



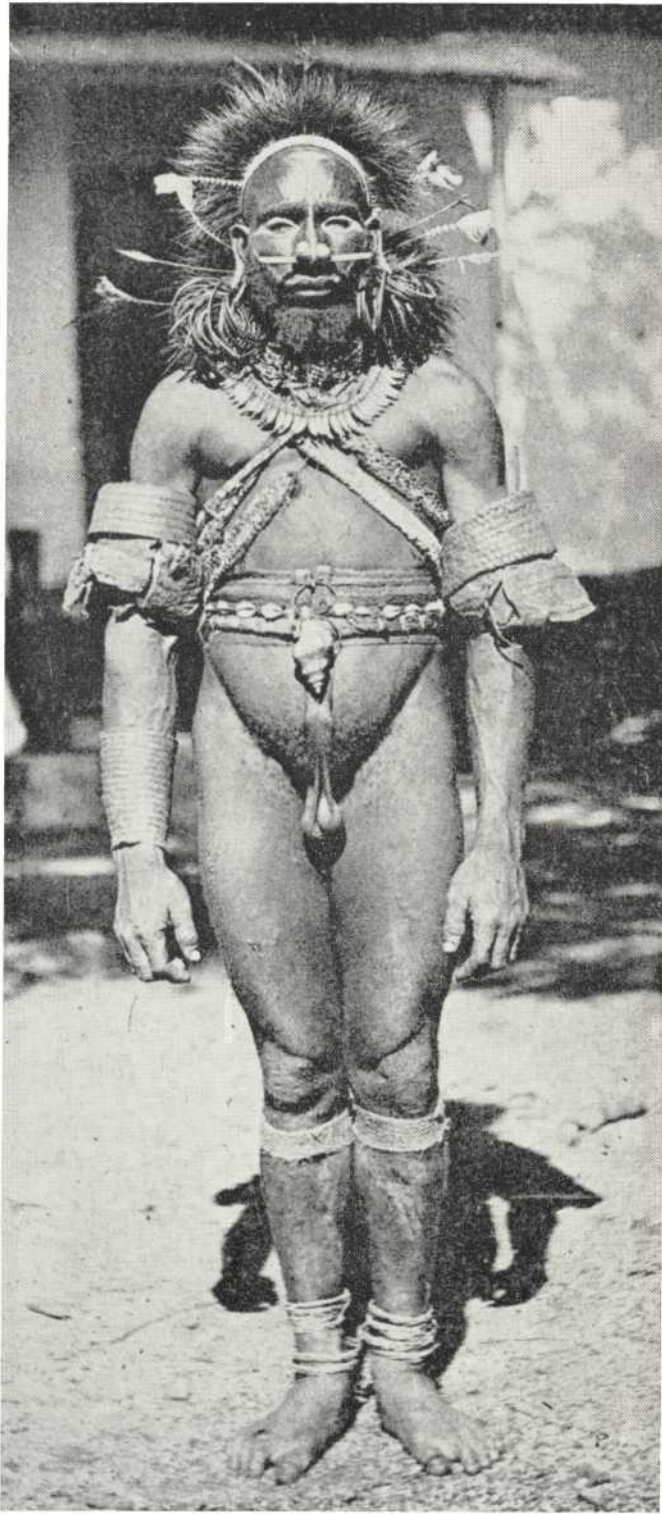
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DR. J. VAN BAAL

DEMA

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS
OF MARIND-ANIM CULTURE
(SOUTH NEW GUINEA)



The proud male. A *miakim*

Reproduced from Wirz, M.A. I, Tafel 9 fig. 3

KONINKLIJK INSTITUUT
VOOR TAAL-, LAND- EN VOLKENKUNDE

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Dr. J. VAN BAAL

DEMA

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF MARIND-ANIM CULTURE
(SOUTH NEW GUINEA)

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF
FATHER J. VERSCHUEREN MSC

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TO THE MEMORY OF
JAN PETRUS BENJAMIN DE JOSSELIN DE JONG

PREFACE

The first to present a comprehensive description of Marind-anim culture was the late Dr. Paul Wirz in his voluminous monograph, *Die Marind-anim von Holländisch-Süd-Neu-Guinea* (1922/25). In spite of its obvious shortcomings the work is highly fascinating; it certainly fascinated me. In 1934, in my doctoral thesis *Godsdienst en Samenleving in Nederlandsch-Zuid-Nieuw-Guinea*, I made a first effort to arrive at a more systematic understanding of the logic underlying the curious mythology and savage ritual of the tribe. The study was based on all the published sources which were available at the time and among these Wirz's book was by far the most important one, as it has been up to the present day. Although I like to think that I succeeded in demonstrating a marked degree of systematization in Marind-anim culture, yet the result was far from satisfactory, which is due to the deficiencies of the data as well as to my own inexperience.

Many years have since elapsed, years in which our knowledge of Marind-anim culture has increased considerably, inter alia as a result of Verschuieren's investigations into their ritual. Besides, I had the privilege of living for two years in the country of the Marind. I had never left Europe when I wrote my thesis, which I finished shortly before I went to the then Netherlands East Indies to join the civil service. In 1936 I had the good fortune of being appointed controleur of Merauke, a position comparable to that of an assistant district officer in Australian territories. It was the first time I held office as a controleur and my numerous duties did not permit me to devote much time to fieldwork. Yet, I was in the right place for gathering some useful knowledge. In the archives I found the files of a surprisingly elaborate registration which, after having been analyzed by my wife, revealed an entirely new picture of the clan-system. I also had the privilege of winning the friendship of Father Verschuieren, whose collaboration has been of inestimable value in writing the present work.

The data acquired during my Merauke period were never published in full. Part of them I included in a book on religion (*Over Wegen en Drijfveren der Religie*), which was published in 1947. The book being

rather general in scope, the ethnographic data were more or less swamped by theoretical expositions which overlaid the descriptive part to a greater extent than I had foreseen. But what is worse, the theoretical views which at the time I brought forward do no longer give me the satisfaction they gave me when I wrote them down. They need amending, especially as far as the Marind-anim are concerned.

In the post-war period I renewed my acquaintance with the area, first as Adviser on Native Affairs to the newly established Government of Netherlands New Guinea (1950-52), shortly afterwards as Governor (1953-58). In those years I had neither the time nor the opportunity to establish close personal contacts, but the general problems of the Marind were stimulating enough to revive my interest. Thus the desire was born to take up again my studies of Marind-anim culture and to rewrite my thesis, supplementing it with all the fresh data and presenting the result in a language more widely understood than Dutch. A number of years after my return to Holland the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde obligingly agreed to assume responsibility for editing the work. The book being conceived as a revised edition of an earlier work, it was decided that it should appear in the Institute's Translation Series.

The renewed analysis of all the data, both old and new, resulted in a book which differs widely from the original dissertation, both in size and in content. Actually, it is a new book, but the Koninklijk Instituut maintained its decision to have it published in the Translation Series, a resolution for which I am grateful.

However, the size of the book calls for something like an apology, but it must be a brief one because the only apology which has real validity is the book itself. Among the circumstances responsible for the unusual size of the present work I should mention first of all the assistance given by my old friend, Father Jan Verschueren msc, a missionary among the Marind-anim since 1931, who is still in the field. Early in 1962 I made an appeal to the vast store of his knowledge, sending him the drafts of the first two chapters. He reacted by producing a wealth of useful notes. I sent him one chapter after another — the final one excepted — and his comments would cover some 200 pages of print. His letters have been filed in the Library of the Anthropology Department of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, where they are available for consultation. The information contained in the letters was worked up in this book; the reader will soon find out how much the author has benefitted from this amazing amount of data, many of

them new and clarifying. For this reason Verschuieren's name has been printed on the title-page of this book, where it belongs by right. Yet, the responsibility for the contents is mine alone. It was not possible to consult Verschuieren on the last chapter, nor could I have his opinion on the final text, which in many places differs considerably from the original draft. It would be unfair to impute to Verschuieren any opinion which the present author has expressed, except, of course, where quotations are concerned.

Another reason for the admittedly great length of the present work is the author's wish to have our knowledge of Marind-anim religion clarified by a study of the structure of Marind-anim culture as a whole. To that end it was necessary to extend the analysis to as many aspects of Marind-anim culture as the nature and quality of the available information permitted. Moreover, it was meant to be an analysis of facts, not an analysis of my presentation or selection of the facts. This implies that the facts had to be set out as fully as possible, including the contradictions and ambiguities with which our sources are replete. I had the happy experience that, in the end, these contradictions contributed substantially to the discovery of a very consistent pattern of trends and motives.

The method obviously has its drawbacks, because the analysis thus presented is not an analysis in retrospect, but in process. Sometimes conclusions, formulated in the course of this process, had to be revised in a subsequent chapter and the reader has to bear in mind that any view expressed in the course of the present analysis may be reformulated in a later chapter. On the other hand, the method chosen enables the reader to trace the origin of these views and to evaluate the facts from which they have been derived. Throughout this book I have tried to let the facts speak for themselves. For me, personally, this work has been one of exploring and the reader is invited to follow the author in his progress through the tangle of facts and opinions in an endeavour to arrive at a reasonably well-defined notion of the dominating patterns of Marind-anim culture and a more comprehensive knowledge of their religion.

I am very much indebted to the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, The Hague, for its willingness to sponsor the editing of the present book and for all the assistance given in the course of my work. The friendship and encouragement of the Instituut's one-time President, Professor Dr. E. M. Uhlenbeck, the sympathetic

assistance and friendly help given by its successive Secretaries, Dr. P. Voorhoeve and Dr. J. Noorduyn, were constant sources of inspiration.

A similar debt of gratitude I owe to His Excellency the Minister without Portfolio, the Hon. Th. Bot, who at the time of planning this book was Parliamentary Undersecretary for New Guinea Affairs in the Ministry of the Interior, for granting a subsidy which enabled the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde to finance the publication of the present work.

When, later, it turned out that this liberal grant would not suffice to meet the total expenses, the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam agreed to contribute a substantial sum, covering part of the deficit. It is not for their financial support alone that I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Board of Governors of the Royal Tropical Institute and to its Secretary-General, Dr. C. Nagtegaal. It is also for their permission to take the advantage of my position as Director of one of the Institute's Departments and draw upon its extensive apparatus, both as regards staff and equipment. The backing of the Institute has been a very great help.

Many people have given me the privilege of their co-operation and assistance. One of them has been mentioned already, Father J. Verschueren msc, to whom I feel deeply and lastingly indebted for his really magnificent contribution.

The assistance given by Mr. O. A. S. Gorissen, Fellow of the Anthropology Department of the Royal Tropical Institute, though in an entirely different category, is not any less valuable. Carefully avoiding to infringe that liberty which an author has in respect of style and expression, he corrected the English of the first draft which was sent to Verschueren, of the second draft which was being elaborated as the latter sent in his comments, and again of the final draft made when the body of the text was given its final shape. He also read through the galley proofs. He did all this with the utmost application, always ready to make some suggestion towards finding the correct word in a language which is not my own. My indebtedness to him is beyond words.

Many thanks are also due to Mr. Peter Worsley for reading through the text before it was sent to the printers, giving the English a final brush-up. I also thank Professor P. E. de Josselin de Jong of Leyden University for his encouragement.

Much valuable help was given by Miss Susan Taub, the designer on the staff of the Royal Tropical Institute, who made the sketch-map and nearly all the drawings published in this book. I also thank

Mr. Lawson, head of the Institute's Photography Section, for all the assistance given by him and his staff in preparing the reproductions and photographs for the illustrations. Mr. H. A. Halbertsma, also of the Royal Tropical Institute, assumed the time-consuming and tedious task of making the index. I owe him many thanks for the way he acquitted himself of this tiresome assignment.

An impressive amount of typewriting and other administrative work was done by the Secretariat of the Department and I wish to express my sincere thanks to Miss Pit Rincker, Miss Renée de Graaf and Miss Cobi Kroese for a most commendable performance and for the good cheer with which they complied with my wishes.

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I have had the assistance of a great many people, first and foremost the members of the staff of the Anthropology Department of the Royal Tropical Institute. It is impossible to mention the names of all of them, but I must make an exception for Dr. Hetty Nooy-Palm, whom I have to thank for much encouragement.

The illustrations in this book are either reproductions of photographs in two Museum collections, or reprints made of illustrations in works dealing with Marind-anim ethnography. They could be published by courtesy of, respectively, the owners and the editors or authors. In expressing my thanks for the willingness with which permission was granted to reproduce the pictures specified in the Lists of Plates and of Figures, I gratefully record my indebtedness to the Director of the Leyden Museum and to the Royal Tropical Institute for the photographs borrowed from their collections, the Sacred Heart Mission at Tilburg for reproductions taken from works edited by the Mission; the University of Hamburg and Messrs. Cram, de Gruyter & Co. for borrowings from Wirz's Marind-anim; the Royal Anthropological In-

stitute in London for a reproduction from Man; Messrs. Brill & Co. in Leyden for reprints taken from Internationales Archiv; His Honour the Administrator of Papua/New Guinea for a reproduction from Williams' Papuans of the Trans-Fly; Dr. J. Boelaars for the copy of one of his drawings in his book Nieuw-Guinea, Uw Mensen zijn wonderbaar; and the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde for a reprint from the Bijdragen. I also wish to thank Mrs. Wirz at Reinach, Professor Dr. A. Bühler at Basel, Professor Dr. R. Firth in London and Professor Dr. E. Schlesier in Hamburg for their kind help in tracing photographs or obtaining permission to make reproductions.

Finally, I have two acknowledgements to make which are of a more personal nature. The first of these is due to my wife, who did an immense amount of work when, many years ago, she analyzed the data of the registration, and who has shown so much forbearance in recent years when I was confined to my study for altogether too many hours.

The second is to the late Professor Dr. J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong, to whose memory this book has been dedicated. He was a great teacher and the tuition and guidance I received from him have meant very much to me in my life. He was interested in structure long before the term had become current. I believe the kind of analysis undertaken in the present work is what he had in mind. For this reason, it can only be to him, and to none but him that this book is now dedicated.

A few remarks on technical details may be added; these concern primarily the spelling of Marindinese words and names. I did try to follow the system Geurtjens applied in his Marindineesch-Nederlandsch Woordenboek, adapting it to the English system by writing u for oe, and y for j, and further simplifying it by writing ai where he differentiates between ei and ai. Unfortunately, I have not been able to follow Geurtjens consistently in his system of specifying the pronunciation of the vowels by adding diacritical marks. Discerning between a, â and á, between e, é and ě, between i, ĭ and í etc. was possible only in those cases in which Geurtjens' Woordenboek points the way, and these are a minority because most of the native terms used in this book are Marindinese personal names. As my own knowledge of the language is not sufficient to warrant decisions on which is the correct pronunciation, diacritical marks were omitted altogether whenever I had no absolute certainty. This implies that e may be pronounced é (as in late), è (as in bed or pet) and also ě (as with the e of later); a may have

the sound of à (as in German Mann), á (as in march) or â (as in walk). I preferred a certain degree of latitude to a spurious display of precise knowledge.

The abbreviations of titles of books and journals quoted are explained in the References following the last Chapter.

J. VAN BAAL

Doorn, April 1966

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PART I

THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. THE SOURCES

The main body of information is incorporated in the two bulky volumes of Paul Wirz's monograph, *Die Marind-anim von Holländisch-Süd-Neu-Guinea* (1922/25), each volume consisting of two separate parts. Formally a complete ethnography, it contains a great wealth of information. Unfortunately the work does not fully come up to modern standards. The author's theoretical knowledge and training in field-techniques did not fully pass the test of anthropological science in the early 'twenties. As far as can be ascertained he never applied the genealogical method, a fact well borne out by the unsatisfactory quality of his data on the social organisation of the Marind. The deficiencies of his training, however, were to a great extent compensated by his unprecedented dedication to task and genuine interest. It is, in fact, unbelievable how much information this amazing character has collected during the years of his stay in the area, handicapped as he was, physically by a slight limp, mentally by his very personality. An unbridled passion for collecting ethnographical objects led him into conflicts of all sorts, sometimes with natives, more often with administrators and missionaries, in short, with all those whose co-operation he badly needed. And yet, he succeeded in winning the confidence of the natives, who told him many of the secrets they used to jealously guard from outsiders. Most amazing of all is the fact that his data, mixed up in his monograph with countless comments and unwarranted little theories on tribal history et al., turn out to be far more reliable and meaningful than the professional reader could have guessed, once a consistent analysis has stripped his data of all the suggestive elements. To eliminate Wirz's comments from the facts is no mean feat; it takes a long time fully to expurgate his interpolations. The great surprise which this clean-up yielded was that the bare data make up a far more consistent picture of Marind-anim culture than the one emerging from Wirz's theories. His fieldwork proper was, in fact, good enough. For

all his shortcomings, his loose style and random quotations, his poor theories and insufficient training, Wirz must be hailed as a great ethnographer with a genuine gift for fieldwork. In his later work he has never surpassed the quality of his Marind-anim studies, probably because he became more and more involved in collecting, an occupation not really compatible with good fieldwork. In the following pages it will often be necessary to criticize his statements, but all the criticism cannot undo the fact that anthropological science is much indebted to the great talent and devotion he bestowed on his description of Marind-anim culture. But for Wirz, our knowledge of the Marind-anim would be extremely scanty. The present work could never have been written but for his fieldwork.

An important objection which may be raised against Wirz's methods is that he practically never informs us where he borrows from other authors. Part IV of his monograph has an extensive bibliography, but in the text references to these sources are scarce. The few there are, usually fail to account for differences between his own rendering of the facts and that of the authors he referred to, or are inconclusive on the point of the actual authorship. I must confess that initially I sometimes suspected him of plagiary, but it soon became evident that time and again it is looseness in the use of his sources. What with his lack of method it must have been impossible for him to distinguish between what he knew from literature and what he had come to know by consulting informants. He may have checked up the information gathered from written sources or he may just have heard the same stories independently. What in fact he did, it is impossible to decide, but, somehow, what he wrote was his own. There may be one or two exceptions, of course, but they should not carry much weight as, after all, the extensive literature mentioned in his bibliography is very limited *in re*.

Most of it was produced by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Mission who worked in the area from 1905 onward. Up to 1920 they were really ploughing the sands and a good deal of their activities centered on the study of the culture and language of the natives for whom they felt themselves responsible. The study of the language was given priority and Fathers J. van de Kolk and P. Vertenten contributed substantially to our knowledge of one of the most complicated Papuan languages. In 1918 they completed a Dutch-Marindinese dictionary, which was published by the Netherlands Indies Government Printers in 1922. A Marindinese-Dutch dictionary followed 15 years later: a

voluminous work of 433 pp., edited by the Royal Batavian Society in volume LXXI of the *Verhandelingen*. In 1927 the Society had already edited a grammar of the language in vol. LXVIII of the same series. By that time Van de Kolk and Vertenten had definitely left the area and the grammar and the Marindinese-Dutch dictionary were written by Father H. Geurtjens MSC, who continued the work begun by his predecessors, building on the foundations they had laid. Like them he was handicapped by a lack of linguistic training. Unfortunately, he was also an ambitious man and he could not help suffusing his data with lots of unwarranted etymologies and poor linguistic theory. Firmly convinced that the Marindinese tongue was of the Indo-European stock, he did not hesitate to take the grammar of classical latin for his model. All this did not matter so much as far as the dictionary is concerned, but the grammar was a failure. In later years the R.C. Mission of Merauke had to entrust the task of writing a new one to its distinguished linguist, Father P. Drabbe MSC. It was published in 1955 as volume 11 of the *Studia Instituti Anthropos*.

The interest displayed by the missionaries in Marind-anim culture was, naturally, of a less lasting nature. From 1920 onwards missionary influence grew rapidly and from that time their reports on Marind-anim customs and religion gradually give way to accounts of missionary progress and of change. In the second generation of missionaries it was only F. Verschueren who gave evidence of genuine interest in their original culture.

The ethnographic studies of the early missionaries were hampered by the same lack of preparatory training as impaired their linguistic work. What is worse, such studies were hardly felt to be a necessity. The sexual manners, the headhunting and supposed cannibalism of the natives, as well as their belief in magic were hardly fit to arouse feelings of sympathy or even interest among missionaries brought up in traditions of rather puritan ethics. They never tried to write a complete ethnography and most of their studies were devoted to more or less isolated aspects of Marind-anim culture. Nevertheless, some of these studies were detailed and accurate. Father Nollen gave an excellent description of Marind-anim age-grades and their characteristic ornaments in *Anthropos* IV (1909); Van de Kolk wrote a very accurate study on kinship-terminology in *BKI* 82 (1926); Vertenten described the decorative art of the Marind in *I.A.* 22 (1915), gave a survey of Marindinese knowledge of astronomy in *BKI* 77 (1921) and wrote a good article on headhunting in *BKI* 79 (1923). Special mention

should be made of Viegen's articles.¹ More than any of his colleagues he tried to let the Marind speak for themselves. Owing to his defective knowledge of the language the results of his endeavours were far from satisfactory and it is easy to brush them aside as confused. Yet, they have documentary value and Viegen was the first to apprehend the classificatory principles dominating Marind-anim thought. Of a later date are the various articles written by Geurtjens, dealing with the cult of the dead, the taboos connected with birth and confinement, associations in Marind-anim thought, and their customs regarding property and inheritance.²

As to the output of recent years, the studies made by Verschuieren of Marind-anim cults and feasts are important. His article on human sacrifice in Indonesië I (1947/48) is a contribution of outstanding value to our knowledge of the cults. It is very accurate in its description of the facts. Unfortunately, this cannot be said of his article in NGS II (1958) on property rights in land, which is marred by a couple of rather serious errors, attributable to hasty writing, somewhere in the field, without any literature at hand. Accurate again are his anonymous contributions to the unpublished Report of the Depopulation Team (see below) and his, equally unpublished, report on the *imo* ceremonies. His contributions to the present book have been mentioned in the Preface. The reader will soon find how much this book owes to his numerous corrections and his additions to the original text, which have opened up many new vistas, substantially amending a number of current notions on Marind-anim social and religious life. Next to Verschuieren's work mention should be made of Father J. Boelaars' book, *Nieuw-Guinea, Uw mensen zijn wonderbaar* (1953), a popular description of missionary work in South New Guinea. Although it was written almost immediately after he had come to the area, it contains several descriptions of native feasts he attended. These descriptions, notwithstanding their popular character, are valuable, as could be expected from a trained anthropologist.

Fortunately, the missionaries, and more especially the early missionaries, did not confine their writings to the few articles which appeared in learned magazines. They composed an almost countless number of short and very short articles for the missionary magazine at home: the *Annalen van O.L. Vrouw van het Heilig Hart* (Annals of Our Lady

¹ Cf. the bibliography at the end of this book.

² *Ibid.*

of the Sacred Heart) and for the yearbook of the Mission Province: the *Almanak van het Missiehuis te Tilburg*. Many of these articles, and a number of others as well, appeared also in the Netherlands Indies Roman Catholic weekly: *De Java-Post*. From 1919 onwards the missionaries contributed also to another Netherlands Indies weekly: *Het Indische Leven*. All these periodicals are difficult to come by. After 1922 the missionary work proper looms larger and larger in these articles and the various periodicals become proportionately less interesting for our purpose. The earlier volumes, however, contain many useful details. The anecdotal approach, so sadly lacking in Wirz's monograph, is richly represented in these short stories and travels. They have details which cannot be found anywhere else and, since there is such a great number of them, together they constitute an invaluable supplement to Wirz's monograph. Among the earlier contributors were Fathers Nollen and Cappers, but the most prolific writers were Vertenten, Van de Kolk and Geurtjens. Among these Vertenten is outstanding; in the bibliography annexed to my dissertation I listed 139 different articles, and he definitely wrote even more. He was an artist who made excellent drawings and a number of creditable paintings. He was a good observer, too, reliable in his expositions of facts. In 1935 a number of these articles were collected and, with some slight modifications, published in a small volume: *Vijftien jaar bij de Koppensnellers van Nederlandsch Zuid-Nieuw-Guinea*, a work which comes nearer to being an all-round ethnographic description than any other missionary contribution. A selection from the writings of Van de Kolk appeared in 1919 under the title: *Bij de Oermenschen van Nederlandsch Zuid-Nieuw-Guinea*. The factual information contained in his articles is less extensive, but as an author he is certainly not less reliable than Vertenten. Van de Kolk had a reputation for accuracy. Geurtjens saw most of his short articles collected in two volumes entitled: *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's van Zuid-Nieuw-Guinea* (1933) and: *Op zoek naar Oermenschen* (1934). Unfortunately, his contributions in this field are of poor quality, because he felt called upon to give his readers a good laugh. A certain section of the public may have appreciated his jokes, but the anthropologist cannot help feeling inclined to avail himself of the rare opportunity to quote Queen Victoria, saying: "We are not amused".

The authors just mentioned were not the only writers of short articles for popular magazines. In the bibliography other names will be found as well. I refrained from listing the titles separately. In the *Annalen*

many of these items simply appeared under the heading 'From a letter received from A great many of these articles have been published twice or even more often, appearing simultaneously or subsequently in the *Java Post*, the *Annalen* and the *Almanak*, to be republished later in one of the four books mentioned above. In my dissertation I have tried to enumerate them all, giving of each the title and the various sources. In the bibliography annexed to the present work I confined myself to giving a reference-list of sources, without venturing upon any further classification. An accurate tabulation of articles of little more than 2 pages each seemed too much of a good thing.

A second group of observers is constituted by early visitors and officials. The first among them was Poch, who visited the area in 1905. He made some brief communications on totemism and the cult of the bullroarer. The Southwest New Guinea Expedition of the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society of 1904/05 added very little to our knowledge. More important were the reports of the government geologist Heldring on the *mayo* celebrations, published in TBG 1913. Wirz paid him the compliment that, but for his record, we would know next to nothing of this highly interesting and very elaborate cult.³ Interesting, too, were the observations made by the leader of the South New Guinea section of the Military Exploration Team, Captain A. J. Gooszen, in BKI 69 (1914). Rather disappointing were the contributions made by the assistant-residents Plate and Berkhout, who were in charge of the administration in the years 1912-1915 and 1915-1918, respectively. The latter's account of the ceremonies of the *Marind* is superficial and adds very little to our knowledge; the former gives useful information on the problems of local administration, unfortunately with too few particulars on the natives and too many on the author.

A more important contribution was made many years later by the assistant-resident L. G. Boldingh, who gave a substantial résumé of the demographic situation in Indonesia V (1951/52). His study was, in a way, a sequel to my essay in TBG 1939 on the history of the area under government control (from 1902 till 1938) in which I paid due attention to the decline in population. Boldingh's data encouraged me to suggest South New Guinea as a possible field of research to the Research Council of the South Pacific Commission, which, at the time, was interested in problems of population decline. The suggestion was acted upon and the anthropologist Dr. Kooijman invited to carry

³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 2.

out the necessary research. He was assisted by two local physicians, Mrs. M. Dorren and L. Veeger, and by F. Verschueren. The assistance of an expert demographer could only be provided after the completion of the fieldwork, a circumstance which added materially to the problems confronting the research-team. Nevertheless, the report in its ultimate form (1958) holds a lot of very useful information. It also has a demographical appendix written by Dr. Norma McArthur and a valuable chapter on nutrition by the nutritionist Dr. R. Luyken, who was in the field during the same period. It is a pity that the report has not been published. A summary review of its contents has been given by Kooijman in NGS III pp. 9-34. Fortunately, there is a copy of the full text (reportedly to be recorded on microfilm by the South Pacific Commission) in the archives of the Anthropology Department of the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam, which I could consult. It will be referred to in the present work as Report Depopulation Team.

The present author's contributions to the sources of our knowledge are small. A controleur is not in the right position for engaging in fieldwork, the less so in South New Guinea, where an epidemic of venereal granulome had led the Government drastically to interfere with the native ways of life. The coastal people were extremely reticent and the only areas where I could do some fieldwork were the territory of the Boadzi (middle Fly region), the upper Bian and Frederik Hendrik Island. My notes on the Boadzi and the upper Bian people were published in TBG 1940; those on Frederik Hendrik Island were lost during the war. When, many years later, I returned to New Guinea, first as an Advisor on Native Affairs and shortly afterwards as Governor, my visits to the area were necessarily brief ones, not leaving me the time required for establishing any intimate contacts. Thus my personal knowledge of the area was gathered mainly during the period when, as a young controleur, I was the highest administrative authority in the area. At that time the assistant-resident resided at Tual in the Kai Islands, Western New Guinea making part of the vast residency of the Moluccas. Next to what little fieldwork I could do, I went through the archives. The results have been published in an essay on the history of the area in TBG 1939; some more data have been laid down in the *Memorie van Overgave* (Memorandum of Transfer) which, in deference to the rule incumbent on officers in charge of an administrative district, I drew up on leaving the area for the information of my successor in office. The

really important discovery I made in the archives was the files of the registration carried out in the years 1930-1932. As will be described elsewhere,⁴ these contained data on 6000 marriages. They were analyzed by my wife. The fact that the records of her elaborate analysis survived the perils of war and internment was a major inducement for me to write this book. The solid facts of the registration are the mainstay of the analysis of the classificatory system.

2. A SURVEY OF GEOGRAPHICAL, MATERIAL, AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS

The Marind-anim are one of the relatively few Papuan peoples who have a name of their own to denote their tribal identity. The word *anim* means men (sing. *anem*, fern. *anum*)⁵ and consequently Marind is the distinctive part of their name.⁶ They occupy a vast territory, stretching all along the coast of the Merauke district in the south of the western half of New Guinea, from the southern entrance to Str. Marianne (between Frederik Hendrik Island and the mainland) southeastward to a point about 15 miles east of Merauke. Here begins the territory of the Kanum-anim, a set of tribes to whom we shall turn presently. Still further east, not far from the coast, halfway between the eastern limit of Marind-anim territory and the Australian border, the small Marind village of Kondo constitutes an enclave in Kanum territory. To-day Kondo is a mere hamlet, practically extinct. In 1927 Kalshofen counted 69 people here, ten years later there were only 37 and in 1948 21 were all that was left.⁷ Since then, the village has apparently dwindled even further; I remember having read or heard that the actual number of inhabitants is 14. Where I am quoting from memory this number cannot be accepted as definite. Whatever the present situation, in the past Kondo was inhabited by a much greater number of people, enough to make it the centre of a special cult, the *rapa*, which has a special place in Marind-anim mythology.⁸

⁴ Below, pp. 71 ff.

⁵ Cf. Geurtjens, *Dict. v. anem*.

⁶ Geurtjens (*Dict. v. Marind*) gives an etymology of the word, breaking it up into Maro, a recurring river name, used i.a. to denote the Merauke river, and *ind*, plur. of *end*, deriving from. Unfortunately, there is little certainty in etymologies.

⁷ Cf. Bolding, *Ind. V* p. 69.

⁸ Verschueren writes: I wonder whether Kondo has ever been big enough to celebrate the ritual unaided; it is quite certain that other groups such as those of Borem and Nasem participated; *Letters I* p. 1.

Inland, the Marind-anim people occupy the hinterland of Okaba between the Buraka and Eli rivers, the banks of the Kumbe and Bian rivers with all the adjacent territory, and those of the lower Maro. In the area last mentioned they are concentrated on the western bank. Among the Marind of the interior those of the upper Bian area speak a rather divergent dialect which, because of its strongly deviating vocabulary, had better be called a related language than a dialect of the Marind, in the same manner as the languages of the Boadzi on the middle Fly and the Jaqai (pronounce Yahai with a guttural like the German *ch* in *Bach*) on the Mappi are called related languages. The dialects along the coast are the eastern dialect spoken east of the Kumbe, the western dialect spoken between Kumbe and Str. Marianne, with the exception of the villages of Sangasé and Alatep where a third dialect is spoken which is also the dialect of the Marind of the hinterland of Okaba. The fourth dialect is that of the Kumbe valley. All four are closely related.⁹

Another subdivision of the tribe is that according to cult. The upper Bian Marind have an initiation cult of their own, called *ezam-uzum* (husband-wife) by Wirz. Along the coast there are three different cults. The most important of these is the *mayo*. The *mayo*-cult, characterized by elaborate ritual and colourful ornamentation, is the cult of the great majority of the coastal Marind. Its dominant position is confirmed by myth. All important mythical events, and the two other coastal cults, have their origin in the primeval *mayo*-rites celebrated by the ancestors. The mythical centre of the cult is at Brawa (near Buti in the vicinity of Merauke), where the navel *déma* (a *déma* is a mythical hero) of the *mayo* has his home. The second cult is the *rapa*-cult of Kondo, which has its proper navel *déma* near the village of that name. The cult is said to be a fire-cult and is the specialty of the Kondo people, joined, so it seems, by a few Kanum-anim groups and a small number of adherents from the coastal settlements east of Merauke. More numerous are the followers of the *imo*-cult. It is the cult of the people of Sangasé and Alaku and of all the inland people who speak the Sangasé dialect (*Imaz*). Of the people of the middle Kumbe some participate in the *imo*-rites, whereas those of Wayau and Koa do not join any of the cults. The lower Kumbe villages joined in the *mayo* and those of the upper Kumbe (Kavarau)

⁹ On the dialects and related languages of the Marind cf. Drabbe, *Spraakunst* pp. 13 ff. and 148 f.; Boelaars, *The Linguistic Position of South-Western New Guinea*.

in the upper Bian ritual. Along the coast the *imo* is also the cult of the village of Domandé and of part of the people of Onggari east of the Bian. West of Sangasé, Alaku and Méwi are predominantly *imo*, while a few people of Okaba and the major (i.e. the eastern) part of Makalin also join the *imo*.¹⁰ In contrast to the *raba* fire-cult, the *imo*-cult, which has its navel *déma* at Sangasé, is associated with the night. *Imo* people are *hap-rek*, i.e. belonging to the night. They paint themselves black and the *mayo* people are afraid of them because of their dangerous magic.¹¹

Of these different groups it is the *Mayo-Marind* who may be further subdivided. The elaborate initiation ritual used to be celebrated once in every four (or more) years by all the territorial groups of a certain area. To that end the territorial groups did not combine; each organized its own ceremonies, but the different ceremonies were held (more or less) simultaneously by each territorial group of the area. The first year the initiation rites were celebrated by the territorial groups between Str. Marianne and the Buraka river, the second year by the territorial groups between Buraka and Bian, the third by those between Bian and Maro and the fourth year by the territorial groups east of the Maro.¹² The next year (or a couple of years later) the cycle started all over again in the westernmost section. The simultaneity of the celebrations by the territorial groups of one area and the rotation of the successive celebrations in the four areas demonstrate that the complete independence of each territorial group did not prevent some form at least of ritual co-operation. Among the *imo* people co-operation was apparently even more comprehensive. Though our information is scanty, the data available tend to suggest that the *imo* initiation rites were — up to an extent — centralized so as to involve the whole group, which for this specific purpose gathered on a central spot.

Of all the groups it is the coastal Marind, both *mayo* and *imo*, who are the most interesting. Their culture is richer and their ritual life more variegated than those of the inland Marind, and they have been described in greater detail. Consequently, our description will be

¹⁰ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III pp. 6, 30 f.; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 64.

¹¹ On their reputation see i.a. Gooszen, TAG 1908, p. 685, and below, pp. 603 f.

¹² See below, p. 498. The term territorial group is used to indicate that the social group celebrating the rites need not necessarily be a village, i.e. a cluster of houses situated far enough from the next group of houses to suggest an independent settlement. The territorial group may be composed of more than one village; cf. below, pp. 39 f., 44 f.

primarily a description of the coastal Marind. The inland Marind will not be ignored, but it is the coastal culture which constitutes the central theme of this book.

Of the tribes surrounding the Marind we already mentioned the Kanum-anim, called Kanum-irébe by Nevermann in his brief description of their culture.¹³ They have a few settlements on the coast between Nasem and Kondo, but most of them live inland, where their biggest village is Yanggandur. In 1937 these groups numbered 263 people among them.¹⁴ Economically and culturally the Kanum-anim, although deeply influenced by their contacts with the Marind-anim, are more like the Papuans of the Trans-Fly. Like these, they are great cultivators of yams and their feasts focus on food-exchanges of a competitive character.¹⁵ Some linguistic data concerning the Kanum-anim, collected by Drabbe, have been published by Boelaars,¹⁶ and a short comparative word-list by Nevermann.¹⁷ It is not impossible that the Kanum-anim actually comprise more than one language-group.¹⁸

Sometimes the term Kanum-anim is extended to cover neighbouring groups with a related culture, such as the Manikor or Mani (pronounce: money) living in Australian territory near the mouth of the Torassi, the Kurkari on both sides of the border east of Yanggandur, and the N'gowugar on the upper Torassi, mostly in Australian territory. The latter are by far the most numerous: Nevermann's estimates vary between 400 and 600.¹⁹ The Mani may have numbered about 50 people when I visited them in 1937, and the Kurkari ca. 100.²⁰

Finally, mention should be made of the Manggat-rik or Mora-ori, a small tribe which in 1947 totalled 55 people,²¹ living at Mbur, a village near the eastern bank of the lower Maro at less than 10 miles' distance from Merauke. They have a separate language, supposed to

¹³ ZfE 71 (1939) pp. 1-70.

¹⁴ Van Baal, TBG 1939 p. 367. In Boldingh's census taken in 1947 the Kurkari-anim are included. They were left out when I gave the numbers for 1937 and, consequently, his comparison of the sum totals leads to erroneous conclusions; cf. Boldingh, Ind. V p. 169.

¹⁵ Cf. Williams, Trans-Fly Ch. XII.

¹⁶ Boelaars, Linguistic Position pp. 37-43.

¹⁷ ZfE 1939 pp. 59-69.

¹⁸ Information given by Verschuieren and noted down in my *Memorie* of 1938 (p. 25) definitely suggests a rather important linguistic variation.

¹⁹ Nevermann, *op. cit.* p. 40.

²⁰ Van Baal, *Memorie* p. 124.

²¹ Boldingh, *op. cit.* p. 170; in 1937 there were 82 (Van Baal, *Memorie* p. 124).

belong to the same group as the Kanum and Yéi languages.²² Culturally they are fully assimilated with the Marind, although I do not think they were accepted as equals. In spite of the easy accessibility of their village, nobody ever paid them more than passing attention.

A far more important tribe is that of the Yéi-anim or Yéi-nan, who inhabit the middle and upper Maro valley. While in 1937 there were 1407 people, living in ten different villages, their number is gradually decreasing. In 1948 it had dwindled to 1017, in 1953 to 971.²³ Their culture is distinctly different from both that of the Marind and of the Kanum-anim. Linguistically they seem to be closer to the latter,²⁴ but as regards their economy they are more like the Marind, who also have sago as their staple diet. Their social structure is characterized by a great number of totemic patrilines, grouped in two exogamous moieties. Brief descriptions of their culture have been given by Wirz, Nevermann and Verschueren.²⁵ New and more elaborate data may be expected to be published by the latter.

Northeast and east of the Yéi-anim we find the Boadzi (called Gab-Gab in older publications), who inhabit the middle Fly- and Lake Murray regions. Linguistically and culturally they have much in common with the upper Bian Marind. Although there are important differences as well, they are closer to the Marind than any other tribe we know of, and consequently their social structure and ritual will be discussed at some length at a later stage.²⁶

Least of all are we informed on the western neighbours of the Marind, whose territory borders on the hinterland of Okaba. They are the Yab of Galum and Bibikem, occupying the area between Str. Marianne and the lower Buraka river; the Makléw of Wekbuti, who have the Mawékré valley as their territory; and the Yelmek of Yodom and Ilwayab, who are recent settlers in the area, originating from Yar, the big island in the Digul estuary where they were attacked by the Marind-anim from Wamal, who, in 1917, almost succeeded in wiping them out. According to Verschueren, who submitted these details, the

²² Boelaars, *op. cit.* pp. 44 ff., 200.

²³ Rep. Depop. Team pp. 204, 212; Boldingh, *op. cit.* p. 72.

²⁴ Boelaars, *op. cit.* pp. 192-200.

²⁵ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 200-215; Nevermann, B.A. 24 (1941) pp. 87-221; Verschueren in Rep. Depop. Team pp. 107-122.

²⁶ Below, pp. 104 ff., 588 ff. On their linguistic position see Boelaars, *l.c.* and Drabbe, *Spraakkunst* pp. 13, 148 ff.

Yelmek speak a dialect of the Jaqai language.²⁷ It is interesting to note that they settled in the vicinity of the Makléw; Drabbe informs us that the Yelmek and Makléw languages are closely related and we might conclude therefore that the Makléw as well as the Yelmek originate from the Jaqai in the Mappi region. Unfortunately, the information is contradictory, as Drabbe adds that the Yelmek and Makléw languages have no affinity with Marind, whereas he conclusively demonstrated that Marind and Jaqai are cognate languages.²⁸ The information is all the more confusing because Drabbe does not mention the Yab, and Boldingh states that, according to information supplied to him by Drabbe, the Makléw, the Yelmek and the people of Galum and Bibikem speak a common language.²⁹ Boelaars, on his language-map locating the Yelmek in the territory of the Yab, apparently holds the same view.³⁰ Gooszen, one of the earliest explorers, also reported that the Makléw and Galum people speak a common language, adding, however, a new element of confusion by recording that the Makléw and Galum together defeated the Yab-anim, who subsequently withdrew to the Wamal river-basin, i.e. to the Bibikem region.³¹ As Nevermann, too, stresses the affinity between the dialects of the three groups,³² we may take it for granted that they speak a common language. The relations of this language with other Papuan tongues remain uncertain and cannot be defined until more information is made available.

Recent data giving numbers for each of these tribes are lacking. The three together made up 520 people in 1938;³³ 120 of these may have been Makléw-anim and some 250 Yab-anim.³⁴ Unfortunately, we know next to nothing of the cultures of these peoples. Apparently, they were outwardly so well assimilated with the Marind that nobody thought it worth while to inquire into differences. It is a fair guess that they are closely related to the Jaqai and the Auyu, the peoples north of the lower Digul river, although an exception has possibly to be made for the

²⁷ Verschueren, Letters I pp. 1 f.

²⁸ Drabbe, l.c.

²⁹ Boldingh, *op. cit.* p. 172.

³⁰ Boelaars, *op. cit.*

³¹ Gooszen, TAG 25 (1908) p. 593.

³² Nevermann, *Stumpfmenschen* pp. 86 f.

³³ Boldingh, *op. cit.* p. 72.

³⁴ Drabbe, *op. cit.* p. 13. In 1937 Galum and Bibikem numbered 146 and 116 people resp.; Van Baal, TBG 79 (1939) *Bijlage III* following p. 414.

Yab-anim, who are reported to partake in the celebrations of the *mayo-cult*.³⁵

The peoples north of the lower Digul, although their ways of life do not differ very markedly from those of the lowland tribes south and east of the river, stand apart in one important respect. Their social structure is not based on an organization of exogamous patrilians, as among the Marind-anim and all the tribes eastward as far as the Gulf of Papua, but on the presence of local groups of a far less rigidly defined composition, in which ambilateral tendencies prevail, even to the extent of giving rise to such strong matrilineal tendencies as have been reported by Pouwer of the Mimika.³⁶ The lower Digul is ethnographically an important divide, of which Strait Marianne is an extension. The peoples of Frederik Hendrik Island, with the possible exception of those of the south coast, adhere to the same pattern of social organization as those north of the lower Digul.³⁷ With the inhabitants of this vast swamp-island the Marind-anim kept up relations of a similarly one-sided nature as their contacts with those beyond the Digul and the Indonesian-Australian border: they were the chosen victims of their headhunting raids. An exception must be made for the people of Komolom, the island off the southeastern shore of Frederik Hendrik Island. In 1948 there lived 210 people in Mombum, the one and only village on the island (308 in 1936).³⁸ Speaking a non-marindinese language,³⁹ they nevertheless had, so it seems, adapted their culture very much to the Marind-anim model. They participated in the *mayo-cult* ⁴⁰ and kept up friendly relations with Wamal.⁴¹

The territory occupied by the Marind is a vast, alluvial flatland, completely devoid of stony matter except for loose concretions of sand or weathered loam. For cooking-purposes the Marind use chunks of termite-heaps, the only concretions hard enough to be fire-proof.

The climate is a monsoon-climate, with distinct dry and wet seasons. From January to April, when the northwest monsoon brings heavy squalls, the land is inundated and great parts of it are reduced to enormous swamps which gradually dry up during the southeast mon-

³⁵ Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 239.

³⁶ J. Pouwer, *Enkele aspecten van de Mimika-cultuur*, in particular pp. 76 ff.

³⁷ Cf. Serpenti, *Cultivators* chapter 3.

³⁸ Boldingh, *op. cit.* p. 175.

³⁹ Cf. Boelaars, *Linguistic Position* pp. 29-32.

⁴⁰ Wirz, *l.c.*; Nevermann, *op. cit.* pp. 168-176; Van Baal, *Memorie* p. 71.

⁴¹ Cf. below, p. 708.

soon when the steady trade wind brings fairly dry and cool air from the Australian continent (from May till October) In between monsoons the climate is hot and sticky, especially during the months preceding the wet season

The landscape⁴² is predominantly a savannah landscape The flora is more Australian in character than happens to be the case in any other part of Western New Guinea The numerous trees of the melaleuca and eucalyptus families give the Merauke landscape its specific appearance which, to the layman observer, seems much akin to that of the vicinity of Port Darwin Vast grassy plains alternate with patches of woodland or swamps The coast is formed by a broad and, in most places, sandy beach The amplitude between two tides is great (up to 5 meters) and the sea near the coast is extremely shallow, consequently the beach is very expansive at low tide A sandy elevation, a kind of low and flat dune, protects the land against floods It is on this ridge that the villages are built All along the coast the sandy elevation separating the interior from the beach is grown with coconut trees They are lacking only in such parts as the northern shore of the Bian mouth and the area east of Sarira, where the coast is swampy and grown with mangroves, or in places where dunes are absent and the land is high enough to keep the sea out, as happens to be the case between Onggari and Domande (between Kumbe and Bian) and between Wambi and Welab

Beyond the sandy ridge along the beach there is usually a swampy area where sago trees are grown Further inland, a former coastal elevation planted with coconut trees presents itself, followed in turn by another swampy area, another elevation and so on There are quite a number of these elevations and depressions following one after another They suggest that long ago the sea reached much further inland and then withdrew gradually To day the process seems to be on the

⁴² On landscape and soils see O G Heldring, *De Zuidoostkust van Nieuw-Guinea*, *Jaarboek van het Mijnwezen in Nederlandsch O Indie* 38 (1909), J J Reijnders *The Landscape in the Maro and Koembe River District, Boor en Spade XI* (1961) pp 164 ff (Mededelingen van de Stichting voor Bodemkartering) A more comprehensive study is Reijnders *A Pedo ecological Study of Soil Genesis in the Tropics from Sea Level to Eternal Snow Nova Guinea*, new series *Geology* Number 6, 1964 It does not, however, deal specifically with the Marindanim area An excellent description of the lowland east of the Bian, concentrating on soils but giving much information on the landscape as well, is found in J Schwan, *Een samenvattende bodemkundige verkenning van het Merauke kustgebied*, a mimeographed paper (Rapport van het Agrarisch Proefstation, Hollandia, oktober 1962)

reverse. Along the beach fallen coconut trees give definite proof that the sea is taking back what it once gave. Not everywhere, however, is the coastline receding. I remember that 25 years ago in some areas the coast seemed to be extending outwards. Father Verschueren informs me that at present such a process can be observed between Kumbe and Onggari and between Alatep and Alaku. Yet in the main the coast is contracting. The best example is offered by the stretch between Onggari and Domande. To-day the clay soil of the slightly elevated land declines sharply to the beach in front, where it is exposed to recurrent attacks of the sea at spring-tide. Many years ago Verschueren witnessed the last coconut trees falling down. Old people informed him that long ago there had been unbroken lines of coconut trees all along the now denuded coast. Similarly, the sea is said to have swallowed large coconut groves in the area between Nasem and Kondo, where to-day the coast is formed by mangrove swamps.⁴³ This information need not imply that here, too, there once was a sandy beach overlooked by coco-covered dunes. These groves could have been planted on scattered old sandbanks. Mythology holds indications that the coast east of Nasem has always been swampy and muddy.⁴⁴

Far inland, from the middle Kumbe and the middle Bian upward, the landscape changes. Low hills, not more than 10 or 15 meters in height, rise from the surrounding flatland. In the upper Bian area the hills enclose vast swamps. When the waterlevel is not too high, the bright green colour of the swamp grass with the dark green of the wood in the background, gives the landscape a charming parklike aspect. The wallaby, which favours the savannah, becomes less frequent. The forest here is more extensive and more variegated. Still it is all lowland, there is hardly any measurable difference in altitude between the upper Bian and the coast. All the rivers east of the Digul are meandering, in many places well nigh bankless, swamp rivers, sluggishly carrying their water toward the sea, the current being reversed far upwards from the mouth when the tide is running in.

South New Guinea is not a fertile land. It is not a bad land either. There is more game here than I found anywhere else in New Guinea. Wallabies are plentiful in the savannah, and boars are by no means rare. Birds in amazingly large numbers brighten the landscape. Among them are flocks of waterfowl, their numbers suggesting that a reasonable amount of fish is available. The sea, too, is rich in fish, especially in

⁴³ Verschueren, Letters I p. 2.

⁴⁴ Cf. the myth of Bangu, below, pp. 341 ff.

and near the mouths of the rivers. The broad beach abounds in shell-fish. In a way the coastal Marind are rich. The huge quantities of coconut and sago available here, added to the abundance of game and fish, make up a good diet, better than the one the inland Marind are able to enjoy. In the interior, coconut is by no means as abundant as it is on the coast, game and fish are scarcer, and though sago is available everywhere, the diet of the inland Marind is definitely poorer.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, even his conditions of life cannot be called marginal. Moreover, he could make gardens as, to some extent, the coastal Marind did.

Our information on gardening is poor, most observers agreeing that it is of little importance. The Marind, however, thought more highly of his gardening and he used to spend a good deal of his time and energy on it. In this swampy lowland garden-making is not to be made light of. Garden-beds have to be raised to a height of about a yard above ground-level, because they are constructed in places where the soil is richest, that is, in the low-lying parts which are flooded early in the west monsoon. The long and narrow beds are called *yarrun* (canoe) by the Marind, because during the rainy season they resemble floating canoes.⁴⁶ The beds are made by piling up lumps of clay which are dug out of the surrounding soil after having been prized loose with a digging-stick which is somewhat enlarged and flattened at its lower end, thus forming a kind of rudimentary spade.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the descriptions of garden-making by Wirz and Van de Kolk do not enter into detail,⁴⁸ thus depriving us of the possibility to compare the methods of the Marind with those of the swamp-dwelling gardeners of Frederik Hendrik Island, whose dedication to agricultural activities has been so admirably described by Serpenti.⁴⁹ We must confine ourselves to stating that the similarity in garden-bed-making suggests similarities in other techniques as well. Our observers, however, could not and did not expect that Marind-anim gardening could ever amount to anything, because they held the firm conviction that the Marind were lazy. An additional reason for this low evaluation is, probably, a lack of opportunity to observe the gardeners at work. The gardens

⁴⁵ That does not mean that in the coastal Papuans' diet there are no deficiencies. Luyken stated that there are various weak spots (in Voeding en Voedings-toestand van de Marind-anim, annexed to the Rep. Depop. Team). Nevertheless Oomen concluded that on the coast the menu is one of the best in New Guinea (H. A. P. C. Oomen, Voeding en Milieu van het Papoeakind p. 20).

⁴⁶ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *javoen*.

⁴⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III pp. 193 f.

⁴⁸ Wirz, l.c.; V. d. Kolk, J.P. 1911 pp. 392-394.

⁴⁹ Serpenti, Cultivators pp. 24 ff.

being one of the few places where a married couple could enjoy sexual intimacy, the Marind will not have encouraged strangers to follow them there. That may explain why Van de Kolk is of the opinion that, for all the work involved, the Marind do not really exert themselves, because everything grows prosperously anyway.⁵⁰

In the late 'fifties the chief agriculturalist of the mechanized rice-growing project, which envisaged the construction of a new polder in the garden-area of Wendu, investigated the garden-beds. There are many, many hundreds of them, most of them old and abandoned, as is plainly visible from an aeroplane. The investigation resulted in a better opinion of Marind-anim gardening. He found that always the best soils were put on top and alongside the beds, and that the ditches surrounding the beds made an intricate and effective drainage system.⁵¹ Verschueren, who submitted this information, points out that gardening, to-day rather insignificant, was important in the old days, when feasts were frequent, which made the availability of great quantities of kava and bananas as well as of yams and taro an urgent necessity. Enquiring further into the matter, he found that formerly not only did every man have a garden from the time he was an *éwati*,⁵² but that he always had more than one, and that even a number of women made their own gardens. He had it confirmed that during the dry season the adults left the village for several months, making gardens, which took plenty of time because the heavy work had to be done in the early morning or the late afternoon, the midday heat being sweltering. Sometimes a man worked together with his wife, sometimes clan-mates or phratry-mates collaborated.⁵³ Verschueren's information is fully corroborated by Wirz's statement that the Marind usually have gardens in many different places and that a man's status is determined by the number and extent of his gardens.⁵⁴

Yams and taro were planted for feasts; they were ingredients for the festive dish. To-day feasts are relatively rare and much restricted in scope. That implies that nowadays very few yams and taro are grown and that the cultivation of kava, too, has diminished, as kava-drinking makes part of every festive occasion. Bananas are daily food and they are cultivated as before, although the decrease in the number of feasts may have occasioned a decline in this field also. However that be,

⁵⁰ V. d. Kolk, l.c.

⁵¹ Verschueren, Letters I p. 2.

⁵² Youth in a later stage of adolescence.

⁵³ Verschueren, l.c.

⁵⁴ Wirz, M.A. III p. 194.

bananas and kava (called *wati* by the Marind-anim) are still grown, the latter being used not only on every festive occasion, but for ordinary consumption as well. As of old, attention is mostly focused on this particular crop, which demands great care.

Although *wati*-drinking is not a ritual, as it is among the Kiwai,⁵⁵ it is closely associated with every ceremony, the male guests having to be presented with a liberal dose.⁵⁶ *Wati* is a highly appreciated narcotic and many of the older men use it every day, or nearly so. Its soporific effect has raised suspicions of every description against the brew. The beverage is prepared by chewing small pieces of the stalk or the main root of the plant and spitting the bitter extract into a coconut bowl until there is enough to make a good drink. The liquid is strong and distasteful and often it is poured down to the accompaniment of loud belching noises. Having swallowed his beverage, the drinker takes some food and shortly afterwards he enjoys a deep and long sleep. I do not know of such a spectacular effect of kava-drinking among the Kiwai or in Melanesia. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the kava-plant, *Piper methysticum*, is the same in all these areas and I do not think that there is reason to suppose that the Marind-anim have a different variety from that of the Kiwai, who do not use the *wati* as a soporific but as a ritual drink prior to a ceremony. A soporific would be ill-suited to the purposes of the Kiwai. The most probable explanation is that the Marind drink the concoction undiluted and imbibe greater quantities than other peoples. As a matter of fact, they take so much that untrained drinkers have to be careful lest they vomit.⁵⁷ As *wati*-drinking is very popular, indulgence in it naturally aroused suspicions that it might have a damaging effect, suspicions which were increased by the popular belief that the use of *wati* by women (who rarely drink it) causes sterility. Laboratory analyses confirmed the narcotic effect, but the presence of decidedly harmful components could not be demonstrated. Nevertheless, suspicions were not allayed and even as late as 1959 Dr. J. A. van der Hoeven propagated prohibition on rather unconvincing medical grounds.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Cf. Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* pp. 107 ff.

⁵⁶ Verschueren, *Letters II* pp. 2c f.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Dr. J. A. v. d. Hoeven, *De invloed van wati-gebruik op de vruchtbaarheid van de Vrouw, Mededelingen van de Dienst van Gezondheidszorg in Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea VI* nr. I (1959). Laboratory research on *wati* was carried out by succ. A. G. van Veen and R. Luyken. Cf. A. G. van Veen, *Over de bedwelmende stof uit de kawa-kawa of wati-plant, Geneeskundig Tijdschrift v. Nederl.-Indië* 78 (1938) pp. 1941-1953; *ibid.* On the isolation of the soporific

It is intriguing to note that the Marind and neighbouring tribes such as the Kiwai and the Wiram⁵⁹ disposed of a truly rich variety of narcotics: they were great chewers of betel and also smoked tobacco, even in the days before European contact. Smoking consisted of inhaling tobacco-smoke from bamboo tubes 30 to 40 cm in length. Within ten years after first contact the technique and the bamboo tubes had completely disappeared to give way to the smoking of big cigarettes made of imported tobacco rolled in bits of newspaper, or to the chewing of tobacco.⁶⁰ In connection with the problem of the origin of tobacco in New Guinea it is important to note that my earlier opinion that the Marindinese word for tobacco is *tamuku*, obviously derived from Malay *tembakau*, must be revised.⁶¹ Father Verschueren informed me that *tamuku* is the word used when addressing strangers. They have also an originally Marindinese word for it, viz. *détak*, which is in common use.

The material culture of the Marind was a simple one. Referring to Wirz for more extensive information, a short survey may be given here of its main items. For weapons they had the arrow and bamboo bow, the spear and spear-thrower, and the stone club. The latter occurred in various forms: egg-headed, disc-headed and even star-shaped. For hunting and fishing both nets and traps were used. Canoes were simple dug-outs, often of impressive proportions and well suited to their purpose. Gooszen on the beach of Sangasé counted 28 canoes, 20 of which measured more than 15 meters.⁶² The oarsmen always stand, plying long oars which are used as beams when in shallow water. The best canoes were made inland, along the middle course of the big rivers.

Instruments consist of stone axes, bamboo knives, shells, bone daggers and bone needles. The stone axe is of the simple type in which the stone is fitted into a hole in the heavy shaft in such a way that the

substance from kawa-kawa or wati, Proceedings R. Netherl. Academy of Sciences 41 (1938) pp. 855-858; A. W. I. van Dam-Bakker, A. P. de Groot & R. Luyken, Influence of *wati* on the fertility of male rats, Tropical and Geographical Medicine 10 (1958) pp. 68-70. In the margin of a separate of the publication last mentioned I found a pencilled note that in 1960 the tests were repeated on female rats, with negative results.

⁵⁹ Cf. Landman, *Kiwai Papuans* pp. 42, 106-110; Williams, *Trans-Fly* pp. 425-427
⁶⁰ Cappers mentioned the smoking from bamboo tubes in 1907 (*J.P.* 1907 p. 729); Gooszen in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* of 21 Febr. 1908, v. d. Kolk in *J.P.* 1914 p. 828. Vertenten, who arrived in South New Guinea in 1911, explains that he had only once seen a Marind smoking in that manner, though he knew that it had been done before (*J.P.* 1918 pp. 141 f).

⁶¹ Cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 16 note 57.

⁶² TAG 1908 p. 686.

cutting edge of the blade runs parallel to the shaft. The stone axes as well as the stone clubs had to be obtained through trade or robbery during one of their frequent headhunting expeditions. The fact that there are different types of axes and clubs points to a diversity of origin.

Pottery and weaving were unknown. Cooking was sometimes done in bamboo shafts. Bigger meals were prepared in a pit, being stewed between leaves covered with heated stones. Plaiting of simple mats and of various kinds of ornaments such as armlets and girdles was generally known. A remarkable achievement in plaiting was the hair-ornaments to be discussed in the section dealing with youth.⁶³ There and in the sections on feasts we shall find occasion to give a somewhat broader description of Marind-anim bodily ornamentation, which was colourful and spectacular to a degree surpassing everything else displayed in New Guinea.

Houses will be briefly described in the next chapter. They are simple structures, painfully lacking the splendour of the big houses built in the region from the Fly delta eastward. Carving, too, was simple and its application restricted. The best-known examples of Marind-anim carving are the decorated posts for the feast-houses constructed for a big feast. The carving, however, is crude and cannot compete with the artistic and elaborate sculptures of the Papuans of the Asmat area. What is true of carving is true of Marind-anim culture generally. There is no highly developed technique, except in one respect: that of staging a spectacular show by means of elaborate decorations worn by fantastically painted dancers. The way they used softwood, feathers, plumes and cane to impersonate a mythical hero or simply to decorate a dancer was baffling in its ingenuity and impressiveness. Their dances were feasts of resplendent colours and gorgeous imagery. Their art concentrated on show and ostentation.

At the time the Dutch established a government-station on the site of present-day Merauke, the Marind were known by a different name, viz. Tugeri. It was the name given them by the tribes of the Western Division of Papua, who feared them more than anything. Almost annually the Tugeri raided them. Many Marind villages joined hands and big war-parties went out far to the east, where they were reported to have been seen in the vicinity of Daru, the seat of the British resident magistrate. They even visited the eastern bank of the Fly

⁶³ Below, pp. 144 f.

river. Of course these raids resulted in diplomatic activity which made the Dutch Government decide to call its uncontrolled subjects to order. To that end Merauke was established, early in 1902.

A closer acquaintance with the Marindinese ways of life soon made it clear that the peoples of the Western Division were not the only victims of Marind-anim aggression. With equal vigour they aimed their reckless expeditions at Frederik Hendrik Island and across the Digul, carrying the war far beyond the borders of their own territory. Sometimes they suffered heavy losses from enemy counter-attacks, but more often than not they brought home a rich booty in cut-off heads and captured children. The latter were adopted and received into the tribe as members with the same rights as own children. At home they enjoyed a relatively high measure of security, because no enemy war-party, however passionate the desire for revenge, ever ventured into Marind territory, the Marind-anim being wise enough to keep up friendly relations with their immediate neighbours. Most remarkable of all is that, in spite of the absence of intervillage authority and organization, they managed to maintain relatively peaceful conditions among themselves.

In those days the Marind-anim were more numerous than they are to-day. Initially, their actual number was greatly overrated.⁶⁴ More recent estimates oscillate between 8500 and 10,000 for the coastal Marind, putting the number of those living in the interior at some 6000.⁶⁵ Although we would expect the Marind to have been a prosperous and thriving people, there are several indications that well before the arrival of the whites the population was slowly declining, or, at best, remaining stationary in numbers. A reliable assessment of their actual strength and of the true demographic situation of the tribe is difficult to make, because the picture is blurred by the events following the foundation of Merauke, in particular by the introduction of new diseases which brought new causes of population-decline. Most dramatic was the effect of the influenza epidemic of 1919, which in a fortnight took away 18½ % of the coastal population.⁶⁶ No other epidemic ever inflicted such a sudden blow, though the impact of the influenza epidemic of 1937/38, which I remember only too well, was of a comparable order of magnitude, more especially in the upper Bian

⁶⁴ Cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 13 note 42, and the sources there quoted.

⁶⁵ Van Baal, *TBG* 79 (1939) p. 310; *Rep. Depop. Team* p. 175.

⁶⁶ Van Baal, *op. cit.* p. 341.

area, where the epidemic took a toll of 21 % of the population during the second semester of 1937.⁶⁷

Even more serious was the introduction of venereal granulome, which thoroughly affected the birth-rate. Nobody knows where it came from, because at the beginning of the century the disease was unknown in the Netherlands Indies. Its incidence in this part of the world was supposed to be confined to Queensland. It is possible that it was imported from Thursday Island: during the first years of the settlement there was regular traffic between the island and Merauke, where, in 1902, a number of Thursday Island people assisted in the construction of the new settlement.⁶⁸ An introduction at such an early date, however, leaves unexplained that the first cases were reported — without having been correctly diagnosed — as late as 1907.⁶⁹ The sexual customs of the Marind are such as to make us expect an explosive spread. Even after 1907 the pace was not so rapid as, under the circumstances, might have been anticipated. It is true that the Report of the Depopulation Team states that at the beginning of 1908 the occurrence of many cases is noted, but only a few lines further down we read: "When in 1910 the R.C. Mission establishes a station at Okaba, west of the Bian river, the missionaries are surprised to find that here the disease is hardly in evidence, whereas two years later it is general there also".⁷⁰ It spread quickly enough, though not like wildfire. The first time it was diagnosed as venereal granulome was in 1916, by Sitanala. When in 1920 the medical specialist Dr. Cnopius made his survey which led to an intensive anti-granulome campaign, about 25 % of the people were infected, in fact, fewer than would have been expected.⁷¹

The spread of the disease coincided with a sharp drop in the birth-rate, which greatly alarmed the missionaries and, subsequently, the authorities. When Cnopius had completed his survey, a medical campaign was planned in which curative treatment was to be backed up by an almost complete change of the native patterns of life. Feasts and dances were banned, since the sexual promiscuity accompanying them

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 350.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 341 note 1.

⁶⁹ Rep. Depop. Team p. 83.

⁷⁰ L.c.

⁷¹ Rep. Depop. Team pp. 139 ff. and Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 155; in my essay in TBG 1939 I erroneously estimated the number of infected people at ca. 50 % (p. 342). On Cnopius' report see also pp. 342 f. of the said essay.

was a dangerous source of re-infection.⁷² In the village boys' and men's houses were closed and living in one-family houses made compulsory. All the things that had made the glory of Marind-anim life were discouraged, because they were supposed — and very often not undeservedly so — to be connected in one way or another with sexual licence. Officially, Marind-anim culture ceased to exist. Actually, the old ritual managed to live on in secrecy; among the *Imo*-Marind (at least among part of them) it persisted in a diluted form even up to the present day. As a means of promoting effective acculturation the measures taken to compel a change of the traditional ways of life were rather a failure.

Medically, they were successful. In 1922 the campaign got fully under way and in 1924 the disease, although not eradicated, was under control. Childbirth, an exception in the years preceding the campaign, soon was common again. Nevertheless, the fertility-rate remained low and the decline in the population, though slowing down considerably, never came to a stop until 1948. The lingering influenza epidemic of 1937/38 complicated the situation by causing a high increase in mortality during that year. The main trouble, however, was the birth-rate, not the mortality-rate, high as it may have been. Something was wrong with the fertility-rate of the women and that something was, curiously enough, highly independent of venereal granulome. In 1920 Cnopius already reported that he had found an abnormally high incidence of sterility, not only among women who had suffered or were suffering of venereal granulome, but among non-infected women as well.

The findings of Cnopius were amply confirmed by the results of the laborious interrogations conducted by the Depopulation Team in 1953. Of the women aged 45 and above who were interviewed, 33 % had never been pregnant, of those between 40-44 years of age 29 %, and of the married women in the age-bracket 25-39 only 6 %.⁷³ As the difference between the women in the age-group of 40-44 and the older women is hardly significant, it follows that a real and well-nigh sudden increase in fertility has taken place among the women aged 39 and under. As the data were collected in 1953 and the average age at which

⁷² Actually, Plate had already forbidden them as early as 1913 (see K.T. 1916 p. 596), an arbitrary measure which, in the long run, could not be enforced. The promulgation of the ordinance on epidemics gave a legal basis for prohibitions of all kinds.

⁷³ Dr. Norma McArthur in Rep. Depop. Team, Demogr. Appendix p. 9 and Table 8.

the first child is delivered is 21.0 on the coast, this sudden change only set in round about 1934, 12 years after the campaign started and 10 years after venereal granulome had come under control. The Team concluded that, although venereal granulome might temporarily have impaired the fertility-rate, the high incidence of sterility among women aged 40 and above cannot be explained from infection with venereal granulome alone, a conclusion further substantiated by medical arguments which it is beyond my competence to evaluate.⁷⁴ The conclusion fully corroborates Cnopius' observations made 33 years earlier.

This left the Team with a twofold problem: first, to identify the cause of this extraordinary high degree of sterility and, second, to account for its disappearance. They sought the answer to both questions in the peculiar form of sexual promiscuity as practised by the Marind: not a general exchange of women, but an obligation resting on one or a few women sexually to gratify a great number of men in succession. The obligation is imposed at marriage, the young women being supposed not to have had sexual experience before. It is suggested that "the absence of pregnancies is probably due to chronic inflammation of the *cervix uteri* and chronic irritation of the female genital organs in consequence of excessive copulation".⁷⁵ The Team "realizes that it is impossible for them to supply absolute proof in support of this theory",⁷⁶ but this consideration does not prevent them from having fairly strong views on this matter, because the explanation covers both the high incidence of sterility under original conditions and its subsequent decrease under missionary influence. Although all rites of sexual promiscuity had been strictly forbidden, even before 1922, they went on in secret, be it that the opportunities were fewer. It was only the generation born after 1913, which had had some school-education and had been deeply influenced by missionary activity, which was sufficiently inner-motivated to refuse to submit to these rites and it is in this generation that a definite and significant decrease of sterility can be observed.

Granted that the explanation covers the facts, it must be considered premature to subscribe to the hypothesis so long as additional evidence is lacking. Such evidence will probably never be procured, because to

⁷⁴ Rep. Depop. Team pp. 138-149; Kooijman, NGS III (1959) p. 22. Actually, the Team expressed their opinion in stronger terms than I employed above, wishing to confine myself to a formulation which, I think, is unassailable.

⁷⁵ Kooijman, op. cit. p. 25.

⁷⁶ L.c.

that end a thorough gynaecological examination would be necessary which requires a greater deal of co-operation from the women involved than they may be expected to give.⁷⁷ For our present purpose we do not need the evidence. The main point is that the investigations conducted by the Team confirm the incidence of a high degree of sterility in pre-contact days. The supposition that the Marind were faced with serious problems on account of this low fertility finds support in various sources, but before the relevant arguments are advanced it is necessary to deal with one piece of information which again brings up the possibility that, after all, the whole decline of the population is a matter of venereal infection. The information in question comes from Gooszen, who, in 1907, wrote in a description of the village of Sangasé: "In some places there are huts in which men and women suffering from venereal and syphilitic diseases are segregated, the sexes being kept apart. The spots on which these huts have been constructed promote recovery and are protected by good spirits".⁷⁸ If the statement should be taken to the letter, we are invited to believe that as early as 1907 the Sangasé people were already so familiar with venereal disease as to have devised standardized methods of treatment! The idea is absurd; Vertenten reports that in 1910 Okaba, Alaku and Makalin were still practically free from the disease, although some cases had occurred in Sangasé⁷⁹ — a statement essentially in harmony with the data which the Depopulation Team culled from the archives of the Sacred Heart Mission.⁸⁰ Gooszen's conclusion that the sick people he saw suffered from venereal disease is an oft-recurring error in laymen's reports of those days. Yaws in particular were often mistaken for syphilis and we may take it for granted that the sick people who aroused his suspicion were cases of framboesia (yaws) in its second stage.

Turning to the data confirming a low rate of fertility in Marind-anim society, we again come across Gooszen. In another article, written shortly after his arrival in the area and well before his visit to Sangasé, he gave a general survey of the situation. His information apparently derived from the assistant-resident, whom he quotes a few lines further down: "The young girl is taboo and respected; the married woman is, as it were, public property and is also at the disposal of friends and acquaintances; sometimes women are exchanged The inescapable

⁷⁷ L.c.

⁷⁸ Gooszen, NRC 28. Nov. 1907, page II A.

⁷⁹ Vertenten, J.P. 1917 p. 387.

⁸⁰ See above, p. 25.

consequence is the decline of the tribe, of the birth-rate. The Papuan realizes only too well what that means. To add to the numbers of the tribe raids are organized the men are killed and their heads cut off, and women and children are carried off".⁸¹

Another author signalling an alarmingly low birth-rate was the missionary J. van de Kolk MSC. In Okaba and Méwi, two villages numbering resp. 268 and 140 people when in 1910 the mission-station was founded,⁸² he collected data on 211 married couples and their offspring. He did not confine his researches to the living, but also included cases from the past, with one or both marriage-partners already dead at the time of the enquiry. Unfortunately, he did not state the bare facts, but only his conclusions. The 211 couples — an unspecified number of whom were still of reproductive age — had 389 children among them. Of these there were probably some 30 or 40 who had been kidnapped. In Okaba alone he counted 22 individuals aged between 10 and 35 who had been abducted on headhunting-raids and subsequently adopted. We do not know how many there were at Méwi, but it certainly is no absurdity to suppose that in a total of 389 for the whole area there were close on 40 children of extraneous origin. Apart from the unknown number of adopted individuals in Méwi, there may have been more of them in Okaba than the 22 about whom he knew. It was bad form among the Marind to allude to somebody's being of foreign extraction, particularly vis-à-vis the person in question. Kidnapped children were raised in precisely the same way as own children and their real descent was kept a secret from them as long and as completely as possible. It follows that the number of own children was in reality low, even if allowance is made for the fact that a fair number of the couples were still of reproductive age and might beget more children. Among them there were i.a. 18 young childless couples, who had been married for periods of from one to three or four years. All this, of course, is not really conclusive, but it indicates a certain trend, which is confirmed by the fact that during the year of observation (July 1910 to July 1911) in Okaba and Méwi together only 3 children were born, whereas 9 people died. The last-mentioned

⁸¹ Gooszen, NRC 3. Sept. 1907, page II A.

⁸² Van de Kolk, Ann. 1918 p. 6. In the article under discussion, which appeared in J.P. 1911 pp. 536-538, he gives a wide variety of demographic details, but as to the number of inhabitants we have to make do with a rough estimate: 300 for Okaba and 180 for Méwi, both considerably higher than the more exact figures quoted six years later in Ann. 1918.

figure is of interest because it proves that during this period mortality was about normal.⁸³

A couple of years later Vertenten voiced similar opinions, though these were based upon other arguments. "When the mission-station of Okaba was established, Okaba, Alaku and Makalin were as good as unaffected [by venereal granulome], although there were already some cases in Sangasé. All the same, the populations of Okaba as well as of Alaku and Makalin had shrunk already, as was demonstrated by the open spaces in, and more particularly near, the villages. In the past these had been occupied by men's and women's houses — the evidence given by the local natives leaves no room for any doubt".⁸⁴ Similar cases concerning groups living in the interior have been reported by the Depopulation Team.⁸⁵ Finally, mention should be made in this context of Viegen's statement that, during the first three years of marriage, a woman is not allowed to bear children.⁸⁶ Whether a rule of this kind actually obtained is open to doubt; probably Viegen's statement reflects the factual situation as observed by him. As such, it finds confirmation in the great number of young childless couples Van de Kolk counted in Okaba. Childlessness during the first years of marriage must have been generally prevalent. As early as 1907 the assistant-resident of Merauke expressed the opinion that *abortus provocatus* is practised by unmarried girls and, "so it is inferred, by women during the first years of marriage".⁸⁷

Having established that all the known facts corroborate the assumption that the demographic situation in the pre-contact period was adversely affected by a low birth-rate, there remains for us to make a final check by means of an examination of the results of the census taken in 1915. Of course, the census would have been more valuable for our present purpose if it had been taken a few years earlier. Nevertheless, what with venereal infection having become general west of the Bian as late as 1912, the returns may have a bearing on our present problem, the more so because the census-takers differentiated between adults and youngsters, assigning all unmarried young people

⁸³ Van de Kolk, J.P. 1911 pp. 536-538.

⁸⁴ Vertenten, J.P. 1917 p. 387.

⁸⁵ Rep. Depop. Team p. 170.

⁸⁶ In an interview quoted in Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 52.

⁸⁷ Gooszen, NRC 3. Sept. 1907, page II A.

to the group of youngsters. As the Marind married fairly late,⁸⁸ we may safely assume that, at a conservative estimate, the age at marriage averaged 18.⁸⁹

There is a significant difference between the ratios of youngsters and adults for the different sections into which the coast may be divided: east (east of the Maro), centre (between Maro and Bian) and west (from the Bian to Str Marianne). In the eastern section the youngsters make up 22 %, in the centre 30 % and in the western section 35 % of the total population. It is evident that the disease which temporarily upset the birth-rate spread from east to west. In the western section, where venereal granuloma had been rampant for three years only, exerting its disturbing influence on the birth-rate, the effect on the percentage of youngsters cannot have been excessive. If we accept that it was some 5 % down, we are on the safe side. That implies that 40 should be adopted as the normal percentage of youngsters in the pre-contact demographical situation. A simple calculation demonstrates that, in a harmoniously structured age-pyramid with the apex at 72, the age-bracket of 0-18 comprises 43.75 % of the total population if the latter remains stationary. As the maximum age would actually be below 72 much rather than above it, and the age at marriage, as appears from the previous footnote, almost certainly higher than 18, 40 in reality represents the highest possible percentage for the age-group of youngsters under pre-contact conditions. That implies that the rate of reproduction was insufficient to keep numbers constant and that, consequently, the kidnapping of children and their adoption

⁸⁸ Van de Kolk, J P 1911 p 537, states that they marry late, suggesting a more advanced age than we can accept (30-35 years for the men!) According to Vertenten bride and bridegroom are of approximately the same age 18-20 years (Koppensnellers p 27)

⁸⁹ In my *Memorie* (1938) I took 20 to be the average age at which they marry, but in my article in *TBG* 1939, which was based on the data of the *Memorie*, I brought it down to 19 for the boys and 17 for the coastal girls. As to the girls of the interior, I fixed on 16, on the assumption that they married at an earlier age than those on the coast. Table 7 of the Demographical Appendix of the Rep Depop Team has more precise data: 21.0 years as the average age of first pregnancy for coastal women and 21.8 for the women of the interior, which belies my supposition that inland girls marry earlier. As it is improbable that, in the old days, women married earlier than they do now, and as it is probable that the first delivery took place later in their married life than it does to-day, 18 is certainly not too high as the estimated age of marriage for girls. My earlier supposition, viz 20, might be nearer the truth almost certainly so in respect of the men. To be on the safe side, we shall hold on to 18, without discriminating between the sexes.

as full-fledged members of the tribe was not a matter of indulgence, but a dire necessity.

In later years the necessity of it was amply demonstrated by the practice of buying children from the tribes across the Digul. Except in the hinterland of Okaba, the practice never became general and its occurrence was discovered, quite incidentally, by Drager when, crossing the western hinterland, he met with an old man from Galum who was on his way to the Digul to buy a boy. On his return in Wambi Drager found out that one of the schoolboys there had been acquired in a similar way, and been well paid for besides.⁹⁰ Many years later, Boldingh found that in the Marind villages of Kiwalan, Ihlep, Nakias, Dohalik and Taga-épé, far away in the hinterland of Okaba, resp. 25, 24, 20, 13 and 11 % of the children had been acquired by purchase.⁹¹

All things considered, the situation at Okaba, where 22 and probably even more, out of a total number of 268, amounting to some 8 or perhaps 10 % of the total population, had been forcibly brought from elsewhere, need not have been exceptional. All this makes it extremely difficult to arrive at a reliable estimate of the total number of coastal Marind at the time Merauke was founded. The figures cited by Van de Kolk for Okaba and Méwi do not provide an adequate starting-point. There are indications that, especially in Okaba, there were migrations which seriously blurred the picture.⁹² I still feel that the census of 1915 furnishes the only reliable basis for an estimate and consequently, what with the coastal population numbering max. 7400 in 1915, it is difficult to imagine that there could have been substantially more than 8500, or at best 9000, in 1902. The Depopulation Team based its estimate of 10 000 on the number of listed men's houses and an assessment of the average number of people belonging to each men's house. The method followed is smart enough, but it involves too many unknowns for us to place reliance on it and accept 10 000 as the original number.

The discussion of Marind-anim demography may be rounded off with a survey of Marind-anim villages and village-groups, arranged according to geographical areas. The population figures have been borrowed from my *Memorie* 1938 and my article in *TBG* 1939, from Boldingh's article in *Indonesië* V and from the Report of the Depopu-

⁹⁰ Drager, *Ann.* 1930 p. 146.

⁹¹ Boldingh, *Ind.* V p. 67.

⁹² Cf. Van Baal, *TBG* 1939 p. 360.

lation Team. The special attention of the reader is called to the fact that the villages mentioned do not always coincide with traditional territorial groups. In the list of coastal villages several villages have often been grouped under one heading which constitute separate administrative units or traditional territorial groups. The inland villages mentioned are all separate administrative units. A number of them, notably in the Kumbe valley and on the upper Bian, comprise more than one territorial group. In the hinterland of Okaba there are administrative units which, traditionally, have made up parts of one and the same territorial group (e.g. Yomob and Yawimu).

A. COASTAL VILLAGES

I. <i>Eastern Group</i>	1915	1937	1948
Sěpadim, incl. Nasem, Sarira, Borem and Kai-a-Kai	554	115	
Yobar, incl. part of Yéwati	114	64	
Buti, incl. Nowari and the greater part of Yéwati	332	308	
	<hr/>		
	1000	487	442
II. <i>Central Group</i>	1915	1937	1948
Urumb, incl. Noh-otiv and Yatomb	495	348	
Wendu, incl. Matara and Birok	472	316	
Anasai	129	72	
Kumbe	315	228	
Kaibursé	283	150	
Onggari	242	168	
Domandé (Samb- and Papis-Domandé)	474	269	
	<hr/>		
	2410	1551	1334

III. <i>Western Group</i>	1915	1937	1948
Sangasé, incl. Alatep	681 ⁹³	408	
Okaba, incl. Tawalu, Alaku and Méwi	489	264	
Makalin	338	275	
Iwolj and Duv-miráv	333	205	
Wambi, incl. Hibóm, Kobing, Wafoklek and Welab	745	730	
Yowid-Elebémě	269	202	
Dokib-Gelib	274	240	
Wamal, incl. Baléwil and Silam-Awehima	621	457	
	<hr/>		
	3750	2781	2436
Group I-III, sum total	7160	4819	4212

Not included are Kondo (69 people in 1927, 37 in 1937 and 21 in 1948) and Kuprik, a village on the western bank of the lower Maro, numbering 115 people in 1937 and 102 in 1948. These two villages should be reckoned among the settlements of the coastal Marind, bringing the total number of inhabitants up to appr. 7400 in 1915, 4971 in 1937 and 4235 in 1948.⁹⁴

B. INLAND VILLAGES

I. *The Kumbe valley*

The Kumbe valley was not brought under control until after 1922. The first reliable census is that of 1930/1931. The following table gives an enumeration of the villages from south to north. Because the census of 1937 did not cover all the villages, no specification is given of the population figure for that year. The diminutive size of several of the groups constitutes a major problem. They are too small to have a school of their own; if they were united to form bigger groups, many would live too far away from their own sago-swamps. Some of the

⁹³ This number, 681, differs rather considerably from that given by Wirz in his extract from the census of 1915, viz. 733 (M.A. I p. 26). Wirz's figures were used on p. 45 below, because they are specified according to village, while those at my disposal only cover village-groups. I must confess that the difference between the two baffles me, as the sum totals are almost equal (7158 being the total arrived at by Wirz, as against my figure of 7160). There are other differences, too, which I cannot account for.

⁹⁴ Cf. Boldingh, *op. cit.* pp. 68 f.

villages listed below have since disappeared, having been merged with other villages, sometimes to form a settlement on a new site (e.g. Kari and Kaverau-Marind in Kaisa). One of the villages, Yakau, could not be located. Initially it had been made a part of Wayau, a village in which, under pressure from local authorities, various minor groups had concentrated. The Yakau people, however, had their gardens in Senayo on the Maro and here it was that they continued to live. Such at least was the situation in 1937.⁹⁵

Yakau	25	Wayau	144
Saror	144	Koa	102
Senam	100	Babor	44
Bad	106	Warita	37
Kaliki	128	Babri	47
Senégi	130	Kari	135
		Kaverau-Marind	106

The total number of Kumbe people in 1930/31 was 1248. In 1948 it had allegedly dwindled to 929, but the Depopulation Team note that this number is probably too low. In 1953 they counted 1037 people.⁹⁶

II. *The hinterland of Okaba*

Few foreigners ever visited the area, which can only be traversed on foot. The Protestant Mission of the Moluccas having established village-schools in the greater part of the area, communications by R.C. missionaries are scarce, while reports by Protestant missionaries are wholly lacking, all missionary work having been entrusted to Ambonese teachers. Personally I never visited the area and the Depopulation Team passed it over. The first census was taken in 1927, but the sum-total for all the villages together being well below that for 1937, there is definite cause for mistrusting the returns of the earlier census. In the following table the villages are arranged in a far from strict order from south to north; the numbers are taken from the census of 1937.

Yawimu	94	Kabtél	130
Yomob	56	Ihlep	133

⁹⁵ Van Baal, *Memorie* p. 126.

⁹⁶ Rep. Depop. Team pp. 189 f.

Kwemsid	74	Po-épé	80
Talol	80	Taga-épé	86
Ya-ula	73	Kiwalan	71
Dohalik	48	Nakias	67

The total number in 1937 was 992, as against 934 in 1948,⁹⁷ not a very important decrease. Probably the practice of buying children had a levelling influence.

In the past the groups living in these villages were called by different names from those under which they are known to-day. Yawimu and Yomob are villages of the Atih-anim or Atih-miráv;⁹⁸ Kwemsid and Talol, possibly Ya-ula, too, should probably be identified with Tumid-miráv, and Kabtel with Aboi.⁹⁹ Being unacquainted with the local situation, I would not venture to identify the other villages with the groups marked on Wirz's map.

III. *The upper Bian*

The villages have been listed roughly from north to south. The sum-totals for 1948 and 1953 are borrowed from Boldingh and the Rep. Depop. Team.

	1930/31	1937	1948	1953
Kafiwako/Mandom	313	291		
Mesak/Mafuyas	175	125		
Muting	208	221		
Wello	127	105		
Tepas	76	75		
Kolam	175	188		
Boha	225	206		
Wan	91	87		
Manggis/Salau	115	122		
<hr/>				
Total	1505	1420	1135	1116

As to definite figures for the sum totals of the three inland groups

⁹⁷ Boldingh, *op. cit.* p. 68.

⁹⁸ Cf. the map in Wirz M.A. II, and Vertenten, *Ann.* 1917 pp. 4-8, 20-24.

⁹⁹ For Aboi see Verschuieren, *Letters V* p. 1.

together, such can only be given for 1948 (2998). In 1930/31 it may have stood at nearly 4000. In view of the fact that in 1948 the coastal population had been reduced in numbers by over 50 percent, it seems warranted to estimate the total number of Marind living in the interior before the outbreak of the disease at approx. 6000.

To-day the Marind are on the ascent again. The elaborate measures taken to combat malaria and yaws, to stimulate education and progress, may at last bear fruit, at least as far as the physical regeneration of the tribe is concerned. Culturally and spiritually, however, they very much hold their own. They do not show that keen interest in change and progress characteristic of so many other Papuan tribes. They never indulged in cargo-cults. Although seriously chastized, the coastal people never lost their pride. They certainly are a different people to-day, but they never renounced that remarkable quality of self-confidence, matching it with a geniality in manners which is distinctive of their behaviour.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The basic feature of Marind-anim social organization is the clan-system. In section 2 of this chapter it will be demonstrated that Marind-anim society is composed of a number of non-localized, patrilineal, exogamic totemclans, each of which belongs to one of four patrilineal and likewise exogamic phratries. The phratries, in turn, are grouped two and two together in moieties. Among the coastal Marind these moieties are not exogamic, except in Sangasé and Alatep. In these two villages and — as far as our information goes — among the inland Marind, a dual division into exogamic moieties prevails. Among the coastal communities the absence of moiety-exogamy detracts from the importance of moiety dualism, although the moieties still have a function in religious thought and ritual. The quadripartition of the phratries strongly confirms us in the assumption that moiety-dichotomy is, indeed, the underlying principle of the organization. From various statements it may be concluded that the people concerned, too, feel that way. Yet, there are local differences. West of Sangasé the dualistic principle is less conspicuous than it is in the eastern section. In the west one of the phratries is subdivided into two almost separate groups and the rule of exogamy between the two is neglected up to the extent that, at first cognizance, we are inclined to follow Wirz and consider them as separate phratries. We need not enter into a further discussion of local differences here. Suffice it to say, firstly, that in the Kumba valley the clan-system is more or less identical with that of the eastern coastal Marind; secondly, that we have very little information on the social organization among the groups occupying the hinterland of Okaba; and finally that the Marind of the upper Bian have, in fact, a clan-system of their own, based on moiety-exogamy and terminologically adapted to that of the coast.

The system of moieties and phratries, elaborated in full in annex III, can in the broadest outline be summarized as follows:

Moiety I

1. *Geb-zé* phratry;
main totem: coconut
2. Phratry of *Aramemb*, comprising the clans (with their main totems):
Kai-zé (cassowary)
Ndik-end (stork)
Samkakai (wallaby).

Moiety II

1. *Mahu-zé* phratry, with among its clans i.a. *Mahu-zé* and *Zohé*; main totem: sago
2. *Bragai-zé* phratry, with the following clans and main totems:
Bragai-zé (betel-crocodile)
Yorm-end (sea)
Basik-Basik (pig). In the western section this clan tends to disregard the rule of phratry-exogamy.

While the phratries are composed of clans, the clans in their turn are made up of subclans, sometimes even further divided into sub-subclans. Some of these subclans are purely local groups, but others have their membership spread over several, sometimes even numerous, territorial groups. The Marind have only one term, *boan*, to denote clans, subclans and sub-subclans. The term may even be used in the meaning of phratry. Under the circumstances there is not much benefit in following Murdock's terminology, differentiating between clans and sibs. We will use the term clan and its derivatives, irrespective of the question whether the genealogical group concerned is localized or spread over various local groups, to denote unilineal, exogamic groups the members of which derive their identity from a common symbol, often by descent from a common traditional ancestor (or group of ancestors). The occurrence of lineages, organized unilineal groups deriving their descent from a common real ancestor, has never been reported. In the first section we intend to demonstrate that they are not really lacking, but that successive observers have failed to identify the men's house community as — sometimes at least — a lineage.

1. LOCAL ORGANIZATION

In the coastal communities four levels of local organization, representing successively larger groups, should be distinguished: the men's house, the hamlet, the village and the territorial group. The men's house community is a minuscule group, rarely numbering more than some 20 persons. It is composed of one men's house and from one to

three, more often two, women's houses belonging to it. The hamlet is a cluster of men's houses with adjacent women's houses, separated from other similar clusters in the village by a fence or a simple landmark. A village is a group of adjacent hamlets huddled together, and standing far enough apart from other, similar groups of hamlets to be recognized as an independent territorial unit of the kind usually denoted as a village. Finally, there is the territorial group, sometimes identical with a village, but often a combination of two or more villages, which together constitute the most comprehensive social unit, made up of members of all four phratries, and characterized by a certain degree of co-ordination of activities and a trend toward endogamy. Owing to the lack of formalized authority and organization the territorial group is not easily recognizable. Where territorial groups live fairly close together, as often happens along the coast, the groups may actually merge. Yet, the territorial group should not be identified with the village, the latter being a more or less accidental cluster of hamlets which need comprise only a part of the total territorial group. Actually, the village is just what it must seem to any chance passer-by: a long-drawn-out series of often miserable huts, built on the low ridge high up the beach, where the vegetation of coconut palms begins.

When in 1902 the area was brought under control and an administrative framework set up, the village was taken for what it seemed to be: the kind of territorial unit well-known from other areas, which in due time should be incorporated into the administrative system as the lowest tier, a unit called village, administered by a village chief. It seemed all very simple; the villages stretched in one long row all along the coast, waiting as it were to have their names noted down in a register and their chiefs recognized as village chiefs. The trouble was that there were no village chiefs, and it was not until 1914 that the administration, disgusted with natives who had no chiefs, decided to solve the problem by appointing village chiefs.¹ Although the appointments were (and are) preceded by consultation of the villagers concerned, the institution never became a success. In essence the village chiefs were representatives of the administration in the villages, and not functionaries of the village communities, as is amply borne out by the recurring complaints voiced by successive local administrators about the chiefs lacking prestige. Personally, I was under the impression that the changing conditions of recent years were contributing to making the

¹ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1939 p. 338.

institution more meaningful to the natives, but I have no factual data at my disposal which could confirm or even illustrate my point. For our present purpose this does not matter much either; what we want to know is whether in the course of these fifty years of contact the administrative units called villages have become more closely coordinated with the native system of traditional territorial groups than they were initially. During the half-century which has elapsed the prevailing trend was for small, isolated local groups to combine or join other groups, because the possibility to keep up a village school is conditional on a certain minimum size of the village. In the Kumbe valley and the upper Bian area the administration has endeavoured to make many newly-formed combinations of formerly isolated settlements coincide as much as possible with traditional territorial groups, endeavours which in some cases were doomed because the relevant groups were too small or their garden-sites too hopelessly scattered, but which more often were fairly successful. The coastal villages, all concentrated along the beach, more populous and always within easy reach, never presented such settlement-problems as the scattered groups of the interior. Although along the coast, too, a certain concentration of villages has resulted from the administration's preference for greater units, such concentrations did not create serious problems and consequently nobody ever felt called upon to make an attempt to delimitate the new administrative units in such a way that they would cover the same areas as occupied by the respective traditional groups. There is no doubt that a certain measure of coincidence of village and territorial group prevails, but in the absence of any systematic survey concrete data pertaining to local organization are painfully scarce. The same can be said of our knowledge with regard to landrights. There is no lack of broad generalizations, but the fact that they are often contradictory and inconsistent demonstrates the necessity for a careful examination and re-study of the available facts, first of all those concerning the coastal communities, in which we are primarily interested.

Various facts suggest that on the coast the structure of the territorial group is at once vaguer, more complicated and, above all, more variegated than is often supposed. Yet, some cases seem simple enough. Such villages as Kumbe, Kaibursé, Onggari and Domandé are quite separate, clearly distinct communities, each with its own history and peculiarities, in fact, genuine territorial groups. In Domandé, however, the situation is more complicated. It is divided into two separate settlements, about a quarter of an hour's walk apart, viz. Samb(Great)-

and Papis(Little-)-Domandé. What does this division imply? Is it simply a matter of arrangement of houses? Or are there also separate territories? The latter is hardly probable, the two parts being too closely associated. It seems more probable that the two village-sections lived in relative independence, but joined hands in all things which really matter; and this hollow phrase is all that can be said of it.²

A similar situation prevails in Sangasé, collective for Samb- and Papis-Sangasé. The two parts were far less different in size than the Domandé villages.³ A curious misinterpretation of the name Samb-Sangasé is given by Gooszen. He applies it, not to denote Great-Sangasé, but what might be called Greater Sangasé, viz. the two Sangasé villages plus Alatep. In his description he states that Samb-Sangasé, the biggest and most warlike village on the coast, is composed of three big conglomerates, extending for a couple of kilometers along the beach. In each conglomerate the houses are often grouped together in clusters. Each of the clusters is known by its own name.⁴ It is evident from both text and context that the clusters are the hamlets within the villages. About the organization of co-operation, and about the joint or separate exercise by the three villages of their rights in land we know very little, but there is historical evidence that Samb-Sangasé, Papis-Sangasé and Alatep closely co-operated and must in respect of all external affairs be considered as a unit. The fact that Alatep joins Sangasé in following the custom of moiety-exogamy is another indication that the three are closely knit together, whatever the degree of autonomy granted to each of the parts.

Another and more common division of the village was that into *mahai*, *in* and *es*, i.e. front, centre and rear, of which front was the westernmost, rear the easternmost part. In the list of villages published by Wirz⁵ such a division is reported from Samb-Domandé, Samb-Sangasé, Makalin and Wambi. According to Geurtjens every village is divided into front, centre and rear,⁶ a distinction fairly general among

² Nollen makes mention of a small village of 15 houses, called Dalimb, half an hour's walk west from Domandé (Ann. 1910 p. 357). Size and location of the village suggest that Dalimb is identical with Papis-Domandé, the latter lying west of Samb-Domandé, though not as far away. It is possible that Dalimb is the name of one of the hamlets of Papis-Domandé which was mistaken for the name of the whole.

³ See Wirz, M.A. I p. 26.

⁴ Gooszen, NRC 28 Nov. 1907 page II A.

⁵ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 170 ff.

⁶ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *es*; TAG 1929 p. 238.

the Marind. Viegen even applied it to the tribal territory as a whole.⁷ The cosmological implications of a division on these lines will be described elsewhere;⁸ for the present we may confine ourselves to stating that it is improbable that the terms front, centre and rear should have any organizational relevance. Obviously the terms are used to indicate relative positions in an east-west context. A village like Sangasé (and in fact every village) already being divided into hamlets, there is little reason to suppose that *es*, *in* and *mahai* indicate anything but the eastern, central and western hamlets of the village which stretches lengthwise along the coast. There is only one case in which we are tempted to suppose that there may be more to the term. This concerns Es-Makalin, East-Makalin, the biggest part of the village, which is predominantly *imo*, the other village people following the *mayo*-cult.⁹ According to Wirz's excerpt from the census of 1915, East-Makalin with 205 people is indeed by far the biggest part of the village, In- and Mahai-Makalin numbering only 51 and 82 people, respectively.¹⁰ A difference in cult might in this case have led to greater independence from the rest of the village, but there is no indication of such a development. On the contrary, Okaba, Méwi and Alaku also had both *imo* and *mayo* among their inhabitants, but nothing points to the adepts of the two cults being segregated in separate hamlets. As a matter of fact, from Vertenten's statement that East-Makalin is predominantly *imo* it follows that in that part of the village a minority belonged to the *mayo*. We conclude that there is no reason to suppose that the tripartition involving front, centre and rear had anything to do with the structure of the territorial group.

Far more important is the hamlet, or the group of hamlets called a village. Fortunately, we have a description of Makalin as it was in November 1909 in Nollen's record of his visit to the area. He describes Makalin as a powerful tribe, almost as powerful as Sangasé (Alatep included). The Makalin tribe (elsewhere he says Makalin group) is spread over a number of villages. Travelling from Okaba westward he

⁷ Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 142.

⁸ Below, pp. 217-221. Verschueren in NGS 1958 p. 259 gives an entirely new interpretation of the terms *es*, *in* and *mahai*, suggesting that *es* and *mahai* are each occupied by people of one moiety, and that *in* is the empty space between the two village-halves. This interpretation is based on the supposition that the moiety-pattern is expressed in the settlement-pattern, a supposition which is belied by fact.

⁹ Cf. Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 64.

¹⁰ Wirz, M.A. I p. 26.

passes through, successively, Alabuk, Wanangub-otiv, Wakakim, Dabiak, Yong-otiv, Gid-otiv, Warayam and Yangomina, eight villages all belonging to the same group. He then goes to Iwolj (spelled Ewali), a 'tribe' living in two fairly large villages separated by a small creek, the Wokati. The eastern village is called Ewal (Iwolj), the western Dabage. The next 'tribe' is Duv-miráv, with the villages Abekč, Saham-otiv, Bagibak and Wêw. Saham-otiv and Bagibak are typical hamlets, small and adjacent, and our author states that they constitute only one village. Wêw, however, lies at half an hour's distance.¹¹ Evidently, the settlements of early years were more widely spaced than those of to-day. Although we still do not know what exactly the terms Es-, In- and Mahai-Makalin stand for, the villages obviously are the really important units which, together, constitute the territorial group.

The degree of autonomy enjoyed by each village of the territorial group is a matter of conjecture. There are indications that Okaba, Méwi and Alaku together constitute one territorial group, even though this did not prevent Okaba and Méwi from engaging in a serious fight, as a result of which the Méwi people moved from their old settlement in the immediate vicinity of Okaba to their present village-site.¹² Yet, we do not really know for certain. Nor can we be positive whether Wambi constitutes one territorial group with Hibóm and Kobing, or what, in the section of the coast between Maro and Kumbe, the relationship is between such villages as Bahor, Wendu, Birok, Matara and Anasai. It seems that Birok and Matara belong together; in 1908/09 the two villages jointly celebrated the *mayo*-initiation,¹³ but we have no information with regard to the other villages in this area, except that Urumb, the easternmost village in this section of the coast, is an independent territorial group.¹⁴ East of the Maro, Nowari and Buti belong together.¹⁵ The position of Yéwati is uncertain; we only know that at the time of resettlement under government pressure the majority of the Yéwati people joined Buti, whereas a minority settled at Yobar.¹⁶ Yobar, however, belongs to the same territorial group as Sêpadim.¹⁷ Present-day Sêpadim comprises other

¹¹ Nollen, Ann. 1910 pp. 308-310.

¹² See below, p. 685.

¹³ Cappers, Ann. 1909 p. 213.

¹⁴ Verschueren, NGS 1958 p. 251; **Letters I pp. 4 and 8.**

¹⁵ Verschueren, NGS 1958 p. 251, as rectified in **Letters I pp. 7 f.**

¹⁶ Van Baal, *Memorie* p. 87.

¹⁷ Verschueren, **Letters I p. 4.**

groups as well, such as Sarira, which, originally, constituted a territorial group of its own.

It is no use trying to draw up a complete list. We have to deal with the problem again further down. For the moment, suffice it to state that I tried to gain a more complete insight into the number and extent of the territorial groups by means of annex II, in which are listed the numbers of the married male members of each phratry in every village of which registration data were available. If in each territorial group all the phatries must be represented, we may expect that such villages as do not constitute complete territorial groups have only 2 or 3 phatries represented among their inmates. According to the list of coastal villages this happens to be the case only in Yobar and Alaku, the former having no members of the phratry of *Aramemb*, the latter being devoid of *Mahu-sé*. It would be rash to conclude that all the other villages mentioned in the list are complete territorial groups; with equal right we might state that villages which are part of a territorial group tend to conform to the pattern of the group as a whole by having representatives of all the phatries among their members.

A last question to be answered before we turn to the smaller units making up the territorial group concerns the number of people belonging to the major entity. The total population of territorial groups constituted by the villages or groups of villages here specified varied in 1915 between 208 to 733, viz. Buti/Nowari/Yéwati 334; Urumb 227; Birok/Matara 208; Kumbé 305; Kaibursé 283; Onggari 242; Domandé 494; Sangasé/Alatep 733, Makalin 338.¹⁸ Probably some were even smaller than Birok/Matara. The list of villages borrowed by Wirz from the census-report 1915 has the following numbers for, respectively, the villages Iwolj, Yoh and Duv-miráv: 91, 89 and 153. Unfortunately, we are unable to decide which of the two Yoh belongs to: Iwolj or Duv-miráv. Yoh is not mentioned by Nollen in the list of villages he visited in 1909, but that need not be a matter of oversight. It has always been difficult for outsiders to get the correct name of a place from the local natives. Every village, every hamlet and every men's house had its own proper name and this profusion of names could not fail to cause confusion.

Having dwelt so long on the most comprehensive local group, we now have to deal with the smaller units: the men's house and the hamlet.

¹⁸ From Wirz, M.A. I p. 26.

A discussion of these two institutions has to be preceded by a short description of dwellings generally. It need not take us long, because houses are nothing spectacular. All houses are, in fact, simple huts, built on the low, sandy ridge up from the beach, where they are at the mercy of the winds which, during the east monsoon, snatch at the roofs and blow the sand in great heaps against the walls of the houses, and batter both roofs and walls during the heavy squalls of the west monsoon. Most houses stand in one long row, the entrance facing the sea; where the sandy ridge is broad it happens that there are two parallel rows of houses or that they face each other across a short alley running in a direction at right angles to the coast.¹⁹ On the land side of the houses are the coconut gardens; the front part of the coconut grove serves as the village back-yard, the *soso*, where during the heat of the day the villagers go and sit in the shade.²⁰ All houses are rectangular, gable-roofed constructions, rising direct from the ground. The length only slightly exceeds the breadth. Down the middle of the house run a number of forked poles arranged in a row, carrying the ridge-beam, which is up to 2½ or 3 meters above ground. The side-walls are between 1 and 1.4 meters high. None of our sources gives an estimate of the length and width of the average house of the coastal Marind, but the photographs suggest that they may be some 5 to 6 meters in width and 6 to 7 meters in length, rarely more.²¹ The roof is thatched with plaited sago-leaves; the walls are made of dry sago-leafstalks piled up between thin poles of bamboo or wood. The construction of the roof is of the simplest kind; one side of the roof is made to extend beyond the ridge, jutting out over the other; with houses facing the sea it is the western side which overlaps, thus offering protection against the rainstorms usually blowing from the west. The entrance to the house is at the front, just right or left of the centre, which is occupied by the front pole supporting the ridge. Inside the house there are no partitions. A central gangway runs down the length of the house, on either side of the supports of the ridge. To the right and left are two platforms, each of them stretching right up to the side-wall. On these platforms

¹⁹ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 177.

²⁰ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *soso*; V. d. Kolk, Oermenschen p. 9.

²¹ In my *Godsdienst* (p. 20) I gave a higher estimate; restudying the photographs mentioned there I find that I overestimated the dimensions. A case in point is provided by the measurements of the huts at Kondo as given by Gooszen: 5 tot 6 meters (NRC 1914, 11 jan., page Ocht.A).

each of the inmates of the house has a place of his own, with a fireplace underneath. The front wall of the house, at least of a women's house, is built slightly inwards, thus leaving room for two benches placed under the eaves, one on either side of the entrance.²²

There is very little difference between men's houses and women's houses. Vertenten states that all houses are sizeable, but that the women's houses are slightly smaller.²³ Wirz expresses the same opinion.²⁴ The similarity between the two types of houses is such that the beautifully carved posts, originating from feast-houses built on the occasion of a ceremony, may be used for both men's and women's houses.²⁵ Such feast-houses may consist of a simple platform covered by a single, slanting roof resting on carved posts; sometimes the structure is more elaborate, resembling a house without walls; thus e.g. the model of a feast-house in the collections of the Royal Tropical Institute at Amsterdam, reproduced in Plate V. Near the houses we often find small huts and contraptions serving various purposes: sheds for working or cooking, sick-huts, wind-screens etc.²⁶ Outside the village is the *oram-aha*, the small maternity-hut which a husband constructs for his pregnant wife shortly before delivery.²⁷ A more important building is the *gotad* or boys' house, usually a long platform under a roof, located in the bush or the coconut grove outside the village, hidden from view by brushwood.²⁸ Here the boys and male adolescents stay in the day-time. After sunset they return to the village, where they sleep in the men's house, to return to the *gotad* before daybreak. Usually a village has only one *gotad*, that is, when the various hamlets are close together and there are not too many of them. Otherwise, each group of hamlets has its own *gotad*.²⁹ Thus Gooszen counted six *gotad* in Greater Sangasé (Sangasé and Alatep).³⁰

Recapitulating, we find that in the construction of Marind-anim houses the fundamental pattern followed is that of the *essara* (platform) covered with a slanting roof. A complete house, in fact, comprises

²² On the construction of the house see Wirz, M.A. III pp. 177 ff. See also Plates III and IV in the present book.

²³ Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 14 f.

²⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 181.

²⁵ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 180. In my *Godsdienst* (p. 29) I questioned the correctness of Wirz's statement on grounds which I no longer consider valid.

²⁶ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 178.

²⁷ See below, p. 131.

²⁸ Wirz, l.c.; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 18.

²⁹ Wirz, l.c.

³⁰ Gooszen, NRC 28 Nov. 1907, page II A.

two of these structures facing in opposite directions. The *gotad* and the temporary residences in the gardens usually consist of a single platform with a slanting roof, village houses of a combination making a double one.³¹ It is obvious that Marind-anim housing is, technically, extremely simple and in essence closely related to camping. The parallel may be extended to cover the segregation of the sexes in the garden-settlement or the camp: "there, too, the sexes are separated and usually assigned different spots".³²

The plainness and restricted size of the Marind-anim men's house prevent us from associating it with the sacral men's houses built by the natives of the Fly estuary and farther eastward along the south coast. These men's houses were sanctuaries impressive in their dimensions and architecture. The Marind-anim men's house was not a sacral hall, it was not the place where rites were celebrated, nor did it contain sacred objects specifically connected with the house.³³ The *gotad* had nothing sacred about it either. The main function of both *gotad* and men's house is that of segregating the sexes. Wirz is very explicit on this point: "it is considered a gross violation of morals when a man enters a women's house, except in the case that he has to get something from his own wife's house. He will never stay there for long, let alone spend the night in his wife's house, sexual intercourse between married people taking place in the bush Even more strictly will a woman avoid the men's house, except when she has to give something to her husband. Quite improper it is for an adolescent ever to enter a women's hut or even to venture into the village in the day-time".³⁴ The rules are all very strict, and yet there is something odd in this segregation of the sexes: in fact it is ineffective. Men's house and women's houses stand close together and every word spoken in the one house can be heard in the other. Except in the rainy season, the houses are used as dormitories only, all other activities taking place in front of or in the space between the houses. Meals are taken separately, the men squatting round one fire, and the women and children round another.³⁵ Again, a strict segregation, but one which does not keep the sexes so far apart that conversation is impossible.

³¹ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 182.

³² *ibid.* p. 189.

³³ Nor was there a special inauguration ceremony for a new men's house. Vertenten's contention that there was a big ceremony refers to the decorating of the house with headhunting-trophies. Cf. BKI 1923 p. 70.

³⁴ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 178.

³⁶ Wirz, M.A. I p. 92; Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 26.

It is just the opposite of what happens in a Namau household, where the man may live and sleep with his wife in his own house. Often, however, he stays in the men's house, which is far away enough to make segregation effective. His wife will bring him his food when he is in the men's house, and to that end will even enter it when it is raining.³⁶ In the case of the Marind segregation is permanent, extensive and inefficient, in that of the Namau (and other peoples with sacral men's houses) it is intermittent, restricted and effective.

The question arises whether the segregation of the sexes is, indeed, as strict as Wirz would have us believe. There is reason for doubt. Cappers informs us that when a man is seriously ill and in need of nursing, he is carried over to the women's house to be taken care of.³⁷ Gooszen states: "only the older, married women may enter the *gotad*, which is forbidden to younger ones"³⁸ and Nollen observed that the young, marriageable girls have a special preference for walking in the neighbourhood of the *gotad* to show off their glorious beauty.³⁹ Gooszen's observation is of special interest because it provides the answer to a problem which all our sources blissfully ignored, viz. how the young man, leaving the village before breakfast to return after sunset, gets his meals. His mother (or, more often, the wife of his ward) takes them out to him! After nightfall the segregation of the male adolescents is even more ineffective. The men's house, where they are supposed to spend the night, is, in fact, such a simple, homy institution that a night's rest there necessarily implies partaking in family life. This segregation is of a different kind from the segregation to which — for a much shorter period, it is true — the adolescents of the Keraki and the Elema are submitted.⁴⁰ Obviously, the segregation of the sexes among the Marind is of a more complicated, more controversial nature than among other tribes of the south coast, being both stricter and less effective at the same time.

Now we have to answer the question how many people live in a men's house and in the women's houses belonging to it. It should not have been difficult, had not our sources succeeded in messing things up almost to the point of inextricability by the looseness of their terminology and a recurrent failure to discriminate between notions

³⁶ Williams, *Purari Delta* pp. 8 f. and 59 f.

³⁷ Cappers, *K.M.* 35 p. 149.

³⁸ Gooszen, *NRC* 21 Febr. 1908, page I A.

³⁹ Nollen, *Anthr.* 1909 p. 557.

⁴⁰ Williams, *Trans-Fly* pp. 189, 191; *Drama* pp. 75 ff.

which should have been scrupulously held apart. Our oldest sources happen to be the most concrete. In Sangasé and Alatep Gooszen counted 63 men's and 71 women's houses; he estimates the average number of inmates of a house at 10. That implies that the two villages together should have numbered 1340 people,⁴¹ an incredibly high total, as there were only 733 people in 1915.⁴² Making allowance for a certain decrease in population, we cannot put the total number of people anywhere above 800 in 1907, that is 6 to a house. More exact data are available for Okaba and Méwi. Okaba (268 people in 1910) had 9 men's and 17 women's houses; Méwi, with 140 people, resp. 6 and 10. Here the average is actually almost 10 to a house.

Confusion begins with Wirz's statement that there is only one or at most two men's houses in a hamlet: "strictly speaking, each hamlet has only one men's house and several women's huts. As the number of inmates increases, new men's houses must be constructed. The women's huts usually are smaller; and whereas the men's houses were originally, and grosso modo are even to-day, clan-property, the women's huts are rather family-houses. The married woman usually goes to live with her mother-in-law and her daughter; when the hut becomes too crowded, she moves with her children into a hut of her own".⁴³ We quoted Wirz at some length to demonstrate the vagueness of his account, in which facts are mixed up with a hypothesis on the original situation — each hamlet a clan-settlement with one men's house, a simple pattern which was upset by population increase. The weakness of the hypothesis is evident; we found already that the alleged increase in population is contrary to the actual facts.⁴⁴ Moreover, the wording of the passage quoted raises serious doubts with regard to the real number of men's houses in a hamlet. Initially, my doubts were dispelled by the detailed and positive presentation of facts in the elaborate list of hamlets, covering 4½ large pages. Here Wirz, again identifying hamlet with clan-settlement and both with men's house, suggests that, normally, there is only one men's house to a hamlet.⁴⁵ Any unsuspecting reader is inclined to take such a presentation to be true to fact, the more so because the list makes mention of several hamlets and men's

⁴¹ Gooszen, NRC 28 Nov. 1907 page II A. He gives an even higher estimate, viz. 1500, because he also included the inmates of the *gotad*. As they sleep in the men's houses, this is a clear case of counting twice over.

⁴² According to Wirz's account; see above, p. 34 note 93.

⁴³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 162.

⁴⁴ Above, pp. 24, 26 ff.

⁴⁵ Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 170 ff.

houses comprising members of more than one clan and even of different phratries. The author does not try to conceal contradictory data and gives an impression of absolute reliability. What is more, we find the identity of hamlet and clan-settlement confirmed in Verschueren's article of 1958: the hamlet was the property of a certain clan which often owned several men's houses and women's houses within the enclosure. The fact that membership also included males belonging to other clans is explained from marriages deviating from the rule of patrilocal marriage, a custom followed less consistently among the coastal Marind than in the inland communities.⁴⁶ The identity of hamlet and men's house is again confirmed in the Report of the Depopulation Team. Basing themselves on the list of hamlets presented by Wirz, the authors make an assessment of the average number of people associated with a men's house (men's house with the women's houses belonging to it), concluding that we may reckon with 37 men, women and children to a men's house.⁴⁷ If that be correct, the average number of occupants of a men's house will be ca. 15.

TABLE 1
HAMLETS AND MEN'S HOUSES IN TWO VILLAGES

Village	Hamlet	Number of men's houses for the respective clans		Total number of men's houses
Yowid/Elebémě	Wodub	2 <i>Kai-zé</i> ,	1 <i>Geb-zé</i>	3
	Lamkoba	2 <i>Geb-zé</i> ,	1 <i>Samkakai</i>	3
	Deliw	2 <i>Mahu-zé</i> ,	1 <i>Samkakai</i>	3
	Yowid	2 <i>Geb-zé</i>		2
	Elbjéme	3 <i>Geb-zé</i>		3
	Momaha	1 <i>Yorm-end</i>		1
Buti/Nowari	Evadakai	5 <i>Mahu-zé</i>		5
	Bu	6 <i>Geb-zé</i>		6
	Adahamad	9 <i>Ndik-end</i>		9
	Taguriki	3 <i>Mahu-zé</i> ,	2 <i>Basik-Basik</i>	5

⁴⁶ Verschueren, NGS 1958 p. 251.

⁴⁷ Rep. Depop. Team pp. 172 ff.

However, other data also brought forward by Verschueren give definite evidence that the picture just given shows at best an incorrect simplification of the real state of affairs. They prove that a hamlet, whatever its origin — and what do we know of origins? — is not necessarily a clan-settlement, and that the hamlet cannot possibly be identified with the men's house because the average number of men's houses in a hamlet is higher than just one or two.

Again, it is the concrete data, not the generalizations, which are instructive. Verschueren's interviews with aged informants at Yowid/Elebémě and at Buti/Nowari resulted in the models of the two villages and their hamlets and men's houses as presented in Table 1.⁴⁸

Unfortunately, the data for Buti/Nowari are incomplete, and we must therefore first deal with those for Yowid/Elebémě, a territorial group numbering 269 people in 1915; among them were 78 adult men and 47 boys and adolescents. As boys sleep in the men's house from a fairly early age, long before they enter the seclusion of the *gotad*,⁴⁹ approximately two-thirds of them must be reckoned to be inmates of the men's houses, so that the total number of inmates may be estimated at 110, and the average number in one men's house at 7 or 8, boys and adolescents included. As the data concerning Buti/Nowari are incomplete, we cannot make a similar calculation with regard to this group, which totalled 344 people in 1915. At the time the group, which was the first to be exposed to foreign influence, must already have suffered a not inconsiderable decrease in population. It is a fair guess that its numbers exceeded 400 at the beginning of the century. Even so, the average number of inmates of a men's house must have been lower than at Yowid/Elebémě, where we find one men's house to every 18 men, women and children. If the same ratio prevailed at Buti/Nowari, the four hamlets on which we have data would among them have a higher population-figure than that of the village as a whole. It is probable, then, that at Buti/Nowari the average number of people occupying a house was of about the same order as we found for Sangasé, viz. 6, or perhaps 7.

The evidence put forward by Verschueren surprisingly well corroborates what the earliest visitors observed. Yet, the variation in the average number of people occupying a house, which ranges from 6 at Sangasé and possibly Buti to 10 at Méwi and Okaba, with Yowid/

⁴⁸ Verschueren, Letters I p. 4.

⁴⁹ See below, p. 140.

Elebéme somewhere in between, is fairly considerable. It is not a variation in extremes, but in averages. Perhaps there is a simple explanation for it. Sangasé is the important centre of the *imo* celebrations, which were attended by people coming from many places.⁵⁰ These guests had to stay somewhere; to that end a number of temporary platforms were sometimes constructed near the festive grounds, but it is fairly certain that these makeshifts fell short of accommodating all the guests. There can hardly be any doubt that the majority of the guests enjoyed the hospitality of friends.⁵¹ It is a fair guess that the Sangasé people had adapted their houses to the demands of friendly hospitality. The fact that there was also plenty of accommodation at Buti may be just a matter of chance, but even if accidental, it is well in accordance with this theory, as Buti/Nowari was the most important centre of the *mayo*-cult, which kept up very close relations with Sangasé.⁵² In historical times Buti, so near Merauke, had little opportunity to stage big feasts and ceremonies, but there is ample reason to suppose that in the glorious old days Buti, too, entertained many guests.

Before we revert to the question whether the hamlet is a one-clan-settlement or a mixed one, a final word may be said on the men's house and its relations with its adjacent women's houses. We have arrived at the conclusion that the identification of men's house community and hamlet is belied by fact. Actually, it is a construction based on hypothesis. The notion that the men's house is an institution representing a male community of some size has to be abandoned. The diminutive number of inmates evidences that what is involved cannot be more than a small group (even a very small group) of closely related men. Where the number of inmates is 10, not more than 7 of them are married. These 7 men sleep apart from their wives. Our earlier conclusion that we are dealing with an unusual case of segregation of the sexes is fully corroborated. Though sleeping in separate quarters, the two sexes are always within earshot. We may even go one step further. Above, we stated that the occurrence of lineages has never been reported of the Marind. The small size of the men's house community, combined with the rule of patrilocal marriage and the tendency of men's house communities to associate with people of the same phratry, gives evidence that this smallest social unit was, in fact, a lineage. Of course, not every men's house community need necessarily have been a pure

⁵⁰ Below, pp. 608 ff.

⁵¹ Cf. below, p. 837.

⁵² Cf. i.a. below, p. 667.

lineage. It may have been a small subclan as well: either the remnants of a formerly bigger subclan, or a subclan which fairly recently developed from a lineage. Any lineage, i.e. a unilineal group which has a real ancestor as its symbol of unity, may well develop into a subclan, i.e. a lineage which has no longer a real ancestor but something traditional as its symbol of unity. This may be a traditional ancestor or a totem, a mythical canoe or a village of origin. A pointer to such a development is the strongly institutional character of the men's house community as demonstrated by the fact that every men's house had a name of its own. In one of his letters⁵³ Verschuieren mentions the names of the men's houses of Urumb, given by his informants, following the order from east to west: *Kawkawe* (*Geb-zé*), *Duw-nakari* (*Geb-zé*), *Boro* (*Kai-zé*), *Asak* (*Geb-zé*), *Maivo* (*Samkakai*), *Subi* (*Geb-zé*), *Takababaki* (*Kai-zé*), *Yemew* (*Mahu-zé*), *Kawai* (*Mahu-zé*). The list is incomplete, as those of the *Bragai-zé* phratry are lacking. Verschuieren also gives the names of 4 men's houses of Dokib and 8 of Gelib. They are listed following the same order from east to west: *Geb-zé*, the phratry of *Aramemb* (*Kai-zé*, *Ndik-end* or *Samkakai*), *Mahu-zé*, *Bragai-zé*. In conclusion Verschuieren notes that this order is not universally observed and may be due to chance. We shall return to this later. For the present the point of interest is the names, which are not only names of houses, but symbols of the groups occupying them, groups which may be lineages as well as small subclans. We shall find later that the more powerful among them exerted much influence in the local community.

The identification of hamlet and clan-settlement has been strongly emphasized by Wirz. He illustrates his case with an example which seems convincing: "The whole village [of Urumb] is divided into four separate clan-settlements, viz. Baiwad, Bai-ongat, Aho-essog and Harau-otiv, each with one [or a] men's house which is entitled to bear the name of the hamlet". Baiwad is inhabited by the *Bragai-zé* (*Yorm-end* and *Swar-rek*); Bai-ongat by the *Diwa-rek* and *Mahu-zé*; Aho-essog by the *Kai-zé* (*Honi-rek*) and *Samkakai* (*Mad-rek*); Harau-otiv by the *Geb-zé* (*Mana-rek*, *Uaba-rek*, *Moyu-rek*, *Dayo-rek*).⁵⁴ Comparing the clan-names with the tables of annex IV, the reader will find that each hamlet is inhabited by the members of one phratry, in each case, however, belonging to different clans. Besides, he will

⁵³ Letters I p. 8.

⁵⁴ Wirz, M.A. III p. 163.

find that they are grouped in two moieties. However, two questions arise. The first springs from the names given to the various settlements. *Bai-onqat*, *Bai*-coconut, is a name which is more suited to a *Geb-zé* settlement than to a *Mahu-zé* hamlet, the coconut being the main totem of the *Geb-zé*. Conversely, *Harau-otiv* is an apt name for a *Mahu-zé* settlement, not for a *Geb-zé* hamlet, because *Harau* is the mythical sago-maker and sago is the distinctive totem of the *Mahu-zé*.⁵⁵ Coconut and sago are the symbols of the two moieties, of the contrast of coast and interior.⁵⁶ Obviously there has been an interchange either of the two names or of the clans associated with them.⁵⁷

The second question which arises is how to interpret the clause: "each with one [or a] men's house which is entitled to bear the name of the hamlet", in the original: "jedes mit einem Männerhaus, welchem die Dorfbenennung im engeren Sinne zukommt". We know from Verschueren's letters that there were more than 9 men's houses and that his list is incomplete. That implies that we must interpret Wirz's ambiguous phrasing to mean that each hamlet has *one* men's house which bears the name of the hamlet, while there are other men's houses which have other names. Unfortunately, none of the 9 names mentioned by Verschueren is identical with a hamlet-name. There are other problems besides. The order of the men's houses as given by Verschueren implies that in the hamlets the phratries are mixed, whereas the moieties are not. It is impossible to reconcile the two statements. The one thing that is certain is that here in Urumb, too, the men's house communities were small groups. Urumb had 227 people in 1915. If there were 14 men's houses (7 out of those mentioned belong to one moiety which, in 1930, was the smaller of the two) that would make about 10 inmates to every men's house, some 7 of whom might be married men.

Adding the four hamlets of Urumb to the ten of Yowid/Elbjéme and Buti/Nowari, we find that out of 14 hamlets there are six which may be pure clan-settlements, viz. Yowid, Elbjéme, Momaha, Evadakai, Bu and Adahamad. There is no certainty, however, that Yowid, Elbjéme, Evadakai and Bu are really clan-settlements, as the terms

⁵⁵ *Harau* is, formally, a *Kai-zé* déma, but her relations with the *Mahu-zé* are very fundamental, as will be demonstrated below, pp. 443, 456 and 941 f. She is certainly not a *Geb-zé*.

⁵⁶ See below, pp. 212, 309 and 338.

⁵⁷ Probably the names of the settlements have been interchanged, as Verschueren gives *Urumb* as an example of a village with a settlement-pattern expressing moiety-dichotomy.

Geb-zé and *Mahu-zé* are used alternately to indicate two phratries and two special clans making part of these phratries. Consequently there are, in fact, only two hamlets which are indubitably clan-settlements. Maybe there are more, but we do not know for sure. On the other hand, the correlation between hamlet and phratry is obvious. In Urumb all the four hamlets are phratry-settlements, or, if we stick to the order of the men's houses as given by Verschueren, moiety-settlements, in Yowid/Elbjéme three out of six and in the part of Buti/Nowari on which we have full data three out of four; all in all: ten out of fourteen. Of the four cases in which people of different phratries have men's houses in one and the same hamlet there is only one, that of Deliw (Yowid/Elbémě), in which the phratries belong to different moieties. Apparently there is a definite tendency to confine the hamlet community to people of the same phratry or moiety. That explains why so many authors are positive that the hamlet is a clan-settlement. The Marind do not differentiate terminologically between subclan, clan and phratry; they use the term *boan*. It is not at all impossible that even in the case where the members of the hamlet community belong to different phratries of the same moiety, co-habitation is explained in terms expressing the view that they are all people belonging to the same *boan*. However that be, the available evidence strongly points up the importance of the phratry as a social unit.

Nevertheless, we should be careful not to over-emphasize the importance of the phratry. The case of Urumb may suggest that each phratry occupies a quarter of its own in the village, and there may be a definite tendency for the hamlet to become a phratry-settlement, but all this does not imply that everywhere the members of one phratry tend to concentrate in the same village-part. On the contrary, the case of Urumb is not undisputed, and moreover, it seems to be an exception. In Wirz's list of hamlets and the clans or phratries inhabiting them a definite order is absent. In this list the hamlets are enumerated in the order from east to west. Although the author does not explicitly say so, various details confirm that they actually have been arranged in that order. The following conclusions may be drawn. First, that within the village or territorial group hamlets of the same phratry are often adjacent, but that there are so many cases of hamlets of the same phratry being separated one from another by one or more hamlets of another phratry that it is impossible to establish any hard and fast rule. Second, that there is no definite order in the location of the phratries within the village, it being possible for each phratry to occupy

the eastern, western or central part of the village or to be scattered over various parts. Third, that the moiety-division is not expressed in the settlement-pattern.

In arriving at the last-mentioned conclusion I am at variance with Verschueren, who, drawing a parallel with inland communities, advanced the view that some coastal villages were mere moiety-settlements, citing Buti/Nowari, Urumb and the Eromka area as examples.⁵⁸ The inclusion of Buti/Nowari appears to be erroneous: in one of his letters F. Verschueren informed me that from a renewed consultation of his notes it became apparent that neither of the two villages, although parts of one territorial group, has its membership confined to one moiety.⁵⁹ Urumb, however, might be a good example, but whether the same can be said of the Eromka people (the territorial groups of Yowid/Elebémě and Dokíb/Gelíb) is open to doubt. The list of hamlets given by Wirz does not bear Verschueren out, but I must admit that, in this particular case, a reference to Wirz's list is a weak argument, because on this point there is something wrong with the order of presentation.⁶⁰ Far more important, however, is another fact. From the passage in his letter quoted only a few pages back⁶¹ it is evident that Verschueren bases his argument in favour of settlement on the lines of moiety-membership on the order of the men's houses, not on that of the hamlets in the village. It is again the identification of men's house with hamlet, conceived by Wirz, with the Report of the Depopulation Team and Verschueren following suit, which causes confusion. The hamlets being preferably concentrations of all the members of one phratry (or moiety), it is only logical that in a list of men's houses we should find men's houses of the same phratry, or at least of the same moiety, grouped together. This statement of the case can be maintained, provided the list of men's houses includes only a few and not all the hamlets of a village, as is evidently the case in the examples given by Verschueren. Urumb, the one village with (at least more or less) a phratry-pattern of hamlets, makes a highly suggestive, but misleading case. Urumb as an isolated example of the coincidence of hamlet-pattern with phratry-pattern does not make any conclusive contribution to the

⁵⁸ Verschueren, NGS 1958 p. 251.

⁵⁹ Verschueren, Letters I pp. 7, 8. I had derived the same conclusion from the returns of the registration; cf. annex II.

⁶⁰ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 174, where Elebémě follows Gelíb instead of following Yowid and preceding Dokíb. Cf. the list in M.A. I p. 26, in which Yowid is lacking, but which has Elebémě in the right place, i.e. before Dokíb.

⁶¹ Cf. p. 54.

solution of our problem, which is defining the prevailing pattern of settlement of the phratries within the village (and/or the territorial group). On the contrary, where the location of clan-groups and phratries within the village is a matter of chance, there must be at least one case in which the patterns of phratry-organization and local settlement coincide. That is the case of Urumb, at least if we accept Wirz's version and ignore the order of the men's houses as presented by Verschueren; far from demonstrating the existence of a rule of settlement according to phratry and moiety, the very isolation of the case proves the absence of a rule. As to the order of men's houses within the hamlet, we refer to Verschueren's own statement that the order of men's houses as found in the three cases quoted is not of general occurrence and may be a matter of chance,⁶² as it almost certainly is. It would have been most satisfying, of course, if the order of settlement had been as suggested. It would be in perfect harmony with the classificatory system if the *Geb-zé* inhabited the eastern, the *Braqai-zé* the western end of the village, with the phratry of *Aramemb* second from the east and the *Mahu-zé* second from the west. Unfortunately, the evidence is against it. Even the case of Urumb is doubtful; the order of hamlets as given by Wirz does not corroborate the one put forward by Verschueren.⁶³

Thus far we have dealt with modes of habitation within the territorial group. Quite another matter is the question of landrights within the orbit of the territorial group. According to Wirz and Geurtjens⁶⁴ all arable land, i.e. all the land taken up by coconut groves and sago swamps and all the land fit for garden-making, is parcelled out among the various clans. Within the clan-territory each individual has his own gardens planted with fruit trees (incl. coconut) or under crops, and his own sago trees. The statement is so worded as to suggest that there are also coconut groves and sago swamps which are common clan-property. This is, up to an extent, confirmed by Verschueren, who states that former gardens and more specifically sago swamps and coconut groves may be the common property of local subclans. He supposes that these gardens were originally laid out by rather distant ancestors, who planted them,⁶⁵ a supposition which is probably true. So long as there is an abundance of coconut and sago, as happened

⁶² L.c.

⁶³ See above, pp. 54 f.

⁶⁴ Wirz, M.A. I pp. 77 ff., III pp. 193 f.; Geurtjens, TAG 1929 pp. 225 ff.

⁶⁵ Verschueren, NGS 1958 pp. 254, 258.

to be the case in most places, there is little reason for title-holders to divide all the inherited property among them.

Among clan-owned property Geurtjens also includes certain swamps which are important fishing-grounds.⁶⁶ All the rest of the territory, however, all the uncultivable land — and that is, under prevailing conditions, all the savannahs, which are the main hunting-grounds of the group — belongs to the 'village'. A similar opinion is expressed by Wirz, unfortunately in terms which leave us completely in the dark as to what kind of territorial group is the title-holder.⁶⁷

In his article in NGS 1958 Verschueren severely criticized these views. The territorial group as such (and in the context he means territorial group in the sense it has in the present book) has no landed property, because the whole territory of the group is shared out among the phratries (in the case of the phratry of *Aramemb* the three clans constituting the phratry). Within the phratry-territory individuals and subclans exercise exclusive rights in gardens, coconut groves and sago swamps. Hunting-rights are not the exclusive privilege of the territorial group, but of the phratries. Hunting on the land of another phratry of one's own territorial group was not permitted, except by invitation from the relevant phratry.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, people of other phratries and even of other territorial groups could be given permission to make gardens or to plant trees within the territory of the phratry. They could even be invited to do so to show them courtesy. Such gardens and trees were inherited by the heirs of the planters, but the heirs had not the right to plant new trees. As to these, their claim was limited to those trees which grow spontaneously in the garden they had inherited, chiefly sago palms.⁶⁹

Emphatically Verschueren dwells on the division of the territory among the phratries. The territorial group as such has no rights, but the localized phratry-groups are the title-holders. Unfortunately, his terminology is confusing, as confusing as is his representation of the clan-system, which, on one point, is definitely wrong, as will be demonstrated in the next section.⁷⁰ In this context the point of interest is that Verschueren does not use the term phratry, but clan. Three of the

⁶⁶ Geurtjens, op. cit. p. 227.

⁶⁷ He uses the vague terms *Siedelung* and *Siedelungsverband* without informing us what he means. See Wirz, M.A. I pp. 77 f.

⁶⁸ Verschueren, op. cit. p. 254-258.

⁶⁹ Ibid pp. 259 f.

⁷⁰ See below, p. 89 note 161.

clans he mentions are actually phratries, the remaining three are the three clans making up the phratry of *Aramemb*. It is these six clans (resp. phratries) who each hold title to the land within the demesne of the territorial group, the rights of individuals and subclans on certain gardens and garden-sites etc. being rights derived from clearing and planting within the clan-territory. I must admit that I am not wholly satisfied with his exposition. I am perfectly willing to accept that, locally, *Basik-Basik* and *Yorm-end* as clans (Verschuieren calls them subclans) of the *Bragai-zé* have no independent rights in land, except certain gardens and sago swamps, while they do have the same rights in the local *Bragai-zé* territory as all other members of *Bragai-zé* clans. I am not quite so sure, however, that, in other places, *Basik-Basik* could not have independent landrights within the group, distinct from the *Bragai-zé* and the *Yorm-end*, in a similar way as the *Kai-zé*, the *Ndik-end* and the *Samkakai* (all clans of the phratry of *Aramemb*) enjoy certain rights. With regard to the territorial groups west of Sangasé, where in matrimonial affairs the *Basik-Basik* tend to behave like an almost independent phratry, I think this even probable. Similarly, there might be territorial groups where *Mahu-zé* and *Zohé*, or *Geb-zé-ha* and the other *Geb-zé* clans have separate territories. So long as we do not have maps of the territories of at least four or five territorial groups with the boundaries of the various phratry-territories drawn in, it is difficult to be satisfied with mere assertions. Our previous discussions have made perfectly clear the importance of fully detailed descriptions of the state of affairs in a few groups for our knowledge of the prevailing rules and customs.

That does not mean that Verschuieren's statement should be ignored. It is based on a far more detailed knowledge than that underlying the expositions by Wirz and Geurtjens. We certainly have to accept his views, but we also have to make certain reservations. The first concerns the fact that the division of the territory of the territorial group need not necessarily be a division into four. Verschuieren himself (in theory at least) allowed for a division into six. So long as a fully detailed investigation has not been carried out, we must reckon with the possibility of a more variegated state of affairs than the one depicted in Verschuieren's article in NGS 1958. In the second place, it may very well be that big territorial groups distributed over separate villages or sub-villages such as Sangasé and Domandé, and perhaps others as well, have their phratry-territories divided among sub-groups. The fact that such a possibility must be denied for Buti/Nowari need not imply that

the same must be the case with every territorial group. Our knowledge is not sufficiently detailed to allow of wholly positive statements.

The reservations here made do not substantially detract from the value of Verschueren's exposition. To have discerned the prominent position taken up by the major genealogical groups (phratries and, occasionally, clans) in the allotment of landrights is no mean achievement; it proves that the coastal forms of organization have much in common with the pattern of territorial organization of the inland groups, at least as far as our knowledge with regard to these groups goes. On the whole that knowledge is vague. The data supplied by Wirz are not very elucidating and are of a very general nature. My personal experience in the Kumbe valley and the upper Bian area led me to conclude that, originally, these people preferred living in scattered little groups, each within its own territory, presumably a clan-territory in Verschueren's terminology. From Wirz I gather that during certain periods — the greater part of the year actually — they were more widely scattered than at others. From Wirz's expositions it must be inferred that there were central villages of a kind where, during certain times of the year, a number of groups assembled, avoiding them at other times.⁷¹ I have not been able to find out whether in these central villages there were concentrated the members of the whole territorial group or only part of them, for instance, a moiety. A case in point is cited by Verschueren, who informs us that the *Rahuk* on the upper Kumbe lived partly in Babor, partly in Koa, one moiety of the group in each village.⁷² In another example from the Kumbe valley, however, there are not two, but three groups, living widely separated, but still constituting an endogamous group, viz. the *Pim*, *Saring* and *Adga-zé*, who later were concentrated at Wayau.⁷³ That villages of some size did, indeed, exist must be concluded from Wirz's statement that on the upper Kumbe, the lower Bian, the Eli, the Buraka and among the Badé-anim on the Maro (Senayo) the young men stay in the *gotad* outside the village.⁷⁴ A *gotad* could never be an

⁷¹ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 189.

⁷² Verschueren, NGS 1958 pp. 250 f. Initially I doubted his statement because the data brought together in annex II demonstrate that in 1930/32 Koa and Babor were no longer moiety-settlements. My objections were met in Verschueren's letter I p. 7, where he points out that in 1930 a protestant mission-school was opened at Babor, which induced some people of Koa to move to Babor. In Koa both Rahuk and Asa-Rahuk were concentrated, which may have upset the moiety-character of the Koa group; cf. Letters I p. 6.

⁷³ Verschueren, Letters I p. 6.

⁷⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 183.

institution of a local clan-group, because in such a small group a boy would hardly have more than one or two partners to share his fate during the years of segregation.

To what extent the upper Bian people had central villages I cannot possibly guess. For a substantial part of the year they, too, lived in scattered little groups. Prolonged drought during the dry season is mentioned as one of the reasons for them to leave the main settlement and retire to some remote sago swamp.⁷⁵ We have no information at all concerning these main settlements. According to Wirz the settlements are not big: usually only two or four houses, but some of these are of an extraordinary size. These big houses have a Δ -shaped roof on high poles, but no walls. The sides of the roof almost reach down to the ground. Inside, the house has been partitioned by means of low screens into a great number of apartments, each accommodating a woman with her children. There are no platforms: people sleep on the ground. The men live in the smaller huts. There is no *gotad* and the young men and boys live in the men's houses. Walled houses, constructed in the same way as the coastal houses, are rare. They are used during the rainy season only.⁷⁶ The description does not allow of any inference with regard to the actual size of the group living in such a village, but Wirz's assertion that on the upper Bian *Geb-zé* and *Mahu-zé* live on opposite sides of the river (a statement too general to be taken for more than an approximation of the true state of affairs) would imply that the old-time villages were at best moiety-settlements.⁷⁷ The assumption is confirmed by the fact that it is always a moiety which acts as the feast-giver and host on the occasion of an *esam* celebration.⁷⁸

The importance of the moieties is strongly emphasized by Verschueren, who points out that Koa and Babor as moiety-settlements occupied separate territories.⁷⁹ He does not deny, however, that the moiety-territory is divided into clan-territories: on the contrary, in his essay he never ceases to uphold the rights of the clan, which should be considered as bearing title to the land.⁸⁰

These inland territories are much vaster, the groups themselves

⁷⁵ Cf. inter alia Wirz, op. cit. p. 188.

⁷⁶ For a description see Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 261 *jo*. M.A. III p. 183.

⁷⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 160.

⁷⁸ See below, p. 579.

⁷⁹ Verschueren, NGS 1958 p. 251.

⁸⁰ See in particular op. cit. p. 263: in the interior, hunts and fishing-parties are still organized by the clan which is the rightful owner.

smaller than the territorial groups along the coast. It is only logical that they should live more widely scattered throughout their territory. A division of the territory according to clans is what may be expected under such circumstances. The fact that a similar tendency apparently prevails among the coastal Marind is an indication that structurally there is an important degree of similarity between coastal and inland communities. As to housing, however, there is a difference. Although the big houses divided into apartments seem to be confined to the upper Bian area, open houses without platforms apparently were rather general inland. The photographs Wirz took of houses at Bad (middle Kumbe) and on the upper Kumbe,⁸¹ and the sketches of dwellings drawn by Vertenten in Yawimu and Awipa in the hinterland of Okaba (where the roofs are thatched with eucalyptus-bark)⁸² do not show any of the platforms which are characteristic of the interior of coastal houses. Wirz reports that on the upper Kumbe walled houses of the coastal type occur next to the open houses. These houses are said to be well-built and often to have painted walls and that is as far as the communication goes, leaving us guessing as to what they may have looked like on the inside.⁸³

Of far greater importance than the differences between coast and interior in respect of housing and settlement-patterns are the structural similarities in social organization. In both areas we meet with territorial groups composed of local clan-segments which, in each territorial group, reflect the composition of the tribe as a whole, each phratry being represented among the local clans. To this rule there is only one exception, viz. Wayau, which has no members of the phratry of *Aramemb*.⁸⁴ Although there is no certainty that — apart from cultivated areas which are the property of individuals or minor groups — the land of the territorial group is invariably divided into four, the trend to have this land partitioned among the local phratry-segments, or important sections of phratry-segments, cannot with reason be denied. It is exactly this trend which demonstrates the importance of the phratries as constitutive elements of the social organization. These phratries are the same everywhere and the tribal pattern is thus reflected in each territorial group.

Reiteration of the tribal pattern in that of the territorial group is

⁸¹ Wirz, Damonon photos nrs. 21 and 50.

⁸² Vertenten, Ann. 1917 pp. 4 and 5.

⁸³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 183.

⁸⁴ Cf. annex II.

manifest also in the latter's tendency toward group-endogamy, thus lending to the territorial group the character of a sub-tribe. Nollen was not far wrong when he used the term tribe to denote these groups.⁸⁵ The endogamy of the local group has been given very little attention by successive observers. Although the patterns of courtship and arranging a marriage obviously favour the contracting of marriages within the territorial group,⁸⁶ nobody ever bothered about the implications. Verschueren was the first to state in so many words that marriages usually were local, i.e. within the territorial group,⁸⁷ a statement he repeated more explicitly in his letters.⁸⁸ Of course there were exceptions; Wirz had already pointed out that there was inter-marriage between Sangasé and Buti, Nowari and Urumb, Bahor and Domandé etc.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, I interpreted Wirz's communications as indicating that a rule was lacking and thus missed the opportunity thoroughly to check up on the group of origin of each of the various marriage-partners at the time the complete files of the registration 1930/32 were at my disposal. When, later, I tried to remedy this oversight, I had to make do with the one volume I was able to recover, the one dealing with the territorial groups Buti/Nowari/Yéwati, Yobar/Kaiakai/Sépadim, and Sarira. Fortunately, the registrar for this area had gone about his task rather scrupulously. Where others sometimes omitted listing the village of origin of the men and women registered, he dutifully checked every item of the questionnaire, his commendable zeal probably being attributable to the fact that he was closely supervised by his superior. The register has a number of additions and a few cross-references written in the more accomplished hand of an educated man, contrasting sharply with the exercise-book characters of the registrar. The results are interesting. Out of 187 marriages in the present and in a former generation in the group Buti/Nowari/Yéwati,⁹⁰ 163 were contracted within the group, as against 6 with Urumb, 2 with Noh-otiv, 2 with Wendu, 1 with Bahor, 1 with Anasai, 1 with Kumbe, 2 with Sangasé, 7 with Yobar/Kaiakai/Sépadim and 2 with Kondo. In Yobar/Kaiakai/Sépadim I noted 148 marriages, 135 within the group, and 5 with the Buti/Nowari/Yéwati

⁸⁵ See above, pp. 43 f.

⁸⁶ See below, pp. 128 f. and 153.

⁸⁷ Verschueren, NGS 1958 p. 251.

⁸⁸ Letters I p. 6.

⁸⁹ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 165.

⁹⁰ For a more detailed description of the registration see below, pp. 71 f.

group, 1 with Kondo, 1 with Urumb, 1 with Birok and 1 with Bahor. Moreover, 4 marriages were contracted with Karoar, probably a hamlet of Sarira. For Sarira 48 marriages were registered, 47 within the group and 1 with Sēpadim. The tendency to marry within the group is obvious, as further appears from the fact that of the people who had married outside the group many were interrelated. Interesting, too, was that a few men appeared to have joined the group by matrilocal marriage or adoption.

Thus far one important problem has been left undiscussed: how did the territorial group manage without formalized authority? As a matter of fact, there was formalized authority, but it was not of the kind which could be implemented into an administrative system. According to Wirz it is the old men, the *samb-anim*, great or important men, who really are the leaders of the group. They are respected by everyone, they are the custodians of tradition and myth, the leaders in ritual and the people who decide whether the group will participate in a headhunt etc. They have a say in such simple matters as a boy's admission to the *gotad* or his becoming a *miakim*. It is the custom for the *samb-anim* collectively to attend the family feasts, sitting and watching in silence. The position, however, is not conditioned by age alone. When old age brings weakness and infirmity, a man loses his status and influence.⁹¹ Wirz's expositions tend to depict the little group exerting social control as a kind of informal body, its membership open to all old people so long as their faculties are sound. He also mentions other factors contributing to status and prestige. A medicine-man has a more influential position than other people. Personal proficiency and skill, too, may heighten a man's influence in the community.⁹² Elsewhere Wirz mentions success in gardening as an important factor in acquiring social prestige.⁹³ Nevertheless, the emphasis is on age as the decisive prerequisite for prestige and authority.

However, there are good grounds for considering this an overstatement. *Samb-anem* does not literally mean old man, but great man. To denote advanced age, other terms are used. Geurtjens writes: "Every *boan* (totem-family) has its *samb-anem*, whose authority depends on his personal prestige. The *samb-anim* settle disputes which have arisen between their subjects, and they arrange village matters.

⁹¹ Wirz, M.A. I p. 67.

⁹² Ibid. p. 68.

⁹³ Op. cit. III p. 194.

Samb-anem, in a wider sense, is also the title given to all aged men who are not yet decrepit".⁹⁴ Apparently we must differentiate between old men and leaders of family-groups. This, indeed, is the point made with great emphasis by Verschuieren, who, in his article in NGS 1958, advanced the view that in the old days Marind-anim society most certainly had its chiefs. As a matter of fact, each men's house had its chief and he noted down the names of hundreds of them who had not yet been forgotten by the present generation.⁹⁵ It was not even necessary for them to be old men; on the contrary, "everywhere informants denied that age is associated with authority. Investigations demonstrate that most of the *samb-anim* happened to be younger married men; otherwise it could never have been possible that some of them are still among the living".⁹⁶ Verschuieren's informants had yet another title for these leaders, viz. *pakas-anim*, which is used as a synonym of *samb-anim*. Apparently, they even insisted on using this term, a remarkable fact because *pakas* means boar's tusk⁹⁷ and, as such, seems to refer to headhunting. In myth the wild boar (and the pig generally) is closely associated with headhunting.⁹⁸ The boar's tusk might well be the distinctive ornament of the successful headhunter, like it is among the Jaqai,⁹⁹ whose headhunting-customs were fairly similar to those of the Marind.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, we have no information concerning the specific ornaments which the successful Marind warrior was allowed to wear. That something of the kind existed, and that that something was a boar's tusk, must be concluded from the following quotation from Verschuieren: "Only a man who, at the headhunting feast, had danced on the *luga*¹⁰¹ was a perfect *pakas-anem*, worthy enough to wear the boar's tusk and do credit to it. In other words, an important aspect of the function was that of headhunting, of being a war-chief".¹⁰²

The *pakas-anim* had other and even more important functions. In the first place, they were the leaders of their respective men's houses, then, the wardens of the clan-territory and, acting together, the

⁹⁴ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *samb*.

⁹⁵ NGS 1958 pp. 251 ff. jo. Letters I pp. 5 f., II pp. 1 f.

⁹⁶ Verschuieren, Letters I p. 6.

⁹⁷ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *pakas*; Van de Kolk and Vertenten, *Woordenboek v. varkenstand*; Verschuieren, Letters I p. 6.

⁹⁸ Cf. below, pp. 396 ff., 408.

⁹⁹ Cf. Boelaars, Mappi p. 107.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. below, pp. 700 f., 715.

¹⁰¹ See below, pp. 751 and 848 f.

¹⁰² Verschuieren, Letters II p. 2.

organizers of the ritual.¹⁰³ It follows that the group of leaders was not an informal body, its membership open to all, but the collectivity of qualified leaders of the men's houses. In the Kumbe valley and on the upper Bian they were the official bearers of the *pahui* or *bahwa*, a cult-instrument closely connected with headhunting.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, Verschueren's expositions are not fully satisfactory. He strongly insists that it is the *pakas-anem* of the relevant group who invites members of other clans to partake in a hunt or to join a fishing-party on the clan-lands.¹⁰⁵ How does that work out with the clan-territory being in fact phratry-territory and with a plurality of men's houses to each single phratry-segment of the territorial group? How can the *samb-anim* be called leaders of the *boan* (clan) by Geurtjens, what with a men's house community being only a lineage? It is possible, of course, we might even say probable, that the *pakas-anem* of a men's house does not make his decisions until after previous consultation with his colleagues of the same phratry, but that does not explain why time and again we hear that it is the *pakas-anem* (sing.) who decides and why we hardly find any reference to a meeting or consultation of *pakas-anim*. Perhaps the explanation must be found in the fact that the *pakas-anim* are not always equals in respect of prestige and authority. There were small men's houses and big men's houses; some *pakas-anim* combined the leadership of two men's houses built side by side.¹⁰⁶ A decrease in the number of inmates automatically led to a decline in the influence of the men's house within the community. Vertenten is explicit on this point¹⁰⁷ and the story of Yadjo and Amul is a case in point.¹⁰⁸ There are leading men's houses (read: lineages) who are strong and powerful enough to take the initiative to a headhunt. Once the men's house has arrived at a decision, the project is discussed in the village council.¹⁰⁹ That is the normal course when it concerns a headhunt. It is pretty certain that in other matters the system works in a similar way. There is always a leading men's house which, because of its numbers, its prowess, or the wisdom of its leader, is *primus inter pares* and we may take it for granted that it is the leader of this men's house whose word is final.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, I p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ L.c.; for the cult-instrument see below, pp. 724 ff.

¹⁰⁵ Verschueren, NGS 1958 pp. 253 f.

¹⁰⁶ Verschueren, Letters I p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Vertenten, I.L. II p. 454; Koppensnellers pp. 60 and 84.

¹⁰⁸ Below, p. 885.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 711.

Before we turn to the problem of intergroup relations, a final remark must be made concerning the term *pakas-anem*. It is amazing that the term should not have come to the fore until 1953. Initially, I thought of the possibility that the term is indicative of a revaluation by the Marind of the history of their own institutions, which are re-interpreted in the light of the introduced institution of village chiefs. On second thoughts, I think that the explanation is possibly simpler than that. The term *pakas-anem* refers to headhunting and was for this reason extremely out of tune in any conversation with the newly arrived whites and their satellites, who all wanted to stop headhunting. That does not mean that every leader of a men's house necessarily was a *pakas-anem*, i.e. — if my interpretation be correct — a man who was a distinguished headhunter. If having danced on the *luga* was an absolute condition, it is hardly possible that every leader of a men's house should have been a true *pakas-anem*. Dancing in that fashion was a rare privilege, which only a few could possibly enjoy. It is impossible to reconstruct the setting in which the term was used in the old days. More important is the fact that each men's house had its leader, and that these leaders differed in the degree of prestige and authority they enjoyed.

In conclusion, a few words must be said on intergroup contacts. The state of relative peace within Marind-anim territory, the co-ordination in the celebrations of the ritual, and the customs pertaining to headhunting and feasting, give evidence of a good deal of intervillage contact. The particulars of these forms of interaction and mutual contact will be described and discussed in the relevant sections of this book. At this stage it may suffice to say that such contacts were made possible by a system of chiefs of lineages who, because they were often elderly men, had the wisdom and the patience required to maintain peace and relatively good relations among people who highly valued prowess and warfare. To that end these leaders needed prestige, which they derived from their personal qualities such as prowess, superior wisdom, persuasive power or occult knowledge. Many of them were also medicine-men, gifted with supernatural powers.¹¹⁰

2. CLAN ORGANIZATION

In their contacts with strangers the Marind seldom used the names of their subclans. They preferred to refer to the clan-name or to the

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 886.

name of their phratry. Preferences differed from one phratry to another, the *Geb-zé* usually presenting themselves as *Geb-zé* and not as members of the coconut- or banana clan or whatever their other names might be.¹¹¹ On the other hand, those belonging to the phratry of *Aramemb* were always referred to by their clan-names as *Kai-zé*, *Ndik-end* or *Samkakai*, unless they were called by the name of a specific subclan. The members of the *Mahu-zé* phratry used the name *Mahu-zé*, which is the name of one of their clans, as is, in fact, also the case with the *Geb-zé* and *Bragai-zé*. However, in the eastern section and the Kumbe valley the *Zohé* and the closely related *Wokabu-rek*, two clans of the *Mahu-zé* phratry, used to present themselves as *Zohé*. Among the *Bragai-zé* we find a similar preference for the use of the clan-name with the *Basik-Basik*, who always present themselves as such. In the western section the *Yorm-end* (the sea clan), another *Bragai-zé* clan, prefer the use of their clan-name, but east of the Bian they identify themselves with the *Bragai-zé*, adopting this name when referring to themselves in intervillage traffic.

The rather unsystematic use of these names, some of which now have a wider and again a more restrictive sense, has a confusing effect. The credit for having brought out the main features of the Marindanim clan-system goes to Wirz. He was the first to report the presence of subclans and clans which were grouped together in exogamous phratries which he called *Totemgenossenschaften*, totem-societies, because the frameworks within which the clans form more comprehensive groups are based upon totemic and mythological relations.¹¹² Unfortunately, he made two mistakes. The first was that he gave the number of phratries as five instead of four, the *Basik-Basik* being presented as an independent phratry and not as a clan of the *Bragai-zé*. We cannot blame him for this, because, west of Sangasé, the *Basik-Basik* tend to behave in some respects like an independent phratry. More serious was another error: his division of the tribe into two unequal 'halves', the first of which was identical with the *Geb-zé* phratry, the other, non-exogamous, including the four remaining totem-societies. One informant gave the following names for these totem-societies: *Kaprim-Sami* for the phratry of *Aramemb*; *Da-Sami* (lit. sago-Sami) for the *Mahu-zé* phratry; *Goda-Sami* for the *Bragai-zé*

¹¹¹ The suffixes *zé* (or *hé* in *Zohé*) and *rek* in various clan-names both mean: descended from; the suffix *end* had best be translated by: belonging to. Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc.cit.

¹¹² Cf. Wirz, M.A. I pp. 28 ff.

(the *Basik-Basik* excluded) and *Marob-Sami* (lit. rainbow-*Sami*) for the *Basik-Basik*. Although Wirz notes that the names of these four *Sami*-groups were mentioned to him on one occasion only and must, consequently, be of small importance,¹¹³ he valued this piece of information highly enough to make it the basis of his classification of the totem-societies. As a matter of fact, he laid additional emphasis on it in his later essay on the totemic and social systems in Netherlands New Guinea.^{113a} Nor was this without reason, because all the four names refer to *Sami*, a mythical ancestor who is the counterpart of *Geb*. In one myth *Geb* and *Sami* are called brothers and the prime ancestors of the Marind.¹¹⁴ We shall never know from where Wirz's informant had these names, in particular whence he had the name *Kaprim-Sami*. The authors of the Report of the Depopulation Team point out that they never heard the name, adding that the application of the term *Sami* is usually restricted to people of the *Mahu-zé* phratry.¹¹⁵ The association of the name *Sami* with the phratry of *Aramemb* is, indeed, incomprehensible and contradictory. Later, we shall come across other evidence which confirms that here Wirz's informant must have made a slip.¹¹⁶ Yet, this poorly documented piece of information has caused a great deal of confusion.

That a misrepresentation of some sort was involved in the picture of the social organization as given by Wirz was evident to every serious student of his work. In my *Godsdienst en Samenleving I* had little difficulty in demonstrating that the clans of the phratry of *Aramemb* could not be classified alongside the *Mahu-zé* and *Bragai-zé* and that they were close to the *Geb-zé*. Yet, I could not find out the true place of the *Basik-Basik* in the system. The data suggested that certain trends toward a tripartite organization complicated the basic dualism. In this system now the *Geb-zé* and again the *Basik-Basik* seemed to occupy an intermediate position, the former by an association of the aspects of totality with those of what at the time I called the upper-world, the latter by combining a predominantly underworld character with some of the traits belonging specifically to the upperworld aspect.¹¹⁷ There is no sense in repeating the argument. New data

¹¹³ *Ibid.* p. 37 note 2.

^{113a} TBG 1931 p. 57.

¹¹⁴ See below, pp. 85 and 209.

¹¹⁵ Rep. Depop. Team p. 65 note 1.

¹¹⁶ See below, p. 325

¹¹⁷ Van Baal, *Godsdienst* pp. 116-121.

proved that the *Basik-Basik* are, in fact, a clan of the *Bragai-zé*. The discovery of the true structure of the moiety-system necessarily led to a revision of my previous views. At the time I had to confine myself to a brief outline of the main facts.¹¹⁸ As they escaped the notice of most students of New Guinea cultures I intend to give a more elaborate exposition of these facts first.

The source of the new information was a census taken in 1930 and 1931, partly even in 1932, when each individual was entered in the files, a record being kept of personal names, the name of his (her) *boan* (clan), (estimated) age, sex and noteworthy particulars, the personal names and the name of the *boan* of the spouse(s), his (her) own children and their sex, his (her) own parents with their personal names and *boan*, their villages of origin and language-group.¹¹⁹ From a scientific point of view the planning of the registration was almost perfect, adoption being the only aspect that was neglected. An anthropologist could have been the designer. However, there was no anthropologist anywhere near Merauke at the time the registration was planned. I never found out who was responsible. I do not even know who the people were who did the actual recording. It is a fair guess, however, that the assistants in charge of the patrol-stations of Okaba, Muting and, perhaps, Kumbe should be given the credit, together with another assistant stationed at Merauke. The handwriting proves that in each single area one man was assigned the actual job, and that man must have been the assistant. These assistants of the patrol-stations were mostly Ambonese, many of them with a long experience in administrative practice. We do not know how they went about the registration. The painstaking way in which they completed the forms, which were bound in five stout volumes, suggests that they discharged their duties faithfully. There is one point in favour of a registration conducted by people who have no anthropological training whatever: they are less apt to spoil the information by asking elaborate questions on marriage-rules than people who have had some previous training. Also speaking for the quality of their work is the fact that the results tally fairly well. Of course, the one will have been more scrupulous

¹¹⁸ Ibid., TBG 1939 p. 314; Wegen Ch. III, in particular p. 108.

¹¹⁹ An enquiry into the village of origin was the last but one of all the questions to be answered by each person. Presumably it was the village of origin of the person registered which had to be stated, but the census-takers related the question to his (her) parents, whose names had been asked in the question immediately preceding.

than the other, but on the whole their findings harmonize. A very favourable circumstance is the great number of marriages recorded: 6004, a number permitting of statistical comparison.

The toilsome task of analyzing the data in the files I found tucked away in a corner of my office at the time I was *controleur* of Merauke, was shouldered by my wife during the many lonely days her husband was on patrol. She translated the data into figures and she also investigated the occurrence of preferential marriage-patterns. The task was quite an exacting one, the more so because it was necessary to trace all the names of persons occurring more than once in the registers, so as to eliminate the possibility of counting them twice. As far as people originating from the same village were concerned, this was not too difficult. In the case of women coming from another village (a small minority) it is probable that a number of duplications could not be avoided. As there is no chance of this relatively small number of duplications resulting in a distorted picture, this need not bother us here.

The data have been tabulated in annexes I-III and VI. The reader will be aware that they do not cover the whole region. There was no register for the hinterland of Okaba. That of the western coastal section is incomplete. The field covered in this section included all the villages from the Bian westwards as far as Yowid. Of the villages west of Yowid we have some data concerning Elebémě, but as they are incomplete they were left out in annexes I-III. Similarly, the eastern coastal section does not include the Kondo group, which at the time of the registration was already declining rapidly.

For purposes of comparison, five different areas were distinguished: the coastal Marind east of the Bian, Sangasé (a group of two villages only, but important because here we found the phratries grouped two and two in exogamous moieties), the coastal Marind west of Sangasé as far as Yowid, the Marind of the Kumbe valley, and the Marind of the upper Bian. It soon appeared that the clan-system of the latter differs from that of the other Marind. For this reason the upper Bian people have been set apart. They have not been included in annexes II and III, nor in the last column of annex I. An analysis of the upper Bian data is given in annex VI. These upper Bian data are the only ones which have been published before. They were edited and discussed in TBG 80 (1940) pp. 568-584. Since it is unlikely that any more than a few copies of the relevant number of the journal, which appeared during the war, ever reached the western world, the data are included here. They will be reviewed in the next section.

A specific problem was offered by the registration on the Kumbe river. Most of the villages in this area were set up by the administration shortly before 1930. Small local groups were persuaded to join a common village. The result was that in some cases groups were united which do not belong together, or, conversely, groups were kept apart which together form a distinct territorial group. I owe the following information to Father Verschueren, who knows this particular area better than anybody else: in *Kaverau* there were brought together Abahim, Samimb, Kanau, and Edda (a Yéi group); in *Kari Ivu* and *Benóng* (again a Yéi group); in *Warita Bes*; in *Babor Rahuk*; in *Koa Asa-Rahuk* and some Rahuk people; in *Wayau Pim*, Saring, and Adgazé; in *Yakau Badé*; in *Bad Bad* and some people of Badé; in *Opeko Opeko*, Senam and Apar; in *Saror Saror*, Mburb and Sirpu; in *Senégi Dimarsé* and *Ahiv-zé*; in *Kaliki Gavur*.¹²⁰ It should be noted that the village of Opeko was given the name of Senam (one of the component groups) in the registers.

The clan-names the people stated to the census-takers were almost everywhere names of clans or phratries, very rarely names of subclans, with the one exception of the western coastal section, though even there clan-names predominated by far. Outside the western section the use of names of subclans occurred only in Alatep of the Sangasé group (1 case) and in Yobar in the eastern part of the eastern section (3 cases). In proportion to the total number of cases registered in these areas they are negligible. If for the moment we ignore the small number of rarely occurring names of subclans and less familiar clans, we find that the following clan-names occur in the registers: *Geb-zé*, *Kai-zé*, *Samkakai*, *Ndik-end*, *Walakwin* (on the Kumbe only), *Mahu-zé*, *Zohé* (not in Sangasé and not in the western section), *Bragai-zé* (or *Blagai-zé*),¹²¹ *Yorm-end* (or *Yolm-end*; in the registration they are mentioned in Sangasé and in the western section only), and *Basik-Basik*.

With one exception, all these names are well known from Wirz's work. The name *Walakwin* was completely new to me. The ending *kwin* is foreign to the Marind language. It means clan in the Boadzi language and as such it is sometimes used in names of upper Bian subclans. Another peculiar feature is the occurrence of l in the name; F. Verschueren brought to my attention that the Kumbe valley dialect has the r instead of the l. That the register has an l in *Walakwin* may be due to the influence of an interpreter from the l-area or some similar

¹²⁰ Verschueren, Letters I p. 6.

¹²¹ In the western dialect the r changes into an l.

accidental circumstance. The name *Walakwin* seemed to refer to the stork, *war*; *wala-* or *wara-kwin* would mean stork clan. The marriage-pattern as laid down in the tables suggests that they belong either to the *Geb-zé* or to the phratry of *Aramemb*. The fact that three cases of *Walakwin* men marrying *Ndik-end* women are recorded does not prove that they could not be a *Ndik-end* subclan. Infringements on the rule of exogamy are not wholly exceptional; moreover, no cases have been recorded of *Walakwin* women married to *Ndik-end* men.

The supposition that the *Walakwin* are a *Ndik-end* subclan is confirmed from two sides. First, by Verschueren, who wrote me that he had never heard of the name *Walakwin* (or *Warakwin*), but that he knew of a *Ndik-end* subclan called *Orakwin*, which might be identical. "In one of my field-notes I recorded that the Koa people told me that the *Orakwin* are associated with a *déma* called *Wara*, one of the *Ndik-end* clan".¹²² Secondly, confirmation of the putative association of *Walakwin* with the *Ndik-end* is found in the list of subclans tabulated by Wirz. Wirz does not mention the *Walakwin*, but when enumerating the subclans of the village of Senam, where the registration of 1931 has 10 married *Walakwin* men and no *Ndik-end* (see annex II), he reports the presence of a *Ndik-end-ha* subclan (*ha* means proper) called *Endaro-rek*.¹²³ He does not mention any other *Ndik-end* subclans under this heading, from which it must be inferred that the *Endaro-rek* are identical with the *Walakwin*. The identification is corroborated by the circumstance that *Endaro* is the name of a mythical hero well-known in upper Bian mythology,¹²⁴ where he is associated with the *Ndik-end* clan as one of the mythical introducers of kava.¹²⁵ What is more, *Endalo* or *Endaro* is identified with *Wara*.¹²⁶ The connections of the *Walakwin* with the upper Bian mythical hero *Endaro* give further evidence of the connections between the Kumbé and the upper Bian people. We could now have taken it for granted that the *Walakwin* are a *Ndik-end* group, if other evidence did not suggest that they are possibly a *Kai-zé* subclan. Verschueren writes that according to his notes there are *Endaro-rek* at Senam, Saror and Buti and that in all three villages they were reckoned among the *Kai-zé*.¹²⁷ Since only

¹²² Verschueren, Letters I p. 9; see also p. 7.

¹²³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 175.

¹²⁴ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 569.

¹²⁵ Verschueren, Letters I p. 9.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

one case of a *Walakwin* marrying a *Kai-zé* has been noted, as against three involving *Walakwin* and *Ndik-end*, an association of the *Endaro-rek* with the *Kai-zé* is by no means improbable. Fortunately, it is not very important one way or the other, as the *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end* belong to the same exogamous phratry. It is very well possible that, along the Kumbe, the position of the *Endaro-rek* is equivocal, being somewhere between the *Ndik-end* and the *Kai-zé*. The fact that, when interviewed, the people concerned did not denote themselves as either *Kai-zé* or *Ndik-end*, but as *Walakwin*, a quite unusual name, may be explained as an indication that they were conscious of the ambiguity of their place in the system of clans and for this reason preferred to refer to themselves as a group apart. For purposes of classification we had to make the decision which they avoided. As an association of the *Endaro-rek* with the *Kai-zé* is disputed by Wirz, who reckons them among the *Ndik-end*, we let mythological evidence prevail and included them among the *Ndik-end*.

Finally, a few words must be said on the clans and subclans other than such oft-recurring ones as the *Geb-zé*, the *Kai-zé*, etc. In the annotations to annex II the reader will find a complete survey of the names mentioned and the villages where they were taken down. Not all these names are names of subclans; some of them are names of clans. Most of them could easily be traced as subdivisions of one of the more comprehensive groups. Initially, there were five among them which could not be identified, viz. the *Kuyamsé* (Yobar), the *Kadel* (Kobing), the *Male-Male* (Wambi), the *Winau* (Makalin, Wambi, Hibóm, Kobing) and the *Marenlo* (Makalin). Fortunately, the two which are the more numerous, the *Winau* and the *Marenlo*, could be traced. The *Winau* are a *Geb-zé* subclan of the *Geb-zé-ha* clan; they derive their name from a former settlement near present-day Makalin.¹²⁸ The *Marenlo* presented a more difficult case. However, among my papers I found some old notes giving proof that I had consulted a native informant on the four subclans of Makalin and Wambi which I could not trace. Who my informant was I do not remember, but I suppose that he was an inmate of the jail next-door to my house, an establishment which often accommodated people too much partial to old-time customs. There were very good informants among them. He must have told me that the name *Marenlo* should correctly be pronounced *Mohenlik*, a name clearly identical with *Mohend-rek*, a subclan

¹²⁸ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 132 in the Addenda to Part II of his monograph.

mentioned in Wirz's list of clan-settlements and, in the addenda to Part II, further defined as a *Yawima-rek* subclan.¹²⁹ The *Yawima-rek* belong to the *Ndik-end*. No information could be obtained concerning the *Kadel* and the *Male-Male*, except that the latter originate from Wayun, a place which is unknown to me. Fortunately, the number of cases is insignificant, viz. two of *Kadel* men, one of a *Male-Male* man and one of a *Male-Male* woman.¹³⁰ The fifth subclan is that of the *Kuyamsé* of Yobar. Three marriages were noted, all contracted between the predeceased parents of people registered, viz. one of a *Kuyamsé* man with a *Bragai-zé* woman, and two of *Kuyamsé* women, one with a *Geb-zé*, the other with a *Mahu-zé*. The odds are that the *Kuyamsé* are a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan, as one of the women had *Napet-ivag*, Banana-woman, as a second name, an indication that she had the banana for a totem. Another indication is, perhaps, that there is a *Geb-zé* subclan called *Kuyam-rek* at Babor (upper Kumbo).¹³¹ All things considered, I thought the evidence somewhat meagre and decided to leave the *Kuyamsé* as well as the *Kadel* and *Male-Male* out of the tables of annexes I and III. In annex I the marriages of the other subclans and clans were tabulated as marriages of the larger group of which they make part.

Annex I gives a complete survey of the marriages contracted between the ten major groups figuring in the registers. The marriages have been tabulated under two different categories: one comprising all marriages, the other confined to the marriages of predeceased parents. The distinction was made in order to find out whether there are differences between the marriage-patterns of the present and of the previous generation.

It is quite obvious from the tables that, in spite of numerous exceptions to the rules of exogamy, the marriage-patterns of the various main groups show some definite preferences and avoidances. The *Geb-zé* are a group of their own, intermarrying with all other groups. The *Kai-zé*, *Samkakai*, *Ndik-end* and *Walakwin* among them also form a more or less exogamous group, definitely preferring marriage with members of any other group but their own. The same is the case

¹²⁹ Ibid., III p. 173 jo. IV p. 137

¹³⁰ One *Kadel* man married a *Yawima-rek* woman, the other a *Mahu-zé* woman (a marriage in the older generation). The *Male-Male* man married a *Basik-Basik* woman, the *Male-Male* woman a *Mahu-zé* man (both marriages in the present generation).

¹³¹ Verschueren, Letters I p. 7.

with the *Mahu-zé* and the *Zohé*. Thus far, the views held by Wirz are confirmed. Then, however, we have to consider the position of the *Bragai-zé* and *Yorm-end* in their relations with the *Basik-Basik*. That the *Bragai-zé* and *Yorm-end* belong to one exogamous group had already been stated by Wirz and is confirmed by the facts as noted down in annex I. The *Basik-Basik*, however, held by Wirz to form a phratry of their own, apparently belong to the same exogamous group, at least in the eastern section and in the Kumbe valley. In the western section there is a tendency for *Basik-Basik* men to marry almost as freely with women of the *Bragai-zé* as with women of clans belonging to other phratries. The details are set out in the analysis, given in Table 2, of the marriage-pattern of the *Basik-Basik* in the western section.

TABLE 2
MARRIAGES OF BASIK-BASIK MEN IN THE WESTERN SECTION

<i>Basik-Basik</i> men married to women of	Groups of villages			Totals
	Okaba, Méwi and Alaku	Makalin, Iwolj, Duv- miráv	Wambi, Hibóm, Kobing, Yowíd	
<i>Geb-zé</i>	2	3	19	24
<i>Kai-zé</i>	2	6	8	16
<i>Samkakai</i>	1	3	12	16
<i>Ndik-end</i>	1	1	—	2
<i>Mahu-zé</i>	2	—	15	17
<i>Bragai-zé + Yorm-end</i>	4	3	9	16
<i>Basik-Basik</i>	2	—	—	2
Total	14	16	63	93
Percentage of marriages with other clans of own phratry	29	18	14	17
Overall percentage of marriages within own phratry	43	18	14	19

These figures may be compared with those for the other sections. In Table 3 we noted the total number of marriages of *Basik-Basik* men in each section, the number of marriages with women of other clans of the own phratry and that of marriages with women of the own phratry generally.

TABLE 3
MARRIAGES OF BASIK-BASIK MEN IN OTHER SECTIONS

	East. sect.	Kumbe vall.	Sangasé
Number of marr. with other clans of own phratry	9	1	2
Number of marr. within own phratry, own clan included	10	4	2
Total number of all marriages of <i>Basik-Basik</i> men	134	58	11
Marr. with other clans of own phratry as percentage of total number of marriages	6.7	2	18
Marr. within own phratry, own clan incl., as percentage of total number of marriages	7.5	7	18

The number of cases from Sangasé being too small to warrant statistical comparison, we confine ourselves to a comparison of the figures for the western section with those of the eastern section and Kumbe valley combined. In the western section the percentages of marriages within the own phratry (the own clan respectively excluded and included) are 17 and 19, for the two other sections combined not more than 5 and 7. Those in the western section are significantly higher than the percentages in the eastern and Kumbe valley sections, which are more or less the same as those of the marriages within the own phratry in the phratry of *Aramemb* (6%) and in the *Mahu-zé* phratry (6.5%), in both cases taking all sections together (the upper Bian excepted).

I also examined the marriages contracted by *Basik-Basik* women in the western section. Here 85 marriages of *Basik-Basik* women have been recorded, 17 of which were with partners of the own phratry, 2 within the own clan and 15 with partners from other clans. The

percentage of marriages contracted within the phratry is high, viz. 20. The total number of married men of all clans in this section is 1239, that of *Basik-Basik* men 93, of *Bragai-zé* men 191 and of *Yorm-end* 114. If a *Basik-Basik* woman is free to marry any man except a *Basik-Basik*,

the odds are that $\frac{191 + 114}{1239 - 93} \times 85 = 22.6$ women will marry a *Bragai-zé* or a *Yorm-end*. Actually, only 15 did so, an indication that marriage with *Bragai-zé* and *Yorm-end* is not entirely at their own discretion. A similar calculation was made for the *Basik-Basik* men of the western section. If they had been completely free to choose, there might have been 26 marriages with *Bragai-zé* and *Yorm-end* women, whereas actually there were only 16.

Again a comparison with the eastern section and the Kumbe valley is instructive. In the eastern section chance would put the number of *Basik-Basik* men marrying a *Bragai-zé* woman (here the *Yorm-end* are included in the *Bragai-zé*) at appr. 18, given freedom of choice. Actually, there were only 9. For the women the odds are 17, as against an actual number of 9. In the Kumbe valley marriages of *Basik-Basik* men with *Bragai-zé* women are even rarer, viz. 1, whereas in case of a free choice the chance would have been 12. For women these figures are 2 and 15, resp. In conclusion we state that in the western section the actual number of marriages between members of *Basik-Basik* and other *Bragai-zé* clans amounts to two-thirds of what it might have been if selection of a partner had been free. In the eastern section this ratio is 1 to 2 and in the Kumbe valley about 1 to 9. It is evident that the *Basik-Basik* are a *Bragai-zé* clan with a tendency toward independent behaviour. It is a tendency which does not represent a recent development. One glance at annex I is sufficient to note the same trend in the marriages of the older generation. That the *Basik-Basik* do indeed consider themselves members of the *Bragai-zé* phratry is confirmed by the investigations of the Depopulation Team and the observations made by Verschueren in NGS II (1958).¹³² The affirmation that the *Basik-Basik* really are a *Bragai-zé* clan is all the more important, because a closer scrutiny of the figures collected in annex I reveals yet another peculiarity, viz. a marked disinclination among *Basik-Basik* men to marry *Ndik-end* women. In the whole area there were only 18 marriages with *Ndik-end* women, whereas the calculus is 27. Here again the western section leads with 3 marriages instead of 6. There

¹³² Rep. Depop. Team p. 66; Verschueren, NGS 1958 pp. 250 and 255.

is every reason to ascribe this deviation to chance. There is not the slightest indication of a conscious disinclination to marriages between *Basik-Basik* and *Ndik-end*. Cf., however, p. 947.

The results of the grouping of the clans in phratries have been summarized in annex III. They point up the surprising fact that the four phratries are more or less equal in numbers, with, resp., 1196, 1119, 1127 and 1078 men recorded as married. The disparity between the two moieties is only slight: that of the *Geb-zé* and the phratry of *Aramemb* numbering 2315 married men, the moiety of *Mahu-zé* and *Bragai-zé* 2205. If we add up the numbers of living men as tabulated in annex II, the totals for each of the four phratries are, resp., 523, 450, 497 and 442, and for the two moieties resp. 973 and 939, the latter difference being almost insignificant.

The great surprise yielded by the survey was the occurrence of fairly exogamous moieties in Sangasé, where the *Geb-zé* belong to one moiety with the phratry of *Aramemb*, and the *Mahu-zé* and *Bragai-zé* phratries to the other. A remarkable tendency toward a similar pattern is found in the Kumbe valley in the moiety of the *Geb-zé* plus the phratry of *Aramemb*. In the other moiety, however, no tendency toward moiety-exogamy can be observed. The relative strengths of the two moieties in this area offer an easy explanation. The moiety of the *Geb-zé* c.s. numbers 456 married men in all, as against the other, 665. For the living men (annex II) the corresponding numbers are 184 and 225. That among the *Geb-zé* and the clans belonging to the phratry of *Aramemb* the rule of moiety-exogamy is fairly well observed is obvious from the fact that among them the number of marriages contracted with members of the other phratry of the same moiety is far below the number which might have been expected if there had been no marriage-prohibition between them. *Geb-zé* men actually married women of the phratry of *Aramemb* in 11 cases, whereas 45 is the number to be expected if marriage had been a matter of completely free choice. For men of the phratry of *Aramemb* the number is 15 actually, as against a calculated 54 in the absence of any restriction.

A similar (partial) tendency toward moiety-exogamy does not occur along the coast. Curiously enough, the Depopulation Team emphatically stresses the occurrence of moiety-exogamy. In substantiation of their viewpoint they refer to the fact that 64 % of all marriages recorded by them are contracted with a partner of the other moiety.¹³³ The argument

¹³³ Rep. Depop. Team pp. 68 f, 100 ff.

is repeated by Verschueren.¹³⁴ However, the facts quoted demonstrate exactly the opposite. If phratries are exogamous, and moiety-exogamy is absent, every man has a choice from among women of three phratries, two of which belong to the other moiety. If the phratries are more or less equal in numbers (as they are), the chance will be that 66 % of the marriages are contracted with women of the other moiety, which is almost exactly what happens.

Once having arrived at their rash conclusion, the Team unfortunately did not enter into a critical investigation of the assertion of the older men that observance of moiety-exogamy was the old rule, a contention not borne out by fact. The marriage-pattern of the older generation does not betray any more respect for moiety-exogamy than that of the younger generation. How far has moiety-consciousness been suggested and how far is it really alive? Is it the result of native reinterpretation of the factual circumstance that two-thirds of all marriages are contracted with members of the other moiety? We have to content ourselves with the fact that informants explicitly confirmed that moiety-exogamy is the old rule. We may find comfort in considering the benefit anthropological theory derives from this fine demonstration of the ambiguity that a division into four exogamous groups can with equal right be explained as both the cause and the effect of moiety-exogamy. If, in this particular case, we accept moiety-exogamy as the older institution, it is because moiety-exogamy occurs among many tribes from the Digul eastward as far as the Gulf of Papua.

Another argument in favour of accepting moiety-exogamy as the older institution is its prominent place in the societies of the Marind in the interior. It is not confined to the Marind of the Kumbe valley. In the next section we intend to demonstrate its occurrence among the upper Bian Marind. Furthermore, there are definite indications that the institution prevails among the natives of the hinterland of Okaba. Wirz reported that the Dahuk-zé on the upper Buraka are divided into *Ndik-end* and *Zohé*, settled on opposite sides of the river.¹³⁵ Verschueren writes that at Okaba he was told that moiety-exogamy prevails in the hinterland, but that he (and the Depopulation Team of which he was a member) had had no opportunity to verify this.¹³⁶ The occurrence of moiety-exogamy in this district, linguistically

¹³⁴ Verschueren, NGS 1958 p. 250.

¹³⁵ Wirz, M.A. III p. 160.

¹³⁶ Verschueren, Letters I p. 10.

and religiously so closely associated with Sangasé, seems, indeed, almost a matter of course.

The most important argument for considering moiety-exogamy as a basic feature of social structure is provided by mythology. In chapter IX we shall have occasion to demonstrate that the marriage-relations between the various phratries (and moieties) are reflected in the marriages of their *déma*.¹³⁷ Further down in this section we shall return to this point, that is, when reviewing the more general features of the Marind-anim clan-system, such as, among other things, the absence of names by which to denote the two moieties.

Before we turn to a discussion of the composition of the various phratries, we must pay attention to the fairly large number of marriages contracted within the own phratry. Out of 4520 marriages recorded in annex III, 247, or 5.46 %, are marriages within the own phratry; 143 of these marriages are marriages between people of the older generation, i.e. marriages of people whose names have been entered as parents of the living people registered. The total number of these marriages in the older generation is 2608, the percentage of marriages within the own phratry being 5.48, almost exactly on a par with that for all marriages. At the time of the registration the marriage-pattern was still exactly the same as 30 or 40 years before. Marrying in the own phratry is not a new development arising from foreign contact, but occurred to the same degree before European contact had been established.

Many of these marriages within the own phratry were contracted between people of different clans or subclans. In annex III the numbers of these marriages have been noted in brackets. Of a total of 247 marriages within the own phratry, 154, or 62 %, are known to have been contracted between partners of different clans or subclans. Undoubtedly there are more such cases. Among the *Geb-sé* informants hardly ever mentioned their specific clan, and outside the western section subclans were very seldom registered. Of all marriages in the own phratry at least 90 % must have been marriages with a member of another clan or subclan (both are called *boan* by the Marind). If that be accepted, the number of marriages with a full clanmate cannot have exceeded 24, or 0.5 % of the total of all marriages. It is possible that it was even less. The incidence of these marriages is highest in the Kumbe valley

¹³⁷ Below, pp. 427 f.

(8.2 %), where the moiety-system is thrown out of balance by disparity in numbers, an indication that the occurrence of such marriages is promoted by local disproportions in the numbers of available marriage-candidates, an explanation which does not exclude occasional personal motivations for violating the rule. I may add here the comment Father Verschueren gave on this pattern: "I know, indeed, of a few cases of marriages between people belonging to different subclans of the same clan. In other cases the people concerned were not really clanmates, because one of them was an adopted child who, by birth, belonged to another clan. I came across at least two of such cases at Wayau. Marriages within the own clan are still strictly forbidden and personally I know of one case only in which husband and wife are members of the same clan and subclan. In this case the man was from the village of Kaibursé, the woman from Kumbe",¹³⁸ The comment is interesting, in particular where the author refers to adoption. Adoption and sister-exchange — which is customary — are interrelated, as adoption is used as a means of effecting sister-exchange. Enigmatic, however, is the use of the word clan. In Verschueren's article in NGS 1958 the term clan is often used in the sense of phratry. Does he mean that phratry-exogamy is still strictly adhered to? Probably not. The Report of the Depopulation Team informs us as follows: "In present-day practice the one principle of exogamy that is really obeyed is the principle of clan-exogamy. Often the older people extend the rule to a group comprising different clans, but younger people, seeing their marriage-opportunities limited, will object".¹³⁹ Later correspondence with Verschueren revealed that in spite of a growing tendency, notably in the phratry of *Aramemb*, to ignore phratry-exogamy, many still adhere to the old pattern.¹⁴⁰

The Marind-anim clan-system is a highly complicated whole. A survey of phratries, clans, subclans and sub-subclans, together with their totems and *déma*, has been given in annex IV a-d. The materials for its compilation were drawn mainly from Wirz and the Report of the Depopulation Team. It is interesting to note that the latter arrived at the same conclusion with regard to the clan-system and the composition of the two moieties as I did from the registration 1930/32. Their work not only brings a very welcome confirmation of our

¹³⁸ Verschueren, Letters I p. 8.

¹³⁹ Rep. Depop. Team p. 102.

¹⁴⁰ Verschueren, Letters I p. 10.

analysis, but has many new details which make a valuable contribution to our knowledge. A discussion of the system has to deal with the following items: the moieties, the differences and similarities in composition of the phratries, the various kinds of subclans, and, finally, the composition of the whole.

The most remarkable feature of the moieties is that there is neither a word for moiety nor a proper name to denote either of them. That there are moieties is an undeniable fact. People are aware of it, as is well borne out by Verschueren's recent experience when he had to collect *wati* because he had to perform the *Diwazib*-role in a Kumbe valley pig feast. He had to rely on the assistance of people belonging to the moiety opposite to the feast-givers'.¹⁴¹ It should be noted that this was in the Kumbe valley, where the moiety-division still plays a part in marriage regulations, but it is not at all certain that the coastal communities, Sangasé and Alatep excepted, are equally moiety-conscious. It is true that the Depopulation Team are rather explicit on this point, but the arguments forwarded are anything but strong. We have already refuted one of them.¹⁴² Another argument advanced is the native statement that for marriage it is necessary 'to cross the road' (an expression used in many places along the coast, from Buti to Dokib, and in the Kumbe valley) or 'to change canoes' (used in Domandé, Sangasé, Okaba and Senégi).¹⁴³ All that can be said of these expressions is that they fit in with a system of moiety-exogamy. It certainly would not be a proof of the prevalence of the institution, had not Verschueren elucidated the point in his letters: the two expressions were cited by the Team's informants in explanation of the pretended moiety-exogamy.¹⁴⁴ A more important argument is what Verschueren further wrote on this matter: "As far as I remember, it never was our intention to argue that moiety-exogamy was still actually functioning, but to convey that, according to all informants, it had prevailed in the old days. In several villages they first explained to us the pattern as it should be, and then proceeded to set out how it had become in practice. Everywhere reasons were given why the old pattern had changed. Everywhere the original moiety dualism was based on mythology. Later, so it was said, totem-affinity became more important, even to the extent that in Urumb the *Basik-Basik* were associated with

¹⁴¹ See below, pp. 841 f.

¹⁴² See above, pp. 80 f.

¹⁴³ Rep. Depop. Team p. 68.

¹⁴⁴ Verschueren, Letters I p. 10.

the clans of the phratry of *Aramemb* because they all are hairy. However, everywhere practical difficulties were cited as the main arguments for ignoring the rule of moiety-exogamy".¹⁴⁵ I give the quotation in full because three points are so clearly made in it: first, that the people of Urumb need not be as heterodox as the pretended association of the *Basik-Basik* with the phratry of *Aramemb* would suggest, because Urumb has no *Basik-Basik* among its inhabitants; second, that there is a tradition prescribing moieties and moiety-exogamy which is still remembered but has never been effectuated in living memory; finally, that the matter of the moieties is primarily one of mythology.

It is interesting to note that the mythological evidence regarding moiety-exogamy is of a similarly elusive, more or less implicit nature as are the moieties themselves, which have neither names nor terms connected with them. A myth noted down by Wirz informs us that at the beginning of all things there were two *déma*, *Dinadin* the Sky, and *Nubog* the Earth. They are the parents of *Geb* and *Sami*, who may be looked upon as the two forefathers of the Marind.¹⁴⁶ Wirz thought that the myth was known only to a few, as he heard the story only once, but in the Report of the Depopulation Team it is stated that Verschueren was told the same story in 22 different places, both along the coast and inland.¹⁴⁷ In addition, the Report also gives a version of the myth of origin of man in which *Geb* and *Sami* again play a part. This version originates from the Kumbe valley. The *déma* celebrated a great feast at Sangasé and then by canoe, travelling underground, they went eastward to Kondo. A variant reading also noted down in the Kumbe valley has it that there were two canoes, with *Geb* in the one and *Sami* in the other. In a creek near Kondo the first humans were floating on the water. They had the shape of lumps of loam. One group were *Geb-zé*, the other *Sami*. They were picked up by a stork *déma* and *Aramemb* made fire and gave them a really human shape. Then the *déma* arrived and took the human beings aboard their canoes, *Geb* and *Aramemb* taking the *Geb-zé* and those of the phratry of *Aramemb*, *Mahu* (*Sami*) and *Bragai* taking charge of the *Sami* people.¹⁴⁸

The myth is circulated in a great many different versions. We shall take the matter up again in a later chapter.¹⁴⁹ For the moment we are

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁶ Wirz, M.A. II p. 28.

¹⁴⁷ Rep. Depop. Team p. 67 note 1.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 67, 68.

¹⁴⁹ See below, pp. 209 ff.

clan to which they belong. Apparently they are considered as being more or less apart.

The bond holding the clans of the phratry together is weakest in the phratry of *Aramemb*. There is one mythical hero who plays a predominant part in the mythology of these clans, viz. *Aramemb*, but the members of the phratry do not consider themselves to be his descendants. "All informants agree that *Aramemb* has no descendants who grew up to become human beings; on the contrary, he only produced, in all sorts of miraculous ways, the *déma* who are the ancestors of the people, animals and plants akin to *Aramemb*. Therefore there are no *Aramemb-rek*".¹⁵⁶ Consequently, the members of this phratry always call themselves by their different clan-names: *Kai-zé*, *Ndik-end* and *Samkakai*. Nevertheless, the Report of the Depopulation Team introduced the term *Aramemb-rek* as a name for the phratry.¹⁵⁷ F. Verschueren, on being confronted with the inconsistency, kindly submitted the following information: "informants at Kuprik, Saror and Bad: Samani, Saham-imu, Pandri, Kwamai, Yamai and Imbai, used the term *Aramemb-end* and, as I needed a term to denote the whole group, I inadvertently called them *Aramemb-rek*. That term is not used anywhere. *Aramemb-end*, however, means the same as your term, the clans of *Aramemb*".¹⁵⁸ That settles the question. The term *Aramemb-rek* is a misnomer and should be read *Aramemb-end*, a term rarely used. We therefore prefer to employ the elaborated term 'phratry of *Aramemb*'.

In the absence of a common name it is difficult to see the three clans as really constituting one *boan*, except in such areas where the term *Aramemb-end* is in use. Nevertheless, the possibility that they consider themselves as really one *boan* should not be ruled out. I asked Verschueren whether a *Kai-zé* man would call a *Ndik-end* his *namek* (real or classificatory brother), to which he replied: "That depends. Where the two clans are considered to belong to one definitely exogamous group they will call each other *namek*, as, for example, here at Wendu [on the coast]. Elsewhere, especially where members of the two clans intermarry, this will, of course, never happen".¹⁵⁹ As intermarriages are infrequent, at least before 1930,¹⁶⁰ the closeness of the relationship

¹⁵⁶ Wirz, M.A. II p. 98.

¹⁵⁷ Rep. Depop. Team p. 65.

¹⁵⁸ Verschueren, Letters I p. 10.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 12.

¹⁶⁰ See above, p. 78 and annex I.

has been satisfactorily established. In another respect, however, the three clans seem to be further apart than is usually the case with the clans of other phratries. In his article on landrights Verschueren mentions the three as clans which always have their own clan-territory, a degree of independence denied to, for example, the *Basik-Basik*, who share their territory with the other *Bragai-zé* clans.¹⁶¹

Among the three clans the *Ndik-end* are conspicuous because there are, in fact, two stork clans, one the *Ndik-end-ha* or *Ndik-end* proper with the white stork, the other, the *Yawima-rek*, with the black one as their totems. Mythologically they have no affinities with each other and it is mainly the close resemblance of their totems which explains their association. The role of *Aramemb* in the mythology of the two clans is a relatively modest one. Here we meet with another case of association, not on genealogical or mythological grounds, but on account of the resemblance of the totems. We find similar tendencies in the phratry as a whole. A genealogical relationship exists only between cassowary and stork. The wallaby has a different origin. It seems that, consequently, the *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end* feel more closely related to each other than to the *Samkakai*. Older observers, such as Seyne Kok and Viegen, tend to identify *Ndik-end* and *Kai-zé*.¹⁶² Although to-day the *Samkakai* seem to be the first to disobey the rule of phratry-exogamy, as might be expected from the foregoing, we shall, in a later chapter, come across evidence pointing to a closer relationship between *Kai-zé* and *Samkakai* than between the *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end*.¹⁶³

The *Mahu-zé* phratry is, outwardly, a more coherent group. Members of all the clans of the group may call themselves *Mahu-zé*, even though some of them may prefer to refer to themselves as *Zohé*. Genealogically, however, the four clans: the *Diwa-rek* or penis clan, the *Mahu-zé* or dog clan, the *Wokabu-rek* or sago clan and the *Zohé* or loam clan, have no relations with each other. All connections are based on totem-relationships, as will be demonstrated in the chapter dealing with their

¹⁶¹ NGS 1958 p. 259. See also above, pp. 59 f. I think that I act in compliance with Verschueren's wishes when I point out that an annoying error has crept into the text of his article just quoted, an error which he will surely want to have corrected. He wrote that the *Samkakai* belong to the same moiety as the *Mahu-zé* and *Bragai-zé*, which, of course, is patently untrue as the *Samkakai* make one phratry with the *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end* (Letters I pp. 9 f.).

¹⁶² Cf. J. Seyne Kok, VBG 56 (1907) Part IV, p. 16; Viegen, TAG 1912 pp. 145 and 151.

¹⁶³ Verschueren, Letters I p. 10; below pp. 307 f.

mythology. These relations are strong enough to give rise to confusion with regard to the place of the component parts in the phratry, as is notably the case with the *Zohé*. Not only did they in the western section present themselves as *Mahu-zé* at the time of the registration,¹⁶⁴ but the Depopulation Team classified the *Zohé* as a subclan of the *Aru-rek* or *Aru-nd*, a widely-spread subclan of the *Zohé* according to Wirz.¹⁶⁵ The divergent meanings of the term *Mahu-zé* are amply illustrated in annex IVc. Within the *Mahu-zé* phratry there is a *Mahu-zé* clan, within the *Mahu-zé* clan a *Mahu-zé-ha* subclan with many sub-subclans, next to two other subclans: the *Doreh-rek* and the *Amari-* or *Ori-rek*, the latter having only very tenuous connections with the *Mahu-zé*.

A comparable lack of genealogical relationships is found among the clans of the *Bragai-zé* phratry. Moreover, here the mythological and totemic links binding the clans are weaker, even to the extent that we never would have realized that the three main clans belong together if we had not known from other sources. The fourth clan, the *kidub-boan*, has a certain affinity with the *Basik-Basik*. As a clan the group is small and hardly identifiable. The phratry as a whole is a fairly loose combination of clans. We already pointed out that the *Basik-Basik* tend to break away from the group. Consequently, the *Bragai-zé* have the highest percentage of marriages within the phratry (7.5%). Nevertheless, the group acts, at least locally, as a fairly close unit where landed property is involved.¹⁶⁶

In conclusion, we state that the solidarity of the clans of one phratry is, ultimately, less a matter of genealogical relations than of mythologically and totemically determined connections based on notions of togetherness, the nature of which has to be examined in the chapters dealing with mythology. The outcome of our enquiry is intriguing, because we are inclined to assume that, in the situation of the Marind, genealogical motivations take priority. The fact that, with only one exception, all four phratries are represented in every territorial group, suggests a strict and stable pattern of organization, requiring for its permanence the fiction of close genealogical relationships. On closer inspection, however, we feel that the expression "all four phratries represented in every territorial group" is slightly misleading, because this notion does not prevail in the Marind's own conceptualization of

¹⁶⁴ Wirz reports that there are *Zohé* living at Sangasé and Makalin; cf. M.A. III pp. 172 f; they must have been registered as *Mahu-zé*.

¹⁶⁵ Rep. Depop. Team p. 67; Wirz, M.A. II p. 166.

¹⁶⁶ See above, pp. 60 and 89.

his territorial group. The phratries are not presented as clearly discernible units. Those of the phratry of *Aramemb* are not primarily *Aramemb-end*, but *Kai-zé*, *Ndik-end* or *Samkakai*. They even have their own clan-territories. In actual practice a territorial group is not composed of phratries; from annex II we learn that in a group such as *Kaibursé* there are *Geb-zé*, *Kai-zé*, *Samkakai*, a few *Mahu-zé*, *Basik-Basik* and one *Bragai-zé*; in *Urumb* *Geb-zé*, *Kai-zé*, *Mahu-zé*, *Zohé* and *Bragai-zé*. In the former, *Ndik-end* and *Zohé* are lacking, and the *Bragai-zé* are represented by the *Basik-Basik*, who are the dominating clan; in the latter we have neither *Ndik-end* nor *Samkakai* nor *Basik-Basik*. That implies that the Marind man sees the *Kaibursé* society as composed of *Geb-zé*, *Kai-zé*, *Samkakai*, *Basik-Basik* and a few *Mahu-zé*, *Urumb* as consisting of *Geb-zé*, *Kai-zé*, *Mahu-zé*, *Zohé* and *Bragai-zé*, so in both cases there are not four, but five different groups. The fact that there are in reality only four groups is implicit; it does not find expression when enumerating the groups and it is not reflected in the settlement-pattern. In how far it is reflected in the pattern of clan-territories is not clear.

Even more confusing is the pattern presented by the subclans. Every individual, without exception, is a member of one subclan or other. Verschueren writes: "According to the information collected in 1953 [by the Depopulation Team] there are no people who do not belong to a subclan. The name of the subclan or its *déma* is bestowed on the canoe and/or the drum "lest people forget their subclan". It seems that there has always been some tendency for these names to drop out of memory. The present decrease in the numbers of canoes and drums has obscured the notion of subclan-membership even up to the extent that many young people can no longer find their way in the system".¹⁶⁷

We note that the names of the subclan and the *déma* are given to canoes and drums, not to men's houses. The men's house community is not necessarily a subclan,¹⁶⁸ and we must not identify the two, although many subclans are purely local groups. "They all are related with one *déma* or another and usually also with a totem".¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, a number of subclans are so widely spread that they might well be called clans. Typical examples are the *Kayar-rek* (*Geb-*

¹⁶⁷ Verschueren, Letters I p. 8 (italics Verschueren's).

¹⁶⁸ See above, pp. 53 f. and Verschueren, Letters I p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ Verschueren, I.c.

zé-ha), *Honi-rek* (*Kai-zé*), *Mad-rek* (*Samkakai*), *Aru-rek* (*Zohé*) and such independent clan-parts as the *Yawima-rek* of the *Ndik-end* and the *Sapi-zé* of the *Basik-Basik*. Our information with regard to the location of the various subclans is very incomplete. Wirz gives a long list in Part III of his work (pp. 170-176), but it does not even cover half the number of subclans the names of which have been registered. On the basis of Wirz's list I drew up a new one in annex V, which has been supplemented with such data as were available, mostly borrowed from Wirz also. It is evident that our information, involving approximately one-half of the various territorial groups, is not complete even as far as the registered half is concerned, and that often people did not really mention their subclan (sub-subclan), but their clan (subclan) instead. People evidently are reluctant to mention the name of their subclan. From the fact that a number of subclans are represented in various villages, whereas a great many others that are mentioned elsewhere could not be located at all, we may conclude that a fair number of these non-located subclans must be purely local. There are so many of them that, by reason of the number alone, we must exclude the possibility that they are each of them represented in more than one village.

The list gives a fair impression of the great variegation in distribution and numbers of the various subclans. Some of them, such as the *Aru-rek* and the *Sapi-zé*, present additional problems. Next to the *Zohé Aru-rek* there is also an *Aru-rek* group which Wirz identifies with the *Ndik-end*, and a *Sapi-zé* group which he associates not with the *Basik-Basik* but with the *Kai-zé*. The *Aru-rek* case might possibly be a lapse, but that of the *Sapi-zé* is not, because we find *Sapi-zé* associated with the *Kai-zé* in the *mayo-rites* as described by Heldring. He witnessed the rites as they were celebrated in the area east of the Maro, probably in Buti, where the *Sapi-zé* are a *Kai-zé* subclan. That the *Sapi-zé* were associated with two different groups may be the result of local differences in mythological affinities among groups bearing the same name but living widely apart. There are more of these cases. There is a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan called *Kahor-rek* by Wirz and localized at Makalin. In the local dialect *Kahor* is pronounced *Kahol*. The registers have *Kahol* in Makalin, Iwolj, Duv-miráv and Hibóm, but these *Kahol* people patently belonged to the *Bragai-zé* phratry, as is amply confirmed by their connubium relations.

Other subclans occupying a more or less obscure position in the clan-system are the *Ori-rek* or *Amari-rek*, a *Mahu-zé* subclan with a

specific relationship with the *Kai-zé*,¹⁷⁰ and the rattan *boan*, which is sometimes associated with the *Kai-zé*, and again with the *Sambakai* or is even considered to be a clan of its own.¹⁷¹

The equivocal position of the subclans just mentioned gives evidence that the relations of the subclans with the clans are not necessarily of a genealogical nature. In some cases, of course, they are: thus, for example, the sub-subclans of the *Mahu-zé-ha*, who call themselves after *Mahu's* dogs, or the *Hong-rek* subclan of the *Geb-zé-ha*, who trace their descent from *Geb's* wife *Hong-sav*. Many other subclans of the *Geb-zé-ha*, however, cannot boast of traditions confirming a clear genealogical relation with the clan ancestor.¹⁷² The same may be said of the *Doreh-rek*, a *Mahu-zé-ha* subclan.¹⁷³ Although some subclans may have originated as simple lineages, alias men's house communities, we cannot possibly explain the subclans as the products of continued fissions. Nor does a hypothesis of this kind find support in the demographic conditions, because continued fission presupposes an increasing population, a condition which is not fulfilled among the Marind.¹⁷⁴

A last point to which attention must be paid in this context concerns the reluctance to mention the name of one's subclan. Even when urged to mention the name of their subclan, people often pretended ignorance of any further division of the clan into subclans. Such at least was my personal experience. It may have been a defensive reaction to the inquisitiveness of an administrative officer who on more than one occasion had proved himself uncomfortably well informed, or it may simply be because I did not go far enough into the matter, but all things considered, I believe there is more to it than that. As it is, Verschueren's statement that the subclan's name is given to the canoe and to the drum points in another direction. Among the Marind names have two contrasting functions: one in interpersonal communication and one in ritual. Names of the first category are common knowledge, those of the second are kept secret. There is some reason to suppose that the names of the subclans tend to fall into the latter category; it is fairly probable that canoe and drum are objects of magical in-

¹⁷⁰ See below, p. 332.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 232 ff., 236 f.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 326 ff.

¹⁷⁴ See above, pp. 26-32.

cantations in which their names play a part.¹⁷⁵ A comparable case is that of the *Baringau-rek*, a *Geb-zé* subclan, bearing the secret name of the coconut déma.^{175a} From whatever angle we approach the problem, one thing is certain: in intervillage traffic the Marind preferred to use their clan-names, and more specifically their phratry-names, rather than the names of their subclans. That implies that the problem we have to solve is not one of why the Marind did not use their subclan-names, but concerns the question why some of them nevertheless gave the names of their subclans when they were registered. Here, however, we have come to a point which must be considered in the context of the clan-system as a whole.

Nine of the ten clan-names most frequently stated during the registration are names which everybody knows. Three of them are also phratry-names, but there is only one of these three, *Geb-zé*, which is generally used as an identification by all phratry-members. Among the *Bragai-zé* there are two clans which, the one regionally and the other generally, prefer their own names to the phratry-name, and among the *Mahu-zé* one, sometimes two, of the clans prefer the name of *Zohé*. The nine names in common use do not elucidate, but, on the contrary, obscure the actual structure of the system. Obviously, the Marind is not interested in the system of the tribe as a whole, but in local structures, which may vary from place to place, though they always remain within the framework of the quadripartition outlined in the preceding pages. We found that the composition of the phratries and clans is based less on genealogical relations than on considerations of a mythological and mystical nature. The names which are common property are neither fish nor fowl, sometimes representing a phratry, at other times a clan or a group of clans. We might characterize these nine names as 'big names', denoting some common bond.

There is a sound reason for putting it this way, because the 'big names' function primarily in intervillage traffic, serving as means of identification and classification of individuals belonging to different communities. They are even more than that. These big names are used

¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately we have no specific information on this point. We do know, however, that the inauguration of a new canoe is a ritual occasion. See below, p. 827. The important role religious formulas play in Marind-amin life makes it all the more probable that the Marind had a specific reason for being reticent when asked to give their subclan-names.

^{175a} See below, pp. 250, 263 and 338.

far beyond the borders of Marind-anim territory. We noted already that the application given to them by the upper Bian people does not really cover their own social system. We shall demonstrate the deviations in the next section. But it was not only the upper Bian people who borrowed these names. The Yéi-anim and the Kanum-anim did the same, at least in their contacts with strangers. When I visited the middle Fly region and Frederik Hendrik Island the local people time and again used these names by way of introduction. All the neighbours of the Marind go out of their way to adapt their clan-systems, associating them with the big names of the Marind. The nine names constitute an expanding system of nomenclature.

As such, the system has a definite function in intervillage traffic. Verschueren writes: "Among the Marind the *boan* is everywhere a haven of refuge. Wherever a visitor may come from, a *boan*-mate will always be made welcome. When he has been made to squat down, hardly a word being spoken, he is offered betel and sirih-leaves. If he is thirsty, either a bamboo tube filled with water or a young coconut is handed to him. . . . Conversation does not start until *wati* has been brought. If the guest is an elderly man, the *wati* is first chewed for him. When the *wati* has been drunk, they have a meal. The guest is accommodated in the house and later he is taken to the gardens or invited to join a hunting-party. If he stays for any longer time it is almost certain that he will be invited to plant a coconut in the clan-territory of his *boan*-mates. At his departure he is given *wati* to take along with him and, if possible, a meal as well. . . . Even now the Marind feels sure that all people can have a place in his system. Through the years I have been questioned time and again as to what my *amai* (grandfather, totem) actually is".¹⁷⁶

Intervillage traffic played an important part in Marind-anim life. Vertenten's article on Marind-anim headhunting gives definite proof that people from as far away as the western section came to the east to join the villagers in that section in their headhunting raids into the Western Division of Papua.¹⁷⁷ Headhunting raids were festive undertakings attracting participants from far away.¹⁷⁸ Wirz makes mention of special relations, including marriage-relations, between widely separated villages such as Buti and Sangasé, Bahor and Domandé,

¹⁷⁶ Verschueren, Letters I p. 12.

¹⁷⁷ Vertenten, BKI 1923 pp. 45-73.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 41: Men from Sangasé and Kaibursé went as far as the Fly river.

Okaba and Iwolj, and Wambi and Dokib.¹⁷⁹ He also describes a pig feast at which the people of Bahor and Wendu were the guests of those of Domandé, a village some 50 km further to the west.¹⁸⁰ The existence of frequent intervillage traffic is conclusively proved by the co-ordination apparent in the celebration of the *mayo*-ritual, the relations between *imo* and *mayo*, the co-operation in headhunts and the celebration of the great feasts.¹⁸¹ The ceremonial life of the Marind reflects a remarkable degree of integration and co-ordination, presupposing frequent intervillage relations.

In the next section it will be pointed out that clan-systems promoting the purposes of intervillage relations are by no means rare in New Guinea, the Namau river-clans and the *aualar*-clans of the Elema providing typical examples. There is every reason to reconsider the Marind-anim clan-system from the point of view of actual reality: an expanding system which is in process of remoulding the social system of the upper Bian people and which exerts its influence upon all the surrounding tribes, everywhere inducing peoples to adapt their clan-systems to that of the Marind-anim by fitting their clans into one of the categories represented by the nine big names. If we see things in this light, we can do without the hypothesis that the system reflects the original pattern of the Marind-anim as it was at the time they were still a relatively small community out of which, through a natural increase in population, a people strong in numbers developed. The hypothesis is improbable anyway, but it accords with our most cherished notions of growth and development. Actually, there is plenty of reason to consider the system as the outcome of continuous intervillage traffic and co-operation in feasts and rituals between linguistically closely related communities, all based on a moiety-pattern and, perhaps, having a tendency toward quadripartition in common. If that is accepted, the more curious traits of the system become understandable: it is a matter of course, then, for the solidarity of the phratry to be based upon mythology and totemic relations and resemblances rather than on genealogical relations. It need not baffle us any more that, locally, we are not confronted with the four phratries as such, but always with parts of phratries and invariably to such numbers that all four phratries

¹⁷⁹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 165. His explanation of these relations as originating from asylum given to sorcerers may be passed over. Cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 24 note 23.

¹⁸⁰ Wirz, op. cit. IV p. 39.

¹⁸¹ Below, pp. 498 f., 667 f., 712, 720 f., 847 ff.

are represented. Neither is it amazing that the system as a whole should be characterized by such inconsistencies as subclans which may be ranged under either of two different clans, or the absence of terms for clans of different orders of magnitude. Such terms could diminish the capacity of the system to accommodate every kind of group. It also explains that there are subclans which are so widely spread that they might well be termed clans. They may be the result of previous efforts at integrating the clan-systems of different communities. The tendency to assimilate local clan-systems into a kind of overall system is so general that it cannot be new. It must be a very old trend.

In an expanding system with a nomenclature primarily serving the ends of intervillage traffic there is little or no need for names to denote moieties. Moieties are too big, too comprehensive to be conceived as parties performing certain functions in ritual or social intercourse. It is always a smaller group which is active, which has certain duties to fulfil, certain parts to act. The smaller group may be a phratry or a clan and will be denoted by one of the bigger names, a name which adequately defines its position in the whole. The moiety is implicit; everyone is aware of its function and constitution and nobody feels the need for a name because it is not the moiety which acts but the smaller group, the group bearing a 'big name', and which is numerous enough to perform such functions as it is expected to and small enough to function smoothly where the giving or the receiving of hospitality is concerned.

The question arises whether the greater readiness of the Marind of the western coastal section to divulge the names of their subclans may be explained from the conception that the clan-system is an expanding system. We might see it as an indication that the western Marind are not as fully integrated into the system as the eastern. That, however, implies the introduction of a new hypothesis, whereas other explanations are possible as well: for example, the Okaba census-taker may have been more intelligent than his colleagues elsewhere and may have succeeded in persuading part of the people to be more specific in the identification of their progeny. The post at Okaba has always been held by slightly better qualified administrative assistants or patrol-officers than those at other stations in the district. Moreover, the hypothesis that the western area was less completely integrated is invalidated by the fact that the certainly less integrated upper Bian Marind without exception identified themselves by one of the big names instead of using their own. A really conclusive answer to the question why an after

all rather small percentage of the westerners reacted differently cannot be given. We can only note that their reaction was different, at the same time remembering that some people in the Kumbé valley wished to emphasize their identity by using the exceptional name of *Walakwin*, and that two people of Yobar gave the obscure name of *Kuyamsé*.¹⁸² Although rarely, subclans sometimes were mentioned elsewhere, too, and we should refrain from laying too much stress on the deviating behaviour of the western coastal Marind.

Finally, a few words must be said on the notion of rank, to which we referred in passing when dealing with the contrast between *Uabarék* and *Geb-zé-ha*.¹⁸³ A difference in rank is obvious in the myth of origin as related in the Report of the Depopulation Team. Here it is explicitly stated that the *Geb-zé* were first, the *Sami* second. It is remarkable that to-day this is still remembered. Older authors made mention of differences in rank among the clans,¹⁸⁴ but later authors ignore these differences; in present-day social life no traces of ranks or classes can be found. Nevertheless, these older sources are pretty explicit and they all agree that the *Geb-zé* take precedence. Second, according to Viegen and Seyne Kok, are the clans of the phratry of *Aramemb*. Next come the *Mohu-zé*, and last the people of the *Bragai-zé* phratry. This, at least, is the logical interpretation of their more or less incoherent statements in which an explanation of the local concept of rank is sadly lacking. To-day, differences in rank cannot be observed, and for this reason we are inclined to explain the order of the clans as recorded by older authors as one defined by their function in ritual or their relative strengths in numbers. Gooszen, who visited South New Guinea as early as 1907, gives a slightly different sequence by putting the sago clan immediately after the *Geb-zé*, which may be interpreted as an indication of the impact of relative strength on native evaluation of rank. Nevertheless, numbers cannot possibly have been the most important criterion. If such had been the case, the clans belonging to the phratry of *Aramemb* could never have been allowed to rank so high in the list as given by our sources. In conclusion we may state that in former years the Marind showed themselves more conscious of a fixed order of precedence among the clans than they do to-day,

¹⁸² One man for the clan of his late wife, one unmarried woman for her own clan and that of her late father.

¹⁸³ Above, p. 87.

¹⁸⁴ Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 151 and personal communications quoted in Van Baal, Godsdienst p. 38; Gooszen, TAG 1908 p. 685; Seyne Kok, VBG 1907 Part IV p. 16; Vertenten, I.L. II p. 454.

an order of precedence which contained an element of rank-differentiation to which we shall refer again later on in this work.

3. THE CLAN ORGANIZATION OF RELATED TRIBES

This is the appropriate place for comparing the organization of related tribes. Throughout the area we find a clan-system dominated by a dual division into moieties: the pattern followed by the Yéi-anim, the Trans-Fly people, the Boadzi and the upper Bian people; further east, the Mawata, the Gogodara and the Namau also have a dual division. A system of non-localized clans superseding local organizations and in a way comparable to the clan-system of the Marind-anim is found among a number of peoples such as the Namau¹⁸⁵ and the Elema¹⁸⁶ of the Gulf of Papua, the Gogodara north of the Fly estuary¹⁸⁷ and, nearer to the Marind, in the division of the Trans-Fly people into Rear, Middle and Front¹⁸⁸ and in the clan-organization of the Boadzi.¹⁸⁹ In this context the first to be paid attention to are the people of the upper Bian. In this area there is more to show up moiety-exogamy and a dual organization than can be inferred from Wirz's brief communication. It is again the registration which provides us with exact data. These present a number of striking differences with the data from the coast. There are only eight clans registered and two of them are so few in numbers as to be almost negligible (cf. annex VI). The remaining six are *Mahu-zé* (592), *Kai-zé* (237), *Basik-Basik* (221), *Zohé* (162), *Ndik-end* (157), and *Geb-zé* (102). Another difference is that in a total of 1478 marriages there is only one case of a marriage between members of the same clan. A final and more important distinction is that the marriage-pattern for the clans is apparently of a different type. In 1940, on the basis of an analysis of the registration and of some complementary information elicited from informants at the time I served in the area, I published a short paper in TBG vol. 80 to which I may refer in the present discussion of the upper Bian social system.¹⁹⁰

On the upper Bian the division into moieties dominates the clan-

¹⁸⁵ Williams, Purari Delta Ch. VIII.

¹⁸⁶ Williams, Drama Ch. I and II.

¹⁸⁷ Wirz, Die Gemeinde der Gogodara, Nova Guinea XVI, livr. IV pp. 376 ff., 454 ff.

¹⁸⁸ Williams, Trans-Fly Ch. VI and VII.

¹⁸⁹ Below, p. 105.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1940 pp. 568 ff.

organization. Repeatedly, informants insisted that in actual practice there were only two *boan*, i.e. moieties, to which at Muting the names were given of *Mahu-zé* and *Kamise*. The same terms were used by an informant from Kafiwako-Mandom, but I am not sure that they were applied to the moieties in all upper Bian villages.

The names given to the clans have apparently been borrowed from the coastal Marind. They do not always have the same totems. The *Zohé*, who, on the coast, are associated with sago and a fish-species, on the upper Bian have the sirih-leaf for their main totem. On the coast sirih and betel-chewing are associated with the *Bragai-zé*. On the upper Bian the custom of betel-chewing is associated not with the *Zohé* (though sirih-leaves are an important ingredient), but with the *Ndik-end*. As regards the other clans, their main totems are identical with those along the coast, the *Mahu-zé* having sago, the *Kai-zé* the cassowary, the *Basik-Basik* the pig, the *Ndik-end* the stork, the *Geb-zé* (probably!) the coconut, the *Samkakai* the wallaby and the *Bragai-zé* the crocodile. To what extent they have subsidiary totems associated with their clans I could not establish, as I had no opportunity to conduct any systematic research and direct questions resulted in vague and unsatisfactory discussions only. Nevertheless, there probably exist subsidiary totems of some kind or other, be it in a less explicit form than among the coastal Marind. An argument in support of this view may be found in the fact that one of my older informants, Yeskai from Kafiwako-Mandom, insisted that his clan was the *Ginamkwin*, which has the red bush-ant as its totem. Now the *Ginamkwin* have not been listed in the registers, which implies, first, that the *Ginamkwin* people gave another name to the registration officer and, secondly, that that particular clan has the red bush-ant for a subsidiary totem.

The grouping of the clans in moieties differs substantially from the coastal classification. According to Yeskai the *Kai-zé* and the *Ginamkwin* (whoever they may be) associate with the *Mahu-zé*, whereas the *Kamise* include the *Geb-zé*, *Ndik-end* and *Basik-Basik*. More important than the classifications derived from casual informants is the information yielded by the registration. Because local differences prevail, the information contained in the registers was arranged according to villages (in annex VI). Even so, the ideal aim: a survey of the original pre-contact situation, has not been achieved. Originally the upper Bian people lived in more or less isolated clan-groups which, together, constituted a number of territorial groups. Villages were built when the area was brought under control. The wish to have, if possible, a school

in every village made it imperative that no one settlement should be under a certain minimum size which, in some cases, exceeded the actual size of the territorial group. Motives of a more personal nature complicated the bringing together of the clan-groups. Accidental conflict situations involving clan-groups of a territorial group at the time of village-settlement may have induced them to join another territorial group than their own. Or the administrative officer, losing his temper in the endless negotiations with the people, took an arbitrary decision on a certain clan-group's affiliations which was wholly beside the mark. In short, there is no guarantee that a village represents an old territorial group in a new shape. In more than one case it was clear that it decidedly did not. Worst of all was Manggis, where a number of clan-groups had been concentrated which did not belong together and some of which had their territories a long distance away. Later the village was moved to Salau, but at Manggis the people kept breaking away from a village with which they felt they had no real links. This incoherence is clearly reflected in the table of annex VI: neither marriage-preferences between clans, nor any tendency in favour of moiety-exogamy can be distilled from the data collected at Manggis.

The other villages present a clearer picture which, in Wan, Kolam and Boha, shows the same pattern of *Ndik-end*, *Zohé* and *Basik-Basik* in one moiety, and *Mahu-zé* and *Kai-zé* in the other. In Wello, where the *Mahu-zé* by themselves constitute a majority, we find *Mahu-zé* opposed to *Basik-Basik* and *Zohé*. There are too few *Kai-zé* for us to decide whether they should be relegated to the one or to the other moiety. In Muting and Tepas the position of the *Kai-zé* is not clear either. In Muting 2 *Kai-zé* men are married to *Mahu-zé* women and 6 to *Zohé*, suggesting a preference among the *Kai-zé* for marrying women of the *Kamise* moiety. Of the *Kai-zé* women, however, 6 out of 9 are married to *Mahu-zé* men. In Tepas the inclination among the *Kai-zé* to marry *Mahu-zé* is strong enough to call it a preference, and in the next village, Mesak, the *Kai-zé* are distinctly part of the *Kamise* moiety. In Kafiwako the position of the *Kai-zé* is again uncertain. Out of 41 men, 25 are married to *Mahu-zé* women and 16 to women of a clan making part of the other moiety. Though the number of marriages between *Mahu-zé* and *Kai-zé* could be cited in corroboration of the suggestion that the *Kai-zé* really belong to the *Kamise*, the fact that in all villages from Wello onward the *Mahu-zé* are a disproportionately numerous clan is a strong argument to the contrary. If the *Kai-zé* should originally have belonged to the *Kamise*, why are there so many

marriages between *Kai-zé* and *Kamise*? The evidence tends to uphold Yeskai's opinion that the *Kai-zé* associate with the *Mahu-zé* and are of the same moiety. The disproportionately large membership of the *Mahu-zé* clan has caused the *Kai-zé* and *Mahu-zé* to give up moiety-exogamy. I found a similar case of decline of moiety-exogamy among the Boadzi on the middle Fly, to which we shall return further on.

Summarizing the analysis, we may conclude that in the upper Bian area there are two moieties, one of the *Mahu-zé* and the *Kai-zé* and the other of the *Ndik-end*, *Basik-Basik*, *Zohé* and *Geb-zé*. In the northern part of the district, where the *Mahu-zé* are very numerous, the moieties are called *Mahu-zé* and *Kamise*. In the southern part (Kolam, Boha) there is a tendency to emphasize the opposition of *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end* as a symbol of moiety dualism. Considering the dual organization from the point of view of symbolism, we find on the one side sago and cassowary, on the other side coconut, stork, sirih and pig. The prominent oppositions are those of sago and coconut, and of cassowary and stork. It is possible that they reflect an aspect of the opposition of grassland and forest, which was stressed by Verschueren as one of the leading classificatory categories in upper Bian and Boadzi representations.¹⁹¹ The evidence is too meagre to allow of any definite conclusion.

The above analysis is confirmed by data kindly submitted by F. Verschueren.¹⁹² He informed me that in the northern villages the division into moieties is explained in the local myth of origin. Originally there were only women. They were all *Mahu-zé* (pronounced *Moguze* in the local dialect). Then *Ndīwē* came with his men who were all *Kamise* (that is *Ndik-end*). They tried to catch the women, some of whom turned into birds of paradise, whereas others were caught and made to marry their captors. Originally there were only *Moguze* and *Kamise*, but later new *boan* were added. In a story from Mandom it is said that they were instituted because the practice of ritual sexual promiscuity (*otiv-bombari*) caused serious difficulties. When the women were gathered and the men went over to them to have intercourse, some of the men came face to face with their own mothers. They were ashamed and turned back, whereupon the leaders (*lulu*, identical with *pakas-anim*) decided upon a subdivision of the moieties into clans. The motivation is highly interesting because, if the principle had been

¹⁹¹ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 7.

¹⁹² Verschueren, Letters I pp. 10 f.

consistently applied, a four section system should have been the result. Of such we find no proof. We might dismiss the story as irrelevant were it not for the fact that, in the people's opinion, some direct connection seems to exist between moiety dualism and the practice of ritual promiscuity. An elderly informant of Verschueren justified moiety dualism on the ground that, but for the existence of moieties, the performance of the sexual rite of *otiv-bombari* would be impossible.¹⁹³ The informant came from Okaba of all places, a region where moiety-exogamy is not observed. It might be, then, that the quadripartition of the communities outside the upper Bian area played a role in the regulation, not of marriage, but of sexual promiscuity, any man being expected during the rites to avoid intercourse with women of his mother's phratry. A rule of this kind might account for the persistence of quadripartition. However, all this is pure speculation. We have no knowledge of other facts which could confirm that any such rule actually prevailed.

Verschueren also reported that in the northern villages (and in the northern villages only) *Basik-Basik* and *Bragai-zé* were included among the *Kamise*. This he found confirmed in two lists of clans, one for Mandom and one for Boha (the latter belongs to the southern villages).^{193a} Both lists are printed here, because they illustrate that each territorial group consists of a number of clans which at the time of the registration were identified with coastal clans. In passing it may be noted that the association of the *Basik-Basik* with the *Moguze* in Boha does not tally with the data derived from the registration. Where various explanations have equal validity, it is no use entering into a discussion. Another interesting particular is the peculiarly high number of clans: they must have been very small, partly even become extinct or only known to exist in other territorial groups.

MANDOM

Kamise (here also called *Gebze*)

Kaisa
(*Ndik-end*)
Agakwin
Lingaweze
Essendi

Moguze

Milavo
Ginamkwin
Tamaneze
Sambere
Yugadeze

¹⁹³ Ibid. p. 10.^{193a} Ibid. p. 11.

<i>Simineze</i>	<i>Dasagi</i>
<i>Kuyameze</i>	<i>Kiwameze</i>
<i>Sigaze</i>	<i>Diwarek</i>
<i>Basik-Basik</i>	<i>Zohe</i>
<i>Balagaize</i>	<i>Kamuize</i>

BOHA

<i>Kamise (Ndik-end)</i>	<i>Moguze</i>
<i>Yawiman</i>	<i>Zohe (Aruam)</i>
<i>Gendekwan</i>	<i>Ngatkwin</i>
<i>Malindan</i>	<i>Diwarek</i>
<i>Waneze</i>	<i>Milavo</i>
<i>Kaisa</i>	<i>Basik-Basik</i>
<i>Watize</i>	<i>Balagaize</i>
<i>Kenadeze</i>	<i>Mariwan</i>
<i>Baibukeze</i>	<i>Bagoweze</i>
<i>Kameze</i>	<i>Kose (Zohe)</i>
<i>Gamuze</i>	<i>Nazam</i>
<i>Lingaweze</i>	<i>Daza</i>
<i>Sigaze</i>	<i>Essendi</i>
<i>Kumankwin (Samka)</i>	<i>Kambaize</i>
	<i>Magandi</i>

A people closely related to the upper Bian Marind is that of the Boadzi of the middle Fly region, who first made an appearance in anthropological literature under the name of *Gab-Gab*.¹⁹⁴ They speak a cognate language, their initiation rituals have many similarities, and their social organization is based on the same principles. In the autumn of 1937 I paid them a short visit. They are divided into a number of subtribes settled on both sides of the Fly river, which in this part of New Guinea constitutes the international boundary. One of these subtribes, the Sangeze, had recently settled on the small island of Bofage in the immense swamp which is their territory. Missionary influence had made them decide to break with their old customs. In their new island-settlement the houses of the type propagated by the government, as well as a school, a teacher's house and a few auxiliary buildings such as a guesthouse for the Mission and one for the police,

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1940 pp. 1-14.

bore testimony to a will to change. During my visit to the area I was fortunate enough to have Verschueren's company and when by force of circumstance we had to stay for more than a full day on Bofagage, I decided to carry out a systematic registration. As sometimes happens, the people were in a communicative mood and behaved as natives should always do when an anthropologist crosses their path. The registration made it clear that the people were divided into two moieties: the *Kaukwin* and the *Mugav*, the former numbering three, the latter four clans. The *Kaukwin* clans were the *Mekwin* (totem: stork), *Baiṗa* (totem: a fish-species) and *Ngerakwin* (totem: cuscus). There had originally been four clans, but the fourth, associated with the sago, was now extinct, there being not a single member left. The situation was slightly better with the *Baiṗa*, who, though there were no adult males among them, were still represented by three married women. The *Mugav* moiety consisted of the following clans and totems: *Kaula* with the cassowary, *Rekwin* with the crocodile, *Nggekwin* with the dog and *Basikwin* with the pig as their totems. Later research carried out by Verschueren gave proof that in the three subtribes he visited (there are more subtribes, but these could not be covered as they lived across the border) a more or less identical system of moieties, clans and totems prevailed, although the order of the clans was usually reversed. In every village the names are always given in a fixed order, according to the position the clans occupy in the men's house. As a matter of fact, later information obtained by Verschueren points up that in the men's house the *Baiṗa* and the crocodile occupy the front part, the stork and the cassowary the back. There are local differences, however. In three other subtribes the stork is not the clan occupying the back part of the men's house together with the cassowary, but a clan associated with a fish-species. Even more to the purpose of our present discussion, however, is the fact that in the men's house, where the young men spend the night, there exists, cutting across the division into a front and a back part, another and more important one, viz. a division lengthwise, marked by a long beam used as a lean-to when sitting. Each of the moieties occupies one of the halves of the men's house as partitioned by the beam running the whole length of the building. In Bofagage, where the men's house had been built with its longitudinal axis parallel to the street, which runs from north to south, the *Mugav* occupied the western, the *Kaukwin* the eastern part of the house.

The division of the men's house into an eastern and a western part,

each associated with one of the moieties, was reflected in the general pattern of the village, in which the *Mugav* had built their houses on the west side and the *Kaukwin* on the east side of the street. As the island was small, there was hardly enough space to accommodate all their houses. The situation was complicated, because in consequence of the peculiar shape of the island there was more building-space on the eastern half of the island than on the western. Nevertheless, the Mission constructed the teacher's house and a couple of other buildings on the western half and that made things rather awkward, because the *Mugav* moiety, which was more than twice the size of the *Kaukwin* moiety, had decided to settle on the western part, where they had to build their new one-family houses so close together that hardly any space was left between the houses. All this very strongly suggests an association of the *Mugav* moiety with west and of the *Kaukwin* with east. Though in later information given to Verschueren this association was said to be wholly incidental, I never could believe that the more numerous *Mugav* people would be willing to bear up with so much discomfort to satisfy a mere whim. Moreover, the presence of cosmological associations was confirmed by myth. In their central myth of origin as it was related to me during my visit, the mythical hero *Nggiwē*, after having given the first men and women their appropriate shapes, divided them into clans, each with their own totem. Having done this, he added: "With the stork clan you of the *Baipa* and the cuscus associate. You all belong to the sun". Then he summoned the cassowary, crocodile, dog and pig clans, and said: "You belong to the cassowary and to the moon. I make it so to enable you to marry, the stork people marrying cassowary people and the cassowary stork people. It is not good that there should be only one group. It is better that they are divided into two".¹⁹⁵ In the light of this information the association of the dual division with an east-west contrast can hardly be denied, at least as regards the Sangeze. In other groups the situation is apparently different. In Bosset, De Zoete could not find any trace of these cosmological associations, which harmonizes with Verschueren's findings.¹⁹⁶

Then the myth continues to relate how *Nggiwē* wanted to make a

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 12.

¹⁹⁶ See the unpublished report by J. J. de Zoete, *Enkele gedeelten uit de nota Ethnologische en andere Bijzonderheden van de Gab-Gab Kampong Bosset*, pp. 4 and 5 (Library of the Anthropology Dept. of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam).

feast (viz. the initiation ceremony). He first tried a mouse, but the mouse fled. Then he tried a wallaby, but the wallaby made too much noise. After that he took sago, but the sago went bad. Then at last he made a *faroch*, a fish-shaped piece of wood, and put it some place high up in the ceremonial house. Thus he contrived the first initiation ceremony.

The myth is told here at some length because the motives for dividing the people into clans and for trying different implements to make an initiation ceremony with are motives which remind us strongly of the Kiwai myth of origin in which *Marunogere* is the central hero.¹⁹⁷ In the first half of the myth, however, we find a typical Marind motive, that of men emerging in an unfinished shape. In coastal Marind mythology these men and women come out of the earth through a hole dug by the dog. In the Boadzi myth they emerge from the earth too, but the hole is made by a lizard. In both, the mythical hero (*Nggiwē* in the Boadzi myth, *Aramemb* in the Marind version) opens their mouths and eyes. The coastal myth goes even further and also has their limbs separated, which were grown together with their bodies, a version which is very much like the myth of origin of the Aranda as related by Strehlow.¹⁹⁸

It is interesting to follow up this first reconnaissance into the field of relations with a comparative analysis of the social system.¹⁹⁹ We already pointed out a disproportion in numbers between the moieties. The consequences are of interest. Of 49 marriages registered there were 16 of *Kaukwīn* men with *Mugav* women, 18 of *Mugav* men with *Kaukwīn* women and 15 of *Mugav* men with *Mugav* women, the latter without exception involving men and women of different clans. In other words: moiety-exogamy was respected by all *Kaukwīn* and by those *Mugav* who had been able to procure a *Kaukwīn* spouse. For many *Mugav* people this had been impossible, because the Boadzi subtribes are endogamous. It is not possible to marry a woman from another subtribe, unless by capturing her. In the past, expeditions launched with a view to capturing women were not uncommon. Such expeditions were at the same time headhunting expeditions. The war-pattern of the Boadzi differed fundamentally from that of the Marind. Like other Papuan tribes, notably the tribes of the western division of Papua, they lived in a constant state of war with neighbouring subtribes and

¹⁹⁷ Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* p. 365; *Folktales* nr. 279.

¹⁹⁸ C. Strehlow, *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme* I p. 6.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Van Baal, *op. cit.* pp. 6 ff.

one of the motives for warfare — though by no means the only one — was the wish to capture a woman of the right moiety.

The marriages of the *Mugav* within their own moiety deserve additional attention. In the following table an analysis is given of all marriages registered.

TABLE 4
BOADZI MARRIAGES

Kaukwin		Mugav		Mugav		Kaukwin		Mugav		Mugav	
men	m.	women		men	m.	women		men	m.	women	
<i>Mekwin</i>	-	<i>Kaula</i>	3	<i>Kaula</i>	-	<i>Mekwin</i>	4	<i>Kaula</i>	-	<i>Rekwin</i>	1
<i>Mekwin</i>	-	<i>Rekwin</i>	1	<i>Kaula</i>	-	<i>Baipa</i>	2	<i>Kaula</i>	-	<i>Basikwin</i>	2
<i>Mekwin</i>	-	<i>Nggekwin</i>	5	<i>Rekwin</i>	-	<i>Mekwin</i>	3	<i>Rekwin</i>	-	<i>Kaula</i>	2
<i>Ngerakwin</i>	-	<i>Kaula</i>	2	<i>Rekwin</i>	-	<i>Ngerakwin</i>	2	<i>Rekwin</i>	-	<i>Nggekwin</i>	1
<i>Ngerakwin</i>	-	<i>Rekwin</i>	3	<i>Nggekwin</i>	-	<i>Mekwin</i>	5	<i>Nggekwin</i>	-	<i>Rekwin</i>	4
<i>Ngerakwin</i>	-	<i>Nggekwin</i>	2	<i>Nggekwin</i>	-	<i>Baipa</i>	1	<i>Nggekwin</i>	-	<i>Basikwin</i>	2
				<i>Nggekwin</i>	-	<i>Ngerakwin</i>	1	<i>Basikwin</i>	-	<i>Rekwin</i>	1
								<i>Basikwin</i>	-	<i>Nggekwin</i>	2

If we had not known that the *Basikwin* actually belong to the *Mugav* moiety (as has been confirmed again by later investigations carried out by Verschueren), we should certainly have classified them as *Kaukwin*. There are no marriages of *Basikwin* men and women outside the *Mugav* moiety. Of the other *Mugav* clans the *Kaula* evince a definite preference for marriage outside the moiety, a preference which is also demonstrated in the marriages of *Kaula* women. The position of *Rekwin* and *Nggekwin* in this respect is less clear. Marriages within the moiety are more frequent among them than they are among the *Kaula*.

The case of the Boadzi is instructive from more than one angle. In the first place, the marriage-pattern of the *Basikwin* gives a good illustration of the way an incongruity of moieties may effect the clan-pattern. One clan, in this case the smallest, has been relegated to the position of a clan of the other moiety without, however, ceasing to be a *Mugav* clan. Ceremonially and ritually the old position is maintained. The high degree of moiety-consciousness as demonstrated and kept alive by the beam bisecting the men's house may have contributed

considerably to the perpetuation of this situation. We have no information as to how in Mesak (upper Bian) the *Kai-zé* are classified ritually.²⁰⁰ Here the *Kai-zé*, by no means a small group, are so obviously opposed to the *Mahu-zé* that it is rather improbable that much would be left of the old ties which, presumably, once linked up the *Mahu-zé* and the *Kai-zé* in a single moiety. It is to be regretted that I never found an opportunity to pay a long visit to the area, because it would have been worth while to go further into the matter. The upper Bian villages differ from the Boadzi in this respect that the possibility of intermarriage is not excluded. They did not organize headhunting expeditions against villages within the upper Bian territory but, following the coastal pattern, sought out their victims further afield, though they went perhaps not as far as the coastal Marind did. Here intervillage contact made it possible, in theory at least, to remedy some of the direct consequences of the unequal growth of moieties by intervillage marriage. We should not overestimate the significance of this possibility. Endogamy of the territorial group prevailed. Moreover, the preponderance in numbers of the *Mahu-zé* in all northern upper Bian villages made this solution impracticable in the long run.

In passing we noted that a development of the type occurring in Bofage creates a kind of middle group, which for ritual purposes associates with its old moiety, but in the matter of marriage regulations sides with the other moiety. Something of the kind may have happened among the Keraki, the Gambadi and Semariji, the Trans-Fly people described by Williams.²⁰¹ Their clans are organized in three phratries, called Front, Middle and Rear, which, just like the Marind phratries (and clans), cover all local clan-groups, diverse though their origins may be, uniting them into one overall system. Now there is a curious thing about these phratries. Two of them, Front and Middle, make up one exogamous moiety, while the Rear constitutes the other. Though this exogamy is explicitly stressed, Williams, when editing his book, could not but concede that the exogamy of these moieties must be a matter of a nominal rule which could not possibly be obeyed. The amazing fact is that Front embraces 48 % of the total population and Middle 13 % (together more than 61 %) whereas some 38 % of the people belonged to the Rear moiety. If exogamy were so principal a characteristic of the moiety-system as it is said to be, it is incomprehen-

²⁰⁰ Cf. above, p. 101.

²⁰¹ Cf. Williams, Trans-Fly Ch. VI and VII.

sible why Middle should not join Rear. When Williams arrived at this conclusion, it was too late to make a detailed survey of Middle people marriages, but the few figures at his disposal did suggest that most Middle people do not marry Rear people but Front people, i.e. members of their own moiety. If, however, we take it that the Keraki and their neighbours were confronted with a similar problem of unequal growth as the people of Bofagage, it is a matter of strict logic for the Middle group to form one moiety with the biggest phratry and not with the smallest. If our supposition is correct, the bigger moiety (and wherever there is a moiety-system the odds are ten to one that, in the long run, one moiety will outgrow the other in size) splits up, permitting the bigger group to adhere to moiety-exogamy (at least up to an extent) by relegating the smaller group to a position in which they have to marry people of the other phratry of their own moiety. A pre-existing tendency to differentiate cosmologically between front, middle and rear may have substantially contributed to this development. Such a tendency is reported to exist also in Marind-anim cosmology and will be discussed in chapter IV. For the present we should confine ourselves to another aspect of Trans-Fly social organization, viz. the occurrence of an overall system of social organization.

This pattern of social organization has certain peculiarities in common with the Marind-anim system. Of the Keraki and their neighbours Williams says: "It seems then there is a general tendency to mutual assimilation in respect of their social organization. It is as if each were anxious to discover affinities with its neighbour".²⁰² It is exactly the same situation as found among the Marind, though there is this difference: the overall system of the Marind-anim is more elaborate and more complicated. That, however, has its reason, a reason which becomes obvious when we do not limit the scope of our comparison to the Marind and the Trans-Fly people, but include in it also the Boadzi, who, in some respects, seem to be related to both.²⁰³ Among the Boadzi

²⁰² Ibid. p. 62.

²⁰³ The existence of a relationship between Boadzi and Marind is a well-established fact; however, the one between Boadzi and Trans-Fly people is still open to question. The Boadzi seem to be related to the Wiram, who, in turn, are going through a process of adoption of Keraki social superstructure. Such, at least, should be concluded from the few communications made by Williams on the natives of Everill Junction, who are, apparently, a Boadzi subtribe. Cf. Williams, op. cit. p. 60 and note I on p. 61. A certain relationship between the Wiram and the Marind is suggested by the myth of *Sami* and *Gwavi*, op. cit. pp. 386 ff., below, pp. 430, 599 and 753.

we find one type of social organization repeating itself in every subtribe. Notwithstanding subtribal endogamy and serious inter-subtribal warfare, the same clans and moieties are present in every subtribe. We are not sufficiently informed on tribal ritual and intergroup activities to infer to what extent intergroup contacts counterbalance the centrifugal forces apparent in warfare and hostility between subtribes. The presence of an identical pattern of social organization among all Boadzi subtribes may be seen as a simple kind of overall organization upheld by identity of culture and language in what is in other respects a pretty much disrupted tribe.

The second case of the presence of an overall structure is that of the Keraki and their neighbours. Here local endogamy no longer prevails. There is more intervillage traffic, but still there is quite a deal of intervillage warfare. Culturally (and socially) the differences between local groups are more numerous and more important than among the Boadzi. There are at least three different tribes speaking different languages. The overall system here is of a very simple type.

Among the Marind-anim a rather complicated overall system exists side by side with a system of independent local groups, which gave rise to frequent intervillage contacts, a fairly restricted amount of intervillage marriages, rather stable and peaceful intervillage relations and an externalization of aggression into warfare with far-off tribes. Unlike the systems of the upper Bian Marind, the Sangeze subtribe of the Boadzi and the Keraki, the Marind-anim system is not marred by the consequences of unequal growth. The four phratries are much the same in numbers. On a more detailed examination of the data we find that this equality in numbers applies only to the total figures for the tribe as a whole. Regionally and locally there are significant deviations (thus, for example, in Kaibursé, Onggari, Domandé and Makalin). The near-equality in size of the four phratries is clearly a matter of the effect of greater numbers. This lends to the overall system a greater continuity than a purely local system, wholly subject to chance, could possibly have. Besides, the greater complexity of the Marind-anim system offers the possibility of providing at least one minor loop-hole. We found that a few subclans can alternatively be associated with different phratries. That opens the door to minor adaptations to disturbances in the balance of numbers. The mainstay of the system, however, is the continuity which is proper to an overall system of any larger size. In the case of the Marind the fabric might be seen as the outcome of a long process of successful integration, made possible by natural con-

ditions which favoured mutual contacts, were it not for the fact that we find the same tendency among tribes living under different ecological conditions. Apparently, there is a widely spread need for inter-village contact and intercourse. A good case is presented by the *awalari* clans of the Elema, whose relationship with the *bira'ipi* clans shows a great similarity to the relations between clan and subclan prevalent among the Marind. As a matter of fact, there are more similarities between the Marind and the Elema, in particular with regard to totemism.²⁰⁴ Even more interesting is the case of the river-clans of the Namau. In ordinary life these river-clans are not very important, but "a man will receive hospitality from another of his own [river-] clan and be helped in difficulty. Visiting another village on a trading expedition he would be entertained by his *awai* [clanmates of one's own generation]; or, stranded for any reason, he would look to them for assistance homewards, whereas he might whistle for any such assistance of others".²⁰⁵ The river-clan fulfils the same functions as those described in respect of the *boan* of the Marind.²⁰⁶ Apparently we are dealing here with a widely felt need. The steady efforts of the neighbours of the Marind to 'translate' their own social system into terms of Marind-anim superstructure every time they are dealing with strangers, illustrates the significance attached to that superstructure for inter-tribal and intervillage contacts. Frequent warfare and the apparent autarchy of the local group have diverted attention from the need for contact and intergroup relations which counter-balances isolationist tendencies. The strength of the need for wider contacts is often underestimated. Many of these peoples — and notably the Marind — have social systems into which they manage to fit every stranger, providing him with an ample number of relatives who may take care of him. External contacts make as essential a part of their culture as their internal organization and solidarity.

4. KINSHIP AND FAMILY ORGANIZATION

The kinship-terminology of the Marind has been dealt with by Wirz,²⁰⁷ by Van de Kolk and Vertenten in their *Woordenboek*, by Geurtjens in his *Dictionary* and by Van de Kolk in an article entirely

²⁰⁴ Cf. Williams, *Drama* pp. 131 ff.

²⁰⁵ Williams, *Purari-Delta* p. 86.

²⁰⁶ See above, p. 95.

²⁰⁷ Wirz, *M.A.* I pp. 75 f.

devoted to the subject and published in BKI 82 (1926), pp. 37—47. None of our authors is known to have applied the genealogical method. However, the list of terms as published by Van de Kolk in his somewhat complicated, but lucid terminology is apparently the result of careful and meticulous investigation. Since his unusual way of denominating kinship-relations may confuse the reader who is not familiar with Dutch, his list of terms has been rendered in a more conventional terminology in the following pages. The reader will be aware that it is not only a longer, but also a far more detailed list than the one given by Wirz.

- amai* : vocative of *izam*, *uzu*. Geurtjens (Dict.) gives also grandchild, but this reciprocal use of the term is not confirmed by other authors.
Personally I remember the term as a specific term of address vis-à-vis old people.
- izam*, voc. *amai* : FaFa, MoFa
uzu, voc. *amai* : famo, momo, faelbrwi
évai, voc. *haz* or *hai* : Fa, FaBr, MoSiHu (here also *takev*)
wah, voc. *ân* or *né* : mo, mosi, mobrwi, fayobrwi, elbrwi, huelbrwi, yobrwi (ws), huyobrwi
- ézam*, voc. *nazam* : Hu
uzum, voc. *nazum* : wi
zib, voc. *wanangib* : cf. *wanangib*
zub, voc. *wanangub* : cf. *wanangub*
wanangib : So, BrSo (ms), SiSo (ws), HuYoBr; *wanangib* also in use as a voc. of *oha-anem* and of *savok*.
- wanangub* : da, brda (ms), sida (ws); *wanangub* also in use as a voc. of *oha-anum* and of *savok*.
- izeb*, voc. *naze* or *nazeb* : grandchild; V. d. Kolk on one occasion gives *naze* (p. 39) and on the other *nazeb* (p. 42) for the vocative form.
- namek* : Br, FaBrSo; *namek* also in use as a voc. of *mahai-rek* and *es-rek*.
- namuk* : si, fabrda; *namuk* also in use as a voc. of *mahai-ruk* and *es-ruk*.
- izanos*, voc. *onos* : MoBrChi, FaSiChi, MoSiChi

- wahok*, voc. *báb* : MoBr, FaSiHu. There is some uncertainty concerning the term for FaSiHu. On p. 43 V. d. Kolk gives *báb* as a vocative, but on p. 40 he gives *nahok*.
- voc. *nahok* : HuElBr
- takev* : MoSiHu (also *évai*)
- évjak*, voc. *kak* : fasi, humo; according to Geurtjens' Dictionary also huelbrwi (see *wah*).
- oha-anem*, voc. *wanangib* : SiSo (ms)
- oha-anum*, voc. *wanangub* : sida (ms); V. d. Kolk en Vertenten (Woordenboek s.v. schoonzuster) give *oha-anum* voc. *nahok* for yobrwi. See *esane* and *wah*.
- izibi*, voc. *kémbra* : BrSo (ws), brda (ws)
- mahai-rek*, voc. *namek* : Hu(Wi) class. ElBr
- In this and following compounds with *rek* Van de Kolk defines the term as older or younger cousin of husband or wife. In V. d. Kolk en Vertenten's Woordenboek the term is clarified by adding, in brackets, the word *namek* to cousin as far as the term *es-rek* is concerned (s.v. zwager).
- mahai-ruk*, voc. *namuk* : hu(wi) class. elsi; for *mahai-ruk* as a voc. cf. *esane*, *nasu*.
- es-rek*, voc. *namek* : Hu (Wi) class. YoBr
- es-ruk*, voc. *namuk* : hu(wi) class. yosi; for *es-ruk* as a voc. cf. *nakaru*, *esane*.
- ezakně*, voc. *páp* : HuFa
- zinaba*, voc. *naba* : WiFa, wimo, DaHu, wielsi, YoSiHu (ws), HuYoSiHu; also (V. d. Kolk en Vertenten, Woordenboek s.v. schoonzuster ad 4) wielbrwi.
- esane*, voc. — : parents-in-law (ws); wiyobrwi
- voc. *mahai-ruk* : huelsi
- voc. *es-ruk* : yobrwi (ms)
- izpam*, voc. *pam* : son's or daughter's parents-in-law
- izikně*, voc. *nikně* : sowi
- nakaru*, voc. *es-ruk* : huyosi. According to Geurtjens (Dict., v.c.) the word is a term of address used

by a married man vis-à-vis all the women and girls of his totem-group. It is inferred that this should be understood to apply to all younger female members of the male speaker's totem-group (whatever the word group may imply).

<i>zimanda</i> , voc. <i>manda</i>	: WiEiBr, YoSiHu (ms)
<i>savok</i> , voc. <i>wanangib</i>	: WiYoBr
voc. <i>wanangub</i>	: wiyosi
<i>zambit-évai</i> , voc. <i>mbit</i>	: EISiHu (ms)
<i>nasu</i> , voc. <i>mahai-rek</i> ^{207*}	: EISiHu (ws), HuEISiHu
<i>zinakom</i> , voc. <i>nakom</i>	: WiSiHu, hubrwi

Some complementary terms are:

<i>ize</i>	: grandparents, ancestors
<i>ivind</i>	: parents
<i>kisih-évai</i>	: stepfather
<i>binahor-évai</i>	: mentor of a boy
<i>binahor</i>	: pupil (m), (voc. <i>wanangib</i>)
<i>yarang</i>	: pupil (f), (voc. <i>wanangub</i>)
<i>yarang-évai</i>	: mentor of a girl

There is no special term for *huyobrwi*; she must be addressed by the *mahudi-igiz*, a special term bestowed on her at the wedding-ceremony by a certain relative on whose identity our sources are at variance.²⁰⁸ A last term mentioned by Van de Kolk & Vertenten in their *Woordenboek* (s.v. *moeder*) is *ivi-sav*, a collective for mothers and aunts. The authors did not specify the aunts.

A short comment may be given here on some of the terms and on the special functions attributed to certain kin. First of all, the slight emphasis given to age-differences deserves attention. Relative age is important in Marind society. It finds expression in the somewhat exalted position of elderly people and in the system of age-grades among the adolescents to be described afterwards. In kinship-terminology, however, relative age plays a part only in the terms used for in-laws, not in those for siblings or cousins. The terminology as a whole does not show any important marks of a dual division. On the contrary,

^{207*} V. d. Kolk gives the feminine form *ruk*, which must be an error.

²⁰⁸ See below, p. 130.

in cousin-terminology the emphasis is on patrilineal descent. The MoSiChi is classified with the cross-cousins, in contradistinction to the FaBrChi, who is identified with a sibling.

The identification of MoBr and FaSiHu can be explained as an indication of marriage by sister-exchange, a subject to be more fully discussed below. Here it may suffice to point out that for father's sister (*évjak*) and mother's brother's wife (*wah*) there is no common term. An interesting identification is that of *fasi* and *humo*. Here again the identification does not warrant the supposition that there is a preference for marriage with *mobrda*. The data to be discussed afterwards do not suggest any preference of that kind.

Our information on the classificatory use of terms is of a too general nature to be of much value. Van de Kolk is the only author who is somewhat more specific, but even his communications fall decidedly short of modern standards. He writes: "As a preliminary remark I want to point out that at the core of kinship relations is the nuclear family: father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister (*évai, wah; zib, zub; namek, namuk*) are terms often used in a very broad sense, in which *namek* is not only brother, but also father's brother's son, friend, fellow-tribesman, fellow totem-member, etc. All ensuing relations must be taken in a similarly broad sense; the wife of a fellow-tribesman (*namek*) is also called 'sister-in-law' (*naba*) etc."²⁰⁹

Needless to say that a term like fellow-tribesman adds to confusion rather than to our information. Fortunately, the term *namek* has also been commented on by others,²¹⁰ and we know that Van de Kolk must have meant clan or phratry whenever he wrote tribe, the misapplication of the Dutch word 'stam' (tribe) with reference to clan or sib being a sin frequently committed by older Dutch authors who did not care much for terminology. Thus we know that *namek* is used to denote any individual of the same generation of one's own phratry, even though he is a member of another clan.²¹¹ Though we would like to know more about the use of kinship-terms vis-à-vis members of other phratries belonging to ego's generation, we may conclude that the application of kinship-terms to phratry-members serves every Marind as an introduction to local tribesmen, wherever he goes.

Like elsewhere in New Guinea, a child's mother's brother is an

²⁰⁹ V. d. Kolk, BKI 1926 p. 42.

²¹⁰ Wirz, M.A. I p. 75; Geurtjens, TAG 1929 p. 231. See also Verschueren, Letters I p. 12.

²¹¹ Cf. Van Baal, Godsdienst p. 41 note 118, and above, p. 88.

important relative, who plays a prominent role in his life. Our information as to the scope of the mother's brother's functions, however, is partly contradictory. It sadly lacks the cogent directness which is the fruit of modern methods of observation, aiming at a clear understanding of the functions connected with kinship. Wirz, too much taken up with the more ostentatious aspects of Marind culture, confined his comment on the mother's brother's functions to the brief communication that in all ceremonies connected with the child's promotion to the next-higher age-grade the mother's brother is the master of ceremonies, the *apanapnë-anem*.²¹² Later, describing a couple of age-class ceremonies he witnessed, Wirz writes: "Now the *apanapnë-anim* are rewarded for the services they rendered, the *wahok* (mother's brothers) among them getting the most. Next come their partners and in the third place all those who assisted in decorating the candidate".²¹³ The mother's brother is seconded or accompanied by other people who do not stand to the boy in that relationship. First among them is the second *apanapnë-anem*, in the cases mentioned by Wirz the candidate's *mobrwi* and the candidate's sister.²¹⁴ The *apanapnë-anim* each hold one of the candidate's arms, thus taking him to the place of the little ceremony. Whether or not the second *apanapnë-anem* is always a woman is not stated. The third group of helpers consists of those who assisted in decorating the youth. According to Wirz they, too, are called *apanapnë-anim*, but I do not believe that in this widened sense the term is in common use. Ordinarily the term is translated as master of ceremonies and, I think, rightly so.²¹⁵ Confusion reigns supreme with regard to the mentors of either a boy or a girl. It is evident that these mentors rank first among the *apanapnë-anim* who perform the relevant duties. They are important functionaries, always a married couple, called *binahor-évai* and *binahor-wah* in the case of a boy, *yarang-évai* and *yarang-wah* in that of a girl.

In anticipation of the discussion of their functions in the section dealing with age-grades, we have to go somewhat further into the matter here because the functions of a *binahor-* and *yarang-évai* greatly resemble those of a mother's brother's. When the candidate is a boy, the *binahor-évai* (*binahor-father*) is the more important functionary, when a girl, the *yarang-mother*. A boy is given *binahor-*

²¹² Wirz, M.A. I. p. 38.

²¹³ Idem, IV p. 18.

²¹⁴ Ibid. p. 16.

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 11; Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.

parents at the onset of puberty, when he is painted black and brought to the *gotad*, which he makes his home in the day-time. From now on he is under the supervision of his *binahor-évai*. When darkness falls, the boy returns to the village, where he joins his *binahor-évai*. He sleeps next to him in the men's house. As a matter of fact, the *binahor-évai* is also called *ketakob-évai*, from *ketakob*, sleeping together.²¹⁶ The relationship between the boy and his mentor is a homosexual one, the *binahor-évai* having the right to use him. The boy assists his *binahor*-father in gardening and hunting, and renders him and his wife small services. The two, in turn, help him make his first gardens, give him food, and assist him in making his ornaments and his hairdress (the plaiting of the hair into strings is always done by a woman, for an adolescent by his *binahor*-mother).

That the *binahor-évai* is, indeed, a mother's brother was, initially, a matter of conjecture. Older sources are very vague on this point and the term *binahor* does not give any clue; *binahor* is the term used to designate the boy. The term used by the boy when addressing his mentor is 'father', that employed by the mentor speaking to the boy, 'son'. A first indication that the *binahor-évai* may be the mother's brother was a case mentioned by V. d. Kolk in which the mother's brother acted as *binahor-évai*.²¹⁷ Among other indications collated in my dissertation²¹⁸ the most important is the statement made by Geurtjens in his dictionary to the effect that the *binahor-évai* is the boy's uncle, whoever the 'uncle' may be. Unfortunately, in the very next line Geurtjens spoils his case by referring to the word *yarang*, denoting the corresponding relationship between a girl and a married couple; under the heading *yarang* he states in the dictionary that the *yarang*-parents must not be close agnatic or collateral kin, but must belong to another *boan* (clan). He adds that marriages between the child and children of *binahor*- or *yarang*-parents are forbidden. All this made it rather difficult to see even the *binahor-évai* as a near relative! Our misgivings were increased by the fact that according to Wirz²¹⁹ the *binahor-évai* may be any man of the village, often a married man without children, and that in many respects the relationship between the child and his *binahor*-parents is very much like that between a child and his own parents. In a case described by Wirz the

²¹⁶ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *ketakob*.

²¹⁷ V. d. Kolk, Oermenschen p. 161.

²¹⁸ Van Baal, Godsdiens p. 46, note 150.

²¹⁹ Wirz, M.A. I. p. 42.

binahor-évai is apparently another man than the mother's brother. The latter executes the important ceremonial act, the former provides the candidate with his distinctive ornaments.²²⁰ However, a corroboration of the identity of mother's brother and *binahor-évai* may be found in the subsidiary term for *binahor-évai*, mentioned by Wirz only, viz. *otiv-rek*, lit. 'one of the men's house'. We are inclined to associate the term *otiv-rek* with the term for sister's child: *oha-anem* (fem. *oha-anum*), 'the one of the women's house'. *Otiv-rek* and *oha-anem* would make an interesting combination. Unfortunately, all this is purely conjectural and we would not have had any definite clue had not F. Verschueren, prompted by my doubts, informed me that according to his informants as well as his personal experience, the *binahor-* and *yarang-évai* are always mothers' brothers. Although to-day age-grades have disappeared and, consequently, the proper functions of the *binahor-évai* have fallen into desuetude, the term is still in use. Such feasts as *barar-angai* and *ihir-angai*, originally the festive bestowal of the first armring, resp. the piercing of the earlobes for the first earring, are still celebrated, albeit in a modified form requiring the co-operation of the missionary. Such feasts used to be combined with (or made the occasions for) a pig feast. The master of ceremonies at the family celebration is invariably the mother's brother and he is called the child's *binahor-évai* (*yarang-évai* in the case of a girl). The man who brings out a boy to be initiated in the *sosom*-ritual is also called the boy's *binahor-évai* and here again the *binahor-évai* is the boy's mother's brother.²²¹

Verschueren's information, while settling the problem, at the same time raises a new one — why is the mother's brother sometimes not the boy's *binahor-évai*? Here the case described by Wirz gives a positive answer. It was the feast of an *évati* of Birok who had to become a *miakim*.²²² Actually, there were two candidates, but one was the more important because his mother's brother was a man from Sêpadim and he was invited along with his whole village, a circumstance which made the feast into a big social event.²²³ It is evident that a mother's brother who lives at Sêpadim could not be the *binahor-évai* of a boy at Birok. The implications of the function make it necessary for the mentor to be a man of the boy's village. The mother's brother of the other boy was

²²⁰ Ibid. IV pp. 16 and 19.

²²¹ Verschueren, Letters II pp. 4 f.

²²² Adult man; see p. 144.

²²³ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 11.

of the same age as the candidate and could not possibly have been his *binahor-évai*.²²⁴ There may be other reasons preventing a mother's brother from acting as a *binahor-évai*. He may have other nephews to look after, he may have a dislike for sodomy, or he may have some other (equally hypothetical) reason for having somebody else fulfil these functions. It is much easier for a man to be his sister's son's *binahor-évai* to-day than it was fifty years ago when the function involved almost daily contacts instead of an occasional ceremonial performance.

In the *yarang*-relation it is not the function of the man which is emphasized, but that of his wife. It is the *yarang*-mother who watches over the girl and has the benefit of her assistance in garden-work. She will help the girl when on the occasion of feasts and ceremonies the fibre hairdress must be renewed and elaborate adorning is expected. The relationship is by no means as important as the boy's relation with his *binahor-évai*. The girl stays in her own home instead of living in her *yarang*-mother's hut. Though our information is scanty and though we have no published reports regarding the occurrence of female homosexuality, we have sound reason to rule out this possibility here,²²⁵ and it seems a likely guess that the *yarang*-institute is more of an imitation of the *binahor*-institute than a functionally important custom.²²⁶

Recurrent confusion has been occasioned by the various translations of the terms for mentor. Wirz, and others with him, gave the renderings adoptive father, adoptive parents, etc. Now adoption is fairly frequent. If adopted children have been acquired by kidnapping, they are brought up without knowing that their pretended parents are not their real parents, which they will learn only at a later age. Such children share the rights and privileges of real children, at least on the coast.²²⁷ However, adoption may have other reasons. On the upper Bian, with the prevailing practice of marriage by sister-exchange, adoption is often resorted to in order to secure a marriage-partner for a son or daughter and similar practices were followed elsewhere, even along the coast.

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 16.

²²⁵ See below, p. 166.

²²⁶ In his *Dämonen und Wilde* (p. 12) and in *M.A. I* p. 46, Wirz suggests the possibility of sexual relations between *yarang*-father and -daughter without being able to substantiate his point. It seems highly improbable, since girls were forbidden to have premarital sexual relations. It may be that they nevertheless had intercourse, but in that case not with an older man but with a youth of their own generation.

²²⁷ See above, p. 28; Geurtjens, TAG 1929 p. 230.

Now adoption is something totally different from the relationship between a child and its *binahor*- or *yarang*-parents. Ritually, the difference is emphasized in the course of the *mayo* ceremonies, when the children's real parents exchange presents with the mentors in acknowledgement of the services rendered to the children.²²⁸ Later on in the present work, the analysis of the family feasts of the Marind will lead us to conclude that a child's growing up is marked by a long series of gift-transactions, primarily between his father and his mother's people.²²⁹ The onus of exchange is mainly on the maternal uncle and the impact of this burden is best illustrated in the description of the pig feast.²³⁰

The rules concerning marriage and the privileges and duties attaching to relations between in-laws were not given any more systematic attention than the aspects of kinship discussed previously. The very general character of the information given by our sources makes it perfectly clear that the subject never engaged the special attention of research-workers in the area, who contented themselves with noting down the rather unsatisfactory results of perfunctory questioning. Thus we know that the young people had a large say in the choice of a marriage-partner, but we do not know exactly where the line was drawn, except that there was a definite preference for marriage between age-mates. None of our authors touches upon the subject of the extension of the rules of exogamy to apply to relatives outside the own clan. They confine themselves to stating the prevalence of clan-exogamy, without entering into a discussion of the rather numerous exceptions commented on above. None of them seems even to have known that there are exceptions. There is only one communication suggesting the existence of rules prohibiting marriage with bilateral kin, viz. Geurtjens' statement that it is forbidden to marry the son (the daughter) of the *yarang-évai* (the *binahor-évai*).²³¹

A little more attention was paid to the subject in the Report of the Depopulation Team, but they, too, had to rely on information obtained through questioning. No genealogies were drawn up. The authors of the Report do not concern themselves with prohibited marriages between close bilateral relatives and confine themselves to stating that there

²²⁸ Below, p. 527.

²²⁹ Ibid, p. 845.

²³⁰ Ibid. pp. 841 f., 845.

²³¹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *jarang*.

is a definite tendency toward moiety-exogamy and that marriage by sister-exchange is the rule.²³² This — at least as far as the coastal Marind are concerned — is new. Older authors (Wirz, Viegen, Ver-
tenten, Geurtjens) who dealt with marriage did not mention the custom.

The analysis of the registration 1930/'32 yields more reliable information, be it mainly of a negative character. Marriages between cousins are extremely rare. Not more than one or two were noted. That implies that the rules of exogamy extend at least to first cousins. With regard to second cousins the genealogies compiled from the registers do not allow of any definite conclusion.

Among the marriages noted were a number of marriages by sister-exchange, be they real or classificatory sisters, especially in the upper Bian area, where marriage by sister-exchange prevails, as I had found out previously when patrolling the area. Here the necessity to have a sister available as an exchange-partner for a son, or a brother for a daughter, leads to a high frequency of adoption. At a very early age children are adopted to serve as exchange-partners, a custom sometimes obnoxious to their health, as foster-parents often are in such a hurry to have their new child stay with them that it is taken away from the mother before it has been properly weaned.²³³ Sometimes even grown-up people are adopted. I remember the case of a widower adopted by an old couple as an exchange-brother for their daughter. The prevalence of the custom was borne out by an analysis of the registers. Of 97 married real brothers and sisters registered, 5 were married to real sisters and brothers, 61 to classificatory sisters and brothers, i.e. to girls and boys of the same clan and 26 to partners belonging to different clans. In actual practice the number of exchange-marriages must have been considerably higher than indicated by this ratio of 66 to 97. The registration ignored adoption: people were asked to state the names of their real parents only. Moreover, devious ways can be followed to arrive at sister-exchange, people need not stop short at adoption; delayed exchange and exchange by introducing a third or a fourth partner into the transaction will be found to present themselves as so many answers to the problems involved in marriage arrangements where and whenever a thorough investigation into the matter brings the actual working of the system to light.

The prevalence of marriage by sister-exchange was known from the

²³² Rep. Depop. Team pp. 69 f.

²³³ Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 575.

upper Bian before the Depopulation Team reported that this was the preferred form of marriage for the whole area. The Team emphasized the possibility that the exchange-partners are not a real brother and sister but a clan-brother and -sister. Even a child of another *boan* may be adopted as an exchange-partner, provided the foster-child belongs to the same moiety. If no exchange is possible, there remains the device of the married couple's first child being given to the bride's family as soon as it has been weaned. Notwithstanding the intensive contacts which had long existed between the Marind and missionaries and other European observers, this custom had never been recorded from other areas than the upper Bian and the upper Kumbe. It is true that Geurtjens reported a great frequency of adoption, but he failed to investigate the matter any further.²³⁴ Verschueren's communications induced me to survey once again the genealogies compiled by my wife from the registers of the Kumbe and coastal areas, where I had never expected the custom to prevail, for one thing because I had never actually come across it, for another because our earlier superficial survey had not revealed a marked preference for that type of marriage. This time I followed the method used on a previous occasion when analysing the upper Bian data: that of tabulating all the cases in which the genealogies showed up marriages of a real brother and sister. Much to my regret our data are not complete. For the western coastal area genealogies have been drawn up only for a number of villages, and in respect of the eastern settlements the genealogies of Anasai and of the coastal villages between Kumbe and Bian had simply disappeared.²³⁵ The registers being no longer at my disposal, this could not be remedied. The results of this survey have been summarized in Table 5.

The first thing to be noted concerns the numbers of own brothers and sisters occurring in our genealogies of the Kumbe valley and the eastern section, which are low when compared to the corresponding numbers recorded on the upper Bian and in the villages of the western section. I am unable to offer a valid explanation. It may be that a renewed scrutiny of the registers will produce more complete genealogies, but there are more possibilities to be considered: marrying outside father's village makes it difficult to trace brothers and sisters in the registers, because they have been entered under different sections and cross-references need not always be as complete as they should be.

²³⁴ Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 125.

²³⁵ After all, it is still more or less of a miracle that so much of our data survived the war, when my wife and I were interned by the Japanese.

TABLE 5
SISTER-EXCHANGE

Village	Real brother and sister marry:			
	real sister and brother	classificatory sister and brother (members of the same clan) *	spouses belonging to different clans *	total number of cases
Saror	—	1	2	3
Kaliki (Gafur)	1	3	—	4
Senam	—	1	2	3
Bad	1	2	—	3
Yakau	—	—	—	—
Senégi	—	9	4	13
Wayau-Pim, Wayau-Saring and Adga-zé	—	2	1	3
Koa, Warita, Babor, Babri	1	5	7	13
Kari	—	1	1	2
Kaverau	1	1	1	3
Kumbe Valley	4	25	18	47
Sěpadim	—	3	6	9
Yobar	—	—	—	—
Buti	—	5	6	11
Urumb	—	4	1	5
Noh-otiv	—	—	2	2
Yatomb	—	1	3	4
Bahor	—	1	1	2
Wendu	—	3	4	7
Matara	—	1	7	8
Eastern Section	—	18	30	48
Sangasé	—	13	9	22
Alatep	1	3	3	7
Sangasé Group	1	16	12	29
Makalin	—	3	7	10
Hibóm/Kobing	—	4	23	27
Yowid	—	2	4	6
Elebéme	—	2	1	3
Western Section	—	11	35	46

* clan. as far as apparent from the registration, i.e. predominantly one of the 'big names'.

In some areas people may have been more successful in keeping cases of adoption from the census-taker. Another possibility is that the venereal and other diseases rampant before the start of the medical campaign eliminated more people in the eastern coastal section than in the western, where the disease did not appear until later. We have to leave it at that, as — after all — the relatively low number of brother-sister couples does not affect what is the most interesting point, i.e. the incidence of cases in which the spouses of, respectively, a real brother and sister were real or classificatory sisters and brothers. The outcome of a comparison of the figures for the different areas has been tabulated in Table 6.

TABLE 6
SISTER-EXCHANGE (SUMMARY)

Area	Real brother and sister marry:				
	Spouses who are real sister and brother	Spouses who are class. brother and sister	Spouses belonging to diff. clans	Total	Spouses real or class. br. & si. in percent. of total
Upper Bian	5	61	26	92	72
Kumbe	4	25	18	47	62
East. section	—	18	30	48	37.5
Sangasé	1	16	12	29	59
West. section	—	11	35	46	24

The result is interesting. We find Verschueren's communications confirmed for the Kumbe valley and Sangasé, whereas in the coastal areas other than Sangasé sister-exchange is apparently less common. The low percentage recorded for the western section raises the question whether this form of marriage may still be called a preferential marriage at all, a question which has to be answered in the affirmative as in these data members of 11 different clans are involved. A certain degree of preference for this type of marriage cannot be denied, not even in these western villages. It may be repeated here that the custom of adoption tends to make quite a number of exchange-marriages escape observation.

We do not know to what extent this practice is followed in this area, but we certainly have to make allowance for it. Actually, Geurtjens very explicitly noted its frequent occurrence, unfortunately without realizing that the custom might be based on sounder reasons than the alleged capriciousness of his parishioners.²³⁶

The chief inference to be made from these figures is the apparent correlation between moiety-exogamy and sister-exchange. On the upper Bian and in Sangasé, where moiety-exogamy is the rule, the percentages are, respectively, 72 and 59; in the Kumbe area, where we found moiety-exogamy to be prevalent, though thrown out of joint by unequal growth, the percentage is 62, even higher than at Sangasé. In harmony with a correlation between moiety-exogamy and sister-exchange is the fact that in the eastern coastal section, where the dual division is superseded by a division into four, the percentage still stands at 37.5, whereas in the western area, where the division into four phratries is looser in structure, it does not exceed 24.

What happens when a man marries without being able to offer an exchange-partner? The Report of the Depopulation Team asserts that, if no clanmate can be found, a girl of another clan, though of the same moiety, may be designated, being invited to act as an exchange-partner. In extreme cases a marriage without exchange is possible, provided the first child to be born is pledged to the wife's family, a procedure which must have been fairly common. The 'giving-away' of children immediately after birth is mentioned by Geurtjens as a common form of adoption.²³⁷ Yet, it is hard to believe that this is the whole truth. In the first place, we found that a great number of marriages are contracted between members of the same moiety, and even of the same phratry. In the second place, the great disparity between one area and another in the observance of the practice of sister-exchange, as demonstrated by the figures discussed above, proves that in the coastal area, notably west of Sangasé, marriage without any form of sister-exchange must have been more common than the Team would have us believe. What happened in such a case? Marind-anim courtship and marriage are among the recurrent topics in popular missionary magazines of the period, but nowhere do we find an answer to this question. Going by Geurtjens, one of the most indefatigable contributors to those columns, we should have definite reason to surmise that mutual preference ex-

²³⁶ Geurtjens, l.c.

²³⁷ Ibid.

pressed by the young people concerned was more important than having an exchange-partner.²³⁸ Vertenten, another writer of popular stories, though less inclined than Geurtjens to let the point of a story get the better of its veracity, mentions the occurrence of marriage by elopement, but just once and then only in passing.²³⁹ Marriage without any form of sister-exchange apparently did not bring serious difficulties in its wake.

When discussing the topic with Verschueren, I suggested that in such cases a bride-price was paid. In modern times a boy sometimes presents a wedding-gift to the bride's people and this need not be a complete novelty. On the contrary, we know that at the wedding-ceremony held in the girl's hamlet each of the visitors brought the bride a block of sago, or a bunch of bananas and so on, which were piled up all around her. These gifts were so bulky that the bride could not make her way out over the pile unaided. The first to offer such gifts were the bridegroom's people and it would have been easy to include some more valuable objects among the presents in case they had no exchange-partner to offer. Though the making of payments, the offering of gifts and the exchange of wealth are features which were not given much attention by successive observers, there were different occasions on which gift-giving was customary or even compulsory and these gifts sometimes were really substantial. We know that a payment was received for wife-lending.²⁴⁰ Age-grade ceremonies and initiation were associated with gift-exchange.²⁴¹ Gifts are presented to the new *éwati* and *miakim* on the occasion of their promotion.²⁴² We might expect, then, that they would lead to payment of a bride-price whenever sister-exchange is impossible. In spite of all this Verschueren found that, even in those cases when the bridegroom gives valuable presents to the bride's people, the parents insist that there must be no question of payment. This is important because to-day there is a tendency among the members of the younger generation to imitate the bride-price customs of other peoples such as the Muyu, and the presents given under such conditions may include money. Even in the past valuable presents were sometimes given, such as a drum, a canoe or a couple of birds of paradise. "But never did I succeed in finding out the

²³⁸ Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 86-99.

²³⁹ Vertenten, *I.L. II* p. 913.

²⁴⁰ Below, p. 164.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 833 ff., 845 and 527.

²⁴² *Ibid.* pp. 151 and 157.

special reason for giving them", writes Verschueren. He adds that the explicit denial of the existence of any kind of bride-price suggests that in case no form of immediate or postponed sister-exchange can be arranged, the bride-givers apparently expect that in a more remote future compensation will be effected on a proper occasion. If, to-day, younger people tend to introduce some form of bride-price, they meet with the scorn of the older generation.²⁴³ The interesting conclusion of the discussion must be, I think, that wealth, though appreciated, is not a major focus in Marind-anim culture.

Another point is that the prevailing preference for marriage by sister-exchange involves a good deal of preparatory negotiations and arrangements between families. Where such a rule obtains, we may expect that marriages are arranged long before the young people most interested in the transaction can have a say in the matter. The necessity to arrange for an exchange-partner conflicts with the definite tendency to let young people have their own way and to let youth be a period of care-free enjoyment,²⁴⁴ a tendency probably inspired by similar considerations as those underlying the aversion to the payment of a bride-price. Humans cannot be bought and they cannot be compelled to do things against their will. The Marind feels strongly about human dignity (on the condition that the people concerned are not strangers). The respect for and the care bestowed on youth is demonstrated also by the emphasis on marriage between age-mates; even for a young widower it is well-nigh impossible to marry a girl.²⁴⁵ This attitude favours the occurrence of marriages based on mutual love instead of on the pre-arrangements necessitated by sister-exchange. Freedom of choice is favoured, too, by the culturally prescribed form of betrothal: *parané*. Wirz inadvertently describes *parané* as a kind of informal exchange of presents between lovers,²⁴⁶ which it is not. Geurtjens²⁴⁷ and Vertenten are very explicit in pointing out that it is a formal betrothal. The procedure has been best described by Vertenten.²⁴⁸

It is the girl who takes the initiative by sending her beloved a message that the next night they shall meet to celebrate *parané*. That night, accompanied by a group of girls, she goes to the beach to await the arrival of the boy and his party. The boy, still an *éwasi*, has had

²⁴³ Verschueren, Letters II p. 3.

²⁴⁴ Cf. below, pp. 152, 154, 161.

²⁴⁵ Vertenten, J.P. 1918 p. 646.

²⁴⁶ Wirz, M.A. I p. 70.

²⁴⁷ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *parané*.

²⁴⁸ Vertenten, J.P. 1918 pp. 645 f.

a busy day primping for the occasion, in which he has been assisted by his friends in the *gotad*. After nightfall the boy's party goes to the beach to meet the girls. The young man is shy. While his friends exchange pleasantries with the girls, with nervous fingers he takes off his cassowary-quill earrings. Then, bracing himself, he hands them to his girl, together with some other simple ornaments. She, in turn, gives him a *pind* or *pur*, a bone implement used for scraping out a coconut. The boy will wear the *pur* in his upper armring. When exchanging the presents, the two stand well apart from each other, the presents being handed over with the arm fully extended. In doing so both pronounce the required formula: "For ever you are my wife (husband)". The formalities having been completed, the bystanders vociferously give vent to their joy and the two groups part company in high spirits, the girls going with the betrothed girl, the boys with the *évati*. Presently the whole village is informed and if the respective families agree, the young man will, on the next day, chew *wati* for his prospective father-in-law and the girl will do the same for her friend's *binahor-évai*. Marriage follows in due time, i.e. after one year, or perhaps two. Unfortunately, the old people do not always agree and it may happen that, after considerable bickering, the lovers have to resign to their fate and go their separate ways again.

Vertenten's vivid account offers a good explanation of Wirz's seemingly contradictory description of prevailing marriage customs, which opens with the statement that marriages are pre-arranged between the families concerned, to which is added that a boy usually knows exactly which *wahuku* or *kivasom-iwag*²⁴⁹ will be his future wife, and ends with the remark that the young man often has already made his choice, which is rarely opposed, although it sometimes happens that a *binahor-* or *yarang-évai* disapproves.²⁵⁰ However, it is not Wirz's statement which is contradictory, but the relevant rules. The system of sister-exchange is incompatible with freedom of choice. The inevitable result is a compromise of the sort reflected in the outcome of our enquiry, which gave evidence that, along the coast, a considerable amount of laxity has crept into the observance of the rule of sister-exchange.

Much attention has been given to two other aspects of the wedding-ceremony. The first of these is the bestowal of a special name on the bride, the *mahudi-igiz*. According to Geurtjens' Dictionary *mahudi* is

²⁴⁹ See below, p. 144.

²⁵⁰ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 70 f.

derived from *mahod*: a small net plaited round the head to secure the fibre hairdress of the *miakim*. It is also applied to decorate the human head as a trophy. *Igis* means name. Where the *mahudi-igiz* is composed of two parts, one of which is unintelligible, the other meaning mother, *mahudi-igiz* may be translated as 'Mother of X', X being the name to be bestowed by the giver of the *mahudi-igiz* on the bride's future child. The reference to headhunting contained in the word *mahudi* makes it probable that the name to be given is a name derived from a human victim. In parentheses it may be remarked that every individual bears the name of a beheaded victim. According to Wirz it is the bridegroom's mentor who bestows the name on the bride, but Van de Kolk and Vertenten²⁵¹ and Geurtjens²⁵² state that it is the bride's father-in-law. Verschuieren, finally, holds yet another opinion and says that it is the bride's *yarang*-mother who gives her the name. He adds that the inexplicable part of the name is, indeed, the head-name for her first child,²⁵³ which implies that the *yarang*-mother must have borrowed the name from some other relative. The apparent confusion on this point inescapably leads to the conclusion that probably each and all of the various parties are right. Perhaps even yet another relative might give the *mahudi-igiz*. The giver should be the owner of a head which, if possible, has not been used for name-giving before. Not every father or *binahor-éwai* is necessarily in that position.²⁵⁴

The second aspect of the wedding-ceremony which had the attention of observers is the custom for the bride on the first night after the ceremony to have intercourse with the members of her husband's clan or even moiety. The last to copulate with her (if at all) is her husband. We shall deal again with this custom. Here we are only interested in the fact that, in spite of all the favour which personal preferences may find in Marind-anim social life, marriage is a matter involving the local clan-group as a whole.

²⁵¹ V. d. Kolk & Vertenten, *Woordenboek v. naam*.

²⁵² Geurtjens, *Dict. v. igiz*.

²⁵³ Verschuieren, *Letters III* p. 4.

²⁵⁴ Cf. below, pp. 709 f.

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE CYCLE

Successive observers of Marind-anim social and personal life concentrated on its institutional aspects. Consequently, the description of Marind-anim life is predominantly a description of rules. The way the individual lives with the institutions of his culture, and his reactions to the limitations imposed by the rules of society were never made the objects of systematic observation. All our information regarding this aspect is of an incidental nature and must be garnered from a variety of minor sources, mainly short stories and articles in different magazines. The imperfections of these data will appear clearly in the following pages dealing with the successive phases of the individual's life.

1. BIRTH AND INFANCY

The main sources of our knowledge regarding birth and infancy are the relevant communications made by Wirz, Geurtjens and Vertenten, supplemented by a few short comments in Verschueren's letters.¹ Their various observations can be summarized as follows: When the time of her delivery approaches, the expectant mother moves from the women's hut in the village to a specially constructed hut built just outside the village, the *oram-aha* (maternity-hut), where she awaits her delivery. Here her mother may join her. Her husband also follows and takes up his quarters in a simple shed in the vicinity of the *oram-aha*.² Husband and wife are subject to a number of taboos until well after the child has been born. They put off all ornaments, they avoid contact

¹ Wirz, M.A. I pp. 34-36; Geurtjens, M&M 1929 pp. 119-132; Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 15 f.; Verschueren, Letters III pp. 3-5.

² The special shed for the husband is mentioned by Wirz only (M.A. I p. 34). In a somewhat equivocal communication by Geurtjens (M&M 1929 pp. 119 ff.) it is inferred that the man joins his wife in the *oram-aha*, a presentation of fact emphatically refuted by Verschueren, who wrote: In the course of many years I had ample opportunity to observe that the husband lived in a lean-to at a distance of some twenty to forty meters from his wife's *oram-aha* (Letters III p. 4).

with other people, a few near relatives excepted, hunting and fishing are not allowed, and they must not work in the gardens or climb a coconut tree. Forbidden are certain kinds of food, notably meat, and all sexual contacts, including discussion of sexual matters. The man is not even allowed to discuss the totem ancestors (*déma*) or tell a myth. All such things would harm the baby. Contact, however, of the parents or the baby with other people would harm the latter. The inmates of the *oram-aha* are strictly avoided both before and after parturition. The man will mark his way wherever he goes (not far, anyhow) and all other wayfarers will carefully avoid stepping in his footprints. Any contact might affect them with disease, elephantiasis of the legs being dreaded as the result of contact with the parents and their new-born child. It is not made clear whether the taboo must also be observed by the woman's mother, or whoever assists her during her delivery. It does not seem probable, because all these taboos make it necessary that the isolated people are provided with food. Moreover, we do know that a number of female relatives and the children of the couple may freely enter the *oram-aha*.³

The term of seclusion in the *oram-aha* begins shortly before the delivery. The total length of the period of isolation is a matter of controversy. According to Geurtjens it is said to be three moons, the moon during which the delivery occurred included. The third moon need not necessarily be completed; for the first child the period of isolation will be longer than for any subsequent child.⁴ Vertenten gives a somewhat shorter period, viz. 6 to 8 weeks.⁵ Wirz again mentions a much longer time-span; his point of view will be discussed presently, as it is closely connected with the ceremony marking the return of the parents to the village. For the moment we confine ourselves to noting that in 1962 the custom of isolating the mother in the *oram-aha* still prevailed in all the villages which had no village welfare worker, an institution inaugurated by the Government medical officer Dr. L. M. Veeger in 1954. Food taboos, too, were still observed by part of the women, although in 1962 the men had already abandoned both isolation and taboos.⁶

It is not certain that food taboos and isolation were interconnected in the strict sense of the word. Veeger, who was a member of the

³ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 16.

⁴ Geurtjens, *op. cit.* p. 121.

⁵ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 16; J.P. 1921 p. 386.

⁶ Verschueren, *Letters III* p. 4.

Depopulation Team, reports that the taboos were very strict and included both meat and fish, with the exception of shell-fish from the beach and the meat of certain birds. He stated that the mother loses in weight, but that her declining condition does not influence lactation, which is usually ample. The taboo is observed until the child begins to follow a person with his eyes.⁷ That would imply that the taboos are possibly lifted before the mother returns from her seclusion.

Obviously, less importance is attached to the father's observing the rule of isolation and the taboos than to the mother's and the child's. If the child dies in the *oram-aha*, the isolation is promptly broken. The child is buried in the maternity-hut, which is either burned or left to decay. There is no mourning in such a case. On the other hand, a mother who died in childbirth is particularly dreaded. Her body is hurriedly decorated by the relatives and buried in the *oram-aha*. Similarly feared is a woman who died in an advanced state of pregnancy before she entered the *oram-aha*. Her body, too, is hastily decorated and — in contrast to other dead people — buried outside the village. The child left by a woman who died in the *oram-aha* is taken care of by a woman capable of suckling it.

Delivery itself does not take place in the *oram-aha*, but some distance away in the bush or on the beach, the spot being screened off with coconut-leaves. A few women assist the mother. The placenta is buried in loco, after having been severed from the umbilical cord by means of a mussel-shell. The remaining end is tied off; after it has been cast off it is sometimes preserved and put into a small bamboo tube or a small bag, which the mother or some related woman wears on a cord round the neck, in this way giving expression to a sentimental bond between herself and the child which our sources fail to specify. According to Geurtjens the umbilical cord must be returned to a girl when she becomes an *iwag*. If the original has got lost, she is decorated with an ornament of nautilus-shell instead. A comparable ornament is given to young men on reaching marriageable age (Geurtjens does not mention the relative age-grade, which may be either *éwati* or *miakim*). They never receive their own umbilical cord. We have no information with regard to native interpretations of this custom.⁸

Every day the child is washed and exposed to the sun for some time. Its skin, which is rather light immediately after birth, gets sunburned and soon begins to peel. After little more than a week the child has the

⁷ L. M. Veeger, *Papoea-Dorpsverzorgsters* p. 38.

⁸ Geurtjens, *op. cit.* pp. 122 f.

bronze colour of its race. This sunbathing is done with care and has, as far as we know, no detrimental effects on the child's health.⁹

According to Geurtjens the child's body is smeared with clay as early as the first day after birth, perhaps a local custom. Vertenten, a more accurate observer, mentions that the child's head is smeared with clay when the couple leaves the *oram-aha*. On that occasion the parents will bathe and paint their bodies and anoint them with coconut-oil, taking care to smear their legs and feet with clay. They also have their hairdo redone, a detail of their toilet in which they invariably need assistance because of its elaborateness.¹⁰

Wirz puts the return to the village later than Geurtjens and Vertenten. "When the child has attained a certain age — people say, when it is able to sit up — the period of seclusion is over for the parents".¹¹ That implies that at that moment the child is between 6 and 8 months old; such at least is the age given by handbooks as the one at which children learn to sit up. The return to the village may be celebrated with a feast and Wirz, from his point of view rightly so, identifies the feast with *vaseb-angai*, the feast celebrating the fact that the child need no longer be borne in a *kabu*, a kind of plaited hammock serving as a cradle, but can be sat in a *vaseb*, a plaited bag with holes through which the child can put its legs while assuming a sitting posture.¹² It is the child's mother's brother's privilege to be the first to put the child into the *vaseb*.

The feast to celebrate the return of the parents as mentioned by Geurtjens is certainly not a *vaseb-angai*. He says it is a small family feast marking the reception of the child into society. Vertenten does not even mention a feast; he confines himself to reporting that friends and relatives are awaiting the couple, that especially the women want to see the baby and cuddle it and that this is how the baby makes his festive appearance in society.¹³ The fact that the occasion marks the child's entry into the community is confirmed by a casual observation made by Geurtjens: before burial, the bodies of children who died after leaving the *oram-aha* are decorated in the fashion of an *éwati* when the baby was a boy, of an *iwag* when it was a girl.¹⁴ In other words, once

⁹ Vertenten, l.c.

¹⁰ Geurtjens and Vertenten, l.c.

¹¹ Wirz, M.A. I p. 36.

¹² L.c.

¹³ Geurtjens, op. cit. p. 124; Vertenten, op. cit. p. 16.

¹⁴ Geurtjens, op. cit. p. 126.

the baby has entered the village he is treated as a full member of society.

That the return from seclusion marks the baby's admittance into society is explicitly confirmed by Verschueren, who is the first to give circumstantial evidence, connecting the event with name-giving. On this occasion the mother's brother acts in his official capacity. He is the first to take the child in his arms, giving it a name. Verschueren adds that it is not impossible that the occasion coincides with *vaseb-angai*, but that such is not necessarily the case, as the two occasions differ in principle. He also points out that, in his opinion, the return from the *oram-aha* was in the old days as good an occasion for celebrating as putting the child in a sitting-bag.¹⁵

Name-giving is an important thing in Marind-anim society. Names play a part in ritual and it is certainly not a matter of accident that every man and woman has several names. First among them is the *pa-igiz* (lit. head-name), which is taken from a victim beheaded during a headhunting raid. The *pa-igiz* is also the *igiz-ha*, the real name. Then, a person has a *boan-igiz* (boan-name) and occasionally also a *déma-igiz* or *déma-name*. He may also have a surname or *téb-igiz*, a name derived from a *téb*, a mark, i.e. some peculiar characteristic¹⁶ such as a limp or a bald head. Any name, with the exception of the *pa-igiz*, which is rarely used, may become a person's *warai-igiz*, the name by which he is called.¹⁷

The information on names as given by Wirz and Geurtjens is rather confused. They identify *boan-igiz* with *déma-igiz*. Wirz, moreover, makes mention of a birth-name without elucidating whether or not that name is the same as the head-name. Here again Verschueren helped us out.¹⁸ The *pa-igiz* (head-name) is given to the child, at least if it is the first-born, on the third day, lit. two nights, after it has been born, and it is bestowed by its mother. Mother and child still are in the *oram-aha*. The name is derived from the mother's *mahudi-igiz*, the name given to her by a relative on the occasion of the wedding-ceremony.¹⁹ Unfortunately, we do not learn how and when a child who is not a first-born receives his head-name. It is possible that in such

¹⁵ Verschueren, Letters III p. 4.

¹⁶ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *igiz* and *téb*.

¹⁷ Geurtjens identifies *warai-igiz* and *téb-igiz*, but from Wirz's exposition it follows that the *boan-igiz*, too, may be used as a *warai-igiz*; cf. Wirz, M.A. I p. 35.

¹⁸ Verschueren, l.c.

¹⁹ See above, p. 130.

a case the name-giving is postponed, which might explain the confusion on this point in Wirz's exposition. Some delay would not harm the child in any way, as the name does not serve any practical end. Verschueren confirms that the head-name is more or less secret and taboo, a fact mentioned earlier by Van der Kooy, who reported that a person is not allowed to mention his own *pa-igiz*.²⁰

The child's second name is his or her *boan-igiz*: the clan-name given by the child's mother's brother.²¹ The name is derived from the totems of the child's clan (*boan*), e.g. *Ongat-iwag*, Coconut-woman, if the girl is a member of the coconut clan. The use of this name is not subject to restrictions. Often, it will become the child's 'call-name'. It may happen, however, that the child falls ill and if such misfortune occurs repeatedly, the child's relatives may feel that the child needs the special protection of a *déma*. Usually it is the grandparents who then give the child the name of a *déma* related to his clan, such as *Yagriwar*, *Walinau* or *Geb* if the child happens to be a *Geb-zé*. As a rule such names are used during the period of sickness only and fall into desuetude after recovery. Although they are not really *dur* (taboo) like the head-name, they are not used lightly either.²²

Verschueren's exposition gives a full account of the reasons why the return of the parents and the admission of the child into the village community should be a festive occasion, different from *vaseb-angai*. That in some cases the two may coincide is explained as follows: "During our investigations [those of the Depopulation Team] I was told in various places that in the old days for a mother the proper thing to do was to wait for the renewed onset of menstruation before she returned to the village. She then might adorn herself afresh and, by giving herself over to a new *otiv-bombari* [rite of sexual promiscuity], resume her part in the social life of the community".²³ The explanation raises a good many questions. We do not know how long it takes with a Marind-anim woman for menstruation to start again during her lactation-period. Neither do we know whether Marind-anim women always followed the course recommended as the proper one. There

²⁰ Van der Kooy, *Ann.* 1910 p. 166.

²¹ Verschueren calls the mother's brother *yarang*-father when the child is a girl, *binahor*-father when a boy. We do not feel wholly satisfied as to whether in the old days these terms were used in connection with a baby. A *yarang*- or *binahor*-father need not always be the child's real mother's brother. Cf. above p. 119.

²² Verschueren, l.c.

²³ *Ibid.* and below, p. 810.

might be numerous reasons to act in defiance of the rule, certainly if she had other children at home awaiting her return. Then, again, the *otiv-bombari* inaugurating the resumption of her role in social intercourse need not immediately follow upon her return to the village. It might be postponed till a festive occasion requiring an act of sexual promiscuity presented itself.²⁴ If the woman in question were an older woman there might, perhaps, not even be an *otiv-bombari* at all, as sexual duties of this kind were incumbent more frequently on younger than on older women.²⁵ For all these reasons it is fairly probable that an older woman did not stay long in the *oram-aha*. With a young woman having her first baby things were different, but even in her case a period of 6 to 8 months is a very long one and the coincidence of her return to the village with the feast of putting the child in a sitting-bag may have been an exception rather than the rule.

More certainty exists with regard to the connection of *vaseb-angai* with the woman's resumption of extra-marital sexual duties. As soon as the child is able to sit — i.e. from *vaseb-angai* onwards — it is given its first solid food: bananas and yams to start with and later, when it has its first teeth, sago (which is always prepared in solid form and never as gruel) and meat. Fish and coconut are introduced even later and greens not until the child has its first molars. From other sources we know that between the ages of 7 and 16 months a child's diet is insufficient.²⁶ As the child is not weaned and the mother goes on suckling her child whenever he asks for it, till long after he has learned to walk, that is, unless another baby has arrived in the meantime,²⁷ the poor condition of children between 7 and 16 months of age must be due in the first place to a decrease in the mother's milk-gift. Decline sets in round about the time of *vaseb-angai* and it is almost a matter of course that the ceremony is looked upon by the mother as a sign to resume participation in sexual intercourse, which is inaugurated by a new *otiv-bombari*, a common feature of any feast.

Very little is known about the early treatment and disciplining of the children. We know for sure that children are welcome. All authors

²⁴ Cf. Ch. XIII section 3, Sexual Rites.

²⁵ Below, p. 815. That older women were not excluded from *otiv-bombari* may be inferred from what has been stated on p. 103 regarding *otiv-bombari* and quadripartition.

²⁶ Rep. Depop. Team p. 158 and Dr. Luyken in the annexed report on nutrition, pp. 9 f.

²⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. I p. 35; Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 124.

agree that the Marind are anxious to have children. On this point Vertenten is somewhat more specific: "they take special pride in a son and in the past — if a girl was really unwanted — the baby was strangled by the father immediately after birth".²⁸ The explanation given is surprising; it is in flat contradiction with the desire to have children and with the many privations parents put up with during the first months of the babies' lives. That children who have been born out of wedlock are killed is quite another matter; they are *déma*-children and simply should never have been born.²⁹ The killing of legitimate children certainly is unusual and Vertenten is the only author who makes mention of such infanticide and then even in a rather perfunctory way, dating the practice back to an undefined past without giving so much as the slightest indication when and why a girl was unwanted. There is no sense in resorting to hypotheses; there may always be circumstances in which the coming of a child is undesirable and the main point is that under such circumstances action is taken when the child is a girl and not when he is a boy. Evidently, there is a predilection for boys, a preference well in harmony with other traits of Marind-anim culture. Killing must have been an exception anyhow. Commenting on the practice of abortion, the Depopulation Team write: "The Marind did not know of any contraceptive devices. On the other hand, they knew herbs the use of which promoted fertility, and even such as affected the sex of the child. Abortion by mechanical means occurred, but only incidentally. Obviously the practice was considered to run counter to tribal morals. If performed, it was done without the husband's knowledge and never when pregnancy had already become visible".³⁰ Unfortunately, the Team's statement is not fully convincing. For instance, it overlooks the Marind's belief that the use of *wati* by women is conducive to infertility.³¹ In the second place, premarital pregnancy is dealt with as if it were always a consequence of *otiv-bombari* and not of simple intercourse between lovers or of initiation in the *mayo*-cult.³² We must make do with a somewhat less sweeping conclusion than the Team's, viz. that generally the Marind wanted children and that there was a strong feeling against preventive measures which, nevertheless, in some cases might be resorted to.

²⁸ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 16; J.P. 1921 p. 386.

²⁹ See below, p. 155.

³⁰ Rep. Depop. Team p. 76.

³¹ Cf. above, p. 21.

³² Cf. the context of the *passus* just quoted, and below, p. 528.

That children were welcome is amply confirmed by the numerous feasts attendant upon their growing up and the explicit way in which the child was made the centre of the celebration. When the child is brought to the village from the *oram-aha*, the women one after another take him in their arms, after the mother's brother has performed the initial ceremony. The next feast, that of putting the child in a *vaseb*, has a similar character. One after another the various relatives put the child in the sitting-bag, which is held out by the mother. A grandmother or an aunt made the bag.³³ In his description of a third ceremony, that of discarding the *vaseb* because the child needs no longer be carried, Vertenten relates how all the relatives turn up, one after another, to put the child for the last time in his sitting-bag.³⁴ A fourth ceremony is that of *barar-angai*, the feast of the *barar*, the upperarmlet of plaited rattan. The *barar* is the child's first ornament and it is his mother's brother who gives it to him. *Barar-angai* is celebrated pretty early in the child's life, when it is between three and four years old. When a girl, she will on this occasion get a simple string round the abdomen to which, at a much later stage, the *nowa* (apron) is to be fastened.³⁵ The period of infancy comes to an end with *ihir-angai*, the feast to celebrate the piercing of the earlobes. Again it is the mother's brother who performs the act. Afterwards, the holes are enlarged, gradually though persistently, till they have come to look like real deformations. The piercing of the earlobes is the first ceremony the children go through consciously. The parents do much to make it an occasion. The little ones are painted red from head to foot and decorated with big ornaments of nautilus-shell. If possible, there is a pig feast and the little hero is made to stand on a dead pig while the operation is executed. As a matter of fact, the same happens with the child receiving his first upperarmlet.³⁶ The child is always in the centre. He must stand on the pig killed for the occasion or, if there is no pig, on the pile of food which has been amassed for the celebration. The child is, so it seems, explicitly and deliberately connected with what makes the pride of any feast-giver: the food.

Of course, not all feasts are really big occasions. If the child is the first-born male member of a new generation in a large family-group, the feast will be bigger than for a second or third child or for a girl

³³ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 18.

³⁴ Vertenten, I.L. II p. 355.

³⁵ Wirz, M.A. I p. 40 jo. IV p. 18.

³⁶ Cf. below, p. 844.

born into a small group. One of the feasts mentioned may even be omitted, viz. that of discarding the *vaseb*. It is not impossible that it is combined with *barar-angai*, just like *vaseb-angai* may be combined with the reception of the child into the village community. The main point in this context is the great attention paid to the various stages of the child's development: its entrance into the village, its being able to sit up, to walk, its having its first armlet and being big enough to have his or her earlobes pierced. On all these occasions, as in their previous seclusion, the parents demonstrate a loving care for the child such as is rarely shown in other Papuan cultures.

Piercing the earlobes marks the end of infancy, because from now on the child, when a boy, will sleep with his father in the men's house. It is the boy's first step towards participating in the pattern of segregation of the sexes. It is, as yet, not a very important step. It does not imply a change in the boy's status. He still goes naked and may go wherever he wishes, play with the girls and associate with the women if he wishes to do so. At a later stage in his life he will be placed under a much stricter control, but for the time being the change in his life is a very gradual one. We would like to know what the proper age is for the ceremony of piercing the earlobes. Unfortunately, the two authors who have an opinion on this point, Nollen and Wirz, do not agree. According to the former the age is seven or eight in the case of a boy, eight or ten when a girl is concerned, whereas Witz puts the age at four or five.³⁷ Apparently there is a good deal of variation in this matter.

We may revert now to the treatment and disciplining of the children. So long as they are sucklings the children are entirely the charge of the mothers or, at least, of the women. The segregation of the sexes does not give the father much opportunity to occupy himself with the child. Geurtjens writes that the father seemingly does not trouble himself much about the baby. As long as the baby is not able to walk, one never sees a man carry the child; at best he may hold it to play with the little one for a few rare moments. As soon as the child is able to walk, he is sometimes seen riding on his father's shoulders, but more often on his mother's, even if she has to carry a heavy load besides.³⁸

It must be the mother who does the early disciplining of the child, but we know nothing of how she goes about it. Among the numerous

³⁷ Nollen, *Anthr.* 1909 pp. 560 and 568; Wirz, *M.A.* I p. 41.

³⁸ Geurtjens, *M&M* 1929 p. 124.

observers of Marind-anim customs there is not one woman, while of all the men not one has bothered about such trivial things as toilet-training. Nevertheless, the Marind are very sensitive on this point. They abhor excrements and pigs and dogs are often beaten or dealt a vicious kick because they soil the village grounds.³⁹ Defecating is done along the beach, preferably at low tide. The aversion from excrements is an attitude which must have been developed early in life, though we do not know how.

Infants-in-arms are called *hon-a-hon*, but as soon as they have learned to walk a distinction is made according to sex between *patur* (boys) and *kivasom* (girls). While very young, they stay with their mothers, but gradually they take to playing with other children. There is no strict segregation of the sexes among the children, though the girls will more often accompany their mothers when they go to work in the gardens than the boys. Growing older, boys and girls increasingly prefer the company of their own sex; the segregation initiated by making the boys sleep in the men's house instead of the women's house forms a stage in this gradual development. As far as can be ascertained, there is little disciplining of children. Wirz assures us that the children's youth is in no way marred,⁴⁰ a statement fully confirmed by the remarks made in passing by other authors. On this point Verschueren writes: "Very little, indeed, has been published on the freedom the children enjoy. That freedom was and is even now rather considerable. In practice the children do as they please. They amuse themselves with all sorts of games and they are almost always together, forming small groups. In the morning and the evening they find their meals prepared and all day long one or more grandmothers keep an eye on them. As a rule the old folks are treated in an anything but friendly way. It rarely happens that older people order the children away when they have something to discuss and from their earliest youth the little ones are quite familiar with the ins and outs of adult life. Moreover, older people often play with children by touching their genitals. When children do the same to their equals, their behaviour meets with roars of laughter. Sexually the children are free and even formal efforts to copulate draw forth a big laugh. Of course, all that changes when segregation becomes a fact".⁴¹

³⁹ Vertenten, J.P. 1924 p. 630 and below, p. 655.

⁴⁰ Wirz, M.A. I p. 41.

⁴¹ Verschueren, Letters III p. 5.

Verschueren touches on a controversial point. Wirz informs us that "Kinder mit peinlicher Prüderie von allem Obszönen ferngehalten [werden]",⁴² that from children all things obscene are prudishly kept away, a surprising contention and, as it stands, certainly an overstatement. Nevertheless, we find it confirmed by other authors, notably Vertenten, who is more careful in his phraseology than Wirz: certain words must not be used in the presence of children.⁴³ Evidently, the children's freedom to imitate adult life is not unlimited. Neither is their freedom generally. They are not allowed to make noise in the village, especially not during the time when the men, having taken their *wati*, want to enjoy a nap.⁴⁴ If they do, they are packed off and generally retire to the beach, their favourite playground, where they indulge in all the many games they are fond of.

They do not wholly go without their share of disciplining either. It is true that they may join in when older people are talking, but nevertheless they are taught to pay respect to older people, especially to the *samb-anim*, the leading men of the village. "The rule of politeness in these parts is that the young must serve the old. When you make a trip in company with a group of boys and you ask one of the older ones among them to get you a young coconut because you are thirsty, he will promptly tell a younger companion: 'climb a coconut tree', but even while he is still speaking, the other is already looking about him to find out if there is not a still younger mate. The system obviously has the advantage that children, usually being spoiled so long as they were with their mothers, immediately have to bestir themselves and be helpful if they wish to be accepted as true *patur*".⁴⁵ Evidently a first disciplining begins as soon as they have become inmates of the men's house, a disciplining which in actual practice is effectuated by their older mates rather than by the men themselves. Living in a kind of gang, the boys drill each other on the basis of the rule that the juniors are at the beck and call of their seniors and have to win complete acceptance by living up to the rules.

In all this the boys are not wholly left to their own devices. Their fathers will make toy-bows for them. One of the favourite pastimes is to shoot toy-arrows into ants' or wasps' nests high up in the trees,

⁴² Wirz, M.A. I p. 69.

⁴³ Vertenten, J.P. 1924 p. 630.

⁴⁴ Cf. Vertenten, I.L. III p. 373; J.P. 1920 p. 224; J.P. 1924 p. 631; Verschueren, Letters II p. 2c.

⁴⁵ Vertenten, J.P. 1924 p. 630.

or to practise aiming at live birds or a moving target such as a wooden disc set rolling over the beach.⁴⁶ A number of children's games and pastimes have been mentioned by Wirz.⁴⁷ With the exception of making cat's cradles and plaited toys the games described are those of boys. Boys' games not mentioned by Wirz but evidently quite popular are: playing headhunters going on an expedition and inter-village fighting.⁴⁸ The Marind were a warlike race and combat-training began early in life, not in the form of deliberate instruction of the young by the old, but in that of voluntary imitation of the old by the young. Bright-eyed, freely moving and happy, the young Marind-anim boy was a fine specimen of untroubled and uninhibited youth.

2. YOUTH

In devoting special attention to the period of growing-up the Marind-anim follow a pattern which is not altogether exceptional among the peoples in this area. Up to an extent we find a similar emphasis among the Trans-Fly people, who expect rapid growth from the practice of sodomy.⁴⁹ The Marind-anim, however, made growing-up a focus of cultural life. They instituted age-grades and their numerous feasts are in one way or another combined with age-grade ceremonies. In principle these ceremonies are family affairs, but different households will join hands, eventually procuring the co-operation of the entire village. These feasts will be described later in this book. Here we have to confine ourselves to the aspects of family life and growing-up.

The age-differences made by the Marind-anim are: ⁵⁰

FOR MALES

patur, from the time the boy can walk till he enters the *gotad*, which is the time when the first pubic hair appears.

FOR FEMALES

kiavasom, from the time the girl can walk till some time before adolescence.

⁴⁶ Gooszen, NRC 21 Feb. 1908 page I A.

⁴⁷ Wirz, M.A. I pp. 80 ff.

⁴⁸ Cf. below, pp. 751, 692.

⁴⁹ Cf. Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 158, 194 and 308 f.

⁵⁰ On the age-groups of the Marind see Wirz, M.A. I pp. 37-62; Nollen, Anthr. 1909 pp. 553-573; Geurtjens, Dict. under the various native terms.

FOR MALES

FOR FEMALES

aroi-patur, from his entry into the *gotad* till the time his hair has grown long enough to be plaited into a hairdo, which makes him a

wokraved (pl. *wokrévid*) for the next two or three years, after which he becomes an

éwati, adolescent young man. The period may last up to about three years. Then the *éwati* leaves the *gotad* as a

miakim, marriageable man, a term also indicative of any adult man, whether married or not.

amngib is the term for a married man, used when stress is laid on the fact that the *miakim* is married.

mes-miakim, old (lit. mature) man.

wahuku, from the age of 10 or 11 until puberty approaches.

kivasom-iwag, adolescent young woman, an age-grade the parallel of that of *éwati*.

iwag, marriageable woman, but also any adult woman, whether married or not.

sav is the term for a married woman, used when stress is laid on the fact that the *iwag* is married.

mes-iwag, old woman.

Some of the age-groups are typical age-grades; they cover a span of a few years only, they confer a well-defined status and their members are characterized by a distinctive ornamentation, while admission into the group is attended with some ceremony. This is more specifically the case with *aroi-patur*, *wokrévid* and *éwati* among the male, with *wahuku* and *kivasom-iwag* among the female adolescents. *Miakim* and *iwag* are no longer real age-grades. There is no definite transition to the next age-group and one is a *miakim* or an *iwag* for the better part of one's life. Yet, becoming a *miakim* or an *iwag* is an important ceremony and the young *miakim* or *iwag*, beautifully adorned with the decorations proper to their group, definitely look like members of an age-grade following upon that of *éwati* and *kivasom-iwag*, more particularly so during the short period preceding their marriage.

The distinctive ornament of the age-groups, and more specifically of the age-grades, is the elaborate hairdo. Though rather widely spread

in South New Guinea, this type of hairdo is a Marind-anim specialty. With them it attained its fullest application and was elaborated into what may be called, if not a work of art, then at least an artful work. Each age-group has its own fashionings, some of them so elaborate that the plaitings reach below the buttocks.⁵¹ All these different shapes represent as many combinations of vegetable fibre and palm-leaves artfully plaited into the hair. Previously, the hair has been properly arranged by braiding a few hairs at a time into thin pigtails, *mayub*, a great number of which are required. These *mayub*, which may be up to 40 cm in length when the hair is long, are wound with vegetable fibre. These strands may be kept apart or combined, depending on the style in which the hairdo is fashioned when, next, fresh fibre and palm-leaves are plaited into it, which completes the coiffure. The finishing touch is applied by anointing the hair with coconut oil and by painting it in the specific colour required. The weight of this hairdo is considerable; even more considerable is the work involved. Plaiting the *mayub* is a women's task; it is one of the duties of a *binahor*-mother towards the neophyte. The arranging of the lengthenings, the repeated readjusting, tending, and redoing of the hairdo require a great deal of work and mutual help which, apparently, are readily given. Strangely enough, we never hear of people complaining that nobody wanted to help them arrange their hairdo. In view of the tremendous amount of work involved we would expect that finding the necessary assistance would have been rather difficult. Obviously it was not; plaiting a hairdo was apparently a pleasant and gratifying occupation.

As the different types of hairdo have been elaborately described by Wirz and Nollen, there is no need further to go into details. The relevant sources are easily accessible to anybody who wishes more specific information. For our purpose a survey of the different age-grades and the feasts concomitant with each is more important.

The life of a *patur* was described in the preceding section. Although the older *patur* sleeps in the men's house, sex-differences are not yet important in his life. The boy goes naked, though he may wear a number of ornaments. His hair is worn short, with the exception of one tuft of hair which, dependent on its form and place, is associated with an animal or a thing belonging to the totem-relations of the child's clan.

The boy is made an *aroi-patur* when pubic hairs begin to appear.

⁵¹ Cf. Plates VI to VIII.

The term is supposed to be derived from *arui*, to burn, because the *aroi-patur's* body is entirely blackened with a mixture of coconut oil and a powder of charred sago-leaves and *payum-nuts* (*Aleurites moluccana*, Malay: *kamiri*).⁵² His installation as an *aroi-patur* marks the end of the boy's freedom. From now on he is not allowed to be in the village or on the beach in the daytime. His abode is the *gotad*. There he goes before daybreak, to return after nightfall to the men's house where he will join his *binahor-évai*, the man who is his mentor and who sees to it that the boy obeys the rules incumbent on him. These rules are the same as those for a *wokraved*. They must be particularly careful not to be seen by women and they are not allowed to take part in any dance or feast, not even those held at night. When there is a dance the *aroi-patur* and *wokrévid* may be locked up in one of the biggest men's houses.⁵³

Becoming an *aroi-patur* is a festive occasion. The celebration takes place in the village in the daytime. Subsequent ceremonies will also take place in the village, but toward nightfall, because when he has reached that stage the boy is no longer allowed inside the village until about sunset. Something of the meaning of the ceremony is revealed by Van de Kolk, who relates that the boy is formally addressed by three men who, each holding a spear in his hand, sum up their exploits, supplemented with the names of those they caught or killed in battle.⁵⁴ The ceremony as observed by Van de Kolk began with the boy being stood on a pile of food, after which he was smeared with black stuff from head to foot. Then his *binahor-évai* wound a long string of beads round his neck. Van de Kolk does not mention the *kimb*, the dried pig-scrotum suspended from the upperarm, which Wirz⁵⁵ calls the distinctive ornament of the *aroi-patur* (and *wokrévid*). He goes on to relate that during the ceremony the boy's mother and 'aunts', who have smeared their faces with white mud, give forth a wailing farewell. Then follows the ceremony of the formal address, whereupon the man who was third to speak hands his spear to the boy and allows him

⁵² Geurtjens, Dict. v. *pajoem*.

⁵³ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 57.

⁵⁴ Van de Kolk, Oermenschen pp. 64 ff. In his *Dämonen* (pp. 45 f.) Wirz gives a description of a boy's installation as *aroi-patur* in Okaba in April 1916, which in its every detail corresponds so much with Van de Kolk's story that it is difficult not to believe that it has been borrowed. It cannot be that Wirz witnessed the same feast as Van de Kolk did, because the latter left Okaba in 1915.

⁵⁵ Wirz, M.A. I p. 43.

to leave the pile of food. He is now made to walk over a pathway of painted coconut-leaf sheaths, *bing*, which have been arranged so as to form a long strip from the village to the beach. Surrounded by a group of young men he proceeds gingerly. When he has come near the end, they all start shouting and to the accompaniment of a considerable din the boy runs off with the men to the *gotad*.

The boy will be an *aroi-patur* for a period ranging from a couple of months (Nollen) to a year (Vertenten),⁵⁶ i.e. till his hair has grown long enough to be plaited into the *mayub*. Then, at another feast, he is made a *wokraved*. From now on he has to observe meticulously all the rules incumbent on him, i.e. the rules enjoined upon him when he became an *aroi-patur*. For the first time he wears a head-dress which is painted black, same as his body. The *wokraved* is not given a pubic cover. He goes naked like the *patur*. Remarkable in some of the photographs is the somewhat feminine touch in the countenance of the *wokraved*.⁵⁷ Vertenten says that there is something Egyptian about his features.⁵⁸ The Marind themselves are more explicit: jeeringly the *wokraved* is called a girl, a qualification apparently referring to his role in the homosexual relationship with his *binahor*-father (and, possibly, his older mates in the *gotad*).

The difference in facial expression between *patur* and *wokraved* is surprisingly great. Instead of the bright and eager faces of the *patur*, most *wokravid* in the photographs at our disposal look either sullen or reticent. They have non-committal faces: uncommunicative,⁵⁹ lacking the winsomeness of the *patur* and the geniality displayed by many adults. The seclusion in the *gotad* has greatly affected their way of life. In the daytime they must keep away from the village and the beach, their old playing grounds; during the night they do not stay with their fathers but with their mother's brothers (or whoever is their *binahor*-father). The intimate contacts with their parental homes have not been severed, but made infrequent. Moreover, they are excluded from feasts and celebrations. No wonder that they do not like it at all. Van de Kolk is very explicit on this point and explains that the boy at becoming an *aroi-patur* does not readily give up his daily games

⁵⁶ Nollen, Anthr. 1909 p. 566; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 18.

⁵⁷ Notably those portrayed in Wirz, M.A. I Tafel 5, in Van de Kolk, Oermenschen p. 122, and Vertenten, Koppensnellers Pl. II, bottom.

⁵⁸ Vertenten, op. cit. p. 18.

⁵⁹ Wirz, M.A. I Tafel 5 fig. 2, Tafel 6 fig. 1; Dämonen photos 16 and 69; Van de Kolk, Oermenschen pp. 65, 122; Vertenten, Koppensnellers Pl. II, bottom; Nollen, Anthr. 1909 Pl. H.

with friends on the beach, or change his free and easy life in the village for the *gotad*. Sometimes the *aroi-patur* will stealthily return to the village and wash the soot off his body.⁶⁰

Once a *wokraved* the boy is submitted to a far stricter control than before. The ban on being seen by women must be taken seriously, even though there are always a few women, such as his mother and aunts, who do not come under the prohibition.⁶¹ Some woman must bring the boy his food. Moreover, staying overnight in the men's house of his *binahor-évai*, he can hardly avoid being seen by the women of the adjacent women's house. It is the boy's duty to assist his *binahor*-father in gardening and hunting, to fetch coconuts for him and to render him various small services.⁶² What further happens in the *gotad* is not clear. We read occasionally that here the boys are under the supervision of one or more older people and it is suggested that they are instructed in tribal traditions, but the relative information is so extremely vague as to be practically useless. One thing, however, is more or less certain, viz. that the boys are coached with a view to headhunting expeditions. Headhunting held a great attraction for the young people and they were encouraged by the older men to become brave warriors.⁶³ The *gotad* was, indeed, a preferred meeting-place of married men when they had to discuss matters which they did not want to be overheard by the women. It offered a perfect opportunity for telling the boys all the old stories of their adventures. Furthermore, the *gotad* is also a hotbed of sodomy and masturbation and once the boys have reached the next age-grade, that of *évati*, they will not leave it in a hurry by entering into early matrimony.⁶⁴ So long as the boy is still *wokraved*, however, there is nobody who cares very much about his feelings. Feasting and merry-making is for the *évati*, not for the *wokravid* and there is no doubt that the disciplining to which they are subjected is for a good deal done by their senior companions in seclusion. On the other hand, we should be careful not to overemphasize the element of privation. Even in his seclusion the boy enjoys a good deal of freedom and so long as he stays away from village and beach he may go wherever he wishes. He also participates in headhunting raids and

⁶⁰ Van de Kolk, Oermenschen p. 62; Wirz, M.A. I p. 45.

⁶¹ Vertenten, I.L. I p. 818; Gooszen, NRC 21 febr. 1908 page I A: "Only older married women may enter the *gotad*".

⁶² Wirz, M.A. I p. 42.

⁶³ Verschuieren, Letters III p. 5. On the supervision the older men exercised over the inmates of the *gotad* see i.a. Geurtjens, Ann. 1916 p. 282.

⁶⁴ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 45 f.

we may be sure that on such occasions the general ban on his visiting the beach is lifted. The element of privation is strongest in his exclusion from feasts. Consequently, there is no particular stress on adornment or body-care. Of the *aroi-patur* Vertenten says that they are dirty because they are no longer allowed to visit the beach and thus cannot indulge anymore in their old habit of sea-bathing.⁶⁵ The same may be taken to hold true of the *wokravid*. During this period they submit to the painful operation of having both the septum of the nose and the two wings pierced. Actually, they will do this themselves, subsequently gradually enlarging the holes, particularly that through the septum so as to be able to wear a boar's tusk or some other ornament in it. The holes in the wings may serve to accommodate any object by way of ornament. There is no ceremony attendant upon the piercing of the nose.

Summing up, we conclude that the elements of disciplining and of being subservient to others, also in homosexual relationships, prevail and make for a sharp contrast with the free-and-easy life of the *patur*. The boy remains in the *wokraved*-grade till he is about 16 years of age, that is, for a period of some two or three years.⁶⁶ Wirz states that the boy will be *wokraved* till his *mayub* have grown so long that they reach down to his shoulders,⁶⁷ but adds that this is a very arbitrary way of defining the age-limit. In reality, the arrival of the moment of transition to the next age-grade is conditioned by many factors, such as the availability of the means to give a good feast through a joint effort with other families who have to celebrate a similar occasion, or the co-operation of the *binahor*-father, who, if childless himself, may prefer to have the boy as a helper for as long as humanly possible.⁶⁸

The corresponding female age-grade is that of *wahuku*, which the girl attains well before adolescence.⁶⁹ On this occasion she is given her first *nowa*: a small apron made of bark fibre, tied in front and at the back to the string round her waist and passing between the legs. The *nowa* is the public cover for all females of all ages. It is usually painted black and is of a very modest size. The giving of the *nowa* is

⁶⁵ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 17 f.

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.* p. 18.

⁶⁷ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 47.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 45.

⁶⁹ According to Nollen (*Anthr.* 1909 p. 557) and Wirz (*M.A.* I pp. 58, 59); according to Geurtjens (*Dict. v. wahaekoe*) at the age of puberty.

made a festive occasion. Apparently the girl's hair has been allowed to grow for some time previous to the ceremony, because she is also given her first hairdo. The hairdo is painted brick-red.

From now on the girl stops playing with boys. It does not make any major change in her life, because as an older *kivasom* she already preferred the company of her sex-mates to playing in mixed groups. In other respects, too, the change is not a very important one. She continues to stay with her mother. What affects her most is that she now has to come under the supervision of her *yarang*-parents. She will help her *yarang*-mother in the garden, she lends a hand in sago-pounding and helps carrying loads of food or firewood. Our information on her activities is scanty. We are assured that she is not allowed to associate with boys and that in this respect she is under the strict surveillance of her *yarang*-parents. Though the girls of the next higher age-grade are said to be under similar surveillance with regard to their contacts with boys, the older girls have opportunities to meet the opposite sex which are not mentioned in respect of the *wahuku*. There are, indeed, indications that the *wahuku* has to avoid boys more strictly than the older girls have to.⁷⁰ Nor do our authors emphasize the care given to bodily decoration and primping, as they do in respect of the older girls. On the contrary: Nollen confines his comment on the *wahuku* to a short resumé of the different duties she has to fulfil, and Vertenten mentions the dirtiness of the *aroi-patur* and the *wahuku* in the same breath: formerly they played on the beach every day and splashed about in the waves, but that is now impossible. They do not care for cleanliness and their bodies are often covered with crusts of old paint and dirt.⁷¹

Apparently their position is roughly equivalent to that of the *wokrévid*: they are disciplined to work, and though they are not secluded or isolated, they are under rather strict supervision. As with the *wokrévid*, their promotion to the next age-grade may be postponed if the *yarang*-parents have no children and wish to stretch the benefit of their daily help in the household.⁷² There is no certainty as to the age at which the girl changes this age-grade for the next. According to Wirz this happens when she has already reached puberty;⁷³ other authors do not mention any age. The different photographs said to

⁷⁰ Cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 51, note 185.

⁷¹ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 17 f.

⁷² Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 45.

⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 59.

represent *wahuku* and *kivasom-iwag* make it probable that she will not become a *kivasom-iwag* until some time after having reached puberty.

His promotion to *éwati* is a big event in the boy's life. It implies an important change in status. The *éwati*, though forbidden to visit the village in the daytime, may join in the nocturnal feasts and dances in the village or on the beach, he need no longer hide from women, the soot is washed off his body and he may paint his face in any such bright colours as Marind-anim technology is able to provide, even though black is the dominating hue. Corn. op 't Land pointed out to me that from Wirz's description it follows that the *éwati's* body continues to be painted black. As a matter of fact, Wirz states that on the occasion of his promotion the *éwati's* body is anointed with *payum*.⁷⁴ Painting the body red is the prerogative of the *miakim* and, on the occasion of a feast, of girls and small children.⁷⁵ In spite of this black paint on the *éwati's* body the general overtone is not dark. The effect of the black foundation is more than offset by his numerous colourful ornaments. Other than the *wokrawed*, who is dirty and stinks, the *éwati* adorns his body and rubs it with sweet-scenting herbs. Of course his hairdo is changed and his maternal uncle hands him his first pubic shell on the festive occasion of his promotion. He is also given a finely decorated bow and a stone-headed club. Our sources do not identify the giver of the club, which is the most valuable present he receives on this occasion. Wirz confines himself to the statement that the young man is very proud of the club and always carries it about with him, because he knows his weapon to be an heirloom.⁷⁶ His ornaments include a couple of long feathers in his headgear, a great number of earrings made of cassowary-quills, pieces of nautilus-shell hanging on his breast and a boar's tusk or some other ornament worn through the septum. Special mention is made by Wirz of the *pur*, a dagger made of the bone of a stork and worn under the upperarmring. According to Wirz this instrument, used for the scraping out of coconut meat, is a favourite item in the ceremonial exchange of gifts with girls (*parané*). Earlier we pointed out that it actually is the boy who receives the *pur* on the occasion of his betrothal.⁷⁷

The *éwati* is, to all intents and purposes, a man. The one thing he

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 48; *payum* gives a black colour: cf. above, p. 146.

⁷⁵ Cf. i.a. Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 24 and above, p. 139.

⁷⁶ Wirz, *M.A. I* p. 50.

⁷⁷ Above, p. 129.

is not allowed to do is to come into the village in the daytime. Whether he is allowed to visit the beach beyond the immediate vicinity of the village is not clear. No interdiction is mentioned, but the paucity of our sources on this point can hardly be used as an argument in favour.⁷⁸ However that may be, in all other matters the *éwati* enjoys great freedom. Growing older, he may marry and he need no longer obey his *binahor-éwai*.⁷⁹ However, he is in no hurry to marry, as he finds much gratification in his status of *éwati*. The *éwati* play an important role in the different dances, they spend whole days primping, they are so much admired that they draw low whistles from people meeting them.⁸⁰ In warfare and in hunting-parties the *éwati* lead the van.⁸¹ As a matter of fact, they are always ready to start a fight.⁸²

There are two points mentioned by Wirz which need some comment: the connection between this age-grade and initiation, and the freedom of the *éwati* to associate with girls of the parallel age-grade. Wirz states that the older *éwati* are initiated into the secret cults and participate in all ceremonies,⁸³ but in his *Dämonen und Wilde* he mentions the case of a promotion feast at which the candidate was adorned with the distinctive ornaments of a young man who has been initiated into the *mayo-* or *imo-*cult. He adds that initiation into these cults, though formally no longer practised, was still going on in secret at the time of his visit to Domandé (ultimo 1916).⁸⁴ Wirz does not mention the age-grade of the candidate, but from his description it is obvious that it was a *wokraved* being raised to *éwati*-status. In other words: the *éwati*-grade need not necessarily be the stage at which initiation takes place. It may happen at an earlier as well as a later age, but this is a point which had better be discussed when we have dealt with the various initiation cults of the Marind.⁸⁵

The information given on the relations of the *éwati* with the opposite sex is contradictory, at least, as far as girls are concerned. There is

⁷⁸ Wirz's statement (op. cit. p. 46): "Als *Ewati* ist ihm bereits alles erlaubt, ausgenommen, dass er am Tage das Dorf vermeiden muss" is in such general terms as not to warrant being taken too literally.

⁷⁹ Wirz, l.c.

⁸⁰ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 19.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Cf. Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 113.

⁸³ Wirz, M.A. I p. 46.

⁸⁴ Idem, *Dämonen* p. 126.

⁸⁵ See below, pp. 670 ff.

no doubt that relations with married women were strictly forbidden.⁸⁶ On the *éwati's* relations with girls Wirz, in his enthusiastic description of the good time the young man was having then, states: "In the daytime he meets the girls in the bush or in the gardens and at night on the beach, where they make *parané*, i.e. protestations of love by exchanging earrings and other ornaments. Nobody objects to premarital sexual intercourse if both parties agree".⁸⁷ Now the latter statement is amazing. On the preceding page the author asserted that, in general, people watch over the chastity of a girl so long as she is not married, and on p. 60 he states that, for the record at least, premarital sexual intercourse does not occur. All authors except Wirz and, up to an extent, Nollen, agree that — apart from initiation into the *mayo-ritual* — premarital sexual intercourse is forbidden to the girls and, in consequence, to the boys. Wirz's account of *parané* does not strengthen his case. *Parané* is a formal exchange of ornaments to announce the betrothal of a boy and a girl who have agreed to marry, and not the kind of exchange accompanying ordinary love-making.⁸⁸ An argument in favour of the actual premarital chastity of the girls is that at the time venereal granulome was rampant the girls did not suffer from it, but were infected as soon as they married and joined in promiscuous intercourse. Of course this does not rule out occasional intercourse with a boyfriend, because the latter was also excluded from promiscuous rites. However, if the boys could not be infected that way, they could be infected through homosexual relationships⁸⁹ and thus transmit the disease to a girlfriend. We are forced to conclude, then, that the *éwati's* opportunities for heterosexual intercourse were rather limited. That these limits were not very narrow seems probable from what our sources communicate on the *kivasom-iwag*, the girls of the age-grade parallel to that of *éwati*.

The term *kivasom-iwag* is not presented as indicating an age-grade per se by every author dealing with Marind age-grades. Vertenten, in the short resumé in his *Koppensnellers*, only mentions the *iwag*, the next age-grade. Geurtjens, in his Dictionary, defines the *kivasom-iwag* as a *wahuku* recently promoted to *iwag*-status (s.v. *kivasom*). On the

⁸⁶ It is interesting to note what Nollen wrote of the older *éwati*: "il se contente d'éviter les femmes; quant aux filles, c'est du menu fretin, auquel il n'a pas à prendre garde" (*Anthr.* 1909 p. 556).

⁸⁷ Wirz, M.A. I p. 47.

⁸⁸ See above, pp. 128 f.

⁸⁹ Cf. Berkhout, BKI 1919 p. 445 for a case of infection through homosexual intercourse.

other hand, both Nollen and Wirz explicitly refer to the *kivasom-ivag* as a special grade. The former even contrasts the behaviour of the *kivasom-ivag* with that of the *ivag*. The *kivasom-ivag* — Nollen writes — “is the opposite number of the *éwati*. She has the very best time of her life, being admired and celebrated by everybody. She is quite conscious of the fact that all are aware of her beauty and this incites her to careful primping. Mothers, aunts and friends vie with each other in helping her adorn herself. The girl has a special preference for walking in the neighbourhood of the *gotad* to display her glorious beauty. The *ivag* is the girl who is marriageable. Most *ivag* are engaged or have been pledged in marriage. Usually they are less keen on winning applause than the *kivasom-ivag*, as is quite natural”.⁹⁰ From this description and the elaborate details given by Wirz and Nollen of the respective ornaments we must conclude that the *kivasom-ivag* form a special grade which has to be distinguished from the *ivag*. At the same time the conclusion seems justified that such a formal distinction is not always made. The abbreviation of *kivasom-ivag* into *ivag* in everyday speech is such an obvious probability that there is every reason to accept it as an explanation of the vagueness in the differentiation between the two age-grades.

The specific hairdoes of the *kivasom-ivag* have been elaborately described by Nollen and Wirz. There are four different kinds of them, all very complicated, and the girls apply them in a certain order of succession. Our sources fail to specify how long a girl will remain a *kivasom-ivag*; the considerable variation in the successive hairdoes holds an indication that the period will be of about the same length as that of the parallel age-grade of *éwati*. Among the other ornaments of the *kivasom-ivag* Wirz mentions, next to the painting of the face, the dried pig's tails and the necklace of dog's teeth, the two feathers rising from her hairdo and also the *pur*, the bone dagger in her upperarmring and the cassowary-quill earrings, objects which may be exchanged when making *parané*. Wirz emphasizes the parallelism between the ornaments of the *éwati* and those of the *kivasom-ivag*.

Girls of this age-grade pierce the septum and the wings of the nose, without, however, widening the holes, as is customary among males. The specific adornment of the *kivasom-ivag* is the scarifications made on breast and abdomen with a sharp object. Charcoal, red earth and coconut oil, often also certain masticated herbs, are rubbed into the

⁹⁰ Nollen, *op. cit.* p. 557.

wounds, causing the cicatrices to granulate profusely. Some of the girls have an elaborate pattern of cord-like swellings on their skins. "Another ingredient which is always applied and which is used to make the body strong and solid, is semen",⁹¹ to an outsider a somewhat surprising statement, considering that other authors emphasize the chastity of the unmarried girls, a virtue which might be pretty much impaired by the application of this specific medicine. Moreover, scarification is not the only occasion requiring the application of sperma. It is also mixed with the black mud used for blackening the teeth, another 'decoration' which is the prerogative of the members of this age-grade, both male and female. Verschueren, however, points out that the medicine was not prepared in loco. The medicine-men were very mysterious about their concoctions and all that was let out to the patient was that it was a secret and surprisingly powerful medicine.⁹² Of course, all this does not imply that the *kivasom-iwag* was as chaste as she should be. It is a point on which Verschueren, too, has his doubts. She may have had an occasional lover. When the missionaries accused the Marind of sexual depravity it was not these love-affairs that prompted the charge, but the prostitution of women during *otiw-bombari*. The girl's preference for displaying her charms in the neighbourhood of the *gotad* is an indication that Wirz's doubts as to the practice of sexual abstinence are not without justification. If the ban on sexual intercourse with a *kivasom-iwag* had been taken seriously, she would not have been allowed near the *gotad*. Probably the emphasis is more on secrecy than on chastity. The one thing the girl has to avoid is to become pregnant. Children born before marriage are killed. They are said to be *déma*-children, children of the totem ancestors and for that reason unfit to live. Very often an unmarried girl who is expecting a baby will not await delivery but, wanting to avoid shame and humiliation, try to bring about abortion by such means as leaping from a tree, or being dragged over a forked tree. Cases of premarital pregnancy seem to be few, whatever the reason, though an exception must be made for the *mayo*-initiation, which was a frequent cause of premarital pregnancy,⁹³ a fact which may explain the term *déma*-children. Having been procreated during the *mayo*-rites, they might be looked upon as the products of the *déma* impersonated during the rites. We may accept then that, one way or another, the *kivasom-iwag* does not enjoy

⁹¹ Wirz, M.A. I p. 90.

⁹² Verschueren, Letters III p. 5.

⁹³ See below, pp. 187, 496 and 528.

complete sexual freedom. At the same time we are told that, though she will do garden-work together with the other women, she is excused from strenuous work and from the carrying of heavy loads. The *kivasom-iwag* (and the same holds true of the *iwag*) has to preserve her good looks. In the case of females, plumpness is highly appreciated in Marind-anim society and until marriage this specific asset is cultivated according to capacity.⁹⁴ Nollen, to whom we owe this piece of information, adds that the Marind-anim jealously watch their young women and do not permit any infringement of morals by strangers, several Chinese and Indonesians already having paid with their heads for their impudence in word or action toward girls.⁹⁵ Here again, then, we meet with the same emphasis on youth and its glamour as we found to prevail with the *éwati*.

The status of *miakim* is reached shortly before marriage. Usually an *éwati* remains in his age-grade for a long time. Though exact data are lacking, three years may be accepted to be the rule. According to Wirz the boy may marry while still an *éwati*, but usually he will be made a *miakim* shortly before the marriage is going to be contracted. According to Vertenten the *éwati* who wants to get married makes his re-entry into the village as a *miakim* some time before his marriage.⁹⁶ Nollen defines the status of the *miakim* as that of one who is engaged to be married, while Wirz states that as a *miakim* he has all the rights of an adult man and may marry. He returns to the village to stay there, whether he marries or not. In the latter case he just remains a *miakim*.⁹⁷ Our sources tend to define the *miakim*-status as an age-grade, whereas it simple means adult man, a fact clearly borne out in the myths in which married men repeatedly are called *miakim*, and explicitly brought to my attention by Verschueren.⁹⁸

The decoration of the *miakim* is, indeed, the same as the decoration of a married man. It includes another type of hairdo (of which there

⁹⁴ Nollen, op. cit. p. 557; Wirz, Dämonen p. 107.

⁹⁵ On the upper Bian morals seem to have been less strict. Wirz (Dämonen p. 267) mentions the case of a girl (*iwag*) who was given for one night to his Indonesian boy. The deal resulted in a conflict because the boy did not pay up. It is uncertain, however, whether the *iwag* was, in fact, a girl or a married woman. In his comment on the case Verschueren tends to admit that there is a difference in sexual morals between the upper Bian people and the coastal Marind (Letters III p. 5).

⁹⁶ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 19.

⁹⁷ Nollen, op. cit. p. 556; Wirz, M.A. I p. 51.

⁹⁸ Verschueren, Letters III pp. 5 f.

are several varieties) and armrings of boar's tusks (his *binahor-évai* makes him a present of one or two pairs of tusks). The essential ornament is the *ségos*, a broad rattan belt, plaited all round and fitting so closely round the waist that it requires quite a lot of wriggling and of voluntarily given assistance to put it on. Over the *ségos* the *miakim* wears a second belt made of rushes, at the back ending in a long tail. In front this belt is decorated with a pubic shell; the shell has no other than an ornamental function because the penis is pulled up and borne in a vertical position, with the prepuce squeezed under the *ségos*. It is hard to believe that this would serve any other purpose than to symbolize the erected penis and in this opinion we are strengthened by the curious head-dress worn by the *miakim* on the special occasion of the feast at which he is promoted. It is the *zambu*, an ornament which Wirz supposes, on solid grounds, to be a symbolic representation of the male and female genitals.⁹⁹ As a reference to the *miakim's* marriage, which is near at hand, this sexual symbolism is quite appropriate. On the occasion of his promotion to *miakim* his body is painted red,¹⁰⁰ a clear indication that his isolation has come to an end. As a *wokravéd* and, up to an extent, as an *évati*, he had been black. He now returns to social life displaying similarly bright colours as he did when, as a small boy, his earlobes were pierced. It is possible that this red colour is also a sexual symbol, but our information on this point is not sufficient to permit of conclusions. It certainly is the colour of fire and probably also of life.¹⁰¹

After his marriage the *miakim* continues to wear the same ornaments and the same hairdo. If he prefers, he may change his hairdo for another coiffure. He may go on bearing his penis in a vertical position, or he may use a marine shell or a nutshell as a cover. On festive occasions he will decorate his head with a crown of feathers, either those of the cassowary or of the bird of paradise. There are many festive occasions and in his earlier years the married man, the *amngib*, is much concerned about his outward appearance. An important means of decorating is painting. There are numerous designs in face-painting, many of them having special totemic significance and as such being

⁹⁹ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 14; III p. 18; II p. 95.

¹⁰⁰ Idem, M.A. IV p. 19.

¹⁰¹ Cf. the red phallus symbolizing *Sosom's* penis (below, p. 479); the red colour of the walls of the *rapa*-house and of the utensils for fire-drilling (ibid. p. 564); the red paint on the bones of the dead (ibid. p. 773) and the red colour of the *békai*-ornament (ibid. p. 777).

each the specific prerogative of the member of the relative totem clan.¹⁰² Over the years the *amwangib* decreases the number of his ornaments. The elderly men, the *mes-miakim*, go about with hardly any ornament. Ornamentation is primarily the concern of the younger age-groups.

The *iwag* form the age-group parallel to the *miakim*. At their feast they receive their distinctive hairdo, but in other respects their ornamentation does not differ much from that of the *kivasom-iwag*. As far as can be ascertained, attaining the *iwag*-status is not as ostentatious a preliminary to forthcoming marriage as becoming a *miakim* is. None of our authors makes mention of sexual symbols in the ornamentation of the *iwag*. In contradistinction to the *miakim*, the girls seem to enter this age-group well before marriage. How long before is not made clear, but Nollen's statement is sufficiently definite for us to conclude that it must be quite a while and that becoming an *iwag* does not mean that marriage is near at hand.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, we are assured that the *iwag* is the girl about to get married, and that most *iwag* have already a lover or are engaged when they enter into this age-grade.¹⁰⁴ Marriage means for them the end of a good time. As an unmarried *iwag* the girl spends her time primping and parading about, without being urged to work. Marriage does not affect her status as an *iwag* (she may still be called an *iwag*), but as a *sav*, a married woman, she has to do her full share of the daily work. She goes over to her husband's group and after an initial period of intense participation in social life the woman gradually lays off her ornaments. Still she has her own types of hairdo, but her role in ceremonies being less important than that of the man, she will forego ornaments and painting earlier than her male partner. Her many duties and the more active part played by women in mourning over deceased relatives contribute to making her neglect her outward appearance. Too often a Marind woman out of her twenties is already well on the way to becoming an ugly hag.

Having completed our survey of the age-grades among the unmarried Marind-anim, a short discussion of some of the system's more general characteristics is well in place. The first observation to be made is concerned with the fact that the girls pass through similar age-grades as the boys. Both sets of age-grades are characterized by special types

¹⁰² Cf. Wirz, M.A. I p. 56.

¹⁰³ Nollen, op. cit. p. 558.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 557; Wirz, M.A. I p. 60.

of hairdo. Such an equal treatment of boys and girls is, to a certain extent, unusual in New Guinea, where more often than not girls are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis boys. Among the Marind-anim the equal treatment of boys and girls even includes initiation into the *mayo*-ceremonies and participation of the women, be it in minor roles, in the great pantomimes where the mythical ancestors are represented, and in various other rites. Nevertheless, there is no such thing as emancipation. All important roles in ritual are the prerogatives of the male sex. Considering the age-grades again, it is obvious that the female grades are by no means on the same level as the male ones. They lack the all-important features of seclusion and segregation. Therefore it is of consequence to note that the feast to celebrate an age-grade promotion of a girl is a less weighty affair than when a boy is concerned. An integral element of the feasts round the elevation of a boy is the small hut or the roofed bench constructed for the candidate, who sits there in full view, to be admired by his family and friends. For a girl, however, such a hut is not usually built.¹⁰⁵ The conclusion is obvious. The hut does not only serve as a platform for the candidate, but also as a place where the pig or pigs, slaughtered for the celebration, are carved up. A pig feast may be arranged for the promotion of a boy, but not for that of a girl. The celebration of her feast is a much simpler affair and it is certainly not by accident that among the numerous descriptions of age-grade promotions those dealing with the feast of a girl are few. These feasts were not spectacular and we are inclined to conclude that the age-grades of the girls are rather copies of those of the boys than a genuine institution in its own right.

In this conclusion we are confirmed by the circumstance that the female age-grades are less comprehensive than their male counterparts. They have no parallel for the *aroi-patur* grade and for their second age-grade there is not even a really notional term. *Kivasom-iwag* might be translated by girl-woman; it is a term which has, to all intents and purposes, been coined for the occasion. Besides, the fairly frequent manifestations of travesty might well be as many symptoms of the tendency among young females to copy the customs of the males. Unfortunately, our information on this point is defective and equivocal. According to Wirz, on festive occasions the young men (*éwati*) often adopt female hairdoes, while the girls take those of the *éwati*.¹⁰⁶ The

¹⁰⁵ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. I p. 62.

statement is of a very general nature and we are confronted with the remarkable fact that the few specific cases of travesty we know of are all cases of girls parading as *éwati*. The first of these cases is that of the *makan hawn* ceremony, the procession to the places that used to be frequented by one recently dead. The procession is headed by one or two girls decorated as *éwati*.¹⁰⁷ The second is that of the *ita-wahuku*, the girl whose elder brother died when he was an *éwati*. When the mourning-period is over such a girl adopts the hairdo and decorations of an *éwati*. If she is a *wahuku* she is called an *ita-wahuku*.¹⁰⁸ A last case which may be cited is the *déma*-performance executed by women.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, not one case is mentioned of a man parading as a woman, except for Wirz's general statement referred to above. The cases in which a man impersonates a female *déma* in a ritual performance must not be taken into account. They are of a different order. In conclusion we state that the inclination to copy the other sex seems to be a good deal stronger among the women than among the men.

A second important point is that juvenescence can be divided into three periods. The first, that of pre-adolescent youth, is a period of freedom in which the children are not much hampered by supervision. The second period, that of early adolescence, is a period of disciplining, harder on the boy than on the girl, but rather effective in either case. During this period their freedom is seriously curtailed, they are treated with some severity, they have to work, to obey their mentors, and their status is an inferior one. As far as the boys are concerned the disciplining is directed toward two main objectives: inculcating respect for older people and those in power generally, and the fostering of a warlike spirit. It is interesting to note that the most effective expedient in this disciplining is not the exhortations of the adult, but the accepted leadership of the seniors in the gang. As *patur* the boys have already learned to obey the senior members of the gang when playing warlike games on the beach. The group occupying the *gotad* is, in fact, the continuation of the old gang of *patur*. The code of behaviour in the group favours the acceptance of discipline as well as the development of a warlike spirit. At the same time the adults have the situation well in hand. A boy cannot become an *éwati* without the co-operation of his *binahor*-father and the two family-groups which have to arrange

¹⁰⁷ See below, pp. 795 f.

¹⁰⁸ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *wahoeke*.

¹⁰⁹ Below, p. 859.

for the relevant feast. Whether he likes it or not, he has to conform to the prescribed patterns of behaviour.

The third period, that of late adolescence, is a glorious period. The youngsters are not expected to do any hard work, the girls are even fattened, they are admired because of their youth and beauty and they get every opportunity for showing off during dances and feasts. This period is explicitly a period of joy, beauty and happiness, for the boys also a period of showing their prowess during headhunting expeditions. It is remarkable that this period is combined with seclusion, even though the seclusion is by no means as strict as it is for the younger adolescent. In this respect the Marind apparently take the same stand as other South New Guinea peoples who rationalize seclusion as a means to promote growth. We find this among the Keraki and among the Elema, the latter even emphasizing the fact that as a special result of seclusion the boys are said to put on considerably more weight. It is interesting to note that, among the latter, the return from seclusion used to be followed by marriage within a couple of weeks, a striking parallel with the return of the *éwati* to the village on the day he is made a *miakim*.¹¹⁰ Here the parallel ends, because seclusion among the Elema does not last longer than 9 months or a year at most, whereas the Marind-anim youth is segregated from village life for many years. Another difference is that the Marind are not reported to expect increased weight or growth to result from seclusion. On the contrary, they hold the former effect to be produced by the good time the girls are allowed to have during the years they live in the village as *kivasom-iwag* or as *iwag*. The growth of the boys — if ascribed to any special cause — seems to be more directly associated with homosexual intercourse, a point to which we shall return when discussing the cults.¹¹¹

A last observation to be made is concerned with the parallelism of the age-grades, which results in marriages between age-partners, another feature the Marind have in common with the Elema.¹¹² The apparent emphasis on youth among the Marind quite naturally works out into marriages between age-mates. Their youth is protected, remarkably enough protected also from early sexual intercourse. Though we are inclined to believe that premarital chastity was by no means so eagerly pursued as theory would have it, premarital intercourse was

¹¹⁰ Cf. Williams, Drama p. 76.

¹¹¹ See below, pp. 493 f.

¹¹² Williams, op. cit. p. 54.

certainly not encouraged and we may well accept that the opportunities were more or less limited. Here again a comparison with the Elema is instructive: there the secluded ones were instructed to abstain from intercourse with girls because it would impede their prosperous growth. There, too, the youngsters conform only temporarily to the rule imposed on them.¹¹³

3. ADULT LIFE

The choice of a marriage-partner and the ceremony of betrothal have been discussed in the preceding chapter.¹¹⁴ The marriage-ceremony is but a small affair; conceivably so because marriage ordinarily follows a very short time after the bridegroom's promotion to adult status. Nevertheless, there is some ceremony. The bride dons a new apron, of the kind worn by married women, somewhat bigger in size than a girl's. When she leaves her hut she finds the bridegroom waiting for her. Taking her elbow, he leads her to the festive grounds, halting in front of a small hut which has been constructed for the occasion. Often, however, the bridegroom is too shy to appear in public and in such a case his *binahor-évai* substitutes for him. The bride sits down in front of the feast-hut and now relatives and friends come from all sides, offering her presents of food: bunches of bananas, blocks of sago, sweet potatoes, yams, taro, areca nuts, sugar-cane, *wati*, and even croton-twigs and water-lilies. These are piled up all around her, surrounding her like a wall. The last to present his gift is the bridegroom's *binahor-évai*. On this occasion he calls her for the first time by the *mahudi-igiz*.¹¹⁵ Then the bridegroom or his *binahor-évai* assists her in getting out from behind the wall of food. Before the ceremony began, the bride had prepared a sago-loaf which she now presents as a gift to her bridegroom's *binahor*-mother, thus signifying that, from now on, she needs no longer cook his meals. She also prepares a cup of *wati* for the bridegroom's *binahor*-father, thus paying him a special compliment. Bride and bridegroom now sit down in the centre of a ring of relatives, who address them by their new kinship-terms. Evidently they also have a meal and *wati* is served out.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Ibid. p. 77.

¹¹⁴ Above, pp. 128 f.

¹¹⁵ At least if he is indeed the one who gives the name. Cf. above, p. 130.

¹¹⁶ On the marriage-ceremony cf. Wirz, M.A. I pp. 71 ff.; Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 26 f.

After nightfall a few old women take the bride to a spot in the bush behind the village, where some sheets of eucalyptus-bark are spread out. Here *otiv-bombari* takes place, i.e. she has intercourse with all the men of her husband's clan or phratry, perhaps even with all the local members of his moiety. If there are too many men, intercourse is resumed the next night. The last to have access to her is the bridegroom. A full discussion of *otiv-bombari* and the many occasions on which it takes place is contained in section 3 of Chapter XIII, to which the reader may be referred. For the present it may suffice to note that from now on the young woman is included among the participants in a system of sexual promiscuity which is rather one of prostitution than of exchange of wives. A couple of days after her initiation into this form of sexual activity the young woman moves over to her husband's hamlet, where she usually makes her abode in her husband's mother's house.

Marriage is predominantly monogamous. Cases of bigamy are very rare, as is evidenced by the registration. Apparently the tendency to prefer age-mates for marriage-partners does not create circumstances favouring bigamy; in the few cases Vertenten noted a bigamous marriage the union did not last long, none of the spouses wishing to accept a co-spouse's position. Even when the two wives are sisters there may be fights. Vertenten registered one case of a woman who was seriously wounded in the head by her elder sister, who had refused to accept her as a co-spouse and substantiated her objections with an axe.¹¹⁷

There is very little factual information regarding divorce. Apparently none of our authors ever tried to find out how many marriages were dissolved by divorce. The registration 1930/32 does not give special information with regard to previous marriages; however, the data as collected suggest that a marriage is not lightly dissolved once there are children. The comment given by Wirz, one of the few authors mentioning divorce, tends to confirm this. He points out that divorce is easy because there is no purchase of wives involving payment of any sort. If two people grow tired of conjugal life, they simply separate. No obligations or indemnities are involved and the divorcee can remarry whenever she wants. Perhaps it is for this reason, Wirz continues, that divorce is relatively rare. Usually the woman stays with her husband till he dies; in many cases there is clearly real affection and

¹¹⁷ L.c.

mutual love between spouses.¹¹⁸ The data published by the Depopulation Research Team, especially those contained in the annex written by Dr. Norma McArthur, equally tend to confirm that divorce is relatively rare. The low rate of divorce is surprising. The sexual customs of the Marind are of a kind to suggest a minimum of conjugal fidelity. Next to *otiv-bombari* and extra-marital intercourse for the purpose of collecting the semen and vaginal fluid to be used as a medicine for ritual occasions, there was quite some extra-marital intercourse serving apparently purely social ends. A visiting friend might expect to be thus entertained by his host's wife. There was also a custom of lending one's wife against payment. Nollen considers "the detestable custom of making one's wife available to anybody who wants to have her against payment of a knife or an axe" to be a clear proof of the low status of women.¹¹⁹ Many authors reported this custom. Every woman can be had, provided her spouse is previously made to agree and given adequate compensation.¹²⁰

Unfortunately, details are lacking. We would like to know more about it because a similar custom happens to exist among the Namau, described by Williams in his *Natives of the Purari Delta*. There it is the woman who receives the payment, consisting in this specific instance not of articles of trade but of shell jewelry in a shape or quantity as previously arranged with her husband. The Namau have different forms of making *amina*, as the custom is called, and in all cases both the man and his wife profit by the transaction.¹²¹ In spite of the fact that we find hardly any reference to the occurrence of shell jewelry among the Marind, the description of the various ornaments worn by the members of the respective age-grades makes it perfectly clear that the Marind highly appreciated boar's tusks, strings of dog's teeth and certain objects made of nautilus-shell, and valued them accordingly. It is not impossible, then, that the Marind, having their own pattern of wealth, had a system of occasional wife-exchange which, up to an extent, was comparable to the *amina*-institution of the Namau.

However that may be, we have to study the Marind, not by comparing them with other peoples, but primarily in the context of their own culture, which is full of contradictions. When she marries, a woman has to copulate with her husband's fellow-clansmen before consum-

¹¹⁸ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 74.

¹¹⁹ Nollen, *Anthr.* 1909 p. 558.

¹²⁰ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 69.

¹²¹ Williams, *Purari Delta* Ch. XVII.

mating her marriage with him. And yet Vertenten assures us that the men are jealous, even very much so, that infidelity on the woman's part may end in homicide and that the least we must expect is for husband and adulterer to have it out between them with sharpened arrows.¹²² And Wirz informs us that whoever would try to have intercourse with a woman without the prior consent of her husband is guilty of adultery and, if the husband finds out, he is in for a great deal of trouble. If he is caught in the act the cuckolded husband may kill the co-respondent; in other cases he may resort to sorcery to avenge himself. Adultery is a common source of quarrels and scuffles between neighbouring villages or hamlets.¹²³

Perhaps these conflicting attitudes are not so inconsistent as they would seem on the face of things. They fit in fairly well with the contradictory pattern of sex-segregation which, for all its apparent rigidity, is inefficient.¹²⁴ This very inefficiency should give us food for thought. If the separation of the sexes seems inefficient, perhaps it serves another end than segregation, something which is really effectively realized: keeping an eye on the women, preventing undesirable contacts between them and the inmates of the men's house. The men do not enter a women's house, nor do the women go into a men's house. The greater part of domestic life is lived in the open, on the bench before the house, in the space between the houses or in the *soso*, the coconut grove at the back. Everybody sees and hears everybody else. The living-pattern is well adapted to a system of relationships in which institutionalized extra-marital contacts are extremely conducive to illicit relationships, unless measures are taken to prevent their occurrence. The extra-marital relations of the woman with her husband's clanmates are not allowed to become love-affairs. Later on, when the sexual rites will be considered in greater detail, we shall find that they are not of the kind giving full satisfaction to lovers.¹²⁵ If the man making available his wife renders his fellow-clansmen a service, they in turn have paid a service to him and his wife because the act will promote her fertility. We may reason even further along this line and explain the whole situation as a compromise between, on the one hand, the man's loyalty to his group as dictated by the gang-spirit which originated among the boys playing on the beach, was consolidated in

¹²² Vertenten, *op. cit.* p. 26.

¹²³ Wirz, *l.c.*

¹²⁴ Above, pp. 48 f.

¹²⁵ Below, pp. 815 f.

the *gotad* and lives on in the solidarity of the men's house community, and, on the other hand, the loyalty between spouses who are age-mates and form a more solid couple than their sexual extravagancies would make us expect.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of the intimate life of a Marind-anim couple is very restricted. The enquiries made by the Depopulation Team focused on the practice of sexual promiscuity. We should like to know more about the consequences of homosexuality. As far as female homosexuality is concerned, F. Verschueren assures me that in his thirty years' missionary work he never came across it, as he certainly would have if it had occurred to any extent.¹²⁶ I may add that the public behaviour of females does not give rise to the slightest suspicion on that score. Another matter is the effect of male homosexuality. Here again, however, it is difficult to see what the impact on conjugal life could be. To be married is the wish of every man; in Marind-anim opinion the unmarried male is a poor wretch and this opinion is vindicated by the facts.¹²⁷ To be married means that a man has to participate in heterosexual relations, both marital and extra-marital. Homosexual relations could at worst result in a slight reduction in the frequency of a man's intercourse with women. Verschueren, consulted on this point, rightly remarks that the effect cannot be more serious than that of having more than one wife in polygynous societies, adding: who knows whether homosexuality may not even have contributed to the prevalence of monogamy?¹²⁸ Here, indeed, is a case in point. The unwillingness of the women to put up with a co-spouse might be explained from the husband's performance being adversely influenced by his extra-marital activities.

The domestic aspects of conjugal life are somewhat better known than the sexual. There are lots of comments made by early observers on the dreadful life of the poor drudge that is the Marind-anim wife, but such conclusions have been refuted by all those who lived long enough in the country to get better acquainted with the daily routine. We also have a number of short stories dealing with marriage-conflicts, next to some descriptions of a more or less general character such as those by Wirz. What we have not got is an analysis based on a series of systematic observations of female activities, and we have to thread

¹²⁶ Verschueren, Letters IV p. 4.

¹²⁷ Vertenten, Koppensneffers p. 26.

¹²⁸ Verschueren, l.c.

our way through the tangle of often conflicting statements and observations.¹²⁹

The newcomer's first impression of a Marind-anim woman's fate is certainly not a favourable one. When she returns from the garden she is bent under a heavy load of sago and tubers bundled up in a net which, fastened to a plaited belt passing over her forehead, hangs on her back. On top of the vegetables there is a substantial pile of firewood and perched on the firewood a young child, who keeps his balance by clutching at his mother's hair. The woman looks slovenly and dirty, whereas her spouse is finely adorned. All he carries is his bow, his arrows and his spear, and strutting behind her he looks as if he were the lord and master of his female slave. However, the man is a hunter and the protector of the family: he should be free in his movements. In the division of labour between the sexes the carrying of loads is a woman's job. Her other tasks are pounding and washing the sago, harvesting and in part also planting the garden, cooking, taking care of the children, feeding the pigs, collecting shell-fish and fishing with nets. The man is a hunter as well as a gardener. He makes the gardens, cuts the sago trees, makes fences and builds houses and canoes. In the old days, when all the work had to be done with stone or bone implements, these tasks were not as light as they are to-day. The introduction of ironware brought a substantial reduction of the men's share in the daily work, without in the least affecting that of the women. Modern times worked many changes in the men's life. There was an end of warfare, one of their major occupations. This, in turn, meant that there was no demand any more for the big canoes they used to build. Simultaneously, the old ritual fell into desuetude or was simply forbidden. Feasts became rare and the few that remained were substantially pruned down, which again affected gardening, as yams and taro are not everyday foods but make part of a festive dish only. The division of labour between the sexes as it could be observed after the early twenties did not present a true picture of the original situation, in which the male sex had a far more important function than in later days.

The Marind-anim woman was, in fact, not such a poor drudge as some casual observers would have her. It would be decidedly wrong to see her as the slave of her husband and the pitiable victim of his lust. She is quite capable of having her own way if she wishes. Among

¹²⁹ Cf. on this matter Wirz, M.A. I pp. 73 ff., IV p. 103; Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's*, and various short articles published by R.C. Missionaries in *Ann.*, J.P. or I.L.; Verschuieren, *Letters* III pp. 6 f., IV pp. 4 f.

the Marind-anim, too, there are henpecked husbands. It must be admitted, however, that, socially, the woman plays second fiddle and that she behaves accordingly. A woman will sooner discard ornaments and bodily decoration than her consort will; even relatively young women often look worn and older than their age. Sago-pounding is dirty work and in periods of mourning the women abstain from washing, smearing their bodies with white mud instead. Mourning is a women's commitment, and the rather abject appearance of many Marind-anim women need not necessarily be the result of hard work only. From the time that they beget children good looks do not matter any more. What matters is the husband's well-being. One of the wife's most important duties is to see to it that he has his meals at the proper times. If she fails in that respect, she is in for trouble. When he has to go hungry at a time he may expect food a Marind man may well fly off the handle. Wife-beating is rather common and though most observers of Marind-anim life assure us that nevertheless the married couple usually get along very well, I am not sure whether we are justified in passing so lightly over a contradictory statement. Of course, the Marind-anim woman is not so easily made the victim of male cruelty. She is perfectly capable of defending herself both with a sharp tongue and with a pair of sturdy hands. It is out of the question that any man should be capable of just beating her into submission. Nevertheless, the frequency of wife-beating must have been rather high. I remember several cases of fairly serious ill-treatment I had to pass sentence on as a judge. On the whole, the incidence of violence was high among the Marind. There were even cases of serious ill-treatment of children by angry fathers, not by way of a misdirected effort to educate the child, but because the child merely happened to be in its father's way or by some misbehaviour contributed to his vexation just when he was in a temper.

At the time I was an A.D.O. at Merauke Marind-anim social life had already changed fundamentally and my impression regarding the incidence of acts of violence need not necessarily apply with equal right to an earlier period. The odds are, however, that it does. The general impression the Marind-anim made on the first whites who lived among them was one of a high degree of callousness and fierceness in their behaviour. The general picture of Marind-anim culture suggests that the woman's first task was to enable her husband, or brother, or son as the case may be, to appear in public as finely ornamented as possible. The big dances are male affairs. The women either stand aside or are

in the middle, but it is the men who do the drumming and singing, and it is the men who are elaborately decorated with feathers, leaves, and all the finery making up Marind-anim jewelry. The women are either onlookers or second-rank participants. Sometimes they have yet another role. At those dances where the men or the *éwati* turn out at their finest the women carry torches, holding them well above their heads so that everybody may see the fine figure of the beloved son or husband. The performers of these dances usually move in a circle and the show thus staged is among the most impressive parades I ever witnessed. That the women thus hold the torches is well in line with their behaviour generally. On every occasion it is the decoration, the ornamentation of the male which counts. The specific beauty of the girl is her fatness, at least so long as she is not married. She, too, has her hairdo, but the occasions are rare when it is crowned with feathers and special ornaments, as that of the *éwati* may be.

We are inclined to see the Marind-anim woman as the devoted spouse, always bent on effacing herself on behalf of a husband, a brother or a son, a not wholly uncommon feature in New Guinea. Yet, it is only part of the picture. The women are allowed to have their share in public performances, be it a fairly modest one in comparison with the part played by the male sex. Not only do women have their own age-grades, they are (an unusual feature) also initiated into the *mayo*-cult, they may fulfil minor roles in the great pantomime, the *déma-wir*, and on some occasions they have their own dance, the *im-zi*.¹³⁰ It even happens that the men feel that they owe the women a feast of their own and let them have a pig feast, at which the women stage a *déma-wir*, after the men had done it the day before.¹³¹

Two points claim our attention. The first is the general air of good fellowship which is apparent from the men's feeling that they owe the women a feast. The second is that these activities of the women are for the better part pure imitations of male roles. In this context an observation made by Verschueren is of some interest: "the women did not live in fairly numerous groups like the men, but rather in large families (the women's hut). Unlike the men, they had no feast of their own and very rarely did they all get together, only on such occasions as when they all went out fishing with *kipa* (a kind of net), which was hardly more than once a year".¹³² The situation was that, among the

¹³⁰ See below, pp. 501, 858 and 543.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* p.859.

¹³² Verschueren, Letters IV p. 4.

Marind, the women hardly had a cultural life of their own. The village-pattern favoured the possibility to make the women's life part and parcel of the cultural life of the men's house community to which they belonged. Of course, we must be careful not to overestimate the women's dependence on male activities. When fishing, gathering shell-fish or pounding sago, they were often unaccompanied by men. If they so wished, they could associate with other women as much as they pleased. The facts are that they adopted male ideals and culture-patterns as their own. They glorified in male activities and male beauty as exhibited in dance and ritual. They did their utmost to make their own men into brightly-coloured birds of paradise, contenting themselves with the same modest and inconspicuous feathers as the female bird. The women seemed always willing to serve: they even accompanied the men on the warpath. At times, however, the tables were turned and the women beautified themselves with the glorious colours of the men, playing their roles.

The contrast between slovenly women truckling to brutish husbands and faithful couples living in fairly good harmony, all in the same picture, is a remarkable one. It is best illustrated, perhaps, by the case of the woman who accused her husband of having seriously ill-treated her. The husband is sent to jail and a few days later the woman turns up at the Government-station to remonstrate that it will do now and that her husband should be released.¹³³ Such things happen, they can even happen time and again.¹³⁴ Sometimes there is a sudden outburst of anger, but in the long run good comradeship prevails. Here again we are reminded of the image tentatively outlined when discussing the implications of *otiv-bombari*: that of the old gang with its conflicts and basic solidarity. The women are treated as junior members of the gang, willing to put up with a fair deal of humiliation just to feel the gratification of belonging to it. After all, it is the 'gang', the men's house community to which one belongs, which defines status and renown in local society. A married woman gradually becomes taken up with the group's well-being. That means that her work increases. Either she has children of her own or she will adopt a child from the village or one captured during a headhunting raid; she may become a *binahor*-mother or a *yarang*-mother to a boy or a girl; there are aged relatives and young males who have to be provided with food, and a pig or two which must be fed. One by one she is laying off her ornaments,

¹³³ Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 115 f.

¹³⁴ Verschuieren, *Letters IV* p. 6.

accepting the position of a caterer for food and assistance to all those who fulfil the important tasks of going on big headhunting expeditions, of arranging wonderful ceremonies or of organizing glorious dances. Fulfilling all those duties, her good looks fade, but she gains in status. If, as a result of her faithful performance in the household, her husband's prestige grows, she need not be afraid that one day he will discard her to marry a younger girl. Of this more decent sin, popular in many civilizations, we do not hear in Marind-anim society.

Elderly people are respected. Their word carries weight and there is a certain tendency to identify the old with the *samb-anim*, lit. the great men, the leaders of the men's houses, called *pakas-anim* by Verschueren. Of course, not every old man is actually a *samb-anim*, but the very tendency among outsiders to identify old men and *samb-anim* is a strong indication that age is an important element in conditioning status. That holds true even of women. An old woman has authority in matters of custom and tradition. Usually she is well-informed on matters of rites and ceremonies, and the respect she enjoys enables her to have a say in public matters, that is, if she wants to.¹³⁵

This respected position is held so long as one is in good health and has the full command of one's faculties. Old people who depend for their livelihood on their children see their status decline rapidly. If they should happen to fall ill and become increasingly helpless, the day may come that they will be buried alive, if need be by their own children. This may happen at the request of the old people themselves; it may also be that it is decided upon by their relatives without consulting them. There is no respect of or love for the decrepit or the sick. They are a burden on the community, and the community is not prepared to bear it for very long. The same holds true of the incurably sick, who drag on their lives in constant suffering. They are *dom ago*, people of no value, to whom nobody pays much attention. That does not mean that all those who are incurably ill are invariably buried alive. On the contrary; in the voluminous popular literature on the Marind there is a number of touching stories on the loving care bestowed on relatives who are seriously ill. It means, however, that there is a limit to the family's endurance. When there is lasting infirmity through old age or a lingering disease, and there is no relative who is very emotionally attached to the patient, the odds are that one

¹³⁵ Wirz, M.A. 1 p. 67.

day or other he or she will be buried alive. That may be because there is a great feast going to be celebrated, or because people want to leave the village for some time, or it may be that the patient himself feels that he should not live any longer. In each case a grave is dug into the sand, the patient is put into it and the pit is closed again by pushing the sand back into place. Sometimes — but not often — the patient offers resistance but this is soon broken. Nobody is impressed. Vertenten mentions a case of those involved laughingly reporting to him all the trouble they had had in dealing with a refractory patient.¹³⁶ That such cases were not exceptional becomes apparent from the fairly big number of them reported by various authors.¹³⁷

The custom of killing decrepit old relatives by burying them alive is exceptional in New Guinea. Of course it is always a burden for a family to be obliged to take care of a sick relative, but there is no reason why this burden should be heavier to bear for the Marind than for any other Papuan tribe. Why then are they less willing than others to put up with this discomfort? To say that the poor victims are dropped by the 'gang' is just another way of begging the question.

It is rather hazardous to answer questions of a causal nature and I think any answer to this particular question should be carefully clausulated in the sense that whatever the answer may be, we can do no more than point to a certain correlation which contributes to a better understanding of the cultural background. Such a correlation is the special emphasis on youth in this culture. Wirz, in discussing social structure, makes the following statement: "Whereas the aged are respected, youth actually takes precedence. Really everything is concentrated on youth. This is demonstrated in public behaviour: the young have the most beautiful ornaments; they get the better and even the greater part of the available food; the children are given the best part and the aged are left to fend for themselves. This is demonstrated, too, in the case of death: for a youth or a young man mourning is intense and prolonged and the rites celebrated are elaborate. For elderly people they are decidedly less so. For very small children or people of an advanced age there is no mourning at all, because — at

¹³⁶ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 78.

¹³⁷ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* III pp. 132 f., IV p. 26; Van de Kolk, *Oermensen* pp. 109 f.; Joosten, *Ann.* 1911 p. 102; Van der Kooy, *Ann.* 1912 p. 343; Plate, *K.T.* 1916 p. 576; Vertenten, *Ann.* 1918 pp. 100, 152; *ibid.* 1921 p. 22; *I.L.* II p. 694; *ibid.* III p. 414. On the scant love bestowed on those suffering from protracted illness see also Verschueren, *Ann.* 1936 pp. 200 ff.

least as far as the latter are concerned — it is only natural that they should die. If, however, a young man or a girl dies, death must have been caused by sorcery".¹³⁸

The emphasis on youth and its glory has been mentioned before. This emphasis is evident not only from the function of the age-grades, the special role of the young women or the important part played by the young in dances and ceremonies, but it is demonstrated very clearly in the customs and ceremonies connected with death and mourning. When a person dies, it is the elderly people who take care of the deceased, who paint him, who bury him, and who sing the *yarut*, the dirge. Young people do not come near the deceased unless he is a near relative, in which case they, too, of course, will join in the mourning. On the whole, however, mourning is a function of the elderly people and more particularly of the women, who paint their faces and bodies with clay and wear various tokens of mourning.

The old are the real mourners also in another respect. When there is a big feast, the young people will have a dance of their own, a *gad-zi*, the night before the feast really starts. That same night the old gather at the other end of the village to sing *yarut*, the dirge, all night through.¹³⁹ The commemoration of the dead is the special function of the aged; in the meantime the young people may go and have their dances and feasts. What counts is youth and life. The old, singing *yarut*, are already half-way down the path that leads to the grave. From this point of view the cruel custom of killing the very old and the very sick is only another expression of the value set upon youth and its vigour.

¹³⁸ Wirz, M.A. I p. 67. See also below, pp. 680 ff.

¹³⁹ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 130 f., IV p. 25; below, pp. 798 f., 845 f., 849 ff.

PART II

MYTH

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND OUTLINES OF WORLDVIEW

Religion is a powerful vitalizer of Marind-anim life. A great deal of effort is spent on the preparation of elaborate rites, impressive dances and magnificent feasts. The gigantic shows making part of a Marind-anim feast fitted the purpose of impressing the onlooker with their glorious beauty. In all probability such purpose was by no means alien to the organizers. Yet, nobody who ever had the privilege of observing one of these colourful old-time dances can believe that this show element can possibly have been the main motive of the performance. An atmosphere of profound solemnity prevails, leaving no doubt that the performers in their dancing express their deeper feelings, apprehend some kind of a mysterious reality which it is impossible to describe in clear-cut terms. It is the same atmosphere of mystery the Marind creates when speaking of the mythical beings impersonated in ritual. These mythical beings are not simply beings belonging to a bygone past; their names, as far as they are not kept secret, are mentioned with awe; soft, long-drawn-out whistles and an expressive shaking of the head signify the admiration the account of their deeds inspires. The world of mystery is near at hand; in the magical act the Marind appeals to it, at the same time trying to impose his will by applying his secret knowledge.

That does not mean that in ordinary life the invisible world predominates. On the contrary, the Marind-anim are an easy-going people, ready to enjoy a good joke and to appreciate the amenities of life. Outwardly they do not appear to be impressed by that invisible world which induces them to so much strenuous effort. A realistic approach to everyday life goes hand in hand with elaborate ritual and the frequent application of magical and ceremonial practices. Two attitudes exist side by side, thus creating another problem over and above that presented by the bewildering richness in ritual manifestations and mythical beings.

An elaborate analysis of the various religious forms is required to

find out whether these concepts and rites are, indeed, as confused as they seem to be to the reader of Wirz's monograph, or whether, on the contrary, they are the products of some underlying pattern of basic concepts of structural importance. To that end a detailed description of concepts, myths, rites and ceremonies is unavoidable. The concepts and myths are expounded and analysed in Part II of this volume, religious practice in Part III. In the present chapter a survey of various religious concepts is followed by an account of Marind-anim mythology generally and of such myths as are not the property of a specific clan or phratry. A section on cosmological concepts winds up this chapter. The next chapters deal with the mythology of the respective phratries and clans. An elaborate analysis of the totemic and mythological system as a whole is presented in Chapter IX, rounding off the part dealing with Myth.

1. RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS: DÉMA

The central concept of Marind-anim religion is that of *déma*. The translations of the word as suggested by various authors are confusing. Suggested are alternately *mana*, spirit, totem-ancestor and spiritual being; sometimes the word is used as a noun and at other times as an adjective indicating the supernatural essence of all things.¹ Such generalizations fail to impart what the Marind has in mind when he uses the word *déma*. To that end a survey of its various applications is indispensable.

Déma is not a word which is used lightly or carelessly. Its use is surrounded with awe and mystery. A corresponding atmosphere is deliberately created when telling a myth. *Déma* are the mythical story-folk, and when a Marind wants to relate their adventures he lowers his voice to a mysterious whisper, interspersing his words with meaningful pauses or admiring clickings of his tongue, alternated with long-drawn-out whistles of amazement, and he slowly proceeds with his story, all the time emphasizing his words with impressive gestures. Old Father Viegen once gave me a demonstration of a classic myth-telling session, a scene never to be forgotten. The story was not simply

¹ On the concept of *déma* cf. Wirz, M.A. II pp. 6-23; Geurtjens, Dict. v.c.; TAG 1929 pp. 228 f.; Onder de Kaja-Kaja's pp. 73 ff.; Vertenten, Koppen-snellers pp. 33 ff.; TAG 1927 pp. 434 ff.; J.P. 1917 pp. 591 f.; J.P. 1919 pp. 69, 345; J.P. 1922 pp. 485 f.; I.L. IV p. 144; NION 1933 pp. 333 ff.; Noffen, J.P. 1907 p. 825; V. d. Kolk, J.P. 1912 p. 226; Verschueren, Letters V pp. 4 ff.

told, it was enacted in an atmosphere of tangible mystery. I never witnessed such a scene myself; at the time I came to the area the Marind had deliberately stopped disclosing their inner life to strangers. All older authors, however, agree in their descriptions of the expressions of awe, reverence and fear concomitant with accounts of mythical events.²

The *dramatis personae* of such events are the déma, and the awe and reverence are focused on their persons. When used in another context which does not call for the elaborate emphasis on mystery belonging to myth-telling, the word déma is still given some slight touch of that same awe and reverence by pronouncing it with a little more emphasis than given to other words. The way, then, in which the word is used demonstrates that a certain consciousness that déma is something surpassing the ordinary is never wholly absent.

The few Marind-anim texts published in Drabbe's *Spraakunst*³ are insufficient to serve as source-materials for a complete survey of the various applications of the word déma. In these texts, written down by students of a teacher-training course, the word is used consistently to denote a specific mythical being. It is never used there in that wider sense reported by various authors. Consequently, Drabbe translates déma as *geest* (spirit), in which we shall not follow him as the connotations of the word spirit harmonize only partly with those of déma as revealed in the stories dealing with them. The déma are beings who lived in the mythical era. Usually they take the form of human beings, but sometimes they change into animals or appear predominantly in animal shape. The déma are the ancestors of the clans and subclans and are associated with their totems. Sometimes they created the totem, e.g. *Wokabu's* wife, whose excrement became the sago,⁴ or changed into it, such as *Yawi*, out of whose head the coconut grew,⁵ the *tarétaré*, a peewit-species, which originated from pus and blood oozing out of a wound in déma *Wawar's* foot,⁶ or *Teimbre* who changed into reeds and swamp-grass after he had been thrown into a swamp.⁷ In other cases the déma seems, up to an extent, identical with the species, such as the snake *Bir* who in myth is never

² Cf. Wirz, *Dämonen* pp. 236 f.; M.A. IV p. 90.

³ Drabbe, *Spraakunst* pp. 152-189.

⁴ Below, p. 336.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 248 ff.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 380.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 295.

represented in any other form,⁸ or as *Wonatai*, the stork *déma*, who changes alternately into a man and a stork.⁹ Sometimes the *déma* is represented as partly a man, partly his totem. A good example is provided by the story of *Arimba*,¹⁰ who gave birth to two *déma-patur*, the first of whom was the *miz-déma* (bow *déma*) *Ringau*, the second the crocodile *déma* *Mongumer-anem*, who later turned into a betel palm. The former was half man, half bow, the latter resembled a crocodile whose body was covered with betel nuts.

All the world and all that is part of it, sun, moon and stars included, is said either to originate from the *déma* or to owe the *déma* its special form. The dictum must not be taken too literally. Though there is a great variety of myths, when taken together they neither constitute a logically constructed creation-myth nor a systematic and complete whole explaining the origin of all things. Next to the numerous things which are accounted for in myth, there are the many others which cannot be traced to any mythical origin. The more important species and things, however, which for one reason or another attracted man's special attention, are associated with a *déma* whose activities or character account for their specific nature. Deliberate systematizing being foreign to Marind-anim thought, we must not expect a complete system covering every item in the world. What we are confronted with is a bewildering multitude of *déma*, each associated with one or more different things, species or customs, so variegated and numerous as to suggest that everything comes from the *déma*. That, indeed, is the way the Marind see it when they refer to the *déma* as the originators of all things.

There is a tendency to identify the *déma* with the particular thing represented. Thus Vertenten points out that the sea is a *déma*. Her common name is *étob*, her mythical name is *Yorma*.¹¹ *Yorma* is the sea *déma*. We look in vain for a myth relating that *Yorma* created the sea. *Yorma* and the sea are simply there and the myths on *Yorma* concentrate on his acts of violence, such as washing away houses and men by means of his big waves. We are inclined to conclude that *Yorma* is the sea. Such, at least, seems to be the obvious inference from the behaviour of the man who returned to the beach after a

⁸ Ibid. pp. 247 f., 252. In ritual pantomime, however, she may be presented in human shape (Verschuieren, Letters V p. 4).

⁹ Below, pp. 302 ff.

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 379 f.

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 382 f.

prolonged stay inland. "His heart rejoiced when he saw the beach. With eyes shining with pride and joy he looked at the wide waters, heaving and glittering in the morning sun. *Duv ah oh*, he exclaimed, *Yorma, désézib ayuwah!*: 'Oh wonderful beach, *Yorma*, son of the deep, how wonderful you are'".¹² Not always is the identity of *déma* and thing (totem) so explicit, and F. Verschueren cautions me not to overemphasize the identity of totem and *déma*: "It may be that the *déma* created the totem or afterwards changed into it, but that does not prevent the Marind from representing the *déma* as an anthropomorphic being".¹³ A comparable tendency comes to the fore in the affinities sometimes postulated between the members of a clan and their totem, and in the magical power a clansman has in respect of his totems. These phenomena will be discussed in greater detail below.¹⁴ From one point of view the *déma* belong to the past, to the mythical era, at the end of which they disappeared or withdrew somewhere into the ground. From another point of view, however, they are still active. In his spells the magician uses the names of the *déma* and, in extreme cases, he may even identify himself with the *déma*.¹⁵ Places where *déma* are known to have withdrawn and where they are thought to reside are respected. The *déma* are still there. Various authors credit them with immortality, a concept for which Van de Kolk and Vertenten in their Dutch-Marindinese dictionary give various paraphrases,¹⁶ but which, as such, does not seem to be a Marindinese concept, even though, up to a degree, it is correct to say that the *déma* are immortal. They still interfere or may interfere in human and worldly affairs; they may send sickness and epidemics.

However, the main emphasis lies on their activity in the past, more than on their interference in the present. But here again we must define the terminology applied to render Marind-anim concepts. To us, past and present are obvious contrasts and we speak of things belonging to a definite past. Perhaps in a certain context the Marind does too, but certainly not in connection with myth. The mythical age is not a definite past, severed from the present. On the contrary, it holds the explanation of the present as well as its justification. It is not a remote past either. To the Marind the mythical era is barely

¹² Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 34 f.

¹³ Verschueren, *Letters V* p. 4.

¹⁴ Below, pp. 194 f.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 915.

¹⁶ V. d. Kolk & Vertenten, *Woordenboek v. onsterfelijk.*

over. If, fifty years ago, a Marind myth-teller had been asked how many generations back it was that the mythical events he had just described took place, it is ten to one that he would have answered that all this happened when his grandfather or his great-grandfather was an *éwati*. This, at least, is how a man of Kimaam in Frederik Hendrik Island reacted to a question of the kind I put to him. He told me that it was his own grandfather who had been a witness to the mythical event which he had just finished describing. Though definite information is sadly lacking, there is no reason to suppose that in this respect the Marind holds a different view. There is little time-perspective in the Marindinese concept of the world and the *déma* who retired from this world are still very near. Verschueren writes on this point: "It is the raconteur's method to present all events as actual, as events of the day. Often, when listening to a myth being told, I had the impression that it all happened only a few months ago. What considerably heightens the sense of actuality is the habit of elaborately enumerating all the places visited by the *déma*. Nothing worthwhile happened in these places; he just passed by, he just slept there or sat there, but the detailed account of all these various places and their names lends to the story a very tangible and direct impact on a public which knows these places".¹⁷

The *déma* have an important part in religious practice. Their names (many of which are kept secret) are applied in magical formulas; their deeds are dramatized in ritual. Places where they are thought to reside are respected and may be honoured occasionally by a small gift of fruit.¹⁸ There is quite a number of such places. According to Wirz they are often conspicuous because of some rare or extraordinary feature such as an unusual form of the surface of the earth, ditches, hills, swamps, or mud-banks in the sea or the river where the *déma* make themselves known by an uncanny rustle. Whirlpools and eddies, too, are ascribed to a *déma*. Many *déma* changed into stones. Stones are rare in this country.¹⁹ Another peculiarity of these *déma*-places is that the totem species associated with the *déma* abounds in the neighbourhood.²⁰

In some of these places the *déma* is revered (worshipped would just be overstating the case) in a specific form. Wirz describes this

¹⁷ Verschueren, Letters V p. 4.

¹⁸ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 38.

¹⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 14.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 15.

as follows: "Once I visited a *déma-miráv* (*déma-spot*) in the vicinity of Sangar, near Siwasiv, where a betel *déma* is said to reside. Though the *déma* usually stays underground, he will, like all *déma*, occasionally reappear, in this particular case in a guise which is a kind of a cross between a man and a betel palm. On this spot a brightly coloured pole with numerous betel nuts attached to it had been erected. Round the pole croton-twigs had been planted to decorate the place. The spot was held in respect and it was forbidden to alter anything about it. It is possible to look upon the betel nuts as a kind of sacrifice brought to the *déma* who, anyhow, is served with them. It follows that the *déma* is not only feared and avoided. People even try to keep the *déma* there; they mark the spot by planting croton-twigs and, in rare cases, by placing small offerings. People hold the view that it is better that the *déma* stay put and be left undisturbed in their places of residence. It is held that the *déma* even work to the good, though at the same time they are feared and respected".²¹ The statement just quoted is explicitly confirmed by Verschueren: the Marind would never give up these places, not for all the world. He is deeply convinced that he needs them and that everything will go wrong if the *déma* should withdraw. He needs them for his magic.²²

In another place Wirz writes: "I was informed that at Sendár, either in the sacral hut or elsewhere, a *rapa-déma* [i.e. the central *déma* of the Kondo *rapa-cult*] actually resides, namely, in two stones, one of which has a phallus-like protuberance while the other has a hole representing the female principle. It seems that all sacral houses (*Geisterhäuser*) have such a stone *déma* and that the same happens to be the case in most of the places where a *déma* is said to reside".²³ The distinction made between "Geisterhaus" and *déma-spot* (*déma-miráv*) deserves some attention. *Déma-houses* (*Geisterhäuser*) are, in fact, extremely rare. Actually, their number was restricted to two, the navel *déma-houses* of the *rapa-* and *imo-cults*. The common *déma-spots*, however, are numerous. The suggestion that most of them are marked by the presence of phallic stones is interesting, but cannot be accepted as an established fact, since it is based on unchecked oral information. Commenting on this point, Verschueren writes that stones are not necessarily prerequisites of a *déma-spot*. An unusual feature in the landscape is a more common characteristic. If, however, somebody who

²¹ Ibid. p. 17.

²² Verschueren, l.c.

²³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 85.

belonged to the same clan as the *déma* happened to find a peculiar stone in the vicinity of the *déma*-spot, the stone would be placed there. After the arrival of the whites the Marind, noticing the interest foreigners displayed in these stones, removed most of them, storing the stones elsewhere. Even now there are some old people who keep one or more of these stones. A collection acquired by a Chinese trader consisted of either phallic stones or petrified animals.²⁴ That implies that the association of a *déma*-spot with phallic stones is by no means rare. As we shall see further on in this section, the notion of *déma* is often associated with stones.

Thus far the word *déma* has been used to denote a mythical being who plays a more or less definite rôle in myth. In this sense the *déma* might be called the story-folk, just as Williams did with reference to the mythical beings of the Orokolo. However, the word *déma* is not confined in its application to the actual heroes of mythology. Wirz points out that the supernatural character of the *déma* clings to his immediate descendants and products. *Mahu*, the dog *déma* (*ngat-déma*), could change himself into a dog and as such procreated a number of dogs. The latter were not common dogs but *déma*-dogs (*déma-ngat*) who could speak and were endowed with reason. From them the common dogs are descended.²⁵ The distinction made between *ngat-déma* and *déma-ngat* is interesting. In the first case the word *déma* is used as a substantive, in the second as an adjective indicating the supernormal giftedness of *Mahu's* dogs. I asked F. Verschueren to what extent a distinction as made by Wirz can be said to be general, as, apart from the question whether we are allowed to apply the categories of adjective and substantive to Papuan linguistic forms, I was not sure whether this twofold use of the term *déma* wholly conforms to Marind-anim patterns of speech. In his answer Verschueren pointed out that, indeed, the two forms are used in the way indicated by Wirz, adding, however, that sometimes the difference is negligible. His elucidation of this point is a valuable demonstration of how close the present is to the mythical age of the *déma*. I therefore quote him in full: "When somebody is scared by a certain animal he will say afterwards that he has seen a *déma*-dog or a *déma*-fish, as the case may be. Once I had the following experience at Onggari. One evening an old woman came from the beach, saying that she had seen a *déma*-fish. The old people were

²⁴ Verschueren, Letters V p. 5.

²⁵ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 11.

just discussing the case when I came along. I then asked an old man whether she had seen *Ganguta*. [*Ganguta* is a tree *déma* who toppled over near Onggari; the branches and the leaves of the tree fell into the sea and turned into fishes. The *Ganguta-rek* are, in fact, a fish clan.²⁶] The old man looked me full in the face and said in all earnestness: 'Exactly as you say'. In other words: this *déma*-fish was also the fish *déma*."²⁷

In other cases the term *déma* refers to a quality rather than to a specific mythical being. Extraordinarily big trees or animals may be called *déma*-trees or -animals even when there is no specific reference to a mythical ancestor.²⁸ I remember that a wild boar which had killed a man was said to have been (a) *déma*. And Vertenten writes: "The men of Okaba were hunting. They met with a gigantic wild boar but nobody dared to shoot it because it undoubtedly was a *déma*-pig! The arrows would glance off and hit the marksman himself! And if you want to shoot a stork, a *ndik*, and the bird just looks at you without flying away, then beware, because it must be a *déma*-stork. If you hurt the animal's head, you hurt the *déma*'s head, because it is a *déma* in bird's shape".²⁹ The same author writes: "In this alluvial land a big stone or a rock is undoubtedly either the residence of a *déma* or his petrified self. Notably fossils are petrified *déma*. Magicians pretend to be able to bring such stones back to life, and to let them resume their petrified form by rubbing them between their hands". He adds that in the Mission's museum there is a fossil crab which one day he had found on the grave of a medicine-man from Sarira.³⁰ The application of stones in magic is important and Wirz in his chapter on magic devotes a special paragraph to the use of *déma*-stones.³¹ Personally I remember how on one occasion such a stone was shown to me and identified in one single word, '*déma*'. The particular form of the stone holds suggestions with respect to the specific *déma* associated with it. A stone which has the form of a fish is a fish *déma*. A petrified wallaby skull is a wallaby *déma*, etc.³²

There is a certain correlation between *déma* and the uncommon. We found this demonstrated in the cases of the fish, of the big trees, the big animals, the stones denoted as *déma*-stones, and so on. In the early

²⁶ Below, p. 385.

²⁷ Verschueren, Letters III p. 2.

²⁸ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *déma*.

²⁹ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 39.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 38.

³¹ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 95 ff.

³² L.c.

days of contact *déma* were ascribed to the various instruments of the newcomers; "the rifle, the gramophone, the Ruhmkorff coil, the compass, the watch, the engines of ships and steam-barges, they all have their *déma*".³³ An outstanding example of the connection between *déma* and the uncommon is given by Geurtjens. The body of a huge sperm-whale, 15 m. in length, was washed ashore at Welab (west of Wambi). What else could it be but a *déma*, and the men of Sangasé, in full dress, went in procession to Welab. They soon decided that, indeed, it was a *déma* and even that he was their own *Salawak-déma*, a sago *déma* who resides in the Bian river. The medicine-men (*messav*), amidst a thundering roar produced by the whole party, conjured the *déma*-soul from the dead body and then the 'soul' was brought back to the Bian in solemn procession and to the accompaniment of drumming and singing.³⁴ Of course one is not always certain that the qualification *déma* is justified. "Often it just depends whether a man or a thing is recognized as *déma* or not. The one believes it is a *déma*, whereas another, though admitting its uncommon character, does not feel that here a real *déma* is operating. Thus it sometimes happens that an old villager who has survived a whole generation is called a *déma* because he is thought to be immortal".³⁵ The final clause in this quotation hardly affords an explanation of the preceding. Moreover, we may well ask whether the people indeed thought him immortal. It is not at all improbable that his fellow-villagers never used the word immortal, but that it is a rationalization introduced by Wirz himself to explain the word '*déma*-man' by which the people expressed their amazement at his longevity; there are more instances of Wirz's mixing up his own explanations and those given by his informants. We might as well see the case of the old man as one of those in which the past is ipso facto associated with the *déma* and their time; thus Vertenten states: "Everything old is venerable".³⁶ But the case is not unequivocal. The exceptionality of this man's advanced age permits of classifying his case as one in which the exceptional is associated with the notion of *déma*. A similar association is suggested when the mentally defective are called *déma*, though, here again, contradictory opinions are expressed.³⁷ Geurtjens reports that deaf-mutes, too, are called *déma*, adding that

³³ Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 373.

³⁴ Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 73 ff.

³⁵ Wirz, M.A. II p. 8.

³⁶ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 39.

³⁷ Wirz, l.c.

this is not because of some particular quality but because the deaf-mutes are supposed to have been struck by a *déma*.³⁸ Similarly, people who lose consciousness are said to be possessed by a *déma*.³⁹

Geurtjens' remark sets the cases of the deaf-mutes and the mentally defective in yet another context, that of *déma* and sickness. The *déma* may cause sickness and death. If somebody's illness is attributed to a *déma*, a medicine-man is called in to lay the *déma* and expel the ailment.⁴⁰ The *déma* are said to avenge disrespect for the *déma*-spots and transgressions of custom and traditional law.⁴¹ Neglect of the various rites and ceremonies would cause sterility of palms and fruit-trees and a increase of different illnesses. A failure to execute the rites would incense the *déma*.⁴² Epidemics are usually attributed to their wrath.⁴³ A remarkable case is that of the fatherless child. A child born to an unmarried mother is said to be a child begotten by a *déma*, a *déma*-child, who has to be killed.⁴⁴ Geurtjens explains this belief from the fiction that the separation of the sexes makes premarital pregnancy impossible. Therefore a *déma* must have impregnated the mother. The wording of the statement suggests that he realizes very well that the Marind, too, are aware that the strictness of this separation of the sexes is a fiction. Because of this it is difficult to accept this explanation; another one has been suggested above.⁴⁵

In conclusion it may be stated that *déma* denotes the supernatural in its mythical form. The most common manifestation of *déma* is the mythical hero, but the word is also used to denote manifestations of the supernatural which for some implicit reason are experienced as related. These manifestations of the supernatural are the object of a cult which has not the character of worship. Offerings are rare and Vertenten precedes his communication that *déma*-spots are occasionally honoured by small gifts of fruit with the remark that altars are lacking. Still, he is also the author who gives the one and only good example of a real act of sacrifice: "At the time we had only recently settled at Okaba a man of the said village had to bring a young wallaby to the wallaby *déma*

³⁸ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *déma*.

³⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Geurtjens, l.c.

⁴² Wirz, M.A. II p. 16; Dämonen pp. 239 ff.; Vertenten, NION 1933 pp. 335 ff.

⁴³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 19.

⁴⁴ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *déma*; M&M 1929 p. 128; V. d. Kolk, Ann. 1911 pp. 4 f.; Vertenten, J.P. 1925 p. 63.

⁴⁵ P. 155.

at Wambi because of late there had been few wallabies in the hunting-grounds and people wished to win the wallaby *déma's* favour".⁴⁶ Prayer is a religious form which, to all appearances, is of rare occurrence in Marind-anim religious practice. Wirz mentions only one case of praying, which he borrows from Vertenten; it deals with a man whose wife had just left by steamer for Ambon. He prayed to the setting sun that he might safely return his wife to him.⁴⁷ However, the case is not as isolated as it seems to be. Several magical formulas are framed in such a way as to be practically indistinguishable from prayers, and F. Verschueren wrote me on this subject: "I must admit that more than once I was edified by the reverence displayed by elderly people applying their *gamo méen* (magical formulas), and I feel convinced that in these *gamo méen* the Marind has his prayers". We shall have to take this up again in the chapter on Private Rites.⁴⁸

The prevailing cult-forms vis-à-vis the *déma* are: 1) impersonation as performed in various rituals; 2) use of *déma*-names in sacred formulas; 3) the small offerings deposited on *déma*-spots, the cleaning of these places and the reverence shown to them, and 4) conjuring the *déma*. Of the latter an example was given above (the conjuring of the *Salowak-déma*). Another example is mentioned by Wirz: the crab *déma* of Okaba, who was believed to have caused the government schooner to run ashore, was conjured by a *messav* and ceremonially brought back into the Koloï river, where she belonged.⁴⁹

The people who know how to deal with the *déma* are the medicine-men, the *messav*. They, too, are sometimes called *déma-anim*, just like the very old. They speak the language of the *déma* (which is the language of the magical formulas) and they are able to see and meet them.⁵⁰ As specialists the *messav* play an important part in the preparation and the supervision of rites and ceremonies.⁵¹

A last aspect of the *déma* to be discussed in this introductory section is the *déma-nakari*, a term used to denote a kind of female mythical beings, the companions of the more important male *déma*. The meaning of the term has been much obscured by the fact that Wirz in part IV of his work revised his earlier opinion that *nakarû* is the term of

⁴⁶ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 39. For a case of human sacrifice, unfortunately a poorly documented one, see below, pp. 384 f. and note 80 on p. 385.

⁴⁷ Wirz, M.A. II p. 18.

⁴⁸ Below, pp. 914 f.

⁴⁹ Wirz, op. cit. p. 7; on the crab *déma* of Okaba see below, p. 344.

⁵⁰ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *déma*.

⁵¹ Cf. below, p. 885.

address used by a man in respect of all younger unmarried girls who are members of his mythological totem-group (i.e. phratry) or *boan*.⁵² He pointed out (and rightly so) that *nakaru* (pl. *nakari*) means husband's younger sister and is therefore obscure as a term to denote the relation between the *déma* and these female beings who cannot be looked upon as the *déma*'s wives, because the *déma* may have both a wife and *nakari*. The translation as given by Wirz in his later comment is confirmed in Van de Kolk's survey of kinship-terms. Fortunately, Geurtjens points the way. The term is used by married men as a term of address applicable to all women and young girls of their own totem-group.⁵³ The addition of 'married' to men and 'young' to girls makes it probable that age-differences are implied in this term; for this reason it was inferred that the term is a term of address used by a man vis-à-vis younger female members of his totem-group, in other words, his classificatory younger sisters, preferably his unmarried sisters, because married sisters do not live within the group.⁵⁴ In their human shape the *déma-nakari* are presented as young and beautiful *iwag*, appearing as something like fairies with a light complexion and a long and beautiful hairdo.⁵⁵ Totemically, the *nakari* often represent certain aspects of the totem with which the *déma* is associated. Sometimes they are the flowers of the totem plant, in other cases birds or animals living in symbiosis with the totem animal. In the case of the sea the waves are said to be the *nakari* of the sea *déma*.⁵⁶ In another context we are informed that two of *Yorma's nakari* bear the names of Turbid and Clear, apparently references to the qualities of seawater.⁵⁷ The possibilities are various, as is demonstrated by the *nakari* of the *méri-ongat-déma*.⁵⁸ Repeatedly, the *nakari* lend substance to the identity of *déma* and totem. Yet, we should be aware that the notion as such is a peculiar one, quite uncommon in Papuan mythology. Perhaps the origin of the *déma-nakari* must be found in ceremony. In the *déma-wir*, the great dramatizations of mythical beings and events, the *déma*-performers are sometimes accompanied by female beings.⁵⁹ They are the young women of the performing group who play minor roles which nevertheless contribute substantially

⁵² Wirz, M.A. II p. 20 jo. IV p. 131.

⁵³ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *nakaroc*; see also above, pp. 114 f.

⁵⁴ Cf. above, l.c.

⁵⁵ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 40.

⁵⁶ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II pp. 20-35.

⁵⁷ Op. cit. p. 131 note 3; cf. below, p. 383.

⁵⁸ See below, p. 255.

⁵⁹ Cf. Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 49, 51 f., 54, 57.

to the perfection of the show. As a matter of fact, the women are always active on such occasions, as torch-bearers and providers of food. Only, the licentious relations between a *déma* and his *nakari* as depicted in myth may not be extended to the performers. The performance is free from anything openly obscene.

2. RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS: TOTEMISM

Throughout this book the terms totem and totem-relation are used to denote the specific relationship, founded in myth or religious speculation, which the Marind take to exist between a genealogical group and a natural species, a category of objects or occupations or any other special item, a relationship which they express by the use of such terms as grandfather (*amai*), brother (*namek*), or simply 'belonging to' or 'derived from'. In the present section a first effort is made to describe this relationship in some detail. We shall have to deal with the subject again after the discussion of mythology has been completed, as the specific character of Marind-anim totemism stands out most clearly in myth. A discussion of the general applicability of the term totemism is avoided. In the case of the Marind-anim we found the term a conveniently concise expression for the specific relationship which is described as fully as possible in this section and in the succeeding chapters.

A survey of Marind-anim clans and their totems has been given in Annex IV. The list gives a specification of all the animal and plant species known to be totemically connected with the relative clans. Though the list is a long one, it is clear enough that, even in its most complete form, it is too short to vindicate the often-heard generalization that all objects of nature are in one way or another associated totemically with one or other of the clans. There must be a fair number of animals and plants which are not associated with any clan. At the same time, however, it must be admitted that the generalization holds true in so far that all the more important species have found a place in the classification presented by the system of totems. In this connection a generalization quoted by Wirz is of interest, which, for the sake of exactitude, may be rendered in its German context: "Alles ist Dema, pflegt der Marind zu sagen, wenn man ihn über die Beseelung fragt. Dies ist natürlich nicht wörtlich zu verstehen, vielmehr will er damit sagen, dasz alles aus Dema hervorgegangen ist und dasz sich in den psychischen Eigenschaften und Kräften etwas vom Dema, dem Urheber

widerspiegelt . . . ”⁶⁰ The statement has to be carefully weighed and must not be used as a decisive proof of Marind-anim pantheism. We do not know to what question exactly the words at issue were the reply. Nevertheless, the relations between *déma* and nature are thus frequent and variegated that the generalization fairly well covers the situation, at least if it is admitted that in Marind-anim religion we are not dealing with a scientific system and that consequently the words “*Alles ist Déma*” are to be understood as: everything I can think of is *déma* or comes from them. Here Verschueren’s comment is of interest. He pointed out that Wirz, when giving the rendering ‘*Alles ist Déma*’, must have been quoting an informant who was speaking Malay. The Marind language has no term to denote ‘everything’. When referring to a pile of coconuts they will say *otiv* (many), *otiv ha*, very many, or *yaba otiv*, very, very many, or *mes baren* (*mes*, coconut; *baren*, completed, finished) to indicate the whole lot. There is, however, no equivalent of Malay *semua*, everything, all. He adds that he confronted some ten old people with the phrase, but none of them could make out what was meant.⁶¹

The link between the clan and its totems is the *déma*: the clan-ancestor who procreated, made or changed the natural objects which are the clan’s totems. In some cases the totems are accepted as such because they are closely associated with the main totem. An example is provided by the flora and fauna of the loamy beach mentioned as totems of the *Zohé*, or the grassy plain associated with the *Samkakai* (wallaby clan). They are the things belonging to the totem, which, in turn, belongs to the clan. The basic relation between the clan and its totem is one of common descent and this basic relation finds expression in the term of address used vis-à-vis the totem: *amai*, grandfather or grandmother, occasionally also *namek*, brother.⁶² Actually, the use of the two terms refers to divergent relations with the totem. *Amái* is used in respect of a totem originated by the speaker’s own *déma*-ancestor, *namek* of an associated totem called into being by another *déma* of the

⁶⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 10. Translation: “All is *déma*, the Marind will state when questioned on the animistic background of the world. Of course this may not be taken literally: he means that everything has been produced by *déma* and that in the spiritual qualities and powers something of the *déma*, the originator, is reflected . . .”

⁶¹ Verschueren, Letters V p. 6.

⁶² Wirz, M.A. II pp. 31 f.; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 69; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *amai*. Van de Kolk (J.P. 1912 p. 227) is the only one who mentions *namek*, brother, as an occasional term of address vis-à-vis one’s totem.

phratry. A *Mahu-zé-ha* man will call the dog his *amai*, because the dog was originated by *Mahu*. The sago, on the other hand, may be referred to as *namek*, because the sago was made by *Wokabu*, who is the ancestor of another *Mahu-zé* clan. Often, however, he will call the sago, too, his *amai*. The use of this term predominates.⁶³

A generic term for totem is lacking. Van de Kolk & Vertenten in their *Woordenboek* give *boan* and *amai* as translations of totem, but none of these really cover the notion. Inquiring into somebody's totems is a painstaking job and queries to that purpose have to be circumstantially explained to elucidate what is meant. In other words, the totem-system of the Marind does not present itself as a primitive effort to classify nature according to genealogical groups; explicitly the affinity with the totem is based far less on any kind of philosophy of nature than on myth. The myth explains the relationship; it is a matter of belonging together because of common descent or some common adventure in the past. What belongs to the relations and affinities of a clan need not necessarily be of the material kind. It may also be a custom or an activity, such as the hairdo, sleeping and sexual intercourse.⁶⁴

The feeling of affinity with the totem does not imply a prohibition to kill or eat one's own totem. According to Wirz totemic food taboos exist only with regard to birds, but even that taboo is not strictly observed. A Marind will never decline to eat when confronted with a roasted cassowary (which, in his eyes, is not a bird because it cannot fly), a Goura-pigeon or a duck, even if they are his totems. With an exclamation of pity for his *amai* he will at once fall to without any further scruples.⁶⁵ Vertenten does not mention any restriction at all and simply states: "More than once, whilst they were eating fish or meat, I heard them exclaim: '*Amai, her ah . . . oh!*', i.e. Grandfather, you taste delicious".⁶⁶ The sentiment expressed is of a different kind from the one underlying food taboos. Apparently the appreciation of the useful qualities of the totem prevails.

The relation with the totem is expressed in many ways. Earlier in this book mention was made of the custom to crop the hair of little children, leaving a single tuft of hair which, dependent on its form and place, is associated with one of the child's totem-relations.⁶⁷ Other

⁶³ Verschueren, l.c.

⁶⁴ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 33; below, pp. 280, 285, 290, 307 and 381.

⁶⁵ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 32.

⁶⁶ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 69.

⁶⁷ Above, p. 145.

forms of expressing totem-relations are the exclamations uttered when sneezing, and the various hunting yells. Our information on exclamations uttered when sneezing is poor. Wirz writes: "On certain occasions the Marind calls out the name of his *amai*, i.e. that which belongs to his *boan*, e.g. when sneezing, or when he is losing his temper or taking fright".⁶⁸ In another context Vertenten mentions the custom: "When somebody sneezes and exclaims *wakin* (shrimp) or *papu* (sting-ray), he doubtlessly belongs to the same totem-society as the man who cries out *kidub* (eagle). Does not the *kidub* hover over the sea? Does not he snatch up fish and eel from the waves with his claws? Are not shrimp and saltwater fish products of *Yorma*, the sea *déma*, the sea personified, *Yorma*, who is the son of the deep (*Désézib*)?"⁶⁹ In other words, each of the different subclans of this phratry has its own exclamation for the occasion of sneezing.

More complete is our information with regard to the hunting yells customarily used by clansmen. Wirz gives quite a number of these yells, which differ from clan to clan but are all alike in this respect that they refer to mythical activities of the clan *déma*.⁷⁰ Usually they are preceded by an urging on of the hunting-dogs. Thus the *Hong-rek*, a *Geb-zé* subclan descended from a bamboo root-section which had served *Geb* as a wife, exclaim: *Ngat-a! Hong-a!*, i.e.: 'Dogs! Bamboo root-section!' or *Hong-sav! Ina muk!* 'Bamboo-woman! Two arms!' (an arm is one section; *Geb*'s bamboo was two sections long).⁷¹

Evidently the Marind is conscious of the totem-relations of his clan and takes pleasure in referring to them. To him these relations are important. Up to a point they determine his role in ritual. In a *déma-wir* (a ritual enactment of *déma* and myth) the performer is not allowed to impersonate a *déma* who does not belong to his totem-relations.⁷² When dancing the *waiko*, which is preceded by a small *déma-wir*, the rules are less strict, but there, too, the performer preferably personifies one of his 'own' *déma*.⁷³ Every *boan* has its own myths and relating them is a privilege conditional upon phratry-membership. Consequently most informants will not relate any other myths than those belonging to their own phratry. When members of other phratries are present,

⁶⁸ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 32.

⁶⁹ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 70.

⁷⁰ Cf. Wirz, *M.A.* II pp. 50, 78, 80, 115, 118, 120, 124, 136, 137, 163-165, 167 and 183.

⁷¹ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 50.

⁷² *Idem*, IV p. 45.

⁷³ *Op. cit.* p. 29.

people do not like telling myths, neither those of their own phratry nor any other. According to Wirz the names of the *déma* are secret and the same is the case with certain myths. They should not be told outside the own group. Communicating the names and myths of *déma* belonging to another phratry than one's own may bring a person to grief, as this kind of flippancy may be avenged by sorcery. The members of the *boan* concerned do not like other people to give away the secret names and tales of their *déma* and may consider this an infringement of their rights.⁷⁴ Evidently, this is an overstatement. Many of these names and tales are fairly well known outside the phratry; during the initiation the ins and outs of mythology rather become common knowledge. It is true that a tendency toward secrecy prevails. Secrecy is implied in the attitude of religious awe vis-à-vis all things supernatural. It is true, too, that many *déma* have secret names next to those more commonly known. These secret names are the property of medicine-men, who apply them in their spells. It is not true, however, that myths are kept from initiates of other *boan*. Verschueren points out that if the privilege of relating a myth is reserved to phratry-members, it is not because non-members are actually forbidden to tell such a myth — transgressors fearing that in retaliation they might be punished by an act of sorcery — but because people are afraid of the *déma* of other clans. Such *déma* are not their relatives, unlike the *déma* of their own phratry. Being insufficiently familiar with them and their stories, people simply fear that some misfortune may befall them. A comparable attitude prevails in ritual.⁷⁵ Nobody will think of impersonating a *déma* who is not of his own phratry. The two cases are closely analogous because story-telling is, in fact, a diluted form of acting.⁷⁶

In the field of magic we meet with other cases of close relations existing between a man, his clan and his totems. Human sperma is widely applied in fertility magic. The sperma of a *Geb-zé* has a special effect on coconut trees, which are a *Geb-zé* totem; that of a *Mahu-zé* is particularly favourable to a sago palm, which belongs to the totems of the *Mahu-zé* phratry.⁷⁷ In general, magic is particularly effective if performed by a man whose phratry is associated with the object of the relative magical act.⁷⁸ The close relationship between a man and his

⁷⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 40.

⁷⁵ Verschueren, Letters V p. 8.

⁷⁶ Below, p. 206.

⁷⁷ Wirz, M.A. III p. 193.

⁷⁸ See below, pp. 866, 869 f.

totem is further demonstrated by the similarities that are believed to exist between a totemite and his totem. Baldness or ringworm may be conceived as totemic characteristics of the clan and its members, if the *déma* suffered from these discomforts or if such afflictions find an explanation in myth.⁷⁹ Often people pretend that it is possible to tell somebody's *boan* from his navel. A slightly convex navel corresponds with a betel nut and holds a hint that the bearer belongs to the totem-relations of the betel; if the navel is vaulted so as to resemble a slight umbilical hernia, then there is a relationship with the coconut clan. Wirz adds: "Of course all this is mere play, demonstrating that the native has plenty of leisure permitting him to indulge in this kind of speculation".⁸⁰ The observation is valuable because the fact that totemism is not only a matter of tradition but also an object of playful speculation illustrates its value for Marind-anim life and thought, and holds the possibility of a certain degree of conscious systematization.

It is of interest to note that this kind of playful comparison starts from outward similarities. Similarities and superficial resemblance play an important part in magic (here referred to as private rites). They do, too, in native contemplation on totems. More than once Wirz dwells on similarities and resemblances in his discussion of totemism. Thus myth equates sago and loam because of purely outward similarities.

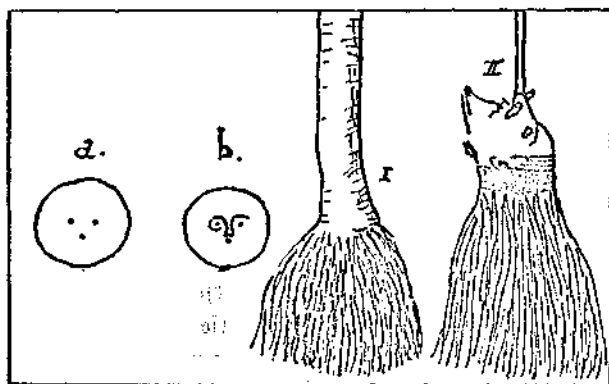


Fig. 1. Coconut and human head.

a. coconut; b. human face; I. lower part of the stem of a coconut tree, laid bare by surface erosion; II. cut-off head suspended from a rattan string passed through the nose.

Reprinted from P. Vertenten, *Het Indische Leven* II (1921) p. 1036.

⁷⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 33.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 35.

The one originated from the other.⁸¹ At the time cattle were imported into the area (after the foundation of Merauke) the *Sapi-sé*, a pig clan, adopted the cow because the cow is called *sapi* in Malay.⁸² From the blood of a dead cassowary there sprang red fruits, from its meat certain nuts which are the bird's favourite food.⁸³ In a bow the Marind see a man and each single part of the bow corresponds with some part of the human body. The myth explicitly explains the associations.⁸⁴ A coconut is a human head; the three holes represent eyes and mouth, a widely spread association confirmed by myth. Another association is that of the tree with a human body. The trunk with its cover of thick threads corresponds with the head adorned with a Marindinese hairdo.⁸⁵ A third way of assimilating man and coconut tree is by associating the stem with the body and the leaves with the hairdo. The rustling of the leaves is the voice of the coconut déma.⁸⁶ Here again myth confirms the association: the coconut tree sprang from a human head. The classificatory activity of associating natural phenomena with certain clans is quite a popular pastime among the Marind. "Time and again the old people, when sitting together, indulge in speculations on the totem-relations of all sorts of new things, trying to find them a place in their system of totem-relations. More than once I was a witness to their endeavours to associate such items as flour, rice, horses, goats, etc. with one of their *boan*. When strangers — non-Marind — are in their midst they will always try to classify them with one or other of their various clans on account of what they told with regard to their specific relations with certain animals and plants".⁸⁷

3. OTHER RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS

Wih. An interesting concept is that of *wih*. It denotes the life-principle in all things living. A translation is difficult to give, the more so because our main sources, Wirz and Geurtjens, indulge in mixing up native expositions of the concept with theories which perhaps served to make the matter more attractive or more acceptable to these authors, but fail to contribute to a scientific understanding of the Marind-anim

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid. p. 34.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 7; below, p. 294.

⁸⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 11 and below, p. 345.

⁸⁵ Cf. fig. 1.

⁸⁶ Wirz, op. cit. p. 11.

⁸⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 1.

mind. From the literature available⁸⁸ the following connotations are quoted: the living kernel in contradistinction to the material hull, an opposition borne out by the expressions *wih-anem* versus *sa-anem* (lit. sand-man). The latter is used to denote the dead body. The word *wih* is used for soul in expressions like *wih mendap ivanon*, the *wih* fled from me, i.e. I was struck dumb (with fright, amazement, etc.); *wih menda ka-huyanáv*, my *wih* trembled, I was afraid; *wih mendind huyev*, his *wih* trembled unto him, he was (very) angry with him; *wih kana karvasah*, the *wih* retires from me, I die. *Wih* is also the living, edible part of a mollusc or a crab, in contrast to its *sarap*, its hull. Similarly, the substance of an egg and more especially the yolk is referred to as *wih*. It is interesting to note that in a discussion of black magic Wirz's question as to whether hair or other body-substitutes used for sorcery contained *wih* had his informants perplexed. Obviously it is out of the question that *wih* should be a kind of magical quality which can exist apart from the living thing to which it belongs. On the other hand, *wih* is ascribed to sago and not only to the living tree as such, but also to the food extracted from it. When washing sago a woman utters the formula: *Wokabu wih anmakap koamin*, may *Wokabu* (the sago déma) make the *wih* enter (into the sago flour). *Wih* is also attributed to the bow; it is manifest in its resilience. Besides, the Marind-anim concept of a bow is highly anthropomorphic.

The concept of *wih* has to be handled with circumspection. It certainly cannot be equated with 'being alive', even though it denotes life or, more exactly, the vital element or principle of living things. The common word for 'alive' is *békai*. *Békai* also means heart. Images of the dead, as are sometimes made, always have the breast decorated with a red stain taking the form of a long-necked decanter, representing the throat and the heart. The design is called *békai* and if we may believe Geurtjens, the meaning of the *békai* is to indicate that the person represented is a living being even in death⁸⁹. Apparently *békai* refers more directly to physical life than *wih* does. The latter term has a mystical connotation, as is apparent from the use of the term *wih-anem*. Except when it serves as the opposite of *sa-anem*, the term *wih-anem* seems to be rarely used with reference to living beings. In the instances given, *wih-anem* is said of a déma. Thus in the myth of *Nazr*.⁹⁰ *Nazr* was killed while he was in

⁸⁸ Cf. notably Wirz, M.A. II pp. 2-5; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *wih*; V. d. Kolk & Vertenteu, Woordenboek v. leven, dood.

⁸⁹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *békai*; M&M V p. 322. Cf. below, p. 777.

⁹⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 170; below, p. 396.

the guise of a huge boar, but his *wih-anem* escaped and *Nazr* came to the feast of his own remains as a beautifully adorned *miakim*. The man who at *déma-wir* impersonates the coconut *déma* wears on his head a replica of a coconut palm. In a hole which has been made in the hollow stem of the tree there is a small human image, representing the *wih-anem* of the *déma*.⁹¹ In connection with living people we are assured by Wirz that while they are dreaming the *wih* temporarily leaves the body to roam about. At the moment of death the *wih* leaves the body forever.⁹² Strangely enough, the *wih's* roaming about while people are dreaming is not further elucidated by Wirz or any other author, nor by any of the (very scarce) stories on dreams and dreaming. Initially I had my doubts whether the relevant passus on the *wih* thus roaming about really originated from the Marind and not from some famous text-book. Equally suspect seemed the assertions of Wirz and Geurtjens that at the moment of death the *wih* leaves the body. These doubts have been dispelled by F. Verschueren, who gave the following comment: "Personally, I have often heard elderly people say that in their sleep their *wih* had been to *dehar* (the hinterland) and there had a curious experience of some kind . . . A drum, too, has a *wih*. When the drum is broken it is said that the *wih* has gone. The same is the case with a man who dies. As far as I know, the coastal people — and at any rate the Gawir-people (east of the Maro river) — believed that at the moment of death the *wih* escapes from the navel in the guise of a big green fly. Then, however, the *wih* is called *gova*. I heard them say so myself, and the prevalence of the concept is obviously not limited to the upper Bian area".⁹³ Here Verschueren refers to the following statement made by Wirz: "In the belief of the upper Bian people the *wih* leaves the body through the mouth; therefore at burial a bamboo tube is inserted into the mouth; others believe that she (the *wih*) escapes from the navel in the guise of a big fly. She lingers in the vicinity of the grave".⁹⁴ Not all the upper Bian Marind notions regarding the dead are identical with those of the coastal Marind. Their term *nduwě*, spirit of the dead, may also be used for *déma*.⁹⁵ It is probable that there are more differences between the two regions. Speaking in general terms, Wirz states that the Marind have no clear notions with regard to the

⁹¹ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 9.

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁹³ Verschueren, *Letters V* pp. 6 f.

⁹⁴ Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 120.

⁹⁵ Geurtjens, *Dict. v. déma*.

passing of the *wih* into a spirit of the dead.⁹⁶ Actually we find that as soon as somebody has died the word *wih* is no longer used. Immediately after his death the Marind speak of *gova*, later on of *hais* to denote the spirits of the dead generally. Apparently the *déma* differ from ordinary living beings. When a *déma* is killed, his *wih-anem* lives on; when a man dies he becomes a *hais*, a spirit of the dead.

Finally, reference should be made to chapter XI, where it is suggested that the *wih-anem*, the life-essence of the *déma*, should be associated with the man who represents the *déma* in ritual. When the *déma* is going to be ritually killed, the performer throws off the ornaments and leaps out of the pit where the *déma* — that is, the ornaments — is buried.^{96*}

The spirits of the dead. Rarely is death attributed to what we accept as natural causes. It is only in respect of the very old that death is taken for granted, and likewise in cases when people die as a result of infirmity or protracted sickness. If the deceased was very old, people will say that the flesh is consumed.⁹⁷ Our sources are silent with regard to comments on the death of a very young child. F. Verschueren informs me that a misshapen or stillborn child is buried without further ado. "When a well-shaped baby dies shortly after birth there is no investigation or divination to find out the cause of death, but that does not imply that they do not accept an external cause. I often had the impression that in such a case a *déma* is held responsible. The possibility of black magic having been applied does not exist, however, as long as the child has not left the *oram-aha*, the maternity-hut".⁹⁸ In other words, any death, except where the very young and the very old are concerned, is attributed either to the *déma* or to some form of black magic. In the chapters on Headhunting and Private Rites we shall return to the subject of sorcery. For the present suffice it to state that, in myth, the origin of death is ascribed to *kambara* (sorcery). The relevant myth is remarkable because the story begins with the origin of man. The myth will be related at some length further on this chapter. Here only the following is relevant: the first men originated from a hole in the ground in the eastern area, in Kondo or thereabouts. From there they started

⁹⁶ Wirz, l.c.

^{96a} Below, p. 623 note 166.

⁹⁷ Wirz, op. cit. p. 81. That the flesh is consumed is said also in cases of sorcery; cf. below, pp. 909 f.

⁹⁸ Verschueren, Letters V p. 7.

out westward. The first to go was an *éwati* called *Woryu* (an alternative name sometimes applied in the western area is *Woliw*). He got to the beach at Koroar near Sarira. That is why he is also called *Koroar-éwati*. He had a big pubic shell (*sahu*), which he was singing about. Proceeding along the beach he conjured the sea, which receded and left him some ground to walk on (at low tide the beach is broad and the going easy). He continued on his way till he arrived in the country of the Yab-anim on the lower Digul, where all the dead have since gone to. *Woryu* had brought his drum *Mingui* which the dead are beating when celebrating a dance. Wirz adds that *Woryu* was killed by *kambara*.⁹⁹ There is one inconsistency in the story as related by Wirz. He states that the Yab-anim country is situated on the other side of the Digul, which is belied by his own map and by the evidence supplied above.¹⁰⁰ The Yab-anim have their more important centre, Bibikem, fairly far south of the Digul, close to Strait Marianne. Wirz must have meant that the land of the dead lies across the Digul, and that it is associated with the Yab-anim, who live near to it.

According to a version related by Vertenten,¹⁰¹ *Woliw* was a man who lived in the Makléw territory. He died and his widow went to Sangasé. There was a sun eclipse and *Woliw* rose from his grave and followed her. She took fright and chased him off (because he stank, a recurrent motive in various versions). Then he went westward to the lower Digul, beating his drum *Mingui* (i.e. maggot) and singing: "Men, you belong to the sand and to the maggots". Ever since, the dead have not stayed with the living, but go to the *hais-miráv*, the land of the dead.

According to another version¹⁰² the scene of his temporary resurrection was in Kondo. In all essentials the two versions of the myth are identical. *Woryu* takes his drum *Mingui* and he goes westward to the Digul. The latter detail is important because the site of the *hais-miráv*, the land of the dead, is a matter of controversy. There is more than one *hais-miráv*. Next to the one situated somewhere near the mouth of the Digul there is an eastern land of the dead, eastward from Kondo in Australian territory. There is also an association of the *hais* with shooting stars and with lightning. According to one myth (the myth of *Sobra*) there are *hais* staying in the sky.¹⁰³ Viegen insists that there

⁹⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 187.

¹⁰⁰ Above, pp. 14 f.

¹⁰¹ Vertenten, Ann. 1916 p. 148.

¹⁰² Wirz, M.A. III p. 127.

¹⁰³ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 190, III p. 124; Vertenten, J.P. 1922 p. 486; Geurtjens. Dict. v. *heis*.

are *hais* in the underworld.¹⁰⁴ In other words, the ideas with regard to the land of the dead are confused. Some people "hold the view that the dead have not a fixed abode but are everywhere, haunting about by night and frightening the people. They shun the light. In the daytime they manifest themselves in the guise of cranes or ravens, visiting their gardens and other spots they loved to visit in their lifetime".¹⁰⁵ In spite of this confusion, which is also apparent from Vertenten's exposition in the Java Post,¹⁰⁶ the prevailing notion is that of a land of the dead in the far west, which is their ultimate destination. That is the version recurring in various forms in Marind-anim mythology, as is confirmed *inter alia* by Cappers, who identifies the land of the dead with the place of sunset.¹⁰⁷

Immediately after somebody's death his soul is called *gova*. We do not really know what the *gova* is, as information is extremely scanty. Wirz points out that *hais* is the term for the true spirits of the dead, usually represented in the form of human skeletons, whereas the *gova* is described as a bright light or as a white shape.¹⁰⁸ Geurtjens confines himself to the statement that the *gova* is the recently deceased, visible to medicine-men only.¹⁰⁹ He adds that *gova* is, possibly, a metathesis of *ogèb-a*, buried one, a suggestion for which we are not any the wiser, the less so because metathesis is used by Geurtjens as a kind of linguistic panacea, giving better evidence of his shrewdness than of the soundness of his etymologies.

The dead proper are the *hais* and a long and interesting text, noted down by Wirz at Yéwati and Yobar (parts of present-day Buti and Sēpadim) gives elaborate evidence of Marind-anim notions regarding the dead.¹¹⁰ When somebody has died, the corpse is buried the same day, usually shortly before sunset. During the night the *gova*, wishing to leave the body (note that the text does not speak of *wih* but of *gova*!), causes it to move spasmodically, whereupon the *déma*-bird called *Simb* comes and whistles into the dead man's ears.^{110*} Then the *gova*, in the guise of a big fly, escapes through the navel. All those who died at

¹⁰⁴ Viegen, oral information, and Ann. 1915 p. 345.

¹⁰⁵ Wirz, M.A. III p. 122.

¹⁰⁶ Vertenten, l.c.

¹⁰⁷ Cappers, K.M. 35 p. 149.

¹⁰⁸ Wirz, op. cit. p. 120.

¹⁰⁹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *gova*.

¹¹⁰ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 121 f.

^{110*} The *simb* is also the little bird which is often seen picking the teeth of a sleeping crocodile.

about the same time in neighbouring settlements assemble and dance the whole night. For this dance the word *arih* is used, the term commonly applied to dances belonging to a fertility rite. At daybreak they set out for the east. Sitting on the bough of a tree called *Saringa* (actually the stem; *saringa* is a palm species) they fly to Siwasiv, where they meet the pig *déma*, who causes them to tumble down by dashing at their legs. They go on to Kondo, crossing the Sendár creek. Here they meet the fire *déma* in the shape of a fiery wall. They leap across, but burn their legs and the lower part of their bodies, and to recover they stay for a few days near the creek, with the *hais* of an old woman. They resume their journey and, crossing several rivers, they arrive at last at Mayo and Yavar-makan, mythical places in Australian territory. The *mayo déma* (plur.) receive them, singing *gaga* (the *mayo* song). They are inspected by a red parrot. After having been decorated with croton twigs by the *mayo déma*, they carry on eastward till they arrive at Kombis, on the eastern bank of the Fly river. In a decorated canoe they are ferried to the opposite bank. There is the eastern *hais-miráv*. Its warden, a *batend-déma* (the *batend* is the beautiful bower bird), flies up and down near the river-bank and the newcomers try in vain to catch the bird.¹¹¹ Thus they enter the *hais-miráv* to be changed into snakes, lizards, echidna and opossums. In such guises, repeatedly changing them, they return to the west, till they arrive at the Maro river. Old *hais*, people long dead, throw a tall palmtree across the river (actually the coconut tree cut down on the occasion of a person's death). Crossing the river via the stem, they are accompanied by an old *hais* who, as their antipode, proceeds head down along the underside of the stem. Halfway across, the new *hais* are tortured by a *déma* called *Adak*, who removes their intestines, thus making them into real *hais* (*hais-ha*). They travel on to the Digul, where they decorate themselves, arrange their hairdoes, anoint their bodies and paint their faces for the feast which they subsequently arrange. For several nights on end they sing to the accompaniment of the drum *Mingui* and dance so that the *sahu* (pubic shells) swing up and down, rattling against their bones.

In the meantime the villagers prepare the *yamu*, the funeral meal.¹¹² The *hais* are well aware of these preliminaries and return to the village.

¹¹¹ Cf. below, pp. 326 ff.

¹¹² Here the text is confusing. It reads literally: "In the village of the deceased the people prepare the *yamu*. The women make sago and bring vegetables and fruits to the village. The men go out hunting. After three days *yamu* must be celebrated". On the face of it, one is inclined to conclude that *yamu* must be celebrated on the third day after the death has occurred, but that is

At night, when the old people sing *yarut*, the ceremonial dirge, they assemble outside the village and sing *samb-zi*, the chorus of the great ceremonial dance; to that end they bring *Mingui*, the death-drum, with them. Nobody sees them, but sometimes, when there is a lull in the *yarut*, they may be heard singing and drumming. In the meantime they nibble the food that has been put on the graves. In the morning, unseen, they partake of the big sago-dish and the fruits which are distributed among the guests. After that, they leave the village. According to our text they do not return to the *hais-miráv* but roam about, haunting and frightening the people by night.

The text pays little attention to the concept of a western land of the dead. Nevertheless, though emphasis is laid on the eastern *hais-miráv*, the western one is not forgotten. After their visit to the eastern land of the dead they go to the western, then again to return to the village for the *yamu*. An interesting feature is the apparent rapprochement between the *hais* and the *déma*. The *hais* go through a kind of initiation and meet the *déma*. In a wholly different context Viegen informs us that the language of the dead is *déma-language*, the language of the mythical age.¹¹³

Wirz gives a few more stories dealing with *hais*. They stress the wish of the living to be reunited with their beloved; one of them is the account of a dream, the other the story of a neuropath who believes he halfway succeeded in becoming a *hais*. The picture of the *hais* as presented by these stories is not different from that given above.¹¹⁴

Additional information is supplied by F. Verschueren: "The Marind feels fairly sure that for some time after his death the deceased will haunt the place where he used to live. He may do so in many ways, even in the guise of a shooting star, or by going underground, appearing preferably by night. But ultimately, at the end of a period which may vary in length, dependent upon the removal of the taboo (*sâr*) on his gardens, he departs definitely to the land of the dead. Now is there a land of the dead in the east? The various *yarut* (dirges) give evidence that the *hais* first go eastward, then to return to the west. The singers of the dirge always agreed that the *yarut* describes the journey of the dead. From the data I collected myself, I gather that the passing

not what the informants meant to convey. Nor could they possibly, because *yamu* is celebrated at a later date (cf. below, p. 797). The three days evidently refer to the hunting-party (cf. inter alia pp. 836 jo. 799).

¹¹³ Viegen, Ann. 1915 p. 377.

¹¹⁴ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 121, 128 f.

through the eastern *hais-miráv* is a kind of initiation, devised to make them complete *hais*, and at the same time a reflection of life on earth. The same idea is exemplified in the text you borrowed from Wirz. The real and final *hais-miráv*, however, appears to be in the far west".¹¹⁵ Another important point brought forward by Verschueren is the following: "The point at which the dead cross the Fly is not Kombis but *Kombes*. Elderly people still remember that *Kombes* used to be the name of the big tributary of the Fly river nowadays known as the Strickland river".¹¹⁶ This, indeed, throws some new light on the situation, because it brings out that the eastern land of the dead is located, not near the mouth of the Fly river, but far inland. We shall have to come back to this point later.¹¹⁷ The identification of places in Australian Territory is a rather controversial matter. In this particular case, for instance, we note that Viegen mentions a river *Kombes* which must be the Wassi Kussa or thereabout.¹¹⁸

In comparison with the elaborate rites and ceremonies celebrated for other purposes, the cult of the dead seems a modest one. A closer inspection of the various data reveals that the dead occupy a fairly important place in ritual; to mention only one item out of many, the custom to have one night of *yarut*-singing at the beginning of a feast. In another chapter this point will be taken up again.¹¹⁹ Here we have to concentrate on the various notions with regard to the dead. The *messav*, who are able to see the *déma* and speak with them, can also contact the *hais*. One of them, meeting a *hais*, was informed by the *hais* that the realm of the dead and the food there were better than the land and the food of the living.¹²⁰ It seems more expressive of wishful thinking than of confident faith. Marind-anim speculation on the dead and the hereafter never resulted in a clear, generally accepted pattern of thought. Still, the dead are a reality. After a recent death people tend to interpret every rustle as a proof that the deceased has returned and is haunting nearby. At night unfamiliar noises and rustles easily frighten the people. They will not go out by night without a light.¹²¹ Vertenten also emphasizes the fear of the *hais*. They frighten the people, at night they whistle through the hollow bamboo tubes of the hedges,

¹¹⁵ Verschueren, Letters V p. 7.

¹¹⁶ L.c.

¹¹⁷ Below, pp. 241 f.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 140 and Wirz, M.A. IV p. 133.

¹¹⁹ On the *yarut* see below, pp. 798 f., 846, 849.

¹²⁰ Wirz, M.A. III p. 126.

¹²¹ L.c.

they wail in the wind howling round the houses, they assemble above the grassy plain at sunset. Their associates are the *rav-a-rav rik*, the flashes of lightning, beings of short stature, living in the clouds and associated with the thunderstorm.¹²²

Other religious concepts are mostly connected with magic and will be discussed in the chapter dealing with private rites. There is no word for deity or god other than *déma*, and in the Marind-anim pantheon there is no supreme deity clearly taking precedence over others.

There is one concept which might be mentioned here, viz. that of *yarét*, hot. In Orokololo religion *ahea*, heat, is magical heat and Williams identifies it with the concept of mana.¹²³ Among the Marind-anim the word *yarét*, hot, is used to denote fighting spirit, anger, frenzy, or sexual excitement. There is a medicine to make dogs and warriors *yarét*. The word is also used to denote bitterness or sharpness of taste.¹²⁴ The word does not seem to have a supernatural connotation, as happens to be the case among the Orokololo.

4. MYTHOLOGY

A myth presents religious truth in story-form. It has an authority which other stories lack. Ordinary stories, even if they are dealing with the supernatural, nobody is in duty bound to believe, as, up to an extent, one is with regard to myth. Up to an extent: there is no dogma commanding belief in myth. Often the people themselves do not have separate terms for story and myth. Whether the story is a myth or just a story has to be decided from the attitudes of story-teller and listener. Even that is not always a reliable criterion. It often happens that myths are told to the field-worker without any proof that the relater believes his stories to be myths, that is, religious truth. He may wish to hide his own feelings or the narrator is just sophisticated enough to be sceptical about the truth of the stories on supernatural events handed down by his ancestors. In such cases the substance of the story may lead the student to conclude that the story makes part of the mythological tradition of the people he is investigating.

In the case of the Marind-anim we are sometimes confronted with the same problem. In the preceding section we met with a few stories on spirits of the dead which Wirz calls myths and which might as well be called stories. Apparently they have been told with that

¹²² Geurtjens, Dict. v. *rav-a-rav*; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 40.

¹²³ Williams, Drama p. 111.

¹²⁴ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *jarét*.

circumlocution characteristic of myth-telling. In content, however, they deal with relatively recent experiences, and not with events belonging to the mythical age. The difference is not as big as it seems on the face of it. Whether or not we accept these stories as real myths, we have to bear in mind that story and myth are no further apart than father's days are removed from grandfather's. There is no clear-cut borderline between real life and mythical life. The world of myth is never far-off. What happened in the comparatively recent past may happen again, provided that 'past' conveys a sense of reality and immediacy strong enough to experience it as close by.

This kind of immediacy apparently belongs to Marind-anim mythology. When telling a myth the narrator creates an atmosphere of mystery and acts his story with an expressiveness highly conducive to a firm belief in its veracity and reality.¹²⁵ There is only one step from telling to re-enacting as done in ritual. In telling the myth the supernatural is made actual. The distinction between past and present, between the pragmatic and the supernatural is fading out. A story about recent experiences with spirits of the dead may arouse similar religious feelings as one dealing with the *déma*. In such a situation the distinction we made between myth and story dealing with the supernatural loses a great deal of its applicability. Both are expressions of the people's experience of something supernatural.

The importance of a sound knowledge of Marind-anim mythology for a better understanding of their ritual and of the relations between the numerous clans and subclans was first realized by Wirz. Consequently he set out to collect a vast number of myths which he published in Part II of his monograph, together with a survey of the Marind-anim clan-system. Mythological data published by other authors give supplementary information only. But for the extensive collection published by Wirz our knowledge of Marind-anim mythology would be extremely poor, so poor even that to arrive at a reasonable understanding of their ritual and clan-structure would have been impossible.

There are only few Marind who are good tellers of myths. Not everybody among them is interested in mythology. Very often they only tell a fragment, leaving out the beginning and the end and selecting just that part which, for some reason or other, takes their fancy at that particular moment.¹²⁶ Wirz does not give us sufficient information to guess the cause of this trend toward fragmentation. It may have

¹²⁵ See above, pp. 178 and 182.

¹²⁶ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 28, 39.

been unwillingness, but it is also possible that the circumstantial method of story-telling with its accent on mystery and acting tends to divert attention from the story as a whole to the parts fit for oral dramatization. Telling a myth is not a matter of merely giving some relevant information, but a quasi-ritual in which some part of supernatural reality is enacted. There is still another impediment to the imparting of mythological data. By far the majority of myths are clan- or at least phratry property and we pointed out already that the Marind are afraid to tell a myth which is not the property of their phratry.¹²⁷ In the few cases they did tell one, Wirz's informants first made sure that no members of other *boan* were around before they started telling a myth belonging to another phratry than their own.¹²⁸ Confining the right of myth-telling to the members of the relevant *boan* fits in with the quasi-ritual character of myth-telling itself. Relating is a diluted form of enacting, and enacting itself is the prerogative of the relevant clan. Even all those myths which begin with the *mayo* as celebrated by the *déma* in the past — and every phratry has at least one such myth — are phratry property. These myths must have been common knowledge. They are part of the phratry's function in the *mayo* ceremonies.

In differentiating between the several myths, the following categories may be established:

1. Myths generally known and not as of right belonging to any specific *boan*;
2. Myths which are the property of a *boan* and which belong to the group of myths connected with the *mayo*-ritual;
3. Myths which are the property of a *boan* and are not connected with the *mayo*-ritual. Often such myths are myths of origin of a particular subclan.

The distinction thus made does not derive from explicit native information and is not a clearly drawn one either. It happens that a myth is relevant to more than one phratry, as in the case of *Uaba*.¹²⁹ Neither is it possible to say for certain which are the myths that are common property and which the ones belonging to one phratry only. If we want to make this distinction we have to rely on Wirz. Other authors transmitting mythological data do not thus distinguish them. Most difficult to classify are the folk-tales published by Drabbe as texts

¹²⁷ Above, pp. 193 f.

¹²⁸ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 40.

¹²⁹ Cf. below, p. 238.

annexed to his *Spraakkunst*. These folk-tales undoubtedly deal with mythological material, but having been transmitted by unbelieving young people who were invited, not to give proof of their knowledge of Marind-anim folklore, but of their ability to write down a text in Marind-anim language, it is extremely difficult to evaluate these stories as sources of folk-belief.¹³⁰ Wirz's collection surpassing by far all other anthologies of Marind-anim folk-tales both in extent and in wealth of detail, we shall follow Wirz, drawing upon the other sources where and whenever required. In this section we shall deal with those myths which, according to Wirz, are common property or may be assumed to be so. Even Wirz is not always explicit in this respect. At the outset it may be pointed out that these myths are few in number. Most myths, the more important ones included, belong to the mythological cycle of one or other of the phratries.

In the beginning there were two *déma*, *Nubog*, the earth, a female *déma*, and *Dinadin*, the sky, a male *déma*. From them spring *Geb* and *Sami* who, in a way, are the ancestors of the Marind.¹³¹ According to the Report of the Depopulation Team the myth is universally known. This source calls *Dinadin* and *Nubog* the parents of *Geb* and *Sami*. In a note the authors add that, locally, *Dinadin* was given the name of *Dino Dina*, i.e. dark.¹³² None of our sources substantiates the assertion that *Dinadin* and *Nubog* mean, respectively, sky and earth, while the dictionaries let us down. In his letters Verschuieren adds that *Sami* is identical with *Mahu*; "at Kuprik and everywhere in the

¹³⁰ F. Verschuieren gives the following comment: "Several of these folk-tales impressed me as being stories which elderly people had introduced from elsewhere, in other words, stories which are not Marind-anim myths, but of Kanum or other origin. Other stories apparently are not myths at all, but simply narrations around some event or custom (cf. Drabbe, op. cit. pp. 165 f.). The story on p. 168 is probably a Kanum or Yéi-anim legend, though an incomplete one. That on p. 170 is a story, not a myth. The story on p. 171 is evidently a fragment of the upper Bian myth of *Mahu*, while on p. 172 we find a description of customs. The story on p. 174 is undoubtedly a myth, but narrated, not in the true manner of the teller of myths, but like a father or grandfather would tell it to his children or grandchildren. I often sat in and listened on such occasions. They then do not take the telling of the myths really seriously. They leave out the names and emphasize those details which are of special interest to children. When a myth is told in such a way it is better to call it a folk-tale. Usually such stories are of foreign origin" (*Letters V p. 8*).

¹³¹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 28.

¹³² Rep. Depop. Team p. 67.

interior *Sami* and *Mahu* are identified. Also on the upper Bian I was told that *Mahu* is identical with *Sami*".¹³³

Wirz has it that according to an old informant from Saror *Geb* originated from a stone. A stork with its beak chiselled a human face into the stone and so *Geb* came into being. This happened in Mayo near the Fly river. *Geb* was a big man, all black, frightful to look at. His body was hard as stone and covered with acorn-shell. Long hairs grew from his ears and he lived in a termite-heap or an ant-heap. Our information on *Sami*, says Wirz, is scantier. Sometimes he is said to have come from the interior. His body was painted red. *Sami* is also the name of a kind of serpent. Slightly incongruously, our author adds that it is not known that *Sami* was a snake, though a snake *déma* called *Sami* resides near Domandé.¹³⁴

Geb and *Sami* are the first ancestors of the Marind, who are descended either from the one or from the other.¹³⁵ The contention is not corroborated by other myths, but we must accept that this is the way the Marind put it.

A second general myth is that of the origin of man.¹³⁶ Once upon a time the *déma* made a great feast underground near Sangasé (according to other informants near Gelib in Eromka or in the vicinity of Awelima near Wamal, both in the far west of the Marind territory). Thereupon they went eastward, travelling underground. In the myth the fact that both the feast and the journey eastward were underground is apparently an important feature, since all the more detailed readings have it. On the surface of the earth was a *déma*-dog called *Girui*, who heard something stirring down below; it was the *déma* burrowing along on their eastward journey. He followed the sounds

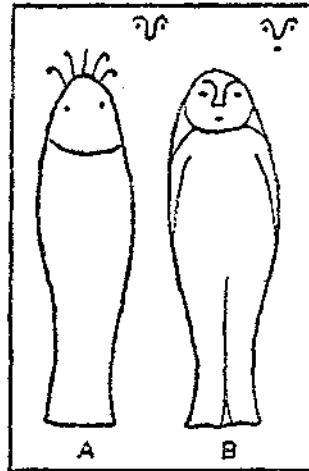


Fig. 2. A. representation of an *anda*-fish.

B. the appearance of man as he emerged from the waterhole.

Reprinted from P. Vertenten M.S.C., Vijftien Jaar onder de Koppensnellers, p. 128. (By courtesy of the Sacred Heart Mission).

¹³³ Letters V p. 8.

¹³⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 29. *Sami* appears as a snake in various myths; see below, pp. 235 and 325 f.

¹³⁵ Wirz, l.c.

¹³⁶ The myth has been related many times; see Wirz, op. cit. pp. 185-189;

till he arrived in Kondo, where the noise became louder. On the bank of a creek he started digging; water welled up and out came a number of peculiar beings of fish-like appearance. They were like *anda*-fishes, catfishes, the main totem of the *Zohé-boan*, but they were in reality human beings whose arms, legs, fingers and toes were still one with their bodies, and who had neither mouths nor ears. The drawing of an *anda*-fish made by Vertenten and reprinted as fig. 2 by courtesy of the Sacred Heart Mission, gives a perfect illustration of the ideas held by the Marind. A stork who was a stork *déma* approached and began to peck away at the *anda*. The skull of the fish was unexpectedly hard, so much so that the stork's beak became bent, and thus it has remained up to the present day. The *déma* of the place, the fire *déma* (other sources say it was *Aramemb*) warned off the dog and the stork. They were human beings, he said, and he ordered the stork to put them on a dry spot. It was cold and the beings shivered. Then the *déma* made a big fire on which he threw a number of bamboo-stems. First a small bamboo cracked, giving a light pop, whereupon two holes burst in the head of each of the beings and became ears. A second, somewhat bigger bamboo exploded, and caused two other slits to appear in each head, and these were the eyes. A third explosion gave them a nose, and a still louder one had them all cry out: the bang had resulted in another crack, the mouth. Now the *déma* cut them their arms, legs, fingers and toes with a bamboo knife. The clippings he threw away and these became leeches. There are still many of them in Kondo.

As a matter of fact, the dog had dug two holes. From one hole the *déma* emerged who are the ancestors of the Marind-anim, from the other originated all the foreign tribes, the *Ikom-anim*, who were the first to depart. According to a variant communicated by Vertenten the white people had been present at the feast in the western area, to which they had come by boat. When the *déma* travelled eastward on their underground journey, the whites went by boat. Arriving at Kondo they could not come ashore. Their boat drifted away, but the fire *déma* managed to hurl a fire-brand into the vessel. That is how the white people got fire.

Most variant readings ignore the foreigners and confine themselves

Viegen, TAG 1912 pp. 145 f.; Heldring, TBG 1913 pp. 429 f.; Gooszen, BKI 1914 pp. 375 f.; Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 125-131, Ann. 1917 pp. 300-304; Geurtjens, TAG 1929 p. 229; Rep. Depop. Team pp. 67 f.; Nevermann, Söhne pp. 15 ff.

to the Marind. Their human shape having been completed, they left Kondo and went westward, travelling day and night till they arrived in their present territory. Those of Alaku, Sangasé and Domandé arrived by night. Therefore they are *hap-rek*, i.e. of the night, and paint themselves black when they celebrate a ceremony. That is also why they have a black cult (these villages belong to the *imo*-cult). Those of Onggari, Kumbe, and the villages farther east arrived by day; in other words, they are different. In another variant we are told that the first men on their departure are taken aboard two canoes, the *Geb-zé* and those of the phratry of *Aramemb* entering the craft of *Geb* and *Aramemb*, those of the other moiety boarding the canoe of *Mahu* (*Sami*) and *Bragai*.¹³⁷

The first to go was an *éwati*, called *Woryu*. He went all along the coast to the west. We saw above that, as the first man to go, he was also the first to die.¹³⁸

An alternative reading has it that the first three beings were snatched up from the hole by the stork, but he bit their heads with his beak so that they died. Then the *déma* (his name is not mentioned) ordered the stork away. The other beings now emerged on their own accord. The first to appear was an old woman, *Sobra*. It was she who made the fire and put the final touch to the shape of the human beings who came after her. The same reading adds that five *déma* stayed down; they are the earthquake *déma*.¹³⁹ They are called upon to churn up the soil when the ground is prepared for planting. *Sobra* herself is a curious character who is rarely mentioned in other myths. In this reading she plays a nefarious role. She hid in a hole from which she emerged now and then to kidnap a boy whom she killed, roasted and devoured, after which she retired again to her hole. She did it in such a way as to throw suspicion on other people who then were killed in revenge. Thus headhunting originated.

Another more frequently related myth calls *Sobra* a *hais*. She lived in the sky. In a period of prolonged drought she dug a hole to find water, but she dug straight through the vault and fell through it onto the earth, where she had many adventures. Here she married *Nær*,

¹³⁷ Above, p. 85.

¹³⁸ Ibid. pp. 199 f.

¹³⁹ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 188 f. It may be a matter of chance that the mythical *kambara-anim* also number five, though this may equally well be significant. Their names, however, differ widely. Those of the earthquake *déma* are *Nénenau*, *Tématai*, *Iauéma*, *Yarépa* and *Bumb*; for those of the *kambara-anim* see below, p. 249.

the pig *déma*, who is also the *déma* of headhunting. She bore him the flashes of lightning who are their children.¹⁴⁰

5. SOME NOTIONS IN MARIND-ANIM COSMOLOGY

In Marind-anim life and thought a few prevailing oppositions can be discerned, the knowledge of which is of the utmost importance for an understanding of their mythology. There is in the first place the contrast between east monsoon and west monsoon. The former is characterized by a strong and constantly blowing southeasterly gale, bringing relatively cool weather. It is the dry season; the swamps dry up, mosquitoes become few, the grass of the savannah can be set on fire and big hunting-parties are possible. The fish retreat into a few creeks, where they are so abundant that, in places, they can even be caught by hand. The east monsoon is the favourite time of the year, the festive season in which the great feasts and ceremonies are held. The wet season, preceded by a prolonged period of hot, oppressive weather, is quite different. Heavy gales and rainstorms lash the country; mosquitoes become innumerable, the swamps make travelling difficult and many people are harassed by sickness. One of the early missionaries, Nollen, informs us that during the rainy season the people are as it were confined to their villages. There is no hunting or feasting. Even beating the drum is forbidden. The good time is that of the east monsoon, when they have, on an average, two dances a week, now in one place and then in another.¹⁴¹ The reader need only glance at the map to realize the importance of the opposition of the seasons: the beach runs practically parallel to the axis of the two contrasting monsoons, viz. northwest-southeast. The latter end is connected with the good season, the former with the bad.

Another contrast is that of coast and interior.¹⁴² The coast is superior. The opposition runs parallel to the opposition of coconut and sago palm. The former grows on the sandy dunes along the beach, the latter in the mosquito-infested swamps of the interior.¹⁴³ A parallel to this is the contrast between the open plain and the bush. The latter opposition has greater prominence among the people of the interior than among those of the coast, who live in the immediate surroundings either of the open beach or of the wide savannah stretching out not far behind the coastline. To the hinterlanders the open plain is what the beach is to

¹⁴⁰ Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 189 ff. and below, pp. 401 f.

¹⁴¹ Nollen, J. P. 1909 p. 341.

¹⁴² Cf. *inter alia* Vertenten, I.L. II p. 454; Gooszen, NRC 28 Nov. 1907 page II A, BKI 1914 p. 367.

¹⁴³ Cf. the myth of the sago tree, below, p. 338.

the coastal people: their home and their hearts' delight.¹⁴⁴ Never did I become so keenly aware of this as on the occasion when, after days of struggling through the interminable forest separating Fly and Digul, we came upon a small, open plain where for the first time in five days we had sunshine: at that moment all my bearers broke into a loud, triumphant song.

The contrast between southeast and northwest, which may be associated with an opposition of east and west, is also one between sunrise and sunset. The sun is supposed to go down through a deep hole in the ground somewhere near the western end of the Marind territory; both Eromka (the westernmost part of the beach, near to the southern entrance of Strait Marianne) and Komolou, the island to the southeast of Frederik Hendrik Island, are mentioned in this connection. Every night the sun goes on an underground journey to the east, where he rises from a mythical spot near the Fly River and resumes his heavenly course. The sun is male, just like the moon; in one of the myths both are said to be *patur*. In the next chapter we shall deal with the tendency to associate sunset with the sun *déma* in his malicious aspect, viz. that of a kidnapping ogre. Another story, related by Vertenten, makes mention of a mythical being called *Pathogu*, a strong old woman who lives underground in a hole in Eromka. She, too, steals children and she can turn into a snake.¹⁴⁵ She is only a minor character. A more interesting item is the association of sunset and sexual act. To the people of the western coastal section (Wirz writes 'eastern', but then it can, strictu sensu, be true of Domandé only) the sun sinks into the sea when the northwest monsoon blows, and goes down into the mainland during the dry season. "Beholding these phenomena, the natives will say that the sun copulates with the sea during the rainy season. The numerous spider-threads floating in the air or hanging suspended from the palm trees on the beach at this time of the year are called *kombra-kombra* by the Marind. They are the sperma of the sun, wafted landwards by the wind blowing from the sea".¹⁴⁶ In passing we note that nothing is said of what the sun does to the land during the dry season. In the absence of any comment by our author we confine ourselves to stating the fact.

The western Marind hold the view that during the night the sun returns to the east travelling just below the horizon, a view which is not substantiated by other, particularly mythical, evidence. The prevailing

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Vertenten, I.L. II pp. 854 f.

¹⁴⁶ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 78.

view in mythology is that the sun goes underground. We shall return to this subject in the next chapter. For the moment suffice it to state that the place of sunrise is an important mythological centre, even though its actual location is a matter of speculation. Some tend to identify the place with that of the birth of the fire at Kondo, but the view more commonly held is that it is somewhere on the coast, not far from the mouth of the Fly River at a point called *Ep kwitare*. Probably Mabudauan is meant.¹⁴⁷ The point of interest is the association of the place of sunrise with, alternately, Kondo (where both the first men and the fire originated) and the country east of the Marind-anim territory, the area connected in mythology with the first *mayo*-rites, from where the *déma* went westward on journeys ultimately resulting in the settlement of the Marind in their present environment. There is a distinct parallelism between the westward travels of the *déma* in the *mayo* myths and of the newly-born human beings in the myth of origin related in the preceding section.¹⁴⁸

The contrast between east and west suggests a certain parallelism with the contrast between upperworld and underworld. The former was alluded to in the myth of *Sobra*¹⁴⁹ and does not differ substantially from this world; the latter is found under the crust of the earth, which is not so very thick. There is one important difference between this world and the underworld and that is that in the latter all things are turned upside down.¹⁵⁰ Anybody can see it if only he looks into ripple-less water. Viegen adds that the language of its inhabitants is a reversed language, the language of *hais* and *déma*.¹⁵¹ A certain connection of the underworld with the spirits of the dead is suggested by Vertenten's communication that shortly after the terrible flu-epidemic of 1918 the rumour was circulated that the spirits of the dead had put everything upside down in the area west of the Bian.¹⁵² The association of spirits of the dead and underworld is effectively balanced by the association of shooting stars with *hais*, and the belief that *Sobra*, who is depicted as a *hais*, originated from the land of the heavens.¹⁵³ The notions of upper- and underworld do not play a very important part in Marind-anim thought and mythology. They may be brought up

¹⁴⁷ See below, pp. 239 ff.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 245 ff.

¹⁴⁹ Above, p. 211.

¹⁵⁰ Viegen, Ann. 1915 p. 346; Wirz, M.A. II p. 184.

¹⁵¹ Viegen, Ann. 1915 pp. 375 f.

¹⁵² Vertenten, Ann. 1919 pp. 247 f., 270 f.

¹⁵³ Above, pp. 200 and 211.

occasionally, but throughout Wirz's elaborate exposé of mythology and ritual the role of upper- and underworld appears to be minimal.¹⁵⁴ There is not a clear tripartition, such as is found in some Indonesian mythological systems (e.g. that of the Buginese) in which this world is a middle-world, situated between the upper- and the underworld and in which earthly, heavenly and underworld powers are constantly interacting. In my dissertation I overstressed this tripartition, led astray on the one hand by the misinterpretation of the phratry-system discussed in Chapter II,¹⁵⁵ and on the other by a few cases of tripartition which deserve of special discussion.

In the first place, then, there is the tripartition resulting from the cults: the *rapa*-cult in the east, in Kondo, in the place associated with sunrise, fire and the origin of man; the *mayo* with its navel *déma* at Brawa near Merauke, of which the native name is Ermasu, associated by Viegen — probably erroneously — with 'reversing, turning upside-down'; the *imo* and its navel *déma* not far from Sangasé in the western part of the country, associated with night and black, to which, perhaps, a certain association with death may be added because of the important part Sangasé and Imo near Sangasé play in the myths on the origin of death.¹⁵⁶ The association of *rapa* with fire and sun is clear, also that of *imo* with the night.

Many years ago¹⁵⁷ I suggested that the *mayo*-rites, celebrated by villages east as well as west of Sangasé, might be associated with totality because of their gigantic extent. To-day I hold the view that the suggestion ought to be rejected as wholly conjectural; there is no evidence whatsoever that the Marind see it that way. In myth the *mayo*-rites are associated with the eastern part of the territory and there is as good a cause to set *mayo* against *imo* as *rapa* against *imo*. In both cases the east-west contrast is dominant.

Almost equally untenable is the suggestion that Marind-anim cosmology involves a clear-cut territorial tripartition. It is true that something of the kind sometimes comes to the fore, as is more particularly the case when the concepts of *gawir* and *imas* are discussed. Gawir is the Marind-anim territory east of Merauke, Imaz the land west of the Bian. Imaz — which may be a derivative of *imo* — is a less clearly defined term. According to Geurtjens¹⁵⁸ it is used in

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Wirz, l.c.

¹⁵⁵ Above, pp. 69 f.

¹⁵⁶ See above, p. 200, and below, the story of *Yawi*, p. 249.

¹⁵⁷ Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 68.

¹⁵⁸ Geurtjens, *Dict. v. imaz*.

connection with all the land between Bian and Strait Marianne, but F. Verschueren writes to me that the term may be used to denote the land west of the Bian alternatively as far as Alaku, as far as Wambi, and as far as the Buraka, but never to include Eromka, the area between Buraka and Strait Marianne.¹⁵⁹ However that be, the two authors agree that intermediately there is the area between Maro and Bian. Part of this area (from the Maro to Onggari) is sometimes called Marind-*miráv*.¹⁶⁰ Verschueren reminds me of the fact that several terms are used to indicate this area, mentioning specifically Rahuk for the land between Maro and Kumbe, and Gavur for the area between Kumbe and Onggari, terms which were reported earlier by Viegen.¹⁶¹

We find that, in certain configurations, the Marind may be aware of a tripartition of some sort, but it is evident that such a tripartition is by no means prevalent. On the contrary, even in case a tripartition is, indeed, made, the underlying dualism is undeniable and that dualism is demonstrated in a particularly cogent way in the following example. Geurtjens and Viegen¹⁶² report the opposition in which are placed *paré* and *kara*. *Paré* means land-ridge, land as distinguished from sea, or dry land versus inundated land. *Kara* means lowland, valley, which, given Marind-anim conditions, includes swamp, bog-land. *Paré*, however, is also used for all the land east of the Bian, and *kara* for all the land west of this river. *Paré-rek* is somebody from the area east of the Bian, *Kara-rek* from that west of it. Here, indeed, we are dealing with a clear-cut cosmic contrast in which east is associated with dry and sandy, west with low and swampy land. I must add that F. Verschueren informs me that his inquiries on this point had a negative result, his informants pointing out that *paré* is contrasted with *bob* (swamp) and denying any knowledge of the connotations reported by Geurtjens and Viegen.¹⁶³ Still, it is difficult flatly to deny the veracity of this particular piece of information. A plausible explanation may be found in the assumption that the spread of modern knowledge has probably wiped out older cosmological references.

Recapitulating, we state that there is a close association between, on the one hand, northwest and lowland (i.e. swamp-land), the setting

¹⁵⁹ Verschueren, Letters V p. 9.

¹⁶⁰ Geurtjens, Dict. v. Marind.

¹⁶¹ Verschueren, l.c.; Viegen, Sem. d'Ethol. III p. 395, TAG 1912 pp. 141 ff.

¹⁶² Geurtjens, Dict. v. *paré* and *kara*; Viegen, interview.

¹⁶³ Verschueren, Letters V p. 9.

sun, the night, and the *imo*-cult, while on the other hand the east is associated with dry land, the rising sun, the day, and the *mayo*- and *rapa*-cults. We may even carry the argument a step further: the east is the area where man was born from the earth, the west that whither he goes when he dies and departs for the western abode of the dead. That at least is the sense of *Woryu's* journey. The association cannot be denied because there is also an eastern abode of the dead; we have seen that after visiting the eastern land the dead go the way of *Woryu* and travel to the western land, which is their more permanent abode.¹⁶⁴

A somewhat better founded case of tripartition is that of *es*-, *in*- and *mahai*-, which occurs in various combinations. We made the acquaintance of these terms in the division of the village and observed that in exceptional cases the same terms may be used to indicate the eastern, middle, and western parts of the land. *Es* means also youngest, *mahai* oldest. *Mahai-anem* is the older, *es-anem* the younger one. *Nok mahai, wo es* means: 'I go first, you follow'. *Es mo man* is: 'you are late', or, 'you are last'. We find the following connotations of *mahai*: first, oldest, west; and of *es*: last, youngest, east.¹⁶⁵ The opposition holds two suggestions; one of a direction east-west to which we shall come back presently, and another of an association of east with younger and of west with older. The latter may be elaborated by the association of east with the origin of man and of west with death; of east with the rising sun who, in *Ep kwitare*, is a *miakim*, a man,¹⁶⁶ and of west with the setting sun.¹⁶⁷ More arguments could be found, but none so convincing as the association of west with older, and east with younger.

The implication of direction has been explained by Wirz and others from a hypothetical east-west migration which, it was argued, was substantiated in myth.¹⁶⁸ The *mayo* myths invariably begin with the *mayo* celebration in the east, after which the *déma* went westward to the present Marind territory. The myth of origin is also quoted as a proof of this westward migration.¹⁶⁹ The theory found a supporter

¹⁶⁴ Above, p. 203.

¹⁶⁵ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *es, in, mahai*; above, pp. 42 f.

¹⁶⁶ Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 139.

¹⁶⁷ In my *Godsdienst*, p. 67, I stressed the association of west with the old woman *Pathogu*, mentioned on p. 213. Now I think the argument is invalid. If *Pathogu* is mentioned, other *déma*, and particularly those who retired to Komolom or Frederik Hendrik Island, ought to be listed as well. That would lead us into discussions and arguments of all sorts, none of them being of any interest in this context.

¹⁶⁸ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 24 ff.; III p. 167 note 1.

¹⁶⁹ Lastly by Nevermann, *Söhne* pp. 190 f. Cf. my review of his book in BKI 1959 p. 279.

in Williams, who, starting from the parallelism between the phratry-names of Front, Middle and East in the Trans-Fly district and the division into *mahai*, *in* and *es* among the Marind, accepted this as an additional proof of a former east-west migration.¹⁷⁰

This migration theory, plausible on the face of it, like so many migration theories, meets with serious objections. In the first place, there is no historical evidence, either among the Marind or among the Trans-Fly people, of such a migration. As far as the Marind are concerned, their closest relatives are not found either east or west, but northeast in the Middle Fly region.¹⁷¹ Among the Trans-Fly peoples there is no such mythological evidence confirming a westward migration as the advocates of the theory think they can derive from Marind-anim mythology. On closer scrutiny this mythological evidence of the Marind does not appear to be as convincing as they would have it. All these Marind-anim myths differ from real migration-myths in this respect that they never explicitly state that the ancestors of the present-day people formerly lived in an area further to the east. They just start from the fact that there was a *mayo* ceremony in the east, from which the ancestors departed in a westward direction. In the myth of origin there is even no question of an eastern origin. On the contrary, the story opens with a feast celebrated in Sangasé or even as far west as Gelib in Eromka.¹⁷² Instead of proving an east-west migration, the myth of origin holds a warning that we must not explain the westward movement from a migratory point of view. Finally, the combination of east with younger and later in the connotations of *es*, and of west with older and first in *mahai*, do not fit in too well with the migration hypothesis. If these different connotations had been developed from the experience of a migratory movement westward, we should expect west to be associated with younger or later, as the place which had been more recently or later occupied. Actually, we find that it is called the older and is connected with first. The terms *es*, *in* and *mahai* are not adequately explained from this theory. We want a hypothesis from which all connotations follow without discrepancies.

Such a hypothesis presents itself if we approach the element of direction implied in the words *es*, *in* and *mahai*, and paralleled by that expressed in the phratry-names Rear, Middle and Front of the Keraki c.s., from another angle. Is not it remarkable that we find this east-west

¹⁷⁰ Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 78 ff.

¹⁷¹ A fact admitted later by Wirz in TBG 1933 p. 115.

¹⁷² Above, p. 209.

direction similarly emphasized among such different peoples? At the same time, the associations of front and rear among the Marind and the Keraki diverge. With the latter, the direction east-west reappears in the relation between the eastern, the Rear deity, who is the moon and a man, and the western, the Front deity, who is the sun and a woman. The moon is the man who chases his wife, the sun. What is more important, we find the same notion of an east-west direction among the Kiwai Papuans, described by Landtman, and among the Orokolos. Especially among the Kiwai the east-west direction is an important principle of orientation. The ceremonial men's house is built with a bush-gable facing east, and a shore-gable (sea-gable might have been a better translation) facing west. On ceremonial occasions people enter the house by the door in the bush-gable, the opposite entrance symbolizing the direction of *Adiri*, the land of the dead.¹⁷³ Entering the house from the east, they go from east to west, keeping the right half of the house with the main post on their right. East-west is the direction in which man goes. In the far west is *Adiri*, the abode of the dead. Of the sun it is said that "he take *wrio* (spirit of the dead) belong man he go that way, carry him along *Adiri*".¹⁷⁴ Or: "sun he go place belong *Adiri*; *wrio* inside man he go that way, all same smoke he go away".¹⁷⁵ Elsewhere *Adiri* is called the direction in which sun and moon go down.¹⁷⁶ At burial the deceased is carried off with the head pointing westwards and in that position the corpse is exposed on a platform for decomposition.¹⁷⁷ In other words, the course of sun and moon (but more especially of the sun) symbolizes man's course of life.

Among the Orokolos the important points of orientation are again east and west, in this case indicated by the names of rivers. The two sides of the ceremonial men's houses are termed accordingly.¹⁷⁸ At the same time there appears throughout Williams' description of Orokolos an opposition of sea and bush which the author omitted to develop systematically. A similar opposition is found among the Marindanim, but here its connotations are different. Another feature has a more immediate bearing on our present discussion: the land of the Elema dead is again in the west, to which Williams adds 'beyond

¹⁷³ Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* p. 6; Baxter Riley, *Vocabularies* (Anthr. 1930) v. *poto, oromu*.

¹⁷⁴ Landtman, *op. cit.* p. 258.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 263.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 52.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 257 f.

¹⁷⁸ Williams, *Drama* pp. 33 f.

the sunset', an addition which may be accepted as reflecting native opinion.¹⁷⁹

All things considered, we conclude that among a number of south-western tribes between the Digul and the Elema coast there is a tendency to apply the east-west opposition as a major means of classification. This classification is combined with a tendency to use the course of the sun as a symbol of the human life cycle. There is a certain affinity between sunset and the land of the dead among the Marind, the Kiwai and the Orokolo. Among the Kiwai the course of the sun is explicitly used as a symbol for the course of human life. If we apply these facts to the tripartition into *es*, *in* and *mahai*, we arrive at a better solution of our problem. Suppose that *mahai*, *in* and *es* refer to the sun (*in-katané*, mid-sun, is the common word for noon), and all discrepancies between the various connotations disappear. Then *mahai* may mean front, first, as well as oldest and west. It is the sun on his way, the sun growing old. Similarly, *es* refers to the young sun who has not yet begun to proceed, but is loitering in the east. The same interpretation holds for the myth of origin. Like the sun, the *déma* travel eastward under the ground. It is not an accidental trait of the myth; none of the more elaborate versions leaves it out. Again, like the sun, the first men are born in Kondo. They travel westward and he who goes first, who goes *mahai*, *Woryu*, is also the first to die. He dies when he has arrived in the western part of the country and he goes to the land of the dead beyond sunset. Similarly, if the life of man is symbolized by the life of the sun, the cycle of *mayo* myths may well start with a *mayo* celebration in the east followed by westward travels of the *déma*, without this being interpreted as a myth of migration. The conception, moreover, fits in perfectly well with the classificatory data collected earlier in this section, viz. those on the combination of northwest, low or swampy land with setting sun, night and *imo*-cult versus southeast, dry land, rising sun, day and the *mayo*- and *rapa*-cults.

It seems attractive to verify this preconception of Marind-anim cosmology by comparing it with the system of totems in annex IV. However, a cursory survey is enough to convince us that this confusing list of totems needs clarification from myth in order to enable us to tell the important from the irrelevant. This task will be undertaken in the following chapters. Before setting out to analyze these myths,

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 118.

a last remark should be made on the subject of tripartition, viz. that in this division the dualistic aspect prevails. This is particularly evident in the case of *es*, *in*, and *mahai*. It is also evident in the use made of these terms to indicate village parts. *In* is used only in the few cases that a village is so big that a tripartition makes some sense. At the time Wirz visited New Guinea such was the case in Sangasé, Makalin, and Wambi. To-day *mahai* and *es* may still be discerned in a few big villages, but an *in* or middle part is lacking everywhere.¹⁸⁰ Finally, if we want to trace migrations, we must look to the northeast, to the Boadzi and their southern neighbours, for the tribes who are the nearest relatives of the Marind-anim, and not to the east, populated by the Trans-Fly people, who are linguistically and culturally far more different.

¹⁸⁰ Verschueren, Letters V p. 9.

CHAPTER V

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE GEB-ZÉ PHRATRY

The *Geb-zé* phratry numbers three clans with, successively, the banana, the coconut, and the palmyra-palm as their main totems. The banana clan is called *Geb-zé-ha*, *Geb-zé*-proper. Its mythological links with the other clans are rather tenuous. The myths of this group have little in common with those of the other clans of the phratry. They will be discussed in the first section of this chapter. The next two sections are devoted to the *mayo* myths, which are of fundamental importance to the other two clans of the phratry. The last section deals with other mythological material pertaining to these clans, and with the picture of the phratry as a whole as it emerges from myth.

1. THE MYTHS OF THE GEB-ZÉ-HA

The central déma of this mythological cycle is *Geb*, the son of *Dinadin* and *Nubog*.¹ Viegen describes him as a kind of supreme being,² a giant whose head is above the sun, whose feet are in the underworld, who holds his arms stretched out towards the extreme south and north. On other occasions *Geb* is represented as a man living in a hole in the ground. He kills children; at last he is caught and beheaded. His head became the sun.³ His body, however, is the earth. According to Viegen the body was divided up among the different clans and generations. The details on this division are very confused; they are the result of discussions of a philosophical nature between Viegen and his informants (mainly adolescents). The outcome of these discussions has to be met with some reserve. Nevertheless, certain parts may be accepted as truly rendering native concepts, such as the statement that the earth and all that belongs to it is *Geb-zé*, that is from *Geb*.⁴ The inconsisten-

¹ See above, p. 208.

² Viegen, *Sem. d'Ethnol.* III pp. 389 ff.

³ *Idem*, *l.c.* and TAG 1912 p. 152.

⁴ Viegen, *Sem. d'Ethnol.* III p. 391 note.

cies in the various replies elicited by Viegen's enquiries into the nature and origin of *Geb* present us with welcome evidence that he succeeded in getting the natives to talk. Thus we hear that "*Geb* originated from himself, growing he did grow". Another time we are told that the stork, pecking at a stone, shaped a human face and that this is how *Geb* originated.⁵ A certain measure of native philosophizing with regard to *Geb* is obvious. His conflicting associations suggest a mystic philosophy of some sort. In this context the discussions on theology which Viegen had with his informants are relevant. A few short articles written for the popular magazine edited by his Mission allow us to gain some insight into his methods. They were sound in this respect that, when discussing theology, he created the atmosphere of mystery which belongs to the telling of a myth.⁶ A typical specimen of such a discussion is the following. Viegen points to the sun: "that is *Geb*, the great Lord". "Oh no", says his informant, "that is not the great Lord. The black of the sun [the black spot in the eye when looking up at the sun?], that is the great Lord". Then, having turned the matter over in his mind: "No, that black thing is not the great Lord either. He is far, far above the sun". His informant does not dwell on this obliging information and starts questioning the good father: "What is that great Lord? Have you seen him?" When Viegen answers that he cannot be seen, his informant is deeply disappointed. The medicine-men of the Marind see spirits often enough. Viegen goes on, trying to strengthen his case: "the great Lord is a being without a body". His informant, thinking it over, shakes his head. "Well", he says at last, "then he is a skeleton, mere bones!" New discussions follow, another comparison, this time with a fireball, is discussed and rejected. The non-material character of the Lord does not appeal to the informant. He must be something at least. What the informant means is not just a body, "it must be something", he says, "like the fleshy parts of the hand, something that slips between your fingers like fine sand, a fire that you cannot grasp", all the time accompanying his words with expressive gestures.⁷ It is in the course of such discussions that Viegen learns about *Geb* and the mystery surrounding him, that the sun in the east is the real head and belongs to the ancestors; that the sun in the centre belongs to the present generation and is the reversed head, a term also used for the glans penis; and

⁵ Quoted from an interview; cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 70 and note 91.

⁶ Author's inference from personal communication. Cf. also TAG 1912 p. 138.

⁷ Ann. 1913 pp. 104 ff., 1914 pp. 58 f.

finally that toward the west the sun is an 'opposite head'⁸ and belongs to the descendants.⁹ It does not make much sense, except that it demonstrates a bent for mystic identification of certain cosmic features with their *déna*, and more specifically a tendency towards ascribing contrasting qualities to *Geb* and his attribute, the sun.

It may seem that I have been unduly elaborate in rendering Viegen's confused and, as regards his translation from the Marind, not always accurate, information. Of all the authors on the Marind-anim Viegen impresses the reader as the one whose writings could well be passed over without thereby depriving ourselves of valuable information. Those who have known him (there are not so many left by now) all agree that he was not a clear thinker, least of all when he discussed his beloved Marind. Nevertheless, his information is valuable; he led his informants on to giving shape to their thoughts by going along with them in their abrupt, disruptive way of expressing themselves when dealing with a supernatural topic. The confused dialectics on *Geb's* severed head and its epiphanies as true head, reversed head and opposite head find a perfect counterpart in the myths dealing with *Geb*, who unites in his person both the sun and the moon. We relate the relevant myths at some length.

Of the myth of *Geb* as the sun various versions are known.¹⁰ Some of them simply speak of the sun, but Viegen, Vertenten and Geurtjens state explicitly that *Geb* (or his head, as the case may be) is the sun.¹¹ Wirz does not include this identification in his rendering of the sun-myths. He expresses the view that the sun plays a minor part in myth and a negligible one in the totemic system. He denies that she is the particular totem of any phratry. It is true that the *Kai-zé* include her among their relations because the sun is the fire; that the *Geb-zé* do the same and equate the sun with the moon; but other natives point out that the sun belongs to all phratries because she is connected with the whole universe.¹² A discussion of Wirz's conclusion with regard to the place of the sun in Marind-anim religion will be held over till

⁸ The translation is doubtful; the term *akap pa* does not make much sense. *Pa* is head, *akap* the posterior part of an animal, tail, hind-leg (Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.).

⁹ Cf. Viegen, Sem. d'Ethnol. III p. 391.

¹⁰ Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 74-78; Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 152, Sem. d'Ethnol. III pp. 390 ff., Ann. 1914 p. 58; Vertenten, Ann. 1913 p. 250, Ann. 1920 pp. 25 ff., J.P. 1914 p. 155; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *Geb*.

¹¹ Viegen, l.c.; Vertenten, Ann. 1913 p. 250, J.P. 1914 p. 155; Geurtjens, l.c.

¹² Wirz, M.A. IV p. 74.

another section, and, accepting that in this particular myth the sun is identical with *Geb*, we now proceed to render its main points, briefly indicating alternative readings.

Wirz is one of the few authors who locate the place of action, which in both alternatives presented by him is Komolom, the island west of the southern entrance of Strait Marianne. Most other sources omit to identify the place, but with one exception they contain nothing which could be used as an argument against the correctness of this association with the west. The exception is made by the version of the sun-myth communicated by Vertenten in Ann. 1920 pp. 25 ff., where the place of action is located in the far east. It should be noted that this version does not make mention of the name *Geb*, unlike the one Vertenten published in Ann. 1913. However that be, *Geb*, or the sun, lived in a hole. In various readings he is a red-skinned (*do-hi*) boy or man. He kidnaps children, particularly red-skinned boys (*do-hi patur*, in other words, his equals; a reddish colour of the skin is fairly frequent among Papuans). None of our sources explicitly states what *Geb* (or the sun) does with the kidnapped children. Obviously they are killed, but how or for what purpose is not mentioned. It is true that Geurtjens uses the verb 'snellen', i.e. 'cutting off a head', but that may have been for the sake of brevity. Geurtjens is not one of those authors who mince their words. At last *Geb* is denounced; according to the first reading as given by Wirz he is found by a *samani-ti patur*, a boy suffering from ringworm, an interesting detail because the moon is usually said to be a *samani-ti patur*.¹³ The detail is all the more intriguing because in this particular version the sun is depicted as a *do-hi patur*, a red-skinned boy, the exact counterpart of his detector. The hole in which the sun (*Geb*) lives radiates a terrible heat. Nevertheless, the men decide to catch him. Vertenten adds that, initially, they were unwilling to tackle the job, but that they were urged on by the women to proceed.¹⁴ Other alternatives do not mention this detail, but most of them make a point of the active part played by the women. They assisted the men by bringing water to extinguish the fire, or at least to diminish the heat. Finally, the aim is achieved. According to Wirz's first version the red boy is taken to the men's house, decorated with feathers and brought to the bush to be sodomized. Later he manages to escape. He climbs a yam-tendrill, but the tendrill is not strong enough and he falls down. Then he climbs a high tree and

¹³ Wirz, op. cit. I p. 49; Vertenten, Ann. 1913 p. 175.

¹⁴ Vertenten, Ann. 1913 p. 250.

reaches the sky, where he becomes the sun. The sunbeams originate from the decorations given him by the men. According to other readings there are two sun *déma*, father and son, one of whom is caught. An interesting alternative, given by Wirz, is the one according to which the sun *déma*, frightened by the water which is being poured into the hole, digs a long, long tunnel and emerges east of the Marind territory at *Ep kwitare*, where the *nakari* of the sun help him out. Climbing a yam-tendril, he reaches the sky to become the sun. Versions related by Vertenten and Viegen state explicitly that the sun is *Geb's* cut-off head. One of the two versions communicated by Geurtjens is important because it states in so many words that Kondo is the place of sunrise. The first version just has it that *Geb's* head is cut off and goes all along the beach to the horizon, where it ascends to the sky, but the second explains that his severed head returned to the hole and went below ground to Kondo to rise there as the sun, adding that from Kondo the sun went all along the sky westward to the Muli (Strait Marianne), where he came down to return underground to Kondo. Since then, the sun has made this round-trip every day.¹⁵

The identity of *Geb* and the moon has been brought to the fore by Wirz and Geurtjens. Vertenten denies that the moon is a *déma*; he is a man (*anem*), a male, disfigured by ringworm.¹⁶ In other words, Vertenten stresses the moon's appearance as *samani-ti patur*. In the same article he gives an elaborate description of the importance of the moon in Marind-anim life. A moonlit night is a night of pleasure. All feasts are celebrated between the full moon and the new moon. When the moon is shining the men even go out hunting by night. On the other hand, when the moon is dark, they stay at home; they will not venture outside the village except when in company and protected by the light of a torch. Finally, he informs us that the dogs are believed always to see the moon earlier than man does.

The moon is a totem of the *Geb-zé*, more particularly of the *Geb-zé-ha*.¹⁷ In the western coastal section the *Yorm-end*, the fish *boan*, too, claim the moon as a totem, because its body is shining like that of a fish.¹⁸ Later we shall find that, in a way, the moon has also a specific relationship with the *Mahu-zé*.¹⁹ The myth of *Geb* as the moon was

¹⁵ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *Geb*.

¹⁶ Vertenten, Ann. 1913 p. 175.

¹⁷ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 78 f., IV p. 73.

¹⁸ Wirz, op. cit. IV p. 74; below, p. 385.

¹⁹ Below, pp. 315 ff., 329 and 352. *Harau* and *Mongumer-anem*, too, should be mentioned in this context. Cf. below, pp. 280 and 379.

communicated to Wirz by the *Geb-zé-ha*. The story, which is corroborated by a version given by Geurtjens, is as follows.²⁰ *Geb* lived near Kondo as a *patur*. He was always fishing on the beach. Every day he remained in the sea so long that at last his body became covered with acorn-shell. One day two *wag* came along the beach. *Geb*, ashamed of his body, rapidly hid under the sand. By chance the women found him. They told the men, who dug him out and cleaned his body with digging-sticks and stone axes. Subsequently he was sodomized and his wounds were treated with sperma. During the night the first banana sprouted from his neck. The *nakari* planted the banana in the immediate vicinity. There has been a banana *déma* at Kondo up to the present day, residing near a deep pool called Kondo, which gave its name to the whole area. From the sprouts of this first banana, which has the secret name of *Kandéwa*, all other varieties originate. People came from everywhere to try the new fruit. At the time those of Sangar (Kanum-irébe territory) made a pig feast. The banana *nakari*, *Wangai* and *Warungai*, went there, too, surprising their hosts with a gift of the new food. It was a great feast which plays an important part in Marind-anim mythology.²¹ All the time *Geb* had been held a prisoner. Having been sodomized again, *Geb* decided to flee. He climbed up to the sky via a yam-tendrill and became the moon. The spots on the moon remind the Marind of his wounds and of his unclean body. Geurtjens explicitly states that he is the *samani-ti patur* of the moon.

It is evident that the acorn-shell covered body is another symbol of the moon. As a symbol I came across it in a folk-tale the people of Blongas on the south coast of Lombok (Indonesia) told me. Here the acorn-shell covered man was called *Pandji*, whom Rassers in his *Pandji Roman* identified as a representative of the moon in old Javanese mythology.²² More important for the present is the analogy with the sun-myth. It is an analogy in reverse. *Geb* as the sun meets his fate in the far west, where the sun sets. As the moon he is caught in the east, in a place associated with sunrise.²³ As the sun he is red, as the moon he is white. As the sun he is a man, and boys (in one version the moon-boy) find him out, and women are his enemies; they incited the men to killing him. As the moon he is a *patur* (boy), women find

²⁰ Geurtjens, *Dict. v. Geb*; Wirz, *M.A.* II pp. 46 ff.

²¹ See below, pp. 336, 378 note 66, 393 f., 396 ff.

²² Cf. Dr. W. H. Rassers, *De Pandji Roman* Ch. III.

²³ On the associations of Kondo with *Ep kwitare*, the place of sunrise, see below, pp. 239 f.

him out and the men completely master him. The women cease to play a role once the men have been advised of his whereabouts. The sun is treated as an enemy and beheaded, the moon merely as a boy fit to be sodomized. *Geb* as the sun is a kidnapper of children, who are his image, *Geb* as the moon is an innocent boy. In both cases *Geb* climbs a yam-tendrill. According to one version, however, the yam-tendrill is not strong enough to hold the sun. In another the tendrill is strong enough, as it is in the case of the moon-myth.

The reversed analogy cannot be explained away as a mere coincidence. The fact that the analogy appears to be disregarded in a few deviant versions does not invalidate the evidence suggesting that in one way or another the Marind must be conscious of the fact that *Geb* is both sun and moon and that these are more or less antagonistic powers united in one person. This is borne out by the cosmological associations of the myth. The sun is abused in the far west, the moon in the far east. The antagonism shows itself in different ways, most obviously so in the version where the sun *déma* is found out by a *samani-ti patur*, the associate of the moon. The antagonism is confirmed by the totem-relations of sun and moon. The sun is claimed especially by *Kai-zé* and *Geb-zé*; the moon by the *Geb-zé-ha* (not by the other *Geb-zé* clans) and by the *Yorm-énd*, and it has also a specific association with the *Mahu-zé*, the latter two clans belonging to the other moiety. Another example of the antagonism between sun and moon is found in a story told by Vertenten.²⁴ The moon was an inveterate headhunter who wanted to cut off the heads of all the people he saw lying on the beach. (The story refers to the habit of sleeping on the beach during the dry season. People go to sleep, each wrapped up in a mat which leaves only the head uncovered.) But the sun said to the moon: "Moon, you should not do that. The things you see there are men, real humans. You do not know that because you shine only by night, seeing nothing but heads, but I know because I see them at work in the daytime. They are men, do not hurt them". And the moon followed his advice.

Geb, then, unifies opposites, and Viegen's obscure expositions have a solid ground in the contradictory nature of *Geb's* attributes, which certainly did not escape the Marind, but was pointedly stylized in the reversed analogy of the two myths. The fact that this stylizing varies in consistency in the various readings which became known, does not detract from the importance of the phenomenon. The situation is

²⁴ Ann. 1920 p. 26.

strikingly different from that among the Keraki, where sun and moon are wife and husband, and where the moon is in pursuit of his wife, the sun.²⁵ There the two are real antagonists, whereas among the Marind, though even here a certain tension prevails, sun and moon are opposites unified in the person of *Geb*.

Additional myths concerning *Geb* stress other aspects of the moiety dualism. Geurtjens relates that *Geb* was an inveterate headhunter who brought many heads, and also the first drums, from the interior. The *déma* of the interior took revenge and beheaded *Geb*, whose severed head ran off and changed into a stone, which can be seen lying in the sea east of Domandé. The stone belongs to the *katar-boan*, the stone *boan*, a subclan of the *Geb-zé-ha*.²⁶ Mythologists will point out that this, again, is a moon-myth. In substantiation reference can be made to the moon's passion for headhunting and to the transformation of the head into a stone. It is doubtful whether any of these arguments would carry much weight with the Marind. The transmutation of a man into a stone, a recurrent feature in Indonesian (and other) moon-myths, is of rare occurrence in Marind-anim mythology and there is not the slightest indication that the Marind are conscious of a specific connection between the moon and big stones. The traits emphasized in this myth are the opposition of coast and interior, and the association of *Geb* with stone and with the beach. That some traits of the myth harmonize with his association with the moon is important only in so far as the myth refers to a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan, which has the moon as one of its totems.

Other myths emphasizing the duality of coast and interior together with the moiety-division, are those of *Geb* and *Sami*, and of *Geb* and *Mahu*, as retold by Wirz.²⁷ The women of Singeas (a former site of Domandé) had decided to put an end to the males' monopoly of rites and ceremonies. They killed all the men except two, who escaped. *Geb* lived nearby in an ant-hill. His body was covered with acorn-shell. He came out to see what was going on. From the interior came *Sami*, who lived in a bee-hive. They decided upon a common action. They summoned the people from the Torassi and together they surrounded the village, *Geb* at one end and *Sami* at the other. They attacked the women, *Geb* fighting *Sami's* totem-relations and *Sami* those of *Geb*. Many women were killed. There were so many heads cut off that the

²⁵ Cf. Williams, *Trans-Fly* p. 302.

²⁶ Geurtjens, *Dict. v. Geb*; cf. annex II and IVa, *katal-boan*.

²⁷ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 43-46.

allies, returning to the east, left some of them on the beach, where they turned into stones. They are still to be found there.

In another context we described the opposition of *Geb* and *Sami* in somewhat different terms.²⁸ There *Geb* was said to be white (the white over the black), *Sami* red, a detail reminiscent of the two *Geb*, moon and sun.

The myth on *Geb* and *Mahu* also has Singeas as the place of action. *Geb* does not find any woman willing to marry him, because of his ugly, acorn-shell covered body. Then *Mahu* arrives from the interior, bringing his two wives with him. *Mahu* is identical with *Sami*. Wirz points out that the *Sami-rek* are often identified with the *Mahu-zé*. "Usually *Sami* is said to have been a *Mahu-zé déma*" and Wirz concludes that *Sami* may have been one of the first ancestors of the *Mahu-zé* clans, if not *Mahu* himself, an assumption finding support both in the fact that *Mahu* and *Geb* are often mentioned as being together²⁹ and in the opposition of *Geb-zé* and *Mahu-zé* being a recurrent one. A final confirmation of the identity of *Sami* and *Mahu* is given by Verschuieren, who writes that at Kuprik and everywhere among the inland Marind, the upper Bian included, the people told him that *Mahu* is the same person as *Sami*.³⁰ Bearing this in mind, we can now take up the story again. *Geb*, unable to get a woman, had procured himself a stout piece of bamboo-stem (*hong*) to cohabit with. The background of this curious perversion is explained in Geurtjens' Dictionary. *Hong* is not an ordinary piece of bamboo, but the bottom end, the root node included. The node is extremely wiry and that is why the *hong* is used as an axe-shaft. A hole is made in the root node, into which the wedge-shaped stone axe is fitted. A *hong-ti* is a stone axe with shaft. To the Marind the axe inserted in the hole is a symbol of the sexual act and this circumstance leads Geurtjens to suggest, tentatively though, that the story of *Hong-sav* must be explained from this background, a suggestion which is most probably correct.³¹ The bamboo had borne *Geb* several children. They were the ancestors of the *Hong-rek*, a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan tracing its descent to *Geb's* liaison with *Hong-sav*, Bamboo-woman. When *Mahu* arrives, *Geb* gets excited at the sight of the women. *Mahu*, finding out about his friend's pitiful condition, gives him one of his two wives. She becomes the mother, first of some

²⁸ Above, p. 209.

²⁹ Wirz, op. cit. p. 52.

³⁰ Verschuieren, Letters V p. 8.

³¹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *hong*.

birds, a *mokmok* (?) and a *ruas* (?), then of a fish (*kimu*, according to Geurtjens' Dict. a crab-species), of another fish (*ongayab*, not identified), at long last, of a boy (*Lamua*), then, once more, of a boy (*Mangis*) and of a girl, *Baléwil*. Subsequent children were birds again, such as a *momoko* (owl) and a *kirkua* (?). Of *Baléwil* it is told that, when she was in an advanced state of pregnancy, she went down to the beach to have her delivery. This took her so long that in the meantime the flood set in and carried her off to the sea, where she still lies in front of the village as a bank of hardened loam.

The last part of the myth is a typical example of the incorporation of an explanatory story into a myth of more general significance. In both myths, that of *Geb* and *Sami* and that of *Geb* and *Mahu*, the moiety opposition prevails. The exchange of women between the moieties is touched upon in both. They are real *Geb-zé-ha* myths; *Geb* appears in his moon-shape, his body covered with acorn-shell. From the fact that *Sami* is said to have his body painted red we must not conclude that he can be associated with the sun. There are numerous arguments against such an association, certainly so within the framework of coastal mythology. The really intriguing point is that the contrast between the two manifestations of *Geb* has been used as the model for expressing the contrast between the two tribal ancestors.

Another important feature is contained in the general framework of the myth of *Geb* and *Mahu*. The story of the man who has no wife and has to make do with a bamboo is a major theme in the mythology of the upper Bian.³² The names of *Geb* and *Sami*, too, have a wider distribution. Among the Wiram, *Sami* and *Gwavi* are the first men. They have a dog which is a headhunter. From a cut-off head grows a coconut palm yielding coconuts, which in turn become human beings. This happens after *Gwavi* has his genitals cut off in an accident, which turns him into a woman. The story takes a turn which sets it quite apart from the Marind-anim pattern,³³ but some of the details are closely akin to certain traits of Marind-anim mythology: the two men, their names, the role of the dog in the origin of man. The theme of *Geb* and *Sami* as tribal ancestors is apparently a theme common to a whole group of related tribes, which the myth of *Geb* as both sun and moon evidently is not. A meaningful difference between coastal and inland mythology is that, on the coast, *Geb* is always settled somewhere. He is not a travelling *déma*. Inland, more especially on the southern

³² Cf. Van Baal, TEG 1940 pp. 577 ff.

³³ Cf. Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 387-389.

upper Bian, he is travelling. He comes to the Bian and goes back to some place on the coast. From Verschuieren's letters we learn that now he is a headhunter who kills all the women, and again the man who becomes enraged because he hurts his foot against a fish-trap and then inaugurates black magic. The differences with coastal mythology are numerous. The common feature is that he is the man who has no wife, but receives one as a gift from his counterpart. In this respect *Geb* is the inferior of *Mahu*, who is his benefactor. Before he meets *Mahu*, *Geb* is a rather pitiable bachelor. In this context Verschuieren refers to *Geb's* relation with the male sex, *Mahu's* with the female,³⁴ an aspect which is certainly present, but is not in this case associated with the contrast of superiority versus inferiority. Here *Mahu's* ownership of women fully compensates the inferiority inherent in his association with the female sex. All this makes the difference between the coastal and the inland myths of *Geb* all the more intriguing. The coastal *Geb*, represented as residing near or on the beach, is a personification of the beach and as such superior to *Mahu*, the travelling *déma* who comes from and returns to the interior.

This more or less completes our survey of the myths concerned with *Geb*. Remain the myths dealing with specific subclans of the *Geb-zé-ha* and a few isolated data on *Geb* which have a bearing on the mythology of the other clans of the phratry.³⁵ We shall deal first with the subclans and the myths connected with them. On the myths we can now be brief. We already traced the origin of the *Hong-rek* subclan and the *katar-boan*.³⁶ Of the other subclans we only have information regarding the *Kanhár-rek*.³⁷ In Kayar near Tomerau (Kanum-anim territory; *Kayar* is also the name of another *Geb-zé-ha* subclan) there lived a man who killed his pregnant wife. He slit her body open, took out the foetus and threw it into the swamp. It was found by a man from *Wiwar*, who gave it to his wife. She managed to rear the boy, who was still alive. He was called *Kanhár* and he is the first ancestor of the *Kanhár-rek*. His two sons, *Yambi* and *Mes-évai*, went westwards, travelling in a banana-skin, i.e. a banana-canoe. *Kanhár* himself later went to Sangasé,

³⁴ Verschuieren, Letters VI p. 3, XI p. 2.

³⁵ We shall meet again with *Geb* as a man with an acorn-shell covered body, living in an ant-hill, in the myth of the *Mahu-zé-ha* *déma Doreh* (below, p. 327). *Geb* also plays a part in the myth of *Yorma*. In that story *Geb* lives in Komolom. The myth is silent on *Geb's* outward appearance. See below, pp. 382 f.

³⁶ Above, pp. 230, 229.

³⁷ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 51 f.

where he begot many descendants. The meaning of the story (if it has any) is obscure. It holds only one clue. The journey in the banana-skin, called banana-canoe, implies a specific relationship with the banana, the main totem of the *Geb-zé-ha*. An allusion to the moon seems probable. We also note the name of *Kanhár's* second son, *Mes-évai*. *Mes* is a ripe coconut and the name obviously means coconut-father, a reference to the main totem of another clan of the *Geb-zé* which, to the *Geb-zé-ha*, is not an *amai* but a *namek*.³⁸

The *Geb-zé-ha* subclans listed by Wirz³⁹ are the following:

The *Hong-rek* descended from *Hong-sav*; they live mainly in Domandé, the scene of the relevant myth. Their hunting yell is *Ngat-a!*; *Hong-a!*, i.e. Dogs! Bamboo-piece!, or *Hong sav! Ina muk*, that is Bamboo-woman! Two arms! (arm denoting any section of a bamboo between two successive joints).

The *Walinau-rek* with the hunting yell *Ngat-a! Walinau-a!* The name refers to the mythical island of *Walinau* in the Bian mouth, which is said to have been a purely *Geb-zé-ha* settlement; *Walinau-rek* are found in Nowari and Onggari. Wirz's statement that *Walinau-rek* live at Domandé is not corroborated by his list of subclans.⁴⁰

The *Kayar-rek*, who derive their name from Kayar near Tomerau, the place mentioned in the myth of

the *Kanhár-rek* related above. The two subclans are mentioned separately by Wirz, but he adds that they probably should be identified. Members of this group (listed as *Kayar-rek*) are reported to live in Buti, Nowari, Kaibursé, Sangasé and Alatep. According to Wirz individual members are found in Kumbe and Yatomb.⁴¹

The *Ogom-zé*, a subclan which has members living at Wendu. A globular stone the size of a human head, called *Bodol-anem*, is the *déma* of this group. Long ago the stone was brought from Saror to Wendu; the stone must never be exposed to the sunlight and is the object of a certain (unspecified) measure of veneration. The *Kewás-zé*, originally from Dimar-zé (east of the lower middle Bian), but since settled at Wendu.

The *Gino-rek*, who derive their name from a former settlement near Okaba.

³⁸ Cf. above, pp. 191 f.

³⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 50 jo. IV p. 132.

⁴⁰ Ibid. III pp. 170, 172 jo. II p. 51.

⁴¹ Ibid. II p. 51.

The *Winau-rek*, who derive their name from a place called Winau, near Makalin. At the time of the registration most of the *Winau-rek* were settled at Hibóm (Wambi), with one individual living at Makalin and another at Kobing (see annex II).

The *Garuam-rek*, who derive their name from an unidentified settlement, Garuam.

The *Bahod-zé*. No information available; it is not certain that they are a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan; in another place Wirz calls them a *Kai-zé* clan, and in the Report of the Depopulation Team a *Bahod-rek* subclan is listed as a *Moyu-rek* subclan.⁴²

The *Hoda-rek*. No information.

The *Woyu-rek*, who trace their descent back to a déma called *Woyu*, the founder of a settlement of that name in Yab-anim territory (in other words, not a Marind-anim subclan).

Besides, there are three *Geb-zé* subclans which may be either *Geb-zé-ha* subclans or belong to another *Geb-zé* clan. We have no further information than the names of the villages where they live, viz. the *Kahor-rek* at Makalin, the *Katal* at Okaba and Alaku and the *Birukande* at Makalin and Welba.⁴³

A final and more important subclan is that of the *Mana-rek*. They will be dealt with at the end of this section, because they occupy a position somewhat apart from that of the other subclans.

The relations of *Geb* with the déma of the other *Geb-zé* clans are rather obscure. They have not been reflected in mythical stories and can only be found out by questioning informants. Fortunately, Wirz has given attention to the problem. He writes: "Only once did an informant explain the connection. He was of the opinion that *Moyu* is descended from *Hong-sav*, and *Uaba* from *Piakor*, the wife given to *Geb* by *Mahu*. Of *Moyu* we know very little and the information is, in a way, ambiguous. On the other hand, all informants agree that *Uaba* is the son of an otherwise unknown déma called *Diwra*. Other sons of *Diwra* are reportedly named *Kéwai*, *Madoi* and *Kenang*. Each is said to have been the ancestor of a specific totem-society and the originator of a secret cult. . . . Whereas *Uaba* is associated with the *mayo-cult*, the *imo-cult* might, according to some natives, have been

⁴² Ibid. III p. 173; Rep. Depop. Team p. 65; below, pp. 263 and 298.

⁴³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 173 and, as far as the *katal-* or *katar-boan* is concerned, the records of the registration.

derived from *Kenang*, and the *rapa*-cult from *Kéwai*. Of course, all this information is mere speculation".⁴⁴

Whereas the names of *Kéwai*, *Madoi* and *Kenang* are utterly obscure, the name of *Diwra* yields an important clue. From a story which is told only by Vertenten it appears that *Diwra* (*Diwre* in Vertenten's spelling) is another name of *Geb*. The story is a highly interesting alternative reading of a deviant version of the myth of the coconut which will be related further on.⁴⁵ Here we are more interested in the first part of the story, which is set somewhere in the western section of the coast (the spot is not specified). *Geb* and his wife are *kariw*-snakes; they have a human child, a boy, who, in their absence, is carried off by some people. *Geb* follows the track, which leads him to the village. The people are celebrating and his boy is in the centre of the festive grounds. *Geb* changes into a man and goes to *Sami*, his *ngais* (friend of one's own age). Vertenten adds that *Sami* is also the name of a big black snake. Here, however, *Sami* appears in human shape. When *Geb* asks him whether he knows where the child is or who took him, *Sami* declares he is ignorant. *Geb* replies: "My friend, the child must be here and I shall punish those who took him away from me". "*Diwra*", says *Sami* — *Diwra* being a second name of *Geb* — "*Diwra*, you go yourself". *Geb* goes, changing again into a snake. When he is seen by a small boy, *Geb* again resumes his human shape and returns to *Sami*, asking him to fetch the child. *Sami* then makes ready also to change into a snake, but at that very moment he is bitten by a big black ant, whereupon he excuses himself, telling *Geb* to fend for himself. *Geb* again changes into a snake, making himself very big so as to be able to encompass the whole crowd. Just in time an old woman sees him and at the moment he is going to crush them all she pours hot ashes over his head. *Geb* flees, to remain a snake forever. The *kariw*-snake still has a white spot on its head, the mark left by the glowing ashes.

Before we conclude this section, we must consider the list of totems in annex IV as far as it is relevant to the *Geb-zé-ha*. The totems mentioned there all find a ready explanation in the myths related above. The birds and fishes are identical with those which, according to the myth, *Piakor*, *Geb's* wife, bore him. A more substantial reason for their association with the *Geb-zé-ha*, other than their accidental

⁴⁴ Wirz, op. cit. II p. 52.

⁴⁵ Vertenten, I.L. III p. 1036 and below, p. 250.

birth from *Geb's* wife, cannot be given, at least not from the data at our disposal.

Special mention is made in this list of the *Mana-rek*. *Mana* lived not far from Saror. He had married his sister *Saripa*. She had wounds in her feet and legs and could not make sago. Therefore *Mana* stole sago. He was found out and fled eastward. On his way he killed a man of Yatomb, raped a girl, went to *Mongumer*, where he killed *Mongumer-anem*, the betel déma, after having committed adultery with the latter's wife. Then he made off to Senayo, where he lived for some time and had children.⁴⁶ Finally, he settled near Kumbe, where he also begot offspring. In the meantime the men of Saror, unable to find *Mana*, revenged themselves on *Saripa*. She was raped, but during the night she managed to escape. Crippled by wounds and unable to find her way in the dark, she finally strayed into a swamp, where she changed into a pearl-mussel (*kuper-sav*). In the swamp she bore two girls, who changed into birds (*obab* and *katar-biru*).⁴⁷ The swamp is held in awe because the people fear the déma. The name of the pearl-mussel, *kuper-sav*, means woman of Kuper (Kuprik); it refers to *Saripa*, because the swamp where she lives (*Tawaker*) belongs to the village of Kuprik.⁴⁸ Verschueren gives a slightly different interpretation; the swamp belongs to the village of Saror and the woman is called *Kuper-sav* because she is really a woman from Kuprik, a village not far from Saror and situated on the right bank of the Maro. Verschueren adds that the swamp is held in great awe, so much so that the Saror people were afraid to hunt the numerous crocodiles in the swamp. However, in 1960 a group of young men plucked up their courage and, carrying a bottle of holy water to protect themselves from evil, they set out on a hunt. Those of Kuprik, however, had got wind of it and decided to forestall them, not because they claimed any rights there but because it was their déma who resided in the swamp. It all ended up in a big brawl in which a man of Kuprik had his arm broken. From that time onwards the swamp has been held in greater awe than ever, because the injury was attributed to *Kuper-sav*. Apparently *Saripa* is held to originate from Kuper or Kuprik.⁴⁹ However that be, Wirz informs us that *Kuper-sav* is the public name of the pearl-mussel, *Saripa* its

⁴⁶ Senayo is a centre of *Mahu-zé* activity; see below, pp. 280 ff., 311, 321 f., 438.

⁴⁷ *Biru* is a white gull (Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.); the other name could not be traced.

⁴⁸ Wirz, M.A. II p. 76.

⁴⁹ Verschueren, Letters VI p. 3.

secret déma-name. The mussel and the birds born in the swamp are totems of the *Mana-rek*.

The reason why the *Mana-rek* are reckoned among the *Geb-zé-ha* is not very clear. Wirz suggests that the similarity between pearl-mussel and moon may have been the reason. As a matter of fact, the pearl-mussel shell, when used as an ornament (*gana*), is always given the shape of a crescent. (For unknown reasons it is the preferred ornament of the old men, who use no other decorations⁵⁰). This implies that the Marind are conscious of a relationship with the moon.⁵¹ Similarly, the relationship with the birds, the daughters of the déma, is explained from the fact that they are swamp-birds. Here again we find an example of those rather loose connections between the particular history of the subclan and the more comprehensive unit of which it makes part. Members of the clan live at Saror, Noh-otiv and Kuper, that is, in a rather narrowly circumscribed area near to the sites of the déma's main activities. There are also, however, clan-members reportedly living in Sangasé.⁵² We would like to know (but our information is insufficient) whether descendants of *Mana* are also found at Senayo, where according to the myth our déma begot offspring.

Recapitulating, we conclude that the *Geb-zé-ha* comprise that group of *Geb-zé* which is closely associated with the moon and the banana (itself, because of its form, an appropriate moon-symbol). The relations of *Geb* with the sun do not make part of *Geb-zé-ha* mythology proper, but belong to the phratry as a whole (if they should not be reckoned to belong to that category of myths which is the common property of the whole tribe). On the whole, *Geb's* relations with the sun are less obvious and more wrapped in mystery than those with the moon, which are prominent. This is particularly well illustrated by Nevermann's statement that among the coastal Kanum-irébe the people of the coconut clan hail the full moon with a long-drawn-out *Geb-éé*.⁵³ *Geb* is also associated with stone (*katar*) and earth (*makan*) "because *Geb* originated from stone and lived in a white ant-hill, which is made of earth. Termites (white ants) and other ants are *Geb's nakarî*".⁵⁴ The connections of *Geb* with the other clans of this phratry are not of the very solid kind. The *Geb-zé-ha* are not directly associated with the great

⁵⁰ Wirz, l.c.

⁵¹ Cf. below, p. 329.

⁵² Wirz, M.A. III p. 172.

⁵³ Nevermann, ZfE 1939 p. 23.

⁵⁴ Wirz, op. cit. II p. 49.

cults, contrary to the other *Geb-zé* clans, as we shall find in the following sections. It will presently be established that in the mythology of the latter the sun, far from being a mythological non-entity as Wirz thought, dominates.

2. THE MAYO MYTHS OF THE GEB-ZÉ

Sections 2 and 3 deal with the main myths of the other three clans of the *Geb-zé*, viz. the *Uaba-rek* and the *Moyu-rek*, together constituting the coconut clan, and the *Uga-* or palmyra-palm clan. First come the *Uaba-rek*. *Uaba*, their ancestor, we have already come to know as a son of *Diwra*.⁵⁵ He is associated with the *mayo*-cult, and from the context we must conclude that Wirz's informants meant to convey that *Uaba* is the leading mythical hero of the cult.⁵⁶ On this point Wirz, who passed the information on, is slightly elusive. Not without reason: for him the association of *Uaba* with the *mayo* was difficult to explain, because he considers *Uaba* to be the navel *déma* of the *rapa*-cult, which, indeed, he is. Such a double identity is a disturbing factor in the pseudo-historical explanations of myth which Wirz never tired of advancing. In spite of all this he later explicitly admits that *Uaba* is the *mayo-déma* proper.⁵⁷ This is confirmed by Nevermann, who reported that among the Kanum-irébe of the coastal area immediately east of Sarira, *Uaba* is called the *mayo-déma* and the originator of the cult.⁵⁸

Uaba is the fire *déma*.⁵⁹ The relevant myth is presented by Wirz as a myth owned by the phratry of *Aramemb*, because fire is one of the main totems of that *phratry*. It originated simultaneously with cassowary and stork, two other main totems of the same *phratry*. However, *Uaba* being the central character of the myth, we are entitled to assume that, in a way, the myth also belongs to the *Geb-zé* clan, which is descended from *Uaba*. Moreover, the two phratries belong to the same moiety; their close relationship is demonstrated in this particular myth which, for several reasons, is one of the most important sources for the knowledge of Marind-anim cosmology.

Before we reproduce and discuss the myth, it seems advisable to bring together the scattered information available on its main character,

⁵⁵ Above, p. 234.

⁵⁶ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* II p. 52.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* III p. 8.

⁵⁸ Above, p. 234.

⁵⁹ Wirz, *M.A.* II p. 81 note 4.

Uaba. In my discussions with Viegen the latter identified *Uaba* with *Brawa*, the navel *déma* of the *mayo*, an identification which finds support in the data just mentioned. A more important point is that Viegen identifies *Brawa* also with the fire *déma* of Kondo, an identification subscribed to by Wirz, who locates *Uaba* as the fire *déma* at Kondo.⁶⁰ Of *Brawa* Viegen writes: "*Brawa* is the personification of the head of *Geb*. . . . He is only head, his face is red (*do-hi*),⁶¹ shining like the sun (*katanni*), with a long, broad, flowing, snow-white beard. He has taken up his residence beyond the Sandar creek in the Kondo area".⁶² The specification 'beyond the Sandar-creek' is correct; the creek (its name is usually spelled *Sendár*, because the stress is on the last syllable) is found immediately west of Kondo, at a few hundred meters' distance from the village, and not, as the map in the *Verslag van de Militaire Exploratie* has it, about 5 km off.

From these identifications, if correct, we may conclude that *Uaba*, the head of *Geb*, is the sun. This leads us on to other possible associations, in the first place that of Kondo with the place of sunrise farther to the east, called *Ep kwitare*, i.e. there (he) rises.⁶³ We reported already that according to Geurtjens Kondo is the mythical place of sunrise.⁶⁴ The association is therefore probable enough. With regard to this association Wirz writes: "According to some informants it (i.e. the being called *Ep kwitare*) is completely white, arched like a *gali*⁶⁵ or like a boat carrying full white sails. Now and then smoke and flames rise from its top; according to others they even reach up into the clouds. Others again report that *Ep kwitare* is like a big lamp and on this score it seems plausible that it has something to do with a lighthouse on one of the islands in the Fly river estuary, which, for the Marind of that period, was, of course, something perfectly unique and quite extraordinary. Thus the fantastic image was associated with a variety of myths and *déma*; some surmised that it was the house or the place of exit of the sun *déma*; other people believed it had some connection with the fire *déma* of *Sendár* and with the *rapa*-cult of the

⁶⁰ L.c.

⁶¹ Viegen translates 'blank', i.e. white in contrast to coloured. Red is the more exact translation.

⁶² Viegen, *Ann.* 1915 p. 376.

⁶³ Cf. Geurtjens, *Dict. v. ep and ko-itare*; Wirz, *TBG* 1933 p. 120.

⁶⁴ Above, p. 226.

⁶⁵ The *gali* or *gari* is the image of the sky, a big white arch about 3 meters in diameter. At the *mayo* ceremonies the appearance of the *gari* on the scene heralds *inter alia* the arrival of the *mayo*-fire. See below, pp. 356-367, 550.

Kondo people".⁶⁶ In this context Wirz quotes Vertenten, who reports that some of the most courageous people of Kaibur once tried to inspect *Ep kwitare* at close quarters.⁶⁷ After a time they had to return. The water of the sea, they said, was like soapsuds. It became thicker and thicker and thicker, until finally it was like thick porridge. They had to return lest they should get stuck in the sludge. An interesting detail is that Vertenten, though he does not mention the name *Ep kwitare*, also refers to the place being likened to a *gari*, adding that it is not advisable to approach it, because the sun would kill the intruder. Viegen (also quoted by Wirz who possibly borrowed from him) does not mention the relationship between Kondo and *Ep-kwitare*, but gives a description of the latter which comes very near to the one given by Wirz: "He is a young man (*miakim*), white like lime, as brightly white as the small clouds in the sky, as white as nothing else; he reaches up into the clouds, he is arched, arched like the *gari*, he is a stone and has the form of a (bridge? platform?). It is the place of a *déma*".⁶⁸ When questioned on the subject, Viegen identified the spot with the place called Mabudauan and added that it is situated near a river called Weri Yahué (spelled Uéri-haua by Wirz) and is marked by a forked coconut tree. I cannot say that his explanations were very illuminating to me, but where the relationship with *Ep kwitare* was also suggested in the natives' description of Mabudauan referred to in Viegen's article in *Semaine d'Ethnologie* III p. 394, the identification of Mabudauan and *Ep kwitare* is acceptable, in spite of the fact that this conclusion is not corroborated by the results of Wirz's efforts to identify the Marindinese names for places and rivers in the Western Division of Papua.⁶⁹ Apart from the question whether the topographical expositions given by Marind-anim informants are clear enough to permit of the exact localization of the places mentioned, there is the obvious impossibility of gathering any definite information regarding the actual site of *Ep kwitare*, the place of sunrise. For this reason its association with Mabudauan should not be rejected forthwith. In fact, Mabudauan is the one really conspicuous natural formation along the coast, viz. a huge boulder cropping out of the lowland. The local people, too, respected the place. To them it was the abode of a rather important (and dangerous) being called *Wawa*. His myth has been told by

⁶⁶ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 75.

⁶⁷ J.P. 1917 p. 481, not 1916 p. 480, as Wirz writes (l.c.).

⁶⁸ Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 139.

⁶⁹ Lastly in TBG 1933 pp. 117 ff.

Landtman.⁷⁰ The story does not give us any clue, but the name is remarkably consonant to that of the mythical hero with whom we were dealing, viz. *Uaba*. Whatever the latter's relations with *Wawa*, those with *Geb*, fire and sunrise are explicit enough to see in him, if it be allowed to use this term, a sun *déma*.

Before we can proceed to relate the story of *Uaba* and the *mayo* celebration at *Yavar-makan*, yet another problem has to be mooted, viz. that of the location of the places *Mayo* and *Yavar-makan*. Both places are recurrently mentioned in *mayo* myths. The name *Mayo* is of very frequent occurrence throughout the country, because any place where the *mayo* ceremonies have ever been celebrated is called *Mayo*.⁷¹ The *Mayo* mentioned in myth should be located in the extreme east. The various places where the *déma* celebrated the ceremonies are, according to Wirz, respectively a mythical *Mayo*, which he believes is an island near the mouth of the *Fly* river, a *Mayo* near *Yavar-makan* (a place between the *Yawim* and the *Kombis*) and another somewhere near *Kondo*.⁷² Finally, a *mayo* celebration at *Brawa* near *Buti-Nowari* is mentioned in one of the myths dealing with *Aramemb*.⁷³ The really important celebrations, however, are those in the far east, primarily at *Mayo* near *Yavar-makan*.

Attempts to locate the place have given rise to the profoundest confusion. According to Wirz — who did his utmost to unravel Marindanim topography of the Western Division of Papua⁷⁴ — the *Yawim* is the *Morehead* river, *Kombis* the *Wassi-Kussa* and *Yavar-makan* a 'bare and forlorn stretch of coast'. *Verschueren*, however, points out that *Kombis* must be a misspelling of *Kombes* and this river *Kombes* is, according to all his informants, the *Strickland* river, the big eastern tributary of the *Fly*, whereas the *Yawim* is a western tributary "which joins the *Fly* river in a place at about the latitude of *Erambu*"⁷⁵ (probably the *Suki*). Of *Yavar-makan* he says that there are several places of this name, but none of them near the coast.⁷⁶ It is impossible

⁷⁰ Landtman, *Folktales* nrs 102-104; *Kiwai* Papuans pp. 146, 287, 300.

⁷¹ A similar custom prevails with regard to *imo* celebrations. Yet, it is improbable that all the places called *Imo* should owe their names to previous *imo* celebrations. Among the villages with sites called *Imo* within their precincts there are mentioned places such as *Saror*, *Bad* and *Wendu*, which are patently *mayo*. Cf. *Verschueren*, *Letters* XI p. 1.

⁷² Wirz, *M.A.* II p. 59.

⁷³ See below, pp. 283 f.

⁷⁴ Cf. Wirz, *M.A.* II pp. 53 ff, IV pp. 132 f., *TBG* 1933 pp. 117 ff.

⁷⁵ *Verschueren*, *Letters* V p. 7, VII pp. 7 f., XI p. 33.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* VII p. 7 and III p. 2.

to decide which is right; Wirz can substantiate his view by referring to the myth of a *mayo* celebration which miscarried because the uninitiated associated with the women and were changed into stones, the red stones "on the beach near Mayo and Yormakan (Yavar-makan), which are clear of the water at low tide".⁷⁷ On the other hand, Verschueren's opinion, based on an intimate knowledge of Marind-anim lore, is plausible for various reasons. In the first place, it brings Yavar-makan nearer to the eastern land of the dead, where the dead meet the *mayo-déma* (plur.). In the second place, there is Gooszen's communication that, before the first humans originated, the *déma* lived at Mayo- (or Déma-) *miráv* near the springs of the Torassi river in a rocky area. When patrolling the relevant area he had not come across any rocks, but he found petrifications of clay which might have given occasion to describe the area as rocky.⁷⁸ Although it is quite a way from the upper Torassi to the Suki- and Strickland rivers, the general direction is more or less the same and it might well be that this story and the location of the eastern land of the dead hold an indication that the Marind are aware that their closest relatives live in the middle Fly region and that they tend to postulate this area as their country of origin. On the other hand, Wirz's findings cannot be ignored either and we must conclude that there is diversity of opinion among the Marind themselves as to where exactly Yavar-makan and the sites of the earliest *mayo* celebrations should be located. The one point on which they agree is that they are situated in the east and that there are various places bearing these names. There is not the slightest indication that this uncertainty worries them. On the contrary, we may agree with Verschueren that where in myth the names Mayo and Imo occur, we should not look upon them as real place-names, but as purely mythical names.⁷⁹

A final observation should be made on the meaning of the name Yavar-makan. Initially, Wirz wrote Yormakan, which he later corrected.⁸⁰ According to Geurtjens the name means Place of Intoxication, from *makan*, earth, and *yavar*, empty, without kernel or spirit, intoxicated, unconscious, obtuse, deafmute; also invisible, vanished.⁸¹ In my Godsdienst I ventured the supposition that the word *yavar* may have been derived from the Yéi word *yaval*, ancestor and that,

⁷⁷ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 61 f.; cf. below, p. 258.

⁷⁸ Gooszen, BKI 1914 pp. 371 f.

⁷⁹ Verschueren, Letters XI p. I.

⁸⁰ Wirz, op. cit. IV p. 133.

⁸¹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *yavar* and *yavar-makan*.

consequently, the name may be translated by ancestor-land.⁸² The translation is attractive, but F. Verschueren points out that the Yéi pronunciation of *yaval* is *yévalē*, which is less consonant with *yavar* than I had supposed. Moreover, *yévalē* does not really mean ancestor, but spiritual being.⁸³ I believe it will be wise to refrain from further speculating and to return to our point of departure, the *mayo* myth of *Uaba* as told to Wirz by members of the phratry of *Aramemb*.

It was *mayo* (i.e. the *mayo*-initiation ceremony) in *Yavar-makan*. *Uaba* was among the *mitwar* (initiates). He had brought an *iwag* for the forthcoming orgies (probably the informant used the term *otiv bombari*, ritual sexual promiscuity; the term orgies is Wirz's and is not as fully appropriate as he thought). The name of the *iwag* was *Ualiwamb*. She managed to escape and the celebration came to naught. She ran off to Mopa near Gelib (in Eromka, the part of the coast farthest to the west), where she made sago. *Uaba* went after her and so came to Mopa near Gelib. Toward evening he saw *Ualiwamb* coming home, carrying a load of sago. She went into the hut, but *Uaba* hid himself and waited till it was dark. Then he stealthily entered the hut. The next morning *Uaba* was found moaning and groaning in copulation with *Ualiwamb*, unable to extricate himself. A *déma*, *Rugarug-évai*, hurried to Kondo and reported what had happened to *Uaba*. Some people immediately set out to fetch *Uaba*. He and *Ualiwamb* were laid on a stretcher and, after having been covered with mats, brought back to Kondo, preceded by *Rugarug-évai*, who laughed and scoffed at *Uaba*. At last they arrived at Sendár (Kondo), where the couple was carried into a hut and laid on a bench. His *nakari* covered *Uaba* with a sleeping mat and gave him a piece of wood for a neck-rest. Croton was planted in front of the hut (as is usual with a *déma-miráv* and à fortiori with a *déma*-house). *Uaba* has remained there up to the present day.

Uaba first killed *Rugarug-évai*. Then *Aramemb* came from *Yavar-makan*. He had been looking for *Uaba* as far as Imo. When he was informed of his whereabouts, he returned and came to Sendár. He went straight into the hut where *Uaba* was still in copulation with the *iwag*. He seized *Uaba*, shook him and turned him over to disengage him. Suddenly smoke developed and flames flared up, the friction had given rise to the fire. Simultaneously *Ualiwamb* gave birth to a cassowary and a stork. The cassowary and the stork owe their black feathers to the fire. Moreover, the stork burned its legs, and the cassowary the

⁸² Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 63.

⁸³ Verschueren, *Letters III* p. 2.

lobes on its neck. They are still red. The fire, fanned on by the east monsoon, spread all along the coast, leaving a broad beach. All animals fled into the water, but the lobster burned itself and turned red, and up to the present day the molluscs, when roasted, will give a hissing sound like water thrown into the fire. In different places the fire spread inland, burning long, woodless valleys into the earth, which became the present river-beds. Other natural features are still related to the primeval fire, but that part of the myth will be told in the next chapter. For the present only one more detail must be added. The *déma* of Kondo were so impressed by the event that since then they did not come to celebrate the *mayo*. They had something more impressive, fire, which they now knew how to make. Moreover, they had the fire *déma*. And this is how the *rapa*-cult originated from the *mayo*.⁸⁴

The second part of the story as related above does not leave any doubt as to the importance of the myth. In a way it is a myth of creation: the fire, two big birds, an initiation cult, and the shape of at least part of the land are explained from it. An interesting variant is told by Verschuieren, who writes: "The Marind are fond of telling this part of the story, usually leaving out the scabrous scenes preceding the event. However, they always connect the story with another opposition in which *Yorma* plays a role. . . . The latter was advised by *Geb* in Komolom to revenge himself on the coastal people, whereupon *Yorma* struck the coast with a tidal wave which broke into the interior, carving out bays and river-valleys. The opposition is evident: *Sendawi*, the eastwind, versus *Muli*, the westwind. According to what I heard from the story-tellers, the broad beach and the open plains of the savannah were made by the fire, the bays and the rivers by the tidal wave".⁸⁵

What is the meaning of the events related in the scabrous story, events which had such weighty consequences? Those who remember that *Uaba* is said to be the head of *Geb* need hardly have any doubt. It is the sun copulating with the earth. He first goes from the east (*Yavar-makan*) all along the coast to the west to have his woman back. That he is the sun is emphasized by the detail — meaningless if *Uaba* were anything else than the sun — of his waiting till darkness before entering the hut. Even more instructive is the couple's journey home. They are covered with mats. It is difficult to believe that this was done for the sake of decency. Decency is utterly absent from the story, as it

⁸⁴ Wirz, op. cit. II pp. 80 ff.

⁸⁵ Verschuieren, Letters VI pp. 3 f.; cf. below, p. 384.

is from the behaviour of one of the leading men in the party on its way home, *Rugarug-évaï*, who was marching in front, laughing and joking at the pair under the mat. *Uaba's* return to the east is a return underground, or, in short, a copulation with the earth. Sunrise, on the other hand, is a binary event: a birth, result of prolonged copulation, and a liberation. However, this is only one aspect and not even the most important one. The subsequent fire is not a daily event but a seasonal one. When the swamps run dry, the time has arrived for setting the grass on fire to hunt wallabies. During a certain time of the year the whole landscape is blotted with huge smoke-clouds caused by grass-fires. They start when the east monsoon, which has been blowing for some time, is at its height, the swamps have dried up, and everything is bone-dry. The final part of the myth plainly refers to this season. The twofold aspect of *Uaba's* liberation, its association with sunrise and with the peak of the dry season, is not accidental. In daily parlance sunrise and dry season are associated also. The word *pig* is used for "sun-heat, sun-glow, sun-light, time of great sun-heat, dry season; also daylight, day, growing light or daybreak; illuminating (by means of sunlight) . . .".⁸⁶ *Uaba*, as the déma of the sun, sunrise, the fire and the dry season, combines in these functions all the various meanings of the word *pig*, which, in turn, reflects the value the Marind sets upon day-light, dry season and sunshine.⁸⁷ The association with the east monsoon is irrefutably confirmed by the presentation of the *Kai-zé* and the *Sankakai* déma as inmates of a canoe heading westwards.⁸⁸

But the myth is more than a myth of nature. It is also the central myth of the *mayo*-ritual. When, in a later chapter, the ceremonies will be described in greater detail, we shall find that the initiation ritual is, among many other things, a dramatization of the myth of the origin of man, and of the present myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. In perfect accordance with the importance of the myth is *Uaba's* role in the

⁸⁶ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *pig*.

⁸⁷ Unfortunately we know very little of *Rugarug-évaï*. The name seems to refer to the *ruga* or *luga*, the platform made of a *rug*-tree (*Terminalia catappa*; Malay: *ketapan*), on which the successful headhunter performs his dance (cf. below, pp. 751 and 848 f.). Headhunting being connected with the west monsoon, the contrast between *Uaba* and *Rugarug-évaï* would become more obvious if the present etymology were correct. The mystery in which his person is wrapped is an argument for considering *Rugarug-évaï* as a rather important character (cf. Wirz, op. cit. p. 81). Unfortunately the etymology is uncertain. Geurtjens' dictionary (v. *roeg-a-roeg*) informs us that *rug-a-rug* is the name of a fern-species (*Davallia elata* Spr.). See also p. 664.

⁸⁸ See below, p. 308.

mythical *mayo*. In the present version he is the man who brings the *iwag*. In another mythical *mayo* performance he is the leader of the ceremonies.⁸⁹ Interesting, too, is his partner, the *iwag*. Wirz calls her *Ualiwamb*, a name which may contain a reference to the stork (*war* or *wal*),⁹⁰ but I must add that, after consulting Father Verschueren, I feel that such an etymological reference had better be dropped. More important is the name given her by Viegen⁹¹: "Tous les *Marind-ha* sont sensés originaires de Kondo. . . Ils doivent donc être enfants de *Kanis-iwage*, la *Belle jeune fille*, qui y est vénérée sous l'image d'un feu immense, duquel s'élèvent sans cesse en tournoyant des pierres énormes, pour retomber aussitôt avec un fracas de tonnerre". *Kanis-iwag* means Betel Woman. The name indicates that she is a *Bragai-zé* woman, because betel is one of the main totems of the *Bragai-zé*. This is fully corroborated by other information. Elsewhere Wirz informs us that *Uaba* and *Opeko-anem*, one of the main heroes of *Bragai-zé* myth, were friends and that each had taken the other's sister in marriage, bringing their wives to the *mayo*.⁹² In other words, *Uaba* is married to a woman of the moiety and phratry which are specifically associated with what we may call the chthonic aspect of the cosmos. That *Uaba* brings her to the *mayo* for the forthcoming 'orgies' is quite logical; the orgies, *otiv-bombari*, are occasions of ritual sexual promiscuity where married men bring their wives.

A last aspect claiming our attention is the place of action, Kondo, which is also the place where, according to the myth of origin of man, the *déma*, after their subterranean feast at Sangasé (or at Gelib, as in the reading published by Vertenten)⁹³ emerged from the earth. Vertenten's version makes the analogy perfect. Instead of having the initial feast at Sangasé (whither our version of the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* sends *Aramemb* on his quest for *Uaba*, seemingly for no reason at all), Vertenten's reading has it at Gelib, the place where *Uaba* found his woman (Mopa near Gelib). The *déma*, then, who became the first men, made the same eastward journey as *Uaba* and were liberated on the same spot. But there is more to it. *Aramemb*, who is present when the first men emerge, who carves out their limbs, and who makes the fire which, by exploding the bamboo, causes the ears, eyes, noses and

⁸⁹ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 120 ff.

⁹⁰ Cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 76.

⁹¹ Viegen, *Sem. d'Ethnol.* III p. 395.

⁹² Wirz, *M.A.* II p. 137.

⁹³ Vertenten, *Ann.* 1917 p. 302, and above, p. 209.

mouths of the first men to burst open, is also the *déma* who extricates *Uaba* from his painful entanglement and, in doing so, makes fire and enables *Kanis-ivag* to give birth to the cassowary and the stork. It can hardly be a matter of chance that, in contrast to the old initiates, the *mitwar*, the newly initiated, on leaving the *mayo* place are called *noh-war*, young storks.⁹⁴ The *mayo*-ritual, dramatizing *mayo* mythology, also dramatizes the story of the origin of man. In other words, the journey of the sun is also the journey of mankind; the westward trend in the movements of the *déma*-ancestors does not refer to any westward migration, but points to the interpretation of human life in terms borrowed from the course of the sun. The identity of the life of the sun and the life of man also explains why the sun, though more particularly associated with the *Geb-zé* and *Kai-zé*, is also held to "belong to all phratries, because she is connected with the whole universe".⁹⁵

The second *mayo* myth, more closely associated with the *Uaba-rek* than with the other *Geb-zé* clans, concentrates on what follows on the completion of the ceremonies. There are several of these myths. Their main function, as far as the *mayo* is concerned, seems to be that they link up the relevant clan or subclan with the total ceremony which constitutes the basis of the primordial events of the mythical age. Later we shall find that the connection of these myths with the *mayo*-rites is not as loose as it seems to be. In part they refer directly to certain details of the *mayo*-rites.⁹⁶ The myth which now claims our attention runs as follows⁹⁷: A *mayo* ceremony had been celebrated at Yavar-makan. *Uaba* was among the *mitwar* (initiates). The ceremonies having been brought to a close, the *Mayo-patur* went westward with their mother, a python of the variety called *bir* (*Liasis fuscus albertisii*).⁹⁸ Her real name is kept a secret. Nevertheless, several names have been noted down by Wirz, viz. *Nangewra*, *Wangor*, *Wangus* and *Kadubar*. Their meaning not being clear, these names contribute little to our knowledge. More important is a communication made by *Verschueren*,

⁹⁴ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *mit*.

⁹⁵ Above, p. 224.

⁹⁶ Such as the scene connected with *Kaipher* in the present myth; cf. below, p. 519. It is probable that we should be able to mention more cases if the *mayo*-rites had been described more completely; cf. i.a. p. 553.

⁹⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II pp. 65 ff.

⁹⁸ In a previous work I equated *bir* with *mbir*, crocodile-tooth (Godsdienst, p. 74). Since Geurtjens clearly differentiates between the two (Dict. voc. cit.), I now think the equation was unjustified. I also withdraw the translation of *Nangewra* there proposed.

who informs us that among the Kumbe valley people in the interior *Bir* is the name for *Geb* in his snake-shape.⁹⁹ The identification confirms that she is an important personage. Intriguing is the name *Mayo-patur*. It is evidently the intention of the myth to represent the *Mayo-patur* as real children, because it is stated that the children are carried in a *kabu*, i.e. a cradle used for a new-born baby. Obviously they are the neophytes who, in a way, are new-born babies. One of their adventures is the mythical elaboration of one of the episodes of their initiation. The myth mentions the various places where the snake made a halt. On the fifth day she stops over near the Maro river, where she stays for a few days. Here a *kivasom* climbed out of the cradle and changed into a *hayam* (*Inocarpus edulis*), a fruit-bearing tree frequently found near the beach.^{99*} The snake crossed the Maro and slithered through the area between Maro and Kumbe, to arrive at a place called Koandi. At this juncture the story bifurcates, the two sequels existing side by side. Wirz notifies us that informants usually relate either the one or the other part, rarely both, the extraordinary length of either part providing a natural excuse for not telling both at one and the same session. Here follows first the more important part, dealing with the origin of the coconut, the main totem of the *Uaba-rek*.

In Koandi the snake became pregnant. She bore a son, *Yawi*, who was found by two *iwag* from Moha, formerly a village near the mouth of the Kumbe river. They took the child with them to the village, but the snake tracked them down by their smell. She encircled the hut and shattered it, without doing much harm to the inmates. An old woman chased the snake away, throwing glowing charcoal at her, whereupon the snake fled and hid in a swamp near Tomerau (K anum-anim territory) where she has remained ever since. Follows an intermezzo relating how the snake swallowed a number of women who were fishing in the swamp. The last to be put away was a pregnant woman, who was too big to be swallowed and stuck in the snake's throat. Later the men killed the snake and slit her open. All the women emerged alive, except the pregnant one, but her unborn baby was still living, and it is from him that the *Bugau-rek* are descended, a *Geb-zé* subclan of Tomerau.

⁹⁹ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 2.

^{99*} I feel uncertain about the name. Dr. Ostendorf of the Royal Tropical Institute points out to me that Heyne in his handbook 'De nuttige planten in Nederlandsch-Indië' mentions the name *gayam* as the Javanese name for *Inocarpus edulis*. Apparently *hayam* is not the Marindinese name of the fruit but one borrowed from Javanese immigrants. There must be another native name, just as happened to be the case with tobacco (cf. above, p. 22).

Tomerau being a Kanum-irébe settlement, the identity of the *Bugau-rek* seems somewhat dubious.

In the meantime *Yawi* grew up into a most handsome boy. *Aramemb* heard about it and wanted to steal him. He went to Imo; Wirz does not explain which Imo is meant in this particular myth. There are numerous places called Imo, but every time Wirz has its location specified it is the Imo near Sangasé. Vertenten in his version of the story of *Yawi* does not mention a place either; he confines himself to stating that it happened in Imaz, i.e. west of the Bian,¹⁰⁰ thus confirming the association with the west. In Imo *Arememb* was informed that the boy was in Moha. When he arrived there the village was deserted; the men were out hunting and the women were pounding sago for a feast. *Aramemb* used his time preparing a collection of ornaments. He had brought rattan from the interior and nautilus-shells from Komolom. Up to that time body-decoration had been unknown among the Marind. It is related that a boy is sent back to the village to fetch fire. Dumbfounded at the sight of the beautiful decorations which *Aramemb* had exhibited on wooden puppets, he forgets everything, and the same happens to one after another of those who come on the same errand. Gradually all the people return home to crowd admiringly round the decorations. Their excitement gives *Aramemb* an opportunity to seize *Yawi* and bring him to Imo.

When he is grown up, *Yawi* commits adultery with his foster-mother. *Aramemb* finds out and decides to kill *Yawi*. To that end he goes to the east to call in five men of the Kurkari, a Kanum-anim group living near the present international border; they have a reputation for being black magicians. The five men, *Mangasesse*, *Mangauéru*, *Uéru*, *Doyam* and *Enod-anem*, belonged to the *Sapi-zé* subclan of the pig clan. They are the mythical *kambara-anim*, and they kill *Yawi* with their magic (*kambara*), *Uéru* taking the leading part. Soon it is all over, and when *Aramemb* hears that the boy is dead he hurries off to the bush to collect medicine. He feels sorry that the boy is dead and wants to restore him to life, but he is too late. When *Aramemb* returns with his medicine, the boy has been buried already. Thereupon *Aramemb* takes the bowl with medicine and pours the concoction over a snake. The snake keeps quiet, becomes cold, and peels. Ever since, snakes have not died. When they are sick, they just slough and live on. If *Aramemb* had been in time to give the medicine to *Yawi*, not only would *Yawi* have survived, but man would have become immortal, just peeling when ill.

¹⁰⁰ Vertenten, I.L. III p. 1056.

From *Yawi's* head there sprouted a coconut tree. An alternative reading, also published by Wirz,¹⁰¹ makes the discovery of the coconut a great occasion. The association of head and coconut is emphasized by having *Yawi's* head severed from the body before it was buried. The name of the *déma* who obtained *Aramemb's* permission to cut off *Yawi's* head is *Bewra*. Later *Aramemb* and *Bewra* became antagonists,¹⁰² but at this stage they still are friends. The important point is that the coconut is identified with a cut-off head. The feast following the discovery of the nut is attended by various *déma*. Mentioned are *Wokabu*, the sago *déma*, who is the first to make coconut oil for anointing hair and body; a man covered with ringworm, who climbed the coconut tree and remained up there for such a long time that a sprout grew through his body, preventing him from ever leaving the tree again; *Bikit* or *Konaim-anem*, who ate so many nuts that he developed a pot-belly and could not walk any more. The latter now lives at *Wendu* in a place called *Konaim*, where he makes a nuisance of himself by stealing nuts from the gardens of the people of *Wendu* and *Bahor*. A young coconut fell into the mouth of another *déma*. The nut sprouted and the *déma* changed into a coconut tree. Other *déma* again spread the nuts all over the country. *Yawi*, one of whose names is *Baringau*,¹⁰³ is the coconut *déma* proper. *Baringau* is also the lower end of the trunk in which the *wih* of the coconut tree resides.

A deviant version, communicated by Vertenten and referred to above,¹⁰⁴ does not mention the boy's name. Here he is the son of two *kariw*-snakes, one of them being *Geb*, who in this story is called *Diwra*. We note in passing that the identification by the Kumbo valley people of *Bir* with *Geb* is not unfounded! The boy is taken away from the snakes by *Aramemb*. When the snakes come to bring the boy back again, they are chased away by an old woman pelting them with glowing ashes. Later the boy commits adultery with *Aramemb's* wife. He is beheaded and from his buried head the first coconut tree grows. A thief who is after the nuts keeps *Aramemb* at bay by throwing young nuts at him, one of which sticks in *Aramemb's* mouth. The thief cannot get down from the tree and changes into the (a?) coconut *déma*. The nut in *Aramemb's* mouth sprouts and he, too, becomes a coconut tree.

Two points in the various readings of the myth are important. The

¹⁰¹ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 70 f.

¹⁰² See below, p. 282.

¹⁰³ There is also a subclan called *Baringau-rek*; see above, p. 94.

¹⁰⁴ Above, p. 235.

first concerns the emphasis laid on the similarity between a severed human head and a coconut. The coconut is a human head (cf. fig. 1). The head of *Yawi*, the son of *Geb* (*Diwra*, *Bir*), is the coconut and the main totem of the *Uaba-rek*. *Uaba*, the originator of the clan, is also a son of *Diwra*, and he is said to be the cut-off head of *Geb*, which is the sun. We conclude that in Marind-anim thought there is a close relationship, and in a way even identity, between the cut-off human head, the sun, and the coconut. *Uaba*, as the originator of the *Uaba-rek*, who have the coconut as their main totem, is alternately sun, coconut and head.

The second point regards the parallelism of the roles of *Yawi* and *Woryu*. Both die of *kambara*, and in both cases their fate is decisive for the fate of man generally. In the one case all people must die because *Woryu* was sent off when he returned from the grave; in the other case *Aramemb* came just too late with his life-giving medicine. Vertenten's version of the myth of *Woryu* adds some interesting details. In this version *Woryu* is called *Woliw*. The connection with the myth of origin is lacking; *Woliw* is simply a man of Makléw who dies. He is buried, but on the occasion of a sun eclipse he rises from his grave and follows his relatives, who had gone to Sangasé for a feast. He joins them at Sangasé, but is chased away.¹⁰⁵ Again there is the connection with the sun and with Sangasé which in several myths as related by Wirz is identified with Imo, the fateful place where death became definite, a trait absent from other versions of the myth of *Woryu*. All these details suggest an identification of *Yawi* and *Woryu*. The identification is given relief by another detail. One of the subclans of the *Uaba-rek* is the *Yagriwar-rek*. The main totem of this subclan is the *koroam*-snake.¹⁰⁶ According to Wirz¹⁰⁷ *Woryu* is also called *koroam-éwati*. There is one snag. In Part II Wirz does not call *Woryu* *koroam-éwati*, but *koroar-éwati*, after a place called Koroar.¹⁰⁸ However, the one need not exclude the other and if, indeed, we may read *koroam*, there is additional reason to stress the evident similarity between *Yawi* and *Woryu*. It all fits in with the basic identity of human life with the sun-cycle. Man is born with the sun and dies with it. It is only natural for members of *Uaba's* clan, which is the true sun clan even though it is not denoted as such, to be the first to share the sun's fate and die. That *Yawi* must die after copulating with his mother is another trait fitting perfectly into the pattern of a sun-myth.

¹⁰⁵ Vertenten, Ann. 34 pp. 148 f.

¹⁰⁶ See below, pp. 261 f. and annex IVa.

¹⁰⁷ Wirz, M.A. III p. 127.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., II p. 187.

After this digression we must return to the myth of *Bir* and the *Mayo-patur*. The first of the two sequels having been fully discussed, we can now turn to the second.¹⁰⁹ In this version the *Mayo-patur* meet with a *Ndik-énd* déma called *Kaipher*, who teaches them how to climb a coconut tree, open the nuts and partake of their contents. In the end *Kaipher* hangs the cradle with the children high up in a tree and goes away. The snake helps the children to come down, except the youngest, who is given feathers and changes into a *Kéwekawé*-bird (an oriole). The snake goes her way again with her children and one of them changes into a banana. When they get to a spot somewhere inland between the Kumbe and the Bian, two of the *patur*, *Naméra* and *Tapéra*, fight the others with glowing coals; the latter climb a tree and change into the Pleiades. The remaining boys kill a man called *Honi* and burn his wife. *Honi* had repeatedly stolen fish from them. He had a wife with very big teeth. It is possible that we may identify him with the ancestor of the *Honi-rek*, a cassowary déma.¹¹⁰ The boys proceed on their way to *Ahiv-zé-miráv* and chase the sago déma from a white ant-heap. In parentheses we note that a white ant-heap is the mythical abode of *Géb*,¹¹¹ and as such not the proper place for a sago déma to live in. An old woman, annoyed at their rude behaviour, chases the boys away. She is called *Rarom*, and is the mother of a young girl (*kivasom*) who bears the name of *Alisan*. A woman of this name will turn up again in the mythology of the phratry of *Aramemb*, where she is the mother of the *Kai-zé* déma *Bébukla*.¹¹² The boys go on to *Dimai* (between the upper Bian and the Buraka). They hide in a hollow tree, where they are found by a number of girls. There are as many girls as there are boys and they all marry. They have children, but one day they all change into hornbills (*haiwui*) and birds of paradise (*zakir*). The people of *Dimai* on the *Digul* are their descendants. The fact that they are tree-dwellers refers to their animal ancestors. Hornbill and yellow bird of paradise (*zakir*, *Paradisea apoda novaeguineae*) are included among the totems of the *Géb-zé*.¹¹³

In this version the snake unobtrusively drops out. The myth gradually fades into a just-so story dealing with foreign people. The return journey from the *mayo* has become a mere framework for explaining

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 71 ff.

¹¹⁰ See below, pp. 297 f.

¹¹¹ Cf. above, p. 237.

¹¹² Below, p. 279.

¹¹³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 79.

the connection with the associated totems of the clan (cf. annex IV). The story of the boys hiding in a tree where they are found by unmarried girls is a widely spread story pattern, which has its versions among many tribes.¹¹⁴ Here it has been fitted into the framework of the return-from-the-*mayo*-myth, which offers ample opportunity for the interweaving of all kinds of local myths and special stories, demonstrating the desire to explain the connection between the different subclans of a clan or phratry from common descent or at least from common adventures they went through since the primordial *mayo* was celebrated. The importance attached to the ritual is obvious. The present story contains yet another feature to which structural significance may be attributed. The *mayo*-boys are all *Geb-zé* and by a stroke of good luck they unexpectedly secure women somewhere far away in the interior. Just as in the myth of *Geb* and *Mahu* it is the *Geb-zé* who have no women and they receive them as a gift from inland people.

3. THE MAYO MYTHS CONTINUED

An unusual characteristic of the *mayo* myths is that there is not any myth relating the origin of the ritual. In Kiwai mythology, for example, we are informed how the originator or master of the ritual decided to make a great ceremony and how, after several failures, he managed to prepare a potent medicine which made a success of the ceremony.¹¹⁵ The same motif is found in the myth of origin of the Boadzi initiation ritual.¹¹⁶ In Marind-anim mythology an originator in the guise of a divine headman who lays down how things have to be done is lacking. Lacking also is the idea that the *mayo* is a ritual which has been deliberately devised. On the contrary, the *mayo* ceremonies are self-contained. Celebrating the *mayo* was more or less the first thing the *déma* did, and we might even say that all things begin with the *mayo*.

The earliest *mayo* ceremonies were beset with difficulties, which had important consequences for the Marind-anim world. According to Wirz the oldest *mayo* myth is the one connected with the origin of the *Moyurek*, a *Geb-zé* clan which has as its totem a particular variety of the coconut, viz. the *méri-ongat*, a coconut with unforked flowerstalks.¹¹⁷ *Moyu* is the ancestor of the clan, who gave his name to it. Mythological

¹¹⁴ See e.g. Landtman, Folktales nrs. 14, 15, 43.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. nr. 279.

¹¹⁶ Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 12; above, pp. 106 f.

¹¹⁷ Wirz, l.c.; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *méri-ongat*.

references to *Moyu* are extremely meagre. In the myth we shall now discuss his function is obscure. The available information on his person is limited to two short communications made by Wirz. In the first we are told that *Moyu* is *Geb's* son by *Hong-sav* and as such a half-brother of *Uaba's*, in the second that *Moyu* is sometimes said to be the navel déma of the *mayo* at Brawa.¹¹⁸ The close connection between *Uaba* and *Moyu* is self-evident. Both clans belong to the coconut *boan*. Here follows the story of the *Moyu-rek*.¹¹⁹

The earliest *mayo* ceremony ever celebrated was held on an island between Kombis and the Maro river. Wirz adds that it is the easternmost place ever to have been the scene of a *mayo* ceremony. The Maro river mentioned here is certainly not the Merauke river, but a Maro river somewhere near the Fly.¹²⁰ We shall not try to identify the spot, but proceed with the story. It opens with the statement that *Moyu* had a share in the ceremonies. That is the only time that *Moyu's* name is mentioned in the story, which continues as follows:

When the ceremonies began, a number of uninitiated boys (*burap patur*; the word *patur* is not to be taken literally) sneaked in and, wishing to partake in sexual intercourse, associated with the *mayo-iwag*. The *mitwar* (initiates) got angry and gave them a beating, whereupon the boys changed into flying foxes and flew away over the sea. During the night, when everybody was asleep, they returned, each holding nuts and flowers of the coconut in his beak, which were dropped on the sleeping people. Thereafter they turned into boys again and joined the *mayo-iwag* (throughout the text Wirz uses the plural form with regard to the *iwag*). Toward daybreak they changed once more into flying foxes and flew back over the sea. This went on for several nights in succession, until an old woman who had grown suspicious because of the young coconuts, a fruit which at the time was still unknown, decided to keep a look-out. She saw everything and the next morning she reported her experiences to the men, who immediately set out in a canoe to find the place where the flying foxes came from. They landed on a island called

¹¹⁸ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 52 and 97; see also above, p. 234.

¹¹⁹ From Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 59-61.

¹²⁰ In TBG 1933 p. 119 Wirz suggests that it is the Oriomu river near Mawata. In this particular case it does not make sense to follow Verschueren's suggestion that Kombis should be read Kombes and identified with the Strickland river. Although a place between Strickland river and Maro (Merauke river) would square with the conception that this area is the Marind-anim country of origin, the scene of the present myth is set in the immediate vicinity of the coast.

Samakor.¹²¹ An unknown tree grew there, a coconut tree. Towards nightfall the tree disappeared. It turned into flying foxes, which flew to the mainland. The following morning the tree reappeared with the return of the flying foxes, which changed into the palm tree (a reference, says Wirz, to the symbiosis of flying foxes and coconut palms, of which they eat the young nuts). Evidently the tree was a *déma* and the men took their axes and cut the tree down, chopping it up into small bits which they threw into the sea. The fragments were washed ashore and in that particular area the petrified remains can still be found on the beach. The *déma*, however, fled into the sea. His name was *Méru*, or *Dangeura*, which are the secret names and also the *igiz-ha* or real names of the *méri-coconut*.¹²² In vain *Méru's nakari Armanowi, Arpatowi, Zarko, Murau, Semai* and *Dokub* (collectively they are called *Uerba* or *Uelba*, the name of a creek in the Eromka area¹²³) tried to pull the *déma* back on land again. At last two of them, *Zarko* and *Murau*, succeeded in persuading him to come ashore. To entice him, all the *nakari* had stripped off their pubic covers and *Méru* followed the two who had the most pubic hair, viz. *Zarko* and *Murau*. In Eromka, in a place bearing the name of the *nakari*, he came ashore. He is still there with his *nakari* and the place abounds in *méri-coconut* trees. If he had not come ashore, we should not have had any coconuts to-day.

For obvious reasons Wirz raises the question as to what *Moyu's* relation with this myth may be. If ever there was an obscure story, it is this one, and if we want to find an answer it is imperative that we read it over carefully. In the first place, then, it is a story of a *mayo* ceremony which went awry. We are inclined to compare the story with the cult-myths of the Boadzi and the Kiwai, in which the leader of the cult makes a number of unsuccessful attempts until finally he discovers the correct procedure. The myth of *Moyu* and *Méru*, being the story of the earliest *mayo* celebration, might be explained on similar lines. The motif of the unsuccessful attempt is faintly ringing through the first episode. Yet, the main trend of the story is different. What might be interpreted as an attempt is, in fact, not an attempt at all but a disaster turning into a blessing. It is a motif common to all mythical *mayo* ceremonies. They

¹²¹ Several names are mentioned. One of these is Endaro, which may mean Daru (cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 54), but may also refer to the mysterious Endaro of p. 74 above.

¹²² Wirz, op. cit. p. 71 note 2.

¹²³ Cf. the map of the Verslag Milit. Explorat. and Verschueren, Letters VII p. 1. The question arises whether *Dokub*, the name of the last of the *nakari*, is a misprint of *Dokib*. *Dokib* is a village not far from the Uerba creek.

are fraught with disaster.¹²⁴ Moreover, none of them has a leader of the kind presented in the Kiwai and Boadzi myths. The leading personage of the Marind-anim cult-myth is introduced in the sentence "*Moyu* (in other myths it will be *Uaba*) was among the initiates". Official leadership is not a matter of ostentation and the idea of somebody inaugurating the cult is wholly absent.

The next question concerns the relationship between *Moyu* and *Méru*. There is no doubt that *Méru* is the *méri-ongat-déma* himself. The circumstance that *Moyu* is the ancestor of the *méri-ongat* clan is an argument for considering *Méru* and *Moyu* as closely related. Not, however, for identifying them. *Méru* resides in the far west and *Moyu* is occasionally associated with *Brawa*, the navel *déma* of the *mayo* east of Merauke, near Buti-Nowari. Another clue is found in the story itself. The boys are chased because they associated with the women before they are allowed to do so. They violate the rule and upset the order of things.

The story holds still another clue. The *méri-ongat-déma* flees into the sea and it takes his *nakari* a long time to persuade him to come ashore. The collective name of these *nakari* is worth our attention: *Uerba* is a creek in Eromka, in myth the area of sunset. The erotic character of the story suggests what happens when *Moyu* comes ashore — he comes to copulate with his *nakari*, who are the land where the sun sets in the east monsoon. We recall that during the wet season the people west of the Bian see the sun go down into the sea.¹²⁵ The sun copulates with the sea. The fact that *Méru* enters into sexual relationship with the land of sunset, *Uerba*, necessarily leads to the conclusion that he is the sun. This is corroborated by the circumstance that *Moyu*, with whom he must be closely related, is the son of *Geb* and the brother of *Uaba*.

Of course this is a conjecture, but it is a conjecture deserving of closer examination. The main point at issue is the setting of the sun over the land. The first time in the year the Marind west of the Bian (including those of Domandé) see the sun set over the land is shortly after or even on the day of the vernal equinox, that is, late in March or in the beginning of April. To the people further east the sun will hardly ever set over the land, but this is a matter which does not affect the case of *Méru*, who is — as appears from his present residence — primarily associated with the western area. In this context it should be noted

¹²⁴ A point made bij Verschueren; Letters VI p. 4.

¹²⁵ See above, p. 213.

that *Moyu-rek* are reported to live in the following villages: Yobar, Yéwati, Buti, Nowari, Urumb (villages situated in the immediate vicinity of Merauke, the eastern part of the eastern area) and Wambi, Uerba, Yowid, Dokíb, Elebéme and Egéwi (villages situated in the western part of the western area). Though we do not know whether the list is complete, we may safely conclude, first, that *Méru* is specifically associated with the western group of *Moyu-rek*, and, secondly, that there must be another myth, unknown to us, dealing with *Moyu* as the *déma* more particularly associated with the eastern group. The presence of such a myth is suggested by the casual association of *Moyu* with Brawa, a *déma*-spot just back of Nowari (Buti).

Though we have to admit that our information on the mythical background of the *Moyu-rek* is limited to data which have a specific bearing on that part of the clan which is more closely related with the west, it is still worthwhile to examine the relations between myth and ritual. The *mayo*-rites consist of a prolonged series of dramatizations of mythical events. Among them is a dramatization of the myth of *Méru*, and we know that this is one of the first to be enacted.¹²⁶ The rites ought to begin toward the end of March or the beginning of April and the ideal time for the performance of the *méri-ongat* myth may accordingly be set at the beginning of April, which corresponds with the period in which, to the people west of the Bian, sunset shifts from the sea to the land. In other words, the interpretation of the myth of *Méru* as a sun-myth is corroborated by its place in ritual. On account of the absence of fuller information on the role of *Moyu*, our knowledge of the ritual and cosmological associations of the *Moyu-rek* is confined to those connections which are more specifically pertinent to their western representatives. Even so, the information is interesting enough. It confirms the close relationship between sun and coconut and the importance of the sexual interpretation of the activities of the sun. In this connection a final remark may be made. The sexual relations of the sun with the sea are expressed in overt, explicit terms; those of the sun with the land are carefully veiled in symbolic language, viz. in the adventures of *Uaba* and *Méru*.

The last *mayo* myth specially connected with the *Geb-zé* deals more specifically with the palmyra-palm clan, the *Uga-boan*. They are a small *boan*, represented in Yobar, Yéwati, Domandé and Sangasé (see

¹²⁶ Cf. below, pp. 518 f.

annex V). Wirz writes: "At present most *Nazem-sé* members [*Nazem-sé* is the name of the main subclan, used as a synonym for *Uga-boan*] are found in Yobar, and a few in Yéwati and in Sangasé".¹²⁷ The relevant story¹²⁸ runs as follows. *Uaba* made another *mayo* ceremony. He came to Mayo near Yavar-makan, bringing an *iwag* with him. When people started to have promiscuous sexual intercourse, the uninitiated mixed with the initiates. Incensed, *Uaba* took a bamboo and filled it up with blood, which he poured out over the uninitiated, who died instantly and turned into stones. They are the red stones of petrified ferriferous loam, which at low tide are found on the beach between Mayo and Yavar-makan. The *iwag* (she is now called the *mayo-mes-iwag*, the old *mayo*-woman) fled with her son. Nowhere could they find a canoe. They walked to Kondo and thence to Tomerau. At last they arrived at Nasem near Sarira, where they found a big palmyra-palm (*uga*), which they wanted to make into a canoe. The boy *Dakoreb* caught a big fish (*nambimb*, according to Geurtjens' Dictionary a fat fish which is frequently found in ditches¹²⁹), and held it with its mouth touching the tree. The fish bit right through the trunk and, assisted by the local people, they hollowed out the trunk and made it into a canoe. At last they could put out to sea, accompanied by a *nambimb*-fish *déma*, a *galéna*-fish *déma*, and a number of other *déma* whom different informants called by different names. Wirz calls them *Saipu*, *Un-anem* (gray-haired man), *Murav*, *Kasuka*, *Sangon* and *Karwai*, names which do not make us any the wiser. They want to go to Imo, the Imo near Sangasé (Wirz). After having spent the night at Kumbe, they run into a heavy gale off Onggari. A few of the inmates are washed overboard by the waves and turn into the red stones found in the sea near Onggari. The night is cold and moonless when the canoe arrives in the neighbourhood of Sangasé and enters into the Iwa creek. At Imo everybody disembarks. One of the inmates, *déma Tubab-évai*, lights a fire and then climbs a tree to pick a number of coconuts. A man from Imo sees them when he glances through the thicket. He is frightened and wants to run off, but a small boy who is one of those in the canoe catches sight of him and invites him to join the party. Then he sees the canoe, the boys and the *mes-iwag*. He returns in a hurry and reports to his fellow-villagers that an attractive *iwag* (the informant does not speak anymore of a *mes-iwag*)

¹²⁷ Wirz, M.A. II p. 63.

¹²⁸ Ibid. pp. 61-64.

¹²⁹ *Eleotris jimbriatus*, gen. *gobbiidae*.

has arrived at Imo. The men hurry to the creek and carry the *iwag*, together with the boy, to the village. Here the two are abused, killed and eaten. Such a feast we shall celebrate every year, the men say. This is the origin of the *imo*-cult. Wirz inserts the information that there is said to be a *déma-aha*, a *déma*-house, in the bush near Sangasé. Here resides the *Nasem-zé-iwag* or *imo-mes-iwag* with her son.

The story goes on, relating how the next morning the inmates of the canoe, leaving the *iwag* and her son (the *patur*) behind, returned to the east. They went to the Maro river, from which they turned into a creek, at a point near the site of what is now Merauke. Paddling up the creek, they passed Brawa, Imbuti-kai and Éwati-kai, places a little way inland from the villages of Nowari, Buti and Yéwati. In Éwati-kai *Dakoreb* died and the *déma* buried him. They continued on their way eastward, but before long a *kivasom-iwag* who was in the canoe had to be turned out to reduce the weight of the boat, which had got stuck in the mud. They went on, but again and again the canoe ran aground and had to be relieved of other inmates; and so, one after another, went the two fish *déma* and *Un-anem* and *Saipu*. The bamboo poles which they had used were also left behind. They turned into a bamboo grove, which is still there, just behind Yéwati. Near Yobar the remaining members of the party had to leave their canoe, which can still be seen in the form of a canoe-shaped elevation of the soil, a *déma-miráv*, respected by the local people. The *déma* went to Yobar, where they settled down. They are the ancestors of the *Nasem-zé* or *Megai-zé* (*Megai* is the name of the *uga*-canoe), a (sub)clan of the *Geb-zé*. They make part of the *Uga-boan* because they arrived in a palmyra-palm canoe.

The story as told contains very little direct information on the *mayo*- and *imo*-rites. It seems to be mainly a story of the return-from-the-*mayo*-type, accounting for the relation of the *Nasem-zé* with the *Geb-zé* and for the origin of their present place of settlement. The relationship with the *Geb-zé* is by no means a very substantial one. It must be derived from the fact that the ancestors of the *boan* shared a canoe with the *imo-mes-iwag*, the navel *déma* of the *imo*, who, as such, is a *Geb-zé*. In the Marind-anim view this is a valid argument. Canoes are given the names of subclans and are the property of local subclans or men's house communities.¹³⁰ Wirz, too, emphasizes the significance of the canoe as a symbol of common descent, a notion the Marind share

¹³⁰ Cf. above, p. 91, and Wirz's description of a headhunting expedition in which "every village [set out] by itself and each canoe held the members of one genealogical group"; M.A. III p. 54.

with the Gogodara, with whom the canoe is the clan-symbol par excellence.¹³¹ Apart from the joint occupation of the canoe, there is not much to prove the closeness of the relationship with the *imo-ivag*. Her companions let the *imo-ivag* and her son be carried off without stirring a finger. In spite of all this, Wirz reports that the people of the *Uga-boan* are closely related both to the *Uaba-rek* and to the *Geb-zé-ha*.¹³²

With regard to the *mayo*, we note that *Uaba* acts as the leader of the ceremonies. The performance is upset by the uninitiated, but this time the disturbance occurs at a later stage of the ceremonies. We are tempted to examine the myth for a possible concurrence of the seasonal conditions depicted in the story with those prevailing during this particular phase of the ceremonies, but the story does not provide us with any definite clue and, consequently, this approach has to be abandoned.¹³³

The information supplied on the origin of the *imo*-rites is not very illuminating either. In the first place, the story is confused with regard to the boy. It is suggested that his name is *Dakoreb*, a name probably meaning Sago-bringer,¹³⁴ but when the *imo-ivag* and her son have been killed, *Dakoreb* is still in the boat. In the second place, the story does not hold a single clue as to the meaning of the *imo*-rites, except that the whole scene is enacted during a moonless night. The statement that the woman and her son are abused, killed and devoured is, to all intents and purposes, a story specifically devised for the benefit of the uninitiated.¹³⁵ In conclusion it may be stated that the primary function of the myth seems to be to relate the *imo*-cult to the *mayo* and to present it as a derivative of the latter. The relationship thus established differs from the relation between *rapa* and *mayo* as revealed in the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. The *rapa* myth contains the essentials of the ritual; the *imo* myth is mainly confined to the establishing of a formal link which

¹³¹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 30, III p. 211, Nova Guinea 16 pp. 381 f., 408, 442 f.

¹³² M.A. II p. 80.

¹³³ The fact that the *ivag* walks from Yayar-makan to Kondo might be interpreted as an indication of a very severe drought. There is a vast and deep swamp between Kondo and the Torassi. I waded through it some time in September and in many places the water came breast-high. This, however, is an argument ex silentio. We may expect a better performance from a *déma* than from a young anthropologist. Moreover, at the end of their journey we find the canoe of the *déma* in the swamp at the back of Buti and Yéwafi. A severe drought would have prevented them from penetrating that far.

¹³⁴ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *da* and (*k*)*oreb*.

¹³⁵ Cf. Verschuieren, Indonesië I pp. 439 ff.

emphasizes the dependence of the *imo* on the *mayo*. The group who accompanied the *imo-mes-iwag* and her son to Imo returns to Yobar, and calls itself *Nasem-zé*, which refers to a settlement in the easternmost part of the territory. People of Yobar and Nasem are patently *mayo*. When considered from this point of view, the myth of the *uga*-canoe has all the characteristics of a return-from-the-*mayo*-story, incorporating unrelated groups into a common whole. A mythical motif of this kind is, to all intents and purposes, an indispensable complement of the trend to incorporate foreign groups into an expanding clan-system aspiring to embrace all groups and all things. And yet, the myth of the *uga*-canoe does far more than explain how the *imo*-cult happened to be incorporated into the system of Marind-anim religious institutions. It would be perfectly wrong to think that the *imo* is a mere offshoot of the *mayo*. It is far more than that and when the myth is placed in its proper context, the story tells us a good deal more about the *imo*-cult and its specific relations with the *mayo* than it seems to do on the face of it. An exposition of these aspects of the myth cannot be given until further on in this book.¹³⁶

4. OTHER MYTHS. THE GEB-ZÉ PHRATRY AS A WHOLE

Among the myths dealing with the coconut- and palmyra-palm clans there is only one which is not connected with the mythical *mayo* performances, viz. the myth of *Yagriwar*, the ancestor of a subclan of the *Uaba-rek*.¹³⁷ As such the *Yagriwar-rek* take up a more or less independent position. Some people hold the view that the *Yagriwar-rek* form a *boan* of their own, saying that they belong to the *Koroam-boan*, the *koroam*-snake being their specific totem. They have a special hunting yell, *Ngat-a! Yagriwar!* (Dogs! *Yagriwar!*).

Yagriwar was a *koroam*-snake *déma* who dwelled near Domandé. He could change into a man (*miakim*) and in this guise he abducted an *iwag*. Her relatives went after the couple and *Yagriwar*, trying to escape, turned into a snake. His pursuers managed to kill the snake, but *Yagriwar's* 'soul' (the native term is not mentioned) escaped and *Yagriwar* made off, taking the tail of the snake with him, to be used as a club. He went to the Bian and got married, but when his wife found out that he was a snake, he left the place and went to Strait Marianne

¹³⁶ See below, pp. 435 f., 622 ff.

¹³⁷ On *Yagriwar* and the *Yagriwar-rek* see Wirz, M.A. II pp. 74, 75, 80.

(called Muri or Muli in Marindinese). Here he met the nautilus *déma* (nautilus-shells come from Komolom, the island west of the southern entrance of the passage), who invited him to a feast in Komolom. *Yagriwar* turned into a snake and transformed his body into a canoe. He brought the nautilus *déma* to Komolom. During the night *Yagriwar*, again assuming snake-shape, coiled his body round the village and shattered both men and houses. On the spot there originated a circular swamp and here *Yagriwar* has resided up to the present day.

An alternative reading has it that *Yagriwar* went to the Muri with the *iwag* from Domandé and that the nautilus *déma* made his body into a canoe holding the two of them. His pursuers were on one bank, and on the other bank stood the people of Komolom who wanted to take the *iwag* from him. Thereupon the nautilus *déma* made his canoe grow smaller and smaller (a reference to the behaviour of the nautilus) until finally he disappeared under water, taking the *iwag* with him. *Yagriwar* leapt into the stream and swam to Komolom.

In the whole story of *Yagriwar* there is nothing that points to a relationship with the *Uaba-rek* or with the *Geb-zé* generally; the fact that he is a snake is of little weight, because snake-species are mentioned as totems of several clans. Those of the *Geb-zé* are the *kariw-*, the *koroam-*, and the *bir-*snakes. Not more than two facts can be found which may have served as starting-points for associating the *Yagriwar-rek* with the *Geb-zé* phratry. The first of these has been mentioned before.¹³⁸ *Yagriwar* is a *koroam*-snake and *Woryu* is called *Koroam-éwati* (but also *Koroar-éwati!*). Now *Woryu* is not explicitly associated with any clan, but he has a double in *Yawi*, the *Uaba-rek* coconut *déma*. The second fact which may have served as a basis for associating the *Yagriwar-rek* with the *Geb-zé* is *Yagriwar's* residence in a pool on the island of Komolom. *Geb*, too, lived in a hole on Komolom.¹³⁹ An association of this kind need not imply a closer relationship with the *Geb-zé-ha*; a journey from east to west terminating in permanent residence on Komolom is reported of several *déma* of this moiety, such as *Dawi* the *Kai-zé-*, and *Wonatai* the *Ndik-end* *déma*, and might well be thematic. It is interesting therefore that Wirz reports explicitly that the *Yagriwar-rek* are closely related to the *Uaba-rek* and reckon themselves among the people of the *ongat-ha* (the coconut proper) *boan*.

The myth of *Yagriwar* illustrates how extremely vague the relations often are between a subclan and the clan or phratry of which the

¹³⁸ See above, p. 251.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 225.

subclan makes part. Actually, the myth contains no information on the clan's place in the tribe, focused as it is on the origin of the group and on establishing a relationship with the different places where *Yagriwar-rek* are found: Domandé, Sangasé and Alatep, with some individuals in a few other villages.¹⁴⁰

With regard to other subclans our information is extremely scanty. Next to the *Yagriwar-rek*, the *Uaba-rek* include the following three subclans: the *Dayo-rek*, the *Baringau-rek* and the *Naméra-rek*. The *Dayo-rek* call themselves after a place called Dayo, situated in the coastal area of the Australian territory, in the vicinity of Yavar-makan.¹⁴¹ The *Baringau-rek* and the *Naméra-rek* are mentioned by the Depopulation Team only.¹⁴² The former derive their name from *Baringau*, the coconut déma, rather surprisingly so, because the name is said to be the secret name of the coconut, known to the *Geb-zé* only.¹⁴³ The name of the *Naméra-rek* refers to *Naméra*, one of the two boys who, by hurling glowing coals at their comrades, induced them to ascend to the sky, where they turned into the Pleiades.¹⁴⁴

The *Uaba-rek* are a big clan; according to Wirz members are found in almost every coastal village. This seems an overstatement, though not a gross one, as *Uaba-rek* are reported from seven villages, and, if we include the *Yagriwar-rek*, even from nine villages (cf. annex V). As a clan the *Uaba-rek* also call themselves the *ongat-ha-boan*, the clan of the coconut proper. This finds expression in their hunting yell *Yaba ongat!* *Yaba ongat!*, i.e. Big coconut! The other coconut clan, associated with the *méri-ongat* species, does not in its hunting yell refer to its totem, but to its ancestor *Moyu*: *Ngat-a!* *Moyu-a!*, i.e. Dogs! *Moyu!*¹⁴⁵ The *Moyu-rek* places of settlement have been listed above.¹⁴⁶ Of their subclans we only know the names mentioned in the Report of the Depopulation Team, viz. *Méru-rek*, *Yahiw-rek*, *Bahod-rek* and *Dino-rek*. The first of these names obviously refers to *Méru*;¹⁴⁷ the other names have to remain unexplained. That *dino* means darkness does not make us any the wiser. The classification of the *Bahod-rek* as a *Moyu-rek* subclan is doubtful.¹⁴⁸ Equally poor is our information on the *Uga-boan*,

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. p. 75 and annex V.

¹⁴¹ Wirz, op. cit. p. 80.

¹⁴² Rep. Depop. Team p. 65.

¹⁴³ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 65 note 2, and above, pp. 94 and 250.

¹⁴⁴ Above, p. 252.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. pp. 80 and 78.

¹⁴⁶ Above, p. 257.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 256.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 234 and below, p. 298.

of which we do not even know the hunting yell. Wirz confines himself to the statement that they call themselves *Nasem-zé* or *Megai-zé*; the Report of the Depopulation Team mentions five different subclans, viz. the *Nasem-zé* and *Megai-zé* (presented as synonyms by Wirz) and the *Gevol-rek*, *Mbarong-rek* and *Ewi-rek*.¹⁴⁹ Wirz is probably right in his identification of *Nasem-zé* with *Megai-zé*, *Megai* being the proper name of the *uga*-canoe which carried the *Nasem-zé* *déma* on their journey. There is no information on their places of settlement, except for the data presented above.¹⁵⁰

A further survey of the various totems listed in annex IV does not open up new points of view. The totems mentioned are accounted for in the various details of the myths expounded above. It is evident that the connections of many of these totems with particular clans are rather accidental. Apparently subclans and mythical ancestors of divergent origins have been incorporated into the *Geb-zé* family by such means as a leading story, notably the return-from-the-*mayo* motif. The central motif of the myths of the coconut- and the palmyra-palm *boan* is the adventures of the sun and its sexual relations with the earth. A second important motif is the association of this group of *Geb-zé* clans with the main cults of the area, all of which derive from the *mayo*. It is the *Geb-zé* who are the owners of the fundamental myths of ritual, an ownership partly shared with the *Kai-zé* c.s. From this angle it becomes understandable why the *Geb-zé* have been compared with a noble class.¹⁵¹

An intriguing facet is the partition of the phratry into two contrasting halves: the one connected with *Geb* in his aspects of moiety ancestor and the moon, the other with *Geb* as the sun and — through his sons and his identity with *Bir*, the mother of the *Mayo-patur* — as leader of the cult. Where the moon is also associated with the other moiety and is found acting in opposition to the sun, we are entitled to conclude that the basic structure of a complete moiety-dichotomy is implied in the relations of the two phratry-halves. What is more, the two halves act as moieties, not — as far as we know — in daily life, but in ritual. When making their ceremonial entry into the *mayo-miráv*, the sacral place of initiation, the neophytes proceed in the following order: first come the *Moyu-rek* and *Uaba-rek*, then the phratry of *Aramemb*, followed by the *Bragai-zé*, the *Mahu-zé* and, bringing up the rear, the *Geb-zé-ha*.

¹⁴⁹ Rep. Depop. Team p. 65; Wirz, M.A. II p. 80.

¹⁵⁰ Above, pp. 257 f.

¹⁵¹ Cf. int. al. Vertenten, I.L. II p. 454, and above, p. 98.

That does not mean that during the ceremonies the two halves of the *Geb-zé* should always be separated: if everybody should be seated, forming a circle, the two ends would meet and come close together. But they meet as opposites, as the two ends of the procession which they enclose.¹⁵² There is not the slightest reason to suppose that the *Geb-zé* intend to elaborate this theme, for example by giving up moiety- and phratry-exogamy for a system of preferred connubium relations between the two phratry-halves. The dichotomy of the *Geb-zé* functions in ritual only. Its effect is to emphasize the ceremonial precedence of the *Geb-zé*. An interesting confirmation of the prevalence of the *Geb-zé* in ritual is found in the myth dealing with the *imbassum*, the mysterious ceremonial instrument presented by *Déhévai* (another of the names of *Nazr*, the pig *déma*) to a *Geb-zé* man called *Molma*.¹⁵³ We are tempted to define this precedence as leadership. However, in myth the actual functions of a leader of ceremonies are in part fulfilled by *Aramemb*, the prominent *déma* of the phratry with which the *Geb-zé* constitute one moiety. The somewhat privileged position of the *Geb-zé* need not necessarily be interpreted as resulting from leadership; it might well reflect the value set upon their association with the sun and the latter's representation in the cult. It is evident that the sun is the main totem of the *Geb-zé*. Nevertheless, the sun is never expressly mentioned as a totem-relation of their phratry. The sun's mythical adventures are guarded secrets, carefully shielded by symbolic forms which veil the sun so effectively that Wirz conceded it "only a very modest part [in myth], and in the system of mythological and totemic relations almost no part at all".¹⁵⁴ Secrets are always valued truths.

The sun-myth and the liaison of sun and moon in the dualistic personality of *Geb* are the *Marind-anim*'s own and, as far as can be judged from our present knowledge of the surrounding tribes, most original contribution to the religious system.

¹⁵² Unfortunately we do not know whether such an arrangement is really observed in the performance. See below, p. 510.

¹⁵³ See below, p. 412.

¹⁵⁴ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 74.

CHAPTER VI

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE PHRATRY OF ARAMEMB

For the substance of our information on the mythology of the phratry of *Aramemb* we depend almost exclusively on Wirz. The relevant myths, published in Part II of his monograph, can be divided into two main categories: those dealing with the *mayo* and with *Aramemb*, and myths concerned with various other mythical characters who have no relations with the *mayo*-cult and *Aramemb*, or whose relations with these are not immediately obvious from the content of the respective stories.

1. MYTHS OF THE MAYO AND ARAMEMB

The central *déma* of this phratry is *Aramemb*, an important character in Marind-anim mythology, as is apparent from his role in the myth on the origin of man and in the *dénouement* of *Uaba's* adventure. His life-history is interspersed with a variety of rather loosely connected mythical events. This makes it advisable to hold over the discussion of his person and functions till the final pages of the second section, which are devoted to a survey of the mythical events in which he is involved directly or indirectly. Before we proceed, we should again concentrate attention on *Uaba*.

In the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*, related in the preceding chapter, *Uaba* is depicted as the primeval ancestor of this phratry. He is the father of the cassowary and the stork who, together with the fire, were born at the moment of *Uaba's* liberation from *Ualiwamb* (alias *Kanis-iwag*). In spite of all this, in our sources *Uaba* is never called a *Kai-zé* ancestor. He is the ancestor of the *Uaba-rek*, a *Geb-zé* clan, and, after his spectacular performance in the basic myth of the phratry of *Aramemb*, he does not appear in any other story belonging to this mythical cycle. While fire is a main totem of the *Kai-zé*, and the fire *déma* certainly is a *Kai-zé-déma*, we find within the phratry of *Aramemb* no specific emphasis on the name which characterizes the fire *déma* as a

Geb-zé ancestor. Among the *déma* of the phratry of *Aramemb* there is only one who is more or less similar in nature to *Uaba*. That is *Sosom*, the *déma* of the *sosom*-cult, celebrated by the Marind east of the Kumbo river. The initiation into the *sosom*-rites is the first initiation the boys of this region undergo. The rites, and the similarities between these rites and the initiation cult of the Trans-Fly people, will be discussed more fully in a subsequent chapter. The rites are associated with homosexual intercourse and with the use of the bullroarer and of bamboo pipes of the peculiar type described by Williams of the Keraki.¹ The bullroarer (*sosom*) is the voice of the *déma* *Sosom*; the bamboo pipes which he carries under his arm are his *nakari*. Every year *Sosom* comes from the east, proceeds along the coast as far as the Kumbo river, where he goes northwards to return through the interior to the east.² More recent data, obligingly submitted by Father Verschueren, present a slightly different view. *Sosom* does not come from Australian territory, but resides in the neighbourhood of Yanggandur, from where he starts on his annual tour, proceeding via Mbur to Sëpadim, continuing all along the coastal villages westward as far as Anasai, then inland to Saror, Senam and Bad and after a final visit to Senayo going back to the point of departure.³

Sosom is a giant whose size is likened to that of a coconut tree.⁴ It is also said that his body is made of stone and that he is so big that he can stand astride the Maro river, one foot on either bank.⁵ Viegen describes him as a giant *miakim*, residing in the subterranean waters of Mabudauan, from where he comes every east monsoon to the eastern part of the Marind-anim territory, fertilizing man and soil. His description of *Sosom* is followed by a comment on Mabudauan which is identical with the description given of *Ep-kwitare*.⁶ Obviously *Sosom* must be associated with the sun, a conclusion further corroborated by his association with the east monsoon, his eastern origin and his alliance with the *Kai-zé* clan, as well as by other data: "A vrai dire, *Sosom* n'est pas *Geb*, le soleil, mais il est son frère", writes Viegen a few pages further on.⁷ More interesting information is given by Wirz in the following story: "*Sosom* originated from Waruti in the Adga-zé area

¹ Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 186 f.

² Wirz, M.A. III p. 36.

³ Boelaars, Nieuw-Guinea pp. 82 ff.; Verschueren, Letters V p. 1, XI p. 3.

⁴ Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 463; V. d. Kolk, Oermenschen p. 176; Wirz, l.c.

⁵ Pöch, Sitzungsber. Kais. Akad. Wien, Bd. 115 (1906) p. 901.

⁶ Viegen, Sem. d'Ethnol. III pp. 393 f.

⁷ Ibid. p. 398.

{west of the lower stretches of the upper Kumbel] and was a member of the *Kai-zé* clan. He was a brute who, like *Uaba*, could not free himself from copulation with an *iwag* with whom he had made love. Thereupon the mother of the *iwag* took a piece of sago-leaf sheath and cut off his penis. The severed part remained stuck in the girl's vulva. At last a *ndik* (stork) managed to extract it with its beak. *Sosom*, however, went to the Kanum-anim in Saruatal beyond the Yawim river (Australian territory), where he still resides as a *déma*. From him the Kanum-anim have this particular cult, which the Marind came to know later on. With his mutilated genital *Sosom* could only sodomize. Therefore he is called *Tépo-anem*, Buttock-man, meaning 'the sodomite' ".⁸

Wirz gives this information quoting an informant at Aboi in the southernmost part of the upper Bian region, a place outside the area where the *sosom*-rites are celebrated. Coastal informants told Verschueren that this version is unorthodox. Their version is scarcely less interesting and will be related at some length when we have completed our discussion of the first reading. The first thing we note is that *Sosom*, although residing in Kanum-anim territory or further eastward, is a Marind-anim *déma* and not a spiritual being of foreign origin. The suggestion that the *sosom*-cult is of foreign provenance originated with Wirz.⁹ Mr. C. Op 't Land was the first to point out that the foreign origin of the cult is, in fact, an unproved hypothesis, altogether too easily subscribed to as plausible by others, including myself.¹⁰ Recently Verschueren wrote: "For many years I have been exerting myself to find out how the *sosom*-rites were celebrated among the Kanum-anim, but in Yanggandur as well as in Sota the people persistently asserted that the cult was not theirs, but a Marind-anim institution, even though it was admitted that in the past several members of their tribe had joined the Marind in the rites".¹¹ The statement is noteworthy because it is an established fact that a place between Sota and Yanggandur (actually a hill near Yanggandur, but situated in Sota territory) plays an important part in the performance of each annual cycle of rites.¹² On this account we would expect the Kanum-anim, and certainly the Kanum-irébe of Yanggandur, to participate in the rites. Nevermann,

⁸ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 39.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 33.

¹⁰ Op 't Land, NGS 1959 p. 213.

¹¹ Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 5.

¹² See below, pp. 473, 475.

indeed, supposes that they did, but he does not substantiate the assumption. On the contrary, the evidence adduced in his paper is exceedingly meagre¹³ and there is every reason to agree with Op 't Land and Verschuieren that the cult is fundamentally Marind-anim and that the Kanun-anim having a share in it is an ill-founded hypothesis.

Particularly interesting is the comparison made between *Uaba's* sexual misfortune and *Sosom's* fate. It is in line with the latter's association with Mabudauan or *Ep-kwitarc*, with his membership of the *Kai-zé-boan*, with his stone body (*Geb!*), and with the equation of his size with that of a coconut tree. Intriguing, too, is the fact that the story as it is told seems to be incomplete. What happened to the girl or to the cut-off penis after it had been extracted? Why is this detail added? It certainly is significant that it is the *ndik*, the stork, which does the extracting. It is the stork which extracted primeval man from the hole in which he emerged.¹⁴ It is worthwhile to have a look at the picture borrowed from Vertenten and reproduced as fig. 2.^{14a} The *anda* or catfish (A in the picture) could be both a stylized penis and a bull-roarer, more especially so because the Marind-anim bullroarer is often fish-shaped.¹⁵ It might seem to be a bit far-fetched to equate the bull-roarer with a penis and to suggest, as we actually want to do, that the extracted penis of *Sosom* is the first bullroarer. A comparison with the myth of the origin of the bullroarer current among the Trans-Fly people, however, may serve to demonstrate that the suggestion is not as preposterous as it might seem. Here the bullroarer is the first-born child of the wife of the originator. She suffered from a genital malformation making proper intercourse impossible. Under the circumstances her husband, the originator, had not been able to make her pregnant with a human child, but with a bullroarer only. Her pregnancy, however, lasted. Whenever the woman stirred, the bullroarer in her body emitted a faint sound. This puzzled her husband, who ordered different birds in succession to extract the thing from her body. One after another they failed, until at last, when she was stooping down with her legs wide apart, sweeping the ground round the house, a little bird snatched the protruding bullroarer from her genitals and left the woman screaming because blood, the first menstrual blood, was drawn from her vagina.¹⁶

¹³ Cf. Nevermann, ZfE. 1939 p. 26.

¹⁴ See above, p. 210.

^{14a} Ibid. p. 209.

¹⁵ Cf. Van Baal, BKI 1963 p. 206.

¹⁶ Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 307 f.

The birth of the bullroarer as the first child of the wife of the originator (husband and wife are moon and sun) sets the framework of the origin of man. In a now obsolete rite of the Keraki the similitude of bullroarer and fish was given further substance. During the night the men were singing, blowing shell-trumpets and swinging the bullroarer. Meanwhile the wife of the leader of the ritual had to sit down with her legs wide apart. A parcel of cooked fish was put between her legs and, at the end of the night, the leader had to snatch this away and bring it to the boys' house of seclusion, where it was cut up with a bullroarer. Questioned by Williams on the meaning of this particular act, the informants referred to the plucking of the bullroarer from the vagina of the originator's wife.¹⁷ The notion that the bullroarer is a fish is apparently present here. But it is also a man, and that is an equation for which there are numerous indications in South New Guinea cultures. Baxter Riley informs us that among the Kiwai the bullroarer is called *madubu*, 'I am a man', and that on the occasion of the initiation into its secret, the initiates arrange themselves in a pattern corresponding to the outline of the instrument, thus forming a kind of human bullroarer in the centre of which the neophytes have to line up.¹⁸ The equation of male and bullroarer is, of course, quite natural. Every male receives a bullroarer on the occasion of his initiation and an identification of the two is almost a matter of course. The phallic symbolism of the bullroarer being so obvious, there is reason to suppose that one particular trait has been omitted from the story of *Sosom*, viz. that the penis which had been extracted by the stork, was the bullroarer, a conclusion which is further confirmed by two data supplied by Verschueren in his comment on the theory here presented. The first is that, in reply to his question what the *sosom-tang* (bullroarer) represented, he was often told that it was a fish. The second and most interesting point is that *anda* is a dirty word for penis!¹⁹

The coastal version of the *Sosom* myth, noted down by F. Verschueren at Saror (1953) and at Kumbe (1955), offers a number of interesting differences and variations.²⁰ The story runs as follows:

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 331 ff.

¹⁸ Baxter Riley, *Among Papuan Headhunters* p. 204; Van Baal, *op. cit.* p. 204.

¹⁹ Verschueren, *Letters VIII* p. 6. A surprising detail is added by Verschueren, viz. that among the Awim (Awin?) the word for *anda* (catfish) has the same secret meaning of penis. The Awim also have the bullroarer. The Awim or Awin live north of the Boadzi, due east of the Muyu, in Australian territory. Cf. Schoorl, *Moejoe-gebied* p. 11.

²⁰ Verschueren, *Letters IV* pp. 5-7.

"*Sosom* came from the far east, from the Fly river, in a beautiful *déma*-canoe, the *gaream*-canoe. He arrived at Pater (east of Kondo), where our ancestors lived. The only canoe known to them was the *uga*-canoe.²¹ They bartered their canoes and *Sosom*, resuming his voyage, embarked again. Off Yobar the sea became turbulent and there he left the *uga*-canoe to continue westward on foot, his footsteps raising the waves of the sea. His *nakari Nagi* and *Runggu* accompanied him. When he became hungry he ate *hayam*-fruits (*Inocarpus edulis*), a *Uba-rek* totem.²² Because he was very tall he could pick the fruits without climbing the tree. He went westward as far as Komolom, but the people of Komolom killed him. They cut off his head, but the head ran off and went eastward under the ground. *Sosom* himself became a *hais*. He returned by land to the east. He went to the Kumbe river, to Moha near Wayau and subsequently to Burb near Saror. Here, unnoticed, *Sosom* entered into the vagina of an *iwag* (in effect a married woman) called *Wanumb*. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, *Sosom*. He was a very noisy boy, always singing to himself *mu-u, mu-u*: a nuisance to the older people when they had had their *wati*. Grown up, *Sosom* importuned the girls and beat the smaller boys of the village after having first decorated himself. At last the older people lost their patience; they cut off *Sosom's* penis and chased him from the village. The penis fell into the river and became a watersnake (*zanid*)". It is worth mentioning here that Geurtjens states that the *zanid-déma* plays an important role in mythology. Geurtjens does not specify this role and Verschueren doubts its importance,²³ but we know that it was an *azanid*-snake which bit *Yawima's* ear when he proceeded with the *gari*.²⁴ The *azanid*-snake (*Acrochordus javanicus*) is a totem of the phratry of *Aramemb* which according to Wirz is more specifically associated with the *Yawima-rek*,²⁵ a connection too specific to be correct.²⁶

"Singing *mu-u-u*, *Sosom* went from Burb to the coast. He slept in Song-ad-warin (i.e., there he sounded the bamboo pipe) inland from the village of Kumbe. Then he went to Tamu, a swamp back of Wendu,

²¹ The palmyra-palm canoe; see above, pp. 258 f.

²² See above, p. 248.

²³ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *zanid*; Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 6.

²⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 99, IV p. 49; cf. below, p. 289.

²⁵ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. II pp. 99 jo. 119.

²⁶ Wirz did not know this version of the myth of *Sosom*. Consequently, he could not establish any other relationship between the present phratry and the *zanid*-snake than the — essentially contradictory — one with *Yawima*.

where he masturbated. This stirred the water of the swamp and the women, ascribing the ripples to fishes, took their nets and tried their luck. Thus they caught *Sosom* who went on singing *mu-u-u*. Wishing to soothe him, the women sang *waiko* [a ceremonial dance] but *Sosom* kept singing. Then they tried *yarut* (the song for the dead) but *Sosom* never stopped. The women brought him to Imbarim, a dry place close by, where the men were gathered. The men sent the women away and sang *manggu* [the introductory song of the *sosom*-ritual].²⁷ *Sosom* became very restless and his growling grew louder. Then the men intoned *bandra*, the main song of the *sosom*-rites and now *Sosom's* growling rose to a roaring so tremendous that the few women who had been lingering around ran off as fast as they could. Here *Sosom* taught the men the *sosom*-rites and after that he returned eastward to Mayo and Yavar-makan. There he met with women celebrating the *sosom*-rites. For two days already they had been whirling the bullroarers, but *Sosom* went up to them and said: 'Aye, women, from now on you may only follow the *mayo-kai* [the *mayo*-road, i.e. the *mayo*-rites]; men only may go with me'. Therefore Yavar-makan is the place of *Sosom*, and Mayo that of the *mayo*-rites. Thereupon *Sosom* went to Sota, where he has remained till the present day."

An alternative version of the final part of this story is presented by Wirz.²⁸ The people of Yahip near Kumbé were preparing a feast. The women were sent out fishing and the men set out on a hunt. The women seized the opportunity to make a feast of their own. They returned to the village, and, believing themselves unobserved, performed such beautiful dances as *waiko-zi*, *suba-mit* and *uar-ti-zi*. An old, sick man, however, had stayed at home in the men's house. He reported everything to the men, who then invented *Sosom* so as to frighten the women. The story apparently is a watered-down version of the complete story as related by Verschueren; all salient points have been left out in order to sidetrack a too inquisitive foreigner.

The complete story is partly an alternative reading of the story of *Geb* as the sun (cf. the cut-off head going all the way underground from Komolom to the east). *Sosom's* soul (*hais*) travels eastward overland; he is one of the spirits of the dead. The second part of the story has several things in common with the Trans-Fly myth. *Sosom* entering a vagina suggests that the bullroarer (*sosom*) actually is a penis; his birth from a woman and his ceaseless humming like a bullroarer remind

²⁷ Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 6.

²⁸ Wirz, op. cit. III p. 39.

us again of the Trans-Fly myth, but here the bullroarer-shape is lacking. The fact that the cut-off penis becomes a water-snake introduces a new element, viz. a reference to the *Mahu-zé* myth of the man with the long penis.²⁹ The last part of the myth associates *Sosom* with the mythological centre of all ritual activity, *Yavar-makan*.

Sosom's relations with the sun need no further comment, and the symbolism of the bullroarer will be discussed more fully later in this book. For the present we have to return to the mythology of the phratry of *Aramemb* in the form as it has been transmitted to us, in the first place by Wirz. We have to go back to the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. In the preceding chapter we left the two of them at the moment *Ualiwamb* gave birth to the cassowary and the stork while a huge fire burst forth from her vulva which razed the coast and branded the river-valleys into the earth.³⁰ *Dawi*, a *Kai-zé* déma and the ancestor of an important subclan, tried to extinguish the fire by beating at it with his stone club, but all in vain. He only succeeded in separating various promontories from the mainland and thus created the islands such as Saibai, Daru, and other islands east of the Torassi, the islands of the white people, and also *Habé*, the one small island off the Marind-anim coast, situated near Welab in the western part of their territory.

Here we must interrupt the narrative of *Habé's* vicissitudes to consider *Dawi's* stone club, which well deserves our attention. The Marind have two types of stone club, the one headed with a flat stone disc, the other with an egg-shaped stone. Irrespective of type, these club-heads are always beautiful pieces of workmanship, with a hole in the centre through which the haft is passed. Stone clubs are highly valued weapons, so precious as to be sparingly used. In daily life a heavy wooden club often takes their place. In myth, however, they have an important part to play and it is of some interest that the disc-headed club, the *kupa*, is also a symbol of the female sex, and the egg-shaped one, the *wagané*, of the male sex. The latter is described by Geurtjens as a regular penis-symbol; to lift the *wagané* is translated as to have an erection.³¹ Curiously enough Wirz has mistaken the one name for the other. In the present myth he describes an egg-headed club and calls it a *kupa*; in another myth, relating the origin of the disc-headed club, he

²⁹ See below, pp. 311 ff.

³⁰ Above, pp. 243 f.

³¹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *wagané*. For the *kupa* cf. Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 6.

terms it a *wagané*.³² Of course, a certain deal of confusion results from this, but in the two cases quoted the context makes it easy to decide which type has been meant. The most curious thing of all, however, is that Wirz's error testifies to the high quality of his fieldwork. In his comment on the present analysis of the terms Verschueren writes: "I know from experience that, in mythology, it is always the term *kupa* which is used. I have heard many myths told in that vein Once, however, when I asked an old man whether the implement referred to in the story he had just told me was really a *kupa* or rather a *wagané*, he got very embarrassed and it was only much later, when all the other people had left, that he said: 'you must never use the word *wagané* in public, but it was, indeed, a *wagané*'".³³ The symbolic meaning of a term so heavily laden with emotional value should not be ignored. The fact that *Dawi* applied a *wagané* characterizes him as a symbol of masculinity.

With that club he separated Habé from the mainland. Habé, a really small island, fairly round and not more than a few hundred meters in diameter, built up of weathered petrified loam, is a coconut tree-covered rocky hill just off the shore. At the time it was cut off by *Dawi*, Habé was not where it is now, but formed part of the mainland near the Fly river. After it had been severed, it slowly drifted westward. On the island were three *déma*, the rattan *déma*, the pig *déma* *Sapi*, who is the ancestor of a pig subclan, and the wallaby *déma*. Of these, the rattan *déma* *Geran* plays a role in this story because he tried to stop the island. He succeeded in making the island fast to the mainland somewhere near Birok, between Wendu and Kumbe.

For reasons unspecified many *déma* assembled to get hold of the rattan *déma* in order to set the island moving again. Failing in all their efforts, they set out to Dahuk-zé-miráv to seek assistance and advice. Two *déma*, the sons of *Diku*, called *Waiba* and *Umbri*, came to the coast and tried to push the island off, but all in vain. Two other *déma*, *Komengo* and *Garhobi* (it is not clear whether they, too, came from Dahuk-zé-miráv), secretly fashioned egg-headed clubs from clay balls hardened in the fire. By this means they tried to make the rattan *déma* lose his hold, but their clubbing had very little effect. Then *Umbri* resorted to magic. The Dahuk-zé people are specialists in magic and

³² Wirz, M.A. II pp. 88 and 175. Unfortunately he did not explain himself in respect of the use of the word *wagané* in the myth of *Awassra*; cf. below, p. 317.

³³ Verschueren, l.c.

this worked. *Umbri* succeeded in capturing the rattan *déma*, at the same time liberating the wallaby *déma*, who had been held captive on the island and now escaped to the mainland. The island, free again, drifted further westwards, leaving the allied *déma* disputing each other the ownership of the rattan *déma*. Two parties were formed, one led by *Umbri* and *Waiba*, the other by *Komengo* and *Garhobi*, each with their friends. Each group seized one end of the rattan, tugging till, at last, it snapped. *Waiba* and *Umbri* held the upper end, which they brought to a place called Oba, on the upper Kumbe, where the rattan *déma* and his *nakari Senga*, *Senga-senga* and *Gugu-messav* have remained up to the present day. *Umbri* returned to the coast and settled in the vicinity of Birok (near Wendu), but *Waiba* remained behind on the upper Kumbe. He initiated the barter-trade of the inland people with the coast, involving the exchange of rattan for nautilus-shells and pubic shells. *Waiba* and *Umbri* are the ancestors of two rattan *boan* subclans. Obviously this part of the myth is meant to give an account of the origin and spatial distribution of the relevant subclans. Another subclan is that of the *Garhobi-rek*, but its place of settlement is not mentioned. The totemic position of these rattan *boan* subclans is somewhat uncertain; sometimes they are associated with the *Kai-zé*, sometimes with the *Samkakai* or considered to be a *boan* of their own.³⁴ The tug-of-war between *Waiba* and *Umbri* on one side and *Komengo* and *Garhobi* on the other suggests a kind of dual division within the group, from which we would infer that the latter, who are the makers of the egg-headed stone club, did not belong to the party fetched from Dahuk-zé-miráv. However, this is mere speculation, since our information is too scanty. In another chapter we shall meet with two other *déma* of the Dahuk-zé party, viz. *Kamina* and his mother *Amus*, who are members of the *Wokabu-rek*.³⁵

The story of the island is not yet quite finished, though little attention is paid to its ultimate fate. Between Wambi and Welab the island gets into the power of a female iguana *déma*, who holds the island between her jaws. Apparently she must be identified with the bank on the north side of the island. The bank is the iguana's body, its jaws the steep rocks rising from the sea.³⁶ The name of the iguana is *Upikak*; it may be translated as 'there is father's sister', which does not make us any the

³⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 102.

³⁵ Cf. below, p. 340.

³⁶ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. p. 89; an abridged version is given by Geurtjens, I.L. VI p. 128f

wiser. Another myth of *Upikak* associates her with *Aramemb*. She was an *iwag* who came to Habé with her parents to hunt for birds, as people often do because there are many birds on Habé and they are anything but shy. *Upikak* climbed a coconut tree to kill some of the birds with a stick and pick their nests. A strong gale was blowing which rocked the tree and *Upikak* had to cling to the tree so as not to tumble down. She cried out for help, but because of the wind her parents did not hear her and returned to Wambi. Finally *Upikak* changed into an iguana, because the giant lizard clings to the stem of a palm tree just like a man who is unable to climb down. Later *Upikak* built a house on Habé and finally she started building a causeway to connect the island with the mainland. She did not finish it because *Aramemb* saw her from the beach and began to work his way towards the island, starting from the shore. To that end he used the yams which grew from his neck.³⁷ The two met and *Aramemb* brought *Upikak* to the mainland, where he married her. Later she bore him *Samanimb*, the wallaby déma.³⁸

With the appearance of *Aramemb* in the story there begins a new sequel of events which have little to do with the mythical *mayo* celebration which led to the separation of Habé from the mainland. The story calls for some comment. Is there any particular reason to have the island severed from the mainland in a place far to the east, further east even than Kondo, where the fire originated? Is this just another silly story or is there any sense in having the island, before it can proceed on its way westward, held up in the area close to the centre of the coast-line where east meets west? Strangely enough, the silly story fits into the cosmological pattern. Habé is an island, as a matter of fact a very conspicuous island and the only one of its kind in these parts. The word for island is *kadahabut*,³⁹ from *kadahab*, to cut off (a head, a treetop or flowerstalk).⁴⁰ Viegen and Geurtjens explicitly associate the word for island with a cut-off head.⁴¹ In the case of Habé (and there is no other small island off the coast) two arguments at least can be advanced in favour of such an association. The island is densely grown, mainly with coconut trees, the coconut being another symbol of the cut-off head. The shape of the island itself is the second argument; it is round and could well be likened to a head.

³⁷ Cf. below, p. 284.

³⁸ Wirz, l.c.

³⁹ Van de Kolk & Vertenten, *Woordenboek v. eiland*.

⁴⁰ Geurtjens, *Dict. voc. cit.*

⁴¹ Viegen, interview; Geurtjens, *M&M* 1928 p. 248, I.L. VI p. 1281.

If it is conceded that Habé may be conceived as a cut-off head, the story, for all its incongruity, is well in line with other cosmological concepts, in particular those with regard to *Geb*, the beheaded hero whose body is the Marindinese land, and whose head, the sun, has three different positions, respectively connected with east, middle, and west. Cut off from the mainland, Habé, the head, is identical with the sun, that is, with the head of *Geb*. It slowly proceeds westward, but, when it has arrived in the central area, the area of reversion according to Viegen's obscure symbolism, the island is arrested in its course by the rattan *déma*, a meaningless detail in a meaningless story, unless Habé be a sun-symbol and the adventure with the rattan *déma* symbolize the turning-point in the progress of the sun, when ascent changes into descent. That it is the rattan *déma* who holds the island, which is a human head, is only logical. A cut-off head is usually hung on a rattan string. In the story the change is depicted as a critical event. Quite a number of *déma* have to step in to set the island moving again after the delay at Birok, which for no apparent reason at all is presented as a calamity. The solar symbolism forces itself again upon the reader in another detail; the *déma* try to lop off the string fastened by the rattan *déma*, using egg-headed stone clubs.⁴² When they fail in these efforts, magic is resorted to and the means are suggested by a man from Dahuk-zé-miráv, a village renowned for its magic. It is situated on the upper Buraka, i.e. in the *imo* area, which is associated with sun-down and night. We are reminded of the fact that *Yawi* and *Woryu*, too, were killed by magic.⁴³ What is more, in a *Wokabu-rek* myth the impression is created that the Dahuk-zé people consulted were *Wokabu-rek* *déma*, i.e. members of the opposite moiety.⁴⁴ The use of egg-headed stone clubs is another curious detail. Why did not they apply an axe, a far more effective instrument for cutting a rattan? Can it be because the egg-headed stone club is a phallic symbol? If that be accepted, the story becomes meaningful. Naturally the stone club, which as a phallic symbol is a representative of the male sex, the east and the sun, has not the power to force Habé, the sun-symbol, to resume its course to the west and to death. Quite as naturally, magic brought by members of the opposite moiety from the western interior, the land of death and sun-down, is successful in releasing the sun-image, which can now proceed westward. It all harmonizes with the story's sequel. Nobody

⁴² Wirz, M.A. II pp. 87 f.

⁴³ Cf. above, p. 251.

⁴⁴ Cf. below, p. 340.

interferes when Habé, having arrived off Welab in the western part of the territory, is stopped again. This time the island is arrested in its course by a representative of its own clan, the *Kai-zé*, a representative who excites our curiosity because of her typical traits. The iguana too much resembles the crocodile, the representative, in a way even the main symbol, of the other moiety and brother-in-law to *Uaba*, the sun-déma, for us to reject an association simply because the *kadivuk*, the iguana, is listed as a *Kai-zé* totem. The crocodile's house is on the bottom of the sea and is full of cut-off heads.⁴⁵ In his stomach are the coconuts thrown into him by *Uaba*, the sun déma.⁴⁶ The iguana, the crocodile's image, with Habé, the severed head, in its mouth, is too perfect an image of the sun in the west (*Uaba* in the power of the crocodile's sister *Betel-izwag*) to ignore the symbolism. An alternative reading of the story of *Upikak*⁴⁷ to the effect that *Upikak* bit off Habé from the mainland and has since been holding the island between her jaws, expresses in an even more suggestive way the resemblance between crocodile and iguana. It is to be regretted that we do not know the reasons the Marind-anim themselves give for associating the *kadivuk* with this phratry. They might bring up a variety of motives, such as the *kadivuk's* resemblance to a man who is drunk with *wati*,⁴⁸ or the fact that the skin of the *kadivuk* is very much in demand as a tympanum.⁴⁹ In spite of all this, the obvious resemblance of crocodile and *kadivuk* is always there, a resemblance also apparent in Marind-anim art.⁵⁰ It is unbelievable that the resemblance should have escaped the Marind.

2. FURTHER MYTHS ON ARAMEMB

Among the Western Marind Habé is frequently associated with *Harau*, the mythical sago-maker, a woman also connected with the *Mahu-zé* phratry.⁵¹ In spite of her specific relations with the sago clan, the more important myths dealing with her adventures are the property of the phratry connected with *Aramemb*. She is even said to be a sister of *Aramemb*,⁵² though this detail is rarely mentioned; in the relevant

⁴⁵ Wirz, M.A. II p. 123.

⁴⁶ Ibid. III p. 97.

⁴⁷ Ibid. II p. 89.

⁴⁸ Cf. below, p. 307.

⁴⁹ Vertenten, I.A. 1915 p. 154.

⁵⁰ Op. cit. Plate XVII/2 and 4, XXIII/4 and 7, XXIV/7 and I.

⁵¹ Cf. below, pp. 337 and 339.

⁵² The myth containing this information was published by Wirz in the addenda to his monograph (IV p. 134). The author does not mention the phratry claiming the ownership of the myth, but it seems probable that it is the phratry of *Aramemb*.

myths her sexual relationship with *Aramemb* prevails. This relationship resembles a marital one, but is not referred to as such. On the contrary, *Harau* marries a *Mahu-zé déma* and therefore she could not be a *Mahu-zé* herself. Though undoubtedly she is a rather ambiguous character,⁵³ the association with *Aramemb's* phratry dominates. She lived on *Habé*, which, at the time, had extensive sago groves, and so *Harau* made sago. With her were a woman called *Alisan*, and *Upikak*. *Alisan* set about building a stone causeway in the direction of the mainland, while *Aramemb* at the same time started out from the coast, using yam-tubers. When the two met, *Upikak* and *Harau* went ashore, where *Aramemb* copulated with them. Shortly afterwards *Harau* gave birth to a small, naked wallaby, which she hid in the shell decorating the front of *Aramemb's* girdle. When *Aramemb* woke up, he was much surprised (an alternative reading has it that the wallaby was born when the *déma* had a pollution in his sleep and so it found its way to the shell), but *Harau* explained everything and *Aramemb* took good care of the animal, which followed him wherever he went.⁵⁴

We shall return to *Aramemb's* relations with the wallaby later on. For the moment it is *Harau* who deserves our attention. According to other sources *Harau* came from the upper *Bian*.⁵⁵ She came down the river on a bed of floating grass. She was drifted ashore on the southern bank of the river-mouth, where she was found by people of *Domandé*, who brought her to the village. They made fun of her ugliness. Her skin was wrinkled and infested with ringworm. Nobody wanted to marry her. Later, however, there was a man, *Bébukla*, who coveted her, but *Harau* turned him down because at *Moha* she had met a fine young man, *Elme*, *Mahu's* son. *Bébukla*, annoyed, shot an arrow into *Harau's* thigh, but *Harau* took her revenge on *Bébukla's* mother *Alisan*:⁵⁶ when the latter went to the sago grove to draw water, *Harau* sneaked up to her and, just when she bent over the pool, thrust a forked bough into her neck. Thus she was drowned, and *Alisan's* hairdo changed into various water-plants belonging to the swamp-flora. *Wirz* mentions four different species by their native names; collectively they are called *Alisan-mayub*, i.e. hair-strands of *Alisan*.⁵⁷ *Harau* went on to *Moha* to meet *Elme*, but the latter had gone to *Senayo*. In the meantime *Wokabu*

⁵³ Ambiguous, too, is her life-history; now she is said to originate from *Habé*, then again from the upper *Bian*; cf. *Wirz*, M.A. IV p. 135 and II p. 89.

⁵⁴ *Wirz*, op. cit. IV p. 135.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* II pp. 89 ff.

⁵⁶ On *Alisan* see also above, p. 252.

⁵⁷ *Wirz*, M.A. II p. 90.

(the sago déma who made the sago-palm) had come to hear of her and summoned her to Kombira (near Domandé) to make sago. She went and for a long time she prepared sago which, until her day, no woman had known how to do. Then she went to Senayo, but again she was out of luck because all the men were away on a big hunt. *Elme's* sister invited her to go out fishing with her. *Harau* accepted and entered into the swamp. When she came out again, she had changed completely. Her skin was shining; she had not been suffering from ringworm, it had simply been sago sticking to her skin as a result of the prolonged sago-beating, and this it was that had made her ugly. *Harau* then started primping. When the men came home, *Elme* wanted to marry *Harau* then and there, but he was pushed aside by the men, who took *Harau* to the back of the village to have intercourse with her on a sheet of bark spread out for her. The next day *Harau* again adorned herself and fashioned herself various female hairdoes. That night men from various villages assembled to copulate with *Harau*, just as the night before. *Elme*, who was going to marry her, was the last to have her. However, before daybreak *Harau* withdrew into the earth, where she has remained up to the present day. *Harau* is the déma associated with the origin of the female hairdo (just as the male hairdo is associated with her brother *Aramemb*) and with the sexual rites the bride has to go through on the occasion of her wedding. We should have expected another sequel to *Harau's* metamorphosis. She would have made a perfect moon-maid, a metamorphosis of this kind being a widely spread moon-symbol. The Marind, however, seem unaware of it. We shall return to this point in a later chapter.⁵⁸

After *Harau* had disappeared, *Elme* took the sheet of bark on which she had been copulating, with all the sperma spilled over it, and folded it into a bundle which he brought into the men's house. The next morning a baby's voice cried out from the bark-sheet, a little boy to whom *Harau* had given birth. *Elme* called him *Ugu*, i.e. Skin. *Ugu's* *nakari* took care of him and the boy grew up thrivingly. His story⁵⁹ is an unusual one with many details which have no known parallels in southern New Guinea mythology. *Ugu* developed into a dubious character who annoyed the old men and fought his comrades. It soon turned out that *Ugu* knew tricks never heard of before. *Ugu* was the first medicine-man (*messav*) and all magic derives from *Ugu*. When he was still a boy he already accomplished the most amazing feats.

⁵⁸ Cf. pp. 315 ff., 329, 453, 456.

⁵⁹ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 91 ff.

From high up in a tall tree he killed all the wallabies and pigs in the vicinity, whereupon he smeared his arrows with blood to make the people believe that he had really killed them by ordinary means. Like a crocodile *Ugu* knew how to dive and to remain underwater for quite some time. Because of his big teeth *Ugu* was much dreaded and more than once the people of Senayo, fed up with his monkey-tricks, tried to kill him. On one such occasion *Ugu* fled underwater, but when at last he emerged he was hit and had two of his teeth knocked out. Up to the present day the teeth have been at Siraro near Senayo in the form of a *gomar-déma* (*gomar* is a boar's tusk). *Ugu* himself escaped by going down again. Underwater he swam to the sea. He went to Alaku, but there, too, he soon came to be feared by everybody. It was here that he performed his most famous trick, that of extending his extremely elastic skin. He could make it so big that it held no fewer than twenty boys, which feat accomplished, he dived under water where, together with the boys, he remained for some time. All this was too much for the people of Alaku. They engaged the services of an expert in spear-throwing, the *déma Anib* or *Mongomang-anem*.⁶⁰ One day when *Ugu* was swimming under water, *Anib* hit him with a spear with barbed hooks. The boys of *Alaku* followed *Anib's* every move, warning him: "Watch out, *Ugu* will catch you and devour you". They sang: "*Mongomang-anem*, watch out, the crocodile. Pierce him with the spear. Throw it!"⁶¹ *Ugu* was killed and his body brought ashore. He was fleeced because the men wanted to preserve his precious skin. *Ugu's* body was roasted and eaten. All the boys who partook of this meal became medicine-men, because along with his flesh they imbibed *Ugu's* magical power.

Our story goes on, relating the adventures which befell *Ugu's* skin. We interrupt it for a moment in order to sum up *Ugu's* specific qualities. It is clear that he is identified with a crocodile. This is confirmed by the fact that *Ugu's* skin is believed still to be in the hands of magicians, who use it to dive under water in the guise of a crocodile and so take careless fishers by surprise. When somebody has been caught by a crocodile, the story of *Ugu* is sure to be remembered.⁶² Verschueren suggested that he may be identical with *Ugnemau*, the mythical crocodile on the beach of Iwolj which plays a part in the

⁶⁰ On *Anib's* death see below, pp. 328, 329 f.

⁶¹ Wirz, op. cit. p. 93.

⁶² Cf. Vertenten, J.P. 1916 pp. 536 f., Koppensnellers pp. 58 f.

story of *Opeko-anem*.⁶³ We should have expected *Ugu* to be a member not of this phratry but of the other moiety, in which the crocodile is one of the prominent symbols. He is, indeed, very closely related to the other moiety. Actually, he should be a member. His father is *Elme*, *Mahu's* son, his mother is *Harau*, an ambiguous character who is a sister of *Aramemb* but also a sago-maker, closely associated with *Wokabu* and the *Mahu-zé* who have the sago as their main totem. Among the Kumbo valley people *Harau* is even classified as a *Mahu-zé déma*.⁶⁴ It is evident that the Marind associate *Ugu*, the *messav*, with the crocodile and with the powers belonging to the other moiety. Nevertheless, he is a *déma* of the phratry connected with *Aramemb*. The duality, apparent in the different aspects of the *Geb-zé* phratry, reappears in another form in the associations of this phratry. There will be occasion to elaborate upon the subject after we have dealt with *Aramemb*, who is the main character in the story of *Ugu's* skin.

Aramemb enters into the picture at the moment the boys are eating *Ugu's* remains. He came from Okaba. "What are you doing, boys?", *Aramemb* asks. "We are eating *Ugu*, whom we killed", the boys reply. A ringworm-infested boy warns them not to say any more, but it was too late. *Aramemb* had already noticed the skin of *Ugu* and made up his mind to steal it. He managed to get hold of the skin and escaped to Imo, near Sangasé, where he went to sleep. Some time during the night he had a pollution. Waking up, he found a young wallaby in the shell fastened to the front of his girdle.⁶⁵ Frightened, he threw the shell away and went off to the Bian, followed by the wallaby. He crossed the river and met *Bewra*,⁶⁶ who requested *Aramemb* to give him the wallaby for a wife, but *Aramemb* would not listen. Secretly, *Bewra* killed the wallaby and hid its buried hair in *Aramemb's* lime-gourd, where the hairs turned into mosquitoes. But *Aramemb* had noticed it and smashed the gourd to pieces over *Bewra's* head. A cloud of mosquitoes attacked *Bewra*, who fled to the Bian, and only by jumping into the river did he get rid of them. In that very place there have been hordes of mosquitoes up to the present day. The mosquitoes are among the totems of this phratry.⁶⁷

Next day *Aramemb*, taking *Ugu's* skin with him, continued on his

⁶³ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 7.

⁶⁴ Ibid. IX p. 5.

⁶⁵ Cf. above, p. 279.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 250.

⁶⁷ Wirz, M.A. II p. 119.

journey eastward. Near Onggari he was met by a number of boys who blocked his way, wishing to get hold of *Ugu's* skin. All day long *Aramemb* ran up and down, trying to break through, in which he did not succeed until after nightfall. The *Aramemb* of this part of the story is rather an oaf, but once he has got through, his self-confidence quickly returns. West of Kaibursé he tries to catch *Yarwima*, the black stork *déma*, and when his efforts come to naught he wends his way eastwards again, dancing all the time and singing of his journey in a song in which he calls himself the stork *Yogum*. The identification with *Yogum* is of interest because the practitioner of black magic, the *kambara-anem*, also calls himself *Yogum* in his spell.⁶⁸ Near Kaibursé *Aramemb* quarrels with his *nakari* who had stolen his *zambu*, the festive ornament worn by a *miakim* on the occasion of his entry into this age-group.⁶⁹ He accuses them of having copulated with a dog, which he kills. The dog, by the way, is one of *Mahu's* dogs, *Maledu*, and the intermezzo reminds us of one of the *Mahu-sé* myths, notably that of *Amari*,⁷⁰ in which *Aramemb* plays an important part by restoring to life one *Amari*, who is the son of a bitch, and who had been killed because of committing adultery with his *nakari*. All this happened in Kurkari, near the border with Australian New Guinea, where, according to the story in question, *Aramemb* had at that time settled down. In our present story *Aramemb* finally arrives at Kumbe, where a friend steals *Ugu's* skin. The thief brought the skin to Nowari, but some people of Saror stole it from him and carried it to their village, where *Ugu's* skin has been kept ever since.

From Kumbe *Aramemb* went to Brawa (Nowari) by canoe. He moored the boat to a pole, but some children at play disengaged the rope and the canoe drifted away. *Aramemb*, enraged, went at the children, who jumped into the water, where they turned into fishes: the boys into *bang-a-bang* (tetrodon) and the girls into *rubri* (a plaice species). The fishes are mentioned among the totem-relations of the phratry as a whole.⁷¹

Wirz found his informants rather uncommunicative on the events which followed. They are connected with Brawa and the *mayo* ceremonies. Brawa is the place of a navel *déma* identified with *Moyu* and with the *mayo*. The *déma* of Brawa is held in great awe. The epidemic

⁶⁸ Wirz, op. cit. III p. 77; below, p. 905.

⁶⁹ Cf. above, p. 157.

⁷⁰ Below, pp. 330 f.

⁷¹ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 119, and annex IVb.

of venereal granulome is ascribed alternately to the *déma* of Brawa, the navel *déma* of the *mayo*, or his fellow navel *déma* of the *rapa*, the fire *déma* of Kondo. *Aramemb* is connected with Brawa because he is said to have hurled his club high into the air, whereupon it fell down in the guise of a glowing stone. Other informants say that the sun sent down his son, the meteor or shooting star, *wai*.⁷² As we do not know the word for club as used by Wirz's informants, the information available is not sufficient to substantiate an assumption of phallic symbolism being implied in this story, though a supposition to that effect seems plausible enough.⁷³ *Aramemb's* erotic activities in Brawa are evident. All informants agree that it was in Brawa that *Aramemb* collected a great number of *iwag* for the impending *mayo* ceremonies. There is no agreement as to where these ceremonies were held, in Brawa itself or further to the east, in Sarira, Kondo or Yavar-makan, but all are one in asserting that these ceremonies developed into so exceedingly grand and licentious an affair as no *mayo* celebration had ever been before. *Aramemb* anointed his body with sperma instead of coconut oil, whereupon yams of all known varieties grew from his head and shoulders. He planted them on a large field east of the Torassi, and shot an arrow at a woman who crossed his yam-field. The woman changed into a cuscus, another totem-relation of the phratry's.⁷⁴ One more thing happened at Brawa. Instead of decorating his forehead with red paint, *Aramemb* used the blood of an *iwag*, after which two red parrots sprouted from his head. These parrots are included among the phratry's totem-relations, an interesting detail because a red parrot of this variety (*voi*) inspects the dead upon their arrival in the eastern abode of the dead.⁷⁵ Later, *Aramemb* returned to the west, to the Digul, and there he vanished. His club is all that is left; it has been kept at Brawa up to the present day. Other informants hold the view that *Aramemb* walked into the sea or that, on the occasion of another *mayo* celebration, he again made fire and was totally consumed by it. They all agree, however, that he has disappeared completely and that he has not, like other *déma*, withdrawn into any known place. Though he brought forth various *déma* who are the ancestors of men, animals and plants which are related to *Aramemb*, *Aramemb* has no descendants of his own and there are no *Aramemb-rek*. He has always

⁷² Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *wai*.

⁷³ Cf. the parallel story of *Atassra* on p. 315 below.

⁷⁴ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. p. 98 and annex IVb.

⁷⁵ Cf. above, p. 202.

been a *miakim*, one who never married [?!] but was forever travelling about without having any fixed abode. At intervals between his wanderings *Aramemb* used to have a long sleep and thus, sleeping, is associated with the *Kai-zé*.⁷⁶ This association the *Kai-zé* have in common with the *Ndik-end*, who have the *wati* as one of their main totems. Among the Marind, *wati* is a frequently used opiate.

Aramemb is a curious character in the Marind-anim pantheon. We noted already *Aramemb's* activities with regard to *Yawi*, the coconut déma, whom he brought up and afterwards had killed by the *kambara-anim*. In one of the alternative readings *Aramemb* turned into a coconut tree himself.⁷⁷ More important is *Aramemb's* connection with the *kambara-anim*. They come from Kurkari, a tribe living in the interior of the eastern part of the region, near the Australian border. In the myth of *Amari* we find *Aramemb* settled in Kurkari.⁷⁸ In the myth of *Sapi* the pig déma, the *kambara-anim* of Kurkari again act as friends of *Aramemb*.⁷⁹ In other words, he is fairly close with the *kambara-anim* without being one of them himself. The fact that he calls himself *Yogum*, a name by which the *kambara-anim* refer to themselves in their magical formulas,⁸⁰ does not seem to be a fully adequate argument for ranging *Aramemb* among the *kambara-anim*. It just serves to show that he keeps up close relations with them.

In part IV of his book Wirz published a few other details on *Aramemb* which he learned in Wamal, the westernmost coastal village.⁸¹ Here *Aramemb* was said to be a son of *Muli-anem*, the déma who is the Muli or Strait Marianne, where he resides in or under the water. *Muli-anem's* wife, *Aramemb's* mother, lived on the land and here, at Kukut, *Aramemb* was born. When he was an *éwati*, his father made him a spear and *Aramemb* set out on his wanderings. In the land of the *Yab-anim* he met with a déma called *Mingui* (i.e. maggot; *Mingui* is the drum of *Woryu* and the dead).⁸² He killed him and ate the body; he arranged the bones so as to make them form a complete skeleton, which he covered with grass. The next morning he went to this spot again and with a stick beat the ground on either side, then the grass

⁷⁶ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 96-98.

⁷⁷ Above, p. 250.

⁷⁸ Below, p. 330.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 405.

⁸⁰ Below, p. 905.

⁸¹ Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 134 ff.

⁸² See above, p. 200.

stirred and there emerged a multitude of wallabies, originating from *Mingui's* bones. They did not know how to leap, but *Aramemb*, beating the ground all the time, frightened them so much that they learned pretty soon and presently fled in every direction, jumping for all they could. The wallabies in reality are *Mingui-rek*, descendants of *Mingui*. They multiplied rapidly and *Aramemb* decided to catch them and make them serve as food. Before this, people ate only fish and thus *Aramemb* became the first hunter and the originator of hunting.

Every time he hurled his spear at a wallaby, he used to swear *yamboda*, i.e. vulva.⁸³ His father corrected him and told him whenever he killed a wallaby to call out the name of his ancestor *Mad*. *Aramemb* obeyed and other people followed his example, thus introducing the custom of using hunting yells.⁸⁴

One day *Aramemb* hurled his spear with so much force that he could not find it again. Disgusted, he also threw away his spear-thrower. Spear and spear-thrower changed into bamboo groves. *Aramemb* went to his father and complained. Then his father made him a bow and arrows and *Aramemb* returned in high spirits from the bank of the Muli and went down to the Buraka, to present-day Dahuk-zé-miráv. Here he committed adultery with the wife of *Nakra*. The latter killed him with an arrow. He was not really dead, however. His *wih* withdrew from the corpse and constituted the body anew. *Aramemb mendab dahuk*, '*Aramemb* had come alive again', and since that day the place has been given the name of Dahuk-zé-miráv. The place is repeatedly mentioned in myth, such as in the stories of *Habé* and the rattan *déma*, of *Yagil*, of *Doreh*, of *Habé* and the ducks, of the pelican *déma*, of the son of the crab *déma* and of *Nazr*. In all these stories a relationship with the opposite moiety is demonstrable.⁸⁵

These additional data point up a number of curious facts which deserve some attention. In the first place we note that the people of Wamal, who were the narrators of this story, call *Aramemb* a descendant of *Mad*. *Mad* is the ancestor of a *Samkakai* subclan which, as a matter of fact, is a widely spread subclan with members not only in the eastern villages mentioned in annex V, but according to Wirz, M.A. II p. 118, also in a number of inland communities which it is difficult to locate or which do not belong to the Marind-anim, such

⁸³ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *jambod*. *Yambod-anem* is a common term of abuse, often applied in a bout of good-natured joking among friends.

⁸⁴ Cf. above, p. 193.

⁸⁵ Cf. above, p. 274 and below, pp. 294, 327, 340, 342, 344 and 401.

as Galum and Makléw. This forefather *Mad* is said to have come by canoe from Mayo in Yavar-makan, which formally links him up with the *mayo*. He was accompanied by two other *déma*, to wit, *Uéru* (there is a word *uéru* meaning rhythmic motion, ceremony, pantomime⁸⁶) and *Saham-békai*, i.e. coward, the wallaby (*saham*) being the common symbol of cowardice. In parentheses we note that *Uéru* is also the name of one of the *Kambara-anim*; he is the one who takes the leading part in the killing of *Yawi*.⁸⁷

More important are *Aramemb's* exploits in Yab-anim territory. We recall that hereabouts the land of the dead is located⁸⁸ and the killing of *Mingui*, the maggot who is the drum of the dead, amply evidences that it is indeed the land of the dead where *Aramemb* is operating. The subsequent creation of the wallaby from the bones of the maggot *déma* holds the promise of new and interesting developments, a promise which is not fulfilled. Instead, *Aramemb*, who had overcome one of the major powers of death, himself comes to grief. At Dahuk-zé-miráv he is killed by *Nakra*. The place is an important *Mahu-zé* centre, associated with hostility towards Habé and *Yagil*, the cassowary. It is the place of settlement of various *Mahu-zé* *déma*, including *Mahu*. *Nakra*, too, is probably a *Mahu-zé*; *na* means excrement and excrement is an important *Mahu-zé* totem. *Aramemb*, however, returns to life. He is a real life-symbol, never having died but simply vanished. In contrast to early man he does not originate in the east, the place of sunrise, but in the west, in the area of sunset. His father is *Muli-anem*, the *Muli-déma*, who may be identified with *Muli*, the west monsoon, who, like his brother *Sendawi*, the east monsoon, is a son of *Yawima*, the thunder-maker.⁸⁹ *Muli* is the friend of *Yorma*, the sea *déma*, who is also the *déma* of the big waves.⁹⁰ All this makes *Aramemb*, the life-bringer who gave the first human beings their shape, a son of the powers of the west, an interesting feature in the intriguing dialectics of Marind-anim cosmology. It is certainly not an isolated feature. The first human beings, travelling underground, came from Gelib in Eromka or, as the case may be, from Sangasé, and emerge in Kondo; the sun *déma* is beheaded or fought in Eromka and he goes underground to Kondo or whatever place in which the sun is thought to emerge; in one myth *Geb* lives in

⁸⁶ Cf. Geurtjens, *Dict. v. wéroe*.

⁸⁷ See above, p. 249 and below p. 423.

⁸⁸ Above, p. 200.

⁸⁹ Below, p. 289.

⁹⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 100.

Komolom⁹¹ and in another somewhere in the western section.⁹² The association of west and death is not an absolute one. On the contrary, there is also a possibility of life coming forth from the west.

Before we return to *Aramemb* and the rather heterogeneous associations of his phratry, we shall first relate the mythical data concerning *Yawima*, so as to complete the picture. *Yawima* is called *Dongam-anem*, thunder-maker, the appellation commonly used for a rain-magician. Once upon a time, when there had been a severe drought, his mother *Manguri* asked him to make rain, and *Yawima* prepared the various ingredients still in use to-day among rain-magicians, and proceeded to make rain. Shortly afterwards a heavy thunderstorm burst, and *Manguri* and *Mamipu*, *Yawima's* father, who happened to be in their garden, were completely soaked. They tried to protect themselves from the rain with their digging-sticks. Finally they changed into birds, *Mamipu* into a black stork, and *Manguri* into a crane (*darau*; *Antigone australasiana* according to Wirz, but more correctly *Grus rubicunda*). Other sons of *Yawima* also changed into birds. That, however, happened on another occasion. They had heard of the *wati* which *Wokabu*, the sago déma, had stolen from the (common) stork déma. They went to Sangasé, but did not return because they got their share of *wati* and were completely intoxicated. When at last *Yawima* came to collect them and found them drunk with *wati*, he got angry and beat them with a stick, whereupon they changed into different birds such as a spoonbill variety (*ahatub*), an ibis,⁹³ a hawk (*kond-kabai*, probably *Haliastur indus*) and a numenius (*gém*; probably *Numenius phaeopus*, the whimbrel). The black-painted younger sons, who were *wokrévid* or *aroi-patur*, changed into ravens and black cuckoos.⁹⁴ They all belong to the totem-relations of the *Yawima-rek*, who form a *Ndik-end* clan of their own. It seems worth while to note that the birds belonging to this clan are either water-fowl or black-coloured birds. The Marind, however, discern a different association; the raven and the crow belong

⁹¹ Below, p. 382.

⁹² Above, p. 235.

⁹³ Wirz's translation (*Ardea sacra*) is wrong. The Marind name used is *ébob*, identified as *Ibis moluccana* by Geurtjens (Dict. voc. cit.), which should be corrected into *Threskiornis moluccus* (information provided by Prof. Voous).

⁹⁴ The native name of the bird is *kuku*. Wirz defines it as *Centropus nigricans*. Prof. Voous informs me that this should be *Centropus phasianinus thierfelderi* Stresemann, the Pheasant-Coucal or Swamp Pheasant occurring also in Western Australia; *Centropus phasianinus nigricans* (Salvadori), the bird referred to by Wirz, is found somewhat more eastward along the south coast of New Guinea.

to this clan because they croak like people intoxicated with *wati*, the other birds because they waddle like inebriated *wati*-drinkers. Perhaps the apposition of the *numenius* (whimbrel) and this clan must be explained in a similar way. The name Wirz gives to the bird is 'Brachvogel', vomiting-bird; the first effect of *wati*-drinking is a poignant belching which makes it perfectly clear that the *wati*-drinker is not far from vomiting. It is a pity that we know so little of the habits of these birds and of the peculiarities which, to the Marind, are specific characteristics of their behaviour. Wholly unexplained is the association of the clan with a crawfish (*and-and*), which is mentioned by Wirz in his final survey of the phratry's totems.⁹⁵

Another remarkable story concerning *Yawima* is the one in which mention is made of *Aramemb*.⁹⁶ *Yawima* came from Sangasé, wanting to attend a *mayo* celebration. He brought an *iwag* and a *gari*, the well-known white fan-shaped screen representing the sky. On the way the girl was raped by *Yawima* and she gave birth to a *zamid*-snake, which bit *Yawima's* ear. *Yawima* then let the girl go and threw the *gari* away. Crying, he walked up and down the beach, lamenting over his pain. *Aramemb* heard him and tried to catch him, but *Yawima* made off and hid where nobody could find him. We note in passing that it certainly is meaningful that *Yawima* is bitten by a snake, which may be identified with the penis of *Sosom*, *Uaba's* brother.⁹⁷ *Yawima*, though belonging to the *Geb-zé* moiety, is rather closely related with the opposite moiety as well. He is a thunder-maker, associated with the *Muli*, the west monsoon and the rainy season, an association which is only partially counterbalanced by *Yawima's* fatherhood of *Sendawi*, the east monsoon. Another pointer to the *Yawima-rek's* being associated with the opposite moiety is apparently provided by the hunting yell of the *Yawima-rek* sub-clan, the *Muli-rek*: *Ngat-a! Gém! Muli-a!* i.e. Dogs! Mud!(?) Muli.⁹⁸ *Gém* (mud) is a totem of the *Mahu-zé* phratry. However, in this instance the translation is dubious. *Gém* is also a bird, the whimbrel, and it is probable that in this context the word refers to the bird, and not to mud. The hunting yell of the *Yawima-rek* generally is less equivocally associated with the totem-relations of the other moiety, *Yaba muri! Yaba muri!* meaning much northwesterly wind (or gales)⁹⁹ Perhaps a similar indication is provided by the other

⁹⁵ Wirz, M.A. II p. 119.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 98 f.

⁹⁷ On the snake cf. above, p. 271. See also below, p. 372.

⁹⁸ Wirz, *op. cit.* IV p. 137.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* II p. 120. The r and l (*muri* and *muli*) are interchangeable.

sub-subclan of the *Yawima-rek*, the *Mohend-rek*, alias *Mohenlik*, who cry out: *Yakis panga-rek!*¹⁰⁰ *Yakis* is a creeper, *panga* is buttock,¹⁰¹ and *panga-rek*, descendants of buttocks, seems pretty near to the various hunting yells of the *Mahu-zé* with their references to defecating.¹⁰²

The curious equivocality observed in the combined associations of *Geb* and the *Geb-zé* presents itself in another form in the various mythical relations of this phratry. On the one hand there is a dominating association with sun, east monsoon, dry season and fire. On the other, there are the associations with the west monsoon and with mosquitoes, with *Harau* the sago-woman, with the *kadivuk* (the midget crocodile), with *Elme* the *Mahu-zé* déma, with *Harau's* and *Elme's* son *Ugu*, who is in reality a crocodile and a *messav*, full of harmful knowledge. Finally there is *Aramemb* himself, assisting in the birth of man and that of fire, shaping man's form, and inflicting death upon *Yawi*; calling himself *Yogum*, a *kambara-anem*, but also the maker of a life-elixir which brought immortality to the snake; who killed the maggot déma, restored *Amari* to life and returned to life himself when killed by *Nakra*; also an avenger of adultery and an adulterer himself, a *miakim* of licentious behaviour; although closely associated with the place called Imo, an important character in the *mayo*, who brings more *iwag* than any other déma; the creator of the various kinds of male hairdo, in the same way as his sister created the various female coiffures; the thief of *Ugu's* skin, the originator of hunting and of the favourite quarry, the wallaby; an indefatigable busybody, travelling all over the country and settling alternately in such widely separated places as the Buraka area, Imo and Kurkari; the creator of the red parrot of the eastern abode of the dead, who himself disappeared in the direction of the Digul, the reaches of the western land of the dead; closely associated with the rising sun (*Uaba*) and the setting sun (*Muli*), and with the east and west monsoons, who are the sons of *Yawima*, one of the heroes of this phratry and through *Muli* related to *Aramemb*; all in all, a predominant and powerful déma, but at the same time the descendant of a minor mythological character like *Mad*, a shiftless oaf when beset by a band of boys, behaving in a way which suits the character of his privileged animal, the wallaby, the symbol of cowardice.

On closer scrutiny the facts are, in part at least, less confusing than

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. IV p. 137.

¹⁰¹ Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.

¹⁰² Cf. below, p. 334.

they seem to be. The *Geb-zé* are associated with the great cosmic powers and events ritualized in the cults of *mayo*, *imo* and *rapa*, with the heavenly bodies and their terrestrial representatives themselves. In the phratry of *Aramemb* the emphasis is not on identity with the great cosmic powers, but on the celebration of the ritual. Of course that does not exclude a certain degree of identification with cosmic powers. This identity is clearly present in such characters as *Sosom*, *Habé*, *Upikak*, *Muli* and *Sendawi*. The dominating aspect, however, is that of the celebration and organization of ritual as represented in the persons of that divine busybody *Aramemb* and, in a special field, *Yawima* the rain-maker.

It would not be difficult to prove that *Aramemb* could be classified alternately as a trickster, a culture-hero, a high-god, and a 'Herr der Tiere'. Such classifications, however, are dangerous; they lead to substituting the ticket for the train. In Marind-anim mythology *Aramemb* is the great performer and organizer of ritual. His association with magic and with the profession of the *messav* is by no means accidental. Too often the *messav* is depicted as a marginal and dubious character. Actually the *messav* are the experts on myth and important leaders of ritual.¹⁰³ Magic is not a marginal outgrowth of Marind-anim religion; it is based on myth and is a producer of myth, the daily practice of religious faith.¹⁰⁴ Magic can be made to serve both good and evil ends, but even these evil ends may have the blessing of society, e.g. when they concern the revenge of a recent death or the striking of a blow at the enemy. Of course a *messav* may use his powers to decidedly antisocial ends; in that case he will have to be careful not to stretch matters too far lest society turn against him. Moreover, a *messav* is not necessarily a practitioner of *kambara*, the most dreaded and lethal form of sorcery known among the Marind. It is important to note that *kambara* is not really associated with the phratry of *Aramemb*. In spite of the fact that *Aramemb* calls himself by the name of the *kambara-anem Yogum*, *kambara* belongs to the totem-associations of the *Sapi-zé*, a subclan of the *Bragai-zé* phratry. Though *Aramemb*, as a great *messav*, may occasionally be related with *kambara*, it is not specific of him. Specific are his activities in all fields of religious and ceremonial practice. He sets things in motion. Like a *messav* dispensing health, recovery and sickness, *Aramemb* assists in the birth of man, metes out death and

¹⁰³ Ibid. pp. 885, 894 f.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Ch. XIV.

awards immortality. The cosmic *mayo*-event, the liberation of *Uaba*, can only come to pass through his intervention.

At the same time *Aramemb* does more than even an ideal *messav* is capable of doing. His activities are more diversified. The whole concept of a feast is implied in *Aramemb's* activities; while the *wati*, essential to any feast, is produced by his associate, the stork, *Aramemb* originates hunting and the wallaby, a necessary ingredient of the festive board; he creates the yam, the vegetable grown especially for feasts; he is the maker of all festive adornment, in which he is assisted by his sister *Harau*, who did the same for the women. By reason of these activities *Aramemb* is also the creator of age-grades and he is connected with initiation generally. *Harau* has a similar function with regard to women. The *mayo* ceremonies at Brawa, in which *Aramemb* has a leading part, are the greatest and most licentious ever celebrated. In the *mayo* ceremonies as performed by the present generation, *Aramemb's* role as an initiator is fairly clearly expressed.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps we may see in the various conflicts between *Aramemb* and the uninitiated another allusion to his role as an initiator. Relevant cases are presented by the boys who wanted to preserve *Ugu's* skin, the boys who blocked his way, and the children who set his canoe adrift. The association of *Aramemb's* phratry with initiation generally is also demonstrated by its connection with *Sosom*, the *déma* of the first initiation rites.

Aramemb's activities may be summarized by calling him the Initiator, the great instructor, the *déma* who demonstrated how things ought to be done. As such he is almost a high-god, but not a high-god who has a permanent abode, known unto man. His activities, though of the highest order and importance, consist of single acts, executed once and for all. Man can and will repeat them ritually, and *Aramemb* can simply disappear, leaving no other trace than his club, which may well be his phallus. Elaborated mythologically in a highly different way, his activities and life-history are structurally rather similar to those of an originator in the Aranda religion, such as the *Achilpa* originator as he appears in the story related by Spencer and Gillen,¹⁰⁶ or *Mangerkunyakunya* in the myth on the origin of man communicated by Strehlow.¹⁰⁷ Still, there is a difference, too. *Aramemb's* humble birth and the cowardly character of his associate, the wallaby, make him a far less dignified character than the Originator in central Australian mythology.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. below, pp. 526 ff.

¹⁰⁶ Spencer and Gillen, *The Arunta* Ch. XIII and XIV.

¹⁰⁷ Strehlow, *Die Aranda- und Loritja Stämme*, Part I Ch. I.

The one *déma* in the Marind-anim pantheon whose origin is comparable to that of, for instance, the Aranda *Achilpa* ancestor, is *Geb*, of whom it is said that "he originated from himself, growing he did grow".¹⁰⁸ The most significant feature of this cumulation of various mythical roles in the person of *Aramemb* is the combination of his shape-giving activities on the occasion of the birth of man with his initiator-ship. The two events are interrelated. All things derive from primeval *mayo* celebrations. The *mayo*-initiation itself is a rebirth in which the myth of man's primeval birth is re-enacted and explicitly applied to the neophytes. The ritual rebirth is a re-staging of primeval birth. To an understanding of the impact of Marind-anim ritual *Aramemb* is one of the key-figures. We shall go further into this in a subsequent chapter.

Aramemb's specific role as an organizer of and instructor in ritual, who sets things in motion, necessarily leads to his association with the good and evil aspects of the world, as well as to his association with various aspects of opposite moieties. Though among the *Geb-zé* and the phratry of *Aramemb* the emphasis is on birth, life and the dry season, such compelling truths as death and seasonal change are not neglected. The association of *Aramemb* with the origin of death and with the Muli, his dealings with the *Mahu-zé* *déma* *Amari* as well as the relations between *Harau* and the *Mahu-zé*, and the association of *Ugu* (as a crocodile) with the *Bragai-zé*, lend ample substance to this inherent dualism. It is most emphatically expressed in *Yawwima*, who, as *Dongam-anem*, is the rain-maker introducing the west monsoon; as father of the west- and the east monsoon he is the personification of dualism, and as a member of the stork clan he is a close associate of the stork, who is a twin-brother of the fire. Summarizing, we may characterize the phratry of *Aramemb* as a phratry connected with ritual and religious practice generally. As such they constitute a harmonious whole with the other phratry of their moiety, the *Geb-zé*, whose leadership was discussed in the preceding chapter.

3. MYTHS OF CLANS AND SUBCLANS

The remaining myths may be ranged under one of three subsections, each concerned with one of the three main clans of the phratry. In content these myths are less instructive than those of the preceding section. They are hardly relevant to our knowledge of the structure of Marind-anim religion; the main characters of mythical history rarely

¹⁰⁸ Cf. above, p. 223.

play a part in these stories which, on the whole, seem to have little more than local impact. References to ritual are rare and the main function of these stories seems to be to explain some specific characteristic of the totem, to commemorate episodes of the clan's history, or to comment on its spatial distribution and on the origin of its subclans. Wherever mention is made of one of the leading mythical heroes, the connection thus established is of a more formal and accidental nature, providing a peg for the group's relationship with that particular hero, a relationship which otherwise could not be explained.

The clan-myths of the Kai-zé. The mythical material dealing with the *Kai-zé* and their subclans consists of two longer stories together with a few rather fragmentary data connected with the subclans of the *Kai-zé* and their distribution over the territory.

The first of the stories¹⁰⁹ deals with *Yagil*, a cassowary *déma* who appears in the guise of a richly decorated young man with one human and one cassowary leg. He lives in the bush on the island of Komolom. When everybody is away from the village, *Yagil* enters it to steal women's aprons from the houses. At last he is found out by an old woman. The men kill him and the following night his flesh changes into the nuts of the *aké*-tree, fruits sometimes used as substitutes for betel nuts. From his blood grows a fruit-tree, *obyara* (*Eugenia domestica*, more commonly known as *Syzygium malaccense*). Then *Yagil's* mother and brothers arrive on the scene and throw his bones into a fire, whereupon a violent thunderstorm kills the people of the village. His mother and brothers now depart, taking *Yagil's* entrails with them, and from these *Yagil* comes to life again. They go to Aboi (middle Bian) and from there to Daboyas (also on the middle Bian), where they settle down, planting the grounds round their house with *obyara* and *aké*. Both fruits make part of the cassowary's diet.¹¹⁰ In this new abode the cassowaries successfully fight *Mahu's* dogs. After a time *Yagil* again makes trouble, viz. when *Harau* visits the area to prepare sago for *Wokabu*. *Yagil* tries to have intercourse with her, but *Harau* does not want him and, on her complaint, *Harau's* mother summons the men of *Dahuk-zé-miráv*. They attack *Yagil* and his brothers, who escape to Oan on the upper Bian, where their mother changes into an impenetrable thicket of tall rushes, protecting her sons from further persecution.

¹⁰⁹ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 102-105.

¹¹⁰ Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 7.

Here the cassowaries hide out and here *Yagil* has remained up to the present day.

The second story deals with the cassowary *déma Teimbre*.¹¹¹ He lived at Urumb, where a snake entered his hut. The animal afterwards changed into a beautiful girl, who became his wife. Her name was *Wariop*. One day she was abducted by *Teimbre's* friend *Bébukla*, whom we met earlier as the suitor whom *Harau* turned down.¹¹² *Teimbre* fought *Bébukla*, but the latter was the stronger and *Teimbre* was then and there thrown into a swamp from which it was impossible to escape and he turned into reeds and swamp-grass such as *do-hi-kassim*, *dombassum*, *akur*, *gu*, *samb-imu*, etc. In vain *Wariop*, his snake-woman, tried to find him. Struggling through the swamp she bore *Teimbre* a son, who changed into a small freshwater fish (*orib*, *Plagusia marmorata*).¹¹³ At last she gave up her quest and went to live with *Bébukla*, whom she bore a son, *Sapai*. But *Sapai* was a naughty boy, who bit his mother's breasts. She went off to Domandé, leaving the boy behind with a coconut-bowl filled with milk which she had squeezed from her breasts. The boy went after her and was adopted by a woman whom he met on his way. He came with her to Domandé, where his adoptive mother and his true mother began to fight for possession of the boy. They tugged at him, tearing off his arms and legs till at last the boy hid in the ground. A beautiful tree bearing red fruits called *uara(d)* grew from his body.¹¹⁴ Later, *Wariop* gave birth to other children, who all turned into shrubs with brightly-coloured fruits such as *Abrus precatorius* (Mar. *samandir*) and Job's tears (*Coix lacrymajobi*; Mar. *baba*).¹¹⁵ In this specific instance we meet with a trait illustrating the clan's (and the phratry's) special connection with ritual. The bright colours also point up an association with fire. The connection between the fruits and the *Kai-zé* is established through the mother; a father is not mentioned. The stories of *Teimbre* and *Yagil* hold very

¹¹¹ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 105-107.

¹¹² Above, p. 279.

¹¹³ *Orib* is also the name given to the star Betelgeuse, which is visible in conjunction with Orion. The three big stars forming Orion's Belt are three boys engaged in spearing an *orib*-fish (Wirz, M.A. IV p. 81).

¹¹⁴ Wirz identifies the *uara* as *Eugenia aquca*, which in modern taxonomy is usually called *Syzygium jambos* (information provided by Dr. Ostendorf). Verschuieren notes that, in the eastern area (Gawir), the *uara* is the djambu tree bearing white fruits, the *wekat* the one with red fruits. It is possible that Wirz confounded the one with the other, but it is also possible that, locally, the two names are interchangeable (Letters VIII p. 7).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *ba-ba*, *samandir*, *boeb*; Verschuieren, I.c.

little that is of special interest. *Yagil's* story is at best an illustration of cassowary life.

After this digression, we may now turn to the list of subclans mentioned in annex IVb. At the head of the list are the *Raku-rek* or, perhaps, *Rak-rek*, as their totem is not *raku* (vapour, mist), but *rak* (smoke).¹¹⁶ They derive their name from the mythical fire which resulted when *Aramemb* disengaged *Uaba* from *Ualiwamb*. Their ancestors got the worst of the smoke caused by the fire. Their hunting yell is: *Tuta! Rak-a! Suram!*, translated by Wirz as 'Smoke-draught, Smoke, *Suram!*', the latter being the mythical (secret) name of smoke.¹¹⁷ The relationship between the *Raku-rek* and the *Kai-sé* is apparent. However, the relation is not devoid of curious complications: a number of small birds are included among the subclan's relations, because they fly in swarms reminding the Marind of smoke-clouds. Wirz gives their native names only, to wit, *talehé*, *baukala*, and *téna*. Not more than one of them could be identified, viz. the *téna*, and it would be wrong to call this a 'very small' bird. In fact, it is a black-and-white 'beach-snipe'. The *téna* is also mentioned as a totem of the *Basik-Basik*.¹¹⁸

Second on the list are the *Dawi-rek*. *Dawi* is said to have walked along the coast, all the way to Komolom. By inference we state that he went the way of the sun, as could be expected of a *déma* so closely associated with the origin of fire. This specific relationship with fire is confirmed by the hunting yell of the subclan: *takav*, i.e. fire. Wirz informs us that in Eromka and Egéwi (extreme western section) *Dawi* begot a number of children, among whom there were four boys, viz. *Dugau*, *Banang*, *Sassurawi* and *Dam-évai*.¹¹⁹ The names are unintelligible, with the exception of the fourth, which means javelin-father. Of two of these sons something more is said. *Sassurawi* went further eastward, while *Banang* settled at Daboyas, the local *Dawi-rek* tracing their descent from him. The information is of some interest because it was at Daboyas that *Yagil* temporarily made his residence.¹²⁰ *Dawi's* reproductive activities in the western section suggest that the subclan bearing his name must be represented among the subclans of Eromka. Yet, they are not mentioned in the list of the subclans located in this particular area,¹²¹ though they are reported from Kumbe, Kaibursé,

¹¹⁶ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 115, and Geurtjens, Dict. v. *rakoe* and *rak*.

¹¹⁷ Wirz, l.c.; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *toet* and *toetoe*.

¹¹⁸ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *téna*; below, p. 400 and annex IV d.

¹¹⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 115.

¹²⁰ Above, p. 294.

¹²¹ Wirz, op. cit. III p. 174.

Onggari and Saror as well as from Bad and Wayau.¹²² The territories of these villages are contiguous and but for the specific information on *Dawi's* activities in Eromka we might interpret the present distribution of the *Dawi-rek* as substantiating the theory that subclans are former local clans which since have been fitted into the framework of present Marind-anim tribal organization. In reality, the history of the integration of the clan-system must have been more complicated. Several subclans have such a wide spread as to render futile any attempt to derive their origin from a less comprehensive local clan-system, as would seem feasible with regard to such small subclans as the *Garhobirek*, the *Waiba-rek* and the *Umbri-rek*, the three subclans associated with the rattan déma. Their mythical history makes it probable that their descendants will have to be looked for in the area between Maro and Kumbe and inland on the Kumbe river. But their case, too, is not without its complications. Wirz, distinguishing between them as between three different subclans on p. 119 of his M.A. part II, speaks of them as one *boan*, the *tub-* or rattan *boan*, when discussing them on p. 117. Apparently a local clan-group is easily included in a more comprehensive unit when a common background is presented by concurrence of mythological data or of totem-relations. In the case of the rattan subclans the relations with the *Kai-zé* generally are evident enough, the story of Habé links them up with *Dawi*; moreover, rattan is used for various ceremonial ornaments, as is apparent from the story of *Aramemb*.

Next to the *Dawi-rek*, the *Honi-rek* present a good example of the intricacies of the interrelationships of the various subclans. The *Honi-rek* have members in the eastern and western sections of the coast as well as in the Kumbe valley.¹²³ The mythical ancestor of the clan is *Honi*. We have already met with a déma of that name in the myth of the *Mayo-patur*, but it is impossible to make out with certainty whether he is the same as the *Honi-rek* ancestor.¹²⁴ The latter had three sons, *Buke*, *Arimangu* and *Sir*. *Sir* is the founder of the *Honi-rek* groups in Wendu and Yatomb, *Arimangu* of those in Rahuk-miráv in the Kumbe valley.¹²⁵ More interesting is that both Wirz and Verschueren testify that *Honi* is sometimes identified with *Yagil* and that Verschueren reports that in the Kumbe valley *Dawi* is said to be a son of *Honi*.¹²⁶

¹²² Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 7.

¹²³ Cf. annex V and Verschueren, l.c.

¹²⁴ Cf. above, p. 252.

¹²⁵ Wirz, op. cit. II p. 116.

¹²⁶ Wirz, l.c.; Verschueren, l.c.

In this way the *Honi-rek* are linked up with the *Dawi-rek*, while a connection is established between these two subclans and the well-known cassowary déma *Yaçil*. It looks, in fact, more like a ready-made rationalization to account for an intrinsically accidental relationship than an explanation of how the *Kai-zé* came to be split up into so many subclans. An explanation of this kind would not only link up the *Dawi-rek* with the *Honi-rek*; it would also associate these as well as the *Raku-rek* and the descendants of *Teimbre* and *Bébukla* with the cassowary borne by *Ualiwamb*. However, we never hear anything of that cassowary, except that it burned its legs and its gill. It is just *the* cassowary, not the ancestor of a clan. The mythical relations of the subclans with the basic event of the clan myth are, at best, of an accidental nature. There is no direct genealogical connection.

Finally, a few words must be said on the subclans hitherto left undiscussed. It is not certain that the *Bahod-zé*, reported by Wirz to be a subclan of the *Kai-zé* at Makalin, really are *Kai-zé*; they may as well be *Geb-zé*.¹²⁷ Of the *Mbui-rek* we only know the name.¹²⁸ The *Muli-rek*, presented as a *Kai-zé* subclan in Wirz's list of subclans, are in fact a *Yawima-rek* subclan.¹²⁹ An unsolved problem — and an intriguing one — is that presented by the *Sapi-zé* of Buti referred to in chapter II.¹³⁰ The mythical connection between *Sapi* and the *Kai-zé* is evident: *Sapi* came with *Habé*.¹³¹ That explains the relations, but the explanation does not get us far, because to all *Sapi-zé* groups except the one of Buti, *Sapi* is a *Basik-Basik* déma and the *Sapi-zé* a *Basik-Basik* (*Bragai-zé*) subclan.¹³² What is more, there is no question of a slip. The occurrence of a *Sapi-zé* subclan of the *Kai-zé* is substantiated in the story of the canoe related at the end of the present chapter.¹³³ We have no explanation to offer, we can only state the fact that the clans are not the closely-knit and thoroughly organized units they seem to be on the face of it. The rattan *boan* which at one time is associated with the *Samkakai* and at another with the *Kai-zé*,¹³⁴ constitutes another, though less telling, example of the uncertainty with regard to the allegiances of various minor groups.

¹²⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 173 and above, pp. 234 and 263.

¹²⁸ Rep. Depop. Team p. 65.

¹²⁹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 173 jo. IV p. 137.

¹³⁰ Above, p. 92.

¹³¹ Above, p. 274.

¹³² Cf. below, pp. 397, 404 ff. and 422.

¹³³ Below, p. 308.

¹³⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 117.

The clan-myths of the *Sambakakai*. A *déma* very specifically connected with this clan is *Yano*. His name is the secret name of the wallaby and all wallabies are his descendants.¹³⁵ His story opens with a somewhat circumstantial account of an *iwag* at Kaibursé whose name is *Samanimb*. The name is significant, because we found that the same name was given to the wallaby child which was borne to *Aramemb* by *Upikak*;¹³⁶ that the child was a girl may be inferred from the parallel story of *Aramemb* and *Bewra*.¹³⁷ The *Samanimb* of the present story, however, is just an ordinary girl. The first time she meets with *Yano* the latter appears in the guise of a big wallaby. The next day he appears again, but this time as a *miakim*. She invites him to a feast, at the end of which *Yano* whisks her off to the bush. In the story *Yano* changes shape more than once and after some time *Samanimb* decides to run away from him. She goes back to Kaibursé, but *Yano*, having convened all wallaby *déma*, attacks the village with his friends. He seizes *Samanimb* and then all the inhabitants are killed, except a few who escape and change into birds (*gub-a-gub*). *Samanimb* goes with *Yano* and bears him two children, a boy and a girl. Later the two youngsters marry and become the ancestors of all *Sambakakai*-people.

One day *Yano* and *Samanimb* went to the Kumbe river. Being hungry and having nothing to eat, *Yano* told *Samanimb* to make a fire and heat some stones in it. Then he cut some slices from his own body, which *Samanimb* wrapped up in eucalyptus bark and roasted on the hot stones, as the Marind always do. When after some time she undid the wrappings, she found that there were as many roasted wallabies as she had put slices of meat on the fire. After having enjoyed their meal, *Yano* repeated the trick, but this time he smeared the slices of flesh with sperma before handing them to *Samanimb* to have them roasted. When the meat was well done and *Samanimb* opened the eucalyptus bark, many young wallabies lept out. This is the origin of the wallaby and the explanation of its abundance in the Kumbe region. *Yano* gave the new wallabies their names (*Simal*, *Dawilum*, *Diwak*, *Garibut*, etc.), and these are the real names of the wallaby (i.e. the names used in magical formulas).¹³⁸ Later, *Yano* and *Samanimb* pay a visit to *Opeko*. Now both are wallabies and they leap into the *Swar*-canoe to snatch up a sugar-canestalk. Directly afterwards they jump out of

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 107 note 1.

¹³⁶ Above, p. 276; for an alternative reading see p. 279.

¹³⁷ Above, p. 282.

¹³⁸ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 107-109.

the canoe onto the opposite bank of the river. *Mangu*, the crocodile déma, pursues them. They run to the Maro, to Tayam (near the nether end of the river's middle reach), where *Samanimb* has to stay behind because she is pregnant. She remains in hiding, while *Mangu* continues the pursuit of *Yano*, who leaps across the Maro river. After some time the crocodile déma gives up and *Yano* goes westward, returning to Ahiv-zé-miráv, where he has remained up to the present day.¹³⁹

At the end of the relevant chapter Wirz gives some additional information on *Yano*, conducive to fitting the story of this remarkable déma into the general mythological pattern. "The coastal people say that the wallaby déma *Yano* was begotten by *Aramemb* and that *Samanimb* was his mother, whom he married afterwards. Therefore the *Samkakai's* hunting yell is: *Yano uah uzum*, i.e. *Yano's* mother is his wife".¹⁴⁰ From the hunting yell it is perfectly clear that the association of *Yano* with the wallaby produced by *Aramemb* is integrated in mythological history. Even so, the thread connecting *Yano* with the main character of the phratry is a thin one, the more so because *Yano's* story does not conform too well to the character conventionally attributed to the wallaby, which, in the Marind-anim view, is the symbol of cowardice. *Yano* is a fighter, quick to act and relentless in revenge. He does not fit into the general pattern of nature myths.

What remains unclarified is *Yano's* relation with the various subclans of the *Samkakai*. Wirz does not mention a *Yano-rek* subclan, as stands to reason, because in the myth *Yano* is called the forefather of all *Samkakai* and of all wallabies. However, the Report of the Depopulation Team does specify a *Yano-rek* subclan. Apparently the identification of *Yano-rek* and *Samkakai* is not generally accepted. From the story we tend to conclude that *Yano* is associated primarily with the *Samkakai* living between Kaibursé and the Maro river. There is, moreover, the problem of the origin of the *Mad-rek*. *Mad*, their ancestor, is presented as an ancestor even of *Aramemb*.¹⁴¹ He came from Yavar-makan and went along the coast westward to Strait Marianne, turning inland whenever he had to cross a river. From Strait Marianne he made his way back, visiting such places as Galum (Yab-anim), Makléw, and Aboi (middle Bian). In each of these places he stayed for some time and begot children. In Sangasé a son was born whom he called *Bir-évoï*

¹³⁹ Op. cit. pp. 125 and 109; cf. below, p. 378.

¹⁴⁰ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 117 f.

¹⁴¹ Above, p. 286.

(father of the *bir*, a snake-species belonging to the *Geb-zé*, but also a brightly-coloured shell-fish).¹⁴² Little is known of his vicissitudes in the eastern section, but here, too, his descendants are numerous. Meliu, a hamlet of Kaibursé, is called a *Mad-rek* settlement by Wirz.¹⁴³ Other subclans of the *Samkakai* are the *Abade-rek* "who live mainly in Sangasé and neighbouring coastal villages in the west",¹⁴⁴ a communication not wholly confirmed by other data, as the only village where *Abade-rek* are reported to live is Yowid, at a considerable distance west of Sangasé. Yet, their hunting yell *Ngat-a! Abada! Ovyuw-duw!* proves that they hail from Sangasé, because *Ovyuw-duw* refers to a former settlement near Sangasé.¹⁴⁵ Other subclans mentioned by Wirz are the *Alep-rek* of Duv-miráv, and the *Etawar-rek*, a subclan which has now almost become extinct and whose dwelling-place is not mentioned. Two more subclans are specified in the Report of the Depopulation Team, viz. the *Sohi-rek* and the *Arewak-end*,¹⁴⁶ but they are not localized.

In conclusion we may state that the additional information gathered on local groups and their mythology tends to confirm that the relationship between local traditions and general mythology is anything but stringent. In content these local traditions are often more or less accidental and they rarely derive from the mythical central theme as incorporated in the story of the *mayo* and *Aramemb*. We note that *Mad* behaves as an orthodox *déma* of his moiety, travelling along the coast from east to west, and that *Yano* and *Samanimb* are accommodated in the pattern as well as circumstances permitted. However, the numerous inconsistencies suggest that a great variety of mythological materials is being included within the framework of a central mythology which is not always adaptable to local variations.

The clan-myths of the Ndik-end are somewhat more diversified and more general in their implications than those of the clans previously dealt with. The main totem of the clan, the white stork, is in a way the most popular bird among the Marind, who will show signs of enjoyment whenever they see one. The mythological ancestor of the *Ndik-end* is *Wonatai*.¹⁴⁷ As a stork he lived near the swamp in the vicinity of Darir

¹⁴² Geurtjens, Dict. v. *bir*.

¹⁴³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 118.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., IV p. 137.

¹⁴⁵ L.c.

¹⁴⁶ Rep. Depop. Team p. 66.

¹⁴⁷ For the story of *Wonatai* see Wirz, M.A. II pp. 109 ff.

(inland of Sarira), where he used to fish every day. The people of Darir caught the bird by using a ruse and locked him up in a cage, intending to feast on him. The next day the men went out hunting, the women went off to make sago and an old woman was left in charge of the bird. She heard a rattling noise and thought the stork was clattering with his beak, but when at last she went there to make sure, she saw a young man, beautifully adorned, leaving the cage and walking off in a westward direction. All she could do was to cover his footprints with leaves in order to convince the villagers on their return that the stork was not an ordinary bird but a *déma* who could change into a man.

In the meantime *Wonatai*, who had apparently changed again into a stork, had flown to the Maro, alighting on the site of present-day Merauke. People from Buti came paddling up to the spot in a canoe and *Wonatai* changed into a young man who was engaged in chewing *wati*, a drug unknown at the time. He taught the Buti people how to use it and the next day *Wonatai*, changing back into a stork, flew off to Birok near Wendu. Having changed again into a young man, he got married. The first thing he did was to make a *wati* garden and instruct his father-in-law in the art of *wati* planting. For cuttings he used hairs from his armpits. Wirz informs us that the Marind fancy a resemblance between the hairs and the gnarled stem of the kava plant,¹⁴⁸ but Verschueren, confessing his inability to see the likeness, considers this to be a misconception. The Marind, so he says, have the curious habit of pointing at their armpits when asked a question which they cannot answer. The gesture might have been the logical, and to a Marind perfectly intelligible, answer to the question where *Wonatai* had his cuttings from.¹⁴⁹ Though Verschueren's explanation strongly appeals to me, I do not feel justified in accepting it as definite. The hairs from *Wonatai's* armpits play a too important part in the sequel of the story to be explained away in terms of a simple misunderstanding. However that be, a more telling case is the association of stork and *wati*, which is based on the generally recognized resemblance between the salient nodes of the *wati*-stem and the heavy joints in the long legs of the stork.¹⁵⁰ Here in Birok *Wonatai's* wife bore him a son who was conspicuous because of his incontinence; the boy had something of the nature of a bird in him. When the child was old enough to receive his first ornaments, a feast was prepared, but just before the feast *Wonatai*

¹⁴⁸ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 111 note 2.

¹⁴⁹ Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 112.

again changed into a stork and flew off to Domandé, taking with him all the *wati* he had planted. In Domandé *Wonatai* again planted *wati*, using hair from his armpits for cuttings. Later the *wati* was stolen by *Wokabu*, who made off with his booty to Sangasé. *Wonatai* found him out and followed him to Sangasé. He selected a *wati*-stem which had grown from his hair and struck *Wokabu* on the head, which set him reeling because *Ugug*, the *wati*-déma who resided in the plants that had grown from the hair of *Wonatai*'s armpits, took possession of him. Thereupon *Wonatai* changed again into a stork and flew off to Kolepom on Frederik Hendrik Island, where he has been perched on a big stone up to the present day. In a *Zohé* myth *Wonatai* is reported to have paid a visit to Okaba to see the son whom *Hoyom*, the crab déma, had borne him.¹⁵¹ Perhaps this episode should be so inserted into the story as to fall between *Wonatai*'s departure from Sangasé and his ultimate arrival at Kolepom.

Wonatai, then, is the mythical *wati*-bringer and as such he is inseparably connected with all feasts and ceremonies, *wati* being a vital ingredient on any festive occasion. The course he follows is the course of the sun and of *Dawi*, the cassowary déma, proceeding along the shore from east to west. Two other myths dealing with the stork also have a bearing on the socio-mythological system as a whole, though in a completely different way.¹⁵² Both have the friendship and ultimate hostility between stork and eagle as their main themes. In the first the *ndik*-déma is invited by the eagle to kill the latter's wife, who must die because she has found out that eagle and stork are not ordinary people, but déma capable of changing themselves into their respective totem birds. After the killing, the two déma dispute each other the ownership of the cut-off head. The *ndik* flies off with the head, which, in the course of the ensuing fight, falls into a swamp, where the *orib*-déma *Abadu*¹⁵³ appropriates it, because he wishes to bestow the victim's name on his son. Finally, the stork swallows the *orib*-fish and acquires the head. In the alternative story the stork's wife is the victim and the eagle flies off with the head, which, here too, falls into a swamp, where it is seized by the *orib*-déma, who manages to make away with it. In the first story the eagle's wife is called *Issok* and his son *Arembo*, in the second the name of the eagle is *Mentoab*, whose committing adultery with the stork's wife is the cause of the conflict.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 159 and below, p. 344.

¹⁵² Cf. Wirz, op. cit. pp. 113-115.

¹⁵³ Cf. the myth of *Téimbre* on p. 295 above.

Stork and eagle each belong to a different moiety. The eagle is called *kidub* in Marind and identified as *Haliaeetus leucogaster* by various authors. Probably *kidub* is the general term for different species of the genus. According to Verschueren there are three different kinds of *kidub*, the blue one with a white belly (which would be *Haliaeetus leucogaster*), the brown one with black wing-feathers, and the black *kidub* which has a brown, rust-coloured belly and a grayish design in its feathers.¹⁵⁴ However that be, the *kidub-boan* is a clan of the *Bragai-zé* phratry. In the story, stork and eagle apparently act as representatives of their moieties; this is corroborated by another story, the myth of the *Divva-canoe*,¹⁵⁵ in which eagle and stork, visiting the feast of the *déma* at Senayo, sit facing each other on opposite banks of the river just below Senayo. The story adds that the eagle stole sago and afterwards dropped it, the sago then changing into edible clay.¹⁵⁶ The intention to depict the two friends as symbols of opposing moieties is evident. The exact nature of the underlying classification is elucidated by Verschueren, who points out that the Marind see the two friends as strongly resembling each other, while all the same they are wholly different. Just as imperturbably as the *ndik*, quiet and dignified, stands poised on the edge of a pond or of some wash on the coast, so the *kidub* will for hours on end be perched on a treetop nearby. Both pretend complete indifference to what is going on, whereas actually nothing escapes them. Both make their nests in the tops of high trees, and from a distance it is impossible to make out whether it is the nest of a *ndik* or of a *kidub*. Finally, the two birds bear with each other and live as good neighbours, never fighting or even avoiding each other.¹⁵⁷

It is interesting to note that the stork, next to a counterpart in the opposite moiety, also has one in its own clan — the black stork of the *Yawima-rek*. We shall not enter into speculations on the identity of the black stork. Among ornithologists only one variety is known. There may be another one which has escaped registration, or it may be that the black stork belongs to another species. More important to us are the cosmological associations attributed to the two birds by the Marind. Whereas the white stork is associated with the east monsoon, his opposite number has specific connections with the west monsoon. It may

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 113 note 1; Geurtjens, *Dict. v. kidoeb*; V. d. Kolk & Vertenten, *Woordenboek v. arend*; Verschueren, *Letters VIII* p. 8.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. below, p. 311.

¹⁵⁶ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 140.

¹⁵⁷ Verschueren, *Letters VIII* p. 8.

be significant that the black stork is associated with a number of black birds, even though there is little consistency in this association, which is confined to those birds originating from the *aroi-patur* and *wokrévid* among *Yawima's* sons. The other *Yawima-rek* birds are not black. The crane (*darau*), for one thing, is grey.

That so much attention is paid to the dualism presented by the myth of the stork and the eagle is not wholly due to an academic interest in classificatory systems. On the contrary, in the social systems of this part of New Guinea the stork is an oft-recurring moiety symbol. In the southern part of the upper Bian area we found an opposition of *Ndik-end* and *Kai-zé*, on the upper Buraka one of *Ndik-end* and *Zohé*, and among the Boadzi the two opposites are the *Kaukwin* and the *Mugav*, with stork and cassowary as their main representatives.¹⁵⁸ Among the coastal Marind stork and cassowary belong to the same phratry; if there is a contrast between the two, it is one within the phratry, which is of minor importance from a classificatory point of view. There is, within the phratry, no clear-cut dichotomy. The dualism in the phratry's various associations does not coincide with the contrast between cassowary and stork. It manifests itself alternately in the person of *Aramemb* and in the totem-relations of the two clans under discussion, that is, among the *Kai-zé* in the dualism of fire and crocodile (*Ugu*) and among the *Ndik-end* in the contrast between white stork and black stork. It is out of the question that cassowary and stork should symbolize a specific opposition. All we can say is that the cassowary is more intimately connected with fire (and thereby with the sun), whereas his brother, the stork, is more specifically associated with initiation, a *mit-war*, i.e. a stork proper, being a mature, initiated man, and a *noh-war*, a new stork, a newly initiated one. Both aspects, that of fire and sun and that of initiation, are present in the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*, but they are not contrasting aspects. Contrasting symbols are white stork and black stork, as well as white stork and eagle. We find that, in the whole area, the stork is a popular symbol, often used in representations of social contrasts. It is suggested that the story of the stork and the eagle holds a reminiscence of the moiety-structure.

The religious associations of the stork among the Marind-anim differ from those attributed to the representative of their stork clan by neighbouring tribes. Among the Marind the stork is associated with initiation brought to completion. In the second place, the stork is the *wati-*

¹⁵⁸ Above, pp. 102, 81 and 106.

bringer. Among the upper Bian people *Endalo*, the *Ndik-end* ancestor, is also the *wati*-bringer.¹⁵⁹ He even introduces betel-chewing.¹⁶⁰ In other respects, however, *Endalo* does not at all resemble a coastal *Ndik-end* *déma*. He comes from the Digul, from the Kia river and, going eastward, crosses the Eli river to reach the upper Bian area. There he meets *Ginggini*, who comes from the Kumbe river. *Endalo* has two women and he has dogs; *Ginggini*, on the contrary, has to make do with a number of cuscus instead of dogs and has to content himself with a bamboo as a substitute for a wife. He is a tall, big man who is thrown into a fit of frantic erotic excitement when he meets *Endalo* and sees his wives. *Endalo* gives him one of his women and some of his dogs. Materially the story is an alternative reading of the story of *Geb* and *Mahu*, in which *Endalo*, the *Ndik-end* ancestor, who comes from the west, stands for *Mahu*, and *Ginggini*, who came from the east, for *Geb*. The underlying systems of classification are widely deviant.

We have no information whatsoever on the *Endalo* (or *Endaro*) who is the ancestor of the *Endalo-rek* or *Walakwin*.¹⁶¹ A few exceptions apart, we do not know either who were the ancestors of the other subclans mentioned in annex IV, nor do we dispose of information on the subclans connected with *Wonatai's* son *Mungus*.¹⁶² *Mungus* is the ancestor of the *Ndik-end* in the region of the lower Eli, the Buraka, and Wamal. His name suggests an association with the big crab (*ngus*), which is a *Zohé*-totem, but in the absence of additional comment no conclusions can be drawn. The list of subclans as given by Wirz (*Araku-end*, *Onan-rek*, *Endaro-rek*, *Dapram-rek*, *Anau-rek*) differs widely from the one drawn up by the Depopulation Team (*Wonatai-rek*, *Orakwin*, *Onan-rek*, *Kana-rek*). The *Orakwin* are identical with the *Endaro-rek*, the *Onan-rek* figure in both lists, and *Wonatai-rek* is a collective term for all, or at least some, of the subclans mentioned by Wirz. We are not quite sure, however; Wirz, too, complains of inadequate information on this point.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, his statement that *Wonatai* is the ancestor of the *Ndik-end*, who are subdivided into numerous subclans,¹⁶⁴ is borne out by the important part *Wonatai* plays in mythical history. It seems probable that the *Wonatai-rek* are not just a subclan among several others, but rather that this is the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 74.

¹⁶⁰ Van Baal, TBG 1940 pp. 579 f.

¹⁶¹ The *Ndik-end* subclan discussed on pp. 73 ff.

¹⁶² Cf. the myth of the crab *déma*, below, p. 344.

¹⁶³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 118.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 112.

common name of at least a number of subclans or sub-subclans. Apart from the *Yawima-rek*, who are a group very much on their own, definite information is available only with regard to the *Wonatai-rek* and the *Tab-rek*. The former having been discussed in the foregoing pages, we may confine ourselves to the latter. The *déma* of this subclan is, curiously enough, not associated with a bird, but with the tortoise (*gaw*) and the iguana (*kadivuk*). The *kadivuk* has been listed in annex IV as both a *Kai-zé* and a *Ndik-end* totem. Taking into account its relation with *Habé*, *Upikak* and *Aramemb*, it is probably more correct to include the iguana among the totems of the phratry as a whole. The special relationship of iguana and tortoise with the *Ndik-end* is based on a similarity; both animals have a roll in their gait, like a man who is drunk with *wati*. As it is, the relevant myth deals with a *déma*, *Tab* or *Mon*, who could change alternately into a tortoise and an iguana and who reeled because of excessive *wati*-drinking. The story has it that his club was stolen. He retrieved his property and killed the thief and all the inmates of his house.¹⁶⁵

In conclusion we state that basically the interconnection of the three main clans of the phratry is a relatively loose one. *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end* are related by their common birth from *Ualiwamb*, but the initial relationship has not been elaborated by myths emphasizing the bond between the two clans. Mythical relations between the two clans are confined to the role of the iguana, the common association with sleeping (which contains a reference to celebrations and feasts) and the rather equivocal reference to the *orib-déma*. *Aramemb* plays an important part in the story of the two birds. In other respects his relations with them are rather circumscribed, those with the *Kai-zé* (his dealings with *Habé* and *Harau*) being somewhat more conspicuous than his links with the *Ndik-end*. His contacts with the latter are limited to his relations with *Yawima* and the occasional identification of *Aramemb* and the stork *Yogum*, a rather dubious connection because of the affinity of *Yogum* and *kambara*. An affirmation of the assumption that *Aramemb* is closer with the *Kai-zé* and the *Samkakai* than with the *Ndik-end* is found in the statement by the *Ori-rek* (who count *Aramemb* among their *déma*) that their place is between the *Mahu-zé* on the one hand and the *Kai-zé-Samkakai* on the other,¹⁶⁶ the latter in this case being taken

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. below, p. 332.

together as a unit. A similar argument may be derived from Wirz,¹⁶⁷ who points out that the natives on various occasions and in villages widely apart explained the relationships between the different clans by means of a canoe which they traced in the sand, assigning to each clan its place in the vessel. The canoe represented the *déma* on their journey westward. The canoe of the phratry of *Aramemb* was visualized as having a fire in the bow with the smoke blown ahead. Behind the fire was the cassowary, then *Dawi* and his descendants, next the rattan *déma*, the wallaby *déma* and, finally, the pig *déma*. We note that the stork is not mentioned at all, that the event takes place during the east monsoon (the smoke is blown ahead and it is stated that the *déma* go westward), that the order in which the inmates are seated in the canoe is evidently one of rank, and that the pig, be it last of all, is again allocated a place of its own in the phratry.

In spite of all this it is out of the question that the opposition of the *Ndik-end* on the one hand and the *Kai-zé* and *Samkakai* on the other could be described as a dichotomy. With equal right we may oppose the *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end*, twin-brothers in mythical history, to the *Samkakai*, whose relationship with *Aramemb* is far closer than that of the other clans. *Aramemb* is, in fact, a real *Samkakai* himself because he is a descendant of *Mad* and the father of alternately *Yano* and *Samanimb*. A wallaby is always with him and in his own behaviour the cowardice of the *saham* (wallaby) is observable. However, this same *Aramemb* is also the great initiator and it is this function which draws him closer to the *Ndik-end* than to either of the other two clans. The initiates are storks; *mit-war* and *noh-war*. Any attempt to create a dichotomy by setting one of the three clans against the other two is futile. Weak though the interconnection of the three clans of the phratry may seem, it is strong enough to make for what is in fact an indivisible whole.

¹⁶⁷ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 101.

CHAPTER VII

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE MAHU-ZÉ PHRATRY

In the mythology of the *Mahu-zé*-phratry there is neither a leading mythical hero nor a leading theme which may serve as a rallying point for the various stories. The *Mahu-zé* constitute a seemingly rather incoherent whole. The logic of their mutual connections is rooted in what to the reader appear as arbitrarily selected resemblances between totems, but which, for the Marind, are important means of classifying the various phenomena of his world. On closer examination this order of classification reveals a logic of its own. It has its guiding principles, one of which is the contrast of coast and interior, a contrast which coincides with that between dry land and swamp, between sand and mud, between coconut and sago. Another important clue to understanding *Mahu-zé* mythology is the behaviour and general appearance of the dog. The dog's big genitals, its lasciviousness, its uncouth behaviour, its sniffing at and occasional eating of excrements (to the Marind, who loathes excrements, a conspicuous trait) and its manifest fertility set a pattern to the way of life of a *Mahu-zé* déma.

In respect of social organization the *Mahu-zé* are contrasted with the *Geb-zé*. *Geb* and *Mahu* (or *Sami*) are the first ancestors of the tribe and a reference to these names implies a reference to moiety-dichotomy. It is also a contrast, already alluded to, between two main crops grown by the Marind-anim, the coconut and the sago. The preparation of sago is one of the women's tasks and, indeed, their most important one. It is interesting to note that when preparing their meals the Marind mix sago with coconut. The association of the latter with the *Geb-zé* and of the former with the *Mahu-zé* again sets a pattern. It is certainly not by accident that the *Mahu-zé* moiety, which is so closely associated with the sago, the crop in the women's care, has in the matter of leadership in ritual to yield to the moiety connected with the sun and its vegetable symbol, the coconut, which is also a human head.

In a previous chapter we discussed the notion of rank among the

Marind-anim and we concluded that, though the word rank implies a greater variation in the degree of social esteem accorded to the different phratries than can be accounted for, the *Geb-zé* certainly take precedence over the *Mahu-zé*.¹ Marind-anim cosmology gives more substance to this differentiation in rank. The *Geb-zé* are associated with the sandy, coconut-grown coast, the *Mahu-zé* with the interior, and we found that, when opposing coast and interior, precedence is given to the former. The coast is definitely superior.² The association of the *Mahu-zé* with an excrement-eating animal is another contributory element in the concept of superior-inferior underlying the principles of Marind-anim classification (e.g. in the contrast between the monsoons and in that between day and night). The social effect of the contrast is nominal only; it is counterbalanced by a system of sister-exchange and exogamy presupposing a notion of strict equality between the bartering partners. It is probably not by accident that it was the earlier authors who observed a differentiation in social precedence which they interpreted as a stratification in rank, whereas it escaped the notice of later visitors, who were in a better position to meet the people than their predecessors. With the decay of ritual the motives for rank-differentiation became less stringent, while the marriage-system, implying ideas of social equality, perpetuated its effect on social intercourse. We have to admit that in Marind-anim religion the obvious tendency toward contrasting superior and inferior was held in check by social forces resulting in equalitarianism, preventing the leading clans from developing into monopoly-holding castes. After all, each of the groups, those belonging to the *Mahu-zé* moiety included, had its own function in ritual, from which it could not be relieved. Even ceremonial leadership was not an absolute monopoly. In spite of the fact that in myth everything connected with religious acts and ceremonies — preparatory activities such as hunting and sago-making included — is associated primarily with the *Geb-zé* moiety, the other moiety has retained its own specific functions, its own role in ritual. That role may be an important one, as is exemplified by the part of the *Mahu-zé* in a given stage of the *sosom*-rites.³

In the successive sections of this chapter we shall deviate from our customary procedure of presenting the *mayo* myths first; the two myths of this description belonging to the mythological cycle of the

¹ Cf. above, p. 98.

² Ibid. p. 212.

³ Below, p. 483.

Mahu-zé are of the return-from-the-*mayo* type and are actually nothing more than introductions to the various myths of the specific clan. Instead, we shall follow the order in which they have been published in our main source, Wirz's *Marind-anim*, and consequently we start with the myths of the clan which, ostensibly, might have a specific connection with the *sosom*-rites.

1. MYTHS OF THE DIWA-REK

Another name for the *Diwa-rek* clan is *uwik-boan*, that is, penis clan, because the penis is their main totem, a relationship which they do not try to gloss over. Their hunting yell is *Yaba uwik! Yaba uwik!*, i.e. big penis.⁴ A penis of immoderate dimensions provides, indeed, the main theme of the mythology of this clan, as will appear presently. We start with the principal myth of the clan, the story of the *Diwa* canoe.⁵

A number of *déma* came by canoe from the *mayo* in *Yavar-makan*. Among them were *Zari*, *Kindir*, *Wapé*, *Watu*, *Wimas*, *Berua* and others. Their names are unimportant and different informants mention different names. In front sat a *déma*-bird, *Yowi*, the white heron,⁶ and the canoe was loaded to capacity with victuals. The name of the canoe was *Diwa*. The *déma* went up the *Torassi* river and then, crossing the inundated land, they made their way to the *Wangu* river, a tributary of the middle *Maro*, which they descended as far as *Senayo*. Here the *déma* made a big feast, actually the same feast as the one at which *Harau's* marriage with *Elme* was celebrated by *otiv-bombari*.⁷ The stork and the eagle also attended the feast,⁸ but the present myth does not refer to these events. The main character is *Yugil*, who is also called *Diwa* and thus identified with the canoe. *Yugil's* genitals were of an extraordinary size; he had to carry his penis slung over his shoulder. *Yugil* had made the trip by land and on his arrival in the neighbourhood of *Senayo* an old woman kindly ferried him across the *Maro* in her canoe. The old woman sat in front, her daughter in the

⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 163.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 139-142.

⁶ The white heron is not mentioned in the list of *Da-Sami* (*Mahu-zé*) totems in Wirz, M.A. II p. 168. That the bird should be included among the totems of the phratry as a whole may be inferred from its role in the present myth and in that of *Wokabu*. See below, p. 337.

⁷ Above, p. 280.

⁸ Ibid. p. 304.

middle and *Yugil* aft. During the trip *Yugil* molested the girl with his long penis, but the mother took a piece of sago-leaf sheath (*dapa*) and cut off the penis, which dropped overboard. Shrieking with pain *Yugil* continued on his journey to Senayo, where the *Diwa*-canoe arrived soon afterwards.

After the feast the *déma* proceeded again downstream and *Yugil* went with them. *Zawi* (*Zari*?) had to get off because he had eaten too much sago and the canoe became overloaded. Not far below Senayo the canoe struck upon the cut-off penis of *Yugil*, which stuck to the bow and was thus carried down the river to the sea. After some time another *déma* had to be turned out because he wanted to eat himself. He is the ancestor of the *Emér-anim*, the Hunger-people, according to Wirz a clan which is now extinct, though it is more likely that they have always been mere story-folk.⁹ *Emér-anem* is a term of abuse giving serious offence, used only in anger and then preferably in respect of one who was adopted as a child after having been captured on a headhunting raid.¹⁰ The association with the *Emér-anim* seems rather a social disqualification.

Further downstream something more serious occurred; a sea-snake bearing the name of *Salendo* approached the canoe and stirred up a strong eddy. The canoe, which slowly followed *Salendo* down the river, had to be relieved of its load and successively a sago-pounder, an old woman (who changed into a tortoise), a couple of fishes (*hara* and *karambu*, the latter a member of the *puntius* family¹¹) and a big load of sago were thrown out. The places where they were jettisoned abound in fish and in sago groves. Further downstream, a big crocodile left the canoe; the spot is now the *déma-miráv* of a crocodile *déma*. Next, a *wokraved* who had gone ashore to urinate was left behind on the land, where he has remained as a *déma* ever since. Yet another *wokraved* was marooned; he was a *Bragai-zé* and on that spot there has since been a betel *déma*, betel being a main totem of the *Bragai-zé*. Subsequently the *Kai-zé* *déma* threw out a lot of sago, which is why the *Kai-zé* of Urumb have extensive sago groves there. Then, at Sirapu, a little distance upstream from Merauke, on the opposite bank, *Salendo* reappeared and assailed the canoe, which turned upside down. One *déma* called *Dabad* had leapt overboard the moment he saw *Salendo*

⁹ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. p. 140.

¹⁰ Vertenten, J.P. 1923 p. 630.

¹¹ According to Geurtjens *hara* is a tree bearing edible fruits, *Terminalia catappa*. *Karambu* is a fish, a *puntius* spec. Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.

approaching the canoe, but he could not make the river-bank and he was carried off towards the sea. He is now a *déma* who lives in a sand-bank in the river-mouth. The other *déma* clung to the canoe, which they managed to bring ashore. Shortly afterwards the current tore the canoe from its moorings and carried it off, leaving the *déma* at Sirapu, where they have remained up to the present day, the spot being avoided as a *déma*-spot. However, a *wokraved* followed the canoe, which was borne off towards the sea, to be washed ashore near Borem (near Sëpadim). Here the canoe got adrift again; entering a small stream, it floated further and further into the interior. It was carried back to the Maro river and, riding the in-coming tide, was pushed up-river as far as the Wangu, where it came to a final halt, a not wholly uncommon achievement, as the tidal current reaches very far inland.¹² Long before, the *wokraved* had given up his pursuit and turned into a *wokraved-déma*. As to *Salendo*, who had caused all this trouble, he swam to Anasai and entered a swamp called Mayo, where he still resides. *Yugil's* penis was washed ashore at Kai-a-Kai, near Borem. Up to the present day a *ngor-uvik-déma*, a 'déma of the top of a penis', has resided there in a swamp. *Yugil*, who is also called the *mit-uvik-déma*, 'the déma of the penis-stumb', stayed with the other *déma* at Sirapu. He is the ancestor of the *Diwa-rek boan*, a big clan which has most of its members in Urumb, though *Diwa-rek* are also found in neighbouring villages such as Noh-otiv and Kuprik. Other villages where *Diwa-rek* are settled are Yobar (near Merauke), Makalin (western section) and Saror and Senam in the Kunbe valley.¹³

The story is a curious one. The canoe follows a rather unusual course and it holds not only clanmates, but also members of other clans and even of the other moiety. Expressis verbis, mention is made of a *Bragai-zé wokraved* and of *Kai-zé déma*; an old woman is changed into a tortoise (*gaw*), which is a *Ndik-end* totem. Nevertheless, emphasis is given to sago and fish, more specifically freshwater fish. Wirz does not include these fishes in his list of totems, but it is probable that they should be listed as such. It is interesting to note that Vertenten, in his description of the dramatization of the myth on the occasion of a *déma-wir*, mentions the *déma Sok* (*sok* is the headhunter's bamboo knife with which he cuts off the victim's head) and the stork

¹² Verschueren, Letters IX p. 3.

¹³ Cf. annex V and Wirz, M.A. II pp. 139-142, III pp. 170 f., 173 ff. In Part III of his book Wirz does not mention the *Diwa-rek* of Noh-otiv. See also below, p. 322.

as inmates of the canoe.¹⁴ Déma *Sok's* presence can be accounted for by the fact that *Mahu* is an important headhunter,¹⁵ but where the stork comes in is difficult to explain. Another conspicuous feature is the number of *wokrévid*, three in all, who play a part in the story. One of them is much attached to the *Diwa*-canoe, which he endeavours to follow after the final catastrophe in which the déma were washed ashore. Before discussing these points, we must occupy ourselves with the chief character of the story, whose fate strongly reminds us of *Sosom*, alias *Tépo-anem*, though he does not resemble him closely enough to suggest identity.

The size of *Yugil's* penis is more explicitly emphasized than in the case of *Sosom*. The similarity between *Yugil* and *Sosom* is most telling in the coastal version of the *Sosom* myth.¹⁶ Our present story even holds the suggestion that *Yugil's* penis, like that of *Sosom*, became a snake. It might be identical with *Salendo* the water-snake. Formerly, I accepted such identity as probable¹⁷ but on reconsidering the evidence I find that there is hardly any argument in favour, except that it may conveniently serve as a pointer to the identity of *Yugil* and *Sosom*.¹⁸ The story of *Yugil* states explicitly that *Salendo* and *Yugil's* penis find a last refuge each in a different place, the one west, the other east of the Maro river. In the elaborate description of *Salendo* as given by Wirz the snake is presented as resembling a crocodile ("only his eyes bulged above the water like those of a crocodile"),¹⁹ an apt simile when we consider the way in which *Salendo* is represented in ritual. The effigy of *Salendo*, exhibited on the occasion of a déma-*wir* witnessed by Wirz, is that of a snake which is more like a crocodile than a phallus.²⁰ In an alternative reading of the myth given by Vertenten, *Salendo* is called a sea serpent with tusks.²¹ The notion that *Yugil's* penis became a snake has to be dropped. It is just a long, a too long penis, which was cut off. Even so, the myth is remarkable

¹⁴ Vertenten, I.L. IV p. 145.

¹⁵ Below, p. 324.

¹⁶ Above, pp. 270 f.

¹⁷ Cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 114 note 362.

¹⁸ Identity of penis and snake is suggested also in the myth of *Sobra* (Wirz, M.A. II p. 190). A snake coiling on *Sobra's* head tries to plug its tail into her anus. Really intriguing is that here again the symbolism is applied to a homosexual context.

¹⁹ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 141.

²⁰ *Ibid.* IV p. 53, Tafel 38 fig. 2.

²¹ Vertenten, I.L. IV pp. 144 f.

enough, as the resulting malformation seems to be fundamental for this phratry. The story of *Yugil* has its parallels.

In the first place, there is the myth of *Awassra*, another *déma* of the *urik-boan*.²² *Awassra* was born near Senam (Kumbe valley) in the spathe of a nibung palm. One day two *izag* on their way to the gardens passed under the palm tree and heard a child crying. Looking up into the tree they perceived a small, light-coloured boy in a spathe. One of the girls climbed the tree and got hold of the boy, whom she brought to the village, where he was given the name of *Awassra*. Growing up, his penis developed into an organ of extraordinary length and the boy seduced the girls and women of the village. Then the men sent him away and *Awassra* went to Aboi on the middle Bian. Some informants tell us that an old woman cut off his penis when ferrying him across the river, because he had molested her daughter, just as in the story of *Yugil*. In Aboi *Awassra* begot offspring, but he went to Tumid on the Eli river, where he arrived while a feast was in progress. *Awassra* went after the girls, whom he seduced, but he was not aware of it when one of them robbed him of his club. Wirz uses the word *wagané* without making it clear whether it actually was an egg-headed club which he meant, a question to which we shall revert presently. Thereupon *Awassra* took an octopus, which he roasted and ornamented with a great number of feathers. Then he tied a string to it and stealthily approaching the dancers, whirled the octopus on the string and hurled it into the air so that it came down right on top of the dancing boys and girls. Frightened, they scattered and fled, crying *uai-ah*. The octopus had been changed into an *uai*, a meteor or shooting star, and *Awassra* recovered his club. The octopus and the meteor (*uai*) are totems of the *Awassra-end*, a subclan of the penis clan.

The story has several interesting points. Nibung-spathe is a frequently applied means for wrapping up parcels and it also provides the material for making a kind of tray in which sago is kneaded.²³ The last-mentioned aspect is important, because a boy peeping out of a basket is a fairly common moon-symbol. Among the Kiwai the moon, *Ganumi*, peeps out of the basket in which his mother carries him. The whiteness of his face is the effect of contact with sago flour. The association of sago and a white-powdered face is found also in alternative readings. According to one of these *Ganumi* was caught by a number of women

²² Wirz, M.A. II pp. 142 ff.

²³ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *soté*.

and girls when they found him living high up in a cluster of sago trees.²⁴ Another reading has it that the moon on its nocturnal wanderings²⁵ carries a basket full of sago. What is more, *Ganumi* committed incest with his mother. This incest is even a main motive in the readings of the moon-myth reported by Landtman in his Folktales.²⁶ The specific relationship of the moon with the nibung palm is expressed in the Mimika moon-myth: the thief who carries the moon in a basket climbs a nibung palm, which grows higher and higher till finally the man with his moon-basket has reached the sky.²⁷ Moon-myths from New Guinea's northcoast have similar motives; among the Waropen the moon commits incest with his mother;²⁸ in the area east of Aítape the moon is a sago-ball which had been kept hidden in a basket.²⁹ The instances quoted represent only an arbitrary selection made from literature ready to hand. A comparative study of moon-myths in New Guinea is not our intention. The examples suffice to prove that the case of *Awassra* is, indeed, strongly suggestive of a moon-myth. Almost all the essentials are there: a nibung palm, a basket and a relationship with sago. Lacking only is the mother-son incest, which, however, constitutes a leading motive in the myths of the closely related *Mahu-zé* clan. In the mythology of this clan one story, that of *Doreh*, strongly reminds us of a moon-myth, and in this case the connection with mother-son incest is much closer.³⁰ Does it imply that *Awassra* has to be interpreted as a moon-symbol? Obviously, this would take us one step beyond the limits of established fact. The identifications of the moon with *Geb*, with a ringworm-infested boy and, occasionally, with *Kuper-sav*, are too explicitly formulated and too generally known to allow of such an explanation of *Awassra's* story. An interpretation of this kind ought to be supported by data proving that the Marind are aware of a specific relationship between *Awassra* and the moon. Such data are lacking and the accepted mythological interpretation of the moon being quite different, it is improbable that the Marind should be aware of the moon-symbolism inherent in *Awassra's* story. There is additional reason for a cautious approach to this kind of explanation. One of the aspects of the moon-complex, the mother-son incest, is also

²⁴ Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* p. 101.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 52.

²⁶ Landtman, *Folktales* nrs. 453, 454.

²⁷ Pouwer, *Mimika-cultuur* pp. 115 and 192.

²⁸ Held, *Papuans of Waropen* p. 339; *Waropense Teksten* pp. 93 ff.

²⁹ Meyer, *Anthr.* 1932 pp. 428 f.

³⁰ Cf. below, p. 329.

associated with the *Sambakai* without containing even the slightest hint that there is a connection with the moon.³¹ However, in the case of the *Mahu-zé* the associations with 'moon-aspects' are so frequent that we must make allowance for the possibility and even the probability that in an earlier phase the moon and the *uzik-boan*, or, as the case may be, the *Mahu-zé* phratry, were more closely and more overtly connected than they are to-day.

In other respects *Awassra's* story runs parallel to that of *Yugil*, while the episode in Tumid reminds us of *Aramemb's* performance at Brawa, when he whirled his club into the air and the weapon came down in the shape of a meteor,³² at least if we may take it for granted that in this case the word *wagané* has been correctly used, i.e. to denote an egg-headed club. Though we have no certainty on this point, it could hardly be otherwise. It would be very improbable, indeed, for a *déma* like *Awassra-with-the-very-long-penis* to be represented carrying a disc-headed club, which is a female symbol.³³ Assuming that his club is, actually, an egg-headed one, we note that the analogy with the story of *Aramemb* is reversed: *Aramemb* throws his club and, when it has come down as a meteor, leaves it behind; *Awassra* has his club taken away from him and, after having thrown his decorated octopus, which plunges down as a meteor, recovers the stolen weapon. It is impossible to explain the octopus as a kind of bullroarer; it is whirled at the end of a string, but there the similarity with a bullroarer ends. The native drawing of the weird instrument as published by Wirz settles everything, it does not even bear a remote resemblance to a bullroarer.³⁴ In the story it is not the octopus that is important, but the missing club, which, if it is of the egg-headed kind, is a penis. In other words, the story of *Awassra* and the octopus is a mild variant of the story of *Awassra* and the old woman. In the latter *Awassra* is castrated, forever to remain so; in the former, in which a girl robs him of his club, he is temporarily emasculated. In the end he recovers the club (penis). The story of *Awassra*, like the story of *Yugil*, is a magnificent example of castration anxiety; it all starts with an excessively big genital, and ends up in disaster. The story creates a setting in which castration anxiety is the natural thing to expect.

³¹ Cf. above, p. 300.

³² Ibid. p. 284.

³³ Cf. above, p. 273. Yet, it might have been a disc-headed club. Cf. below, p. 759 note 284.

³⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 143.

If ever there was a myth provocative of a Freudian interpretation, it is this one. It is not only the obvious content of the story, nor the fact that the myth is the property of a clan which calls itself after the male genital, but also the fact that we find castration anxiety expressed in an almost classic form in one of the myths of the *Mahu-zé* clan, who are very closely related to the penis *boan* because of the dog's (and *Mahu's*) big genitals. The story runs as follows.³⁵

Béto, a *Mahu-zé* déma, lived near Wendu. He caught a *nambimb*-fish and while he was eating it, a hawk (*kéké*) suddenly swept down and snatched his *kékéwin*, the shell worn by Marind men just over that part of the girdle which keeps the foreskin pressed tightly against the abdomen when the penis is drawn up. *Béto* pursued the bird, but all in vain. At last the bird dropped the shell, which crashed to pieces. It was getting late and *Béto* went to his friend *Na-anem* (i.e. Excrement-man) to spend the night in his house. *Na-anem* had already gone to sleep and *Béto* had to rap on the door. *Na-anem* answered the knocking and when *Béto* entered, a *hais* (spirit of the dead) slipped in with him. The moment *Béto* lay down, the *hais* attacked and strangled him. Then *Béto* woke up, he had only dreamt of the hawk which stole his girdle-shell.

For the present, the question why the hawk is a totem of the *Mahu-zé* may be passed over. More important is Wirz's comment that the *hais* is the hawk because there is an analogy between the behaviour of a ghost and that of the grey-brown bird in that they will both come out of nowhere and vanish again with the same eerie suddenness. All in all, the myth is an almost perfect example of a nightmare with castration anxiety as its main motive; that is, if we may call it a myth, which is doubtful. Verschueren strongly objects; he heard the story told on several occasions, though never in the way a myth is presented, but always in the manner of a story drawing roars of laughter. He adds that the detail of the closed door savours of modern influences.³⁶ Yet, the fact remains that the story is explicitly connected with the *Mahu-zé*, an association to which substance is lent by the connection with the hawk and the use of the name *Na-anem*, a typical *Mahu-zé* name.³⁷ The association of this particular dream with the *Mahu-zé* emphasizes the correlation of these clans with features belonging to

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 145 f.

³⁶ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 3.

³⁷ Ibid.

the castration complex. Of course, we do not mean to say that castration anxiety is an inhibition specific of the *Diwa-rek* and *Mahu-zé* clans-people, since this interpretation would overlook the fundamental similarity of the conditions of their life and the life of the members of other clans. The facts are confined to the association of the clans with certain features of a castration complex. That leaves us with the problem of the departmentalization of religious and other experience in accordance with a system of social classification, but that is a general problem of Marind-anim mythology which must be discussed in a broader context. Suffice it to establish that in the myths of this group castration anxiety prevails.

When we accept this trait as a leading motive, we need not wonder any more at the *wokrévid* repeatedly appearing in the myth of the *Diwa-canoe*. They are quite in place there because in homosexual intercourse they are the women, in a Freudian context the castrates. The *wokrévid* are relevant in more than one way. Their black paint and dirt conform with the general character of this phratry, which is associated with excrements.³⁸

Before we conclude our discussion of the present theme, we have to pay attention to another *déma*, *Konai-mit*, whom I presented as an important *Mahu-zé* *déma* in my first study of the Marind-anim.³⁹ To-day I think this was on insufficient grounds, but since at one time I laid so much stress on the role of this *déma*, I cannot avoid going deeper into the question now. Our information concerning this *déma* comes mainly from Viegen. We have already met him as the coconut-stealing *Konaim-anem* of Wendu.⁴⁰ Wirz describes him as a *déma* whose belly is swollen as a result of excessive consumption of coconuts. In ritual he is represented in a wooden image with a pot-belly and a very big, detachable penis.⁴¹ At the end of the ritual performance an *iwag* walks up to him and asks: "*Konaim-anem*, why do you swallow all our coconuts?" Viegen greatly emphasized the role of this *déma* in Marind-anim thought, in which I followed him in my Godsdienst, when owing to a misreading of the map I identified the *déma* with *Yugil*. *Konai-mit* or *Konaim-anem* resides at Wendu, in the immediate vicinity of the site selected by the missionaries for their church.⁴² This

³⁸ Cf. above, p. 149, and below, pp. 351 f.

³⁹ Van Baal, Godsdienst pp. 112 ff.

⁴⁰ Above, p. 250.

⁴¹ Cf. Wirz, M.A. IV p. 52, Tafel 35.

⁴² Viegen, Ann. 1915 p. 346.

circumstance could easily lead a missionary stationed at Wendu to overevaluate the *déma's* relative importance, and this is what happened to Viegen. To an outsider who had never visited New Guinea, the statement that *Konai-mit* resided at Wendu was confusing, because the map in the *Verslag v. d. Militaire Exploratie* has two places by that name, one on the coast, which is the actual scene of the myth, and another in the immediate vicinity of what on Wirz's map is the site of Sirapu, the residence of *Yugil* and the *déma* of the *Diwa*-canoe. This other Wendu is a big coconut garden on the right bank of the Maro, just above Sirapu. Everything fell so nicely into place that I confounded the two Wendu and had *Konai-mit* reside next to Sirapu on the river-bank instead of on the coast, where he belongs.

The effigy of *Konai-mit* has an inordinately large penis, which is separable from the body. A photograph made by Viegen shows the *déma* with the detached penis propped against the image. At one end the penis is shaped like a human head, according to Viegen a representation of the reversed head, one of the manifestations of the head of *Geb*.⁴³ The fact that his big belly marks *Konai-mit* as a pregnant man leads Viegen into rather far-fetched speculations, which must be set aside as insufficiently justified. We happen to have some information with regard to the motives that induced him to set such a high value on inversion as a leading principle in Marind-anim religious speculation. As it is, he told the devoted readers of the *Annalen*.⁴⁴ Certain informants had led him to assume that *Konai-mit* was a hunch-back, until one day he was shown the *déma's* true image. Discussing the misdirection with his informants, he was told that the story had been inverted. Viegen continues by citing other examples of inversion. All this undoubtedly contributed to his notion of *Konai-mit* as a very important *déma*, a personification of the principle of inversion. A good many years afterwards, in an interview I had with him, he even identified *Konai-mit* with the husband of *Kanis-iwag*, that is, *Uaba*. All this seems hardly justified. His communications are important on a wholly different count: they do not explain anything regarding *Konai-mit*, but they do prove that the Marind-anim apply inversion as a means of expression in the religious sphere.

Though *Konai-mit* cannot be accepted as a very important character in Marind-anim mythology, we have to admit that his curious physical

⁴³ Cf. above, pp. 223 f.

⁴⁴ *Ann.*, 1.c.

malformations qualify him for membership of the *Mahu-zé* phratry. The fact that he is a thief is another argument in favour; among the *déma* of this moiety there are notorious thieves such as *Wokabu* the sago *déma*, and the eagle *déma*. Another indication is that, according to Viegen, in the ceremonies a girl who is continuously eating sago carries his image. Apparently this again is an unchecked generalization, because on the occasion of a *déma-wir* witnessed by Wirz it was a man who filled this function.⁴⁵ Formerly, I thought a final argument for *Konaim-anem's* or *Konai-mit's* association with the *Mahu-zé* phratry was to be found in the *déma's* name. *Konai* means black and *mit*, used as a suffix, usually stands for unto, toward. However, it does not make much sense and, even if we should translate the name by Black One or something of the kind, we still have to explain why the image photographed by Wirz does not seem to be black at all. The photograph that was once given to me by Viegen having got lost sometime during the last world-war, verification is impossible and I think that, after all, the name does not provide us with any valid argument. It may well be that the version of the name as given by Wirz is more correct and that we have to accept the latter's explanation, viz. that it refers to a place called *Konaim*, the place where the *déma* actually resides.

The meagre result of this long digression is the emergence of yet another semi-castrate as a dubious candidate for membership of either the *Diwa-rek* clan or the *Mahu-zé* phratry. Probably he is not a *Mahu-zé* at all, but a *Geb-zé*. He is always in the coconut gardens, stealing nuts. After all, castration also befalls *Sosom*, and yet this does not entitle us to identify the latter with the castrates of the *Mahu-zé* phratry. There is less specific emphasis on the size of *Sosom's* genitals, and in other respects *Sosom* is closely and explicitly associated with *Uaba* and the *Kai-zé*. Not every castrate is a *Mahu-zé*.

Before we conclude this section, mention must be made of one more myth, that of *Ganguta*, the *soma-déma* (the *soma* are the carved and decorated posts of a feast-house). The scene was set on the occasion of the above-mentioned feast of the *déma* at Senayo. Sometime during the night, when everybody was asleep, an old woman saw that one of the *soma* of the feast-house started moving. She tried to give the alarm, but it was already too late. The post, which in reality was a *déma*-post, walked off and the house collapsed on top of the sleeping inmates, who changed into frogs. The post finally fell into the river

⁴⁵ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 52.

and was washed downstream to settle in a place called Yaparam, where it has remained ever since. The frog is a totem of the *Diwa-rek*.⁴⁶

There is yet another *déma* by the name of *Ganguta*, who is the ancestor of a *Yorm-end* subclan. He was a tree *déma* who slowly moved up to the village of Onggari, threatening to shatter the village in his imminent fall. Here the people managed to ward off the danger; they availed themselves of outside assistance to cut the tree down. The story, however, clearly runs parallel to the previous one, the main difference being the greater strength and more dangerous aspect of the *Yorm-end* *déma*. An interpretation of the two myths in the light of phallic symbols, with the toppling post or tree standing for a falling penis is, of course, possible, but — as yet — not convincing. The context is wholly devoid of data which could support the suggestion, and there is no indication that such an interpretation expresses native feelings. Yet, accepting the fact at face-value does not get us nearer to understanding why people feel sentimentally attached to cock-and-bull stories of this kind, and how they arrive at a system of classifying them which, in the case of this particular clan, might satisfy an inveterate Freudian. The problem has to be faced; we shall come back to it later in this book.⁴⁷ For our present purpose, a primary orientation with regard to the guiding notions and classificatory principles of Marind-anim mythology, another point is of more immediate relevance, viz. the fact that the main locus of action in the mythology of this group is the interior. Its centre is Senayo on the middle Maro. That does not imply that most of its members should actually be found there. The *Diwa-rek-ha* live mainly in Urumb and Kuprik, with a few members settled at Noh-otiv and Yatomb, that is, in the immediate vicinity of the mythological centre Sirapu. Similarly, the *Awassra-end* live mainly in Senam, Aboi and Tumid, that is, in the region of mythical action. This leaves unexplained the occurrence of *Diwa-rek* at Makalin.⁴⁸ However, the Report of the Depopulation Team has a few more subclans on whom we have no further information: *Kopjeng*, *Ndo-rek*, and *Parpir*. Probably at least one of them is identical with the *Diwa-rek-ha*; the other subclans may serve to explain the presence of *Diwa-rek* at Makalin.

⁴⁶ Wirz, M.A. II p. 142.

⁴⁷ Below, p. 377.

⁴⁸ Cf. annex V.

2. THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE MAHU-ZÉ

The *Mahu-zé* clan is a group of subclans which is more closely associated with *Mahu* than other groups of the phratry of this name. A somewhat confusing fact is that among the subclans of the *Mahu-zé* there is one group of subclans, or one subclan divided into a great number of sub-subclans, which is given the name of *Mahu-zé-ha* by Wirz.⁴⁹ The distinction seems well justified, but compels us to distinguish carefully between *Mahu-zé* phratry, *Mahu-zé* clan and *Mahu-zé-ha* or *Mahu-zé* proper, the subclan. The starting-point of the mythological sequel of events is again the interior. *Mahu*, the dog *déma*, lives at Unum on the upper Bian.⁵⁰ He is closely related to the *Diwa-rek*, because he, too, had an excessively big genital and as a consequence *Len*, his favourite wife with whom he very frequently copulated, bore him a litter of dogs.⁵¹ We already pointed out that, to the Marind, big genitals and excessive sexuality and fertility are characteristics of the dog.⁵² *Len* hid the dogs, but *Mahu* soon retrieved them and gave them names such as *Maledu*, *Yodkap*, *Yodayod*, *Mizerangib*, *Kurku*, *Kiwari*, *Girui*, *Pul*, *Ndindu*, *Rasak*, *Mérab*, *Awumu*, etc. They were not real dogs, but *déma*-dogs, one of which, viz. *Girui*, we already met in the story on the origin of man.⁵³ Later *Len* gave birth to real sons: *Kakidu*, *Menam*, *Dimbu*, *Kanas*, *Boi*, *Kimu*, *Maki*, etc., many of whom are ancestors of *Mahu-zé* sub-subclans.

Mahu had a second wife, called *Piakor*. One day *Mahu* caught her in the act of stealing a large number of siri-h-leaves from his garden. He tied her hands and feet and locked her up in his house, telling his sons that he had caught a cassowary. A few days afterwards he went with *Len* and *Piakor* to *Geb* at Singeas near Domandé. Some of his dogs he took with him to present them to his friend, because at the time dogs were unknown and people kept rats instead of dogs. At the same time he wanted to give *Piakor* to *Geb* because he knew that the latter had no wife. Everything went according to plan,⁵⁴ but when *Mahu's* sons learned about what he had done with their 'mother', they were so outraged that they defecated into coconut bowls and flung the contents at their father. Up to the present day, an

⁴⁹ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. p. 168.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 44.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 144.

⁵² Above, p. 309.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 209.

⁵⁴ See above, p. 230.

excrement *déma*, *Saruak*, has resided in a swamp near Singeas. Defecating is of the nature of the dog.⁵⁵

Ordinary dogs originated as follows. *Girui*, one of *Mahu's* *déma*-dogs, committed adultery with his mother *Len*. *Mahu* killed him and then roasted the dog for his meal; when he had finished, he collected the bones and wrapped them in an areca spathe. In the bones the *déma* lived on and each bone became a little dog. One day when *Mahu* was defecating in the bush, they came out, crawling up behind his back, because they had smelled the excrements. From now on *Mahu* had real dogs and people came from far and near to receive one as a present.

Other information on *Mahu* is contained in the myth of *Nazr*, the pig *déma*.⁵⁶ *Mahu* is his assistant on a headhunting expedition and his role had best be defined as that of an apprentice. After the expedition *Mahu* settles at Karikri in Tumid-miráv, the same place as the one to which the snake *Sami* returned after having liberated her son, the *batend-déma*.⁵⁷ *Mahu's* association with headhunting was referred to above in connection with *déma Sok's* presence in the *Diwa*-canoe. *Mahu's* part in myth is even more narrowly limited than that of his counterpart *Geb*. Yet, when we compare their stories to those of *Ginggini* and *Endalo*, it is clear that the encounter of *Geb* and *Mahu* is the central theme of an old tribal myth⁵⁸ which has a fairly wide spread, because we find the same motive, be it in a substantially modified form, in the Boadzi myth of origin.⁵⁹ An interesting point in this mythical theme is that keeping dogs is linked up with having women. It seems to be fundamental.

An even more obscure character than *Mahu* is *Sami*. He is said to be a *Mahu-zé* *déma* and identical with *Mahu*, but in spite of the fact that he is mentioned as a primeval ancestor of the Marind, a function which he shares with *Geb*, his part in Marind-anim mythology is surprisingly small. Almost all of our meagre information regarding *Sami* has been related in the preceding chapters.⁶⁰ He is remembered primarily as the counterpart of *Geb* as a primeval moiety ancestor. Only Vertenten is more informative; to him we owe the specification that *Sami* is a big, black snake,⁶¹ an interesting detail within the

⁵⁵ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 144 f. jo. IV p. 137.

⁵⁶ Below, pp. 402 f.

⁵⁷ Wirz, op. cit. p. 147, and below, p. 326.

⁵⁸ Cf. above, p. 306.

⁵⁹ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1940 pp. 10 ff.

⁶⁰ Above, pp. 208 f., 229 ff., 235.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 235.

framework of moiety-dichotomy. We note that in this myth both primeval ancestors are presented as snakes. Contrasts are more eloquently expressed if there is a common background of similarity, a general rule in symbolism, of which M. Lévi-Strauss recently gave a number of lucid examples taken from Australian totemism.⁶²

To the data concerning *Sami* we can add only two which have not been related previously. The first and more important one is the communication made by Geurtjens in his Dictionary s.v. *sami*: "*Sami*, a big snake-species. Name of a *déma*. Term used by the *Mahu-zé* when sneezing, and then often *da sami!* — *Goh-sami!* sneezing-term of the *Bragai-zé*". The present information implicitly invalidates Wirz's application of the term *sami* to members of the phratry of *Aramemb*.⁶³ The use of *Sami's* name by the phratries constituting the moiety claiming descent from *Sami* is another confirmation of our reconstruction of the Marind-anim dual division.

The second time that the name *Sami* is mentioned within the framework of *Mahu-zé* clan mythology is in connection with the *batend-déma*.⁶⁴ Here again *Sami* is a snake, though on this occasion not a male, but a female one, the mother of the *batend-déma*, who is an important character among the various *Mahu-zé* *déma*.

The *batend* is the bower bird (*Xantomelus aureus*), a beautiful bird with scarlet feathers decking its head and shoulders, which partly cover a plumage of yellow and black. Its skin is a highly valued ornament used on the occasion of *déma*-performances and ceremonies for the dead. Every *déma*-performer in a *déma-wir* has his face covered with a *batend* skin; the bird is fixed to the performer's forehead with the wings spread out and the head hanging in front of the wearer's face. The number of *batend* skins required for a performance by far exceeds the number of available skins. The bird is shy and is by no means as common as the yellow bird of paradise. Moreover, the bower bird lives in the interior and therefore the Marind has to make do with a substitute: a brightly coloured shield made out of a sago spathe. Such shields are also called *batend*.⁶⁵ In another function, the *batend*

⁶² Cf. Cl. Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* p. 88.

⁶³ Cf. above, pp. 69 f.

⁶⁴ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 146 ff.

⁶⁵ Geurtjens, *Dict. v. batend*; Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 42 f. Verschuieren points out that the bower bird is not a rare bird, but that it lives far from the coast, in the great forest north of the road from Bupal to Muting. Here the *batend* is by no means rare, but it is very difficult to spot the bird because it has a habit of hiding out in the darkest recesses of the undergrowth. "I know of only

waits at the entrance of the eastern abode of the dead, where newly arrived *hais* try in vain to catch the bird.⁶⁶ We already pointed out that *hais* and *déma*, though clearly distinguished terminologically, are more closely related and have more in common than the living and the *déma*.⁶⁷ In this respect the *batend's* combining the functions of prime ornament in decorating a *déma*-performer and of warden of the abode of the dead need not be seen as contradictory. It is also interesting to note that, evidently, the ceremonial leadership of the *Geb-zé* moiety does not imply that the members of the opposite moiety should have no function in ritual. The *Mahu-zé* contribute one of the more important ornaments for decorating the *déma*-performers of any moiety and it is quite in line with current notions of classification that this specific ornament originates from the interior.

The *batend-déma* with his two *nakari* lived at Yamuli on the Buraka river. The *déma* used to go out alone, leaving *Upma* and *Upmai*, his two *nakari*, behind. Time and again they had to go and search for him (a reference, says Wirz, to the bird's extraordinary shyness). When at last the two girls had found him, they would take off their aprons and with these slap the *déma's* face. One day a *wahuku* happened to witness the *batend-déma* romping with his *nakari*. She ran to the village and summoned the people, who set a trap to catch the *batend-déma*. Not long afterwards the *déma* was caught and brought to the men's house. When the *déma's* mother, a snake called *Sami*, heard of her son's discomfiture, she went overnight to the village, slipped into the men's house and opened the trap. Though the men woke up, they could not see a thing in the dark and not until the following morning did they realize that the bird had escaped. *Sami* went with her child first to Makalin and then to Karikri in Tumid-miráv (somewhere near the lower Eli river in the interior), where she has remained till the present day. The *batend-déma*, however, went on to Bahor and his *nakari* followed him. The next day the people of Bahor had already found him out and went after him with sticks and arrows. They made a mess of it, doing much damage to the banana trees where the *déma* had been hiding. He finally eluded his pursuers and went to the Tarer swamp north of Yatomb.

one way to catch the bird" he writes, "which is by stalking it near a well when the dry season is at its height. On such occasions I saw the people of Bosset bagging more than thirty birds in one single day" (Letters IX p. 4).

⁶⁶ Above, p. 202.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 203.

Now *Doreh*, a man from Dahuk-zé (on the upper Buraka in the western interior), took up the hunt. He, too, laid wildly about him with his stick without hurting the *déma*, who merely lost a few small yellow and red feathers, which fluttered down and changed into croton plants of the kind called *kundama*.⁶⁸ Though *Doreh* cut his feet at the sharp kunai grass, he still continued the hunt until the bird flew off to the coast near Urumb. The same scene repeated itself and *Doreh* hurt his foot again, this time at a sharp-edged mussel-shell, and so badly even that he had to give up. The *batend-déma* flew off to Brawa and still further eastward, crossing the Fly river, where he still wings up and down over the eastern bank, guarding the entrance to the eastern land of the dead. *Doreh*, discouraged, went back to Imo, where he wanted to make a yam garden. When fencing the spot, he hurt his foot a third time, now at a sharp bamboo. Blood gushed forth, which he collected in a taro-leaf. Coagulating, something like a human face took shape in the blood, which gradually formed into a complete boy. The blood, however, had attracted wasps which had alighted on the edge of the leaf, so that it was impossible to take the boy out. *Doreh* now went to his friend *Geb*, who was invulnerable to wasp-stings. *Geb*, whose body was covered with sea-acorn, came from his ant-hill and followed him to Imo, where he took the boy out of the leaf and put him into a cradle. *Doreh* called the boy *Doreh*, after himself. He found that the drops of blood which had fallen on the earth had formed low mounds such as the Marind make for the cultivation of yams. And so he could immediately begin planting yam-cuttings.

In another story *Doreh* is presented as ill-treating a pair of Siamese twins, *Bariu* and *Gerenger*, who lived at Kurik near Kumbé. Their backs were grown together, but their heads, arms and legs were separate. *Doreh* played them all kinds of monkey tricks. When *Bariu* handed food to his brother *Gerenger*, *Doreh* took it away, and likewise when *Gerenger* passed food round his back to *Bariu*. One day he wrapped up the pair in an areca spathe and threw them into the fire. The two, however, tore up their wrappings, leapt into the water and set their dogs at *Doreh*. *Doreh* seized a stick and killed the dogs. He killed *Bariu* and *Gerenger*, too, and taking their heads and the dead dogs, he went to his friend *Teimbre* to prepare the heads. From here

⁶⁸ Wirz identifies the plant as *Cordyline variegatum*, apparently a contamination of *Cordyline terminalis* and *Codiaeum variegatum*, a croton species. Both plants are ornamental shrubs occurring in New Guinea (information kindly supplied by Dr. Ostendorf).

he went westward. At Onggari he dropped the skulls of the dogs and that is why so many petrifications are found there on the beach. He went on to Okaba, where he killed *Anib*, the spear-thrower who had killed *Ugu*.⁶⁹ Then he went to Hibóm (Wambi) and married a girl, *Dabu*, whom he took with him to Bu on the Muri (Strait Marianne), where she bore him a son, *Gopa*. When he had grown up, *Gopa* committed incest with his mother, then killed her and threw her dead body into the Digul river. The mother has remained there up to the present day, and the strong eddy on that particular spot is her doing. *Gopa*, chased by *Doreh*, flew to Hibóm and Makalin. Because of his father tirelessly pursuing him, the boy changed into a bird of extraordinary beauty, and thus became the bower bird *déma*.

The myths of *Doreh* and the *batend-déma*, in which *Sami* plays only a negligible part, require some comment. The second story is characterized primarily by a great deal of senseless outrage and cruelty from which even superior force or prowess are conspicuously absent. In the absence of native reactions to the story, a discussion of the moral character ascribed to these *déma* is pointless. A Marind-anim myth rarely sets standards for human morality, and moralistic conclusions cannot be drawn unless the content of the myth or some forms of native comment provide us with a clue. Moreover, Verschueren informs me that in the alternative readings which became known to him the twins invariably are too smart for *Doreh*, who is presented as a silly ass.⁷⁰ However that be, *Doreh* is not a respectable character.

The relationship of *Doreh* and the *batend-déma* with the *Mahu-zé* clan is obscure. The role played by *Sami* as mother to the *batend-déma* (a function she shares with a woman associated with an eddy in the Digul river) is the one and only key to explaining *Doreh's* and the *batend-déma's* membership of the *Mahu-zé* clan. Yet, apart from the obvious association of the bower bird and *Mahu* with the interior, there are a few points worth noticing. In the first place, there is the boy *Gopa's* incest with his mother. Mother-son incest is a recurring motive in the *Mahu-zé* clan-myths; we shall find it again in the story of *Amari* and *Ori* and we are well justified in calling it thematic for this clan.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Above, p. 281.

⁷⁰ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 4.

⁷¹ The romping of the *batend* with his *nakari* is depicted as an act of eroticism, probably a reference to the bird's behaviour in the mating season. It would be arbitrary to take this case as an example of the unusual degree of sexualism displayed by the *Mahu-zé*. There are so many cases of exalted eroticism in

In the second place, there is the curious story of the birth of a boy out of blood collected in a taro-leaf. This type of miraculous birth is not uncommon as a motif in moon-myths. In the case of *Doreh* the story, elaborately and, it would seem, intentionally, calls attention to *Doreh's* suffering injuries three times in succession. Yet, we cannot just identify young *Doreh* with the moon; our Marind-anim friends might be fairly surprised if we did. A more stringent reason for assuming that some relationship with the moon must have existed is *Geb's* interference. We note that *Geb* is called upon in his moon-shape. The sea-acorn covered body has a definite function in this story; this very inconvenience enables *Geb* to extract the boy from amidst the wasps. The incest committed by *Doreh's* son *Gopa* introduces another moon-motif, that of mother-son incest.⁷² In this context we are reminded of the Keraki originator's son *Gufa*, whose name bears so much resemblance to *Gopa's* as to suggest some relationship. The originator *Kambel* is the moon and *Gufa*, his son, commits incest with his mother.⁷³ Though *Gufa's* connections with the moon are still traceable, those of *Gopa* are completely veiled in inscrutable symbolism. It is the second time that, in the mythology of this phratry, we meet with a moon-myth which has lost its function and has ceased to refer overtly to the moon, the first and more obvious case being that of *Avassra*. The covert relationship of the *Mahu-zé* with the moon corresponds with a similarly obscured relationship between *Mahu-zé* clan and *Geb-zé-ha*, in particular the *Mana-rek*. *Mana* has an incestuous relationship, not with his mother, but with his sister; he steals sago, he resides for a time at the *Mahu-zé* centre *Senayo* and he, too, is a disreputable character.⁷⁴ He rapes a girl, commits adultery with *Mongumer-anem's* wife and murders his opponent. In every detail his behaviour is that of a perfect *Mahu-zé* déma, except that his more overt relationship with the moon marks him a *Geb-zé-ha*.

Quite another point in the context of the story of *Doreh*, and one deserving of some attention, is the brief episode to the effect that *Doreh* killed *Anib*, who had speared *Ugu* at *Alaku*, a village in the immediate vicinity of *Okaba*. The story does not mention why *Doreh*

Marind-anim myth that only gross offences against current sexual morality, such as *Gopa's* and *Girui's* incest with their mothers, can count as cases having symptomatic value.

⁷² Cf. above, p. 316.

⁷³ Williams, *Trans-Fly* pp. 312 ff. jo. 302.

⁷⁴ Cf. above, pp. 236 f.

killed *Anib*, but we cannot help remembering that by birth *Ugu* is in fact a *Mahu-zé*.⁷⁵

Last in the small collection of *Mahu-zé* clan-myths comes the story of *Amari* and *Ori*.⁷⁶ In this case the connection with the dog clan is explicit and clear; a *déma*-bitch by the name of *Saboruwaktu* came from *Aboi* (middle *Bian*) and went via *Woya* (north of *Anasai*), *Kuprik* and *Manggat-miráv* (*Mbur*) to *Kurkari*, where she gave birth to a boy, *Amari*. At that time *Aramemb* lived at *Kurkari*. One day when the bitch was out hunting, *Aramemb* saw a hawk and a falcon intent upon catching the boy, who was lying down in the open air. *Aramemb* told his *nakari* *Satap-íwag* and *Dawi*⁷⁷ to take care of the boy. So they did, bringing him into their house. When the bitch returned, she, too, was summoned to the house to suckle the boy. The boy grew up and became an *éwati*. He was a bad boy, lit. a *kiw-anem*, a crocodile-man, the expression commonly used to denote an adulterer. Pretending to be ill, he let himself be cared for by the *nakari*, availing himself of the opportunity to copulate with them. In the story it is not wholly clear whether his own *nakari* or those of *Aramemb* are meant; from the context we infer that it really was *Aramemb's* *nakari* with whom he had intercourse. The men of the village decided that *Amari* should die. With *Aramemb's* approval the boy was caught and burned in a fire, after which he was eaten. *Aramemb*, however, collected his bones and packed them in an *areca* spathe. When the *nakari* heard of *Amari's* death they asked *Aramemb* "Why did you kill *Amari*? Did not we rear the boy?" They were angry and decided to avenge his death. But *Aramemb*, too, was full of regret now that the boy was dead; therefore he laid his bones on some *banana*-leaves, which he covered with grass and *rushes* of different kinds. After a time something began to stir and when *Aramemb* lifted the grass, *Amari* had come to life again, though no longer as an *éwati*, but as a *miakim*. *Aramemb* tells his *nakari* and everybody is happy. They all join hands to celebrate *Amari's* promotion to *miakim*. *Aramemb* arranges his *hairdo* and puts on the ornaments which the *nakari* had made. Then *Amari* is made to sit on a bench to be admired by visiting relatives, who bring *sugar-cane*, *bananas*, *yams* and *wati*, the usual procedure when a young man becomes a

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 280.

⁷⁶ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 149-152.

⁷⁷ The names are curious. *Satap* means dew; *Dawi* is the name of a *Kai-zé* *déma*, but also a freshwater fish. A *dawédawi* is a small 'beach-snipe'; cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.

miakim. The story is another example of *Aramemb's* activities as an initiator and this aspect raises the question whether *Amari's* death should be interpreted as an initiation, going through which is an absolute condition for his promotion to the next age-grade. Everything seems to fit in, but the reason advanced for killing the boy sets a framework so completely alien to the ideas connected with initiation that such an interpretation must be dropped.

One of the *nakari*, *Naik*, had intercourse with *Amari* (apparently she is a *nakaru* of *Aramemb*). She did not tell *Amari* that she was married. Her husband, *Demo*, soon found out what was going on and killed *Amari* by a shot from his bow. At his own request *Amari* was buried in Babak near Anasai, where he has remained to the present day, together with his mother, *Saboruwaktu*, the dog *déma*.

Naik gave birth to a boy, *Ori*, who had been begotten by *Amari*. When he was grown up, he set out to find his father. He went west of the Bian and, having searched in vain, settled in Tumid (lower Eli area), where he married *Awimb* and had four children, *Armemb*, *Pitarb*, *Garinga* and *Du*. They played together, practising spear-throwing. One day the spear strayed into the bush and the children could not find it again. Then their father *Ori* joined them, but there, says Wirz, the informants have either forgotten or withheld something. Later, *Ori* went with his wife to Alaku. One afternoon he saw a man coming down the beach, carrying a *haupra* (a funnel-shaped rattan fish-trap) on his head. *Ori* had never seen a *haupra* and was not a little scared, thinking the man was not an ordinary man but a *déma*. Nevertheless, he seized the *haupra*, and with one quick movement snatched it from the head of the man, who dashed off. *Ori* looked at the thing and decided to use it as a fish-trap. He soon became an experienced fisherman. One night another man by the name of *Gopa* (we recall one *Gopa*, *Dorch's* son, who became the *batend-déma*) took the *haupra* and fished with it. He brought the *haupra* back, but replaced it in a way which was not *Ori's*, with the opening pointing in another direction. The next morning *Ori* wanted to fish with the *haupra*, but could not find the opening. He was too dull to solve the problem and consequently he could not fish. A little distance away, *Gopa's* children were roasting a large number of fishes. *Ori* sneaked up to them, took a hot fish and beat the children on the head. They fled, but the next night they returned with their father *Gopa* and from bamboo vessels poured torrents of water over the sleeping *Ori*. They went on and on till *Ori* together with his house and his sleeping-bench was washed

away to the sea, where he changed into a big shark (*sésai*). *Ori* swam to Birok. His two *nakari*, *Kéna* and *Kéna-Kéna*, followed him, proceeding along the beach. Two unmarried men promised them that they would get *Ori* ashore. They made a big fish-hook, smeared it with sperma after copulating with the *nakari*, and threw it into the sea near where the shark was. The shark swallowed the bait and was dragged ashore. The two men cut open the skin covering the shark's forehead and *Ori* slipped out. *Ori* still lives near Alaku as a *déma* and the shark still has a scar on its forehead.

Amari and his descendants belong to the *Mahu-zé boan*, but owing to their mythical connection with *Aramemb* they have a specific relationship with the *Kai-zé*. The *Ori-rek* will say: "We are between the *Mahu-zé* and the *Kai-zé-Sankakai*. *Aramemb* is also one of our *déma*".⁷⁸ Their mythical relationship with *Aramemb* is characterized by some curious details. The story of *Amari's* death and his resurrection runs, in fact, closely parallel to the story of the death of *Yawi* the coconut *déma*,⁷⁹ though there is one major divergence. Had *Aramemb* been in time to restore *Yawi* to life, mankind would have attained immortality. The fact that *Aramemb* succeeds in resuscitating *Amari* is of no consequence whatsoever; there is an important difference in effect between what happens to a *Geb-zé déma* and what befalls a *Mahu-zé déma*.

At the same time, the story is a remarkable illustration of *Aramemb's* ambiguous identity. The attentive reader will have observed that the name of *Ori's* eldest son is *Armemb*, a name so closely similar to *Aramemb* that we are inclined to think of a misprint. The story of the spear-throwing children vividly reminds us of the story of the young *Aramemb* who threw his spear and could not find it again.⁸⁰ It is interesting that *Wirz's* informants were either embarrassed by this detail and therefore passed it over, or genuinely forgetful of this conflicting *passus* which hardly fits into the general scheme of Marind mythology. Even more intriguing is the fact that the story of *Amari* and *Ori* was told at Anasai in the eastern section, whereas the story of *Aramemb* and *Muli* was noted down in Wamal at the far western extremity of Marind-anim territory. There is a consistency even in this contradictory fragment of Marind-anim myth, which is sufficiently conspicuous to convince us that *Aramemb's* relationship with the *Mahu-*

⁷⁸ *Wirz*, op. cit. p. 152.

⁷⁹ Above, p. 249.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 286.

zé is not a gratuitous element, but must be conceived as a detail which is structurally relevant to the concept of this *déma's* function in Marind-anim religion.

All this does not detract from the oddity of the position of the *Amari-rek* or *Ori-rek* in the Marind-anim clan-system. Though *Amari's* incest and his descent from a dog which comes from Aboi perfectly fit in with the *Mahu-zé* pattern, and *Ori's* stupidity, emphasizing one of the clan's less reputable features, is acceptable as a *Mahu-zé* characteristic,⁸¹ their close relations with *Aramemb* are decidedly not so. Also *Ori's* identity with a shark is surprising. Though the *Mahu-zé* phratry has a relationship with the sea through the *Zohé* clan, we would have expected this ferocious representative of the sea to be associated with the violent *Yorm-end* and not with a group whose members are repeatedly depicted as less powerful than their *Bragai-zé* relatives.⁸² In the western Torres Straits area the shark is reputedly an aggressive animal.⁸³ It is amazing to find that among the Marind-anim the shark is associated with an oaf like *Ori*, who, as a shark, obligingly allows himself to be caught. If the shark must at all be associated with the *Mahu-zé* phratry, the *Bangu-boan* seems a more appropriate alternative because it is associated with the sea and — which may be purely accidental — with that particular region of the Marind-anim coast where I once observed a couple of big sharks swimming in the immediate vicinity of the beach, the one and only time I saw sharks in this region. *Ori*, the shark, provides another instance (the first case was that of *Yano* the wallaby *déma*) of a totem which does not act according to pattern. It is dangerous to speculate on causes; it might be suggested that the shark's character has been accommodated to the place presently occupied by the *Ori-rek* in the socio-mythological pattern. If that be accepted, we are still facing the fact that the *Ori-rek* are a fairly widely spread subclan with members living in Anasai, Kumbe and Alaku,⁸⁴ a distribution reflected in their myth. If the *Ori-rek* originally made part of a socio-mythological system different from that prevailing to-day, they formed not just one local group which had to be incorporated into the new whole, but at least two, with a fair distance separating the two areas of settlement.

⁸¹ *Dorch*, too, is sometimes represented as stupid; see above, p. 328.

⁸² Cf. the two *Ganguta*, above, pp. 321 f., and *Uari* and *Yorma*, below, pp. 341 ff. and 382 f., 386.

⁸³ Cf. Haddon and Rivers in Report Cambridge Expedition to Torres Straits V, p. 184.

⁸⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 151.

The myth of the hawk and the girdle-shell, which is a *Mahu-zé-ha* story, has been dealt with in the preceding section. The stated reason for classifying the hawk with the *Mahu-zé* is not its role in a castration anxiety myth, but the fact that this genus of the hawk family has been observed to feed on excrements on the beach.⁸⁵

Socially, the *Mahu-zé* clan may be divided into three subclans, viz. the *Mahu-zé-ha*, the *Doreh-rek* and the *Amari-* and *Ori-rek*. The *Mahu-zé-ha* are a very widely spread subclan comprising a great number of sub-subclans which trace their descent to *Mahu's* sons. These sub-subclans are the *Mariu-rek*, *Maki-rek*, *Dimbo-rek*, *Boi-rek*, *Papi-rek*, *Yok-end*, *Kimu-rek*, *Yavar-zé*, *Kanas-zé*, *Yubad-rek* and others.⁸⁶ A specification of their places of settlement is lacking, nor do we know of any important differences between the sub-subclans in group mythology. Apparently, the sub-subclans are distinguished only by their descent from different members of *Mahu's* numerous offspring. In other words, in spite of their wide spatial distribution the *Mahu-zé-ha* are a very homogeneous subclan.

According to Wirz the *Doreh-rek* must probably be included among the *Mahu-zé-ha*, a posit which he does not further substantiate.⁸⁷ On the place or places of settlement of the *Doreh-rek* no information is available. With regard to the *Ori-rek* we are better informed. In addition to the preceding discussion of their distribution we note that Wirz mentions both *Amari-rek* and *Ori-rek* without explaining whether the two terms are synonyms or refer to different sub-subclans. Probably the former is the case.

The three subclans together have a common symbol in their hunting yell, *Ngat-a! Nai!*, i.e. 'Dogs! Excrements!', or *Ngat-a! Karina!*, 'Dogs! Defecate!' In this yell the word dogs has no specific meaning; the dog is mentioned in almost every hunting yell which, in a way, is addressed to the dogs which accompany the hunter. The last part of the phrase is characteristic of the clan which, in this case, publicly proclaims itself the excrement clan. The value set upon excrements as a distinguishing characteristic was already pointed up in connection with the rôle of the hawk. We shall find it expressed again with regard

⁸⁵ Identification of the bird is impossible. Geurtjens gives it the latin name of *Astur dovinaesalvad* d'Alb., which must be a misnomer. Prof. Voous suggested that he may have meant *Megatriorchus doriae* Salvadori et d'Albertis, but rather doubted the correctness of the identification.

⁸⁶ Wirz, op. cit. p. 164.

⁸⁷ L.c.

to the sago, which is most intimately associated with the next clan of this phratry, the *Wokabu-rek*.

3. THE MYTHS OF THE WOKABU-REK

Through *Wokabu* the story of the *Mahu-zé* phratry is linked up with the beach, a favoured centre of Marid-anim social life, and with the *mayo*. When *Wokabu*, coming from the *mayo* at Yavar-makan, went to Imo near Sangasé, he travelled along the beach. Wherever he stopped over to spend the night, he built sheds for himself and for his *nakari*. Later they were blown down by the wind; the débris changed into the numerous coral fragments scattered all over the beach. Some of these are the remnants of the sago-leaf roofing, others of the spars. The latter were rolled up and down by the tide, thus leaving the ripples in the sand. *Wokabu's nakari* are identified with various kinds of small beach-dwelling crabs.⁸⁸

Wokabu was present at various important events. We met him on the occasion when the coconut originated.⁸⁹ This took place at Imo (apparently Imo near Sangasé), where *Wokabu* came to have his *mayub* (hair-strands) plaited. Seeing the coconut grove, he was the first to try the nuts, which he found palatable. Then he spat a little bit of the masticated coconut meat in his hand, smeared it on his hair and body, and saw that it imparted a lasting gloss. He then mixed coconut oil with red earth and used it as body-paint, of which he thus became the originator. Here again we find the phratry connected with festive adornment (cf. the *batend-déma*).

The second time that we met with *Wokabu* was in the myth of the stork *déma*. *Wokabu* happened to be in Domandé, where he had his hair plaited, when *Wonatai* arrived with his *wati*. One night *Wokabu* pilfered *Wonatai's* garden, taking as much *wati* as he could carry and brought it to Sangasé, where everybody soon got drunk. In the end *Wokabu* was found out and punished by *Wonatai*.⁹⁰ The third time that *Wokabu* appears is in the myth of *Nazr*, the pig *déma*.⁹¹ *Wokabu*, carrying a full load of coconuts, bananas, taro, yams and sugar-cane,

⁸⁸ Wirz, M.A. II p. 152.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 70, and above, p. 250.

⁹⁰ Above, p. 303.

⁹¹ Below, pp. 396 ff. and Wirz, op. cit. p. 171.

came to a feast at Sangar, and there he saw the first pigs.⁹² He also organized the first pig hunt, which resulted in a big pig feast. The myth of Wokabu and the origin of the sago is the sequel to this story.⁹³

Sangon, *Wokabu's* wife, had attended the pig feast at Sangar and on that occasion she had eaten too much fat. After her return to Imo, her village,⁹⁴ she suffered from abdominal pain and had to defecate several times. However, what she defecated was not excrements, but sago, for *Sangon* was a *déma*. (Often the story is told in a slightly different version. *Sangon* felt she was pregnant and gave birth to a faintly red and mellow substance, sago, or, actually, the sago *déma Gurida*). At the time sago was unknown and instead people ate certain parts of the stem of the banana. *Sangon* tried the substance she had produced and found it palatable. Much though she ate of it, it did not diminish in quantity, because it was *déma*. *Sangon* kept her discovery a secret, but one day *Wokabu* noticed that his wife had some food which was different from his own. That hurt his feelings and availing himself of *Sangon's* absence, he searched her house. In his wife's apron he found a reddish-yellow substance. He tore off a lump, which he roasted and ate. The remainder he put away in his hairdress. His boys, *Sibuli*, *Akial*, *Kukas* and *Lanawi*, had watched him and informed their mother on her return. Then *Sangon* slapped *Wokabu's* head till the sago came flying out and dropped on the ground.⁹⁵

The next day a tree had grown out of the fallen morsels of sago, but it was a bare trunk only, without leaves or flowers. *Wokabu* went to a

⁹² Verschueren gives the following comment: "It is interesting to note that among the inland Marind the location of the scenes of the various mythical actions differs from that in coastal mythology. In the interior the scene of the stolen *wati* and the drunken villagers is set in Kaisa, whereas the events which took place at Sangar are said to have occurred west of Wayau in the territory of the *Ahiv-zé* of Senégi" (Letters IX p. 4). As we are dealing primarily with coastal mythology, the deviating patterns of inland mythology need not keep us from paying due attention to the location of the events. However, it is important to bear in mind that inland mythology is different. In another place (Letters IX p. 2) Verschueren points to the fact that in the interior it is not the *Geb-zé* but the *Mahu-zé* who rank highest in social evaluation, an observation strongly emphasizing the meaning of the beach — which is *Geb-zé* — in coastal mythology and classification.

⁹³ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 152 ff.

⁹⁴ In this version Imo; in the myth of *Harau* (above, pp. 279 f.) Domandé is the scene of action. In the mythology of the Kumbe valley the scene is set at Saring, south of Wayau.

⁹⁵ In the Kumbe valley the origin of the sago is explained differently. *Sangon* had hit *Wokabu* so hard that the brains popped out of his head. When he went to wash his head in a small creek, a sago tree sprouted from his brain.

Bragai-zé déma, whom he requested to catch him a sting-ray (a *Yorm-end* totem). The *déma* did as he had been asked and brought a number of them. *Wokabu* took the fishes and stuck them on to the stem. They developed into leaf sheaths, to which they are analogous, because the sago-leaf sheath with its broad base and long stalk resembles a sting ray with its sharp spine. Again *Wokabu* went to the *Bragai-zé déma*, now asking for a sawfish. Again the *déma* obligingly brought him the fishes, which *Wokabu* placed on the top of the tree, where they developed into young leaves, another analogy based on outward appearance. A number of birds such as *p(a)ri-p(a)ri, end-end* (unknown species) and others alighted high up on the tree with, right at the top, a *yowi* or white heron. Thereupon the tree started flowering, according to Wirz yet another analogy, because the floescence of the sago tree resembles a flight of small birds perched on the top of the tree.⁹⁶ The sago tree is a favourite resting-place for birds and those mentioned are totems of the sago clan.⁹⁷ There is some doubt with regard to the white heron, which is not mentioned in the list of totems from which we quoted. Where it is explicitly stated that the list is given by way of example, we feel justified in adding this bird, which both by Wirz and Vertenten⁹⁸ is also mentioned as sitting near the bow of the *Diwa*-canoe.

Now *Wokabu* wanted to cut the tree to prepare the pith. He summoned the villagers, but nobody knew how to go about it, because at the time stone axes were unknown. Then *Wokabu* took a tooth from *déma Monubi*, who had very big teeth and had come from far away. He made the tooth into an axe and now *Wokabu's nakari Rimba* and *Mupi* could cut down the tree. While they were chopping away at the trunk, the *déma* in the tree started crying out (the groaning of the trunk preceding its fall) and fled. The tree fell.

Then *Wokabu* summoned *Harau*, who had been born on the upper *Bian* and who was at the time the only woman who knew how to make sago. At first she spilled much of the sago, because the leaf sheaths through which the flour is filtered in the process of washing had not

⁹⁶ Wirz writes *paré-paré* instead of *pari-pari*. The *pari-pari* is a parakeet species (cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.) and that it is this bird which is meant is confirmed by Verschueren, who writes that the fruits of a sago tree resemble a flock of the little birds which the inland Marind call *pri-pri*, a small parakeet species frequenting flowering sago trees (Letters IX pp. 4 f.).

⁹⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 168.

⁹⁸ Cf. above, p. 311.

been fixed tightly enough. This aroused *Wokabu's* anger and he changed the spilled sago into inedible loam.

Wokabu wanted more sago trees. He asked *Baringau*, the coconut *déma*, to provide space on which to grow them. *Baringau* replied: "Go and plant in the interior, I shall stay on the coast", thus referring to the fact that the coconut trees are planted on the dunes along the beach, whereas the sago is found in the swamps behind the dunes.⁹⁹ This being settled, *Wokabu* gave his *nakari* to the village people for one night. The girls lay down on both sides of the old sago palm which had been cut down and men (*déma*) of all the *boan* copulated with them. Then young sprouts burst forth from the stump on every side, each sprout representing a specific kind of sago. Thus a *Geb-zé* *déma* begot the *arap* variety, a *Ndik-end* the *wépra*, a *Bragai-zé* the *dumang*, two *Zohé* the *gaskus* and the *madoi*, etc. In other words, each of the phratries has its own distinct kind of sago, but originally all sago comes from the sago clan as a result of *Wokabu's* activities. The kind originally made by *Wokabu* is given the name of *Gurida*, which is the name of the sago *déma* mentioned at the outset of this story. *Wokabu's* *nakari* introduced the sago tree in every part of the country.¹⁰⁰ This attribution of a specific sub-species to each of the various phratries does not make the sago an exception in Marind-anim classification. The banana presents a corresponding case, where in respect of the totems of the crocodile clan (*Bragai-zé*), mention is made of a special kind of banana (*brobor*), which originated from the sperma of a *déma*-crocodile killed by *Dimar*, a *Bragai-zé* *déma*. *Brobor-anem*, a banana *déma*, still resides on the spot where the killing took place.¹⁰¹

In the meantime *Wokabu* had some trouble with his sons. On the occasion just mentioned, four of them, viz. *Bua-Bua*, *Sawé*, *Ago*, and *Ugug*¹⁰² tried to partake in sexual intercourse with *Wokabu's* *nakari*.

⁹⁹ It is interesting to note that in a Kumbe valley reading communicated by Verschueren it is not *Baringau* who sends the sago *déma* to the interior, but *Mahu* who sends *Baringau* to the coast, saying that he will plant (his sago) in the interior (Verschueren, Letters IX pp. 2 and 5). The order of precedence is here reversed; cf. above, note 92.

¹⁰⁰ Of two of them, *Duriau* and *Korodí*, we know the names, which have no relevance for our present purpose.

¹⁰¹ Wirz, op. cit. p. 138 note 1.

¹⁰² The name of the son mentioned last is surprising; *Ugug* is also the name of the *wati-déma* (cf. above, p. 303). Geurtjens, however, informs us that *ugug* is a small mud-fish. He does not refer to *wati*. Cf. Dict. v. *oeg-oeg*. The meanings of the other names could not be traced, except that of the third.

He went after them and pursued them till the boys leapt into the Bian river, where they changed into catfishes, *anda*, i.e. the species of fish from which the first men originated and in which we discovered a certain resemblance to the bullroarer.¹⁰³ Another of *Wokabu's* boys wandered into the savannah and, with his father in hot pursuit, he got so tired that at last he changed into a *tadu*, a centipede.¹⁰⁴ *Wokabu* remained at Sangasé, where he begot a son, *Arengo*, who is the ancestor of the local *Wokabu-rek*. Later, *Wokabu* went to Domandé, where he also begot offspring.

The *Wokabu-rek*, says Wirz, form a widely spread clan, the members of which are reckoned among the *Zohé*, because *Wokabu* is the father of the *anda*-fishes and is himself also called *anda-déma* (*anda* and *zohé* are synonyms). However, the *Wokabu-rek* also belong to the sago *boan*. In the schematic survey of the *Mahu-zé* phratry published by Wirz¹⁰⁵ the sago *boan* is presented as a combination of *Mahu-zé* clan and *Wokabu-rek*. In other words, the *Wokabu-rek* are associated alternately with the *Zohé* and the *Mahu-zé*, though, at least according to Wirz, mainly with the *Zohé*. This is confirmed by their hunting yell, 'Dogs! *Anda*!' It is hardly any wonder, then, that we do not often meet with the *Wokabu-rek* as a special clan. In annex V we find them reported from Bahor only. Rarer even are references to *Wokabu-rek* subclans. The Report of the Depopulation Team mentions four subclans, two of which should be listed as *Mahu-zé* subclans, viz. *Yok-end* and *Boi-rek*.¹⁰⁶ The remaining two are the *Arengo-rek*, who should be identified with the *Wokabu-rek* of Sangasé, and the *Harau-rek*, of whom we know nothing. The name cannot but surprise us, because *Harau* is a woman who is rather emphatically counted among the *déma* of the phratry of *Aramemb*. Earlier we found that, in the Kumbe valley, *Harau* is counted among the *Mahu-zé* *déma*. Wirz does not mention any *Wokabu-rek* subclans at all and states that he does not know whether there are any.¹⁰⁷

Before we enter into a discussion of the characteristics of *Wokabu*

Ago, which is 'So-and-So' (cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *agé*). Apparently the narrator could not remember the true name or did not want to communicate it. The four names mentioned differ from those given earlier in the story.

¹⁰³ Cf. above, pp. 210 and 269.

¹⁰⁴ The identification is uncertain. Geurtjens (Dict., voc. cit.) translates *tadu* as 'a kind of earwig'. Wirz, however, gives centipede and so do Van de Kolk & Vertenten (*Woordenboek v. duizendpoot*).

¹⁰⁵ Wirz, M.A. II p. 168.

¹⁰⁶ Rep. Depop. Team p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Wirz, op. cit. p. 165. On *Harau* see above, pp. 278 ff.

and his clan, mention must be made of one more myth. The scene is set in Habé at the time the rattan déma held the island immobilized near Birok. A man called *Kamina* came from Dahuk-zé-miráv to fetch the rattan déma, bringing his mother *Amus* with him.¹⁰⁸ The woman died on the island and *Kamina*, finding no eucalyptus-bark, buried her body wrapped in banana-leaves. Three days later voices were heard coming from the grave and, when it was opened, a flock of pigeons (*bévom*) came flying out. Something similar happened to another woman who died on Habé and who was wrapped in pieces of sago bark. After three days geese (*bova*)¹⁰⁹ emerged from her grave. The pigeons are one of the *Geb-zé* totems because they were hatched in banana-leaves; the geese are among the totems of the sago clan because they were bred in sago-bark.

This review of the *Wokabu-rek* myths having been completed, the stage is cleared for a discussion of *Wokabu's* place within the framework of the mythology of this phratry. One thing is obvious: in the sordid company of the uncouth déma of the *Diwa-rek* and *Mahu-zé* clans *Wokabu* is a gentleman, even though he is a thief. Apparently the déma were as willing to forgive him his lapse as we are; the punishment he receives is of the mild kind, as is fit for a man who has *Wokabu's* gift for feasting. His contribution to celebrating is important: he is the inventor of coconut oil and body-painting; he organizes the first pig hunt and makes the feast at Sangar into a success, arriving there as the perfect guest, laden with the newly discovered coconuts and with many other contributions to the festive board. When he has stolen *wati* he shares the haul with his fellow-villagers. In short, *Wokabu* is a society man, caring much for his outward appearance. On two different occasions he is introduced in the story just when he is having his hairdo refashioned. Accordingly, he is associated with the beach and not with the interior. He travels from east to west and behaves in a way befitting a déma of the *Geb-zé* moiety. The sandy beach is explicitly said to be *Geb-zé* and, within the framework of moiety-dichotomy, *Wokabu's* association with the beach can only be explained from the fact that collecting small crabs, i.e. *Wokabu's nakari*, is essentially a women's task. Perhaps his

¹⁰⁸ The name *Amus* is also given to the young man who came to Habé to hunt *moriwa*; cf. below, p. 388.

¹⁰⁹ Wirz writes *bofa*, which he translates as ducks. *Bova*, as is the more correct spelling, is not a duck but the Pied Goose or Magpie Goose, *Anseranas semipalmata*.

association with Imo at Sangasé may be reckoned to be another indication that he does not belong to the moiety primarily associated with the beach.¹¹⁰ Further we note that in the myth of origin of the sago there are two versions, one in which the sago is excrements, the other in which it is a child.¹¹¹ We may consider the latter version to be the more typically *Wokabu-rek* reading and the first the *Mahu-zé* one. The latter include the sago among their totems because, they say, the sago originated from the excrements of one of their *amai* (ancestors).

In *Wokabu* we meet with a *déma* who, from a classificatory point of view, is related to the opposite moiety; in other words, the *Mahu-zé* phratry presents a similar picture as the phratries of the *Geb-zé* moiety. Their association with swamps, with the interior and so on is not absolute. It is counterbalanced by an association with the beach, an association which the *Wokabu-rek* share with the *Zohé*, with whom, in a way, they constitute one clan.

4. THE MYTHS OF THE LOAM CLAN

Zohé is simply another word for *anda*, catfish (a *plotosus spec.*).¹¹² They are also called *gém-boan*, from *gém*, loam, clay, a soil which in Marind-anim territory is the opposite of sand. The following myth deals with the *gém-déma*, *Uari*.¹¹³

Hunting for heads, *Uari* went by canoe to Owin, on the coast between Duv-miráv and Makalín. The waves were too strong and he had to return to spend the night in the Sawa creek west of Duv-miráv (which implies that he came from the west). The next day he continued on his way and got as far as the Kumbe river, where he went ashore in a pretty angry mood, annoyed because of his unsuccessful headhunt. The *déma* of Kumbe, however, scoffed at him: "You can't lick us, you are far too young!" *Uari* set out again eastward and arrived in the neighbourhood of Bangu (between Ongaya and Tomer in Kanum-irébe territory; see the map in Dämonen und Wilde), where the people were preparing a feast. He came ashore some little distance away from

¹¹⁰ See on this point pp. 434 ff.

¹¹¹ The Kumbe valley version according to which the sago tree originates from *Wokabu's* brain must be left out of consideration. The version is incomplete and not necessarily representative of coastal mythology.

¹¹² On the sexual connotations of the word *anda* see above, pp. 269 f.

¹¹³ From Wirz, M.A. II pp. 156 ff.

the village and made the rest of his way on foot. After nightfall, he approached noiselessly. Only one young man was still awake, plaiting his hairdo. He quickly woke up his wife (*iwag*) and their boy (*patur*) and the three of them climbed a tree to see what was going to happen. Then *Uari* came and killed all the people; after that he covered everything up with fine, slimy loam, the sleeping people, their huts, the whole coast. The next morning everything was solidly under, with only the treetops sticking out of the mud. The three people in the treetop were still alive, but after a time the boy wanted to find out whether the loam had already sufficiently hardened for them to leave the tree. After a few steps he sank away and changed into a mud-skipper.¹¹⁴ The mother then made a *haupra* (a fish-trap) and, climbing down from the tree, tried to catch him. Right where her boy had been swallowed she, too, sank away and changed into a mangrove tree (*haráv*). The buttress roots of the mangrove are relics of the *haupra*. A young girl (*kivasom*) of the village changed into a pelican when *Uari* covered everything with loam. She flew off to Dahuk-zé-miráv, where there has been a pelican *déma* up to the present day. The woman *Hoyom* (we shall take up her story presently) became a big crab. Other people changed into rays (a *Bragai-zé* totem), gurnards (*kirub*; also a *Bragai-zé* totem) etc. The numerous bones of the *déma* who were killed became the mussel-shells and snail-shells which are found on the beach; some of these are used as pubic covers by males. The young man in the tree survived. He held out there for another night and when the mud had become solid enough, he cautiously walked to the coast. He is, according to Wirz, the prime ancestor of the *Zohé* or *Bangu-boan*, a statement which is, it seems, only partly correct, because the *Bangu-boan* is to all appearances only a subclan of the *Zohé*, living in the vicinity of the scene of the calamity described in the myth. To-day the area is Kanum-irébe territory.

The myth of *Uari* is essentially a myth of nature. East of Sarira the shore is no longer a predominantly sandy beach, but loamy and slimy in many places, often grown with mangroves. Still, there are areas where the beach is sandy, but in several places we find that the sand is gradually being overlaid with mud. The new 1:100,000 map

¹¹⁴ Wirz gives the native term *gudetwai*, which he translates by 'Schlamm-springer', mudskipper, a little fish which at low tide is seen in great numbers moving on the surface of the slimy mud. Geurtjens, in his Dict., makes mention of the *godéwai*, a bird. It is evident, however, that the boy changed into a fish or a fish-like animal because his mother tried to catch him with a *haupra*.

gives a fairly good impression of the situation, which enables us to correct Wirz's statement that east of Sarira there is no sandy beach at all.¹¹⁵ The myth of *Uari* at Bangu (which must be located near present-day Ongaya) reflects the continuous changes occurring along the coast in this area. One of the factors bearing on this process is the violence of the breakers crashing on the beach. Wirz points out that *Uari* could not land between Duv-miráv and Makalin because there the surf is very strong, making sedimentation of loam impossible. Round about the mouth of the Kumbe the situation is more favourable; the stream as it skirts the coast is rather muddy and consequently the beach is, in some places at least, fairly soft. This is brought out in the story by *Uari's* short visit. In Bangu the conditions for sedimentation are the most favourable and here, indeed, fairly thick layers of clay may be deposited within a very short space of time, even in the course of one single night.¹¹⁶

It is quite well possible that Wirz's hypothesis is correct and that the story of *Uari* is founded in historical fact. Verschueren writes: "long ago some old people of the eastern area told me that in the days of their youth very old people would recount that at one time the shore between Meliu and Kondo had been one long sandy beach, lined with coconut trees. Besides, the Enkelembu people, a Kanum-irébe group, at present the rightful owners of the area all along the coast as far as Kondo, concede that very long ago all this land was Marind territory. The Ongaya people, who make part of the Enkelembu, now hold the whole area from Sarira to Tomer. They settled here as late as about 1919. Before, they had been living at Mongumer, together with those of Yanggandur, till the last big headhunting raid of the Kumbe valley people, led by those of Bad, induced them to migrate to the coast".¹¹⁷ Verschueren's explanation undoubtedly lends substance to Wirz's hypothesis, but there is more to this question than can be dealt with in the present context. We shall come back to it further on in this section.

The story of *Uari* holds yet another interesting aspect. A similar story is told of *Yorma*,¹¹⁸ but *Yorma* is not a déma to be derided like *Uari*. *Yorma* is a redoubtable fighter, lashing the coast with his mighty waves. He compares with *Uari* like *Ganguta* the tree with *Ganguta* the

¹¹⁵ Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 158 f.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 159.

¹¹⁷ Verschueren, *Letters IX* p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Cf. below, pp. 383 f.

feasthouse-post. Here again the milder character, we might say a tinge of immaturity, of the *Mahu-zé* phratry comes to the fore. The difference between the two is epitomized by the totems associated with their respective clans. Those of the *Yorm-end* are the fishes of the deep sea, but those of the *Zohé* the fishes of the shallow coastal waters.¹¹⁹

One of *Uari's* victims was *Hoyom*, the wife of *Wonatai* the stork déma who, at that time, apparently had already left her. When *Uari* covered Bangu with loam, *Hoyom* changed into a big crab (*ngus*; the same word is used to denote the constellation Cancer¹²⁰) and took her son *Mungus* with her to Okaba, where she settled in the Koloji creek. As always happens in such stories, a couple of girls found the boy and brought him to Okaba. *Hoyom* tried to recover her child, but she was chased by an old woman who threw glowing embers at her and beat her with a stick, again the usual pattern. The boy remained in the village and was raised by the *iwag* who had found him. One day his father *Wonatai* came to the village to see him. He agreed to it that his son was to be left in the care of the *iwag* and, changing into a bird, he flew off. *Mungus* later went to Karikri in Tumid-miráv, where he married a girl called *Susu*. With her he went to Dahuk-zé-miráv on the upper Buraka, where they had two sons, *Demai*, who later begot offspring at Wamal, and *Korokev*, who settled and raised a family at Hibóm (Wambí). They all belong to the *Ndik-end*.¹²¹ The fact that the story is a *Zohé* myth proves that in one way or another the *Zohé* feel themselves more or less related to the *Ndik-end*.¹²²

Another *Zohé* totem is the cormorant (*kar-a-kar*). One afternoon some boys of Borem were going home with a big catch of fish, when they met a déma, *Gěngé*, who robbed them of all their fishes and ran off. Crying, the boys came home, but they could not tell who it was that had grabbed their fish, as they had forgotten his name. Only a small, ringworm-infested boy remembered the name. Then the men set out to catch the robber. They met him outside the village and seized him by the arms and legs, tugging at him with all their might.

¹¹⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 132 note 2.

¹²⁰ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *ngoes*; Vertenten, BKI 1921 p. 187.

¹²¹ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 159 f.

¹²² It would be premature to present the fact that both the *Ndik-end* and the *Zohé* have an *Aru-rek* subclan among their subclans as an argument supporting our supposition that *Zohé* and *Ndik-end* feel themselves more or less related. We must allow for the possibility that the *Ndik-end Aru-rek* are not *Ndik-end* at all. They are mentioned only once, viz. in the list of subclans in Wirz, M.A. III p. 173, and this might well be an error.

Then, suddenly his arms changed into wings and the fish-thief turned into a cormorant.¹²³

A last *Zohé* myth is concerned with the bow.¹²⁴ On the Oba river¹²⁵ in Yéi-anim territory (middle Maro) there lived *Kedma*, the bow déma, with his wife and *nakaru*. In those days bow and arrows were unknown and the bow déma hid in the forest, where he hunted wallabies and pigs. One day, when the people of Senayo and the Yéi-anim, jointly preparing a feast, went out hunting, they could not find a single wallaby. Then, suddenly, they heard somebody growling; they had hit upon the bow déma, who came away by taking the direction of Saror, killing all the wallabies that he met on his way. The story got round and the Yéi-anim and Kanum-anim flocked to Saror, wanting to join the Senayo people in their efforts to catch the déma. They surrounded him and, though some of them were killed, they succeeded in seizing the déma. His wife hung on to his neck, while the daughter (*nakaru*?) hid herself in the earth. The wife of the bow déma is the bowstring, the daughter the arrow. The bow déma himself is the bow; the bows of the inland people have two differently shaped ends: a nose-end and a foot-end. The coastal Marind, next to a similar bow, have another, the ends of which are alike (both foot-ends) and which is used for shooting fishes. The people who seized the bow déma tore at him till he broke in two. The Yéi-anim held the upper end (the nose-end) and that is why they have a bow with two different ends. The same happened to the arrows. The Yéi-anim secured the upper ends and ever since the Yéi-anim have boasted beautiful, red-painted arrows with arrow-heads of bone or cassowary-nails, whereas the coastal people had to content themselves with the empty shafts, which they fit up with simple arrow-heads. The better Yéi-anim arrows have to be procured by barter.

Usually the bow is held to be a *Zohé* totem, though for what reasons is not wholly clear. Wirz suggests that it is primarily the coastal bow which is called a *Zohé* totem. The fact that this bow is used preferably for shooting fish seems to bear him out.¹²⁶ Another motive for associating the bow with this clan might be found in the representation of the bow as a man in permanent copulation with his wife, the bow-string. This, however, seems rather far-fetched. Sexual symbols are

¹²³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 160.

¹²⁴ Ibid. pp. 160 ff.

¹²⁵ Not Obat, as Wirz writes. Cf. Verschueren, Letters IX p. 6.

¹²⁶ Wirz, op. cit. p. 162.

numerous in the mythological equipment of every clan. If we follow this precedent, every solid argument is going to be drowned in a sea of mere possibilities. We must keep to the facts. In the myth of the bow *déma* there are only two such which are relevant from a classificatory point of view — the association of the bow with war, and its having originated in the interior. It is the only time that the interior, a main theme of the phratry's mythology, is alluded to in a *Zohé* myth.

Of course there are points of contact with other main features of the phratry's mythological equipment, primarily the association of the clan with loam and mud. Not the sandy, but the muddy beach is emphasized, the beach which is not the true beach, the playground of every coastal village. Even so, the points of contact with the opposite moiety are numerous. The crab *déma* of the Koloï creek is a good example. The creek itself is muddy and the crabs live in holes in the steep banks, but the banks are built up of solid, hard and sandy soil. The crab *déma* lives in the immediate vicinity of the sandy beach, where numerous small crabs, totems of the *Wokabu-rek* and as such also totems of the *Zohé*, daily fall prey to the foraging women.

A curious character is the cormorant. As a fish-thief he is in the right company. His importance, however, derives from the role of the cormorant *déma* in mortuary rites. We do not know of any myth which could explain this role, a role which will be discussed more elaborately in chapter XIII.¹²⁷ We have to be satisfied with the knowledge that the cormorant has an unclarified relationship with the dead.

According to Wirz the *Zohé* comprise two main branches, the *Wokabu-rek* and the *Bangu-* or loam *boan*, i.e. the *Zohé* of annex IVc. The Report of the Depopulation Team gives another division, viz. that into *Wokabu-rek* and *Aru-rek*, the latter being identified with the loam *boan* and subdivided into *Zohé*, *Yawar-zé*, *Hayam (Hoyom)-rek* and *Kawai-rek*. Mythological evidence supports the classification as given by Wirz. *Wokabu* being the father of the *anda* or *zohé*, there is every reason to accept his view that the *Zohé* embrace both the *Wokabu-rek* and the various subclans of the loam *boan*. Whether the *Aru-rek* are identical with the loam *boan* or whether, as stated by Wirz, they are its most important and most widely spread subclan, may be left undecided. Whatever the case may be, the *Aru-rek* are without doubt a very widely spread subclan with members living in Sěpadim, Buti, Nowari, Noh-otiv, Bahor, Kumbe, Sangasé, Saror, Senam and Koa.

¹²⁷ Cf. below, pp. 786 ff.

Their ancestor *Aru* is said to have lived on the upper Kumbé. In *Rahuk-miráv* he had three sons, *Kawai*, *Goyab* and *Ombëv*, who settled at Kuprik, Wendu and Saror respectively; their descendants are still settled there, a contention which I do not find confirmed in Wirz's work.

On one point the account as given by Wirz is corroborated by the Report of the Depopulation Team. The two agree in that the clan we are dealing with and which Wirz alternately calls *Zohé* and *Bangu-boan*, has loam as its main totem. The importance of loam as a clan-symbol is expressed in the clan's hunting yell, *Bangu! Gém-a!*, i.e. 'Bangu! Loam!' Intriguing is the reference to *Bangu*. From Williams' Trans-Fly we know that the Trans-Fly people are divided into three sections, *Bangu*, *Maiarva* and *Sangara*, Front (West), Middle and Rear (East). The western origin of *Uari* and the place of the *Bangu-boan* within the Marind-anim clan-system speak for an association of the *Bangu-boan* with the Trans-Fly *Bangu* section.¹²⁸ After all, the *Kanum-irébe* are fairly close relatives of the Trans-Fly people. What is more, one of their five clans is called *Banggu*. According to Nevermann the *Banggu* have the sago, the catfish and the penis as their totems, but here he differs slightly with Verschueren, who reports that the *Banggu* totems are the sago and the wallaby.¹²⁹ The relationship with the sago explains why the *Banggu* equate their clan with the *Mahu-zé* of the Marind,¹³⁰ of which the Marind *Bangu-boan*, too, makes part. With these facts in mind it seems a bit rash for us to conclude that the *Bangu* people of the myth were, indeed, Marind-anim. For all that goes to show that the relevant area was originally Marind-anim territory, it must have been the preserve of the *Kanum-irébe* for a long time since. Otherwise, the eastern Marind would not have allowed them to settle down in the area without so much as a word

¹²⁸ Cf. Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 58 and 80.

¹²⁹ Verschueren registered the clans of the *Kanum* tribe of Yanggandur. He, too, found that they comprise five clans, viz. *Banggu* with wallaby and sago as their totems, *Geb* with the coconut, betel and banana, *Ngolmbu* with the cassowary and the stork, *Semagol* with the pig, and the *Sami* with the eagle and a fruit called *doga* in Marind (probably a *semecarpus* spec.; cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *doga*) as their totems. Verschueren's list (Letters VI p. 2) differs in various details from the one given by Nevermann (ZfE 1939 p. 21).

¹³⁰ The correctness of the equation is corroborated by the fact that the census 1930/32 has many *Banggu* in the *Kanum-irébe* villages that were registered, and no *Mahu-zé*. The *Sami* mentioned by Verschueren are probably the same as the *Balagase* listed by Nevermann. In the registration they were noted down as *Blagadjé*.

of protest. Actually, the relations between the Kanum and the eastern coastal Marind were friendly. The Kanum-irébe participated in *mayo* ceremonies of some kind¹³¹ and intermarriage involving neighbouring Marind-anim groups is fairly frequent.¹³² Though the Kanum-irébe have been the victims of headhunting expeditions undertaken by the people of the Kumbé valley and Sangasé, they often joined the eastern Marind as allies when the latter struck at the Gambadi, Semariji and Keraki people.¹³³

When all is said and done, it must be conceded that the whole question whether *Bangu* originally was Marind or whether it was Kanum, has no relevance at all, unless it could be used as an argument in support of a migration theory. As such it served the purpose of Wirz, who looked upon the many contacts of the Marind with the Kanum, contacts recorded in myth, as so many arguments in favour of his hypothesis of a migration from east to west. However, it is only natural that such contacts should be referred to in myth. Mythology gives an account of the world a people lives in. That world is always wider than the territory the people may call their own. It is most emphatically true in the case of the Marind, fierce headhunters and indefatigable wanderers that they were. Their world reached from the Fly river to the Digul and Frederik Hendrik Island. We learn from myth that the stork *déma Wonatai* retired to Frederik Hendrik Island, that *Geb* lived in Komolom, that *Yagil* the cassowary *déma* originated there and that *Aramemb* came from Strait Marianne. All the same, nobody ever thought of concluding from these premises that at one time or another the Marind-anim were actually settled in these places. Why, then, should the stories of *Bangu*, of *Aramemb* at Kurkari, of the pig feast at Sangar and so on be accepted as arguments in favour of a migration theory? Actually, the myth of *Bangu* serves only one evident purpose. *Bangu* is the symbol of a mud-covered beach. The myth reflects the opposition of sandy beach and muddy beach and from this point of view *Bangu's* place in the Mahu-zé phratry fits perfectly into the classificatory framework. The present viewpoint is amply confirmed by Wirz's statement that the whole flora and fauna of the muddy beach belong to the relations of this clan.¹³⁴

Finally, mention should be made of a few points which could not be

¹³¹ Nevermann, *op. cit.* p. 23.

¹³² *Ibid.* p. 7.

¹³³ *Ibid.* p. 32.

¹³⁴ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 158, 168.

clarified. *Bangu*, says Geurtjens, is also an *imo* ceremony held to dispel sickness¹³⁵ and *Bangu* is the name of an unidentified large crab species,¹³⁶ perhaps the same as the *ngus*, which is a *Zohé* totem. Next, there is a *déma* called *Bangréke* who sets the tidal currents moving in the mouth of the Merauke river. He is a beautifully adorned giant. His face is painted red and black and on his arms he wears white and blue water-lilies. His left hand holds his big drum, which he beats when proceeding upstream. The name *Bangréke* might be interpreted as *Bangu-rek*, descendant of *Bangu*, the name *Bangréke* having been noted down at a time when the knowledge of the Marind-anim language was very limited and its orthography wholly a matter of experiment. Our author¹³⁷ does not give us any clue as to the *boan* to which *Bangréke* may be reckoned to belong.

5. THE COMPOSITION OF THE MAHU-ZÉ PHRATRY

On p. 168 of Part II of his *Marind-Anim Wirz* published a diagram of the *Mahu-zé* phratry and its clans, subclans and totems. Though it undeniably has its merits, the table has greatly contributed to blurring the picture of the phratry's composition. The four main clans are regrouped to form three totem-groups, viz. the penis *boan* (coinciding with the *Diwa-rek*), the sago *boan*, comprising the *Mahu-zé* clan and the *Wokabu-rek*, and the *Zohé-boan*, constituted by the *Wokabu-rek* or *anda-boan* and the loam- or *Bangu-boan*. In this presentation the sago *boan* and the *Zohé-boan* overlap each other, the *Wokabu-rek* belonging to both. It shows a serious flaw, however, in that it confines the specific relationship with the sago to only two of the four clans. The phratry as a whole is also called *Da-sami* and this in itself is a valid argument against monopolizing the sago (*da*) as a specific relationship of the *Mahu-zé* clan and the *Wokabu-rek*. The sago is the symbol of the phratry as a whole and its mythological history, in particular that of the *Diwa-rek*, makes it perfectly clear that the relationship with the sago cannot be limited to two clans. The *Diwa*-canoe is full of sago, time and again sago is thrown overboard, causing sago groves to spring up in the vicinity. Moreover, *Mahu* is said to have a special relationship with the *Diwa-rek* because of the excessive size of his genitals. Our view that the *Diwa-rek* are closely associated with sago is explicitly

¹³⁵ Actually, it is more than that. Cf. below, pp. 627 f.

¹³⁶ Geurtjens, *Dict. v. bangoe*.

¹³⁷ Cappers, J.P. 1908 p. 123.

confirmed by an alternative reading of the myth of the *Diwa*-canoe, communicated by Vertenten.¹³⁸ The *déma* of the *Diwa*-canoe, says Vertenten, were sago *déma* and in their canoe they brought all the implements for sago-making.

Similarly, the loam clan constitutes in fact one clan with the *Wokabu-rek*. *Wokabu* is the father of the *zohé* or *anda* and, together, *Wokabu-rek* and loam clan are given the name of *Zohé*. In the mythology of the *Zohé* proper (the loam clan) explicit references to their relationship with the sago are, indeed, lacking, but this relationship is none the less evident enough to the Marind, in whose view sago and loam are closely connected. On several occasions Wirz himself pointed out the analogy between the two, most explicitly so on p. 154 of part II, where he writes: "There is a relationship between the sago and the loam; the white, gray or yellowish marine clay which is deposited along the coast, and the fresh sago as after washing it settles into a pulpy mass, closely resemble each other both in appearance and in feel". To this outward resemblance could be added the fact that the sago is always processed on the spot, in the swamp, that is amidst mud and loam. How this similarity in appearance leads to the identification of sago with loam is clearly borne out by myth: when the eagle *déma* drops sago at Senayo it changes into edible clay; when *Harau* spills sago, *Wokabu* transforms it into inedible loam.¹³⁹

If we start from the obvious fact that sago is the main totem of the whole phratry, a natural grouping of the clans presents itself. Two of the more prominent characters of the phratry are associated each with two clans: *Mahu*, the prime ancestor of the *Mahu-zé* clan is also closely associated with the *Diwa-rek*, and *Wokabu* is the first ancestor of the *Zohé* as well as of the *Wokabu-rek*. Taken together, *Mahu* and *Wokabu* are contrasts, as, in a way, the associated clans are contrasts. From this angle a review of the main motives discernible in the various totems and myths might prove fruitful. These contrasting aspects, however, have a common background in the phratry's association with sago, which in its turn is very closely associated with swamp, mud, loam and female occupations. Processing sago is the women's main task. Their second important task with regard to the food-quest is gathering shell-fish and crabs along the beach. The various crabs and shell-fish are totems of the *Wokabu-rek* and the loam *boan*. In other

¹³⁸ Vertenten, I.L. IV pp. 144 f.

¹³⁹ Above, pp. 304 and 338.

words, the phratry's two contrasting groups are associated with the women's part in the food-quest.

Among the *Diwa-rek* we found a combination of the following motives: excessively long male genitals (referred to in their hunting yell), castration and castration anxiety, and the *wokraved* grade which is associated with the female role in homosexual intercourse, with black and dirt, and with social disqualification (the association with the *Emér-anim*, the Hunger-people). The mythology of the group has the interior as its place of action. Finally, we also put forward the suggestion that one of the group's myths was originally a moon-myth.

The picture presented by the *Mahu-zé* is more complicated, though there is much they have in common with the *Diwa-rek*, such as the emphasis on a big genital, be it in a less exaggerated form. Nevertheless, castration anxiety is expressed in one of their myths. The homosexual component is not stressed. On the contrary, a special emphasis is given to the combination of dogs and women. Other prominent traits are a strong eroticism, incest, fertility and excrements. The *batend-déma* links up the *Mahu-zé* with ritual ornament and with the land of the dead. Throughout the clan-myths the interior dominates as the locus of action. We again found a myth which at one time may have been a moon-myth. A deviation from the theme may be observed in the myth of *Ori*, who is associated with the sea, with fishing, with a fish-trap and with dullness, but who also stands close to *Aramemb*, though the relationship is not clarified. In short, *Ori's* associations are of an equivocal nature and could perhaps be best characterized by calling him a harmless shark.

The two clans together are marked by a preoccupation with genitals, castration, excrements, homosexuality, the female sex, and the interior as the locus of action. There is a rather unimportant connection with the sea through a *déma* whose behaviour is very little in accord with the ferocious character of the shark which he represents. An interesting point is also *Mahu's* role as an apprentice in headhunting. We may interpret it as another indication that the association of this group with the age-grade of the *wokrévid* is, in some way or other, essential. The function of the phratry in the performance of the *sosom*-rites points in the same direction. The *Mahu-zé* and the *Diwa-rek* are a disreputable and unsavoury lot, and the same epithets may be said to apply to a *wokraved's* outward appearance.

The *Wokabu-rek* and the loam *boan* deviate markedly from this pattern. *Wokabu*, though a thief, is a socialite, a man who contributes

to feasts and ceremonial ornamentation. In all things he seems to belong to the coast and not to the interior, but ultimately it is in the interior that he agrees to plant his sago and it is the sago which is essentially characteristic of *Wokabu*. The sago is identified, sometimes with excrements, thus linking the group with the *Mahu-zé* clan, and sometimes with a child. Important, too, is *Wokabu's* fatherhood of the *anda*. The *anda* is identical with man as he was before being reshaped by the fire and by *Aramemb*. The *mayo*-rites suggest that the *anda* should be identified with the young men about to undergo initiation, but also with mankind still underground. In other words, in spite of his outward aspect, *Wokabu* fits perfectly well into the pattern presented by the *Diwa-rek* and the *Mahu-zé*, whom we found associated with the *wokrévid* age-grade. In this context *Uari's* weakness (he is too young to attack the *déma* of *Kumbe*) is quite in place. The loam, the mud with all the fauna and flora of the loamy beach, which are the totems of the loam clan, are in reality coastal variants of the sago-swamp. The loam is a sago-symbol; the molluscs and the crabs are the objects of the females' food-quest. The two clans together constitute, in fact, a socially more acceptable and more polished variant of the other two clans. However, both in this circumstance and in their being associated with the beach it is implied that their characteristics include certain traits of the opposite moiety. *Wokabu* is overtly associated with the sandy beach and he is the originator of coconut oil, body-paint and anointing of the hairdo.

In other words, the *Mahu-zé* phratry presents a dualism similar to that observed in the religious equipment of the phratries of the other moiety. In the way this dualism is expressed the parallelism with the *Geb-zé* is closest. In both cases the phratry may be split into two halves, one of which has characteristics more properly belonging to the other moiety. The parallelism with the *Geb-zé* lends further substance to the opposition of *Geb* and *Mahu*. In a way they belong to each other. The relations of the *Mahu-zé* with the moon, overshadowed to-day by *Geb's* identity with the moon, contribute substantially to the surmise that a process of stylizing or patterning is going on in which the essentials of a system of classification and differentiation are taking shape and are in this Marind-anim community getting the better of the egalitarian tendencies and the isolationism normal to any Papuan society.

The differentiation of the moieties into a superior and an inferior one raises the problem how the inferior moiety could ever have willingly accepted its part. The question is particularly poignant with

regard to the *Mahu-zé*. How could they agree, not only to being associated, but to actively associating themselves with female sex, castration complex, homosexuality, and excrements? The fact that the four traits complement each other may serve to confirm the correctness of the analysis, but the very consequent elaboration of the sordid theme adds to the difficulty of understanding its attraction for a section of the tribe which is neither more foolish nor more neurotic than any other section. Still, the hunting yells of *Diwa-rek* and *Mahu-zé-ha* leave no doubt but that they take a pride in them: 'Big Penis!', 'Dogs, defecate!' They are of a comparable order to those of the *Bragai-zé-ha*: 'Much sperma! Much emitting!' ¹⁴⁰ There is something in it of the pride of the male sex, boasting its independence and its masculinity by referring to the male genital and by indulging in obscenity. Homosexuality is not necessarily a corollary of femininity, at least not among the Marind, who are basically heterosexual. The phallus which during the *sosom*-rites is set up in the guise of a red-painted pole planted in the centre of the ceremonial grounds ¹⁴¹ gives ample evidence that the castration anxiety expressed in the cut-off penis is more than compensated by the gigantic size of the red, blood-covered phallus. The exorbitant size of the genital is the symbol of virility. The *Mahu-zé* are not just black and dirty sodomites. They are also the people who have plenty of women; *Mahu* gives one of his to *Geb*, who had to satisfy himself with a bamboo. This provides another cause for pride: *Mahu* makes a free gift of her. Next to this, the *Mahu-zé* are the people who glorify in the possession of a big penis, certainly not a minor matter in New Guinea, where many tribes (inter alia the Digul tribes north of the Bian) symbolically improve upon the size of the penis by the use of a long penis-sheath. We conclude that in a sex-ridden community where male ideals prevail, the association with the female sex tends to result in an emphasis on abnormal male forms and the assertion of male pride.

The qualifications of the various clans are, primarily, ritual qualifications. They do not affect the human dignity of the individual members. The classification of *Geb-zé* versus *Mahu-zé*, in which the *Geb-zé* take precedence, is a coastal classification. In the interior, where *Mahu* and the sago are at home, *Geb* tends to be the lesser while *Mahu* takes precedence. The observations made on this point by Verschueren are amply confirmed by myth. In Wayau (middle Kumbe) it is not *Baringau*

¹⁴⁰ Below, p. 381.

¹⁴¹ Below, p. 479.

who tells *Mahu* to plant his sago in the interior, but *Mahu* who despatches *Baringau* to plant on the coast. On the upper Bian (and upper Kumbe) *Mahu* is identified with *Ndiwa*, who is the culture-hero, and in ritual the *Mahu-zé* take precedence.¹⁴² We even find that here *Mahu* (*Ndiwa*) is associated with the east, and *Geb* with the west.¹⁴³ The inland Marind have not so much elaborated their myth and ritual as the coastal Marind, but the underlying principle, the emphasis on the strong ties connecting man and nature, is evident.

¹⁴² Cf. above, p. 336 note 92 and p. 338 note 99; Verschueren, Letters IX p. 2.

¹⁴³ Cf. below, p. 587.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE BRAGAI-ZÉ PHRATRY

Like the other phratries, the *Bragai-zé* phratry embraces a number of rather loosely interrelated clans. One of these, the *Basik-Basik* or pig clan, stands so much apart that Wirz held it to form a separate phratry, an error which was discussed and corrected in chapter II of this book.¹ The fact that the *Basik-Basik* prefer to be called by their clan-name rather than by the appellation of *Bragai-zé* certainly contributed substantially to mistaking their position, which could only be rectified by taking into account the analysis of the registration. Together with the other *Bragai-zé* clans the *Basik-Basik* constitute one exogamous group, a fact borne out by the more recent investigations of the Depopulation Team. More reliable than Wirz's communications on the rules of exogamy are his data on clans, subclans and myth. We owe to him the main body of the information available on the clans and the mythology of this phratry. The *Bragai-zé* number four clans; next to the *Basik-Basik*, there are the betel-crocodile clan or *Bragai-zé-ha* (*Bragai-zé* proper), the *Yorm-end* or sea clan, and the *kidub-boan* or eagle clan. The *Yorm-end* or sea clan include the fish clan among them. It is not clear whether fish clan is just another name for sea clan or the name of a separate subclan. The *kidub-boan* is a separate clan, though it stands less close to the *Bragai-zé-ha* than the *Yorm-end*; it is said to be nearer to the *Basik-Basik*. Among the myths the most elaborate are those of the crocodile clan and of the *Basik-Basik*. They contain much valuable information; those of the crocodile clan connect the phratry with the *mayo*-rites, and those of the *Basik-Basik* with headhunting and sorcery. In our discussion the data are grouped under the following headings: the *mayo* myth of the *Bragai-zé*, other myths of the betel-crocodile clan, the myths of the *Yorm-end* and the fish clan, myths of the *kidub-boan*, and *Basik-Basik* mythology.

¹ Above, pp. 77-79.

1. THE MAYO MYTH OF THE BRAGAI-ZÉ

The principal character of the *Bragai-zé mayo* myth is *Mer* or *Opeko-anem*, 'the man from Opeko'. *Uaba* and *Opeko-anem* were friends who each brought the other one's sister to the *mayo* ceremonies. From that time onwards there has been friendship between *Uaba-rek* and *Bragai-zé*.² For a man thus to bring a woman to the *mayo* involves that he has married her, because he will put her at the disposal of the community of the men on the occasion of the sexual rites which make part of it. This he cannot do unless he is married to her.³ That the two friends indeed married each the other one's sister is confirmed by the fact that *Uaba's* wife is named *Kanis-iwag*, i.e. Betel-woman. She bears the name of a *Bragai-zé-ha* main totem, and in an earlier chapter we related how she was taken to the *mayo* by *Uaba*, who obviously is her husband.⁴

The story of *Opeko-anem* as retold by Wirz⁵ opens with the *mayo* celebration at Mayo near Yavar-makan. *Uaba* was among the *mitwar* (the mature initiates) and he sent *Opeko-anem* to Imo to fetch the *gari* and an *iwag*. The *gari* is an important cult-ornament and its role in the present myth is of so much consequence as to justify a more elaborate discussion.

The *gari*, then, is a huge semi-circular ornament which is carried on the shoulders. There are two types of *gari*; the best-known is the *gari* of the eastern Marind, an almost perfect semi-circle with a diameter of up to three or even four meters. The ornament is fan-shaped, made of the very light kernel of sago-leaf ribs. The thin, long strips, radially arranged, are lashed together and then painted in various colours, among which white dominates. The usual pattern shows a broad, dark-coloured semi-circular band round the centre, which is behind the bearer's head, a band often enclosed by another broad semi-circular band of a lighter colour. The main body is coloured white with lime, with the exception of a narrow outer border, which is given a dark colour. In the white field a few ornaments are painted, usually two stars with, in the centre, a crescent or a phallus (cf. Plate IX). In one picture I noticed a thin, phallus-like mannikin painted in the centre of the white field. The dimensions of these designs are relatively modest; it is the white field that dominates and not the ornaments. Sometimes the field is left blank (without any decoration at all).

² Wirz, M.A. II p. 137.

³ Cf. above, p. 163 and below, ch. XIII section 3.

⁴ Above, p. 243.

⁵ M.A. II pp. 121-125.

In the western section another type of *gari* occurs, which is somewhat smaller, with a maximum height of $1\frac{1}{2}$ meters measured from the shoulders of the bearer, and its shape no longer represents a perfect semi-circle, but more or less an oblong, faintly pointed at the top. According to Vertenten this type of *gari* is general in the western section,⁶ a contention belied by the photographs of a *déma-wir* held in Okaba in August 1925, which show a couple of ordinary *gari* of the eastern type.⁷ Where the *gari* alleged by Vertenten to be typical of the western section were *gari* used in mortuary rites, it is probable that at the time he wrote his paper (one of his earliest) he had not yet had an opportunity to attend any other *déma-wir* in the area except the small *déma-wir* for the dead which is different in character and extent from the big *déma-wir* performed on the occasion of a major feast. If that is correct, it is just a matter of there being two types of *gari* in the western section, the one as used in mortuary rites, and the other as made for a *déma-wir* or a *mayo*-initiation. At any rate, the *gari* used in the ceremonies for the dead is much smaller than those shown in the photograph of the Okaba feast. Besides, the outer border is broader and in some cases decorated with a geometric design along the outer edge and with representations of the moon (in one case of a crescent-shaped centipede) in the apex, with crabs of different varieties depicted on either side in the border.⁸ The design in the white field dominates in the three *gari* reproduced by Vertenten;⁹ with two of these it is a *sâr-ahai*, an ornament connected with death,¹⁰ and with the third the morning-star. A photograph published by Geurtjens of two *gari* made for the ceremony of the dead shows these also to be relatively small. In the white field (which rather seems to be light-gray in colour) the figures — in this case a crescent and the morning-star in conjunction — are less dominating. Finally, there is the sketch published by Heldring, which shows a *gari* decorated with two large birds.¹¹ Heldring's article holds

⁶ Vertenten, I.A. 1915 p. 159.

⁷ Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 167 ff. and Plate 17 facing p. 136. As the *déma-wir* was arranged on the occasion of a government-sponsored feast, the Queen's birthday, it is fairly certain that all the participants were people of the Okaba district, that is, of that part of the Merauke sub-division which lies west of the Bian. It is practically out of the question that on such an occasion people from outside the district would be invited to perform a *déma-wir*.

⁸ Cf. Vertenten, l.c.

⁹ Cf. Plate XXI of the article just quoted.

¹⁰ Cf. below, pp. 776 ff.

¹¹ Fig. 1 of his essay in TBG 1913; cf. pp. 466 jo. 435 *ibid.*

yet another surprise, viz. reproductions of *gari* that were attached to the house in the *mayo-miráv* at Gelib (western section) during the *mayo*-rites.¹² The one seems to be more or less identical with the *gari* used at the ceremony for the dead, the other has right and left a circular ornament which might be an eye. The white fields are greyish and the dimensions of these *gari* are so modest that we might even doubt whether they are *gari* at all. The greyish colour of the white field is probably due to the fact that for the colouring white clay has been used instead of burnt lime. When questioned on this point, Verschueren's informants told him that lime being rather expensive — i.e. requiring a lot of work to prepare — white clay may be used as a substitute.¹³

The few pictures of *gari* used at initiation ceremonies and the somewhat more numerous pictures of the *gari* exhibited at a *déma-wir* all show the large semi-circular type with a big white field as its dominant feature. While the function of the *gari* in the mortuary rites will be discussed later on,¹⁴ we now have to go into detail with regard to its use during the initiation rites and the festive *déma-wir*. The two occasions must not be confused; the one differs as widely from the other as both do from a mortuary ceremony. During the initiation rites the *gari*-bearer appears for the first time when the ceremonies have already been going on for about one month. The bearer enters the *mayo-miráv*, the initiation-grounds, beating a huge drum and dancing in a peculiar way, firmly stamping his feet while advancing in solemn fashion. He is followed by a second performer to whom he is linked by means of a spear. The second performer is a man dressed up as a woman, with a woman's apron; he wears a special cap and his body is covered with a multitude of red and yellow dots. He is the *mayo-mes-iwag*, the old *mayo*-woman, an important personality in the *mayo*-ritual. Some five or six months afterwards, on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the rites, the *gari*-bearer appears again, but this time he is alone, i.e. unaccompanied by the *mayo-mes-iwag*. He carries a fire-brand in his hand; he brings the *mayo*-fire and his arrival announces the closing of the rites.¹⁵ The importance of this personality within the framework of the rites is beyond any doubt.

Apparently there are more occasions on which the *gari*-bearer appears

¹² Op. cit. fig. 28.

¹³ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 5.

¹⁴ Below, pp. 786 ff.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 524 f., 537.

during the initiation rites. Our information is of a rather sketchy nature. Viegen records the presence of three *gari* at one of the later ceremonies, but his information is very incomplete and it is impossible to draw definite conclusions.¹⁶ Photographs made in the *mayo-miráv* (*mayo*-initiation place) at Kumbe in 1909 show a *gari*-bearer and a stork *déma*. The photographs were not made during an actual performance. The performers stand close to a shed and the *gari*-bearer is still engrossed in putting the finishing touch to his garb. There is no certainty that he and the *déma* are going to act together. We only know for sure that the performance does not belong to one of the later phases of the rites because the photographs show a number of candidates whose bodies are covered with white clay. The white clay makes part of their disguise during the earlier phases.

Photographs of *gari* displayed during the initiation ceremonies are few in number. Those that were to go with Heldring's article could not be reproduced and have since got lost.¹⁷ Gooszen published one of the above-mentioned photographs of a *gari* in the *mayo-miráv* near Kumbe taken in 1909.¹⁸ On that occasion at least three photographs were made; as nrs. 196, 280 and 281 I found them in a set of albums donated (presumably by Heldring) to the Anthropology Department of the Royal Tropical Institute. One of them, which, contrary to the photo published by Gooszen, does not show the stork *déma*, was printed by Wirz in his *Marind-anim* (III Taf. 3) and his *Dämonen und Wilde* (Plate 100). As usual, Wirz does not mention the origin of his photograph. This particular *gari* is exceptional because it has three stars in the white field, and no other ornaments besides. How to interpret these stars is difficult; they may be *wayar* and represent an ordinary star, or *ovom* and symbolize either Venus (as morning- or evening-star) or Jupiter. The main difference between the two is that the *ovom* is worked up more elaborately than the *wayar*, but where comparison is impossible, it is difficult to decide from a photograph of a *gari* whether we have to do with a *wayar* or an *ovom*.¹⁹ Wirz does not give any relevant infor-

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 539.

¹⁷ In a footnote on p. 429 the editors of TBG explain that the photographs are in the Museum of the Batavian Society, where they are shown by request. When I applied there in June 1934, the photographs could not be found and were supposed to have been taken from the files by a former curator who was planning to write a book on New Guinea. I am not sorry that he never finished the book, but I still feel sore about the photographs.

¹⁸ BKI 1914 photo 8.

¹⁹ Cf. the designs published by Vertenten, BKI 1921 p. 184 fig. IV; I.A. 1915 Taf. XVII nr. 5, and our reproduction, Plate IX.

mation as he holds the designs in the white field to be meaningless.²⁰ Fortunately, other authors are more specific. In respect of the *gari* used in mortuary rites and described by Vertenten and Geurtjens²¹ the authors state that the stars represent *ovom*. Viegen, describing the *gari* displayed during the initiation ceremonies, also calls the stars *ovom*.²² A preference for the *ovom* is unmistakable; Verschuieren's informants, too, mentioned the *ovom*, and not the *wayar*, as a *gari* ornament.

The collection in the albums contains two more photographs of *gari*. The one is of a very small specimen (nr. 194) without any design or decoration. The picture was made well before the end of the ceremonies; it shows a number of candidates painted with white clay. The other is of a bigger *gari*, decorated with a star (*ovom*) in the centre and a crescent on the side of the field which is to the performer's left, whereas on his right-hand side the field is a blank. In the present instance the novices are not painted white, but they still wear a grass-cloak and do not have their hair done up, in other words, this photograph, too, was made before the closing ceremonies. The picture has been published by Wirz (again without making mention of its source) in Part IV of his *Marind-anim* (Taf. 56 fig. 1) and in his *Dämonen* (Plate 95). Finally, there is one photograph of the *gari* exhibited during the closing rites of the *mayo*-initiation at Birok and Matara. The picture goes with the description of the rites given by Father Ed. Cappers in the *Annalen*.²³ It shows a really huge contraption of about 4 meters in diameter, with an inner semi-circle divided into four sectors in different colours, enclosed by another, broad semi-circle bordering on a wide, completely unadorned white field with a dark and relatively narrow outer border. At the top and at angles right and left long, decorated spears or stakes project from behind the fan. The photo has been reproduced in Van de Kolk's *Oermenschen* (p. 69), with a minor, but confusing amendment to the original caption, substituting "*gari*, ornament used in dance" by "*gari*, ornament used in mortuary dance".

This is all I could trace in the way of photographs of *gari* exhibited during the *mayo*-initiation rites. They are characterized both by the absence of any ornamentation in the border and by a big white field

²⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 121.

²¹ Vertenten, I.A. l.c.; Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 330.

²² Viegen, TAG 1914 p. 151.

²³ Cappers, Ann. 1909 p. 213.

which is either left completely blank or decorated with a few stars and a crescent.

The *gari* made for a *déma-wir* have a more diversified ornamentation in the white field. Among the *gari* photographed by Geurtjens at the *déma-wir* in Okaba (1925) there is one with two crescents and four stars, one with one crescent and two stars (the crescent uppermost), and one with two stars and, in the centre, a penis. On *gari* made for a *déma-wir* a representation of a standing penis was by no means exceptional. This is illustrated by one of the several *gari* pictures in the 1923 volume of the Almanak of the Sacred Heart Mission, with the annotation that the photographs were taken on the occasion of a feast celebrated at Wendu. Of the five or six *gari* of the *déma-wir* reproduced by Wirz two have such a symbol in the middle of the field, with a star both right and left (M.A. Part IV Tafel 29 fig. 1 and Tafel 46 fig. 1). Another, the one used for the dramatization of the myth of *Yawima*, has a mannikin resembling a phallus, with stars right and left of it. The other two *gari* (Wirz, M.A. IV Tafel 29 fig. 1 and Tafel 27 fig. 3) have a crescent near the top, with stars on either side, and the same is the case in the hand-drawn picture in Tafel 30 in the same volume. Finally, Wirz has a picture of a *gari* from Okaba (M.A. IV Tafel 28 fig. 1) with in the centre a figure resembling a crosier or a walking stick and, on either side, a stylized star motif.²⁴ We do not know, however, for what purpose this particular *gari* was made.

Lastly, there are the more recent *gari*. In 1925 the Roman Catholic Mission applied the *gari* motif in the first Corpus Christi procession ever to come out in these parts. The procession was held at Buti and F. Vertenten comments that the *gari* "which is the essence of the *déma* presentations belonging to their old feasts, is now dedicated to the true God and Creator of Heaven and Earth; therefore one *gari* depicted the sun, another the moon and the stars, and a third their main crops, showing a coconut tree, a sago palm and a bunch of bananas. Rising above moon and stars, blood-red on a white field, the cross triumphant. . . .".²⁵ Later, I came across a few photographs of the procession, published in *Het Indische Leven* of August 15, 1925;²⁶ the *gari* displayed are completely denaturalized. They make me disinclined to attach much value to any pictures of *gari* made in later years. In the

²⁴ For its identification cf. Vertenten, BKI 1921 p. 184 fig. IV.

²⁵ Vertenten, J.P. 1925 p. 386.

²⁶ Vol. VII nr. 1, p. 1406. The system of page-numbering followed by the editors of the weekly is baffling.

archives of the Royal Tropical Institute I found a photograph of an almost classic *gari* with the word (or name) *Sarpai* painted upon it, and an anonymous filing-card saying that this *gari* represented déma *Bebu*, the spider déma. Another *gari*, reproduced by Father Verhoeven in the Almanak of the Sacred Heart Mission,²⁷ is also said to be a representation of déma *Bebu*. Now who is *Sarpai* and, above all, who is déma *Bebu*? They are never once mentioned in literature. There was a time when I made bold to draw some daring conclusions from the identification of *gari* and spider, which to-day I think are preposterous.²⁸ The denaturalized *gari* of the procession at Buti makes us doubt the correctness of the very identification of *gari* and spider. Taking stock of what we know about the meaning of the *gari*, we had better confine ourselves to information dating back to the time prior to its display in processions. Even so, it is difficult enough to arrive at any conclusion. We shall have a long way to go.

First of all, we have to bring more system into our data with regard to the different types of *gari* used on diverse occasions. These data consist of:

- a) One picture of a *gari* displayed at the close of the initiation rites. This concerns a very big *gari* without figures in any of its fields and with a broad inner band divided into sectors in different colours;
- b) Pictures of three different *gari* used at earlier stages of the initiation ceremonies; viz. a small one devoid of any further decoration, and two medium sized specimens, one with a crescent in the centre and a star on either side, the other with a star in the centre and a crescent on the side above the bearer's left shoulder;
- c) Pictures of some eleven or twelve different *gari* used in a déma-*wir*, of which four show representations of crescents and stars and five have stars on either side of the centre, in which there is depicted what in four cases most distinctively is, and in the fifth case might be, a phallic symbol. Besides, there is the unclassified *gari* of Okaba with its unidentifiable object flanked by two stylized stars;
- d) Pictures of five *gari* displayed on the occasion of mortuary rites. They are small *gari* and the design in the white field has a more dominant place. The designs alternately represent a *sâr-ahai* (twice), a morning-star, two birds, and crescent and morning-star in conjunction. Moreover, in the outer border of the *gari* reproduced by

²⁷ Alm. 1929 p. 43.

²⁸ Cf. Van Baal, Godsdienst p. 116.

Vertenten we noticed crabs of different varieties, and a centipede. To these five pictures we should perhaps add a sixth, mentioned by Heldring in his article on the *mayo*, in which he writes of one of his unpublished photographs: "The *gari* at Kumbe. The bird also represented by this figure is displayed on the occasion of the burial of an initiate". The wording is equivocal: it does not state that the *gari* is displayed on the occasion of a burial.

The inventarisation is useful, because it demonstrates the scantiness of our information. Nevertheless, it does lead us somewhere. First, we have to refute Wirz's statement that "certain designs in the white field, such as stars, crescent, crabs, penis, snake, have no meaning".²⁹ We did not find a single example of a *gari* with a snake. The suggestion that these designs have no meaning is a sledge-hammer argument. If so, why should they paint them? As a result of a systematic classification of the different *gari* we could establish some significant differences. The *gari* for the ceremonies of the dead is smaller, in the white field the central design dominates, and this, as well as some other designs, may (but that is a surmise) be a totem emblem, whereas in other cases the designs refer either to the dead or to death generally (the *sâr-ahai*). The other *gari* are different. Inasmuch as these *gari* have any design, it is one in the white field and among these symbols a reference either to the moon or to the stars or to both is never lacking. Though hazardous on account of the small number of cases, a systematic analysis leads us to conclude that a very big, though undecorated, *gari* is distinctive of the bearer of the *mayo*-fire; that the *gari* used during the preceding phases of the initiation is either a blank or is provided with the symbols of moon and stars, and that the *gari* displayed on the festive occasion of a *déma-wir* always has stars and, near the top, either a crescent or a penis, these two apparently being alternates.

Finally, we have to investigate which kind of crescent is represented on the *gari*, the crescent of the waxing or that of the waning moon. We find that the crescent on all eastern *gari*, used for initiation ceremonies and *déma-wir*, is one with the horns pointing downward, i.e. the moon in her fourth quarter. Those in the western section all have a crescent with the horns directed upward (see the pictures made by Geurtjens of a ceremony for the dead; his prints of a *déma-wir gari* showing two identical crescents; and those by Vertenten of *gari* used in ceremonies for the dead). There is one exception: one of the *gari* reproduced by

²⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 121.

Vertenten has two crescents, one (the waxing moon) above the other (the waning moon). In another *gari* the place of the latter is taken by a centipede bent like a crescent. The small number of *gari* which could be studied does not permit of drawing definite conclusions from the implied association of waxing moon with west and waning moon with east, which is so obvious, however, as to make it impossible to ignore it.

We may now raise the question what the *gari* actually is. What does it represent? Wirz states that all sorts of conjectures could be brought forward, and goes on to say that the *gari* is probably nothing more than a reference to the forthcoming orgies, the number of *gari* perhaps indicating the number of women to be sacrificed.³⁰ This does not help us any; hard upon a firm rejection of all conjectures there follows an invitation to subscribe to the wildest of all possible explanations, which may at best apply to the initiation ceremonies (*quod non*), but to nothing besides. Later he ventures the suggestion that, originally, the *gari* may have been a representation of the solar disc.³¹ On the whole, there are very few authors who have expressed an opinion; to be exact, only Viegen and Cappers. In Viegen's view the *gari* "which is also called *takav* (fire), is the *boan* of a *Kai-zé* lineage",³² a very inaccurate statement. In another context he states that the *gari* represents *Geb* and *takav* (fire).³³ Gooszen, who was the leader of the Military Exploration Team in Merauke when Viegen was there as a missionary, informs us that according to Viegen the *gari* represents the sun, the moon and the stars.³⁴ Gooszen himself calls the *gari* a representation of the sun,³⁵ but we doubt whether he could have had that knowledge from any other source but Viegen. Independent of Viegen stands Cappers' dictum: "The *gari* is a representation of the sky".³⁶ Apart from these general statements we have no other information than a few indirect references. One of these has been related earlier in this book; the place of sunrise or the young sun, *Ep kwitare*, is compared to a *gari*.³⁷ Our information on this point does not derive from Viegen only (who has been followed by Wirz), but also from Vertenten: "They believed that far across the border the sun had pitched his tent. There the sun resembled a *gari*; by

³⁰ L.c.

³¹ Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 218.

³² Viegen, TAG 1911 p. 118.

³³ Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 151.

³⁴ Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 381 note 2.

³⁵ Op. cit. p. 384.

³⁶ Cappers, Ann. 1909 p. 214.

³⁷ Above, p. 240.

night, when seen from afar, a lamp".³⁸ That, however, is all we have on the *gari*. Not much, on the face of it, but when related to the general appearance and the specific ornaments of the *gari* this is all we need to know for certain that the *gari* is associated with the sky and with the rising sun. In this connection the colours of the *gari* are relevant. They are given by Gooszen; the colours of the successive semi-circles, going from the centre to the border, are red, yellow, white, and black (the outer border).³⁹ The red of the central semi-circle giving way to yellow in the next, and finally the glory of the dominating white screen, strongly suggest the spectacle offered by the luminous sky at sunrise. The suggestion is borne out by the big *gari* photographed by Cappers. Here the differently coloured sections in the centre of the *gari* are like heavy shafts of light radiating from the head of the bearer. Another, and very definite, reference to the sky is implied in the stars and the crescents in the white field. At least, that is our assumption, which we would now like to be confirmed by ritual and myth. As far as ritual is concerned, this could give us a clue as to the identity of the *gari*-bearer. If our conjecture is right, we would expect him to be a *Geb-zé* or, perhaps, a *Kai-zé*, but in this respect we are disappointed. Wirz states with regard to the *gari* in the ritual of the dead: "Every character has, of course, to be impersonated by a man of the relevant *boan*; the dog always by a *Mahu-zé*, the stork by a *Ndik-end*, but the *gari*, it would seem, may be carried by a member of any clan".⁴⁰ There is no reason to doubt the veracity of his statement, because the performance of the two *gari*-bearers of the mortuary ceremony and of the four who present themselves at a *déma-wir* strongly suggests that they act as representatives of the two moieties, a point to which we shall return further on in this section.⁴¹

Fortunately, confirmation comes from yet another quarter. Our analysis inspired F. Verschueren to consult his informants at Wendu. They gave a wealth of information. An interesting point is that nobody remembered the *gari* as a cult-ornament in the mortuary ceremonies of the *Mayo-Marind*. The small *gari* of the ceremony for the dead was, they said, an *imo* implement, and they substantiated their point by arguing that the crabs and the centipede figuring in the outer border of the *gari* pictured by Vertenten are typical *imo* designs. Only the *imo* are entitled to use such motifs as *pahui*, *anda* and crab.⁴² However,

³⁸ Vertenten, J.P. 1917 p. 481.

³⁹ Gooszen, op. cit. p. 381 note 2.

⁴⁰ Wirz, M.A. III p. 142.

⁴¹ Cf. below, pp. 373 ff.

⁴² Verschueren, Letters VII pp. 4 f.

Wirz submitted fairly precise information on the use of the *gari* in the *mayo* ceremonies for the dead, describing even the differences between the relevant ceremonies of the *mayo* and those of the *imo*.⁴³ East of the Kumbe the *mayo* mortuary rites have a somewhat simpler pattern than west of the river. That implies that at one time the Wendu people followed the same custom. Of course, the difficulty can be explained away by assuming that Wirz derived his information from the people east of the Maro and unduly stretched it so as to include the coastal Marind between Maro and Kumbe as well. In that case the latter would never in reality have followed the custom. It is, indeed, a possibility. Verschueren explicitly states that all his informants "are from the Wendu area, people who rather strictly keep apart from what they call the *Gawir*, the land east of the Maro".⁴⁴ We must add, however, that this solution of the problem is mere guess-work and even rather questionable besides. Why should the Marind between Maro and Kumbe ignore a custom which is followed by all the other coastal Marind both to their right and left? It seems more probable that, during the forty years which have elapsed, the custom has passed out of memory.

More to the point were the answers to a number of questions put to a group of some ten old men from the Wendu area, who discussed these queries among them. Verschueren was present as an observer, interfering as little as humanly possible.⁴⁵ The questions and the answers given are summarized as follows:

What is the *gari*?

A thing used by the *mayo* initiates to frighten the women and the children;
 the rising sun;
 the rising sun back of Kondo, where the fire originated;
 a festive ornament;
 the ornament of *Sosom*, an answer immediately repudiated by the other men because *Sosom's* head-ornament is the *humum*; but the informant stuck to his guns, countering that the *humum*, too, represents the sun.

Which is the *boan* to which the *gari* belongs?

The *gari* does not belong to any particular *boan*, but to all the *mayo*;

⁴³ Cf. below, pp. 784 ff., 791 ff.

⁴⁴ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 5 f.

the *gari* belongs to each and every *boan* and may be represented by people of any *boan*.

Does not the *gari* belong more specifically to the *Kai-zé*?

Here opinions were divided:

Yes;

No, the *gari* belongs to all the *boan*;

The *gari* is also of the *Kai-zé*, but all have a share in it.

Did there exist a special *gari* for the dead?

Yes, among the *imo*;

Verschueren adds: "Most informants did not know anything about it; the *imo* have a *gari* of their own, smaller and of a different form, the particulars given tallying with your [i.e. the present writer's] description of this specific *gari*";

The *mayo* do not use a *gari* in their mortuary rites (informants did not know whether this held true for the *Gawir* people as well).

What are the designs depicted on the *gari*?

The moon, the morning-star (*ovom*), the sun, the *pungga* (i.e. the cut-off penis of *Sosom*);

Everybody follows his own inspiration (commentary by Verschueren: this can mean only one thing, viz. that each may depict his own totem only).

What are the designs of the *imo gari*?

There were only three answers given:

the *amai* (grandfather, totem) of the *Yorm-end*;

the *hais*;

the *sâr-ahai*.

The answers speak for themselves. The relationship between the *gari* and the rising sun is evident. We must now investigate the myths about the *gari* and that takes us back to what occasioned this exceedingly long digression, viz. the myth of *Opeko-anem*, which has to be related in full before the discussion of the *gari* and its meaning can be concluded.

We left the story at the episode of *Uaba* sending off his friend and twofold brother-in-law (wife's brother and sister's husband) to fetch the *gari* and an *iwag*. *Opeko-anem* returned with them, dancing and beating the drum, bringing the *iwag* to the *mayo-miráv*, where the *mitwar* (older initiates) were gathered. It is evident that he enters the

mayo-miráv in the same way as the *gari*-bearer performing his act with the *mayo-mes-iwag* during the initiation rites. However, something went wrong. The *iwag* (to whom the *gari*-bearer is linked by means of a spear) seized the spear and stabbed *Opeko-anem*, who fell down. She carried him off and brought him to Kondo. The woman wanted to take him to some far-away place to have her revenge, but she could not find a canoe, because everybody had gone to the *mayo*. Then they (there are a number of *déma* by now) seized a tall man, laid him full-length on the ground and trampled his body until finally he changed into a canoe. The name of the man was *Swar* and consequently the canoe is called the *Swar*-canoe. Some informants, however, called him *Bragai* and thus explained the name of the phratry. *Opeko-anem* and the *gari* were brought aboard the canoe and the *déma* (specific mention is made of two ancestors of *Bragai-zé* subclans, *Wawar* and *Epaker*, but there were more of them, as will appear presently) set out westward. They wanted to get *Opeko-anem* as far away as possible and went all along the coast, looking for a suitable spot where to leave him, but though they went as far as the Digul they did not find a place to their liking. Thereupon they returned. One afternoon they landed at Iwolj to have a rest. While the *déma* were engaged in getting *Opeko-anem* ashore, a *déma* called *Daman*, without asking *Uaba*, took the *gari* and put it on his head. Enraged, *Uaba* tried to kill him with his club, but *Daman* leapt overboard with the *gari* and changed into a *yamara*-fish, one of the totems of the betel-crocodile clan. The head of this fish shows some resemblance to the *gari*. More immediately relevant, however, is the fact that *Uaba*, too, is present and acts as a custodian of the *gari*.

At Kiwi near Iwolj the *déma* tied the canoe to a pole. The tide came in and the waves alternately pushed the canoe toward the beach and pulled it back again. After some time the pole gave way and fell, the waves now playing the same game with the pole, which rolled to and fro with the breaking waves. Suddenly four feet emerged from the pole, while one end changed into a head and the other into a tail. Without anybody being aware of it, the pole had become a crocodile. It swallowed one of the village-boys who were playing nearby. Nobody saw it, except an old woman who had observed everything from the village. She informed the men, who ran to the beach, but found only a big piece of wood rolling to and fro in the waves. "You wait a moment", the old woman said, "presently, when a small boy approaches, the chump will change again into a crocodile". And, indeed, so it happened, but the moment the crocodile tried to seize the boy the men shot their arrows

and threw their spears. Though it was hit, the animal escaped by plunging into the water. In vain the men waited for the animal to reappear. At last one of the boys, *Guéra*, volunteered to dive in and tie a string round the monster's body. Using a long bamboo with pierced septa, he could breathe under water. On the bottom of the sea the crocodile had its house, which was full of prepared heads. It was not an ordinary crocodile, but a *déma*, and he was all but dead. *Guéra* could talk with the crocodile, who told him that his name was *Ugnemau*. He asked *Guéra* to send his sister *Damun* to make sago for him. While *Ugnemau* was talking, *Guéra* had put a rattan noose round the crocodile's feet and mouth and then he rapidly made off to pass the other end of the rattan to the men. By a strenuous effort the crocodile was pulled ashore and killed. It was a very big animal and all day long everybody was busy cutting it up and roasting the meat. During the night the old men sang *yarut*, the ceremonial dirge, while the young men had their fill of crocodile's meat. The next morning a sago palm had grown from the animal's bones. It was of a new variety (*wiriba*), hitherto unknown, and *Ugnemau's nakari* came to prepare sago from it. For several days the villagers and their guests were busy making dishes of sago mixed with crocodile's meat. The top of the sago tree was laid aside, later to be used as a vegetable, but long before that the treetop, in which the *déma* had been living, had changed into a crocodile.

The *déma* now departed from Iwolj, travelling eastward in the *Swar*-canoe. *Opeko-anem* and the *gari* (sic!) were on board, and the newly originated crocodile followed them, swimming. They went to Ewi (between Kaibursé and the Kumbe), where they entered the small creek of the same name. The *nakari* decided to bring *Mer*, alias *Opeko-anem*, to Opeko on the Kumbe and the canoe shaped its course northward to the Kumbe, passing through the creek and the adjoining swamps. [Apparently the rainy season had arrived, and consequently they could make a short cut via inundated land]. Because of the shallowness of the creek the canoe had to be partly relieved of its load, and the *gari* was left behind in a place called Karamnati.⁴⁶ Finally, they reached the Kumbe river, which they went up as far as Opeko (near Senam), where the *nakari*, with strings taken from their hair-lengthenings, tied

⁴⁶ Wirz writes Karomnati and derives the place-name from *karona-ti*, an etymology which may be passed over as mere speculation. Verschueren gives the correct name, which refers to a small animal, *karam*, which lives in the mud. The Marind say that it swallows mud, which is excreted in the form of small heaps. Verschueren, Letters VII p. 7.

Opeko-anem to two ironwood pillars which had been set up in the middle of the river. *Opeko-anem* resisted and, trampling with his legs, managed to free himself. The *nakari-iwag* now pulled him out of the water, turned him upside down and lashed him to the poles again, this time tying both his arms and his legs. They also fastened a big woman's apron between his legs so as to prevent him from copulating, and thus left him on the spot, where his still trampling feet have been setting the water eddying up to the present day.

Having dealt with their prisoner, the *nakari* (and the *déma*?) sang *ayasé*, the headhunters' song. The story then continues with the adventures of the various *déma* who had joined in the trip. These will be discussed in the next section; for the present suffice it to add that the *nakari*, after having pulled the *Swar*-canoe ashore, settled down on the spot to watch *Opeko-anem*. They have remained there with the canoe up to the present day.

We now have to probe for the possible meaning of this elaborate and, in view of its connection with the *mayo*, important myth. Wirz had a very definite opinion on this point. To him *Opeko-anem* was the mythical *gari*-bearer who brings the *mayo-iwag* to the celebration, that is, to the orgies which will end in a cannibalistic meal, in the course of which the girl, after having been raped to every male's satisfaction, is roasted and eaten. Although he is not quite sure as far as the girl's gruesome fate is concerned, Wirz does not hesitate to add, as a rider to the story of *Opeko-anem's* arrival at the *mayo*-place, that the *iwag* did not undergo the ill-treatment without offering resistance. Fortunately, Wirz is scrupulous in his presentation of myth. The original text and his own comments are meticulously kept apart, and this applies here, too. In the original it was not stated that the girl was abused or ill-treated. She just seized the spear and stabbed *Opeko-anem*. We are not told why. Unfortunately, Wirz thought he knew why, and also why that motive was not revealed by his informants. He felt sure that endo-cannibalism was the cruel secret of the rites. The weakness of his argument in favour of this interpretation of the initiation rites has been demonstrated by Verschueren, whose well-founded refutation of ceremonial cannibalism as an element of the ritual will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.⁴⁷ Once it is accepted that there is no reason to believe that the girl was going to be victimized, the weakness of Wirz's interpretation of the role of *Opeko-anem* is all the more obvious. The

⁴⁷ Cf. below, pp. 540 f.

simple facts as related in the story do not lend the slightest support to the really ill-founded assumption that *Opeko-anem* is the ideal *gari*-bearer. In fact, he is a complete failure; defeated, rejected, abused and humiliated, adorned with a woman's apron, he is the most blundering of all bungling *gari*-bearers. *Yawima* was bitten in the ear, *Daman* could save his life by leaping overboard, but *Opeko-anem* is staked upside down in the stream, with an apron tied to his loins to prevent him from copulating. If there is one thing the myth makes perfectly clear, it is the rejection of *Opeko-anem* as a *gari*-bearer. A possible explanation of this rejection has to account for the following facts: *Opeko-anem* is *Uaba's* twofold brother-in-law; he is a representative of the *Mahu-zé-Bragai-zé* moiety; he is injured by a spear, more specifically by the spear which links the *gari*-bearer to the *mayo-mes-iwag*; he has to be taken far away from Kondo — the Western section is the first preference, but ultimately he is carried to the interior — he is put upside down in a river and dressed like a woman; he must be prevented from copulating; his worst enemies are his own wife and his *nakari*.

The scene to which the myth refers is the arrival both of the *gari*-bearer, i.e. the one who brings a something indisputably associated with the sky, the fire and the rising sun, and of the *mayo-mes-iwag* who in the *mayo*-rites is a representative of the primeval mother. At the beginning of the rites 'she' carries her children, the neophytes, into the *mayo-miráv*.⁴⁸ In this connection it is of interest to point out that — and here I quote from Geurtjens' Dictionary v. *miráv* — "in contradistinction to *otiv*, men's house, *miráv* means women's house". This is a connotation of the word *miráv* which gives additional meaning to the act; the *mayo-mes-iwag* gathers her 'children' and, lifting them up, carries them to what is really the *mayo* women's place.⁴⁹ It is certainly not less meaningful that after a time she returns to the scene of the rites, this time in the company of the *gari*-bearer, linked to him by a spear. It is a most unconventional way of appearing together in public and the scene is provocative of questioning why. Though we have not a single indication as to the native interpretation, there can hardly be

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 511.

⁴⁹ Verschuereen notes that *miráv* is applied to a women's hut only when the women's house is contrasted with *otiv*, men's house. The common term for women's hut is *sav-aha*, while *miráv* normally means village. Since in our present case there is no question of contrasting men's house and women's house, Verschuereen expresses his doubts on the value of my comment. Though I grant him this point, there still remains the apparent connection of the term *miráv* with a place where women are.

any doubt that the two are represented as copulating. There are some sexual symbols which are well-nigh universal, and from everything we have been discussing so far it is evident that the Marind-anim do not fail to recognize one when they meet it. If that be accepted, the *gari*-bearer can hardly be anybody else but *Uaba*, who went after the runaway (*mayo*-)*iwag* and was brought back in copulation with her. Then it is also a matter of course that at the closing of the rites the *gari*-bearer, bringing the *mayo*-fire, appears alone. He has been extricated from copulation and he has engendered the fire. It is also evident now why every other *gari*-bearer fails, *Yawima*, *Opeko-anem*, and *Daman*. There is only one *gari*-bearer, *Uaba*, and that this is kept a secret is well in line with another practice, that of keeping it concealed from the uninitiated that in the dry season the sun copulates with the land. We made a point of it when dealing with the story of *Méru*.⁵⁰

Still, *Opeko-anem*'s case is a special one. After all, *Uaba* had ordered him to bring the *gari* and the *iwag*. The situation is deliberately created, the seemingly malicious motive being the desire to straighten things out and decide for good and all who will be the *gari*-bearer. It is the *iwag*, the sister of the sun, by birth belonging to the ceremonial moiety, who performs the decisive act. And how! She stabs *Opeko-anem* with the spear, i.e. with his own phallus. Not she is being raped, but he. The putting of a woman's apron on him 'to prevent him from copulating' is no more than the final act in a process of symbolic feminization of which *Opeko-anem* is the victim. Or, to put it in more general terms, it is a process in which the *Sami-rek* moiety, represented by *Opeko-anem*, is allotted its place in ritual. They play the women's part, which, in the *mayo*, is not without importance because women, too, are initiated.

The details of *Opeko-anem*'s fate complete the picture. He must be carried far away, that is, far from Kondo, the special domain of the sun *déma*. They go all the way to the western section of the territory, but nowhere do they find a place which suits the purpose. We might put it this way. Initially they thought that the western section was the part of the territory where *Opeko-anem* belonged, but, going deeper into the matter, a principle of classification other than the east-west contrast came to prevail with them, and they decided to bring him from the coast to the interior. It is not possible to explain why the middle Kumbé was chosen and not, for example, Dahuk-zé-miráv on the Buraka. The outstanding fact is that for *Opeko-anem* a place on the coast is not suitable and that he is taken inland. The excursion to the western area

⁵⁰ Above, p. 257.

provides an opportunity for associating *Opeko-anem* with the main symbol of his phratry, the crocodile. The intimate relations between this phratry and the *Mahu-sé* are expressed by having the first crocodile, *Ugnemau*, change into a sago tree, which in its turn becomes a crocodile, *Mangu*, whose doings will be discussed in the next section. There is, however, one detail in *Ugnemau's* story which is immediately relevant to *Opeko-anem's* fate. *Ugnemau* lives on the bottom of the sea; *Opeko-anem* is doomed to live underwater in the Kumbé river. The particulars of his position are revealing: the woman's apron, the ties made of strings taken from the women's hairdresses, and, last but not least, his inverted position. The Marind-anim have a vague notion of an underworld where all things are upside down, as anybody may see for himself by looking into stagnant water.⁵¹

Though all the pieces seem to fall perfectly into place, we have to admit that on two points our explanation is less satisfactory: *Uaba's* deceitful order to fetch the *gari*, and the meaning of the *gari* displayed on the occasion of a festive *déma-wir* or at mortuary rites. Evidently, the *gari* exhibited in a *déma-wir* cannot possibly be identified with *Uaba*. There were four of them on the occasion of the *déma-wir* described by Wirz, and in the mortuary rites invariably two. Viegen reports the presence of three *gari* at one of the ceremonies towards the end of the initiation rites. There cannot be more than one *Uaba* and we cannot but assume that in a *déma-wir* the *gari* must have a wider, a more variegated meaning, a supposition which finds ample support in the divergent ornamentations of these different *gari*. To a *gari* with a dominating *sâr-ahai* motif in its white field there cannot possibly be ascribed the same meaning as to a *gari* which is a perfect blank or which is decorated with a modest design of two stars and a crescent. On the *gari* used for mortuary ceremonies we found ornaments which might be representations of totems; one of them had crabs and a centipede, both *Zohé* totems, referring to the *Sami-rek* moiety.⁵² It is interesting to note that in these rites there must be two *gari*, which raises the question whether they could possibly represent the two moieties. In the one and only case, however, that the two *gari* used on the same occasion have both been described, they were identically decorated with crescent and morning-star.⁵³

All the same, the notion that the *gari* may be associated with the

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 214.

⁵² I.e. the moiety of *Mahu-sé* and *Bragai-sé*.

⁵³ Geurtjens, M&M V p. 330.

two moieties is not wholly unfounded. The *déma-wir* described by Wirz is opened by four *gari*, which, two by two, from opposite ends of the ceremonial grounds proceed to the centre, where they meet. We also know that, as far as can be ascertained from the few photographs at our disposal, there are *gari* with a crescent and stars, and *gari* with a penis (or a phallus-like design) and stars. Of the eleven or twelve *déma-wir gari* which have been photographed, four have a crescent and five a phallus in the centre of the white field. On three photographs the two different types are shown together, and in all cases the *gari* with the crescent is at the right of the *gari* with the phallus. The last-mentioned detail may be perfectly meaningless; the important point is that the two *gari*, one with a *Geb-zé* totem (the crescent) and the other with a *Sami-rek* totem (the penis), appear two and two together. All our evidence points in the same direction: there are certain forms of *gari* other than those used in the initiation ceremonies, which may be carried by members of the non-ceremonial moiety. This does not necessarily imply a contradiction; the dual division into a ceremonial and a non-ceremonial moiety,⁵⁴ with its inherent differentiation of rank, is counterbalanced by a strong equalitarian tendency, preventing the ceremonial moiety from monopolizing its favoured position. The non-ceremonial moiety has its own share in ritual, and nowhere is the fundamental equality of all initiated men more cogently expressed than at the close of the *mayo*-initiation rites, when all the new initiates who have reached the *miakim* age-grade leave the ceremonial grounds decorated with stork's feathers. The new initiate is a *noh-war*, a new stork, just as the older initiate is a *mitwar*, a stork proper, whatever his clan or moiety may be. Still, the stork is a *Ndik-end* totem. We came across a similar expression of the fundamental unity of all men, whatever their clan, earlier in this book when we discussed the identity of human life and the life of the sun. It is true that the sun is more specifically a relation of the *Geb-zé*, but all human beings share its fate. When he concluded that the sun does not belong to any phratry or clan in particular, Wirz certainly erred. Nevertheless, he was right in arguing that "other natives believe that the sun belongs to all phratries equally, because the sun is connected with the whole universe".⁵⁵ Both the one and the other are true and

⁵⁴ 'A moiety which has a leading part in ritual and one which has not' would be a more precise characterization. Unfortunately, precise formulations tend to be unwieldy.

⁵⁵ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 74.

therefore it is not to be called an inconsistency when, on certain occasions and in a certain form, *Mahu-zé* or *Bragai-zé* act as bearers of a *gari*, provided that *gari* be of the kind they are entitled to bear, and the occasion call for action on their part. After all, all Marind are children of the sun, and once they have been initiated, they all become storks. Just as they are permitted to wear the stork's feathers, why should not they on certain occasions be permitted to bear the *gari* which, in a way, is the symbol of the sun? It is a great pity that our information on this point is so extremely limited and incomplete. All the same, it is sufficient to suggest another and better explanation of *Uaba's* seemingly insidious order to *Opeko-anem*. *Opeko-anem* might have brought another kind of *gari*, and, above all, he had not been invited to enter the *mayo-miráv* in the way he did, viz. as *Uaba*, in copulation with his wife. When he is punished, it is not because he brought the *gari* and the *iwag*, but because he acted the wrong part, playing the role of *Uaba*. No wonder that the woman offered resistance: she was *Uaba's* sister!

Various details that have been left undiscussed thus far seem to fit in perfectly with the explanation of the *gari* as given above. The photograph that Wirz took at a *déma-zvir* of the *gari* carried by the *Yawima*-performer, shows a *gari* with a mannikin in the centre and a star on either side. We do not know for certain what the mannikin represents, but the view that it has something to do with *Yawima* is certainly not far-fetched. However that may be, here is a *gari* which is borne by a specific performer (not a *Geb-zé*), which is used to represent that specific *déma*, and which has a very specific design in the white field. In sum, a *gari* used for a specific purpose and characterized by a specific design.

A second detail which can now be discussed more fruitfully concerns the meaning of the star-motif. Its surprising consistency requires an explanation of some sort. As has been observed previously, this star-motif should be interpreted as *ovom*.⁵⁶ *Ovom* may mean morning-star as well as evening-star (they are not distinguished), and refers to both Venus and Jupiter. Venus and Jupiter often appear simultaneously and they are known as *Mandi* and *Arap* respectively. *Mandi* and *Arap* are sisters, of whom Wirz gives the following particulars: Originally they lived between *Yawim* and *Torassi* (in Australian territory), where an extensive savannah was cleared by the two sisters. One day the

⁵⁶ Above, p. 360.

elder, *Mandi*, left without telling her mother or her sister. She went to Imo, where she cut a great number of banana-leaves to make a bed. The next day the people of Imo, wondering what had happened to the leaves of their bananas, found her out. The men decided to use her for their *imo* ceremonies and locked her up, after they had anointed her with sperma. According to another story the two girls live at Brawa, where various medicine-men have seen them.⁵⁷ Vertenten describes the two *iwag* as *nakari* of the *déma* of Brawa.⁵⁸

Earlier we found that the *déma* of Brawa is the *mayo-déma*, who is identical with *Uaba* or with his brother *Moyu*.⁵⁹ This implies, however, that the two girls are the *mayo-déma*'s, and consequently *Uaba*'s, *nakari*, in other words, that the stars on the *gari* are the *nakari* of the *mayo-déma*. What, then, do the crescent and its alternate, the phallus, represent? It is suggested that the crescent is the symbol of the *Geb-zé* moiety, the phallus that of the *Sami-rek* moiety. This is only suggested. There is no proof and it would be imprudent to commit ourselves to more than a conjecture. All the same, the two stars, conceived as *ovom*, as *nakari* of the *mayo* navel *déma* of Brawa, fit perfectly well into the pattern of the *mayo*-ritual. The symbolism of crescent and phallus is purely hypothetical. As symbols of the two moieties both crescent and phallus have the peculiar quality of each being covertly associated with the other moiety. The moon, indicated by the crescent, is a *Geb-zé* totem, but there are many covert associations between the *Mahu-zé* and the moon. The *Yorm-end* are even overtly associated with it. Similarly, the phallus is a *Mahu-zé* totem, but at the same time we find important associations between the phallus and such prominent *Geb-zé* moiety *déma* as *Aramemb* and *Sosom*. Any further elaboration of the hypothesis is senseless. After all, it is offered merely as a possible solution of a problem, suggested by a prominent cult instrument.

2. THE OTHER MYTHS OF THE BETEL-CROCODILE CLAN

Opeko-anem himself does not personify any animal or plant. The totem-relations of the *Bragai-zé* are vested in mythical heroes who accompany the central character and play a part in his story. Ranking first among them is the crocodile, which originated from a fallen pole.

⁵⁷ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 80; Vertenten, BKI 1921 pp. 190 f.

⁵⁸ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 40.

⁵⁹ Above, pp. 239, 254.

In the preceding chapter we discussed another fallen pole, *Ganguta*, the *soma-déma*,⁶⁰ whose namesake was *Ganguta*, the *ser-déma*, the fallen tree whose leaves changed into fishes. *Ganguta* the *ser-déma* is the ancestor of the fish clan, one of the clans of the *Bragai-zé* phratry. In our discussion we repudiated a symbolic explanation according to which the falling pole or tree stands for a falling penis, though we had to admit that this still leaves us with a problem. The fact that the story of the fallen pole makes part of a cycle of stories all concerned with a castration complex may, of course, be due to chance. The fact that there is a second story concerning a namesake who is a fallen tree and who is classified with the ritually feminized *Bragai-zé* makes such an explanation less attractive. Right now we are confronted with a third case of a fallen pole, and this time the thing turns into poor *Opeko-anem's* clan-symbol, the crocodile. *Opeko-anem* being the man who, after having been stabbed with his own spear, was dressed up in a woman's apron, we cannot help concluding that there is more system in chance than chance can explain; the association of a fallen pole with a fallen penis really forces itself upon the reader.

In other respects there is system, too. We already noted the close association of crocodile and sago palm in connection with the former's metamorphosis. But that is not all. When the *déma* fought *Ugnemau* on the beach, *Uaba* hurled young coconuts at the monster, which hit with so much force that they penetrated into its stomach. Occasionally, they may still be found in one or other crocodile's stomach in the form of rather big bezoar stones. The crocodile is not the only animal with bezoar stones. They are also found in the stomach of the turtle (*baba*), though these stones are smaller and the Marind compare them to betel nuts. The story goes on to relate that later on the crocodile *déma* threw his totem, i.e. betel nuts, at the turtle, who is a totem-relation of *Uaba's* and who has since suffered from the same disorder.⁶¹ We find that the relatively frequent occurrence of bezoar stones in the stomachs of two aquatic animals has been conceptualized within the general framework of moiety-dichotomy in such a way that the two animals act as representatives of the two opposite moieties, each injuring the other with his own main totem and each swallowing the main totem of the other.

We now take up again the story of *Ugnemau's* successor, who originated from the top of the sago palm. This second crocodile is called

⁶⁰ Above, pp. 321 f.

⁶¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 97.

Mangu; *Mangu* is the *igiz-ha*, the real name, of the crocodile.⁶² While the *nakari* were engaged in tying up *Opeko-anem*, two wallabies, *Yano* and *Samanimb*, leapt into the canoe to pinch a sugar-cane stalk, and bounced out again, landing on the opposite bank. *Mangu* set out in pursuit and chased *Yano* well across the Maro river.⁶³ Then *Mangu* gave up and went to *Messe*, a *Manggat-rik* settlement northeast of *Merauke*, where he changed into a *miakim*. He carefully arranged his hairdo, and duly adorned he went to *Mongumer*, where he intended to attend a pig feast. In parentheses we note that *Mongumer*, which on the map annexed to Part II of *Wirz's* monograph is a settlement just inside *Marind-anim* territory, is in reality a former *Kanum-irébe* hamlet. In recent years the *Mongumer* people — or at least part of them — joined those of *Yanggandur*.⁶⁴ Now on his way to *Mongumer* *Mangu* met an *iwag* who came from the village and invited him to act as master of ceremonies (*apanapnë-anem*), because his hard body (an allusion to his crocodile-essence) made him a suitable killer of the pig that was being held in readiness. *Mangu*, who, from now on, is called *Mongumer-anem*, agreed and assisted by his *nakari* he began to anoint and paint his body. Among the numerous guests was *Mana*, the *Geb-zé déma*, who during the night seduced *Mongumer-anem's* wife *Yarimba*.⁶⁵ Fearing that *Mongumer-anem* would take revenge, *Mana* killed him during the dance by striking him an unexpected blow with his club. *Mongumer-anem* was buried by his *nakari*. The next morning a beautiful betel palm (*kanis*) had grown from his grave.⁶⁶ Everybody gathered round the tree and tried the nuts, which effected a great improvement in the custom of betel-chewing. Until that time people used to chew mangrove-bark instead. The *nakari*⁶⁷ carried the whole bunch of fruits to the festive grounds, where everybody began to chew. If *Gandi*, a ringworm-infested boy, had not pronounced a magic formula over the nuts, causing them to become infested with the small worm which spoils the nuts, the people would have finished the lot.

⁶² *Verschueren* (*Letters VII* p. 7) draws my attention to the fact that one of the *sosom* songs bears the same name, spelled *manggu* by him. Cf. above, p. 272. I have no explanation to offer.

⁶³ Above, p. 300.

⁶⁴ *Nevermann*, *ZfE* 1939 p. 4, and above, p. 343.

⁶⁵ Above, p. 236.

⁶⁶ According to an alternative version the feast at which *Mongumer-anem* was killed was celebrated at *Sangar*. Cf. *Wirz*, *M.A.* II p. 48.

⁶⁷ Their names are *Gura*, *Gura-gura*, *Kéna*, *Kéna-kéna*, *Senoya*, *Uéro*, *Dua*, and *Dua-dua*. *Kéno* and *Kéna-kéna* have been mentioned earlier, viz. as *nakari* of *Ori* (above, p. 332).

Gandi was *Mongumer-anem* himself, who had returned to the feast in the guise of a *patur*. He sat on a bench, enjoying the feast, but that night he copulated with his *nakari*, who gave birth to many children.

At this juncture Wirz's informant volunteered an explanation; the *nakari* are the palm's flowerstalks and when their spathes open, the flowers (and later the nuts) burst forth, that is, are born from the flower spathe. In this particular case each *nakaru* represented a special kind of betel, of which the Marind distinguish about twenty different varieties. The *nakari* made the betel known throughout the country, but the *déma* remained at *Mongumer*, a place rich in betel palms. The relationship between betel and crocodile is explained by the Marind from the resemblance they observe between the round, scaly body of a crocodile and a bunch of betel nuts, a likeness delightfully expressed in the impersonation of *Mongumer-anem* at a *déma-wir*.⁶⁸ Among the trappings of the *déma* there is one peculiar object which is important for *Mongumer-anem's* apparent relationship with the moon; the distinctive ornament of the performer of the *Mongumer-anem* role is a replica of a bunch of betel nuts. The bunch is suspended from a base formed by the sheath which secures the bunch to the tree. This sheath is given the form of a crescent with the horns directed upward (the waxing moon). In the centre, also pointing upward, is a wooden crocodile's head (see Plate X). I am unable to explain whether the crescent on top of the bunch has anything in common with the actual shape acquired by the sheath after the bunch has been torn from the stem. The reference to the moon is undeniable anyhow, and mythologically confirmed by *Mongumer-anem's* identity with *Gandi*, who is a ringworm-infested boy and, as such, the moon-boy. The fact is the more remarkable because *Mana*, *Mongumer-anem's* murderer, is also associated with the moon, more particularly (through *Kuper-sav*) with a crescent. It is suggested that *Mana* represents the waning moon, a supposition fitting the pattern constituted by the possible association of the waxing moon with the western and of the waning moon with the eastern Marind.⁶⁹

Before taking up the main story again, we must devote a final paragraph to *Mongumer-anem's* wife *Yarimba*. In another myth on *Mongumer-anem*, in which a completely different origin is ascribed to the *déma*, his mother is called *Arimba*, a name so closely similar to *Yarimba* as to make some connection probable. *Arimba* was an *iwag* from *Sangasé*, who went out fishing in a swamp near *Saror* (*Kumbe*),

⁶⁸ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II pp. 125-127; IV p. 57 and Tafel 45, 46; our Plate X.

⁶⁹ Above, pp. 363 f.

where she caught a fish *déma* in her net. The fish leapt into her vagina and shortly afterwards she became pregnant and gave birth to two *déma-patur*. The first to be born was *Ringau* the bow *déma*, who was half man, half bow, the second was *Mongumer-anem*, who looked like a crocodile and whose body was covered with betel nuts. The myth does not seem a very important one, but the details are interesting. We find there exists a close relationship between the *Bragai-zé* and the bow, which we met earlier as a specific *Zohé* totem.⁷⁰ There is also an immediate association with fish. Now the fish clan is one of the clans (or subclans) of the *Bragai-zé* phatry and in this particular story a fish is *Mongumer-anem's* father. At the same time the story presents the by no means uncommon association of fish and penis. Finally, and this is an important constituent of the general image of a mythical hero, the story very emphatically points up the twofold nature of the totem-ancestor, who is two in one, man and totem.

We have to return now to the inmates of the *Swar*-canoe, whom we left at Opeko. The canoe having been brought ashore and the *nakari* having settled on the spot, the other *déma* went away, each following his own destination. Particulars are not stated, except with regard to *Wawar*, the ancestor of the *Wawar-rek* subclan, who went on foot to Imo. On his way, he hurt his foot at a sharp bamboo and he decided first to go to Saring for his wound to heal. Wading through the Oan swamp near Saring⁷¹ his wound opened and from the ooze which fell on a waterlily-leaf there originated a number of birds, all of them of a peewit variety called *terétaré* or *taré-taré* in Marind. The waterlily and the *taré-taré* are *Bragai-zé* totems. Later, *Wawar* went to Kumbe, where he begot offspring. One son, *Sina*, went to Onggari; he is the ancestor of the *Sina-rek*, a *Bragai-zé* sub-subclan. The other sons, *Arembo* and *Guno*, went to Saring; they are the ancestors of the *Arembo-rek* and *Guno-rek* sub-subclans. Other *Wawar-rek* are found in Kumbe, Kai-bursé, Dimar-zé, Opeko and other places.⁷² We note that this distribution of the *Wawar-rek* sub-subclans only very partially agrees with the list of subclan-settlements published by Wirz in M.A. III pp. 171 ff.

Other subclans of the *Bragai-zé-ha*, descended from inmates of the *Swar*-canoe, are the *Swar-rek*, *Epaker-rek*, *Barum-rek*, *Manav-zé* and *Dimar-zé*, whereas the *Kahor-rek*, *Isum-zé* and *Kinam-zé* subclans are

⁷⁰ Above, p. 345.

⁷¹ Apparently another Oan than the one mentioned on pp. 294 and 382, Saring being situated in the middle Kumbe region.

⁷² Wirz, M.A. II pp. 127 f.

said to derive their names from their respective places of settlement.⁷³ The Report of the Depopulation Team adds the *Waimukre*. They all make part of the betel-crocodile clan, the *Bragai-zé-ha*, and their hunting yell is *Yaba karona! Yaba zomba!*, i.e. 'Much sperma! Much copulating!' (more correctly: 'emitting'). In this connection Wirz makes the following important annotation: "Sperma is, in a way, the main totem of the whole *Bragai-zé* group. All *Bragai-zé* clans use this hunting yell, which is common to all of them. More correctly, they should be called the sperma (*karona*) *boan*, because of the all-encompassing mythological and totemic relation with sperma; copulating (*zomb*) may be considered a totemic technique of the whole phratry".⁷⁴ We have to bear in mind here that this statement cannot be automatically extended to apply to the *Basik-Basik*, who, in Wirz's view, are not included among the *Bragai-zé*. Besides, the literal meaning of *zomb* is not copulating, but seminal emission. Therefore the translation of the hunting yell should read, 'Much sperma! Much emitting!' In all this there is a clear reference to what to the Marind is a fundamental characteristic of the crocodile: a crocodile-man (*kiw-anem*) is an adulterer. Copulating and crocodile belong together, a peculiarity which, though it is given little emphasis in myth, stresses the disqualification of the crocodile people from leading ceremonial functions. *Opeko-anem* is not entitled to bear the *gari*; *Mongumer-anem*, invited to act as a ceremonial pig-killer, is murdered before he can discharge his duties. Further on in this chapter we shall see that the mythical performer of these functions is *Nazr*, the pig *déma*, the main character of what may be called the opposite half of the *Bragai-zé* phratry. From a moral point of view — and their hunting yell confirms it — the crocodile people are a fairly disreputable lot, more or less of a kind with the *Diwa-rek* and the *Mahu-zé* clan. The hunting yells of the three have much in common.

3. MYTHS OF THE YORM-END AND THE FISH BOAN

From a classificatory point of view the pedigree of *Yorma*, the sea *déma*, is perfect. His father is *Desse*, Depth, his mother *Dawéna*, the *déma* who brought forth the ground water.⁷⁵ *Dawéna* appears in Marind-anim myth in the following story.⁷⁶ There was a terrible

⁷³ Ibid. p. 136.

⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 136 f.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 129; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 35.

⁷⁶ Wirz, l.c.

drought in Gebut near Oan on the upper Bian and the villagers told *Dawéna*, an old woman, to go to the forest and find water. *Dawéna* went and searched in vain. Even the sago groves were dry and ultimately she started digging on the lowest spot, hoping to strike water. Tirelessly, she delved and delved, but never a drop of water. The villagers, who had grown anxious because she did not return, went out to look for her and found her on the bottom of a deep pit, on the point of urinating. And thus the ground water originated. She is the *déma* who produces all the sub-level flows which feed the lowest spots and swamps. *Dawéna* still lives on in the deep well near Gebut, which will hold water even when all the pools and rivulets have run dry, because she produces ever fresh supplies of water. When there is a long and severe drought, coconut-leaves are planted in a pit and *Dawéna* is called upon with the formula '*Dawéna, Dawéna! urinate in this place*'.

Dawéna, impregnated by Depth (*Desse*), gave birth to *Yorma*. When he was a *wokraved*, *Yorma* went to Imo to live in a swamp. An *iwag* used to come there to draw water. One day she saw a *wokraved* who masturbated when he caught sight of her. In a footnote Wirz comments that among the Marind masturbation is very common; it is considered a ridiculous, not an immoral act.⁷⁷ Here, however, he misses the point. The *wokraved* has to be careful not to be seen by women. Instead, *Yorma* masturbates when he meets one, a case of serious misconduct, and retaliation quickly follows. The next day the girl, who had informed the men of the village, is followed by a couple of men. When the *iwag* stoops to draw water she again beholds the boy, who with wistful eyes looks up to her (apparently it is suggested that *Yorma* is under the water). At this moment one of the men lets go of his arrow, which hits the *wokraved* in the eye. Shrieking with pain he runs off, and going from swamp to swamp he travels on westward. The names are given of several swamps which, says Wirz, owe their origin to *Yorma*. He reached the Koloï, the creek of Okaba, from there he went on to the Buraka and finally he took the sea. Following the coast, he went to the Muri (Strait Marianne) and then to the western end of Komolom, where he met *Geb*, to whom he complained about the people of Imo who had injured his eye. *Geb* advised *Yorma* to summon his *nakari* and have them administer a bloodletting. *Yorma's* *nakari* did as they were told and, using sharp mussel-shell splinters, cut the skin of his

⁷⁷ Op. cit. p. 130.

swollen eye. One after another they worked on him, but the best performer of them all was *Worwa*, who had a very steady hand. The *Yorm-end* will say that the custom of bloodletting (*arom*), an art always practised by women,⁷⁸ was invented by their ancestor.

Yorma, by the way, had quite a number of *nakari*: *Kandowa*, *Worwa*, *Anoya*, *Akoya*, *Sanoya*, *Karai*, and *Mo*. A definite meaning can be ascribed to two of these names, viz. *Karai* (turbid) and *Mo* (clear), which refer to characteristics of seawater. The jellyfish are also *nakari* of *Yorma*; the pieces of coral washed up on the beach are fragments of the *nakari's* fishing-nets.

When *Yorma's* wound had been cleaned, *Geb* asked him what he intended to do in order to revenge himself on the people of Imo. Assisted by *Geb*, *Yorma* made himself all the ornaments proper to a great *déma*, such as they are worn by a performer at a *déma-wir*. (In parentheses we note that *Yorma* is acknowledged as a great *déma*). Now he took his big drum and walked into the sea. Initially, his legs were unsteady and weak, but gradually he gathered strength and the further he went eastward the stronger he grew and the louder his drum sounded. *Yorma* became a great and dreaded *déma*; his head-gear fluttered in the wind (the foam from the crests of the waves) and his drumming (the roaring of the waves) frightened the villagers, who hid in their huts. *Yorma* wished to go to Imo. He spent the night in Wamal; here the sea is calm because there is a bight in the coastline. The next morning he went down to Imo, but first he wanted to chastise the people of Wambi. He extinguished the fires, tore up a couple of palm trees and overturned the houses. Much worse fared the people of Imo, who suffered the full impact of his wrath. They had passed the night celebrating, singing and dancing, when *Yorma* ran up the coast, first tearing down the palm trees and then the houses with the sleeping villagers. Even the gardens were ruined. Within the shortest possible time not a trace had been left of Imo. All the people who died at Imo became fishes, fishes belonging to the deep sea, that is, totems of the *Yorm-end*, those frequenting the shallow coast being reckoned

⁷⁸ This must be restricted to bloodletting as applied to sick people. Occasionally the Marind draw blood from their penis for the purpose of fastening the tympanum of a drum (Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 125) or an arrow-shaft (Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 462) and in such cases the blood is drawn by the men themselves (Wirz, l.c.). Wirz's explanation that the practice is confined to situations in which no animal blood is available, is unsatisfactory. If that were true, we may wonder why they do not draw blood from their lower leg, as the Casuarina Coast people do (cf. the French film *Le ciel et la boue*).

to belong to the *Zohé*. Only very few people came off with their lives; these are the ancestors of the present *Yorm-end*.

From this last passage it could be inferred that *Yorma* is not a real clan-ancestor. Nevertheless, we found him presented as such only two paragraphs back, when we said that the *Yorm-end* believe the art of bloodletting, which derives from *Yorma*, to have been invented by their ancestor. As far as could be ascertained the Marind do not see a problem here. To them, *Yorma* is the sea déma who, after having satisfied his longing for revenge, went to the mouth of the Bian, where he has remained ever since. A big and powerful wave which he causes to surge up every day betrays his presence. That wave is the tidal bore which precedes the rising tide. The Bian has a broad, funnel-shaped mouth and there is a considerable difference in level between two tides, amounting to some 5 meters at spring-tide. When the tide is in, the water jams up where the river narrows, raising a wave like a solid wall of up to one meter in height, which goes ahead of the incoming tide and penetrates far inland, especially during the dry season when there is not much water flowing down the river. Then, at spring-tide, the bore may reach even beyond Kabtel. Its roar is heard from afar and all the canoes are speedily dragged ashore.

A very interesting variant on the myth of *Yorma* is that communicated by Verschueren, in which *Yorma* acts as the counterpart of the fire (*Uaba*), creating the river-valleys and the bays, while the beach and the plains owe their existence to the primeval fire.⁷⁹ The importance of *Yorma's* action is given special emphasis by the intervention of *Geb*, who, in his advisory capacity, fulfils the part of an instigator. Where *Geb* is also *Uaba's* father, *Yorma* and *Uaba* are, to all intents and purposes, a pair.

Yorma is, indeed, a dangerous déma and the story is circulated that at or about the time of the advent of the Dutch, a human being was sacrificed to the sea by the *imo* people of Sangasé so as to ward off an impending epidemic. To that end a great many canoes put out to sea, one of them holding an *éwati* in festive attire, all by himself. When they had left the coast far behind them, the canoe of the *éwati* was overturned and his heavy hair-lengthenings dragged him down as an *étob-tamu*, lit. a repast for the sea. The next morning both the corpse and the canoe were washed ashore. The story is too poorly documented

⁷⁹ Cf. above, p. 244.

for us to attach much importance to the rite as such,⁸⁰ but it does not leave any doubt as to how much *Yorma* was dreaded. As late as 1929 the crews of canoes going through Strait Marianne carefully refrained from throwing any rubbish overboard or, when they started out from a camp on one of the banks of the strait, avoided to make any noise, lest *Yorma*⁸¹ should be enraged.

In Part IV of his monograph Wirz adds an interesting detail to his description of *Yorma*, when he writes: "Among the people of the western area the sun is usually included among the totems of the *Geb-zé*, but the moon among those of the *Yorm-end*, the fish clan, because she glitters like the body of a freshly caught fish".⁸² Remarkable is the overt association with the moon, which elsewhere is always reckoned to be a *Geb-zé* totem, but time and again presents itself in disguise among the *déma* of the opposite moiety and their attributes. The connection with the moon also explains the friendship between *Geb* and *Yorma*.

Closely associated with the *Yorm-end* is the fish *boan*, the relationship being so intimate that it is preferable to consider the two as one clan. They, or at least the *Ganguta-rek* among them, are more specifically related to *Ganguta* the *ser-déma*. The *ser* is a big tree, the trunk of which is used in canoe-building. *Ganguta's* story has already been related⁸³ and only a few details have now to be added. The crown of the tree fell into the sea in a place far out from the shore, where the leaves changed into various fishes of the deep sea: *rov-rové* (saw-fish), *sangupan* (an oblong flatfish), *kirub* (gurnard), *dora* (a small seafish), *kuikawak* (?) and *yamopa* (?).⁸⁴ The roots of the tree turned into freshwater fishes of the swamp, with the exception of one big buttress-root which became a shark-species (*ipani*). The freshwater fishes are *yamang* (?), *tunga* (*tung?* cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *toeng*, a freshwater fish), *ugma* (?), *zakiv* (?) and *kamub* (?). There is some overlapping here, for though the *Ganguta-rek* and the fish *boan* are as a rule primarily associated with the sea and with seafish, there is also a connection with freshwater fish from the swamp. There is the same

⁸⁰ The story as told by Wirz (M.A. III p. 29) differs from the version given by Vertenten (NION 1933 p. 338; Koppensnellers p. 37) in that it does not mention the canoe and the corpse which are washed ashore. In the absence of any detail with regard to the personal circumstances of the victim, no conclusions can be drawn.

⁸¹ Drager, Ann. 1929 pp. 223 f.

⁸² M.A. IV p. 74.

⁸³ Above, pp. 321 f., 377.

⁸⁴ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.

dual association in the case of *Yorma*, the sea déma, who has fresh-water, rain and a number of freshwater fishes among his totem-relations⁸⁵ and whose life-history opens with the story of his birth as the son of the ground water and goes on to relate how he lives in swamps.

A last detail of the myth of *Ganguta* again has a reference to the moon. When the déma of the tree retreated into a swamp near Onggari, "his *nakari Kangigipum, Kandabu, and Paputumila* [*papu* is sting-ray, a *Yorm-end* totem] took his *gana* (breast ornament of crescent-shaped mother-of-pearl shell) and brought it to another swamp, where it has remained up to the present day".⁸⁶ It is the ornament associated with *Kuper-sav*.⁸⁷

The classificatory relationship between the *Yorm-end* and the *Bragai-zé-ha* is a very intimate one. *Opeko-anem* and *Yorma* are both closely associated with water. They actually live underwater. *Yorma* and the crocodile are both dangerous; the latter is a symbol of adultery, the former a *wokravéd* guilty of sexual misconduct. Socially, the tie between the two clans is also a strong one; outside the western section the *Yorm-end* usually call themselves *Bragai-zé*, at least so long as they are not pressed for particulars on their descent. There are, however, no stories of specific mythical relations between *Yorma* and the déma of the crocodile clan. Of the other clans there are only two déma with whom *Yorma* maintains relations. The first is *Geb*, who belongs to the other moiety. It is noteworthy that *Geb*, who is living in the far west of the territory, is the man who incites *Yorma* to revenge. We may explain this from totem-friendship (both have the moon among their totems), but it is also an indication that calamities of nature come from the west. We found the same motive in the story of *Uari*, the loam déma.⁸⁸ We also note that in the far west *Geb* is a rather dangerous character. As a sun déma living in the Eromka area in a hole under the ground, he devoured children, and here, as a friend of *Yorma*, he instigates the latter not only to attacking the coastal people, but even to acting as the complement of *Uaba* in shaping the territory. It is *Yorma* who creates the river-valleys.

The second déma mentioned as a relation of *Yorma's* is *Bau*, the eagle déma and the ancestor of the *kidub-boan*. *Yorma* and *Bau* are

⁸⁵ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 138.

⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 133.

⁸⁷ Cf. above, pp. 236 f.

⁸⁸ Above, p. 341.

said to have been brothers, the sons of *Besse* (not *Desse* as in the myth related above). *Besse* gave *Bau* to *Hong-sav* at Domandé to be educated. At the time *Geb* had already done with *Hong-sav*, the bamboo-woman, and married *Piakor*, whom he had received from *Mahu*. *Yorma*, however, stayed with his father till he became a *wokraved*.⁸⁹ The story is a very short one; its main function is the skilful classification of the two mythical heroes. As members of the same phratry they are brothers, sons of the same father. Their life-histories, however, deviate. *Bau* is educated in a coastal village; *Yorma*, in spite of the fact that one day he will become the *déma* of the sea, is brought up in the interior, where he remains till he becomes a *wokraved*. Here again the east-west contrast is cut across by the opposition coast-interior. Within the framework of the *Bragai-zé*, *Bau's* character has more of the coast and *Yorma's* more of the interior.

Closer than the link between *Yorma* and eagle is that between the *Yorm-end* and the frigate bird. From the addenda and emendations to Part IV of Wirz's monograph we learn that this bird, earlier introduced as a member of the *kidub-boan*, is in fact a *Yorm-end* totem.⁹⁰ According to Wirz the bird is a *Bragai-zé* totem because it feeds on fish, but there might be various other reasons, such as its black colour, and, above all, its native name, *Muriwa*. *Muriwa* means *Muri-Mother*; *Muri* (or *Muli*) is Strait Marianne, but also west, westerly wind, west monsoon, rainy season.⁹¹ Geurtjens translates *muriwa* by west monsoon-mother and he points out that the bird, which appears on the coast mainly during the west monsoon, is seen as the bringer of the heavy squalls of that particular season.⁹² The association of the *Yorm-end* with the west monsoon, as it is inferred from their association with the frigate bird, is corroborated by the story of *Yorma's* performance as the sea *déma*. When he sets out to attack Wambi and Sangasé, he comes from Komolom, i.e. from (the) Muli (Muri). The Arafura sea, never calm except between seasons, is at its most tempestuous during the west monsoon, when heavy squalls whip up waves higher and more vehement than those raised by the steady impact of the trade-wind that blows during the east monsoon. *Yorma*, demonstrating his frightening power in the attack on Imo, is certainly acting during the west monsoon. This is also the time when the differences between two tides

⁸⁹ Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 138 f.

⁹⁰ Wirz, *M.A.* IV p. 134 jo II p. 135.

⁹¹ Geurtjens, *Dict. v. moeri*.

⁹² *L.c.* and *J.P.* 1926 p. 260. Also Verschueren, *Letters* VII p. 7.

are maximal; the february spring-tide is notably higher than that in any other month.

One of the places frequented by the frigate bird is Habé. In the story of *Upikak*, the iguana déma, we read that people often go to Habé to catch birds, in particular frigate birds.⁹³ By way of introduction to another story about frigate birds on Habé,⁹⁴ Wirz informs us that the bird has a white spot on its stomach, which reminds the Marind of a certain shell, known by the name of *muriwa-sahu*, *muriwa* pubic shell.⁹⁵ Then follows the actual story, which has no connection whatsoever with a pubic shell. A young man of Wambi, *Amus*,⁹⁶ went to Habé. From afar he saw numerous frigate birds perched on the treetops. Stealthily he approached the island, intending to kill one. He climbed a palm tree and when he had reached the top, he took his club from his girdle and tried to hit one of the birds, but he missed and the bird flew off. A strong gale shook the tree and he had to cling to it lest he be thrown down. To descend was impossible. Night fell and the fear that a spirit of the dead might eventually find him, added to his predicament. And, as it happened, suddenly he felt himself blanketed by a something which pressed him closely to the tree. A *hais* had assaulted him. He fell from the tree and lay unconscious till daybreak. Then he woke up and found himself weak and tired, but unharmed. He quickly loaded up his canoe with coconuts and went home.

In itself, the story is pointless, but when considered in connection with related stories its pattern becomes of interest, more particularly so if we may assume that the narrator, too, made mention of the bird's *sahu*, which, anyhow, is implied. We note the following elements: the comment on the bird's pubic shell, the fear of the *hais*, the assault by the *hais*, the near-fatal accident which has a happy ending in the young man's waking up; in brief, a sequence strongly reminiscent of the *Mahu-zé* myth of the man who dreamt that a hawk stole his girdle-shell.⁹⁷ We found that the latter story fitted particularly well into the framework of the castration complex dominating the mythology of *Diwa-rek* and *Mahu-zé-ha*. To that complex there belongs yet another feature, the *Mahu-zé* association with the *wokaved* age-grade.

⁹³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 88; cf. also above, p. 276.

⁹⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 135 jo IV p. 134.

⁹⁵ See also Geurtjens, Dict. v. *moeri* and *sahoe*.

⁹⁶ The same name is given to a woman mentioned in a *Wokabu-rek* myth dealing with Habé; see above, p. 340.

⁹⁷ Above, p. 318.

The same association is found in the story of *Yorma*; *Yorma* is presented as a *wokrawed*!

In other respects the young man's adventure is identical with the experience of *Upikak*, the iguana *déma*.⁹⁸ Again, there are points of contact. The iguana, though a *Kai-zé* totem, is a simile of the crocodile,⁹⁹ a totem-relation of the *Yorm-end*. *Aramemb*, who releases the girl from the island, is himself a son of the *Muli-déma*.¹⁰⁰

Finally, there is the place of action, *Habé*, a *Kai-zé* association. The frigate bird is a big bird and every time big birds enter upon the scene there is some specific connection with the beach or with another typical totem of the *Geb-zé* moiety, a feature which we shall find confirmed presently, in our discussion of the myths of the *kidub-boan*. In conclusion we state that, though the story of the young bird-hunter on *Habé* may be pointless, it nevertheless is true to pattern and contributes to fitting *Yorm-end* myths into the general framework of tribal mythology.

Before winding up this section, we have to take up again a point which was brought up before, when we discussed the myths of *Ganguta* the *soma-déma* and of *Uari*, the loam *déma*.¹⁰¹ The first is paralleled by the story of *Ganguta* the *ser-déma*,¹⁰² the latter by that of *Yorma*. In both instances the *Mahu-zé* heroes and their stories (and even their marine fish totems) are no more than weak reduplications of the *Bragai-zé* (or, more precisely, *Yorm-end*) model. It is as if through these parallels the myths want to impart that the *Mahu-zé* are but a mild version of the *Bragai-zé* and that the latter are the real representatives of destructive force and violence, while at the same time it is emphasized that the two belong together and are, essentially, of the same order.

The hunting yell of the fish *boan* (which we may identify with the *Yorm-end*) is *Yaba ave! Yaba ave!*, i.e. 'many fishes!' Wirz does not comment on the fact that the *Yorm-end* as a *Bragai-zé* clan may also exclaim *Yaba karona! Yaba zomba*.¹⁰³ Probably both yells may be used indifferently. A specification of the spatial distribution of the *Yorm-end* is not very revealing either. As appears from annex V,

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 276.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 278.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 285.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. pp. 321 f. and 341 f.

¹⁰² Ibid. pp. 321 and 385 f.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 381.

Yorm-end are reported from Urumb, Domandé, Makalin, Iwoj, Wambi, Hibóm, Kobing, Yowid and Baléwil; *Papu*, a subclan calling themselves after the sting-ray (*papu*), from Okaba and Alaku; *Ganguta-rek* from Onggari. The Depopulation Team in its report mentions three other subclans, the *Wowar-rek*, the *Genger-rek* and the *Magari-rek*. In the absence of any additional information we must confine ourselves to just mentioning them in passing. From the available data we are inclined to conclude that most *Yorm-end* are found in the western section and that they are absent in the Kumbe valley. It is possible, however, that in the eastern section and even in the Kumbe valley a number of *Yorm-end* were overlooked, having been simply classified among the *Bragai-zé*.

4. THE MYTHS OF THE KIDUB-BOAN

The *kidub-boan* is associated primarily with the *kidub*, the eagle.¹⁰⁴ Another bird belonging to this clan is the *sangar-anem*, which, according to Wirz, may probably be identified with the fish-eagle, *Pandion haliaetus leucocephalus*.¹⁰⁵ In Part II of his monograph Wirz also included the *muriwa*, the frigate bird, among the totems of this clan, but on this point he corrected himself in Part IV, classifying the bird as a *Yorm-end* totem.¹⁰⁶

In published sources no mention whatsoever is made of any genealogical group descendent from the déma of the *kidub-boan*, except for groups in non-Marindinese territory, which led me to conclude that the *kidub*-clan is, essentially, a foreign clan. The possibility as such should not be ruled out; the *Bangu-boan* presents us with a comparable case. The Marind-anim social system and myths are not confined to the tribe per se, but tend to include the whole world as they know it. Their neighbours are classified and, in fact, often classify themselves in the same way and by the same terms as are used by the Marind for their own genealogical groups. Yet, the conclusion that the *kidub-boan* is, primarily, a foreign clan proved to be premature. Referring to the *Bau-rek* subclans mentioned in the Rep. Depop. Team (the

¹⁰⁴ *Haliaeetus leucogaster* as well as some undefined other eagle-species; cf. above, p. 304.

¹⁰⁵ Wirz, M.A. II p. 135. I rather doubt whether the use of the name as a generic name is correct. It looks like a mythological name. However, Geurtjens has it as the name of a bird-of-prey (Dict. voc. cit.).

¹⁰⁶ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 134.

Sangar-rek, *Kahor-rek*, *Kanambre* and *Ebak-rek*), Verschueren, one of the authors, informed me that the names of the subclans were noted down from informants: "I did not in each individual case check on the information by trying to find out who the local representatives were of the subclans mentioned to me. Yet, in every village I asked people to record the names of such subclans as were locally represented, together with the names of those subclans as had once been known to exist in the village and had now become extinct. Often my informants, when summing up the names of the various subclans, supplemented them with those of groups which were extinct and I have a rather strong feeling that the other names mentioned always referred to subclans that were actually represented. Of course, one must make allowance for lapses, but I am certain that in many cases the answers as given were correct, because I happened to know both the individuals concerned and their subclans. Thus I find in my notes that the *Sangar-rek* have been recorded in Wayau, Koa and Kaisa [all in the Kumbe valley]; the *Kahor-rek* in Okaba, Makalin, Duv-miráv and Wambi; the *Kanambre* in Okaba, Sangasé, Alatep et al.; the *Ebak-rek* in Kuprik only, though the name has been mentioned also in Wendu, with the added remark that people of that particular subclan never had lived there". Finally, Verschueren added that to-day there is a man living at Wendu who is a *Bau-rek* and originates from Alatep.¹⁰⁷ From all this it is evident that the *kidub-boan* is not only a clan of foreign tribes but of the Marind as well.

First among the birds which are the totems of this clan is the *kidub* or eagle. The relevant *déma* is *Bau*, whom we met in the company of the stork, when the two of them were disputing each other the head of *Issok*, *Bau's* wife. Later they appeared as guests at the great feast the *déma* held at Senayo, where the two friends were seated facing each other from opposite banks of the river.¹⁰⁸ On this occasion *Bau* stole sago, which he dropped, whereupon the sago changed into edible clay. In the previous section *Bau* was mentioned only in passing, viz. as *Yorma's* brother, who was given to *Hong-sav* to be raised.¹⁰⁹ In the following story *Bau* is called a brother of the crocodile *déma*.¹¹⁰

Crocodile and eagle were brothers and they lived on the left bank of the mouth of the Bian, opposite Walinau, an island which was later

¹⁰⁷ Verschueren, Letters VI pp. 1 f.

¹⁰⁸ Above, p. 304.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 386 f.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II pp. 133-135.

washed away. In the mythical age Walinau was inhabited; the memory of these days has been preserved in the name of a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan, the *Walinau-rek*. The crocodile lived on the beach, the eagle on a high tree near the sea. One day two *iwag* came from the beach looking for a canoe in which to cross the river to Walinau. The two brothers had seen them from far away and, having previously changed into young men, they volunteered to carry them across on their backs. The girls accepted, but once they were seated on the young men's backs, the crocodile-man turned into a crocodile again and, diving into the river, took his *iwag* with him under the water. The other one changed into a bird and with his girl he flew off to the treetop where he had his nest. Here the two lived together, apparently as husband and wife. The girl, who was born on Walinau, must be considered a *Geb-zé-ha*, and, as such, she makes a legitimate marriage-partner for the eagle. Secretly, however, the *iwag* planned her escape. Since it was impossible for her to get down because of the size of the trunk, she resorted to guile. First she asked *Bau* to catch her a wallaby, which she prepared for him. The next day she asked him to fetch her some leaves of the palmyra-palm, because she wanted to make a mat. As soon as he had brought them, she started plaiting. Again, at her request, the eagle went out to catch a wallaby and during his absence she quickly plaited the palm-leaves into a long cord and descended from the tree. She fled to Walinau, where her people hid her. That night *Bau* flew down to Walinau and destroyed all the houses, then killed the people by tearing them to pieces with his long claws and pointed beak. A stream of blood gushed forth into the sea, which as far as Onggari was coloured crimson. The red stones that are still found on the beach between Domandé and Onggari derive their colour from the blood of the Walinau people.

Having vented his wrath, the eagle flew off eastward, leaving bloody marks on the spots where he rested. He went to the upper Torassi and the offspring he begot there became the ancestors of the *Bau-anim*, a group of people belonging to the *kidub-boan*. Later, *Bau* went to Mur, a place in the far east between the Yawim- and Kombes rivers, where as a *déma* he still resides in a stone which resembles an eagle. We shall not again enter into the question where Yawim and Kombes (Wirz writes Kombis) should be located; ¹¹¹ when Yawim and Kombes are mentioned, the scene is set in the neighbourhood of the mythical

¹¹¹ Above, p. 241.

Yavar-makan. This introduces a new problem; what business has a *Bragai-zé* dema in this region? From the point of view of Marindanim classification we would not expect to find him there. It is true that his association with this particular region follows from the fact that people who have the eagle as a totem actually live in the region, but this does not dispense with the anomaly, that is, if there is one. That, indeed, is exactly the point. There is an anomaly if classification among the Marind should be interpreted in an absolute sense, as a means to give everything its fore-ordained place in the universe. That, however, is an ethnocentric misinterpretation of the classification concept. Classification as handled by the Marind is not applied from above, from a point commanding a bird's eye view of the whole system, but from below or from within, the various contrasts being always set in an ad hoc situation, which lends the result its unsystematic character and its unforeseen and unforeseeable peculiarities. *Bau*, the eagle, is also the companion of the stork. The two belong so much together as to become a suitable pair of moiety representatives. The stork, who is the son and, in a way, the twin-brother of the sun (the fire), is born in the east and goes to the west, where he made his home on a big stone on Frederik Hendrik Island.¹¹² As a symbol of human life (every initiated man is a stork) and of the sun, it is only logical for the stork's travels to end somewhere beyond the place of sunset. The eagle being his opposite number in various situations, it is perfectly natural for the latter to travel in the opposite direction, from west to east, and to settle near the place where the former originated.

We find the same trend in the life-history of *Bau's* brother *Sangar-anem*, the fish-eagle, about whom the following story is narrated by Wirz.¹¹³ *Sangar-anem*, together with his brother *Bau*, was living in Walinau, where they occupied adjacent trees. There was a great pig feast at Sangar near Siwasiv (Kanum-irébe territory) and *Sangar-anem*, wishing to attend it, travelled eastward from Walinau and on his way he visited places near Noh-otiv, Sēpadim and Borem. Each time, he adorned himself and collected arrows, not hunting-arrows, that is, but war-arrows. Then he eloped with *Méru's* daughter,¹¹⁴ whom he brought to Sangar, where he arrived while the people were preparing the feast. A couple of days afterwards, when the feast was in full swing and the men were dividing up the fat pig, *Sangar-anem*

¹¹² Ibid. p. 303.

¹¹³ Wirz, op. cit. p. 135.

¹¹⁴ *Méru* is a *Geb-zé* dema; cf. above, pp. 255 f

devised a ruse so as to get more than his rightful share. He left his *iwag* for the men to copulate with, and when they all crowded round her at the back of the village to have intercourse with the attractive girl, *Sangar-anem* returned to the now empty grounds and secured as much of the meat as he could possibly carry. Then he fled to the Torassi river to enjoy the stolen food undisturbed. Later, he went further eastward to Bapir and then on to Bandri on the Yawim river, where up to the present day he has resided as a *sangar-anem* déma who causes the river to eddy. He has his nest under a big rock. In Yawim, *Sangar-anem* left descendants who belong to the *kidub-boan*.

Sangar-anem is almost a replica of *Bau*. They come from and go to approximately the same places. Each of them steals a woman, the one a *Geb-zé-ha* girl, the other a girl of the *méri-ongat-boan*. They are thieves, the one steals sago, the other pork. The two beget offspring in the same foreign area, *Bau* on the upper Torassi, *Sangar-anem* on the Yawim. Yet, the two characters are not wholly identical. Not *Bau*, but *Sangar-anem* is the proverbial thief; his name is a common nickname for food-thieves. Stealing food apparently is a specific trait of the *Sami-rek* moiety. *Wokabu* steals *wati*,¹¹⁵ *Gěngé*, the cormorant déma, steals fish,¹¹⁶ while now we are dealing with two characters who steal sago and pork. That makes four of them — two in each phratry, three of them birds and one an otherwise well-behaved man. From a classificatory point of view it is interesting to note that theft is associated with those individuals belonging to the non-ceremonial moiety, who in other respects are characterized by traits more becoming to the opposite moiety.

Sangar-anem is associated more specifically with the pig clan. Because of *Sangar-anem*, the Marind say, there are friendly relations between the *Basik-Basik* (pig clan) and the *Bragai-zé*.¹¹⁷ The facts testifying to *Sangar-anem's* relationship with the *Basik-Basik* are his presence at the pig feast in Sangar, which is an important feature in *Basik-Basik* myth; his name, which refers to an important event in *Basik-Basik* mythology; and finally his quest for war-arrows, warfare being the specialty of the *Basik-Basik*.

Finally, we return to the subject of *Bau's* and *Sangar-anem's* non-Marind offspring, the local clans of Trans-Fiy people. A fish-hawk¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Above, pp. 303 and 340.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 344 f.

¹¹⁷ Wirz, M.A. II p. 139.

¹¹⁸ The word is translated as fish-eagle by Nevermann, *ZfE* 1939 p. 40.

is mentioned by Williams¹¹⁹ as a Setavi totem. Whether the Setavi fish-hawk (or eagle) is the same bird as the Marind *sangar-anem* cannot be said for certain. Neither Williams nor Nevermann give the Latin names of the relevant animals, and the identification of *kidub* and *sangar-anem* is not wholly satisfactory either. All we know for certain is that among the Setavi, as among the Marind, a predatory fish-eating bird is a totem, and that predatory birds generally are popular totems among several Trans-Fly tribes (e.g. the *inifiak* and *wana* hawks of the Keraki and the *wario* of the Mawata and Masingara¹²⁰). The only conclusion which may be drawn from these facts is that the information supplied by Wirz to the effect that *kidub* and *sangar-anem* are also totems of some Trans-Fly tribes which could not be identified with any precision, is not contradicted by the data contained in other sources, and that consequently there is no particular reason to call the statement in question.

There is one point in respect of these specific connections between the Marind-anim and their eastern neighbours which deserves attention. This is the fact that at the Marind end the specific points of contact seem to be concentrated in the *Bragai-zé* phratry: the crocodile *déma* is called *Mongumer-anem*, after an old Kanum-irébe settlement to which he retires; similarly the fish-eagle and the eagle *déma* ultimately retire to the Trans-Fly region. The other prominent *déma* of the phratry, *Opeko-anem* and *Yorma*, are purely Marind, but the latter has a parallel in the *Mahu-zé* phratry, viz. *Bangu*, who is almost a Kanum-irébe character. It is a peculiarity which has, or at least seems to have, its counterpart in a tendency for *déma* of the opposite moiety to retire to the far west. This is a point to which we shall have to return in the next chapter, when we shall assess the results of our present analysis.

5. BASIK-BASIK MYTHOLOGY: THE MYTHS

Our main source for the mythology of the pig clan is again Wirz, who gives a very elaborate version of the myth dealing with *Nazr*, the most prominent pig *déma*. This is followed by a second myth in which *Sapi*, the *déma* associated with sorcery (*kambara*), is the principal character. In the present section we first render the two stories, starting with that of *Nazr*.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Williams, Trans-Fly p. 60.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 89; Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* pp. 188 ff.

¹²¹ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 170-179.

In Sangar, near Siwasiv (Kanum-irébe territory!), there lived a *miakim*, *Nazr*, who was in reality a pig déma, capable of changing alternately into a man and a boar. *Nazr* kept this a secret and his fellow-villagers, unaware of his gifts, never suspected that *Nazr*, who in the day-time moved about the village as an unmarried young man, would after nightfall make off to the sago grove, where he changed into a boar, devouring the sago-pith which had been left behind. When the Sangar people found out that a pig was feasting on their sago,¹²² they dug a pitfall and one night a very big boar actually fell into it. They decided to make a big feast and on that occasion the boar was to be shared out. The boar was *Nazr*, of course, but well before the trapped animal was found by the villagers, *Nazr's wih-anem*¹²³ had already made off. When the feast was ready, *Nazr*, too, presented himself. He was offered a piece of roast, but he declined. Instead, he collected all the boar's bones, wrapping them up in an areca spathe, which he took to a spot outside the village. There he put the bundle down and began to arrange the bones so that each was in its proper place again, after which he covered the skeleton with grass. Not long afterwards a voice was heard calling out from under the cover of grass, complaining about the heat and expressing the wish to bathe. From the cover two swine emerged, a very big boar and a somewhat smaller sow. The two pigs came running into the village, attacking the people, who were so terrified that they shrieked like pigs. Consequently they all changed into pigs; the village and the festive grounds turned into a thick forest.

Wokabu came from Imo, bringing coconuts and many other articles of food as his contribution to the feast. When he arrived at Sangar, he was much astonished to find that the village had vanished. Instead, there was only the dense forest from which a herd of swine emerged, dashing at him to rob him of his sugar-cane and bananas. *Wokabu*, who had never before seen such a thing as a pig, was terrified and throwing away all the food he carried, he made off. When he realized, however, that the animals did not follow him but contented themselves with swallowing the food, he calmed down. At that moment *Nazr* came

¹²² Verschueren notes that the Sangar people of the present myth obviously are Marind-anim and not Kanum-anim, as the latter do not make or eat sago (Letters IX p. 6). I do not think we may conclude that formerly Sangar was a Marind settlement. Actually, the Marind-anim are so well aware of the undeniable fact that Sangar is situated in Kanum-anim territory that in the story the Imo people associated themselves with the Kanum-anim to hunt the pigs.

¹²³ Cf. above, pp. 197 f.

out of the forest. They made friends, *Wokabu* showing *Nazr* the newly created coconuts and demonstrating to him the art of making coconut oil and body-paint.

Wokabu returned to Imo, where he encouraged the men to associate with the Kanum-irébe and hunt the newly discovered animals at Sangar. They all went eastward and, jointly with the people of the Torassi- and Yawim rivers, the Bau-anim, the Bapir-anim, the Baikar-anim and others, made for Sangar. They had been cautioned by *Wokabu* not to inform a certain young man called *Nazr*, whom they might meet near Sangar, of the real purpose of their visit, because *Nazr* apparently was a friend of the swine. Therefore they told *Nazr* that they had come to burn the forest down. They set the savannah ablaze, lighting fires in various places so as to make a wide circle of flames with an opening to leeward, and there the hunters assembled to round up the fleeing animals. One man, *Mindu*, boasted that he was going to kill the big boar. His fellows warned him that he should not get near the ferocious animal, but *Mindu* did not heed their advice and went on bragging till, all of a sudden, the boar turned up and bit him in two. The boar, which in reality was the pig déma *Sapi*, ran off to Habé. He is the ancestor of the *Sapi-zé* clan. *Mindu* was bled to death; from his corpse the sirih plant (*dédami*) sprang up. Up to that time the sirih plant had been unknown and people chewed different kinds of bark instead. The sirih gives the betel its bright red colour, the red of *Mindu's* blood.

Nazr himself caught a small pig, which had at one time been one of the Sangar people, and gave it to his *nakari* *Sangam* and *Samaz* to raise it. They were successful pig-raisers who domesticated the animals to the extent that they no longer shrieked in their presence. This particular pig, however, was a déma-pig. In the daytime it was just a pig, indistinguishable from any other, but at night it changed into a *miakim*, who stealthily entered the hut of *Samaz* and *Sangam* and abused the girls. At last the mother of the girls found him out and she informed the men, who decided to kill the pig. *Nazr* consented and a big feast was prepared, at which *Nazr* was going to act as the *apanapné-anem* (master of ceremonies), who kills the festive boar. And so he went to the *wahok-ivind*, i.e. the matrilineal and patrilineal uncles¹²⁴ of *Samaz*, inviting them to fashion his weapons and or-

¹²⁴ Not the "Onkel mütterlicherseits" as Wirz translated; *wahok* is MoBr and FaSiHu; *ivind* is the plural form of *évai*, Fa, FaBr, and MoSiHu; see above, pp. 114, 113.

naments. There were four of them; *Kamarwi* made the bow, *Yabe-pirahi* and *Akamsakan* the arrows, and *Barambariugan* the rattan wrist-guard. They also made the decorations for the master of ceremonies, called *Diwazib* on such occasions, and they constructed a fine bench on which *Nazr* was to dance. At nightfall *Nazr*, fully decorated, got up the bench and danced all night through. At daybreak *Nazr* took his arrows and after shooting one straight upward and another one backwards, with four successive shots from his bow pierced the four uncles of *Samaz* who had taken up their stance each near one corner of the bench. Wirz's informants were unable to give a reason for this outrage. Wirz suggests that an explanation might be found in the *apanapnë-anem* being entitled by custom to claim the woman who raised the pig which he is going to kill, but it is fairly improbable that such a custom should ever have prevailed.¹²⁵ The killing is not commented on in the story, which goes on to relate how *Nazr*, after having finished off the four men, put off his decorations, smeared his arms with lime, as is usual, took the club and smashed the head of the pig, just while *Samaz* was feeding it for the last time. It was a huge animal and difficult to kill with a club. When the people began to cut it up, the blood spouted right up to the clouds and that is how the rainbow (*marob*, one of the clan's totems) originated.

After the feast *Nazr* married *Samaz*. When she became pregnant, *Nazr* said to her: "If you give birth to a boy, call him *Nazr*, if it is a girl, name her after yourself". Then he departed and, going westward, he first came to Mongumer, where he met *Mongumer-anem*. He was on the point of killing him, when he stopped short, recognizing *Mongumer-anem* as a friend. *Nazr's* friend *Wokabu* also was at Mongumer. *Nazr* left again and went to Tomerau (still Kanum-irébe territory), where he made a canoe and in this craft he went to Wendu. From here he continued on foot. On his way he met with *Puker*, a déma who was engaged in plaiting rattan into an armring. *Nazr* taught him how to fashion the *basik-isas arir*, the pig-spoor motif, a popular ornament in plaitings. When he came to Anasai, he met with a déma called *Mére*, who was engaged in making artificial yam tubers of the variety called *nar*, cutting them out of the soft kernel of sago-leafstalks.

¹²⁵ Apparently Wirz allowed himself to be misled by a misinterpretation of the fact that after the feast *Nazr* marries *Samaz*. It is not unusual among the Marind to have a marriage preceded by a pig feast. In such a case the bride is the grower of the pig, the bridegroom the *Diwazib*. *Nazr's* marriage obviously refers to this custom (cf. Verschueren, Letters IX p. 12).

Mére made a pass at *Nazr*, who retaliated by shooting his arrows at him, but they all missed. Just then, *Nazr* happened to see two snakes copulating. He caught them, using the animals to fetter *Mére*. Next, he went to Kumbe, carrying *Mére* on his back.

In Kumbe he met with another *déma*, *Agé-miakim* (*agé* means So-and-So), who was engaged in making different birds of the beach (*dawé-dawé* and *tub-a-tub*),¹²⁶ shaping them out of gray sea-clay. When he had finished, the birds came to life and flew off. *Nazr* tried to shoot some of the birds, but his rattan bow-string snapped and he had to make a new one. From the old discarded bow-string there grew a rattan palm, which is still to be seen at Sesem near Kumbe. *Nazr* also made new arrows. The cut-off ends of the shafts he threw away, whereupon they changed into *mumu*, a kind of mussel which is a much appreciated food.¹²⁷

Continuing his way to Onggari, *Nazr* forgot his betel-gourd, which remained behind in Kumbe. In Onggari he shot an arrow at the shark which had originated from *Ganguta*, the tree *déma*.¹²⁸ The arrow stuck in the tail and the animal was not killed, and *Nazr* went on till he met with a gurnard. He shot an arrow at the fish, cleaving its frontal bone, and ever since the gurnard has had a furrow in its forehead.

Near Domandé, *Go-anem*, a dreaded *déma*, wanted to fight *Nazr*, but *Nazr* forestalled him by killing him with an arrow. He went on to the Bian, where he tried to shoot *Yakrawa*, another fish *déma*, who is a *karambu*¹²⁹ and who escaped by rapidly swimming off. At that moment the incoming tide pushed a breadfruit tree close to the shore. *Nazr* leapt on to the trunk, with the intention of being carried up-stream, and so it happened. When *Nazr* had arrived near Aboi (south of the upper Bian), he wanted to go ashore, but in spite of his remonstrances the tree kept to the middle of the stream. Then he played it a trick, advising the tree to keep to the centre of the stream so as not to get stuck in the mud near the banks. And just as he expected, the tree headed for the bank and *Nazr* leapt ashore. The trunk struck root and

¹²⁶ Geurtjens writes *dawé-dawé* and *tab-a-tub* (*tabatoeb*). The terms are synonyms, the first being an onomatopoeia. The bird is described as a small beach-snipe, flying in big flocks (Dict., v. *dawé-dawé*). Wirz gives no comment on the term *dawé-dawé*, but calls the *tab-a-tub* a *charadrius*, a plover (M.A. II p. 174).

¹²⁷ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *moemoe*.

¹²⁸ Cf. above, p. 385.

¹²⁹ According to Geurtjens (Dict. v. *karamboe*) a *puntius* species; according to Wirz (M.A. II p. 174) probably a tunny.

developed into a mighty tree which soon bore fruit. It is still there. *Nazr* ordered his *nakari* *Wetibi*, *Tebtilu*, *Boronang*, *Sanemu* and *Yasu* to climb the tree and pick the ripe fruits. The first fruits they threw down changed into echidna (*banate*) and opossum (*tuban*); these ran off and hid in the earth. The fruits burst open and from some of them there emerged a swarm of birds of the species *daru*, *biru*, *téna* and *kata*.

Wirz adds that these are small birds, but this is a mistake. From Geurtjens' Dictionary (voc. cit.) it appears that *daroh-iwag* is a snipe with a long, crooked beak (a plover?); the *biru* a white gull; the *téna* a white-and-black beach-snipe, and the *kata* (as Wirz himself confirms in the sequel to the story) a scrub-hen. The latter is associated with the breadfruit because the eggs of the hen resemble the kernels of the fruits.

Other *nakari* of *Nazr* made a fire under the tree to roast the fruits. Accidentally, a big fruit dropped on *Mére*, whom *Nazr* was still carrying on his back. *Mére* and the two snakes fell off, right into the fire, and thus they were roasted. *Nazr* devoured everything, the breadfruit, the snakes, and *Mére*. He ate so much that after some time he had to defecate. From the forest a scrub-hen was looking on, making fun of him. *Nazr* took offence and shot an arrow at the hen, but the arrow dipped right down and landed, end up, into *Nazr's* excrements. To his amazement *Nazr* found that the excrements and the arrow had turned into a club with a disc-shaped head.¹³⁰ He added the new weapon to his armature and went on foot to the upper Bian.

In a certain village he met with an old woman, a pelican *déma* called *Mongoru*. She tried to devour *Nazr*, but because of his elaborate hairdo she could not swallow him, and had to throw him up again. Then *Nazr* killed her with his club. He cut up her abdomen, threw the intestines into a swamp, buried her head in the earth and ate the rest of the corpse. The next morning he found that various reeds and *kapatu*, a kind of sugar-cane,¹³¹ had grown from her intestines and that a banana of the species called *suraki* had sprung up from her head. *Mongoru* also had a daughter, whom *Nazr* kept to prepare his sago for him.

Nazr went to Ipa near Kabtel on the middle Bian, where he met with the *hais* of an old woman. She came from the river, where she had been fishing and she had her child with her. *Nazr* requested her

¹³⁰ Wrongly called *wagané* by Wirz; cf. above, p. 273.

¹³¹ The *kapatu* is a sugar-cane, the flower of which is eaten. Geurtjens calls it *Saccharum edule floridulum*, but Dr. Ostendorf informs me that it probably is an uncommon form of *Saccharum officinarum*.

to give him some fishes, upon which she handed him a couple of fishes of poor quality, giving the better ones to her child. *Nasr* was furious and when the *hais* went off, he set fire to her house, letting her child perish in the flames. When the *hais* returned, nothing was left but the bones of the child, which she collected and put into a basket. *Nasr* had left and was proceeding to Tumid-miráv between the middle Bian and the middle Buraka. The old *hais*, carrying the basket with the bones, followed him. Changing into a dog, she managed to come close to him and hang the basket round his neck. *Nasr*, jumping up, only saw a dog running off. In the basket he found a number of boys that had originated from the bones. He gave them each a name and went on to Kusa near Dahuk-zé-miráv, where *Mahu* lived at that time. *Nasr* hung the basket with the boys from a tree. That very moment flashes of lightning shot forth from the basket and struck the mighty tree, which fell down with a thundering roar. The children of the *hais* had turned into flashes of lightning.

In an alternative reading already referred to,¹³² the flashes of lightning are born from the marriage of *Nasr* and *Sobra*. *Sobra* was a *hais* living in the sky. At the time there was a serious drought and the *hais* up in the sky needed water. *Sobra* was sent to the forest to search for water.¹³³ She went to the sago grove and started digging. She went on till the pit was so deep that she could not get out. Then, suddenly, the bottom gave way and through the unfathomable depth she fell upon the earth. The *hais* in the heavens waited in vain for *Sobra* to come back. At last they found out what had happened, and they lowered a rattan with a piece of wood tied to it for *Sobra* to sit upon. The rattan had an enormous length, so that it could span the distance from the Maro to the Kumbe. *Sobra* found the rattan, but she did not want to return right then. She gave the cord a jerk so as to convey to the other *hais* that she was alive and then tied a *wati* plant to it, because at the time *wati* was still unknown up above. Next, she went reconnoitring. She had come down north of the springs of the Bian river. She went southward, looking for water to quench her thirst, and at last, on the lower Kumbe, she found a swamp which she drained completely. A little way further on a snake leapt on her head and tried to insert its tail into her anus. She killed the snake, which she roasted and ate. She travelled on and visited various places, one

¹³² Above, pp. 211 f.

¹³³ Cf. the myth of *Dawéna*, above, p. 382.

of these was Wambi; the itinerary is in fact a very devious one.¹³⁴ She also attended the *imo* ceremonies at Tumid-miráv, where she related her adventures. A few days later she went on again and came to Singeas. In Singeas (Domandé) she met with *Nazr*, whom she married. She bore him several children, who became the flashes of lightning (*taragi*). It was *Sobra* who taught *Nazr* and *Mahu* the art of headhunting. She went with them and instructed them how to prepare the heads. She walked in front and sang *ayasé*, the headhunters' song; the wording of this song refers to her name.

In the main text, to which we have to return now, *Sobra* is not mentioned. The story of *Nazr's* lightning-boys continues and we are told that when *Mahu* heard the tree crashing down, he ran to see what had happened. *Nazr*, however, put his children into the basket and told *Mahu* not to worry them. The two *déma* then decided to make two canoes and to that end the lightning-children brought down another tree. *Nazr* and *Mahu* now set about making the canoes, fashioning the bows in the shape of a human face, that on *Nazr's* boat being given a big nose and that on *Mahu's* a small one. Ever since the Marind have made canoes with carved bows.

Nazr intended to use his canoe for a headhunt among the foreign tribes on the Digul. "They are foreigners", he said, "whom we may safely kill and whose heads we may cut off". At first, *Mahu* objected, but later he thought better of it. Before he was to start out, he wished to bring *Piakor* to *Geb*, and so he did.¹³⁵ *Nazr* in the meantime cut the necessary arrows and wooden clubs, which he presented to his lightning-children. When *Mahu* returned, he was scared by the sight of so many heavily armed people, but *Nazr* reassured him, telling him that they were his children. Now *Nazr*, *Mahu* and the lightning-children set out, travelling by canoe to the headwaters of the Bian; there they left the canoes and continued on foot. When at last they arrived in an area inhabited by foreigners, *Nazr* suggested that they should first reconnoitre the area to find out the location of the settlements and the number of people they would have to reckon with. After a couple of days they had selected their target. *Mahu* wanted to strike straight away, but *Nazr* restrained him, arguing that it was better to attack toward daybreak, when people are bemused with sleep. After midnight they set out and stealthily entered the village. *Nazr* took his children out of the basket and they threw themselves upon the houses, killing

¹³⁴ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II pp. 190 f.

¹³⁵ See above, p. 323.

the people. *Nazr*, however, cut off the heads of his victims and encouraged *Mahu* to assist him, telling him that he should ask for their names before cutting off their heads as, otherwise, it would be senseless. *Mahu* answered: "They don't understand me when I ask them their names, because they are foreigners". "That does not matter", *Nazr* replied, "before you cut somebody's head he is bound to say something, and this may be used as a name". They seized a great number of heads; only a few people managed to escape. Then *Nazr* told his partner to hurry, as the day was already breaking. He called his lightning-children, who were still hurling their arrows at the fleeing people, but the children did not listen and when he tried to catch them, they slipped through his hands and climbed up to the sky, disappearing for ever.

Nazr and *Mahu*, carrying the captured heads, went into the bush, to a place where they were safe from counterattack. *Nazr* instructed *Mahu* how to prepare the heads and the story gives a detailed report of the procedure. *Mahu* treated the heads in the same manner as *Nazr* did. At last *Nazr* warned him that it was time to go and asked him to see if the canoes were still there, while he finished with the heads. *Mahu* complied, but as soon as he had disappeared, *Nazr* collected both his and *Mahu's* spoils and made off. When *Mahu* returned, *Nazr* had disappeared and he had to go a long way to find him. With his dogs he went southward. On his way he quite accidentally discovered the sirih plant: a creeper blocked his progress and, biting through the stalk, he afterwards found that the sap had coloured his saliva red. At first he thought that it was blood, but when he checked by first chewing betel nuts and lime, he found that it must have been the plant, the sirih, which had coloured his spittle. Finally *Mahu* arrived at Yé on the upper Kumbe, and there he caught up with *Nazr*. Changing into a dog, he entered the village. A magical formula made all the people go to sleep, except a ringworm-infested boy who saw that a dog walked up to *Nazr's* bunch of cut-off heads, snatched them up with its mouth and made off. When the people woke up after they had been alerted by the boy, it was already too late. Carrying the heads, *Mahu* returned to the canoe and went to Karikri.¹³⁶ *Nazr* stayed in a swamp near Yé on the upper Kumbe, where he is still residing. Anybody who goes there to pull out the reeds, which serve as arrow-shafts, will hear his wail.

The second myth concentrates on *Sapi*. According to the story of

¹³⁶ In Tumid-miráv in the lower Eli region; cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 159.

Nazr, *Sapi* is the boar that originated from *Nazr's* own carcass and which, after having killed *Mindu*, ran off to *Habé*. It is at this point that our story begins. A pig *déma* named *Sapi* went from *Habé* to *Wambi*, to live there in the guise of a richly decorated *miakim*. During the night, however, he sneaked into the gardens and, turning into a boar, churned up the yams and the taro grown by the villagers and ate them. After having satisfied his appetite, he would change again into a *miakim* and return to the village before daybreak. Of all the gardens those owned by a man called *Tsami* suffered the most from *Sapi's* pifering. Time and again *Tsami* tried to catch the pig which damaged his garden, but he never succeeded, because in his human form *Sapi* carefully watched his doings and never went to *Tsami's* gardens until some time after he had seen the latter take his *wati* and he could therefore be sure that *Tsami* would be fast asleep. What *Sapi* did not know was that *Tsami* had applied to a friend, *Yanda*, asking him to watch the garden during the night. And so it was how *Tsami* found out at last what was going on. Then *Tsami* went to *Kumbe* to ask *Bomaid-anem*, a famous hunter, for help. *Bomaid-anem* agreed to come and kill the boar and so one night *Sapi*, after having changed into a boar again, was killed in *Tsami's* garden by *Bomaid-anem's* arrows. A pig feast was arranged and the animal was carved up, *Bomaid-anem* claiming for himself only the heart and the liver. Returning to *Kumbe*, *Bomaid-anem* threw these away. After some time he saw that a big boar was trailing him along the beach. From the organs a new boar had materialized, which now wanted to have its revenge on *Bomaid-anem*. The latter was terrified and tried to kill the animal. In spite of the magical formula applied, most of his arrows missed and those that did come home did not kill the boar. *Bomaid-anem* had to take to flight. He ran for his life, all the way to *Kumbe*, where his mother *Malim* stood waiting for him. *Bomaid-anem* (he is now represented as a small boy) hid between her legs and all of a sudden numerous legs emerged from *Malim's* body, preventing the boar from getting at *Bomaid-anem*. *Malim* had turned into a sort of mangrove-tree (*batna*),¹³⁷ which is still to be seen near *Kumbe*. While he was in flight, *Bomaid-anem* had thrown away his sleeping-mat,

¹³⁷ The translation is doubtful. Geurtjens' Dict. gives for *batne*: "tree species with very hard wood; the bark is used as a masticatory". The common word for mangrove is *haráv*, which is also the word used in the myth of the *Bangu-boan*. Cf. above, p. 342; Geurtjens, Dict. voc.cit.; V. d. Kolk en Vertenten, Woordenboek v. mangrove.

which turned into a ray *déma* (*papu-déma*), who has resided at Kumbo till the present day. The reader will remember that the *papu* is a *Yorm-end* totem.

The sequel to the story takes us back to Wambi. When *Bomaid-anem* had killed the pig *déma*, the *nakari* came to divide the meat among them and roast it. The German text is equivocal on this point and it is impossible to decide whose *nakari* they were. However that may be, when they removed the bark from the meat they had been roasting, a herd of live piglets came out, shrieking. The *nakari* raised them on bananas and sago. One day *Aramemb* arrived from Komolom, carrying a bunch of bananas. The piglets beset him and the people told him to throw away his bananas lest the pigs should hurt him. But *Aramemb* just chaffed them and amused himself with the animals which, at the time, lacked every 'ornament'; they had neither mane nor tusks nor tails. Some *déma* arrived from Kurkari, viz. *Mangauéru*, *Mangasesse*, *Uéru*, *Doyam* and *Enod-anem* (we met them earlier as the mythical *kambara-anim*¹³⁸) and fashioned the indispensable 'ornaments'. *Uéru* and *Doyam* also gave the pigs their real (secret) names (*igiz-ha*), viz. *Waléh*, *Genge*, *Samake*, *Dorai*, *Koyani*, et al., names apparently used in magic only and unintelligible to us. Still, we remember the name of *Géngé* as the name of the cormorant *déma* who, in some way which has not been sufficiently clarified, is associated with the dead.¹³⁹ Then they summoned the piglets and said to them: "You have importuned *Aramemb*, trying to rob him of his bananas; do not do that again or you will be killed. If you meet somebody who is armed with bow and arrows, then make off rapidly because man is hunting for you". With these words they sent off the piglets and that is how the bush-pig originated. On the fact that the bush-pig originates from the activities of the mythical sorcerers, the *kambara-anim*, Wirz gives the following comment: "Referring to this myth, the Marind will say 'As the bush-pigs are in the forest, so the sorcerers, the *kambara-anim*, are in the village', in other words, as the wild pig is among the most dangerous and treacherous of animals, so the sorcerer, the *kambara-anem*, is among the most dreaded and malevolent of human beings".¹⁴⁰ There is a close relationship between pig and sorcery. The mythical *kambara-anim*, the *déma* of sorcery, belong to the *Sapi-zé* subclan, and sorcery

¹³⁸ Above, p. 249.

¹³⁹ Ibid. pp. 344, 346.

¹⁴⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 181.

may be called a totem-relation of the *Sapi-zé*; it is an activity which, mythologically, belongs to this *boan*.

The pig déma *Sapi*, who pursued *Bomaid-anem* as far as Kumbe, has remained there in the guise of a stone up to the present day. According to other informants, *Manimbu*, the thunder déma, pulled him up into the sky on a *taragi*. Wirz translates the word as 'bark fibre'; Geurtjens (Dict. voc. cit.) gives 'aerial root' as well as 'flash of lightning'. It is evident that a quibble is involved; both aerial root and flash of lightning are appropriate. *Sapi* remained in the sky; when we hear the long-drawn-out rumbling of the thunder (*waren*), it is *Sapi* grunting.¹⁴¹

6. BASIK-BASIK MYTHOLOGY: THE PIG AND DÉHÉVAI

An analysis of the myths of the *Basik-Basik* or pig clan has to begin with a discussion of the place the pig occupies in Marind-anim life and thought. This place is a prominent one. The dog and the pig are the only domesticated animals and it is the pig which is by far the best cared for. Of the numerous dogs no more than a few favourites which excel as hunting-dogs are given food and care; their owners are much attached to them and some of the pups so much enjoy the affectionate attention of the family that sometimes the housewife takes them to her breast and suckles them. These dogs are the lucky ones; the majority hardly ever get any food and have to foray on their own. When the Marind enjoys his meal, there is always a number of scrawny scavenger-dogs sneaking about, ever watchful for an opportunity to steal a bite. More often than not a firm dig in the ribs is all they get, but since they are half-starved, they will run any risk. Their leanness, next to being a token of starvation, is their most effective protection. A fat dog that loses its master is doomed; even though dog's meat is not a regular feature of the festive board, it is as much appreciated as any game and so, when the opportunity offers, people are not likely to let it slip.¹⁴²

With pigs, things are different. There are no neglected pigs in the village; the pig provides the ceremonial food, which is kept in stock for festive occasions. Strange though it may seem, there is no actual pig-breeding. Verschueren points out that the animals they raise are, or more correctly were, without exception castrated boars, picked from

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 180.

¹⁴² Cf. Vertentcn, J.P. 1918 pp. 512 f.

the litter of a wild sow at the time they were still piglets. Though to-day it may happen that a sow is singled out for this purpose, the rule has long been that exclusively boars are raised, because only castrated boars will grow big and fat.¹⁴³ When a piglet has been selected from a litter, it is given to a relative, invariably one belonging to another phratry — and to the other moiety in cases where moiety-exogamy is observed.¹⁴⁴ Raising a pig is an important task, which is entrusted to the women. When they are young, the piglets may be suckled; since they were picked from the litter of a wild swine, people will do everything to familiarize them with their mistresses. They always get their food in time and often the women are very affectionate with their pigs. When the day has come for the animals to be killed, there is much shedding of tears, albeit that the women who raised the pigs are willing enough to lure them to the place where the henchman stands ready. After all, there is no food like pork; Vertenten gives a vivid description of the way a Marind shows his appreciation. Among the things in which one of his catechists was keenly interested, the question of whether or not there were pigs in the Christian *hais-miráv* (land of the dead) took precedence.¹⁴⁵ "In most cases, there is some special motive for raising a pig: it is to be given to this cousin or that nephew or niece, it is for that particular uncle or friend, for a sister or a brother. When the pig is big and fat, it will be killed for their benefit, usually on a festive occasion such as the piercing of the earlobes, the arranging of the first hairdo, the promotion to the next higher age-grade and so on".¹⁴⁶ The statement is not entirely correct. The owner of the pig is not the man or woman to whom the pig is given to be raised, but the man who gave it away, the one who picked it from the litter. When the time has come for the pig to be slaughtered, the owner is called upon to do the actual killing.¹⁴⁷

Killing the animal is an important ceremony. It is done with a club (not with an arrow), but before the killer performs his job he has to dance, beautifully decorated, on a bench in the centre of the festive grounds, all the night through. The dancer is called *Diwasib*, i.e. Son of *Diwa*. At daybreak he puts off his ornaments, takes the club and kills the animal just when its mistress is feeding it for the last time in its life. The carcass is put on a platform constructed over the graves,

¹⁴³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 45.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. IX p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Vertenten, J.P. 1920 p. 357.

¹⁴⁶ L.c.

¹⁴⁷ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 7.

that is, near the festive grounds. Feasts are always celebrated near or on the graves.¹⁴⁸ When there was a big feast, many pigs were killed; as many as thirty or fifty animals might be slaughtered on a single day.

Highly popular though the pig may be, caution is not neglected. All boars are castrated to prevent the full-grown boar from becoming dangerous. Its long tusks, its swiftness of movement and the blind fury of the animal at bay, make it a dangerous enemy, as more than one reckless hunter experienced. Accidents during boar-hunts are fairly frequent and I know of a few cases in which there were fatal casualties. As the domesticated pig is essentially a wild one, the Marind does not want a boar about in the village. Castrates are more indolent, less dangerous and, above all, fatter.¹⁴⁹

A certain degree of equivocality in the appreciation of the pig is evident. On the one hand, the *basik* (pig) is the symbol of courage and prowess. *Basik* is the common word for courageous; every Marind man wants to be known as *basik*. At the same time, the animal is fairly much feared and in a hunting-party there are only few who are daring enough to set at a wild boar. Very big animals are always left alone. They are *déma*-pigs¹⁵⁰ and in this case superstition has a solid basis in well-founded fear. The ferocious character of the animal is expressed in various associations. The grunting of the pig is associated with thunder.¹⁵¹ The close connection between the pig and warfare, more particularly with headhunting, finds expression in the custom of calling the domestic pigs by proper names which are the names of places the people used to visit on their headhunting expeditions.¹⁵² Another interesting association is that of pig and sorcery. We found it demonstrated in the previously related myths. Later on, we shall meet with a magical implement, the *mangon*, which is a miniature coconut shell carved in the shape of a pig's head. The instrument is used in black magic.¹⁵³

In all these instances the pig figures as a domestic animal which is anything but friendly. Its dangerous qualities counterbalance its virtues as a provider of pork and a symbol of wealth, the main object

¹⁴⁸ Vertenten, l.c.; below, pp. 843, 846.

¹⁴⁹ See also Vertenten, J.P. 1920 pp. 406 f.

¹⁵⁰ Vertenten, l.c.

¹⁵¹ Vertenten, l.c.; Wirz, M.A. II p. 180, IV p. 79; above, p. 406.

¹⁵² Vertenten, J.P. 1920 p. 357.

¹⁵³ Cf. below, pp. 897 f., 907 f.

in the ceremonial intercourse with relatives and friends from other villages. It is futile to speculate on the origins of this dualistic attitude. We might refer to the fact that the pig, in spite of its prominent role in social life, is the object of female rather than male interest and care, but such observations cannot contribute much to our understanding, as the same situation prevails in other Papuan cultures, where the pig is not as closely associated with conflicting emotions as among the Marind. Instead of indulging in hypothesis, we had better try and establish the meaning and function of the *Basik-Basik* clan in the socio-religious system. To that end we have to return to the myths related in the previous pages.

The story of *Nazr* is by far the most lengthy among Marind-anim myths. It differs from other elaborate myths in the absence of any overt reference to the *mayo*-rites, a peculiarity which is the more remarkable because Wirz, whose curiosity must have been aroused, writes that "all sorts of mythological rumours are circulating which have it that *Nazr*, like the other *déma*, played a part in the primeval *mayo* ceremonies".¹⁵⁴ Without informing us as to the exact nature of these rumours, he continues: "In the *mayo* ceremonies the name of *déma Nazr* is never mentioned; instead, there is another character who plays a part, viz. *Déhévai*. . . . Toward the end of the ceremonies, which usually take five months, *Déhévai* enters the grounds masked as a *kapiog* (black cockatoo), wearing a peculiar headgear made of sago-leaves and decorated with big, red-rimmed eyeholes and black feathers. In other respects his ornaments are similar to those of any other *déma*-performer. . . . The *kapiog* belongs to the pig clan and the performer must be a member of this clan. Probably he represents the pig *déma Nazr*, because the latter is occasionally also called *Déhévai*".¹⁵⁵ Wirz translates the name *Déhévai* as 'Father who kills', which has the support of Nevermann, who published a collection of South New Guinea myths under the title 'Söhne des tötenden Vaters', Sons of the killing Father. The collection makes part of a series which was meant to give a popular version of exotic literary products and as such it has its specific merits. The work in question must not be mistaken for a handbook of ethnography. All the same, there is no justification for this particular title. The Marind do not consider themselves sons of *Déhévai*, at least, we have not the slightest indication that they do. Besides, the very translation of *Déhévai* has been called

¹⁵⁴ Wirz, M.A. II p. 167.

¹⁵⁵ L.c.

in question. Father Verschueren points out that another translation is equally possible, one which is by no means less probable, viz. wood- or tree-father. This, indeed, is what Geurtjens in M&M IV p. 252 gives as the translation of the name applied to the *kapiog*. In daily life, too, the *kapiog* is called *Déhévai* and Geurtjens adds that he is at a loss why this name should be applied. The crux is that the word *Déhévai* may be considered to be based on either of two roots, viz. *dé* or *déh*. The former means tree, wood, plank, etc.; thence *dé-aha*, a wooden house made of planks; *dé-ngor*, a tree-leaf; *dé-bak*, forest; etc. The other word is *déh* (upper Bian *déhě*): to shoot, to strike, to hit; thence *yémessav a déh*, the sorcerer has hit him, i.e. he has been bewitched.¹⁵⁶

Fortunately, in M.A. IV Wirz has presented additional data which enable us to make the right choice: "As the father of the flashes of lightning (*taragi*) they always mention *Déhévai* (lit. killing father); a frequently applied abbreviation of *Déhévai* is *Déhě*, and the one thus designated is identical with the pig *déma* anyhow".¹⁵⁷ The use of the name *Déhě* settles the matter, and the one point on which difference of opinion remains possible concerns the question whether Shooting or Striking Father would not be a more correct name than Killing Father. The answer to this question will be given below. For the moment the discussion of the name *Déhévai* may be wound up with a remark on the spelling. All authors write *Dé-hévai* or *Dé-évai*. Evidently, the correct spelling is *Déh-évai*. As it is hardly becoming to introduce a new spelling even before the arguments have been advanced on which it is based, I decided to drop the hyphen and write *Déhévai*.

Déhévai's fathership of the *taragi*, the flashes of lightning, lends substance to Wirz's statement that *Nazr* is sometimes given the name of *Déhévai*.¹⁵⁸ *Nazr*, too, is called the father of the *taragi*, in the main version of his myth he appears as a kind of foster-father, who carries them in a basket fastened to his neck by their mother, a *hais*. In an alternative version the flashes of lightning are the children born from *Nazr's* marriage with *Sobra*, a *hais* who had fallen from the sky.¹⁵⁹ *Sobra* is a curious character in Marind-anim mythology. In spite of her celestial origin, she is closely associated with the underworld. The story of her search for water in the upperworld is an exact replica

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *dé* and *déh*.

¹⁵⁷ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 79.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. II p. 167.

¹⁵⁹ See above, p. 402.

of the story of *Dawéna*, the groundwater woman, who was married to the depth and became the mother of *Yorma*.¹⁶⁰ She is closely, even emphatically associated with the end of the dry season, when all the wells and pools have dried up. She even drains a whole swamp to quench her thirst. It is the right season for headhunting expeditions, the season, too, when thunderstorms are frequent. Perhaps that is why she is called a *hais*; all the land looks like it were dead. Obviously, she is the ideal counterpart of *Nazr*. In a variant on the myth of the origin of man, *Sobra* is an old woman who is the first to come out of the hole from which the human beings emerged, the beings that in the more orthodox reading are given their final shape by *Aramemb*, who makes fire after the stork has picked them up from the well and put them down on a dry spot. In the deviant version it is *Sobra* who makes the fire and, acting the part of *Aramemb*, completes the work of shaping the human beings.¹⁶¹ Having finished her work, she withdraws into a hole, leaving it only to steal children, whom she roasts and eats. Suspicion falls on other people; revenge is taken and that is how the custom of headhunting originated. *Sobra* acts as a nefarious kind of primeval mother and it is interesting to note that *Nazr*, in the guise of *Déhévai*, presents some of the specific traits of a sky-god, a minor sort of supreme being whose marriage with a primeval mother (or mother-goddess) living in a hole in the earth reminds us of another divine couple, viz. *Dinadin* and *Nubog*, Sky and Earth, who are the parents of *Geb* and *Sami*, the moiety-ancestors.¹⁶² There is a difference, however, in that *Dinadin* and *Nubog* are the parents of the tribal ancestors, and *Nazr* (or *Déhévai*) and *Sobra* of the flashes of lightning only. The marriage of the latter pair has less far-reaching consequences. Nevertheless, the assumption that *Déhévai* may be classified as a kind of sky-god is vindicated by the fact that he is depicted as "an old man with a long, white beard, who during a thunderstorm comes down to the earth in the guise of a glaring flash of lightning. The smaller flashes, the *taragi*, are his children. When there is a thunderstorm, *Déhévai* and his children are hunting on earth".¹⁶³

There is, of course, some variation in the representations connected with a thunderstorm. Sometimes the thunder is said to be caused by *Déhévai* breaking the cover of the sky, while others relate thunder

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. pp. 381 f.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 211.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 208.

¹⁶³ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 79.

to the grunting of the pig *déma*. Again, sheet-lightning is sometimes said to be produced by spirits of the dead. All these variations keep within the framework of the myths of *Nazr* and *Sapi*. The same may be said of *Nazr's* marriage with *Sobra*; a Shooting Father (or, following Wirz's less strict interpretation, a Killing Father) who marries a spirit of the dead, the former belonging to the sky and the latter emerging from the earth, and both associated with the end of the dry season, make a well-balanced couple. Though they lack the functions of a primeval divine couple, *Déhévai's* appearance shows unmistakable traces of the outward symbols belonging to such a dual divinity. That is also the case in the following myth.¹⁶⁴

Molma, a *Geb-zé* man, went from Dahuk-zé-miráv to Domandé and was overtaken by a heavy thunderstorm. Disconsolate and scared he found himself some shelter, where he lighted a fire. Suddenly an old man with a long white beard appeared and sat down next to the fire. This man was *Déhévai* or *Déhě*, the father of the lightning-children, but *Molma* did not know who he was. They chatted, chewed betel and ate the roasted meat of a wallaby which *Déhévai* had killed. On leaving, *Déhévai* presented his friend *Molma* with his *imbassum* (a stone spear-thrower; see below) to facilitate the catching of wallabies, which at the time was extremely difficult. Shortly afterwards a glaring stroke of lightning flashed down from the clouds and *Déhévai* and his children, climbing it, returned to the sky. The thunderstorm was over. *Molma* continued on his way to Domandé, very happy with the old man's present, which he examined carefully. Soon afterwards, however, the thunderstorm began to rage again. As it was, *Déhě's* children were very angry with their father when they heard that he had given his *imbassum* to a human being. They scolded their parent because of his stupidity, fearing that now they could not kill wallabies any more. They decided to return to the earth and presently the lightning flashed all around *Molma*. He ran for his life and made for the nearest house, throwing away everything he carried with him, his betel-gourd, the pieces of wallaby roast presented to him by *Déhě*, and also the *imbassum*. The latter was picked up by *Déhévai*, but *Molma* had studied the weapon closely enough to give a detailed description to the men of his village, who lost no time in making the implement themselves. Since then, the *imbassum* has been used in the *imo*-cult.

Wirz does not inform us to what end the *imbassum* is used in the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. pp. 79 f.

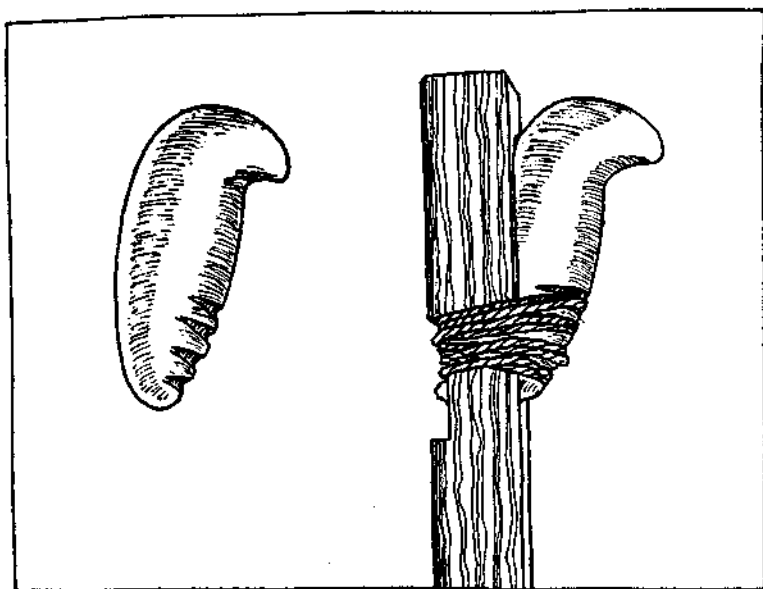


Fig. 3. Sketch of an *imbassum*, nr. 1011/1 in the collections of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam. The small black stone has been tied to a stick to demonstrate its use as a spear-thrower.

cult, but from his description of the *mayo*-cult it appears that the *imbassum* has a function in the *mayo* initiation rites as well. It is the *kapiog* (black cockatoo) performer who carries it. He appears on the scene toward the end of the rites, shortly before the neophytes are released from seclusion. In one hand he holds a spear (*dam*, a javelin; cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.), in the other the *imbassum*. We already pointed out that it is actually a spear-thrower. The object is discussed in different passages in Wirz's *Marind-anim*¹⁶⁵ and he asserts that "it combines the functions of spear-thrower, striking weapon and thrusting weapon" ("in ihr sind Speerschleuder, Schlag- und Stichwaffe vereinigt"), a most inaccurate and contradictory conclusion, which is highly confusing. The object is, in fact, a small stone artefact, about 7 cm long, beak-shaped at one end and with a few notches near the other end for the strings by means of which the artefact is fastened to a stick in the way shown in the picture published by Wirz as fig. 12 of Tafel 36 in Part I of his *Marind-Anim* (cf. also our fig. 3). Artefacts

¹⁶⁵ M.A. I p. 112, III pp. 20 f., IV p. 79.

of this kind are rare, but fortunately Geurtjens happened to come across a specimen originating from the Mappi river area. He was the first to put forward the suggestion that the *basom* (*imbassum*), when it is fastened to a stick, not only resembles a spear-thrower, but to all intents is one. The arguments he forwarded in support of his theory are convincing.¹⁶⁶ After all, the spear-thrower is a widely spread implement among the Marind. What is more, long before Geurtjens' article had come to my notice, experiments which Mr. H. C. van Renselaar carried out with one of the specimens in the collections of the Royal Tropical Institute at Amsterdam proved — much to my surprise, I must confess — that the artefact could effectively function as a spear-thrower. Since we cannot think of any other purpose that the instrument could possibly be made to serve, there is ample reason to accept that the *imbassum* is a ceremonial spear-thrower. It fits in perfectly with the ritual performance. The *kapiog*-performer has the *imbassum* in one hand, a javelin in the other; the two belong together. What is more, the bird's second name (which is also a household name) is *déhévai*, that is, 'shooting father' or 'father who hits'. It is perfectly clear now that *Nazr's* surname indeed means Shooting Father, and nothing else. Shooting is what *Déhévai* actually does; he 'shoots' his flashes, and this activity is symbolized by the black cockatoo performer who 'shoots' his javelin by means of a spear-thrower, the instrument which once the thunder *déma* imprudently presented to a human being. Small wonder that the flashes of lightning were enraged. They needed the instrument to be hurled down to the earth by their father. The black cockatoo being the representative of the thunder *déma* in ritual, the name of the *déma* could also be applied to the animal and thus *Déhévai* could become a synonym for *kapiog*.

One question, however, remains unanswered: why was the black cockatoo made the representative and symbol of the thunder *déma*? Information on this point is very limited in scope. In a footnote Wirz states: "According to one myth the black cockatoo originated from a man who, during the pig hunt at Sangar, got so scared that he hid in a hollow tree".¹⁶⁷ Although the relationship between pig clan and *kapiog* is substantiated, the story does not provide an explanation. Elsewhere Wirz suggested that the resemblance of the black *imbassum* to the hooked bill of the black cockatoo inspired the equation, but we do not know for certain whether his suggestion is based on native

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Geurtjens, *Anthr.* 51/54 (1946/49) pp. 219 ff.

¹⁶⁷ Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 20 note 2.

information.¹⁶⁸ Verschueren, commenting on this point, says that because of its shape the *imbassum* is nowadays usually associated with a banana. An *imbassum* which was shown to him at Senégi (a big one, 12 cm in length) was even said to be the banana *déma*,¹⁶⁹ an explanation which adds to confusion because the banana is, primarily at least, a *Geb-zé* totem.¹⁷⁰ His informants also told him that the artefact was not really an *imbassum*, since an *imbassum* is, in fact, an adze. The statement is interesting because *imbassum* is the word which is used to-day for a steel axe. Geurtjens also mentions the word as denoting a stone adze used in warfare.¹⁷¹ Evidently, there is an air of mystery about the term, more so than about the particular object, which is a spear-thrower anyhow.

A more plausible explanation of the association of the ritual spear-thrower with the *kapiog*, the black cockatoo, was advanced by Verschueren. At the end of the dry season, that is, in November and December, when thunderstorms are frequent, the black cockatoos, which in other seasons are not gregarious, flock together in great numbers, feeding on a special kind of fruit, a *Syzygium* species. That, indeed, would explain the relationship with *Nazr* as well as the *kapiog*-performer's appearance toward the end of the *mayo*-rites, when the rainy season is rapidly approaching. In one of the following chapters we shall have to consider the possibility that the *mayo*-rites may be followed by headhunting.¹⁷² Wirz's hypothesis that by his arrival the *kapiog*-performer announces that the moment has come for a girl, who had previously been raped by all the men, to be slaughtered, roasted and eaten, may be dismissed as a figment of his imagination, in part the result of his slipshod translation of *Déhévai* as 'Killing Father' instead of 'Shooting Father'. In the ritual *Nazr* is not a killer, but a headhunter and his bird, the *kapiog*, appears in the headhunting season. We may leave it alone whether the bird's dull blue-black feathers may have reminded the Marind of the colour of a thundercloud. What is more to the point is that, to symbolize a sky-being, a bird is selected and, again, a fairly big bird, the black cockatoo being by far the biggest among all the New Guinea parrot species.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. IV p. 138.

¹⁶⁹ Verschueren, Letters IX pp. 1 and 10.

¹⁷⁰ There is also a banana species which belongs to the *Basik-Basik*; see above, p. 400.

¹⁷¹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *basom*.

¹⁷² Cf. below pp. 551 f., 742, 758 f., 763.

7. BASIK-BASIK MYTHOLOGY: DIWAZIB, KAMBARA AND CONCLUSION

Although the *Diwazib*-function may be fulfilled by a man of any clan or phratry, *Nazr* evidently stands as the mythical prototype. As such he acts as the executer of his alter ego. The contradictory character of this behaviour is emphasized by the preceding events. When *Wokabu* and his crew go to Sangar to hunt the newly created pigs, they decide to conceal their intention from *Nazr* because he is a friend of the pigs. Apparently they apprehend that pig-killing is a hostile act in respect of *Nazr*. Nevertheless, a little while afterwards, *Nazr* joins the hunters and catches a pig himself. He gives it to his *nakari*, who raise it, i.e. who prepare it to be slaughtered on the occasion of another pig feast. Apart from the fact that, to the Marind, there is all the difference between a wild pig and a domesticated one, the ambivalence of *Nazr's* dual function of protector and killer of the pigs is comparable to a similar ambivalence well-known from our own culture. Passionate hunters often are devoted protectors of animals, a much-derided but nevertheless very frequent combination of conflicting attitudes. Among the Marind such a conflicting situation is poignantly expressed by the woman who raised the pig. She takes pride in its fatness and its weight and when the hour has arrived for the *Diwazib*-performer to kill the pig, she lures the animal with food and kind words to the place of execution. However, when the animal has been killed, she is shocked and bewails it, showing every sign of genuine grief. This, again, will not prevent her from marrying the killer afterwards, that is, if the pig feast was organized in anticipation of her marriage, as happened to be the case with *Samaz*. Another example of this ambivalence is presented by the general attitude of the Marind vis-à-vis his totem. There is no taboo on eating the totem, but when partaking of one's animal totem, it is good form to praise the *amai* (grandfather) because he tastes so well.¹⁷³ Evidently part of the pride a man takes in his totem is determined by its qualities as a nutriment. That is undoubtedly the case with the pig, which supplies the *nec plus ultra* of delicacies, pork. With regard to the wallaby the myth reflects a comparable appreciation of the animal's qualities as an article of food. *Aramemb*, the originator of the wallaby, who calls the wallaby *déma Mad* his ancestor, is also the originator of wallaby hunting.¹⁷⁴ The appreciation

¹⁷³ See above, p. 192.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 276, 279, 282, 285 f.

of the animal is based on its nutritional value, and the relevant *déma* is given due credit for the prominent part he played in the discovery of the animal's perfections as a festive roast. The ambivalence in sentiment demonstrated by the situation in daily life is reflected in myth.

The name given to the ceremonial killer is *Divazib*, i.e. Son of *Diwa*, which is rather surprising.¹⁷⁵ Instead of referring to *Nazr*, the term associates the office with a clan of the other phratry of the same moiety. When Wirz tries to explain the difficulty away by suggesting that *Divazib* is a contraction of *Déhévai-sib*, this is just a little too ingenious to be acceptable. We must face the undeniable fact that, terminologically, the function is more closely associated with the *Mahu-zé* than with the *Basik-Basik*.

Other evidence tends to confirm the association. Heldring and Gooszen, in their descriptions of the *mayo*-initiation ceremonies, state that the neophytes receive their first sago from the sago *déma* who, for the occasion, is dressed up as *Divazib*.¹⁷⁶ Wirz, who strongly relied on Heldring when he gave his account of the initiation ceremonies, must have had his misgivings, as he records the scene of the sago *déma* without mentioning the name of *Divazib*. Unfortunately, he does not inform us why he deviates from his main source.¹⁷⁷ His argument may have been that the *Divazib* as photographed by Gooszen differs widely from the typical *Divazib* dancing at a pig feast. The *Divazib* of the initiation ceremonies has on his head a crescent, which is definitely lacking in the pictures and descriptions published by Wirz and Vertenten of the *Divazib* of the pig feast.¹⁷⁸ Still, Heldring must somehow have heard the name mentioned in this connection; the name *Divazib* as applied to a distributor of sago is, after all, too apt to leave room for the possibility that Heldring selected the name at random and just noted it down in this particular context. His knowledge of the

¹⁷⁵ Cf. i.a. Wirz, M.A. IV p. 32.

¹⁷⁶ Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 450; Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 381 and photograph 6. Gooszen's communications cannot be considered as statements of an independent witness (cf. the opening paragraphs of his article, in which he says that on many points he followed Heldring). The deviant spelling of the name of *Divazib* (*Die-waie-siebe*, i.e. *Diwaizib* in the orthography as applied in this book) does not provide an argument for upholding the view that somebody else than *Divazib* may have been meant. Vertenten, too, in one of his articles calls the killer of the pig *Diwaizib* (J.P. 1920 p. 357.). We may also rule out the possibility that the name *Divazib* is derived from *wasib*, to strike (Geurtjens, Dict. v.c.). None of our sources ever associated the word with the killer of the pig.

¹⁷⁷ Wirz, op. cit. III p. 16.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. IV p. 31 and Tafel 14; Vertenten, Ann. 1915 pp. 151 f.

language was too limited for him ever to make such a felicitous error. It seems safer to conclude that the name *Diwazib* is sometimes (and more specifically during the initiation ceremonies) given to the sago déma, i.e. to *Wokabu*, the reveller of Marind-anim mythology, who quite naturally is deeply interested in pig-killing. As a matter of fact, the originating of the sago from the excrements of *Wokabu's* wife is an after-effect of her eating too much pork and fat at the pig feast at Sangar.¹⁷⁹ Evidently, the *Diwazib* function is considered as a function associated with the moiety as a whole, rather than with the *Basik-Basik* particularly, even though the prime ancestor of the latter is represented as a prototype.

The *Diwazib*-performer appears round about midnight; he is elaborately ornamented and by the light of a torch held by a woman who accompanies him, he climbs up a platform constructed for the purpose in the festive grounds. According to Wirz there is a bow among his ornaments, while in his hands he carries beautifully decorated arrows. This is flatly denied by Verschueren's informants.¹⁸⁰ However, a painting Vertenten made of a *Diwazib*-performer shows him equipped with two ornamental bows,¹⁸¹ a detail which tallies with the myth as related by Wirz.

On the platform the performer dances, i.e. he stands now on one foot, then on the other, swaying the upper part of his body so that the ornaments crowning his head swing gracefully up and down. After some time he turns about at right angles and goes through the same movements, facing each quarter in succession, then to start all over again, and so on till daybreak, when he stops and puts off his ornaments, except the fibre skirt round his loins. Then the woman who raised the pig sprinkles lime on his forehead and arms, a symbolic act which the Marind declare is performed to make his shoulders strong and his head clear, but also to convey that the raisers of the pig do not blame him for killing the animal.¹⁸²

Another question which must be raised in this context concerns the

¹⁷⁹ Cf. above, p. 336.

¹⁸⁰ Verschueren, Letters IX pp. 10 and 12.

¹⁸¹ Cf. the reproduction in Ann. 1915 p. 151.

¹⁸² Verschueren, Letters IX p. 8. According to Wirz the *Diwazib* himself rubs his arms with lime (M.A. IV p. 32). Verschueren interviewed his informants on this point. This resulted in the description of the scene as given above, which is well in harmony with the one as given by Vertenten (Ann. 1915 p. 165). The latter, too, had other people rub the performer's shoulders with lime.

number of *Diwazib*-performers dancing at a particular feast. Verschueren asserts that there may be up to four or even more, depending on the number of pigs to be killed. From the descriptions of great feasts in other sources I gather that on such occasions there is usually only one. However that be, the problem need not further occupy us here, as the procedure is discussed at some length in a later chapter, when we shall also describe the elaborate exchange of gifts connected with a feast of this kind.¹⁸³ In the context of the present myth the relationship between the killer and the raiser of the pig is of more importance than the number of performers and the actual procedure of gift-giving.

Earlier, we pointed out that the killer of the pig is in reality the owner, the man who entrusted the animal to a member of an other phratry to be raised.¹⁸⁴ Usually, the beneficiary is a relative, for example a sister's husband who is the father of the owner's *binahor*- or *yarang*-child. The owner will be the master of ceremonies on the occasion of a feast to celebrate the child's passing from one age-grade to the next. In such a case the actual raiser of the pig is the owner's sister. This implies that Wirz errs when he writes that the *Diwazib* is entitled to claim the woman who raised the animal, a contention which was emphatically refuted by Verschueren's informants.¹⁸⁵ Actually, we know of only one case in which the *Diwazib* may be said to have sexual claims on the raiser of the animal, the case, already referred to, of a bridegroom killing the pig which he had given to his prospective bride.¹⁸⁶ It is the case of *Nazr* who gave a pig to *Samaz* and married her after he had killed the animal. In one respect *Nazr*'s behaviour does not conform to pattern; *Samaz* is said to be his *nakaru*, a younger clanmate. Verschueren discussed the case with his informants, who doubted whether *Samaz* really was *Nazr*'s *nakaru*.¹⁸⁷ In every other respect, however, *Nazr* acts as he may be expected to. He approaches *Samaz*'s uncles, who fashion his weapons and his ornaments. It is only when he has finished dancing that he commits an unprecedented outrage: he kills the four uncles of *Samaz*. In vain Wirz tries to explain *Nazr*'s behaviour. He supposes that the uncles were opposed to his marriage. It is quite obvious that they were not. They knew what was going to happen and they were co-operative till

¹⁸³ Cf. Chapter XIII, more particularly pp. 841, 845.

¹⁸⁴ Above, p. 407.

¹⁸⁵ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 11.

¹⁸⁶ Above, p. 398 note 125.

¹⁸⁷ Verschueren, *op. cit.* p. 12. Verschueren points out that further on in the story other *nakari* are mentioned.

the very end. Evidently, the heinous murder of the four uncles cannot be explained from reasonable motives. The murder merely brings out *Nazr's* cruel and violent character. On this occasion he reveals for the first time what a ruthless savage he is, the prototype of the merciless headhunter. There is, after all, no reason to doubt the correctness of Wirz's statement that *Nazr* married a clan-sister. It is a line of conduct which is cut out for the brute who is a member of the crocodile phratry, which has the symbol of adultery as its main totem.

Nazr's third role is that of a headhunter. His aggressiveness is his outstanding characteristic throughout the rest of the story. When he has left *Samaz*, he is about to start a fight with *Mongumer-anem*; fortunately, he recognizes his friend and there is no violence. A friendly meeting takes place in which *Wokabu*, too, is included. When he has resumed his journey, most of his encounters are of a violent and warlike nature. Initially, a few more or less friendly meetings mitigate the predominating picture of violence. In the first encounter, he teaches *Puker* how to plait a specific motif into upperarmrings, an allusion to the fact that when a child is given its first upperarmrings, this may be celebrated by killing a pig. The second instance is his contact with the man indicated as *Agé-miakim*; though it does not appear that there was a friendly overtone, there was nothing hostile to it either and the whole setting alludes to festive occasions. Pictures of birds are made for feasts and *Nazr's* dealings with *Agé-miakim* hold a reference to the former's role as *Diwasib*. In all other encounters *Nazr* appears as a ferocious warrior, ruthless in action and unreliable even vis-à-vis his friend *Mahu*, whom he deceives, trying to steal the heads the latter had collected. *Nazr's* leadership in headhunting becomes so clearly apparent from his story as to need no comment. He acts as leader, initiator and instructor; in one alternative reading *Sobra* is said to have initiated headhunting, but as she is *Nazr's* wife, *Nazr's* association with headhunting remains a very close one. There is only one point which should be discussed, viz. the relationship between headhunting and thunderstorm. In the section dealing with headhunting we shall find that there is a definite preference for organizing headhunts at the end of the dry season as well as at the beginning and the end of the northwest monsoon. In this season thunderstorms are frequent, far more so than at any other time of the year.¹⁸⁸ The association

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Verslag Mil. Expl. pp. 207 f.; Meteorologisch en Geofysisch Bureau Hollandia, Publicatie no. 13 (Climatological Observations, 1956-1960).

of headhunting and thunderstorm, personified in déma *Nazr*, must be seen against the background of the climatological conditions which make the season characterized by the occurrence of thunderstorms the convenient time for headhunting expeditions.

An interesting feature is the extreme violence exhibited by *Nazr*. It is never tried in the myth to present headhunting as a noble sport. It is just a cruel business and the Marind are so well aware of the risks involved that they have banned it from their relations with immediate neighbours and peoples in adjoining areas generally. There may be conflicts with neighbouring villages, but these never amount to regular wars. Headhunting is carried on far away. It is not a matter of revenge or of social conflicts, but it is a religious or ceremonial necessity. They need names for their children, a motive which will be discussed in greater detail later on.¹⁸⁹ Of course, the practice of headhunting is unthinkable unless there is a fair amount of basic aggressiveness and the Marind demonstrate their apprehension of this fact by associating the pig, the symbol of headhunting, with sorcery in its most dreaded form, *kambara*.

In myth the association of the *Sapi-zé* with *kambara* is fairly heavily veiled. Outwardly, *Sapi* himself is little more than a reduplication of *Nazr* in the first part of the myth. Yet, there is a difference. Verschueren aptly remarks that *Sapi* is the representative of the wild boar in the bush, *Nazr* more particularly of the village pig. Socially, there is a big difference between the two¹⁹⁰ and this difference is clearly emphasized in myth. The *kambara-anim* warn the piglets which originated from *Sapi's* body, telling them to hide out in the bush.¹⁹¹ And whereas *Nazr* is associated with headhunting, *Sapi's* offspring is connected more specifically with sorcery. Nevertheless, the real sorcerers are not *Sapi* or his immediate progeniture, but the five *kambara-anim* who come from Kurkari. They are associated with the *Sapi-zé* because it was they who gave the piglets which originated from *Sapi's* remains their final shape by adding tails, mane and tusks. For the rest, there is only the statement by Wirz that they are descendants of *Sapi*.¹⁹² We conclude that *kambara*, originating from Kurkari (just beyond the north-eastern border of Kanum-irébe territory), has been associated with the *Sapi-zé* without this resulting in a myth which makes *Sapi*, or the

¹⁸⁹ Below, pp. 717 ff., 754.

¹⁹⁰ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 10.

¹⁹¹ Above, p. 405.

¹⁹² Wirz, M.A. II p. 181.

pig, the real originator of sorcery. Nevertheless, the association is sufficiently evident, black magic being quite explicitly called a *Sapi-zé* relation.¹⁹³

In conclusion we state that the *Basik-Basik*, associated with the pig, thunderstorm, headhunting and sorcery, are strongly connected with the menacing aspects of life. We also found that there is a strong link between *Nazr* and the various *déma* of his moiety, *Mahu*, *Wokabu*, *Diwa* and *Mongumer-anem*. *Nazr's* life cycle is typical for a *déma* of his moiety. His close connection with Kanum-irébe territory (Sangar) puts him on a par with *Mongumer-anem*, *Bau* and *Sangar-anem*. The association of this foreign territory in the east with sorcery (Kurkari) tends to strengthen its classification with death and evil. When *Nazr* leaves the area, he first goes westward, but when he has arrived at the Bian, he turns inland. The interior is his ultimate destination, and there he has many contacts with *Mahu*.

When we consider the *Bragai-zé* phratry as a whole, we become aware of a certain dichotomy between the crocodile clan and the *Yorm-end* on the one hand, and the *Basik-Basik* with the *kidub-boan* on the other. Crocodile clan and *Yorm-end* are associated with water, the *Basik-Basik* and *kidub-boan* with land and the sky. The crocodile lives underwater, *Opeko-anem* is turned upside down and made into a woman, whereas *Nazr* in his role of *Déhévai* is associated with the sky and in all his activities figures as a typical representative of the male sex. *Sapi* has even a distinct relationship with the opposite moiety. He is associated with the *Kai-zé* and with *Habé*, and he travels from east to west. He could have been a real *Kai-zé* *déma*, were it not that he is associated with *kambara*. The *déma* of the *kidub-boan*, *Bau* and *Sangar-anem*, who are said to be close to the *Basik-Basik*,¹⁹⁴ are also characterized by features which are more or less those of the opposite moiety. From this point of view the *Bragai-zé* phratry presents a similar dualism as the *Mahu-zé* or any other phratry. In function, too, there is a dichotomy; the associations of the crocodile are with femininity and — which appears as a remarkable compensation — the emission of sperma. *Nazr* and *Sami* are associated with evil and death, with

¹⁹³ Wirz suggests that *kambara* comes from the *Yéi-anim* word *kambra* for crocodile (M.A. III p. 209 note 1). In my *Godsdienst* I accepted the etymology as sufficiently established (op. cit. p. 100), but F. Verschueren informs me that it is uncertain, the *Yéi* word for crocodile being *kambélè* and not *kambra* (Letters III p. 2).

¹⁹⁴ See above, p. 394.

headhunting and sorcery. Yet, the contrast is not absolute. After all, *Yorma*, too, is a dangerous customer, and the sister of the leading *Bragai-zé* déma succeeds in holding *Uaba*, the sun déma, in copulation.

A study of the spatial distribution of the subclans of the *Basik-Basik* does not open up any new points of view. The *Sapi-zé* seem to be more numerous than the *Nazr-end*; the list of subclans as published by Wirz makes mention of *Sapi-zé* living at Kaibursé, Domandé, Alatep, Elebémě and Awéhima; ¹⁹⁵ elsewhere he states that there are also *Sapi-zé* living at Wambi, Iwolj and Duv-miráv. ¹⁹⁶ *Nazr-end* are reported only from Saror and Koa (Rahuk) in the Kumbe valley and from Sangar in Kanum-irébe territory. ¹⁹⁷ The Report of the Depopulation Team mentions two other subclans, viz. the *Mére-rek* and the *Wiru-rek*. Of these subclans we know very little. The *biru* (not *wiru*, but this may be an alternative form) is a white gull which originated from a breadfruit and is one of the *Basik-Basik* totems, ¹⁹⁸ and it is possible that this bird is their specific totem. Another possibility is that the *Wiru-rek* should be identified with the *Uéru-rek*, a *Basik-Basik* clan descended from *Uéru*. Wirz adds that this *Uéru* is not the *kambara-anem*, and that it is uncertain whether the *Uéru-rek* form a subclan of their own or a subgroup of *Nazr-end* or *Sapi-zé*. ¹⁹⁹ The *Mére-rek* apparently are descendants of *Mére*, the one who was killed and eaten by *Nazr* after he had carried him on his back for some time, tied up by means of two copulating snakes. The presence at Buti of a *Sapi-zé* subclan of the *Kai-zé* still defies explanation. ²⁰⁰

The various totems and totem-relations of the *Basik-Basik*, listed in annex IVd, do not need much comment. They are accounted for in myth. To what extent the conditions connected with headhunting have contributed to the inclusion of scrub-hen and breadfruit among the *Basik-Basik* totems is a question that must remain unanswered. It is possible that their frequent occurrence in areas traversed in the course of headhunting expeditions has played a part in associating them with the headhunters' clan, but this is merely conjectural. That it leaves unexplained the very close association of breadfruit and scrub-hen with a white gull (*biru*) and with two varieties of snipes or plovers

¹⁹⁵ Wirz, op. cit. III pp. 172 f.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. II p. 182.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. III p. 175; II p. 182.

¹⁹⁸ See above, p. 400.

¹⁹⁹ Wirz, M.A. II p. 182. Apart from the two *Uéru* mentioned here there is the *Uéru* who accompanied *Mad*; cf. above, p. 287.

²⁰⁰ Wirz, op. cit. III p. 170; above, pp. 92 and 298.

(*daro* and *téna*), does not contribute to increasing its value. A clearer case is that of the rainbow and of canoe-making. The rainbow belongs to weather-conditions governed by thunderstorms. Canoe-making is an occupation closely associated with headhunting. The first lap of the expedition was almost invariably made by canoe and in the myth *Nazr* is on two different occasions engaged in making canoes. Finally, mention must be made of the cow. The Malay word for cow is *sapi* and once the word had become familiar, the cow was listed as a *Basik-Basik* totem. An intriguing detail is that in 1902 already the Marind knew the English word cow. They had seen the animal before Merauke was founded.²⁰¹ What is more interesting is that they had also adopted the word for it, an indication that their expeditions into British territory were more than mere headhunting expeditions.

The hunting yell of the *Basik-Basik*, '*Yaba hindau! Yaba hindau!*' is unintelligible. The same is the case with the hunting yell uttered by *Nazr* when fighting *Mére*: '*Buangéde! Buangewar!*'²⁰²

Having finished our discussion of *Basik-Basik* mythology, we now have an opportunity to survey the characteristics of the phratry and the moiety as a whole. Since the next chapter is devoted to a more detailed comparison of the various phratries and their mythological and totemistic associations, we shall be very brief and confine ourselves to a few casual remarks. The first of these is that our earlier conclusion that the *Geb-zé* moiety is the leading moiety in ritual can now be elaborated with the statement that the opposite moiety, the *Sami-rek*, is given precedence in matters connected with pig feasts, warfare and sorcery, and in matters concerning marriage. They are the bride-givers to whom *Geb* is indebted for his spouse. It is curious to find that the principal barrier against the possibility of the associations with superior and inferior upsetting the equilibrium of the two moieties, is so aptly expressed in *Mahu's* position as a provider of women. We also found that the dualistic pattern, first observed in the mythology of the *Geb-zé*, is present in the mythological equipment of every phratry. It is evident that, in spite of this — from a classificatory point of view complicating factor — certain specific contrasts play a leading part in the patterning of Marind-anim social structure and cosmology. The principles governing the pattern of Marind-anim classification must be studied more systematically before we can formulate its characteristics more definitely.

²⁰¹ Wirz, *op. cit.* IV p. 137.

²⁰² *Ibid.* II p. 174.

CHAPTER IX

PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFICATION IN MYTH REVIEWED

1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have made it sufficiently clear that Marind-anim mythology is not the chaotic jumble of abstruse stories which it seems to be on first acquaintance. A fairly strict logic is undeniable. A limited number of recurring notions demonstrates the all-pervading influence of some underlying system of classification. In the present chapter the extent to which these principles of classification have been applied in myth will be examined in a more systematic manner than was possible in the preceding chapters, in which we had to relate the subject to each of the various clans in succession. The degree of application of these principles is a measure of integration. The mythical material is part of a heritage which is thousands of years old. Many myths are based on themes which are spread over wide areas and are certainly not the products of Marind-anim religious fantasy. The point of interest is not the origin of these themes, but the degree to which they have been integrated into a closed system governed by a few central ideas such as the parallel between human life and the course of the sun, between sunset and copulation, the vital force of sperma, the high evaluation of youth, the contrast between east and west, day and night, dry and wet, male and female, the symbolism of the human head and the coconut and their relations with the sun, the opposition of coast and interior, the association of the evil powers of headhunting and sorcery. We found these ideas expressed time and again, and, what is more, we found them expressed in a fixed order connected with the order of the social system of clans. We also found that the system is irreducible to a clear-cut opposition of simple contrasts. The tendency to associate every phratry with certain aspects of nature is balanced by a trend to express relations with the favourite characteristics of the opposite moiety. *Geb* is both sun and moon, and the phratry bearing his name is divided into two halves which resemble moieties,

except that there is no intermarriage between them. *Aramemb* combines in his person and his phratry the most diverse cosmological and religious associations, including those of the opposite moiety; the *Mahu-zé* in their turn are divided into two halves, one of which has close relations with the beach; among the *Bragai-zé* déma *Déhévai* is represented as a kind of sky-god. There is system in these deviations; every phratry has its own way of expressing a close relationship with natural aspects primarily characteristic of the other moiety. The totem-relations of each phratry can be grouped in two main categories, those expressive of the phratry's dominating aspect on the one hand, and those which give shape to what we would call its dialectic aspect on the other. It is this dualism which lends to each phratry the character of a strongly biased reflection of the tribe as a whole. We suggested that it is one of the ways in which the disruptive influence of the notions of superior and inferior, associated with the two moieties, is counterbalanced.¹ But the fundamental equality of all men is expressed in various ways. Ultimately, all humans go the way of the sun,² all men through initiation become storks.³

What we are mainly concerned with in this chapter is to find out to what degree the total system may be called a fully integrated system. To this end we shall discuss, first, the coherence of myth and social system, which will not take us very long. A special section is devoted to an examination of the application of a few principles of classification which were selected because they suit the purpose of measuring the degree of integration. The discussion will lead us on to a closer examination of the functions of *Geb* and *Aramemb* in Marind mythology and to a digression on some shifts which seem to have taken place in the system, such as the association of the *Geb-zé* moiety with the magic of the medicine-man. The chapter winds up with a survey of the various more important associations and oppositions as occurring in myth.

The close coherence of myth and social structure is evident from the fact that every phratry (and clan) has its own myths. However, this ownership, unlike what Williams would have us believe of the Orokolo,⁴ has not led to a multitude of mutually unrelated or hardly related mythologies; the myths of the various phratries are inter-

¹ Above, pp. 352 f.

² *Ibid.* pp. 217 ff.

³ *Ibid.* p. 305.

⁴ Williams, *Drama* p. 132.

dependent. Together they form a whole in which the myths of one phratry link up with those of another. There is yet another respect in which the phratries are interrelated. In Marind mythology moiety-exogamy is very distinctly expressed and the marriage-relations between the various phratries are reflected in the marriages of their *déma*. *Geb* marries the *Mahu-zé* woman *Piakor*, who is given to him by *Mahu*; ⁵ *Geb* and *Sami*, when attacking the women of Singeas, fight each other's clan-relatives; ⁶ *Uaba* and *Opeko-anem* marry each other's sisters; ⁷ *Harau*, *Aramemb's* sister, marries *Mahu's* son *Elme*; ⁸ *Wonatai*, the stork, is married to *Hoyom*, the *Zohé* crab *déma*, and the mother of the *Zohé-déma Kamina* is a *Geb-zé*; ⁹ the eagle and the crocodile marry *Geb-zé-ha* girls, ¹⁰ and *Sangar-anem* elopes with *Méru's* daughter, who is a *Geb-zé*. ¹¹ There are no marriages involving a breach of the rule of exogamy, except such in which every rule is broken by primeval incest. Three cases are mentioned: *Mana* marries his sister *Saripa*, ¹² *Yano* marries his mother *Samanimb*, ¹³ and *Nazr* his clanmate (*nakarū*) *Samaz*. ¹⁴ Perhaps we should consider them as cases of non-integration. However, in the case of *Nazr* there is a special reason: the relevant story apparently aims at depicting him as a savage character. An even less disputable case is that of *Mana*, who has a close relationship with the moon. We found that in other New Guinea myths the moon has incestuous relations with his mother. ¹⁵ The trait has been preserved in *Mahu-zé* mythology (*Doreh's* son). ¹⁶ On the other hand, the story of *Yano* is clearly disconnected from the general trend of Marind mythology. In other respects, too, it gives evidence of a lack of integration. ¹⁷ Among the cases of incest we did not count *Bébukla's* efforts to win his clanmate *Harau*, because these failed. ¹⁸ An additional reason for the fact that the irregular character of his

⁵ Above, pp. 230 ff. and 323.

⁶ Ibid. p. 229.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 246 and 356.

⁸ Ibid. pp. 279 f.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 344 and 340.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 392.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 393.

¹² Ibid. p. 236.

¹³ Ibid. p. 300.

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 398, 419.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 316.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 328.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 300.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 279.

suit is not commented on in myth can be found in the obscurity of *Harau's* place in Marind mythology. Although she is presented as a *Kai-zé déma*, there is a *Harau-rek* subclan which belongs to the *Wokabu-rek*.¹⁹

The few cases of primeval incest cannot detract from the conclusion that, as far as moiety-exogamy is concerned, a high degree of integration prevails. A comparison with Boadzi mythology may serve to confirm this conclusion. Among the latter, moiety-exogamy is a rule laid down by their originator, *Nggiwě*.²⁰ Here the rule is presented as having at one time been instituted; if it had not been instituted, there would not be a rule. Among the Marind the existence of the rule is implicitly understood to be a matter of course and is never questioned. It is just that they and their *déma* have always acted in this way; it is part of an unquestioned pattern. The dichotomy of society is part of the dichotomy of the universe. At the beginning of all things there are Heaven and Earth, *Dinadin* and *Nubog*, who are the parents of *Geb* and *Sami*.²¹ They are neither created nor instituted; they simply are, and from them all things originated.

Next to moiety-dichotomy there is another interesting trait of Marind-anim social structure which is reflected in myth. When we discussed the clan-structure, the hypothesis was advanced that the present system of phratries and clans is a superstructure which, through a long process of adaptation and integration, has superseded and absorbed a multitude of older local clan-organizations, the constituents of which live on in the numerous subclans.²² In the preceding analysis of mythology we came across various facts which seem to confirm this opinion. When analyzing the myths of the phratries, we were repeatedly confronted with myths which stand more or less apart from the total body of mythology, and are connected not so much with the tribe as a whole as with a restricted local section. Examples are, among the *Geb-zé*, the story of *Baléwíl*, which has a purely local impact,²³ and the information on the *Ogom-zé*,²⁴ the *Winau-rek*²⁵ and the *Yagriwar-rek*,²⁶ though members of the clan last mentioned are distributed over

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 339.

²⁰ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1941 p. 12.

²¹ Above, p. 208.

²² Ibid. pp. 96 f. and 110 ff.

²³ Ibid. p. 231.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 233.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 234.

²⁶ Ibid. pp. 261 ff.

a somewhat wider area. Among the *déma* and subclans of the phratry of *Aramemb* those of the rattan *boan* seem to be confined to the Kumbe area; ²⁷ the same is the case with the *Walakwin* or *Endaro-rek*.²⁸ A wholly isolated myth is that of *Teimbre*, the ancestor of the *Teimbre-rek*.²⁹ The myth of *Mungus* provides another example of a fairly unconnected story which does little more than explain the distribution of certain local subclans.³⁰ Other cases are presented by a number of *Mahu-zé* subclans. The *Diwa-rek-ha* and the *Awassr-end* apparently are found in a rather limited area only.³¹ A telling example is that of the *Amari-* and *Ori-rek*, who divide their allegiance between *Mahu-zé* and *Kai-zé-Sambakai*, but are spread over a relatively wide area (Anasai, Kumbe, Alaku).³² A typical example of an isolated myth is that of the bow *déma*.³³ A fine illustration of the way in which any ancestor of any particular subclan can be assimilated into a larger whole is found in the story of the *Bragai-zé* *déma Wawar*, who happened to be in the *Swar*-canoe and whose descendants are found in Kumbe, Kaibursé, Dimar-zé, Opeko and some other places which have not been mentioned, but which, judging from the detailed report on the whereabouts of *Wawar's* sons, may be supposed to be in that same area.³⁴ Some fine examples of local subclans have been given by F. Verschueren in connection with the *kidub-boan*.³⁵

Another method of relating subclans to the prevailing clan-system is the application of the return-from-the-*mayo* motif, which plays an important part in Marind-anim mythology. It is to be regretted that our information on local subclans covers such a limited field, but what little we know is sufficient to conclude that most of these subclans are confined to rather limited areas. However, there are exceptions. Such subclans as the *Honi-rek*, the *Mad-rek* and *Aru-rek* have a very wide spread.³⁶ When dealing with the *Dawi-rek* we pointed out that it would be rash to conclude that the *Dawi-rek* might well be a local subclan represented only in Kumbe, Kaibursé, Onggari and Saror. As it is, mythological evidence makes it probable that other descendants

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 275 and 297.

²⁸ However, *Endaro-rek* are reported from Buti, too. Cf. above, p. 74.

²⁹ Above, pp. 295 f.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 344.

³¹ Ibid. p. 322.

³² Ibid. pp. 332 f.

³³ Ibid. p. 345.

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 368, 380.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 391.

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 297 f., 286 f., 346 f.

of *Dawi* once lived (or still live) in the western section.³⁷ These widely spread subclans are associated with rather obscure mythical heroes, who are sometimes difficult to classify. The most typical example is *Honi*, who is identified with *Yagil* and in his known features deviates rather widely from the usual pattern.³⁸ It is not improbable that these widely scattered subclans represent the result of earlier efforts at reconciling different local clan-systems. The suggestion is not so preposterous as it may seem at first sight. In the first place, it is evident that an age-old process of exchange of mythological data has been going on. Also among related tribes such as the Wiram the name of *Geb* is found as the name of one of the two primeval ancestors, viz. *Gwawi* in the story of *Sami* and *Gwawi*.³⁹ The name occurs again in the myth of origin of the Boadzi, who call him *Nggivë*.⁴⁰ *Uaba's* name may be associated with *Wawa*, the mythical dweller at Mabudauan.⁴¹ The name of *Kwoiam* or *Kuiamo*, the headhunter of Mabuiag and Kiwai mythology, is mentioned in the *ayasé*, the Marind headhunters' song, where he is called *Kuiamu*.⁴² In the second place, the process of reconciling local clan-systems through adaptation is still to be observed even to-day among the neighbouring tribes, who are all only too ready to translate their own system into Marind-anim terms. A similar process was observed by Williams among the neighbours of the Gambadi and Keraki, who tried to assimilate their system to the tripartite division of the former.⁴³ In the third place, we found that such processes are evidently rather common in the southern part of New Guinea; we witnessed similar developments even among the Elema and the Namau.⁴⁴ Given these facts, it would be more absurd to suppose that the present process of assimilation to a certain overall clan-system among the Marind is their first effort of this kind than to assume that it has been preceded by similar processes. The mythological data make it perfectly clear that these are of multiple origin and have been adjusted so as to fit the present system. Though the Marind have not succeeded in covering every detail and a number of myths remain which it seems impossible to reconcile with their present system, they have carried

³⁷ Ibid. pp. 296 f.

³⁸ Ibid. pp. 252 and 297 f.

³⁹ Williams, *Trans-Fly* p. 387.

⁴⁰ Van Baal, *TBG* 1940 pp. 10 ff.

⁴¹ Above, pp. 240 f.

⁴² Cf. Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 55 and Landtman, *Folktales* nr. 60.

⁴³ Above, p. 110.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 112.

the process pretty far. Just how far, is a matter to be examined in the next section.

2. CLASSIFICATORY PRINCIPLES IN MYTHICAL JOURNEYS

The dualistic trends in the affinities of the four phratries greatly reduce the number of recurring traits suiting the purpose of measuring the extent to which certain classificatory principles have been applied within the context of mythological material. A case in point is the opposition of male and female. The moiety associated with female occupations and the female sex is also associated with the male genital and the emitting of sperma. The opposition male-female with its highly emotional associations is apparently unfit for general application, and we had better look for a contrast less evidently beset with emotional connotations. Such a contrast may be found in spatial oppositions. As a matter of fact, their importance is given special emphasis in myth. As a rule, every myth is confined in its scope to explaining one or two specific traits of natural history: the origin of a species or of one of the heavenly bodies, the behaviour of a certain animal, the history of an eddy in a river and so on. There are only two which deal with the overall features of the landscape, viz. the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*, which explains how the broad beach and the open plains of the savannah originated, and the myth of *Yorma* which gives information on the origin of the bays and the river-valleys.⁴⁵ They are important myths also in other respects. *Yorma's* greatness is explicitly emphasized⁴⁶ and *Uaba's* story provides the central theme for the *mayo*-ritual. The one is acting in concert with the southeast monsoon, and the fire, spreading from east to west, creates the beach and the open plains. The other travels with the northwest monsoon and shapes bays and river-valleys. The two are opposites in every respect and the contrast between the combination of fire and east monsoon and that of waves and west monsoon stresses the importance of direction as a moiety characteristic. Going from east to west is a *Geb-zé* moiety trait, whereas travelling from west to east characterizes the *Sami-rek* moiety.

It has necessarily to be put this way; it is not true that east is associated with the *Geb-zé* and west with the *Sami-rek* (for the sake of convenience the terms *Geb-zé* and *Sami-rek* are used in this chapter

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 244 and 384.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 383.

as names for the respective moieties). We find prominent *Geb-zé* déma travelling westward and staying there, as well as *Sami-rek* déma who settle in the east. The really distinctive trait is the direction in which they move and this trait is of wider application, because Marind-anim heroes are very much on the move. A substantial part of mythology is taken up with stories of travel. This does not imply, however, that the contrast between the two directions can be applied as a distinctive moiety characteristic in every case. The picture is blurred by the necessity to locate the origin of man and the celebration of the primeval *mayo* in the far east. They are connected with the sun and in the context of the Marind-anim worldview they could not be located anywhere else. This implies that members of the *Sami-rek* moiety may have to travel westward. They are included in the creation myth and in the *mayo* celebration and, to reach their destination, they simply have to go westward. The west-east direction as a distinctive feature can therefore be applied to only a few of them.

Fortunately, Marind-anim myth has yet another device to characterize movements of *Sami-rek* déma. The myths of *Geb* and *Sami* or *Mahu* explicitly state that the former belongs to the coast, the latter to the interior.⁴⁷ Moving into or through the interior may be taken to be a *Sami-rek* trait, an association with the coast, more particularly the sandy beach, a *Geb-zé* one. A combination of the two contrasts may serve as a means of judging whether the déma on their journeys adhere to the pattern set in these fundamental myths. A survey of all the myths dealing with travels of mythical ancestors should enable us to find an answer to the question how far their movements are governed by the rules set by the prevailing pattern. When we assess the results, we shall have to bear in mind that not every deviation from pattern is necessarily proof of a failure in integration. The coast-interior antithesis is not an absolute contrast either, because in every inland community the *Geb-zé* moiety is represented on a basis of equal numbers with the *Sami-rek* moiety. A myth may serve to explain the presence of the local *Geb-zé* moiety-members in that locality and, if there is such a myth, there is no question of a deviation from pattern. In such cases the coast-interior contrast is simply irrelevant, just as the east-west and west-east contrasts are irrelevant in the case of *Sami-rek* déma returning from the *mayo*. There are other possibilities, too, as is demonstrated by the case of *Amari*, whose corpse was brought from

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 229, 230.

Kurkari to Anasai.⁴⁸ If he had been alive, this direction would have been contrary to what was to be expected when a *Mahu-zé* déma is concerned, but moving a corpse is a different matter and the story may be dismissed as irrelevant to our purpose. After all, there are *Mahu-zé* living on the coast, too, and their presence has to be explained, just like that of *Geb-zé* in the interior.

Before we start with the actual survey, some notes have to be made on the places which are repeatedly mentioned in myth. From among these we selected Kondo, Sangar, Domandé (incl. Singeas), Imo, Sangasé, Eromka (incl. Egéwi), Muli, and Komolom on the coast; Kurkari, Senayo, Tumid-miráv and Dahuk-zé-miráv in the interior. We might have widened our range and included a few more places, but, as it is, the list is long enough for us to decide whether a review of the events connected with these places may or may not contribute to evaluating the meaning to be attached to the travels of the various déma through the Marindinese territory. In one case at least the analysis will make a substantial contribution.

Kondo is associated with *Geb*, *Uaba*, *Aramemb*, the *rapa*-ritual, the creation of man, and *Woryu*, the first man to die.⁴⁹ We are inclined to add *Sobra* by implication, but in the version of the myth of the creation of man in which she plays a part, the locality is not mentioned. The conclusion is that in myth she is not explicitly associated with Kondo, which might be called a *Geb-zé* mythical centre.

Sangar is associated with *Sangar-anem*, *Sangon*, *Wokabu*, *Nazr*, *Sapi* and the *imo-mes-iwag* who, according to an isolated statement made by Wirz, stays at Sangar.⁵⁰ Sangar is associated with the big mythical pig feast, on which occasion the first bananas, which a short time before had originated from *Geb's* neck, were distributed.⁵¹ In spite of the fact that *imo-mes-iwag* and banana belong to the *Geb-zé*, we may call Sangar a proper *Sami-rek* mythical

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 331.

⁴⁹ In this survey cross-references are made only in respect of a few places which it may be difficult to identify by means of the Index.

⁵⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 86.

⁵¹ *Geb's nakari* brought the first bananas to the pig feast at Sangar. According to this version of the myth *Mongumer-anem*, too, was present and changed into a betel palm, thus contributing another new fruit to the celebration. Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 48.

centre. The associations of the banana with the moon and of the *imo* with the night and, as will be shown presently, with the *Sami-rek* generally, bear out that in this context the *Geb-zé* are presented in their dialectic aspect.

Domandé has strong links with the *Geb-zé* moiety; *Geb*, *Hong-sav*, *Baléwil* and *Yagriwar* of the *Geb-zé* phratry, *Harau*, *Wariop*, *Sapai* and *Wonatai* of the phratry of *Aramemb*, they all lived there for a longer or shorter period. However, the same happens to be the case with two *déma* of the *Sami-rek* moiety, *Wokabu* and *Bau*, while other *déma* of this moiety, such as *Sami*, *Mahu*, *Doreh*, *Nazr* and, if we may include her among them, *Sobra*, were occasional visitors. *Domandé*, then, has a dual connection, that with members of the *Geb-zé* moiety having preference.

Imo is very strongly associated with the *Sami-rek* moiety, a contention which requires some explanation, because in the list of the *déma* connected in one way or another with *Imo* there are various *Geb-zé* *déma* mentioned, viz. the *Nasem-zé iwag*, the people of the *Uga*-canoe, *Mandì* the morning-star (also known as a *nakaru* of the *mayo-déma*), *Yawi* and *Aramemb*. *Sami-rek* *déma* associated with *Imo* are *Doreh*, *Wokabu*, *Sangon*, *Opeko-anem*, *Wawar*, *Yorma* (and *Sobra*). Before we discuss the connections of *Imo* with the representatives of the two moieties, the reader may be reminded of the fact that the site of *Imo* cannot be identified with any precision. The name can be given to any place used for celebrating the *imo* ceremonies. Still, there is a difference between the ways *Imo* and *Mayo* are used as place-names. We never (or hardly ever) find that people really live in a place called *Mayo*, whereas in several stories it is explicitly stated that people lived at *Imo*, as if *Imo* were really a village. On such occasions some real village is meant, as in the case of *Imo* near *Sangasé*, the place swept away by *Yorma* in his wrath, and also the place where the *Nasem-zé iwag* was captured. In various cases any indication as to where the place must be located is lacking, although situating it somewhere in the western area is always plausible, just as the mythical *Mayo* is always associated with the east. We cannot go wrong, however, if we adhere strictly to the text and always bear in mind that *Imo*, even in those cases where a specific village is meant, is also the mythical centre of *imo* celebrations, which is exactly what the narrator, too, had in mind.

Now this is what happens at Imo to the various *déma* of the *Geb-zé* moiety. The *Nasem-zé-ivag* is raped, killed and eaten; ⁵² *Mandi*, the morning-star, is captured, anointed with sperma and coconut oil and imprisoned in a hut; ⁵³ *Yawi* is killed by sorcery and his cut-off head becomes the coconut.⁵⁴ In other words, three of the *déma* are treated in a hostile way. The remaining *déma*, those of the *Uga*-canoe and *Aramemb*, are only instrumental in delivering the victims into the hands of their henchmen. When we were dealing with the relevant myth, we observed that the *Uga*-canoe people showed themselves amazingly indifferent to the fate of the *ivag* and the boy. Their indifference is fully explained if we assume that they had the intention to take them to the Imo people. It also explains another detail. When a man from Imo is peeping through the foliage, one of the inmates of the *Uga*-canoe invites him to join the party.⁵⁵ It is evident that, contrary to *Wirz's* interpretation, it was by no means their intention to remain unobserved. They brought the *ivag*. And they have to return to the east to demonstrate that those escorting the *ivag* are not *Imo*-, but *Mayo-Marind*. There are no *Imo-Marind* in their part of the eastern section.

We have now come to a point where it is worth while to make a comparison between the mythical *ivag* of the two rituals. With regard to the *mayo*-rites we know of only one *ivag* who made a success of her part, viz. *Ualiwamb* alias *Kanis-ivag*, the sister of the *Bragai-zé* *déma* *Opeka-anem*. Two other *ivag* are mentioned; *Opeko-anem* is sent out to bring one from Imo — of all places.⁵⁶ The other one is the *ivag* brought by *Yawima* from *Sangasé*.⁵⁷ Imo is not mentioned here, but *Sangasé* is so closely associated with Imo that we cannot consider *Yawima's* case as really divergent from the general principle. The fact is important, because it is evident that in one way or another Imo is connected with the origin of the *mayo-ivag*. When *Uaba* does not return from his pursuit of *Ualiwamb* alias *Kanis-ivag*, *Aramemb* goes to Imo to look for them there.⁵⁸ We may conclude that the

⁵² Above, p. 259.

⁵³ Ibid. pp. 375 f.

⁵⁴ Ibid. pp. 249 f.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 258.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 356.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 289.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 243.

mayo-iwag comes from Imo and that in the mythological event which had really basic importance she was a woman of the *Sami-rek* moiety, of the *Bragai-zé* phratry. Conversely, we find that the future *imo-iwag* is in reality the *mayo-mes-iwag*. "The *mayo-mes-iwag* fled with her son", it says in the text.⁵⁹ She is also a *Geb-zé* woman. The second *imo-iwag* is *Mandi*, the morning-star, who is called a *nakaru*, a younger clan-sister, of the *mayo* navel *déma*, who, again, is a *Geb-zé*. We conclude that the *imo-iwag* comes from the *mayo* and that the *mayo-iwag* comes from Imo, that the *imo-iwag* is a *Geb-zé* and the *mayo-iwag* a *Bragai-zé*. The relationship between the two cults is modelled on that between the two moieties. They exchange their women.

But here we must make an important restriction. In one of the following chapters we shall find that, to the *imo* initiates, the *imo-iwag* is not a *Geb-zé* at all, but *Ualiwamb*, the same as the *mayo-mes-iwag*.⁶⁰ The secret of her name is jealously kept from the uninitiated. Obviously, the construction just presented is the *mayo* version of the relationship between the two cults. The myth of the *Nasem-zé-iwag* is, primarily, a *mayo* myth; the *déma* travelling with the *Uga*-canoe belong to the area east of Merauke, a region which is wholly *mayo*.

Next to the difference that exists between the two cults, there is also a difference between the two moieties. The *imo-iwag* is brought by *Geb-zé* and the *mayo-iwag* is also brought by a *Geb-zé*. The anomaly does not escape the Marind. When an *iwag* is brought to the *mayo* by a *gari*-bearer who is not a *Geb-zé*, the ceremony goes wrong and in the case of *Opeko-anem* even ends up in disaster. The ceremonial function of the *Geb-zé* is derived equally from *Uaba's* success and from *Opeko-anem's* disqualification and rejection, and it is in this connection that another dualism, another seemingly self-contradictory story forces itself upon us as meaningful. *Yorma*, the powerful representative of the *Sami-rek* moiety, destroys Imo, the ceremonial centre. In spite of his greatness and his power *Yorma* is only a *wokraved*, a candidate who is not qualified to celebrate the secret ceremonies, and he antagonizes the people of Imo, the ceremonial centre, resorting to a terrible act of revenge when they chase him.⁶¹ This is surprising, because

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 258.

⁶⁰ Cf. below, p. 650.

⁶¹ Cf. above, pp. 382 ff.

Imo has quite narrow links with *Yorma's* own phratry. Not only is Imo a real *Sami-rek* centre, but the Imo men of the story of the *Nasem-zé-iwag* must of necessity have been members of the *Sami-rek* moiety, because they had intercourse with her.

That Imo is predominantly *Sami-rek* in character may by now be accepted as evident. There is only one exception to the rule that the Imo people are antagonistic to the *Geb-zé* phratry. This exception concerns *Aramemb* who, for the time being, is settled at Imo. However, *Aramemb* is so much a dualistic character himself, so fully associated with contrasting aspects of the Marind-anim cosmos that his connections with Imo can only be seen as another proof of his dialectic character. Imo stands as the absolute counterpart of Mayo and Kondo. The Imo people are the ones who, after leaving Kondo, arrived by night. 'That is', it says in the myth of creation, 'why they are *hap-rek*, of the night'.⁶² Kondo, however, is associated with fire, sun, and daylight. The relations a *déma* has with Imo may, if they are friendly, be taken to be indicative of an association with the *Sami-rek* moiety, while similar relations with Kondo betray a relationship with the *Geb-zé* moiety.

Sangasé is mentioned in the myths of *Yawima*, *Mad*, *Arimba*, *Wokabu*, and the creation-myth. It is repeatedly associated with *imo* celebrations. Relations with the *Sami-rek* moiety dominate, though they are less stringent than in the case of Imo.

Eromka (incl. *Egéwi*), the area of sunset, plays a part in the myths of the sun, of *Méru*, *Yagriwar*, *Uaba* and *Dawi*, and is also mentioned in the myth of creation. The area may be characterized as a *Geb-zé* centre, but it seems hazardous to put too much emphasis on this point, because Strait Marianne is in the immediate vicinity and the *déma* connected with this channel, the Muli, are regular visitors to the area under discussion, as is more or less natural. An example is provided by the myth of *Yorma*, who spends the night at Wamal, which is, to-day, the main village of the region.

Muli. The Muli area is associated with *Muli*, *Aramemb*, *Mad*, and *Doreh*. *Opoko-anem*, on his journey to the Digul, must have come via the Muli, though the fact is not explicitly mentioned. The Muli-*déma* is called a friend of *Yorma's*; because of the Muli's

⁶² Ibid. p. 211.

association with the northwest wind its totem-connections with the *Sami-rek* moiety are prevalent. In its mythical history, however, déma of the *Geb-zé* moiety, such as *Aramemb* and *Mad*, play an important part. Therefore, the Muli is more or less equally connected with both the one and the other moiety.

Komolom and Frederik Hendrik Island are mentioned in the myths of *Geb*, *Yagriwar*, *Yagil*, *Wonatai*, *Dawi* and *Yorma*. *Aramemb*, too, is said to have visited *Komolom*. He comes from *Komolom* when he is harassed by the piglets of *Sapi*,⁶³ and in the story of *Yawi* he brings nautilus-shells from *Komolom*. The *Geb-zé* connections dominate the relations *Komolom* and *Frederik Hendrik Island* have with the déma.

Kurkari, visited by *Bir*, the snake, travelling west on her way back from the *mayo* celebration,⁶⁴ is the place of origin of the *kambaranim* and a temporary place of residence of *Aramemb*, *Saboruwaktu*, *Amari* and *Ori*. The relations with the *Sami-rek* moiety dominate, though not to the exclusion of other links.

Senayo is mentioned in the myths of *Mana* and *Saripa* (who wants to follow *Mana* to *Senayo*),⁶⁵ of *Harau*, *Elme* and *Ugu*, of *Yugil* and the *Diwa*-canoe, *Bau* and the stork, of *Ganguta* the déma of the feast-house post, and of *Kedma* the bow déma. The stories of *Harau*, *Elme*, *Ugu*, *Yugil* and the *Diwa*-canoe, of *Bau* and the stork, and of *Ganguta*, are all connected with the feast celebrated at *Senayo*, which is definitely a *Mahu-zé* event. *Kedma*, the bow déma, belongs to the same phratry. *Mana* and *Saripa* represent the dialectic aspect of the *Geb-zé-ha*, just as *Harau* and *Ugu* do in respect of the *Kai-zé*. The *Mahu-zé* character of the place dominates.

Tumid or *Tumid-miráv* is also predominantly *Mahu-zé*; *Mad*, *Awassra*, *Sami*, *Ori*, *Mungus*, *Nazr*, *Mahu* and *Sobra* are mentioned as visitors or as dwellers in the area. Only *Mad* and *Mungus* are members of the phratry of *Aramemb*, *Sobra's* phratry of origin (if she has any) is unknown, and all the others are members of the *Sami-rek* moiety. *Mahu* himself retired to this region at the end of his perambulations. Another important centre is

⁶³ Wirz, M.A. II p. 180.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 65.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 76.

Dahuk-zé-miráv, where *Waiba*, *Umbri*, *Doreh* and *Kamina* originated, where *Nakra* killed *Aramemb*, whither the pelican *déma* of the Bangu myth retired, and where *Mungus*, *Mahu* and *Nazr* were temporary residents or visitors. Only four of these are members of the *Geb-zé* moiety. The *Dahuk-zé* people are famous for their magic⁶⁶ and that is why *Waiba* and *Umbri*, two *déma* of the rattan clan, are summoned to *Birok* to fight the rattan *déma*. In the role they play in the mythology of their clan they are cast as the antagonists of *Gerau*, the rattan *déma* proper. *Aramemb*, the leading character of their phratry, is killed at *Dahuk-zé-miráv*. The visit of *Mungus* to *Dahuk-zé-miráv* serves no other purpose but that of explaining the presence of *Ndik-ond* people in this area. The relations of *Dahuk-zé-miráv* with the *Sami-rek* moiety prevail.

From this brief survey it must be concluded that the close association of the interior with the *Sami-rek* moiety is evident. The *déma* of the opposite moiety who are associated with these centres are either representatives of the dialectic aspect of their phratries or are introduced only because the presence of their descendants has to be accounted for. The coastal settlements offer a far more variegated pattern. From east to west, there are *Kondo* which is *Geb-zé* and *Sangar* which is *Bragai-zé*, while *Domandé* is mixed, though with a preference for members of the *Geb-zé* moiety. *Imo* again is definitely a *Sami-rek* moiety settlement. In *Sangasé* the connections with the *Sami-rek* moiety dominate, though they are not exclusive. *Eromka/Egéwi* is predominantly associated with the *Geb-zé* moiety, but not entirely so; the *Muli* is more or less equally connected with both moieties, and *Komolom* and *Frederik Hendrik Island* are predominantly associated with the *Geb-zé* moiety. We find that it would be perfectly incorrect to say that the eastern part of the territory is connected with the *Geb-zé* and the western part with the *Sami-rek* moiety. The picture is more complicated and it is confirmed that the real opposition is one of the directions east-west versus west-east. Only part of the coastal settlements have a dominant allegiance to one or the other of the moieties. The actual number of places with a dual allegiance is higher than could be inferred from our survey, which does not include such villages as *Kumbe* and *Wendu*. Among the places with a strong allegiance to

⁶⁶ See above, p. 277.

one moiety, Imo is outstanding. The connection of Imo with the *Sami-rek* moiety appears to be so strong as to make us accept a relationship with Imo as a distinctive *Sami-rek* characteristic which can be used in our survey. In that survey we shall analyse the travels of the *déma*. If the direction in which a *déma* of the *Geb-zé* moiety moves is from east to west, the case is registered as positive (p), if it is the opposite or leads him to the interior, it is registered as negative (n). There is quite a number of cases which are difficult to classify; a few of them may have to be dropped, because they are not really concerned with travels. They are marked (x). Other cases will have to be marked doubtful (d), because the progress of the *déma* concerned is related to his deviating character, which, for some reason to be discussed afterwards, expresses the dialectic aspect of his phratry or moiety. The same classification is followed with regard to the *déma* of the *Sami-rek* moiety. Here the positive cases will be divided into three categories: *déma* who travel from west to east (p1); *déma* who go to the interior or travel in the interior (p2); *déma* who have a special connection with Imo (p3).

Classification

Déma of the Geb-zé phratry

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Geb</i> is not a travelling <i>déma</i> in coastal myths. There is one statement to the effect that he was a headhunter who brought heads from the interior. ⁶⁷ Wirz makes mention of a place on the upper Bian where <i>Geb</i> left his canoe, but this piece of information obviously makes part of the completely deviating cycle of myths on <i>Geb</i> as they are told by the Marind of the interior ⁶⁸ | x |
| 2. <i>Kanhár</i> , who originated at Tomerau, goes to Sangasé; his sons go westward, travelling in a banana-skin | p |
| 3. <i>Mana</i> originated at Saror. Via Yatomb and Sirapu he goes to Sēpadim and Tarir, then via Mongumer to the upper Bian and back to Senayo, to end up near Kumbé | n |
| 4. <i>Uaba</i> goes from Yavar-makan to Gelib (Eromka) and back to Kondo; when on this return-journey, he was covered up with a mat, probably symbolizing progress underground ⁶⁹ | p |

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 229.

⁶⁸ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 77. On the difference between inland myths and coastal myths of *Geb* see above, pp. 231 f., 353 f.

⁶⁹ Above, pp. 243, 244 f.

5. *Bir* goes from Yavar-makan via Kurkari to Sěpadim and further westward to the Kumbe. Then back east to Tomerau. The directions followed by the snake in its progress are inconsistent. As a woman who is called *mayo-mother* her position is ill-defined. It may be argued that she has to return eastward because all mythical *mayo-miráv* are east of the Maro river, but with equal right other explanations may be advanced, e.g. that as a mother of *Geb-zé déma* she should act as a *déma* of the *Sami-rek* moiety. We never arrive at a definite solution and because of our ignorance with regard to the implications of the term *mayo-mother*, her case had better be dropped x
6. *Yawi* goes from Kumbe to Imo, where he is killed p
7. *Mayo-patur* who changed, resp., into an oriolus and the Pleiads p
8. *Mayo-patur* who turned to the interior (*Dimai*) and became the ancestors of the Digul people. The association of inland people, who are foreigners, with the interior accords with the usual pattern; this does not apply, however, to their association with the *Geb-zé*. As such the case is a deviant one and should be classified as negative n
9. *Méru* goes from the Fly river to Eromka, where he has remained ever since p
10. *Nasem-zé-iwag* goes from Mayo in Yavar-makan to Imo p
11. *Inmates of the Uga-canoe* bring the *Nasem-zé-iwag* to Imo and then go eastward to settle in the vicinity of Sěpadim. The second part of their journey, when they are east-bound, deviates from the expected pattern. However, the fact that they return eastward gives emphasis to the fact that the *iwag* is actually and deliberately brought to Imo. It is really a means to exemplify the relationship between the *mayo-* and *imo-*rituals. They act in accordance with the pattern prescribing that the *mayo-iwag* come from Imo, the *imo-iwag* from the *mayo*. Therefore the case must be regarded as positive p

Classification

12. *Mandi*, the morning-star, who is a *nakaru* of the *mayo* navel *déma*, is, of course, *Geb-zé*. She goes from the area between Yawim and Torassi to Imo p
13. *Yagriwar* goes from Domandé all along the coast to Komolom, where he has remained ever since p

Recapitulation. Out of 13 *Geb-zé* cases 2 had to be dropped, reducing the total number of cases to 11, 2 of which are negative and 9 positive.

Phratry of Aramemb

Classification

1. *Aramemb* is a highly contradictory character and his function has to be more amply considered below. His travels take him in every direction and his case must be classified as doubtful d
2. *Sosom*, in the coastal version of the myth, travels from the Fly river to Komolom and as a *hais* returns to Saror, where a new cycle begins which explains the spread of the cult. Spirits of the dead may be expected to travel from west to east when they visit the living p
3. *Dawi* goes from the Fly to Komolom p
4. *Gerau*, the rattan *déma*, comes with Habé from the Fly to the Kumbe. He ultimately goes to the upper Kumbe. There is nothing wrong with the first part of his journey, but his withdrawal to the upper Kumbe upsets the pattern. However, we have to admit that rattan comes from the forest, primarily from the interior. The association of rattan with this phratry seems to be based on the fact that it is used for the construction of ornaments and articles of festive adornment. In a comment Wirz states that to this specific end the coastal people barter rattan from the interior for mussels and nautilus-shells.⁷⁰ Mythologically, the relationship between rattan and Habé is rationalized by associating *Gerau* with Habé, which, in its symbolic guise of a cut-off head, is suspended from a rattan string

⁷⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 88 note 2.

which must be untied. We conclude that *Gerau* has as much been streamlined into the proper functions of a *déma* of this phratry as was possible. The basic association, however, of rattan with the interior constitutes a definite bar to complete absorption. The case remains intrinsically doubtful

d

5. *Waiba and Umbri*. The dialectic position of the rattan *boan* in the phratry of *Aramemb* is underlined by the role of *Waiba* and *Umbri*, who are summoned from Dahuk-zé-miráv, a *Sami-rek* centre, to untie Habé. Actually, they fight the rattan *déma*, the *déma* of the clan of which they are co-ancestors. In our previous discussion of the case we found that their action is in perfect harmony with the general pattern. The magic of the opposite moiety, c.q. the western interior, is required to overcome the rattan *déma*. When the job is finished, one ultimately settles on the coast and the other in the interior, and this, too, is fully acceptable. There is no real conflict with the general pattern, except that *Waiba* and *Umbri* are, in reality, opponents of the rattan *déma* and for this reason they might just as well have been members of the opposite moiety. We must, at least for the time being, classify their case as doubtful

d

6. *Harau*. According to one version *Harau* comes from Habé, according to another from the upper Bian. She goes to Domandé and twice travels to Senayo, where she withdraws. There is also a *Wokabu-rek* subclan which bears her name. For various reasons she does not really belong to this phratry. Her position is ambiguous, but, considering her association with sago and the moon,⁷¹ there is nothing in the itinerary that really goes against the pattern and her case should be classified as doubtful

d

7. *Ugu* presents another controversial case. If we accept him as a member of the phratry of *Aramemb*, his journey from the interior to the coast and from there westward to Alaku is in the proper direction and we should hail him

⁷¹ See above, pp. 280 and 339.

as a true representative of his phratry. Inasmuch as we consider him as a son of *Elme*, the *Mahu-sé* déma, as a déma associated with the crocodile, his perambulations deviate as widely from the prescribed pattern as his outward appearance is at variance with what a *Kai-sé* déma would lead us to expect. He, too, should be classified as doubtful

d

8. *Mad* travels along the coast from Yavar-makan to the Muli, then he turns back. We do not know how far he goes on the return-journey. We are informed that while skirting the coast he makes trips up and down the rivers he crosses. On the whole, the journey made by *Mad* conforms to the general pattern; in spite of various deviations we may classify it as positive
9. *Yano and Samanimb* go from Kaibursé to Kumbe and Opeko. They proceed to Tayam on the Maro, where *Samanimb* stays behind. *Yano* leaps across the river and afterwards returns to Ahiv-zé-miráv in the hinterland of the Kumbe. The case is decidedly negative
10. *Yagil*, travelling from Komolom to Aboi, Daboyas and Oan on the upper Bian, presents another purely negative case
11. *Wariop and Sapai* travel from Urumb to Domandé. *Wariop*, as a woman, can hardly be recognized as a typical case, but *Sapai's* certainly is one
12. *Wonatai*, who goes from Darir near Sarira all along the coast via Merauke, Birok, Domandé, Sangasé and Okaba to Frederik Hendrik Island, where he has remained ever since, travels according to pattern
13. *Mungus*, together with his mother, goes from Bangu to Okaba. When he has grown up, he goes to Karikri (Tumid), where he gets married. He goes to Dahuk-zé-miráv and begets two sons, who go to Wamal and Wambi, where their descendants are still living. The story as a whole conforms to the general pattern. It is true that *Mungus* turns inland after having travelled from the east

p

n

n

p

p

Classification

straight to the west, but the story continues with his sons regaining the coast in places further to the west. The wish to explain the clansmen's distribution over the interior has been successfully worked up into the pattern: the direction east-west and the coast as the ultimate goal have been maintained

p

14. *Yawima*. Little is known of his peregrinations. To the extent that they have been described, they concern his journey from Sangasé to the *mayo*, which ended very soon, viz. at Kaibursé, where *Yawima* hid out in the bush. All the elements in *Yawima's* adventures combine to have us classify his case as negative

n

Recapitulation. Out of 14 cases concerning the phratry of *Aramemb*, 6 are positive, 5 are doubtful and 3 negative. For the moiety as a whole the number of cases is 25, of which 15 are positive, 5 doubtful and 5 negative.

Mahu-zé phratry

Classification

1. *Diwa-canoe and Yugil*. They go from Yavar-makan to the Torassi, then up the river and via the Wangon to the Maro. After having visited Senayo, they go downstream and suffer shipwreck not far from Merauke, at Sirapu, where *Yugil* remains. The canoe returns to Wangon. The relationship with the interior is evident
2. *Ganguta*, the feast-house post, falls into the river at Senayo and is carried down the stream until he is washed up on one of the banks of the river
3. *Awassra* originates at Senam and travels to Aboi and Tumid-miráv
4. *Sami*. There are two *Sami*, one who comes from the interior to assist *Geb* in his fight against the women of Singeas, and another who is a snake and travels from Yamuli on the Buraka via Makalin to Tumid-miráv, where she has remained ever since ⁷²

p2

p2

p2

p2.1

⁷² Above, p. 326.

5. *Mahu* goes from Unum (upper Bian) or Dahuk-zé-miráv to Singeas on the coast and then back to the interior. The next time, he sets out from Dahuk-zé-miráv and via the upper Bian reaches the Digul, to go on a headhunt. Returning via the upper Kumbe, he goes on to Karikri (Tumid), where he withdraws p2
6. *Doreh* comes from Dahuk-zé-miráv and goes to Urumb. He returns to Imo. In another story he comes from Kumbe and follows the coast as far as the Digul, from where he returns eastward in pursuit of his son *Gopa*. Association with Imo is evident, association with west-east direction controversial p3
7. *Batend-déma* goes from Yamuli on the Buraka via Makalin, Tumid-miráv, Bahor, Urumb and Brawa to the Fly river; in a variant reading he is called *Gopa*, who travels from the Digul to the Fly p1
8. *Saboruwaktu* goes from Aboi to Kurkari. The myth gives no explanation of the fact that she is buried in Anasai⁷³ p1
9. *Amari*. Above we explained why the case of Amari and the removal of his corpse from Kurkari to Anasai had better be dismissed as irrelevant in this context⁷⁴ x
10. *Ori* travels from Kurkari to Tumid-miráv and from there to Alaku. As a shark he swims from Alaku to Birok and on foot returns to Alaku, where he has remained ever since. His atypical behaviour has been discussed above⁷⁵ n
11. *Wokabu* goes from Yavar-makan to Imo. Then from Imo to Domandé and vice-versa. Twice he travels from Imo to Sangar and down again. Sangar is another *Sami-rek* moiety centre. Later he goes to Domandé. Strong relationship with Imo p3
12. *Sangon*, *Wokabu's* wife, goes from Imo to Sangar and returns to Imo p3

⁷³ Ibid. p. 331.

⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 432 f.

⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 332 f.

Classification

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| 13. <i>Kamisu</i> is a man from Dahuk-zé-miráv who, together with his mother, travels to Habé at the time Habé is held up at Birok | p1 |
| 14. <i>Uari</i> , the Bangu-déma, travels from somewhere in the far west all along the coast to Bangu | p1 |
| 15. <i>Hoyom</i> goes from Bangu to Okaba. The direction in which she travels is atypical. This cannot be explained from the fact that she is <i>Wonatai's</i> wife. When the story begins, husband and wife do not live together and nowhere do we find that <i>Hoyom</i> wished to follow her husband or, conversely, that <i>Wonatai</i> cared about his wife | n |
| 16. <i>The pelican déma</i> flies from Bangu westward and settles at Tumid-miráv (interior) | p2 |
| 17. <i>Kedma</i> , the bow déma, goes from the middle Maro to the middle Kumbe, where he is killed | p2 |
| 18. <i>Aru</i> , the <i>Zohé</i> ancestor, lived on the upper Kumbe, where he begot sons, who settled at Birok, Wendu and Saror. It might be argued that this is an atypical course for <i>Sami-rek</i> ancestors to follow. However, the information in the relevant part of the myth is of the briefest and the actual itinerary of the sons is passed over altogether. The important thing is not that they go from the interior to the coast. On the contrary, the one fact which is really relevant is that the coastal (or nearly coastal) <i>Mahu-zé</i> subclans derive their origin from an ancestor who belongs to the interior. Therefore the case has to be classified as positive | p2 |
| 19. <i>Girui</i> , the dog, acting in the myth of origin of man, goes from west to east | p1 |

Recapitulation. The total number of *Mahu-zé* phratry déma who travel over longer or shorter distances is 19. One case has to be struck off the list, which leaves us with a total number of 18 cases, of which 2 are negative and 16 positive. Among the latter, 6 have been included because the déma go from west to east, 8 because they are associated with the interior and 3 because they are connected with Imo. One case has been entered under two different headings, both positive.

Bragai-zé phratry

Classification

1. *Opeko-anem* goes from Imo to Yavar-makan. He is brought all along the coast from Yavar-makan to the Digul and then via Iwolj and Ewi back to Opeko on the middle Kumbe p3.2
2. *Swar*, together with *Opeko-anem*, travels from Yavar-makan to Opeko p2
3. *Mongumer-anem* alias *Mangu* alias *Ugnemau* goes from Iwolj via Ewi, Opeko, Tayan and Manggat-miráv to Mongumer p1.2
4. *Wawar* travels in the *Swar*-canoe and after having reached Opeko he attempts to go on to Imo p2.3
5. *Arimba* goes from Sangasé to Saror p1
6. *Yorma* originates in the upper Bian area. He goes to Imo and from there by way of the swamps to the coast and further westward to Komolonu. He returns along the coast, going from west to east, and after another visit to Imo he retires in the Bian mouth. His case is positive in all three aspects p1.2.3
7. *Bau* goes from the mouth of the Bian eastward to the area between Yawim and Kombes p1
8. *Sangar-anem* goes from the mouth of the Bian to Yawim p1
9. *Nazr* goes from Sangar via Mongumer and Tomerau to the coast and then westward to the mouth of the Bian. He continues his way up-river to Aboi and on to Tumid and Dahuk-zé-miráv. From there he goes via the headwaters of the Bian to the Digul. In Yé on the upper Kumbe he finally withdraws p2
10. *Sapi* goes from Sangar to Habé and, together with Habé, travels westward to Welab. From Welab he goes to Kumbe in pursuit of *Bomaid-anem* and then changes into a stone. The main direction of *Sapi's* wanderings is atypical. It is as if the final part of the story, which has *Sapi* travelling from east to west, must compensate for the unorthodox beginning. However, the fact that so much emphasis is laid

on *Sapi's* relations with Habé characterizes him as predominantly atypical and we have to enter the case as negative

n

11. *Bomaid-anem's* behaviour gives occasion to similar considerations, but here the main trend of the story is different. It is *Bomaid-anem's* task to kill a déma of the *Sami-rek* moiety and it suits the general pattern that to that end a déma is chosen who has to come from the east. In this respect *Bomaid-anem* is the very counterpart of *Waiba* and *Umbri*, who had to come from the west to fight a déma of the *Geb-zé* moiety. In both cases the same anomaly presents itself, viz. that the enemy of the *boan's* main déma is incorporated among the ancestors of the *boan*. On the one hand, this confirms our earlier observation that *Marind-anim* totemism does not primarily express feelings of identity with the totem, but rather the appreciation of the totem's value in actual life. On the other hand this, the second instance of such an anomaly, which now involves a déma of the opposite moiety in comparable circumstances and which is again combined with the story of Habé as a common main theme, gives clear evidence of the highly structured character of *Marind-anim* myth. *Bomaid-anem's* coming to Welab to kill *Sapi* corresponds to pattern. Full stress is laid in the story on *Bomaid's* returning in a direction from west to east. This journey is described far more elaborately than his going to Welab. In this respect the story again corresponds to the pattern, because, after all, *Bomaid-anem* is a déma of the *Sami-rek* moiety. We cannot but enter the case as positive

p1

12. *The kambara-anim* go from Kurkari to Imo in the myth of *Yawi* and from Kurkari to Welab in the story of *Sapi*. The direction in which they travel is the wrong one, but their origin in a foreign inland community and their association with Imo make it evident that their case has to be evaluated as positive

p3

Recapitulation. Out of 12 cases, 11 are listed as positive and only one as negative. Of the positive cases, some of which fall into more than one category, 6 are ranged under the heading west-east, 6 under that of relations with the interior and 4 come into the category of relations with Imo. The total for the *Sami-rek* moiety is 30 cases, of which 27 are positive and 3 negative, as against a total of 25 cases for the *Geb-zé* moiety, of which 15 are positive, 5 doubtful and 5 negative. The deviations among the *Geb-zé* moiety are more numerous than among the *Sami-rek* moiety. Between them, the *déma* of the tribe as a whole make up 55 cases, of which 42 are positive, 5 doubtful and 8 negative. The total percentage of positive cases is 76 and if the doubtful cases are excluded this even rises to 84. These facts confirm that there is a prevailing pattern. They also confirm that we may speak of a rather high degree of integration or even drop the qualification 'rather'. A full evaluation, however, has to await a further analysis of the doubtful and negative cases. It is exactly because there is a prevalent pattern that these deviations are of particular interest, the more so because the apparent dialectics of the logic underlying the system call for a reconsideration of the deviant cases. Deviations are inherent in the scheme and we have to allow for the possibility that they match the pattern rather than defy it.

3. THE DEVIATIONS FROM PATTERN

The cases qualified as doubtful, *Aramemb*, *Gerau*, *Waiba* and *Umbri*, *Harau* and *Ugu*, are all directly or indirectly connected with *Aramemb*, who is one of the most intriguing heroes of Marind-anim myth. His character is highly controversial: associated alternately with life and death, with the initiation rites and the origin of magic and sorcery, he could be an originator of the same kind as *Nggiwë* in Boadzi mythology, as *Kambel* in that of the Trans-Fly people, or *Marunogére* in Kiwai myth. Nevertheless, he is definitely inferior to them. Though presiding over the birth of the first human beings, he is not a real originator who, like *Nggiwë*, divides these humans into clans and moieties and puts everybody in their proper place. Nor is he a real originator of ritual like *Marunogére*, who designed the whole scheme before putting it into execution.⁷⁶ Neither is there any association with the great cosmic powers, as in the case of *Kambel* and his wife who are the moon and the sun, the moon chasing the sun along

⁷⁶ Cf. Landtman, Folktales nr. 279.

the sky and the two of them returning one after the other to the eastern point of departure.⁷⁷ In all his multifarious activities *Aramemb* just falls short of achieving that dignity which graces real primeval beings. He is a *déma* of humble origin; he is just the son of the *Muli-déma*. He might, perhaps, also be called the son of *Ori*, the shark *déma*.⁷⁸ His origin is obscure and full of contradictory elements. His activities on behalf of initiation and ritual do not make him the real leader of the ceremonies, a function which is entrusted to *Uaba*. He is lacking that one element which could make him a fully respected character. He is not a fighter. When somebody has to be killed, e.g. *Yawi* or *Amari*, other people do the killing. The one and only time he gets into really serious difficulties, he is killed by *Nakra*. When opposed by a throng of boys, he is at a loss what to do, he muddles and his behaviour is anything but dignified. It is only by his shrewdness that he finally extricates himself. In his lack of fighting-spirit he is a typical wallaby, the common symbol of cowardice, more typical than *Yano*, the wallaby *déma*. Because of *Aramemb's* close association with the wallaby, which is in fact his own creation, we might be tempted to suppose that, by origin, he is no more than just a wallaby *déma*. Although he is indeed an initiator, he does not rise very far above the level of a renowned medicine-man who knows all the ins and outs and who travels far and wide to give instructions and make all the necessary arrangements. Part leader and part go-between, in the final act conceived as something like a high-god and a real culture hero, in origin just one out of many, he appears as a baffling mixture of controversial elements. He just fails to qualify for the central role of the kind of originator common to the mythology of several of the surrounding tribes. In the *mayo*-rites the highest authority is vested not in *Aramemb* but in *Uaba*, who is the real ancestor of the phratry of *Aramemb*; he is the fire and a cosmic power identical with the sun, the counterpart of the devastating *déma* of the sea. All the same, *Uaba* is not an originator either; part of the originator's functions are taken over by *Aramemb*, who must extricate *Uaba* from an extremely precarious position. In his origin *Uaba*, too, lacks the distinctive traits of a primeval being who is in existence at the beginning of things. He is the son of *Geb*. If we want to have a better understanding of *Aramemb's* position in what may in a somewhat pompous terminology be called the Marind-anim pantheon, we cannot dispense with a closer

⁷⁷ Williams, *Trans-Fly* p. 302.

⁷⁸ Cf. above, p. 332.

examination of the few mythical beings to whom the term primeval beings could apply. There are not many of them in Marind mythology.

Next to *Aramemb*, we have already discussed *Uaba*. Both fall short of the mark in one or another respect. Other beings who show definite traits of primeval beings are *Dinadin* and *Nubog*⁷⁹ and, secondarily, *Geb* and *Sami*. *Dinadin* and *Nubog* are typical primeval beings. They were at the beginning, and in the classic opposition of Heaven and Earth who are husband and wife a solid foundation is laid for the cosmic dualism recurring in myth and in basic notions. *Dinadin* and *Nubog* remain in the background. They are not involved in the riotous developments of the mythical age which resulted in the present shape of the Marind-anim world. They have only an epistemological function; they are the things which were at the beginning and they procreated *Geb* and *Sami*. Mythical history begins with the latter. It is not *Dinadin* and *Nubog*, but *Geb* and *Sami* who play a part in the developments of the mythical age.

Geb and *Sami*, though born as siblings, are not each other's equals. *Sami*, in fact, is hardly ever mentioned. The few times that he does occur in myth it is mostly as a snake. He is not renowned and has no specific achievement to his credit, except the fact that he is the prime ancestor of his moiety, who is remembered more as a symbol of its unity than as a factual progenitor of subsequent clan-ancestors. As a *déma* the only natural feature he is associated with is a black snake. With *Geb* things are different. In spite of the modest role he plays in mythological events, he really is a very important *déma*. He is the dry land of the coast, he is the moon and his head is the sun. He is also depicted as a giant who is a representative of the universe.⁸⁰ Next, he is said to have "originated from himself, growing he did grow".⁸¹ In other words, to him are attributed some of the major characteristics of a Supreme Being, such as having existed from 'the beginning' and being identified with the heavenly aspect of the universe. Of the two primeval ancestors the one is neglected, while upon the other are bestowed all the attributes of supernatural power and value. At the very outset of Marind-anim mythology the *Geb-zé* moiety appears as the one associated with supernatural power, whereas the *Sami-rek* are left aside. We already discussed the curious dualism of *Geb's* supernatural attributes; he is dry earth, sun and moon.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 208.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 222.

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 223.

Now that the discussion of mythology has been completed, we are in a better position to assess the meaning of this exceptional combination. There is the surprising fact that the moon is not only a *Geb-zé* totem, but also a totem of the *Yorm-énd*, more especially of the fish *boan*.⁸² Representations of the moon make part of the decorations of the actors representing *Mongumer-anem* in the *déma-wir* and of the sago *déma* during the initiation rites.⁸³ An old relationship, which is no longer explicit, between the *Mahu-zé* and the moon is evidenced by the myths of *Awassra* and *Doreh*.⁸⁴ Among the *déma* of the *Geb-zé* moiety there are at least three who, besides *Geb*, must or could be associated with the moon, viz. *Kanhár*, *Mana* and *Harau*.⁸⁵ It is of interest that two of these three are *déma* whose cases were classified as either negative (*Mana*) or doubtful (*Harau*). The latter, moreover, is also associated with the *Wokabu-rek*.⁸⁶ We are tempted to conclude that, originally, the moon was in fact a *Sami-rek* relation which has for some reason been transferred to the *Geb-zé*. That, however, is impossible. Of all *Geb*'s attributes his association with the moon is the most fundamental. It is as a representative of the moon that he is conceived of by the *Kanum-irébe*, where members of the clan which has the coconut as a totem greet the full moon with a long-drawn-out *Geb-éé*.⁸⁷ Among the *Marind* his common manifestation is an acorn-shell-covered man. When *Geb* and *Sami* meet, *Geb* is said to be very black, his whole appearance terrifying, his body covered with acorn-shells (which are, of course, white). *Sami*, on the contrary, is painted red. In this context *Sami* bears the distinctive marks of the sun (red) and *Geb* those of the moon (acorn-shell) and of the night (black).⁸⁸ If there is one thing which is obscure it is *Geb*'s relationship with the sun and not his association with the moon. The former tends to be kept a secret, whereas the latter is common knowledge. If there has been a *shift*, and evidently there has, it was in the overt relations of the *Sami-rek* with the moon, which have regressed to the advantage of *Geb*, who became associated with the sun. The contrast between *Geb* and *Sami* is, to all intents and purposes, a contrast between coast

⁸² Ibid. p. 385.

⁸³ Ibid. pp. 379 and 417.

⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 316 f. and 329.

⁸⁵ Ibid. pp. 232 f., 236 f., and 280.

⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 339.

⁸⁷ Nevermann, *ZfE* 1939 p. 23.

⁸⁸ Above, pp. 209, 230.

and interior, not one between the heavenly bodies now associated with *Geb* and the chthonic powers incorporated in *Yorma* and the crocodile. *Geb* in his moon-manifestation is on the side of the *Sami-rek* rather than of his son *Uaba*. He advises *Yorma*, and he assists *Doreh*.⁸⁹ He is, himself, not a representative of one of the two cosmic halves, like *Dinadin* and *Nubog*, but a representative of dualism as it repeats itself in the connections of every moiety and phratry. We do not know how the Marind-anim religious system developed; we cannot even guess where it originated. One thing, however, is evident from its richness and its wide scope: it incorporated mythological materials from a variety of different communities and it arranged them into a new combination in which *Geb* is associated with the two principal heavenly bodies and his moiety with all ritual and supernatural power. To his moiety fell the male functions in ritual, while the *Sami-rek* moiety became associated with female occupations, warfare, sorcery and the sexual act. How the process developed will forever remain a mystery; we only know the curious outcome. One of its interesting traits is the extensive partitioning of functions. Thus *Aramemb* became an initiator without being the leader of ritual; *Uaba* a leader of ritual whose actual involvement is confined to being one of the authorities on the one hand and a representative of a cosmic power on the other; *Geb*, as *Sami's* opposite number, developed halfway into a kind of high-god without losing the basic traits of a moon-symbol. The most important consequence of the *Geb-zé* leadership in ritual is that it tends to upset the cosmic duality of heaven versus earth, of sunrise versus sunset, of east-west versus west-east, of sea versus land and of coast versus interior.

The ensuing trend towards the monopolizing of religious functions by the *Geb-zé* moiety has resulted in the absorption of the magic of the medicine-man and of the rain-magician, together with the leadership of the cults and the institution of age-grades. Each of these extensions necessarily upset the system. It cannot be a matter of chance that on the side of the *Geb-zé* there are far more deviations from the alleged pattern than on that of the *Sami-rek* moiety.

The fundamental relationship between magic and the *Sami-rek* moiety is evident from a number of facts. In the first place, there is the origin of the art of the medicine-man, *messaw*, in the person of *Ugu*, who is the son of the *Mahu-zé* déma *Elme*. *Ugu* has all the

⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 382 and 327, 329.

characteristics of a crocodile and his skin is used by those who want to dive like a crocodile. In a subsequent chapter the magic of the medicine-man will be discussed in detail. Here it may suffice to state that, in spite of the fear which the magician may inspire, he is not merely an anti-social being. On the contrary, he is the religious specialist par excellence, the man who knows the secret names and the myths. Magic is not a more or less suspected sideline of religion. Of course it is a secret art, it deals with the real secrets of life and death and for that reason there is something eerie about it. But at the same time it is the core of religion; it deals with all the uncanny intentions which are apprehended to be at the bottom of all events and developments. The magician is the natural leader of ritual and his social position is valued accordingly. *Aramemb* is the prototype of all medicine-men and his multiple relations with the other moiety may be explained from this function. There is one thing, however, which cannot be explained from his being a medicine-man, viz. his incessant travelling. He really goes everywhere. It might be — but I must add that this is pure conjecture — that his busybodying reflects the multiple consultations which must have accompanied the growth of Marind-anim ritual. The succession of *mayo* celebrations in one area after another, the organization of feasts at which guests from villages far and wide perform elaborate dances and shows, require a great many preliminary consultations. The high degree of integration achieved in myth and ritual makes it probable that the leading magicians maintained fairly frequent contacts. We have no information to confirm this view and it is only by inference from the activities of Australian leaders of ritual that we may conclude that such consultations were probably held.⁹⁰ Now this explains *Aramemb's* perambulations and we need not bother any more whether he travels in the right direction or not. There is a twofold explanation for his deviations from the regular pattern, viz. his associations with the opposite moiety and his consultations in his dual function of medicine-man and organizer of ritual. It is also evident why *Ugu* has been incorporated into this moiety and has been classified as a *déma* of *Aramemb's* phratry. The origin of so important a function in ritual had to be associated with the ceremonial moiety.

A comparable case is that of *Yawima*. In the Marind language the rain-magician is called *Dongam-anem*, Thunder-man, a name which

⁹⁰ Cf. Spencer and Gillen, *The Arunta* I p. 224.

associates him directly with the pig clan of the opposite moiety, with which we found him associated also in his relations with *Muli*, with the rain, and the west-east direction of his journey along the coast. We might add his being disqualified as a *gari*-bearer and the opposition in which he stands to the white stork *déma*.⁹¹ The *Yavima-rek* rather stand apart as a more or less independent group within the stork clan. It is their ceremonial function which links them to the phratry of *Aramemb*.

Harau, again, is a perfect specimen of the *Mahu-zé* phratry. She is the mythical sago-maker, a moon-maid whose relations with the moon remain unexplained, the originator of the various kinds of female hairdo and the woman whose behaviour gives rise to the first celebration of the fertility-rite called *otiv-bombari*, which makes part of the marriage-ceremony.⁹² All of these are either female occupations or ceremonies in which women are the central characters. A *Wokabu-rek* subclan claims to be descended from her.⁹³ Among her associations there are two, the hairdo and the marriage-ceremony, which have an impact on initiation and ritual. If ever there was a clear case of a shift from one moiety to the other, it is the one of *Harau*. She belongs to the *Mahu-zé* phratry in almost every respect and her ritual importance must have been the only reason why she has been incorporated into the *Geb-zé* moiety. The fact that she is called a sister of *Aramemb* is a poor argument for maintaining that she is intrinsically a member of his phratry. Her marriage with *Elme* could be cited with better right, but even this provides only a formal argument and is incapable of outweighing her preponderantly *Mahu-zé* character. All this does not imply that her membership of the phratry of *Aramemb* is a deviation from the prevailing pattern. On the contrary, the pattern, by ascribing religious and ceremonial functions to the *Geb-zé* moiety, makes her association with this moiety a necessity.

The two remaining cases classified as doubtful seem to be examples of conflicting allegiances rather than of obvious shifts from one moiety to the other. Rattan being traded from the interior to the coast, where above all it is needed to make ceremonial paraphernalia, it is associated with two contrasting categories. For the ultimate classification the

⁹¹ Cf. above, pp. 289 f. and 304 f.

⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 279 f.

⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 339.

category of the superior moiety has been decisive. From this point of view, it is difficult to maintain that *Gerau* deviates from the regular pattern. Together with *Habé*, he comes from the far east, his eastern origin is beyond suspicion. Ultimately he disappears into the interior, which is where the rattan, the plant of ceremonial application, has to be taken to in order to multiply. *Gerau's* tenaciously keeping *Habé* tied up to the coast is not necessarily an act of hostility. It is quite in the nature of the rattan; the cut-off head (*Habé*) is hung from a pole by means of a rattan string. When seen in this light, the activities of *Waiba* and *Umbri*, too, seem to fit in fairly well with the accepted pattern. Their originating from *Dahuk-zé-mirav* and *Waiba's* ultimate settling on the upper *Kumbe* emphasize the relations between rattan and interior more strongly than would seem to be necessary. However, the two of them are summoned because they are needed to allow the sun-symbol *Habé* to proceed on its way to the west and this cannot be effected by the powers of the eastern coastal section, but requires the magic of the western interior. At the same time, they co-operate in overcoming the rattan *déma*, that is, they contribute their efforts towards capturing an important expedient for ritual and ceremonial application. As a reason for their absorption into *Aramemb's* phratry this is sufficient. It is noteworthy, however, that, just like the *Yawima-rek*, they stand somewhat apart, and that their place in the system is not strictly defined. We conclude that the five doubtful cases and the one of *Yawima*, which was classified as negative, do, after all, fit into the *Marind-anim* classificatory pattern in its tendency for ceremonial functions to be monopolized by the *Geb-zé* moiety.

The negative cases to be discussed are those of *Mana*, the *Mayo-patur* who go to the *Digul*, *Yano* and *Samanimb*, *Yagil*, *Ori*, *Hoyom*, and *Sapi*. We shall deal with them in this order.

Mana is unquestionably a moon-symbol, as is obvious from his incestuous relations with his sister *Kuper-sav*, the mother-of-pearl mussel which is made into a crescent-shaped breast ornament. *Mana's* behaviour is typical of a *Mahu-zé déma*, but he is incorporated among the *Geb-zé-ha*. Still, he is not just simply incorporated; the *Mana-rek* stand apart from the other *Geb-zé-ha* clans and this time again we are confronted with that definite awareness of an anomaly which we encountered already in the case of the *Yawima-rek* and the rattan *boan*, and which we are to meet again in connection with the *Ori-rek* and the *Sapi-zé*. The origin of the ambiguous position of *Mana* lies in

Geb's association with the moon, which, as a symbol, was (originally at least) common to both *Geb-zé* and *Sami-rek*. In the course of the elaboration of the system and its application to more and more communities, the moon ceased to be overtly recognized as a totem by most of the *Sami-rek* clans, which in their mythology still show traces of this former allegiance. Can we maintain that *Mana* presents a negative case, in other words, that he demonstrates a lack of integration? In a way we can, because, if the adaptation to the present system were complete, he should have lost the distinctive marks of his *Mahu-zé* behaviour. However, if we bear in mind that every phratry tends to be a biased reflection of the tribe as a whole, and that every phratry in its relations expresses some traits which are specific characteristics of the opposite moiety, it is difficult to maintain that there is a case of deviation from the pattern. These deviations belong to the pattern, and we even find a manifest awareness of this fact in the tendency to set the groups which are the bearers of these deviant traits apart from other subclans. Instead of denying that *Mana* conforms to the pattern, it may be argued that he completes it, and that he can do so by reason of the potentialities inherent in the traditional (incestuous) nature of the moon-symbol. The latter argument seems decisive and we have to revise our previous opinion.

The argument might, of course, also be applied to such cases as that of the *Mayo-patur* who went to the Digul and of *Yagil* who deviates from any pattern. In that case, however, we would just invalidate the argument. The deviant behaviour of the *Mayo-patur* and of *Yagil* does not imply that these deviations can be recognized as traits characteristic of the opposite moiety. The direction in which they go is the only valid symptom of a deviation from the pattern and in the absence of other distinctive traits characteristic either of the own or of the opposite moiety these deviations cannot, with a reasonable degree of certainty at least, be said to represent an effort to express the dialectic aspect of the phratry's relations. *Yagil* and the *Mayo-patur* are rightly classified as negative cases demonstrating the survival of old mythical history which remained outside the influence of the process of integration.

The case of *Yano* and *Samanimb* is a less simple one. It shows numerous deviations. The mother-son incest is rather a *Mahu-zé* trait, just like the fairly close association with the interior. *Yano's* fighting spirit does not imply a specific association with any phratry, but the thing is that it is not in character with a wallaby *déma*. The close

association of the wallaby with the mythical model of dualism, *Aramemb*, makes the problem even more complicated. Is it possible that the wallaby was originally a totem of the other moiety, at least among some of the groups which united in the *mayo*- and *imo*-rituals and their mythology? Does the incorporation of these groups into the phratry of *Aramemb* make part of the process which led to the absorption of *Harau* and *Ugu*? These questions have to remain unanswered. We should not venture any further into the field of historical reconstruction, lest futile hypotheses make us lose every grip on reality. There is no need to present the case of integration under an even more favourable light by resorting to arguments which cannot be demonstrated to be true. Even the argument that *Yano* expresses the dialectic aspect of his phratry's allegiances is a weak one and we better let his case stand as a negative one.

The last-mentioned argument can with better reason be applied to *Hoyom* who, as a *Zohé*, is a member of a clan representing the dialectic aspect of the *Mahu-zé* phratry, which must make up for the lack of dignity associated with its main aspect. Since she is a married woman, the wife of *Wonatai*, her deviating from the pattern by travelling westward must be seen in conjunction with her son's adhering to it. Considering all its various aspects, it is suggested that her case be reclassified as positive.

Even more evident in this respect is *Ori's* case, which is so clear an expression of the dialectic aspect of the *Mahu-zé* clan and phratry as to entitle the *Ori-rek* to a position between the *Mahu-zé* and the *Kai-zé*. It is in keeping with the scheme of dualism as it recurs in every phratry, and from this point of view the *Ori-rek* conform to the general pattern. The special position of their clan underlines the fact that the Marind are aware of the anomaly and accept it.

Remains the case of *Sapi*, which is controversial even to the extent that some *Sapi-zé* are classified as *Kai-zé*, whereas the majority is reckoned to belong to the *Basik-Basik boan*. Their totem being the bush-pig, it is beyond doubt that they are allied with the pig clan. The association with sorcery, too, harmonizes perfectly with the malicious character attributed to the clan. However, its close connections with the *Kai-zé*, with *Aramemb* and with *Habé* form just as perfect a contrast. It is obvious that the *Sapi-zé* represent the dialectic aspect of their clan. It is obvious, too, that the fact did not remain unnoticed. The *Sapi-zé* are a quite distinct subclan with specific connections of their own, in particular with the *Kai-zé* (*Wirz* is emphatic on this

point).⁹⁴ But why had this clan, with its association with the worst of all immoral occupations, to be associated with such outstanding characters of the opposite moiety? An answer in the nature of an account of what actually happened is difficult to give, but it is fairly easy to point out that the dialectic relations of *Sapi* and the *Sapi-zé* with, alternately, the *Basik-Basik* and the *Kai-zé* have a close parallel in the equally dialectic connections of *Ugu*, *Yawima* and the magic of the *messav* and the rain-maker, with, alternately, the phratry of *Aramemb* and the *Sami-rek* moiety. *Aramemb*, though he is not called a *kambar-anem* himself, is nevertheless very closely associated with that sordid art. He calls in the *kambar-anim* to kill *Yawi*, he avails himself of their help when he gives the bush-pigs their final shape, he calls himself *Yogum*, one of the names the *kambar-anim* give themselves in their incantations, and during a period long enough to see *Amari* grow up, he lives at Kurkari, the place of origin of black magic. The uncertainty with regard to the *Sapi-zé's* allegiance is another proof that all direct activities in the realm of the supernatural are *Aramemb's* speciality. Actually, it often happens that the *kambar-anim* are also *messav*. They always need the guidance of a *messav*.⁹⁵ When we compare sorcery with rain-making and with the magic of the medicine-man, it is impossible not to arrive at the conclusion that either the *Sapi-zé* are on the way to incorporation into the phratry of *Aramemb*, or that this process has been arrested halfway because there is too much malice in sorcery to allow of their complete absorption into a moiety primarily associated with the brighter aspects of life. More than any of the other cases, that of the *Sapi-zé* proves beyond doubt that a process of incorporation of all religious activities into the orbit of the *Geb-zé* moiety is going on. The case is convincing exactly because the process has been arrested halfway (or at least temporarily at the time of observation), its disturbing effect on the existing classificatory system being too obvious to allow of the completion of the process. This implies that the case of the *Sapi-zé* cannot really be cited as a negative case of integration. On the contrary, it has evidently been assimilated into a process of integration developing certain traits at the expense of others. We shall find this view corroborated in the concluding section of chapter XI.⁹⁶

Now to take stock of the position again. When reconsidering the

⁹⁴ Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 167.

⁹⁵ Cf. below, pp. 904, 906.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 669; for a final solution see pp. 943 ff.

5 doubtful cases and the 8 negative ones we concluded that all of the doubtful cases and 5 of the negative ones had to be reclassified as positive because there is ample evidence that they fit in with the prevailing trends of the classificatory system, a system which must not be viewed as static, but as a process of classifying on the basis of prevalent trends. What it comes down to is that of a total number of 55 cases not less than 52, or 94 per cent, are positive. Consequently, we are fully justified in speaking of a very high degree of integration.⁹⁷

4. RÉSUMÉ OF THE CLASSIFICATORY SYSTEM

The various inconsistencies and obscurities at issue having been discussed and, as far as was possible, straightened out, we can now proceed to a more detailed résumé of the classificatory system. The survey begins with a few general concepts concerning man and his life.

Man, whatever his clan or moiety, goes the way of the sun. Man came from the west when, underground, he went to Kondo, where he is born from the earth. He travels westward to the land of the dead, which is beyond the area of sunset. The first man to go was also the first to die, and he was an *évati*. The sun is a cut-off head, the head of *Geb*. The coconut, too, is a cut-off head, and of the same phratry as *Geb*. Man's life is associated with the coconut. When a child is born, the father plants several coconut palms which will be its property.⁹⁸ When somebody dies, a coconut tree is cut down.⁹⁹ For every child that is born a foreigner should — in theory at least — be beheaded. Every child is given the name of a beheaded person, the name of the head the father or any other relative brought home with them. Sun, coconut, cut-off head and the course of human life belong together. Growing up, a man becomes a stork through initiation. The stork *déma*, who was born in Kondo, sits on a stone somewhere in Frederik Hendrik Island, in the west. Sun, coconut, cut-off head and stork are symbols of every man's life, irrespective of his totem. It is true that they are also totems, but as symbols of human life they belong to everybody.

The classificatory system is a system of recurring oppositions and

⁹⁷ A fourth case which does not at all tally with the system of classification is discussed on pp. 643 ff.

⁹⁸ Wirz, M.A. II p. 194.

⁹⁹ Above, p. 202.

associations. Such oppositions are east monsoon and west monsoon; day and night; *mayo* and *imo*; dry season and rainy season; sunset and sunrise; heaven (*Dinadin*) and earth (*Nubog*); coast and interior; coconut and sago; open plain and bush; upperworld and underworld; sandy beach and loamy beach; dry land and swampy land; *es* and *mahai* or young and old; sun and moon; *Uaba* (fire, sun and east monsoon) and *Yorma* (sea, waves and west monsoon); stork and eagle; white stork and black stork; coconut and betel in conjunction with crocodile and turtle;¹⁰⁰ fishes of the deep sea (*Yorm-end*) and fishes of the shallow sea (*Zohé*);¹⁰¹ village-pig and bush-pig;¹⁰² stone axe and flat-headed club, associated with, respectively, *Wokabu* and *Naer*, versus egg-headed club as associated with *Dawi* and the *Kai-zé* in the myth of Habé; water versus fire (*Yorma* extinguishing the fires);¹⁰³ *wati* (*Ndik-end*) versus betel-chewing (*Bragai-zé*). In ever varying combinations these oppositions are expressed in myth. *Geb* as the sun is attacked in the west and the women want to take his life; as the moon he is abused in the east and here it is the men who are his chief enemies. At certain times of the year the sun sets over the sea and this is called copulation; when at other times the sun sets over the land this is copulation, too, but in this case it is kept a secret.¹⁰⁴ The contrast sea-land plays an important part and so does the contrast man-woman. The ancestor of the *Geb-zé* moiety has to receive a woman from the ancestor of the *Sami-rek* moiety. The *Geb-zé* moiety, associated with all kinds of religious and ritual occupations, is associated with the male sex, the *Sami-rek* moiety with female occupations and the female role in homosexual relations. But the contrast is never absolute. The female aspect of the *Sami-rek* moiety is compensated for by a specific association with the male genital and a strong emphasis on headhunting and prowess, the symbol of which is the pig. The *Geb-zé* moiety, on the contrary, has the wallaby, the symbol of cowardice, as one of its totems. This, however, confronts us again with the remarkable fact that every moiety (and, in fact, every phratry) has two aspects, a dominant one and a dialectic one, the latter reflecting characteristics of the opposite moiety. The main items are collated in the following survey.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 377.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 344.

¹⁰² Ibid. pp. 405, 421.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 383.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 257.

Geb-zé phratry

MAIN ASPECT

The phratry (and the moiety) is to a certain extent superior.

Geb is a giant whose body is all the dry land and whose cut-off head is the sun.

Associated with the coast.

Associated with the sun, the morning- and evening-stars, and the Pleiads.

Close relationship through *Uaba* with fire, stork and cassowary. Association with rising sun, *Ep-kwitare*, Mabudauan, the *gari*, and Kondo; with daylight, east monsoon, sunshine. Sunset as copulation of sun and sea is also public knowledge, whereas copulation of sun and land is always esoteric knowledge (cf. *Méru* and *Uaba*).

Association with direction east-west.

Associated with the coconut, which is also a human head.

Associated with beach and open plain, which have been made by the fire.

Associated with the first man to die.

Associated with the navel *déma* of *mayo-*, *imo-* and *rapa-*rituals; through *Uaba* with the leadership in the *mayo-*ritual.

Phratry of Aramemb

MAIN ASPECT

Through *Sosom* associated with sun, bull-roarer, *sosom-*cult and male genital.

DIALECTIC ASPECT

In the sphere of social relations *Geb* is dependent on *Mahu* for obtaining a woman.

Associated with the moon, which is identical with *Geb*.

Associations with banana, ringworm, acorn-shell, bamboo. Through *Mana* and *Saripa* also with mother-of-pearl shell and crescent-shaped ornament. *Mana* goes to the interior and his behaviour has typical *Mahu-zé* traits. The association of moon and night, although never explicitly mentioned, is real enough not to be ignored.

Associated with a sago-species mentioned in the myth of *Wokabu*.¹⁰⁵

In ritual the *Geb-zé-ha* bring up the rear in the procession which is opened by the coconut clan.

DIALECTIC ASPECT

The ambiguous relations between *Habé* and the rat-

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 338.

MAIN ASPECT

Associated with fire, stork, cassowary, east monsoon, smoke, the shaping of beach and river-valleys by the fire, with egg-headed club (penis-symbol), Habé (again a cut-off head), and direction east-west.

Associated with wallaby and wallaby-hunting.

Through *Aramemb*, who completes the work of shaping man and helps *Uba* out of his predicament, the phratry is connected with initiation, the age-grades and the male hairdo.

Through *Harau* associated with the female hairdo (and age-grades) and the marriage-rites.

Connected with life-giving (that is, the life given to the snake by *Aramemb*, who also kills *Mingui*, the maggot, who is the drum of the dead).

Associated with yam and red parrot. Hostility between *Aramemb* and the other moiety (killed by *Nakra*).

Associated with *wati*-drinking.

Contrast with eagle.

DIALECTIC ASPECT

tan déma.

The iguana which holds Habé.

Harau, the mythical sago-maker and potential moon-maid, who is the mother of *Ugu*.

Ugu, the *messav*, who is a kind of crocodile and the son of a *Mahu-zé déma*.

Aramemb's function as a *messav* and his dealings with sorcery (*kambara*).

His association with *Kur-kari* and the sorcerers.

His birth as a son of the *Muli-déma*, his travels in an eastern direction, and the killing of *Yawi*.

His relations with *Ori*.

Yawima, the thunder-maker, associated with west monsoon and thunderstorm, and disqualified as a *gari*-bearer. The opposition of *Yawima* the black stork on the one hand and the white stork and *wati*-drinking on the other.

Yano's relations with his mother.

Sago-species mentioned in the myth of *Wokabu*.¹⁰⁶

Mahu-zé phratry

MAIN ASPECT

Relations with the interior, sago, swamp

DIALECTIC ASPECT

The male genital.

¹⁰⁶ L.c.

MAIN ASPECT

and the women's foodquest, including the gathering of crabs.

Possession of women.

Connected with dog, big genitals, excessive sexuality, fertility, excrements, out-sized genitals, castration and castration anxiety.

Related to disreputable characters such as the hunger-people (*Emér-anim*), to theft, mother-son incest, *wokraved* age-grade.

Covert, but strong relations with the moon.

Connected with headhunting.

The *Mahu-zé* reflect *Bragai-zé* qualities on a minor scale (*Mahu* versus *Nazr*, *Uari* versus *Yorma*, *Ganguta* the feast-house-post *déma* versus *Ganguta* the tree *déma*, fishes of the coastal waters versus fishes of the deep sea).

Associated with frogs, octopus, shark, catfish, centipede. Through catfish (*anda*) linked with man while he was still shapeless, and with the penis.

Associated with mud, loam, crab, flora and fauna of the muddy beach, fishes of the coastal waters, cormorant, bow.

Associated through the cormorant with some aspects of mortuary rites, with stories of the dead¹⁰⁷ and — through *batend-déma* — with the eastern abode of the dead.

Associated with *Imo*, *Dahuk-zé-miráv* and *Tumid-miráv*, with travelling from

DIALECTIC ASPECT

Meteor.

Ori who travels from east to west and is associated with *Aramemb*.

Wokabu's relations with the beach, the making of coconut oil and body-paint, his behaviour as a socialite who is very much preoccupied with his outward appearance.

Wokabu's association with the marine fauna on the sandy beach.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Béto*, above, p. 318.

MAIN ASPECT

west to east and in the interior.
 Associated with the axe (as used for cutting down the sago tree).
 When *Aramemb* brings *Amari* to life the event is of no consequence to mankind, contrary to what it would have been in the case of *Yaxwi*. *Amari* was killed by fire, *Yaxwi* by sorcery.
 Associated with *Divazib*-function.

DIALECTIC ASPECT

Bragai-zé phratry

MAIN ASPECT

Ritual feminization and exclusion from certain functions in the *mayo*-ritual.
 Crocodile, living under water, reversed position, connection with sago.
 Canoe and canoe-making.
 Connection with betel nut and sirih.
 Depth, ground water, sea, northwest monsoon, big waves, tidal bore, creation of bays and river valleys, swamps, fishes of the deep sea and of the swamp, jellyfish, Muli and frigate bird.
 Association with *wokravéd* age-grade, with falling pole and tree.
 Association with the moon.
 Associated with adultery, theft, malice, rude behaviour, headhunting and sorcery.
 Associated with travelling from west to east, with the interior, Imo, Kanum-irébe territory, Sangar.
 Associated with pig, lightning, thunder and the *Divazib*-function.

DIALECTIC ASPECT

Kidub and *Sangar-anem* have an association with the beach.
 Betel-chewing puts them on a level with the *wati*-drinking *Ndik-end*.
Déhévai as a typical sky-god.
 Masculine virtues of the warrior (courage = *basik* = pig).
 Association of *Sapi* with *Kai-zé boan*, with Habé and *Sapi's* westward journey.

MAIN ASPECT

DIALECTIC ASPECT

Associated with spirits of the dead
(*Sobra*).

Eagle versus stork.

The above survey gives a fair picture of the structure of Marind-anim dualistic classification as it repeats itself in the various associations of each phratry with its contrasts of male and female, east and west, coast and interior, etc., which result in a not overemphasized contrast of superior and inferior, held in check by fundamental equalitarian trends and the repetition of dualism in the associations of the respective phratries. The feminine traits of the 'inferior' moiety are balanced by a specific emphasis either on the male genital, on the possession of women, or on warfare and prowess. Conversely, the predominance of the superior moiety is mitigated by its association with the cowardly wallaby and the absence of fighting ability in *Aramemb*, one of its most prominent *déma*. Their important role in ritual is to a certain extent offset by the functions of the *Sami-rek* in the festive aspects of the elaborate ceremonial. A discussion of the general character of Marind-anim ideology as it stands out from mythology cannot be taken up until after we have studied their ritual and magic, which are the subjects of Part III.

PART III

RITUAL

CHAPTER X

THE GREAT CULTS; THE CULTS OF THE MAYO PEOPLE

Each of the great cults is connected with initiation and to a large extent the description of these cults is concerned with the initiation rites attendant upon them. Yet, we must bear in mind that the terms cult and initiation rite are not synonymous. Apart from the fact that, among the Marind, certain parts of the cult may be celebrated irrespective of whether these are combined with the initiation of neophytes or not, the term initiation itself already presupposes a cult. Every initiation postulates that there is a secret important enough to have it ceremonially disclosed to the neophytes and jealously held back from the uninitiated. Accordingly, every initiation among the Marindanim has the character of a revelation, the revelation of a something which older initiates, in spite of a certain degree of sophistication, consider as the manifestation of some awe-inspiring power. The cults have a meaning which definitely transcends that of a simple rite de passage; they are interwoven with myth and embody fundamental concepts. Evidently they serve to satisfy some deeply-felt religious needs of the community as a whole. Over-emphasizing the initiatory aspect might easily lead to neglecting what, after all, are logically the more fundamental meaning and function of the cult.

The present chapter deals with the *sosom*- and the *mayo*-cults, the former having its adepts exclusively or almost exclusively among *mayo* people. We begin with a description of the *sosom*-rites, because initiation into their secrets takes place at an earlier age than initiation into the *mayo*. The next chapter is devoted to a presentation of the *raba*-cult of the Kondo people, the cult of the upper Bian Marind, and, finally, the *imo*, coming last because the relevant data cannot be properly discussed unless we have some knowledge of the upper Bian cult. The chapter winds up with a section dealing with the relations between *mayo* and *imo* and the connections of the initiation rites with the system of age-grades.

Throughout the whole presentation we shall find that our efforts

to gain some insight into the meaning of Marind-anim ritual are seriously hampered by a lack of accurate knowledge. The published descriptions of ritual are often of a rather general and superficial nature. With few exceptions, they are based on hearsay. Fortunately, by courtesy of F. Verschueren, we are able to offer the reader a great many previously unpublished data on the *sosom*-, *imo*- and upper Bian cults.

1. THE SOSOM-CULT

The myths of *Sosom* are of basic importance for the cult bearing his name. These myths and *Sosom*'s connections with the various mythological heroes of the Marind-anim pantheon have been discussed in Part II.¹ Source-materials on the cult were published by Pöch, Heldring, Berkhout, Viegen, Wirz, Geurtjens, Nevermann and Boelaars.² Further information is confined to an occasional reference such as that made by Van de Kolk in his *Oermenschen* (p. 176). A penetrating discussion of the cult and of the comments supplied by various authors, including the present, was published by Mr. C. op 't Land in *NGS III* (1959) pp. 207 ff., 260 ff. Finally, there is the important information contained in various letters written by Verschueren.

All authors agree that *Sosom* is a giant who comes from the east every year at the time when the east monsoon has caused the swamps to dry up. Visiting Kondo, Sarira, Borem, Sëpadim, Yobar, Yéwati, Buti, Nowari, Urumb, Noh-otiv, Yatomb, Bahor, Matara, Wendu, Koadir, Birok and Anasai on the coast, he turns inland to Saror and returns via Kuprik.³ Berkhout adds that before he returns to Kondo⁴ he goes from Kuprik upstream to the Yéi-anim. According to Viegen *Sosom*'s point of departure is Mabudauan.⁵ He agrees that *Sosom* visits the coastal villages as far east as Anasai. Then *Sosom* turns inland, either to go back where he came from or to go in all secrecy to the north to visit the *Imo*-Marind.⁶ The latter addition may be an

¹ See above, pp. 267-273 and 314.

² Pöch, *Sitzungber. Kais. Akad. Wien*, Bd. 115 (1906) Abt. I; Heldring, *TBG* 1913; Berkhout, *BKI* 1919; Viegen, *Sem. d'Ethn.* III (1923); Wirz, *M.A.* III pp. 33 ff.; Geurtjens, *Dict. v. sosom and tépo*; Nevermann, *ZfE* 1939 pp. 23-26; Boelaars, *Nieuw-Guinea* pp. 82 ff.

³ Heldring, *TBG* 1913 p. 463.

⁴ Berkhout, *Bijdr.* 1919 p. 446.

⁵ Viegen, *Sem. d'Ethn.* 1923 pp. 393 f.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 394.

allusion to the role of the bullroarer in the *imo*-cult.⁷ According to Verschueren *Sosom* comes from Sota and travels via Yanggandur (Kanum-irébe), Mbur (Manggat-rik) to Sěpadim, Yobar, Nowari, Kuprik, Urumb, Noh-otiv, Yatomb, Bahor, Wendu, Anasai, where he turns inland towards the lower Kumbé valley, visiting Saror, Senam and Bad, and returning via Senayo to Sota.⁸ Some of the places mentioned by Heldring are missing in this enumeration; with few exceptions, the omissions can be explained by the concentration of villages which has since taken place. One such exception is Kondo, which, to-day, is so small that a celebration of the ritual is hardly feasible any more. When Heldring's list of villages was submitted to them, Verschueren's informants agreed that the list gave the right picture of *Sosom's* 'old way'.⁹ Two deviating accounts claim our attention. The less important is that by Boelaars, who mentions a hill called Tamargar, near Yanggandur, as *Sosom's* place of residence. The discrepancy may be ignored; actually, his description is the more accurate. The hill lies northeast of Yanggandur, but it is situated in Sota territory.¹⁰ The other account, which is by Nevermann, presents more difficulties in its description of *Sosom's* annual tour. It has *Sosom* start from the upper Torassi, whence he goes westward through the interior to the Kumbé river; on his way he visits the Yéi-anim village of Kakayu and then turns back to the east, going along the coast. The last place he visits is Kondo, where a final great feast is celebrated before *Sosom* returns to the upper Torassi. Quite incongruously, Nevermann adds that where *Sosom* properly belongs is on the Sakor, a tributary of the Kumbé river. He also reports that in May or June 1910 *Sosom* appeared at Okaba in the western section and that during his own visit to the area — in 1933 — a man from Okaba, about 20 years old, told him that he had seen *Sosom* at Okaba. Finally, Nevermann states that the reference to the alleged visit of *Sosom* to a Yéi-anim village must be erroneous, because the Yéi people know of *Sosom* by hearsay only.

Some of the details in Nevermann's deviating account can be explained without difficulty. The name of the bullroarer is *sosom* and what with the bullroarer being used in the *imo*-ritual this is likely to cause some confusion. Of course an *imo* man may say that he has

⁷ Cf. below, pp. 620, 633, 637.

⁸ Letters V p. 1.

⁹ Ibid. XI p. 3; on Kondo see above, p. 10.

¹⁰ Verschueren, l.c.

seen *sosom*. As regards the actual tour of *Sosom* in 1933, things are different. At the time Nevermann was in the territory and he reports that he saw numerous people coming from Urumb, Bahor, Noh-otiv and Wendu (villages on the coast between Maro and Kumbe) pass through Merauke on their way to Kondo-miráv, where the final feast of *Sosom* was going to be celebrated.¹¹ If that is correct, we can only assume that in 1933 the usual order was reversed, but this is flatly denied by Verschueren, himself one of Nevermann's sources of information at the time he visited the area. Verschueren consulted his informants on the possibility of an inversion of the order of celebration and they convinced him that any such thing is definitely out of the question. The people Nevermann saw passing through Merauke may have had quite another objective. "Every year the people of Buti and those further to the east, but usually also those of Urumb, Noh-otiv, Yatomb and often those of Bahor (though rarely those of Wendu) are invited by the people of Sarira (Nasem) to partake in the great and generally renowned fishing-party in the Darir river and swamp".¹² Nevermann's account deviates so widely from that of all other authors that we had better discard it, being the product of superficial contacts and an insufficient checking of information. By far the most authoritative record is that of Verschueren. It is based on prolonged contact, full mastery of the language and, in its present version, purposeful enquiries made in a later period in which the Marind tended to be somewhat less secretive about their ritual than they were some twenty years before.

One last point must be made in this connection. Verschueren nor any other author mention Kumbe as a village visited by *Sosom*. Yet, an old man of Kumbe was one of Verschueren's main informants, and Heldring writes that in the village of Kumbe only two people are known to be adepts. The point is explained in Verschueren's letters. *Sosom* never visits the village of Kumbe, but he passes through Kumbe territory when he comes by Song-ad-warin. Those Kumbe villagers who are members of the cult (to-day there is only one left) are men originating from villages in the *Sosom* area. A case in point is that of his old informant Linus Mali, who was born at Matara and later settled at Kumbe.¹³

¹¹ Nevermann, *Sumpfmenschen* pp. 19 ff.

¹² Verschueren, *Letters XI* pp. 3 and 4. Darir is also mentioned in myth; cf. the story of *Wonatai* on pp. 301 f.

¹³ Verschueren, l.c.

In every village visited by the *déma* a celebration takes place. The preparations for such a celebration are fairly extensive and imply that previous to the *déma's* departure from his abode at Tamargar the villages involved consult each other on the actual sequence of his respective visits. On this point we have no information at all.

For the rest, all we have available is a slightly romantic and popularly written description by Boelaars. The impression it leaves is of a somewhat idealized account rather than of a report of what actually happens.¹⁴ However that be, before *Sosom* sets out on another tour, the village chief of Yanggandur is supposed to pay his respects to a certain old man who lives in a house on the hill of Tamargar in the vicinity of Yanggandur. Boelaars calls the old man the keeper of the secret. When the chief and his retinue arrive, they find the old man in front of his house. A piece of bamboo has been set up in the ground. The bamboo is said to be used for divining. If *Sosom* does not wish to make his annual journey, the bamboo will split as soon as the visiting chief has made known his request that *Sosom* set out on a new journey. When the bamboo does not split, some assistants of the old man suddenly start swinging the bullroarer somewhere behind the house, which betokens that *Sosom* is agreeable. As no mention is made of anything whatsoever which might cause the bamboo to split, the whole affair is pointless. All that can be said of it is that if ever the bamboo did split, the visitors would have as good a reason for being frightened as any consultant of divination ever could have. When we strip this cock-and-bull story of its fringe of false but fairly transparent secretiveness, all that remains is a rite conducted on a hill outside Yanggandur under the supervision of an old man, announcing *Sosom's* impending departure on a new tour.¹⁵ It is impossible that other villages associated with the tour would be left in ignorance. Another proof of these contacts is provided by Verschueren's communications on the celebrations in the various villages.

On the preparation of the rites Verschueren informs us that every village has to meet *Sosom* at the boundary of its territory. To that end the bullroarers are brought out. Every *boan* has its own bullroarer and there are at least as many bullroarers as there are *boan* partaking

¹⁴ Boelaars, Nieuw-Guinea p. 82.

¹⁵ In his letters (XI p. 4) Verschueren confirms that the story is meant for outsiders. An old initiate whom he interviewed on this point clearly showed his amusement, but admitted that an old man of Tamargar (Tamakar) had been the keeper of the *sosom* proper until his death a few years ago.

in the celebration. At the outskirts of their territory the men meet a party from the neighbouring village, which has just finished the celebration. The receiving party must rub their bullroarers against those of the visitors. The bullroarers have been anointed with sperma, but Verschueren's informants did not tell him whether it has been procured by a rite of *otiv-bombari* (ceremonial promiscuity) or in other ways. They just stated that, by making them touch the bullroarers of the village where the ceremony has just been finished, the bullroarers of the recipient party have been made 'alive'. From now on they may be sounded and every now and then their buzz is heard. The real *sosom* (bullroarer) is the bullroarer of the *Kai-zé*, because *Sosom* is their *déma*.¹⁶

Next to bullroarers, bamboo pipes are also used, made of a thin bamboo species called *bulu* in Malay. The bamboo is split lengthwise and (here I insert Wirz's description of the pipes; cf. M.A. III p. 37) the two halves are held together by wrapping up the ends with fibre. Blown into the closed pipe, the air is forced through the longitudinal fissure, producing a harsh and shrill tone. In other words, it is the same kind of pipe as the one described of the Trans-Fly people by Williams,¹⁷ an instrument which has nothing to do with a flute. Evidently these pipes cannot last long; when the bamboo dries up it will soon be impossible to produce a sound. In spite of the fact that the pipes are called the *nakari* of the *déma*, the five *iwag* which he carries under his arm,¹⁸ the pipes do not share in the sacral character of the bullroarer. At the ceremony on the border of the territory "these pipes neither need a special blessing nor are they made to touch the pipes of the opposite party".¹⁹

Verschueren continues by relating that after this ceremony the men prepare the *sosom-miráv*, the *sosom*-place. Every village has its traditional *sosom-miráv*, each place having its own name. Verschueren gives an almost complete list: at Mbur the *miráv* is *Bud*, at Sédadim *Serarnam*, at Yobar *Aropsoram* etc. In the *miráv* a structure up to eight meters high is erected, a platform which serves the giant as a seat. The whole place is enclosed with a fence more than two meters in height, built of tightly jointed coconut-leaves. Everything is cleaned up and decorated with croton and young coconut-leaves. Wooden forks

¹⁶ Verschueren, Letters V pp. 1 f.

¹⁷ Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 186 f.

¹⁸ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 36.

¹⁹ Verschueren, Letters V p. 2.

are placed alongside the fence. Round these, great quantities of food are piled up. In the meantime some enormous footprints have been made in the sand near the village. It also happens that the men defecate all on the same heap. In the morning the footprints and excrements are shown to the women and children to demonstrate that the giant has arrived and that the uninitiated had better keep away. This horse-play, although mentioned by almost every author dealing with the subject, is not an essential part of the rites and may be left out.²⁰ Interrupting Verschueren's account at this point, we note that this kind of buffoonery causes great merriment among the men, and warns off the women, while it may really frighten the children and more especially the neophytes. It is not very likely that the women should have been convinced that a real giant is about. The fact that *Sosom* is oftentimes announced as *Tépo-anem* or sodomite (lit. tailbone-man; see Geurtjens, Dict. v. *tépo*) does not leave much room for doubt about what is going on. Even so, the women may be supposed to apprehend that at the bottom of these buffooneries there is something really serious. Verschueren pointed out how his informants clearly distinguish between such practical jokes as the big footprints and, for example, the arrangement of the *sosom-miráv*. The footprints are a source of amusement, but the bullroarers and the *pungga* (i.e. either the phallic pole in the centre of the *sosom-miráv* or the dancing-place round the pole) are not so at all.²¹

According to one of F. Verschueren's informants the neophytes are boys between 7 and 10 years old. Having sound reasons for being somewhat apprehensive of a Marind-anem's familiarity with figures, I think this estimate of their age rather conservative. According to Wirz they are *patur* or *wokrèvid*; Verschueren himself mentions the fact that the boys are taken to the *sosom-miráv* by their *binahor*-fathers, which implies that they must at least be *aroi-patur* or at the very least about to be promoted to *aroi-patur*.²² In this context yet another question must be raised. Did initiation take place every year (and in that case it is highly improbable that boys of 7 years should be initiated), or was initiation concomitant with some special, less frequent celebration? This, indeed, is suggested by Berkhout's description, in which a distinction is made between a normal annual visit by *Sosom*, which is of one day's duration and unaccompanied by initiation, and a tri-

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Cf. above, pp. 117 ff. and p. 136 note 21.

annual visit lasting three days, as when there is initiation. Independent information by Viegen²³ confirms that normally *Sosom* stays for one day only, except when there are neophytes who have to be initiated, in which case he will stay longer, if necessary up to five days. Apparently we have to distinguish between a simple celebration without, and a more comprehensive ceremonial with initiation, a point of view explicitly confirmed by Verschueren, who stresses the fact that the rites were performed every year, adding that, in his experience, a celebration never lasted longer than one night, regardless of whether there were boys to be initiated or not. This circumstance does not rule out the possibility that, in earlier years, the celebration may have lasted longer when there were neophytes going to be initiated. In case there are no neophytes to be initiated, no high, wooden structure is erected. This about sums up the difference, as the dancing around the wooden phallus, the singing of the *bandra* and the appearance of *déma*-performers in the early morning make part of every celebration.²⁴ The limited number of the occasions for initiation would account for a certain variation in the age of the neophytes. The close association with the *binahor*-institution²⁵ leads to the inference that the ideal age for initiation is about the same as that for entrance into the *aroi-patur* or *wokraved* age-grade.

The preparations having been completed, the rites can begin. We follow Verschueren's description, the only one which is more detailed and has been verified by discussions with various informants. "When there are neophytes, they are assembled in the bush outside the *sosom-miráv*. Inside, a man, a *Kai-zé*, climbs the high ceremonial platform, where at intervals he swings the bullroarer. The instrument used is the ceremonial bullroarer of his clan and the *sosom* proper of the territorial group celebrating. The *binahor*-fathers of the neophytes (my informants maintain explicitly that they are always mothers' brothers to their wards) now go to the bush and fetch their boys, who are then made to sit down on some sheets of eucalyptus-bark spread out under the high platform. The boys are told to sit still without looking up or about them. In the evening the men assemble to

²³ Viegen, Sem. d'Ethn. 1923 p. 394.

²⁴ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 4 jo. V p. 2 and VIII p. 4.

²⁵ Cf. i.a. Berkhout, BKI 1919 pp. 445 f. and Verschueren's reference mentioned above.

decorate *Sosom*.²⁶ If possible, *Sosom* should be represented by a *Kai-sé* man.²⁷ After nightfall, the men, with *Sosom* in their midst, go to the *sosom-miráv*, making a thundering noise and singing the *bandra*, the sacred song of the *sosom*-rites, on their way. [It is assumed that the noise is produced by the bullroarers and the bamboo pipes]. On their arrival at the *sosom-miráv* a few of the men tear down the fence and now *Sosom* enters, slowly approaching the neophytes. In the meantime the men accompanying him are beating the boys with burning torches and wooden clubs (*kupa*). After the boys have met *Sosom*, they are presented by the initiates with the bullroarer of their clan, which they must keep in the men's house under the supervision of their *binahor*-fathers [another indication that the neophyte must be at least an *aroi-patur*, v. B.]. After having instructed them never to talk to the women about anything connected with the ritual, the *binahor*-fathers bring the boys to the edge of the bush outside the enclosure, where each of them is allocated a place of his own. For the rest of the night the boys are here subjected to promiscuous homosexual intercourse. Both informants insisted that this homosexual intercourse is subject to the same rules of procedure as ritual promiscuity with women (*otiv-bombari*).²⁸

One incident has a very special importance. Either just before the men enter the *sosom-miráv* or at the moment of the boys' confrontation with *Sosom* (when precisely this is, does not become apparent from Verschuieren's letter, but will be defined presently) a rather stout, hardwood pole is set up in the centre of the *sosom-miráv*. "The pole has a purely phallic form and is painted in red. Linus Mali [Verschuieren's informant, v. B.], when telling me this, added casually: 'You do know, don't you, that those of Saror cut off *Sosom's* penis?' When the boys are taken to the edge of the bush, the men tune up the *bandra* and go on singing till daybreak, all the time dancing round the pole in the centre".²⁹

Before we continue, it is necessary to compare Verschuieren's data with earlier communications such as those by Wirz and Berkhout. As far as homosexual promiscuity is concerned, they are fully confirmed. Whereas in everyday life the *binahor*-father has the exclusive right

²⁶ Verschuieren does not say where. Presumably they do it in the village. In the old days the *gotad* would have been a suitable place.

²⁷ Obviously a condition which is not always fulfilled.

²⁸ Verschuieren, Letters V p. 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

of using the boy and any relations the boy has with others may lead to outbursts of homosexual jealousy, there is promiscuity during the *sosom*-rites.³⁰ As far as the actual procedure of initiation is concerned, the description given by Wirz differs from Verschueren's in that Wirz has the boys brought into the *sosom-miráv*, where they are met by the community of the men seated around the platform and singing the *bandra*, while others are swinging the bullroarers and blowing the bamboo pipes. The homosexual intercourse would take place under the high platform.

Whereas Wirz does not give particulars on *Sosom*'s attire and performance, some other authors do, notably Viegen, Nevermann and Boelaars. According to Viegen he is impersonated by an old man who climbs the high platform. "On his head he has a crown of long cassowary plumes, in his left hand he holds a wooden staff and in his right an enormous wooden tooth [club?]. A string of cut-off heads hangs from his left shoulder. When the moon rises, he stands up and his long shadow falls on the assembled men. His shadow is the giant *Sosom*, who bestows his blessings on the assemblage".³¹ Nevermann gives more circumstantial information.³² The footprints of *Sosom* are reversed, the toes pointing backwards. *Sosom* himself is a giant, the ceremonial grounds are a glade in the forest. Here a tall post is set up which takes the place of the high platform described by Wirz. When *Sosom*'s voice, the bullroarer, resounds, the men, all naked except for the crown of cassowary plumes, run up and down the village, calling *umu*, *umu*.³³ Women and children now leave the place. According to the Kumbe people the men on entering the ceremonial grounds find *Sosom* lying curled up round the post, just like a dog. He addresses the men, exhorting them not to follow foreign customs too zealously. While *Sosom*, who is decorated in the Marind-anim fashion, is having his meal and his *wati*, *bandra* is sung, as well as various other songs. When the singing flags, the bullroarers are swung to put zest into the singers again. It is said that the sound comes from the post, but in reality it comes from the thicket nearby. Finally, *Sosom* devours all the neophytes and adolescents (in Okaba the older men, too), each time he swallows one, disgorging another through his posterior parts. Nevermann (having part of his information from

³⁰ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 34; Berkhout, BKI 1919 p. 446.

³¹ Viegen, Sem. d'Ethn. 1923 p. 394.

³² Nevermann, ZfE 1939 pp. 24 f.

³³ Cf. *Sosom*'s singing *mu'u*, *mu'u*, as related in the myth recorded above, pp. 271 f.

Verschuieren, who, at the time, was a young missionary) adds that the information given is of the kind supplied to the uninitiated.

Boelaars is more elaborate.³⁴ In 1952 he witnessed a *sosom* celebration at Wendu. The feast was announced as a definite formal farewell to old-time ritual and the celebration was a public event. This implies that the performance was not wholly genuine. Even so, the recorded experience is of great interest. Boelaars' account conforms to a great extent to that by Verschuieren. The neophytes are brought to the festive grounds and made to sit under the platform, with their backs to the entrance. Some sort of removable fence encloses the place. *Sosom* has donned an enormous headgear made of thin reeds covered with white down. His face is hidden behind the *batend* mask,³⁵ his breast is covered with fibre and a heavy red-brown skirt folds round his limbs. A garland of bright croton-leaves is draped over his shoulders and down his back hang the long strands of his hairdo. Surrounded by men dancing and swinging their bullroarers, *Sosom* proceeds to the festive grounds. From the bush alongside the path he follows, the shrill sound of the pipes pierces the air. Jigging and dancing, circling round the *déma* in their midst, the cluster of shouting and singing men jostles into the grounds, where the frightened neophytes huddle under the platform. Suddenly the structure moves to and fro, as if a gigantic monster had leapt upon it. A hideous black something descends upon the neophytes: the tail of the monster. The thundering noise has stopped. An eerie silence prevails when the fence is taken away and the uncles and fathers of the boys grasp their arms and drag them out of the enclosure to meet the *déma*. At the same time a hardwood pole is set up and as soon as it stands upright the ordeal starts anew. The *déma*, flanked by men swinging bullroarers and blowing pipes, starts moving round the pole, followed by all those present, the neophytes each between two elders, who have taken them by the hand. At last the *déma* kneels down and in front of the boys his decorations are taken off him. The *déma* is revealed to the boys as an ordinary man. Then the dancing round the post continues.

This description by Boelaars provides a welcome addition to the story told by Verschuieren. The revelatory character of the procedure is clarified and the moment of planting the pole, obviously *Sosom's* erected penis, is now defined and thereby becomes meaningful. The

³⁴ Boelaars, *Nieuw-Guinea* pp. 83 ff.

³⁵ Cf. above, p. 325.

combined versions of Verschueren and Boelaars must be preferred to any of the earlier descriptions, and particularly Verschueren's communications may be regarded as authoritative. Among other things, his statement that homosexual intercourse takes place in the bush is more in harmony with Marind-anim custom than is Wirz's suggestion that it takes place under the platform. The detailed account by Verschueren is obviously the result of long and careful discussions of the various details. Nevermann's picture of *Sosom* lying cuddled up round the pole like a dog must be discarded, as well as other details inconsistent with Verschueren's account. It is especially Viegen's communications which now seem fairly valueless. Even *Sosom's* being decorated with a garland of skulls seems doubtful, but later, when dealing with the *imo*-rites and with headhunting, we shall come across data giving evidence that somehow or other Viegen cannot have been so much beside the mark.³⁶ Better substantiated are the use of the *humum*, *Sosom's* headgear made of thin reeds covered with white down, and that of the long tail descending on the neophytes. Verschueren, granting that on some points Boelaars' description is more detailed than his own, recorded that his Wendu informants, when examining *Sosom's* decorations which had been left in his house by Boelaars, denied that the *humum* made part of *Sosom's* prescribed ornaments. However, the contention is contradictory, because in another context a Wendu man explicitly referred to the *humum* as an ornament of *Sosom*.³⁷ Of the tail descending on the neophytes Verschueren reports that he, too, has heard rumours about it, but that he has no information on its meaning.³⁸

A last point to be made is the following. When describing the ceremony on the boundary of the group-territory Verschueren stated that every participating *boan* has at least one bullroarer. *Boan* of course may mean clan or phratry as well as subclan. Whatever it actually means in this context, one thing is certain, viz. that the number of bullroarers is limited and falls far below the number of men involved in the ceremonial. This is well borne out by the procedure. What with the men having to sing (and a rather big choir is needed to drown out the noise produced by bullroarers and pipes) and at the same time to swing bullroarers and to blow pipes, it must be a rather limited number of bullroarers that can actually be sounded.

³⁶ Cf. below, pp. 664 and 762.

³⁷ In a discussion of the *gari*; cf. above, p. 366.

³⁸ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 4.

Now we must return to Verschueren's story and consider the next part of the ritual. "At daybreak the dancing is stopped and now a man of the *Mahu-zé* clan, representing an old woman, enters the festive grounds with a *kipa* (a round fishing-net). Aided by some younger men of the same *boan*, he enacts the scene of the fishing women. My informant Saham-imu explains that *Sosom* was caught in their net by fishing women. To my question whether all these women were really *Mahu-zé* he replies: 'No, but the *iwag* who gave birth to *Sosom* was a *Mahu-zé*'. While the performance is in progress, another procession is being lined up. Just behind the fishing women comes the sago *déma* with his *nakarun*, then the *Geb-zé déma* with a coconut in his hand, followed by the *Basik-Basik* with a taro and the pig, the *Bragai-zé* with the dog, the *Kai-zé* with a yam, the *Ndik-end* with *wati* and finally the *Samkakai*, represented by two romping wallabies. My informants insist that it is always the totem that comes first, followed by the relevant *déma*. The feast is wound up with a copious meal".³⁹

So much for Verschueren's communications, which contribute substantially to our knowledge of the actual procedure, though even his description of the show of *déma* at the end of the ritual is somewhat sketchy. Performances of this kind were reported earlier by Wirz and Boelaars. According to the former the ceremonies are not everywhere executed in the same way. In Borem and neighbouring villages masked *déma*-performers will appear, just as on the occasion of feasts and *mayo* ceremonies. In this case there are four performers, representing a wallaby, a *kariw*-snake, a black cockatoo (*kapiog*), and a hornbill respectively. Before the beginning of the ceremonies they enter the festive grounds from the bush, leaping in a peculiar way, slightly stooping, each carrying a disc-headed stone club (*kupa*). The club, held with both hands, is aslant, the head pointing downwards. Several times they walk round the high platform, after which they withdraw into the bush.⁴⁰ We note that Wirz has the procession take place at the beginning of the rites and not at the end. The totems involved do not represent the four phratries, the *kariw*-snake and the hornbill being *Geb-zé* totems, the wallaby belonging to the phratry of *Aramemb* and the *kapiog* to the *Bragai-zé*. In one respect only do these data conform with those supplied by Verschueren: the club is a *kupa*, be it that in Verschueren's description it is a wooden club and in Wirz's

³⁹ Verschueren, Letters V p. 3. For the episode of the fishing women, cf. above, p. 272.

⁴⁰ Wirz, M.A. III p. 38.

a stone one which, besides, serves a different purpose.

Boelaars gives the following account of the last part of the *sosom* ceremony performed in public at Wendu in 1951. In the early morning every *boan* stages its own performance. The *Mahu-zé* bring sago and the boys are instructed never to spill sago. The *Geb-zé* show a coconut and the boys are taught how to husk a coconut. The *Kai-zé* bring *wati* and the *Samkakai* enact the scene of a wallaby pair at their erotic play. The *Basik-Basik* imitate a boar-hunt and the *Bragai-zé* hunt an eagle. The boys are given food by each clan in turn, but this is no longer (as in the old days) mixed with sperma. When the meal is finished, the boys lie down in two rows. An old man passes between them. He has two bullroarers, one in each hand, which he holds to the navel of each of the boys, the boys swearing that they will observe the tribal rules. Earlier, men of the next village had arrived. They partake in the latter part of the feast and they will now take *Sosom* to their own festive grounds.⁴¹

There are several details in this description which deviate fairly widely from Verschuieren's account. Considering that, at the time, Boelaars was new to the area and did not know the language, I am inclined to prefer Verschuieren's communications. The boys' swearing that they will obey the tribal rules smells of the foreign village teacher's interpretation of a ceremonial act which he has not quite understood. The instructions with regard to how to deal with sago and coconut belong to the *mayo*-initiation. It is possible that they are a recent introduction in which the *sosom*-rites have taken over some of the functions of the *mayo*-rites, which have long fallen into desuetude. In this case, however, we should not conclude too rashly that the show as presented is a recent innovation. Verschuieren, too, made mention of it and later annotated the information as follows: "It is remarkable that until the present day *sosom* adepts have time and again stressed the fact that the neglect of the rites has had an adverse influence on Marind-anim preoccupation with agriculture. When questioned what precisely the nature of the relationship between the two is, the recurring answer is: 'Well, does not the procession in the early morning, when the *bandra* has been finished, demonstrate that it is the *déma* who bestowed the sago, the coconut, the taro, the yam, the *wati* and everything the Marind eat or apply?' I must admit that the explanation does not make things as clear as I would have them, but another point always brought up in this context may be more important, viz. that

⁴¹ Boelaars, Nieuw-Guinea pp. 85 f.

the ritual ends with an enormous meal. Gardens were prepared several months in advance. This gives some substance to the contention, not only as far as the *sosom*-rites are concerned, but in respect of all other rituals as well".⁴² We have very little to add to this conclusion, except that the rites described by Boelaars were a public show, and that, consequently, there is very little certainty whether various elements were presented in the correct way or order. Our final conclusion must be that the order of presentation of the various *déma* at the end of the rites is as it was noted down by Verschueren, who is very definite on this point.

A few points still need some further discussion. Before they enter the *sosom-miráv*, the neophytes are told that *Sosom* is a giant who is going to devour them, after which they will either be thrown up again or excreted anally. Similarly, Cappers was told that *Sosom* devours some of the boys and then defecates to disgorge them. Stinking badly, they come out again and henceforward they will be suffering from ringworm.⁴³ It is also said that he slits open the stomachs of the darker boys, replacing their intestines by something else (a coconut according to Wirz), after which the wound is invisibly healed. The light-coloured boys are devoured and instantly spied out.⁴⁴ The exact meaning of the symbolism is not very clear. Viegen in an interview explained that in the case of the darker boys *Sosom* functions as a man in the homosexual intercourse, and in the other case as a woman, but this is an explanation which is not very plausible. It is more likely that both expressions, devouring and cutting up, are symbols of one and the same thing, viz. intercourse. The main point is that in this context the association of light-coloured boys with the sun plays a part. The cutting-up may also refer to the bullroarer, a cult-instrument which plays a prominent part in myth and magic and deserves of a broader discussion.

Above it was pointed out that the bullroarer is identical with a penis.⁴⁵ Elsewhere we demonstrated that there are two kinds of bull-roarer, the one lancet-shaped, the other fish-shaped. The lancet-shaped ones are wholly unadorned, while those with carved decorations have a fish-form.⁴⁶ A photograph demonstrating the fish-shape of Marind-

⁴² Verschueren, Letters XI p. 4.

⁴³ Boelaars, op. cit. p. 83; Cappers, J.P. 1907 p. 729.

⁴⁴ Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 464; Wirz, M.A. III p. 36.

⁴⁵ Pp. 269 f.

⁴⁶ Van Baal, BKI 1963 p. 206.

anim bullroarers is reprinted in Plate XI fig. 1. These bullroarers differ substantially from those in use among the tribes of the Gulf of Papua, which represent a human figure with the head at the end in which the hole is made. The photographs of bullroarers published by Wirz show a wider range of differentiation.⁴⁷ Although the fish-shape dominates, there are also a few lancet-shaped bullroarers with carved motifs. One of the specimens reproduced resembles a Papua Gulf bullroarer, but this particular specimen (nr. 19) is from the Torassi, outside Marind-anim territory.⁴⁸ Far more convincing are the various magical spatulae reproduced by Wirz in Plate 10 of Part III. The *tang* among them, presented by Wirz as 'Zauberpfeile' (magical arrows), are almost without exception bullroarers in fish-shape which lack a string-hole and for this reason cannot be sounded. Wirz, confused at first by the fact that the natives repeatedly called a bullroarer a *tang*, finally concluded that in one way or another a bullroarer may also serve as a magical instrument (*tang*), a conclusion fully confirmed by the following passage from one of Verschuieren's letters: "*Sosom* is still in the bullroarer he presented to man, it being his voice. Himself, he is at Sota in the very bullroarer which he gave. It is still preserved there. Another, very secret name of *Sosom* is *Kobu*. It is the name used by medicine-men, who invoke *Sosom* when they want to cure somebody of black magic (*kambara*). Saham-imu [Verschuieren's informant] says that only *Sosom* is able to cure a person of *kambara*, because in fact he is himself the *déma* of *kambara*. And in a whisper old Saham-imu adds: 'The *tang* and the bullroarer are one and the same thing' ".⁴⁹

The communication is both curious and important. The shape of the *tang* leaves little doubt as to its identity with a bullroarer. Wirz's hesitant statement in which, more or less in spite of himself, he admits the fundamental relationship between *tang* and bullroarer, is fully confirmed by Verschuieren's aged informant. More interesting is that the old man is aware of the identity and, at the same time, considers it a real secret. And, indeed, a real secret it is, because a fundamental truth of Marind-anim religious philosophy is embodied in this identification of penis-symbol and magical implement. In every rite sperma, the fluid ejaculated from the penis, is used as a life-giving medicine.

⁴⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III Tafel 6.

⁴⁸ It should be noted that among the Trans-Fly people an identification of fish and bullroarer is not lacking either; cf. Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 331 ff.

⁴⁹ Verschuieren, Letters V p. 1.

In this context the penis may be seen as a life-giving instrument. However, it may also bring death. *Sosom*, whose identity with the sun is beyond doubt, who appears when the dry season is well under way and who therefore must be associated with life and youth (youth is associated with east) is said here to be also the *déma* of *kambara*, the most deadly kind of black magic, of which only he can cure the victim. It is important to note here that for the effective manipulation of *kambara* the use of semen, collected by a rite of *otiv-bombari*, is indispensable. Here the semen is used to inflict death. The Marind have no concept which may serve as a clear-cut equivalent of *mana*, but, if ever, it should now become clear that the mysterious power apprehended as the essence of the *déma* and the ritual initiated by them, is the same as the obnoxious power manipulated by the sorcerer. The fundamental unity of *fas* and *nefas* of the sacred in the Marind-anim religious view opens up new vistas of their system of classification. The dual association of the *Sapi-zé* with, alternately, the *Basik-Basik* and the *Kai-zé* is no longer the baffling mystery which it seemed to be. *Sosom*, the *Kai-zé* *déma*, himself is called the real *déma* of *kambara*. *Sosom's* identity with the phallus is beyond doubt. He is the bullroarer, and the bullroarer is the phallic symbol par excellence. Every boy is given a bullroarer on the occasion of his initiation. The thing has the shape of a fish, which, in turn, is a phallic symbol itself, as is most obviously demonstrated in the myth of *Sosom*, who, as a fish, enters a woman's vagina and impregnates her. Another example is found in the almost identical story of the birth of *Mongumer-anem* and the bow *déma*.⁵⁰ The reproduction of Vertenten's picture of the *anda*-fish and of the shape of man at the moment of his birth from the underworld, suggested identity of *anda*-fish and bullroarer.⁵¹

The identity of bullroarer and *tang* and the dualistic functions of *Sosom* are of specific interest with regard to the dualism inherent in the moiety-structure. Outwardly, one moiety is associated with the religious and beneficent aspect of the mysterious power incorporated in phallus and semen, while the other is associated with its malignant aspect and with copulation, the ejaculation of semen, but also with castration and female functions. One moiety seems superior to the other. Esoterically, however, the difference falls away. *Sosom*, the representative of sun and fire, is also a castrate, and the *Sami-rek* initiate is also a stork. Obviously, the difference between the two

⁵⁰ Above, pp. 379 f.

⁵¹ Above, pp. 209 and 269.

moieties is not a difference in essence, but in roles. The one has the male role and the other the female. The role-pattern makes it necessary that all the roles connected with the ritual manipulation of supernatural power as embodied in the beneficial — and at the same time lethal — power of semen are distributed over the two moieties. Hence the uncertain position of the *Sapi-zé*,⁵² who in their death-bringing aspect are opposed to the sun, but derive their power to kill from the supernatural effect of the male semen. The incumbent rank-differentiation between the moieties is held in check by their fundamental identity, expressed in the dualism of the moieties (and phratries) themselves, and in the castration of *Sosom*, who, as the most specific representative of the male sex, would appear to be the last to be represented as a castrate. The ultimate explanation of the dialectics might be found in the psychological consequence of a perfectly one-sided concentration on the power of the male sex in a phallic religion in which the female sex is denied an essential function and is accepted merely in an accessory and auxiliary role. The glorification of the phallus leads to the objectivation of this part of the male anatomy, thus degrading it from an integral part of the male self into a separate object. The inescapable consequence of the reification of the phallus is its separation from the human body; it results in castration and castration anxiety. Here, however, it is not an individual who morbidly concentrates on his sex, but a male community expressing its pride by erecting a symbolic phallus in the centre of the ceremonial grounds. The community of the males expresses its solidarity and its antagonism to the female sex in the glorification of a blood-stained magnified phallus and professes its contempt of the female sex by promiscuous acts of sodomy. The celebrating men's community assigns the various motives which, in the *Sosom*-cult, lead to a ritual outburst of male absolutism, as roles to its constituent groups, the one moiety being primarily associated with the idea of male triumph and independence, the other with castration-fear and indispensable female roles. Still, it is not a community of psychopaths. A compensation for the humiliation of being assigned a lesser role may be found in the dualism inherent in each of the phratries and in the reversal of roles which occurs when *Sosom* is presented as a castrate and the feminized *Bragai-zé* are allowed to have the word for ejaculation of sperma as their hunting yell. The tension between the fundamental equality of all men and the inequality

⁵² Ibid. pp. 92, 298 and 423.

of the roles assigned to each group results in that curious mixture of dualism and monism characteristic of the Marind-anim religious pattern.

In the light of these considerations it is hard to maintain my former view that the *sosom*-cult is essentially a foreign cult, in which I followed Wirz, who stated that the Marind-anim borrowed it from their eastern neighbours. The *sosom*-cult is so fully integrated in Marind-anim life that we simply have to accept it as genuinely Marindinese, whatever its origin. In our concept of the origin of Marind-anim culture as the result of multilateral contacts between neighbouring and mutually related groups, the question whether a certain ritual is foreign or native is hardly relevant. We have to confine ourselves to stating that the *sosom*-ritual makes part of the ceremonial life of the easternmost section of the Marind. We cannot say that the bullroarer has been adopted from the neighbouring Kanum-anim. Verschuieren's enquiries give perfectly satisfactory evidence that, contrary to earlier reports, the *Kanum-anim* do not participate in the cult which is, to all intents and purposes, a Marind-anim institution. The use of the bullroarer, the focal implement of the cult, is not confined to the Marind-anim east of the Kumbe. We know that it plays a part in the ceremony for driving out sickness at Elebémě in the far western region of the *Mayo-Marind*⁵³ and that the instrument is used also in the *imo*-rites and in the upper Bian ritual.⁵⁴ The instrument is also known in Frederik Hendrik Island.⁵⁵ The main arguments for connecting the cult with the initiation rites of the eastern tribes are the place where the primeval *sosom* is kept (Tamargar), the homosexuality with which it is associated and the use of the curious bamboo pipes which are typical for this region. In its mythical and religious context, however, the *sosom* ceremonial is purely Marind. The credit for being the first to point out this genuinely Marindinese character of the cult goes to Mr. C. Op 't Land.⁵⁶

Though Op 't Land's comment on the origin of the cult must be accepted as in the main correct, I cannot go along with him when he identifies *Sosom* with the sun in the rainy season.⁵⁷ One of his arguments is that the *sosom*-rites are a sequel to the *mayo*-initiation rites,⁵⁸ a conception not corroborated by fact. Yet, his discussion of the various

⁵³ Below, pp. 636 f.

⁵⁴ Ibid. pp. 620, 633, 637 and 569 ff.

⁵⁵ I collected two small items in the villages in the western part of the south coast.

⁵⁶ In NGS 1959 pp. 207 ff., 260 ff.

⁵⁷ Op. cit. p. 265.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 266.

details of the cult is important, because he demonstrates that the actual connection between the ceremonies and the dry season is less stringent than would appear from the writings of earlier authors, who all agree that it is a very close one. Pöch has *Sosom* come during the southeast monsoon, Viegen in August, Heldring during the east monsoon and Wirz in September or October.⁵⁹ That seems definite enough, but in Wirz's *Dämonen und Wilde*, a book based on his diary, *Sosom* visits Borem and Sarira (east of present-day Sēpadim) on the 18th of January.⁶⁰ This implies that he started his tour early in January, at the beginning of the rainy season. This might be used as an argument in favour of *Sosom's* supposed connections with the sun in the rainy season. However, Op 't Land himself points out that Nevermann reports a *sosom* celebration that took place between June and September (cf. pp. 473 f.). Personally, I remember a *sosom* celebration at Bad (Kumbe valley) in 1937 and I think the event took place, not at the end, but rather at the onset of the dry season. A letter which was written in the same year and which survived World War II gives evidence that the celebration was brought to my notice in the course of June. The connection with the beginning of the dry season is emphasized by Verschuieren, who calls my attention to the requirement that they have a gorgeous meal at the end of the celebration. This makes it more or less compelling to hold the feast at the beginning of the dry season, when the gardens produce yams and taro in abundance.⁶¹ The main point I want to make is that the ideal time for the celebration of the ritual is, to all intents and purposes, the beginning of the dry season, though the actual celebration may, for reasons unknown to us, take place at another time of the year. We shall find that a similar course was followed in the celebration of the *mayo*-rites.

The genuinely Marindinese character of the *Sosom*-rites is amply confirmed by the tenacity with which the Marind clung to them. We already pointed out that in 1951 Boelaars witnessed a ceremony at Wendu which was announced as a farewell to ancestral ceremonial. From one of Verschuieren's letters I gather that a similar ceremony was held at Buti as late as 1954. He reports that on both occasions the women, on seeing the swinging of the bullroarers, wetted themselves with fear. So right up to the day when allegedly they wanted definitely

⁵⁹ Pöch, *Sitzungsber. Kais. Akad. Wien* 1906, Abt. I p. 901; Viegen, *Sem. d'Ethn.* 1923 p. 394; Heldring, *TBG* 1913 p. 464; Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 36.

⁶⁰ *Dämonen* pp. 140 f.

⁶¹ Verschuieren, *Letters XI* p. 5.

to have done with the ceremonial, the bullroarer had preserved its power to inspire awe and anxiety.⁶² At that time it had been almost forty years since the last *mayo*-initiation took place. Even if we admit the possibility of some form of *mayo*-initiation having been celebrated secretly in the years after 1920, such initiation must have taken place — as it actually did — in a condensed form, which could not have been regarded as a real substitute and must soon have lost its attraction. *Sosom* celebrations, however, continued to be organized for many years in succession. In this context I may relate at some length my own experience with the *sosom* ceremonies at Bad in 1937. It may serve as an illustration of the dangers of interfering with other people's religious life. Though I have to quote from memory, I remember the main features of the story well enough.

In 1937, some time in June, the Roman Catholic Mission at Merauke informed me that a *sosom* celebration had taken place at Bad, and requested me to take action, on the plea that secret feasts of this kind had been forbidden ever since the epidemic of venereal granulome. At the time I was *controleur* (an administrative official equivalent in rank to a junior assistant district officer) of South New Guinea and I had to deal with the case. As far as the prohibition of these feasts was concerned, the Mission was neither wholly right nor wholly wrong. That feasts of this kind were banned was beyond doubt, but the legal basis of the prohibition was tenuous. I shall not enter into a discussion of the legal ins and outs. Nor do I think I did so at the time, though it would without doubt have been wiser if I had. For me, the important fact was that in those days venereal granulome had not yet disappeared; so, under the circumstances, a ritual connected with homosexual promiscuity was obnoxious as regards the general conditions of public health. Another consideration I entertained was that if the ban on feasts had to be lifted, it should be done gradually and, besides, if a beginning had to be made with a more normal and more humane policy vis-à-vis native feasts, it would be making a perfectly false start if we were to begin a feud with the Mission (which, at the time, was very much against feasts of any kind) by protecting sodomy. A couple of weeks later I set out in a motor-boat to pay a visit to the Kumbe valley.

Although the celebration at Bad must have been common knowledge all along the Kumbe, everybody professed complete ignorance. I had travelled up-river as far as Kaverau, looking for somebody who could

⁶² *Ibid.* IV p. 7.

serve as a witness; then I returned downstream to Bad, still without having found anybody who could be expected to give evidence. At Bad I had a long talk with the elders of the village, headed by Pandri, the village-chief, a middle-aged scoundrel with a beautiful command of Malay. Things did not go too well. My question when *Sosom* had visited Bad was immediately parried by Pandri, who politely enquired whether *Sosom* was a Marind or a stranger. When I answered that *Sosom* was a *déma*, the whole assembly seemed stupefied. Obliging, I told them everything I knew of *Sosom*, which earned me a great deal of admiring approval, the old men whistling softly and shaking their heads in token of the most genuine amazement. "Well, Sir", Pandri confided to me when I had finished, "this is a very, very beautiful story indeed. We are very glad you told it to us, because such a thing we have never heard before". I gave Pandri a long stare, but blatantly innocent, he registered admiration, looking me straight in the eyes as if he was hoping for more. I felt I was being taken for a ride, a feeling that had a galvanizing effect on a young and still ambitious officer who, at that moment, did a bit of very rapid thinking. We were all sitting together and looking at each other, our faces beaming with benevolence. I smiled at the chief and said: "Well, Pandri, I am glad the story is so much to your liking. I will do you a favour. As it is, I happen to have a few *sosom* down at my house in Merauke. I shall come back and bring these bullroarers with me and then we are going to have a fine performance, here in the village-place, where the women, too, can enjoy it".

Exploding a bomb could not have had a more dramatic effect. All the kind black faces suddenly turned ashen and haggard, and Pandri put a trembling hand imploringly on my arm: "No Sir! please Sir! you can't do that. We shall all die!" he whispered. "All right", I said, "just tell me what happened", and they told me all I already knew, taking care to add very little to my knowledge. They swore that they had not committed sodomy, because, they said, "We are afraid of the awful wounds the disease may inflict on a boy's anus and buttocks".

I sentenced them all to fourteen days' detention, quoting an article from the penal code which earned me the stinging criticism of my superiors, who were more interested in form than in matter. For the Bad people the fortnight's detention was rather unimportant. Other things weighed more heavily with them. They came with me on my way home and in every village we passed I saw the old men sitting by the side of the path, with dejected faces consulting each other on

the disaster which had befallen them. The worst came a couple of weeks later, on their return home. They brought out their bullroarers and showed them to their women, whirling them in the village-place, because the big man at Merauke knew everything. It is interesting to note that later on they must have changed their minds again, because it is evident from the data communicated by Verschueren and Boelaars that they must have revived the annual celebration of the ritual. It serves to confirm that the secrecy of the cult is not the real guarantee of the awe in which the bullroarer is held. The bullroarer is feared because of its power to impart life and death, because it symbolizes the sacred in its most condensed form.

The genuinely Marindinese character of the *sosom*-rites and the tenacity with which the Marind cling to them having been demonstrated, the conformities with the initiation rites of the Keraki again claim our attention. We already noted the main points: the bullroarer, homosexual intercourse and the use of the bamboo pipe. Among the Keraki the bamboo pipe is not shown on the same occasion as the bullroarer. First the bullroarer is demonstrated, while the bamboo pipe follows at a later stage of the boys' seclusion. Although the bamboo pipes are called the bullroarer's wives and children, it is open to question whether they ever are sounded simultaneously with it.

More interesting is the rationalization of homosexual intercourse. The boys have to grow and the mothers are expected to be astonished at their sons' having grown in stature when they return from seclusion.⁶³ This alleged effect of sodomy is apparently parallel to the idea that prolonged cohabitation is necessary for pregnancy to be successful. The foetus must be built up through an accumulation of semen.⁶⁴ In the initiation rites the first to have homosexual intercourse with a neophyte is his cross-cousin.⁶⁵ We are inclined to compare the relationship between the two with a marriage, as cross-cousin marriage prevails among the Keraki,⁶⁶ but Williams does not appear to have paid attention to this aspect and we must confine ourselves to pointing out the possibility of a marriage-substitute. Some similar ideas might be current among the Marind-anim, where a boy's main paederast is again a relative belonging to the opposite moiety, albeit that he is not a cross-cousin, but a maternal uncle. It is true that this rules out the

⁶³ Williams, *Trans-Fly* p. 204.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 172.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 188.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 128.

idea of a marriage-substitute, but it certainly does not conflict with the notion of promoting the boy's growth by a mother-substitute who deposits his semen in his body. Curiously enough, we know very little of Marind-anim ideas of conception. It is probable enough that they, too, believe in multiple cohabitation being a necessity for successful pregnancy. Ideas of this kind are widely spread in these parts. Landtman reports them from the Kīwai⁶⁷ and Pouwer from the Mimika people.⁶⁸ Among the latter the philosophy underlying this particular conduct differs slightly from that of the Keraki, but that does not matter very much in this context, as any concepts of this kind would fit in perfectly well with the Marind-anim ideas on the mysterious potencies of semen. The hypothesis that the Marind foster comparable notions is advanced by Verschueren, who writes: "Homosexuality is widely spread and occurs among the Jaqai, the Auyu, the Yéi and the Boadzi as well as among the ancient Marind. In our studies of the notions underlying the practice F. Boelaars and I found that, everywhere, the act is seen as a necessary condition for the completion of a boy's physical development. The Yéi and the Jaqai in particular are perfectly explicit on this point. Consequently, I fully understand that you think of a parallel with the notion that repeated sexual intercourse is a requirement for successful pregnancy. As a matter of fact, the latter is also the opinion of the Marind, but they do not seek its implementation in prolonged, repeated intercourse with the same man, but in *otiv-bombari*, intercourse with many men in rapid succession. . . . I do not think I can affirm that the Marind also hold the belief that for a successful completion of his wife's pregnancy a husband, too, must continue to have frequent intercourse with her. Whereas the Jaqai, the Yéi and the Auyu explicitly adhere to them, notions of this kind hardly prevail among the Marind, who emphasized the importance of *otiv-bombari* as a means to this effect".⁶⁹

2. THE MAYO-CULT

SETTING THE STAGE AND ENTRY OF THE NEOPHYTES

The dominant place the *mayo*-cult occupies in Marind-anim religious thought is amply demonstrated by its prominent role in mythology. The life-histories of *Uaba*, *Méru*, *Yazwi*, the *Mayo-patur* and their

⁶⁷ Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* p. 230.

⁶⁸ Pouwer, *Mimika-cultuur* pp. 55-60.

⁶⁹ Verschueren, *Letters XI* pp. 5 f. (rendered in a slightly condensed form).

various metamorphoses, *Dawi*, *Aramemb*, *Habé* and its occupants such as the wallaby- and rattan *déma* and *Sapi*, *Yawima*, the cassowary, the stork and the fire, the *Diwa-rek déma*, *Wokabu* and *Opeko-anem* and his companions, they are all linked in one way or another with this particular cult. The *imo*- and *rapa*-cults, too, are presented as emanating from the *mayo*.⁷⁰ Even the myth of *Sosom* does not lack a reference to the cult.⁷¹ It is true that Wirz collected most of his data among the *Mayo*-Marind, but it cannot be denied that he worked also in *imo* villages such as Sangasé and Domandé.⁷² Probably the reticent *Imo*-Marind withheld quite a deal of information regarding their own views on the origin and place of their ritual and we have to count with the possibility that our sources are biased towards the *mayo* point-of-view. Even so, we have to admit that the *mayo*-cult dominates. As far as can be ascertained, the various myths referring to the *mayo*-ritual are the common property of the relevant phratries, and there is no indication whatsoever that it makes any difference whether their members participate in the *mayo*- or in the *imo*-rites. We simply have to accept the basic importance of the primordial *mayo* ceremonies as a given fact.

The cult is so fundamental to Marind-anim thought that, just like moiety-dichotomy,⁷³ it is not even presented as having once been instituted. The *imo*- and *rapa*-cults have their myths of origin, just as the *sosom*-cult has. The cults of the Boadzi, the Kiwai and the Keraki have their originators.⁷⁴ The *mayo*-cult is just there and the great heroes of mythology play their roles in it as part and parcel of their place and function in the Marind-anim world and society. It is suggested that the *mayo*-ritual is this world and this society in their religious form, a point of view corroborated by the fact that it is only through initiation that the neophytes become acquainted with this world as it really is and learn how to go about all the activities and occupations of everyday life in the proper way.

Our information on the procedure of the rites and the contents of the various scenes is not proportionate to their importance. Earlier than any other rite they were banned by the administration and after

⁷⁰ Not only in the mythology as related by Wirz, but also by Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 367.

⁷¹ See above, p. 272.

⁷² Cf. Wirz, M.A. II p. 43; Dämonen pp. 37 ff. and 118 ff.

⁷³ Cf. above, p. 428.

⁷⁴ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 12; Landtman, Kiwai Papuans pp. 365 ff.; Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 295-314.

1911 they could only be executed secretly and in an abridged form. I never managed to find out the legal foundation of this administrative measure. Probably the prohibition was enforced without any legal basis at all. The early administrators in those parts were not commissioned in consideration of their juridical abilities, but because they were expected to be capable of finding practical solutions to practical problems. Once the *mayo* ceremonies had been reported to be immoral, a practical administrator might be tempted to campaign for morality by issuing orders. Without having the authority to punish offenders, he still had the power to make a celebration impossible by sending a police patrol. Plate, who became assistant-resident of South New Guinea in 1912, was certainly not the kind of man to let himself be baulked by considerations of law when he felt that something ought to be done to stop the spread of venereal disease. In this vein he acted when, on his first patrol in the area, he found it to occur.⁷⁵ To the modern reader Plate's ideas seem fairly naive. His statement that first of all the Papuan has to realize that he is an uncivilized savage does not impress us as either helpful or practical, but it must be admitted that he was the first administrator in the area to succeed in enforcing a reasonable degree of law and order.⁷⁶ Another, and in view of our present purpose obnoxious, result of his ceaseless activity is the rapid disappearance of the rites. Of course they could not be suppressed all at once. Wirz states that they were continued in a contracted form, consisting mainly of sexual orgies and the distribution of food mixed with sperma among the neophytes. He suggests that such celebrations occurred as late as 1922,⁷⁷ a statement corroborated by Vertenten, who found that the people of Makalin were celebrating a *mayo*-initiation in November 1921.⁷⁸ He remembered that the last *mayo* celebration at Okaba in 1907 had resulted in several children born out of wedlock, who had subsequently been killed, and he immediately requested administrative action. The success of the government's intervention was complete. At the time I was controleur of Merauke (1936-1938) rumours circulated that *mayo* celebrations continued to be held in the most complete secrecy, but it is hardly possible that this should have been true, at least as far as the eastern area is concerned. West of the Bian the *mayo* celebrations continued. Every year, during the dry season, in

⁷⁵ Cf. his articles in TBB 1913 pp. 200 ff. and K.T. 1916 pp. 586 ff.

⁷⁶ Van Baal, TBG 1939 pp. 338 ff.

⁷⁷ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 5: "selbst bis in die allerjüngste Zeit".

⁷⁸ Vertenten, J.P. 1922 p. 9.

June or July, the men withdraw for a one-night's secret performance in the bush. Particulars are lacking and the ceremony cannot but have been a poor reminder of the grandeur of bygone days. Yet, it is certain that as late as 1952 a celebration took place at Wambi and there are indications that even to-day the *mayo* is still alive there.⁷⁹

As a result of all this intervention our information on the *mayo* is scanty. The description given by Viegen is short, extremely fragmentary (he witnessed only a few scenes) and more taken up with conjecture than with fact. The best description is that by Heldring. He, too, did not attend the whole celebration (which, in theory, takes 5 to 6 months and in reality probably even more), but he availed himself of the information given by the government-interpreter, Kwé Kiong Sioe, a man of mixed Chinese and Indonesian origin, who was present at all the celebrations in the villages east of the Maro and actually was initiated himself.⁸⁰ Kwé Kiong Sioe held the position of interpreter because he had married a Marind-anim woman and had managed to achieve a reasonable proficiency in their language. In later years he was a small trader at Wendu, better known to old-timers of Merauke as Baba Ki Oeng, an amiable, easy-going man with a broad knowledge of Marind-anim lore. Though the times I had dealings with him were only few, I found him a reliable informant. Owing to his assistance, Heldring's article has become our main document on the *mayo*-initiation. Wirz admits that but for Heldring's contribution it would have been impossible to have any clear picture of the *mayo*-rites.⁸¹ Evidently he relied very much on Heldring's communications, but in the 25 pages he wrote on the ceremonies he never made clear which items he did borrow from Heldring and which are the result of his own, subsequent inquiry, nor does he ever give reasons why his presentation of the facts differs from Heldring's. Another eye-witness to at least some of the ceremonies is Gooszen.⁸² He had his information mainly from the same sources as Heldring. Actually, he used both Viegen's and Heldring's contributions and his own report is little more than an abstract from that of Heldring. His additions are few in number. Lastly, there is Berkhout's article,⁸³ but all his information is from hearsay and its reliability is open to question. Wirz certainly was right

⁷⁹ Communicated by Verschueren, Letters XI p. 6.

⁸⁰ Heldring, TBG 1913, p. 444.

⁸¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 2.

⁸² Cf. Gooszen, BKI 1914 pp. 366-385.

⁸³ BKI 1919 pp. 438 ff.

in stating that the one important and reliable source is Heldring. He did not realize, however, that his own communications would have been more valuable if he had been more informative on his sources. Apart from this, there are a few casual observations made by early missionaries such as Cappers, Van de Koik and Vertenten. On the basis of these sources we shall try to give a description of the actual ceremonies.

We know for certain that in 1906 the *mayo*-initiation rites were celebrated in the villages between Str. Marianne and the Buraka, in Awehima, Baléwil, Wamal, Gelib, Dokib, Elebéme, Welongenko and Welba;⁸⁴ in 1907 between Buraka and Bian in the villages Wambi, Iwolj, Duv-miráv, Makalin, Okaba, Alaku and Méwi;⁸⁵ in 1908 between Bian and Maro in the villages Kaibursé, Kumbe, Anasai, Birok, Matara, Wendu, Bahor, Yatomb, Noh-otiv and Urumb; in 1909 in the villages east of the Maro: Nowari, Buti, Yéwati, Yobar, Sěpadim, Borem and Sarira. The villages of the interior followed those of the coast (Heldring). From Wirz we conclude that they actually joined a coastal village: Kuprik and the Badé-anim⁸⁶ joined Urumb; Saror joined Kumbe and Senam Kaibursé. Heldring mentions the fact that in the western interior Yawimu and Yomob joined the *mayo*, but Wirz is silent on this point. The villages celebrated the ceremonies each on its own account, but Berkhout adds that they might combine if the number of neophytes was too small,⁸⁷ a comment corroborated by Cappers' statement that Birok and Matara organized a joint celebration.⁸⁸ An important point is that the various villages of one section saw to it that the different parts of the cycle were performed more or less simultaneously. A celebration consisted of a prolonged series of ceremonies and, according to Heldring and Wirz, it took from five to six months to complete them.

Various authors concluded that in the year following the completion of the initiation rites in the eastern section the westernmost section started afresh, but there is nothing to show that this conclusion, logical

⁸⁴ In the enumeration of the villages of the various sections we follow Wirz.

⁸⁵ Wirz and Heldring add Alatep, but that cannot possibly be correct because Alatep joins the *imo*. Alatep is a part of Sangasé rather than a separate territorial group of its own.

⁸⁶ The Badé-anim are the people of Senayo, a small group which settled at Yakau on the Kumbe in the early days when administrative control was established along the river valleys. Cf. Verschueren, Letters XI p. 34 jo. Van Baal, *Memorie* p. 124.

⁸⁷ Berkhout, BKI 1919 p. 441.

⁸⁸ Cappers, *Ann.* 1909 p. 213.

as it seems, is borne out by fact. Though Heldring states that the celebration has to be repeated locally every four years, he does not substantiate his contention with facts and Van de Kolk even expresses the opinion that the rites are repeated every six years, while Viegen puts the interval at eight years.⁸⁹ It must be admitted that the succession of celebrations in each of the four sections does not imply that the fifth year the first section, the westernmost, must begin afresh. We can only conclude that once the westernmost section has started the celebration, the next section has to organize the celebration during the next year and so on. An interval of some years without any celebration at all is certainly a possibility, at least it is by no means improbable. The range of variation in the ages of the candidates⁹⁰ is more in accordance with an interval of six or more years between two local celebrations than with one of four years. The really interesting point in the succession of celebrations is the combination of co-ordinated local performances within one section with a west-east direction of the sectional succession. If we accept a six or more years' interval, the notion of a west-east direction is given even more emphasis. It means that there is a necessity for the eastern section to link up with its western neighbours. Once the cycle has started, it has to go on until the easternmost group has completed the performances. Of course, we do not know for sure, but this, at least, is what is suggested by the facts as we know them.

The leading men of the village (the *samb-anim*) appointed the date for the beginning of the rites. This had to be done, according to Wirz, in the course of the month called *Doga*. *Doga* is a fruit-tree, a *Semecarpus* species, and the month of *Doga* derives its name from the ripening of the fruits. This happens to be the case, says Wirz in M.A. III p. 6, in May and therefore this particular month is also called *Mayo-month*. It is all very instructive, except that in the section he devotes to chronology (M.A. IV p. 83) the month *Doga* coincides with March. This again is corroborated by the fact that *doga-pig* is the last part of the dry season, when the *doga*-tree flowers. According to V. d. Kolk & Vertenten *doga-pig* is about November.⁹¹ It is not very probable that the *doga*-fruit should need six months to ripen.

⁸⁹ Van de Kolk, Alm. 1911 p. 51; Viegen, Ann. 1916 p. 42. Later (Sem. d'Ethn. 1923 p. 398) Viegen suggested that the celebration is repeated every 19 years, when there is a conjunction of Venus and the moon. This should be rejected as mere speculation, unsupported by any known facts.

⁹⁰ Cf. below, pp. 501 f.

⁹¹ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *doga*; V. d. Kolk & Vertenten, Woordenboek v. maand.

In other words, March should be the time for the beginning of the rites, but that cannot be true either because in March the rainy season is not yet over and all the authors who venture an opinion on the time of the celebration, viz. Gooszen, Heldring and Wirz, agree that the time is the dry season.⁹² A reference to Kooyman's article on the chronology of the Marind⁹³ does not help us out of the difficulties. The problem is even more complicated because Cappers witnessed the final ceremony of the *mayo*-initiation in Birok and Matara at the end of February 1909, and Van de Kolk reported the performance of ceremonies immediately preceding the final ceremony at Nowari on Christmas-eve 1909.⁹⁴ That implies that at Nowari the ceremonies were completed round about the end of December, which, on the assumption that the ceremonies began in May and lasted 5 or 6 months, is one or two months overdue, while those in Matara were three or four months overdue. We cannot but conclude that the rule is hardly as strictly obeyed as it is made to appear. On the other hand, we have no reason to doubt that the *mayo* ceremonies are celebrated during the dry season. As a matter of fact, the weather conditions would not permit the progress of a prolonged series of ceremonies during the wet monsoon. Moreover, Viegen associates the beginning of the rites with May,⁹⁵ and Geurtjens in his Dictionary (*v. majo*) confirms that *mayo-mandow* is the same as *doga-mandow*; he identifies it with spring, which falls neither in May nor in March, but more or less round about the first half of April, a time which fits the occasion of the performance of the mythical history of *Méru*.⁹⁶ If we hold to the beginning of April as the time for the first initiation rite, the celebrations at Matara and Nowari were even more retarded than was pointed out above. We have no clue as to the reason for this delay, except that in all human enterprise delay is a common feature as soon as prolonged recurring activities and organization are implied. The *hévehe*-rites of the Orokololo people often suffered delays of several years, and in that light the Marind may be said to keep fairly strictly to schedule. A duration exceeding 5 or 6 months corroborates, up to an extent, Viegen's statement that the length of the period spent in the enclosure varied from 6 to 9 months or even a year and more.

⁹² Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 370; Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 442; Wirz, M.A. III p. 6.

⁹³ Man 1960 nr. 211.

⁹⁴ Cappers, Ann. 1909 p. 213; V. d. Kolk, Alm. 1911 p. 48.

⁹⁵ Sem. d'Ethn. 1923 p. 398.

⁹⁶ See above, p. 256.

Initiated were both boys and girls, men and women. There is no reason to believe that the initiation of women was, formally at least, of a more restricted nature than that of men. This need not imply that, at the end of the ceremonies, the girls were as thoroughly acquainted with the Marind-anim lore as the boys. Verschueren draws our attention to the fact that, in contrast to the older men of to-day, the elderly women know next to nothing of the *mayo*. There are various reasons for their ignorance. Unlike the boys, they have never been secluded in a *gotad* and did not receive the instruction the boys may have been given there by the older men. During the *mayo*-rites it is the men who act as instructors and it is hardly probable that they should take as much trouble over teaching the females as over the instruction of the boys.⁹⁷ On the other hand, my old friend Wagér used to excuse himself from giving me any information on the *mayo*-rites on the grounds that he had not been initiated himself and had to ask his elder sister, who had gone through the rites, for further enlightenment. This, of course, was a patent lie, Wagér being renowned for his knowledge of mythology. Yet, the mere plea is interesting. There is the fact that the women were initiated. The Marind constitute a curious exception in this part of New Guinea in admitting women to their rituals, an exception which is all the more remarkable because the position of the women is in no way superior to that of their less privileged sisters of the surrounding tribes.

None of our informants paid much attention to the age of the neophytes. Berkhout states that candidates belonged to the age-grades of *aroi-patur*, *wokraved*, *wahuku*, *éwati* and *kivasom-iwag*, but from Heldring and Wirz it is clear that *miakim* and *iwag*, single as well as married people, are among the neophytes. Viegen states that initiation usually takes place at some time between the 10th year and the 25th, but this contention is based on the perfectly hypothetical conjecture that the initiation should coincide with a constellation of Venus which recurs every 19 years. Gooszen states simply that "men and women, even children approaching puberty, have to submit to initiation".⁹⁸ Evidently, the majority of the candidates have at least reached puberty, a conclusion confirmed by the few available photographs, which do not show any children (cf. the photographs printed with Gooszen's article). The neophytes are certainly older than the candidates for the *sosom*-rites and the actual course of the initiation favours the sup-

⁹⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 6.

⁹⁸ BKI 1914 p. 370.

position that to have attained nubile age is, formally at least, a requirement.⁹⁹

The importance of the rites is demonstrated by the fact that during the whole period no other feasts may be celebrated, except what Heldring calls *pataré angai* and which, in this context, must be identified with one of the ceremonies in honour of the recently dead, and the feast attendant upon the piercing of a child's ear-lobes. If this feast can be postponed till after initiation, the celebration is suspended, if not, all extravagance is carefully avoided.¹⁰⁰ Heldring's communication is confusing because *pataré angai* is in reality a pig feast. As it is celebrated a fairly long time after the actual demise took place, Heldring must have meant one of the ceremonies executed shortly after burial. The piercing of a child's ear-lobes often goes combined with a pig feast. The fact that during the *mayo*-rites the act may be performed, provided all extravagance is avoided, gives evidence that a pig feast was banned.¹⁰¹ The fact that ear-piercing is allowed during the *mayo* period is, as such, interesting. It is a boy's last feast before his entering into the *gotad*. We conclude that *patur* (and *kivasom*) are definitely excluded from initiation into the *mayo*. Where the lowest age-grade of the neophytes is that of *aroi-patur*, respectively *wahuku*, and the highest that of a married man or woman, the ideal age for initiation is probably that of somebody who is in between, i.e. an *éwati* or a young *miakim*, resp. *kivasom-ivag* or *ivag*.

Notwithstanding the fact that women are admitted, the rites are secret and precautions are taken to prevent the uninitiated from observing any other details of the procedure than those which the initiated want them to see. Though most of the uninitiated (*burap*) are children, the members of the *imo*-cult should also be reckoned among them. Although our sources do not mention their exclusion explicitly, a prohibition to attend the ceremonies may be inferred from the excessive secrecy observed by the *imo* people, who very strictly debar any person who has not been initiated. The exclusion of the uninitiated was extended to foreign immigrants. Father Viegen in his description of the procedure writes: "Some months later there is again a ceremony, to which the foreigner is admitted".¹⁰² Kwé Kiong Sioe, observing the ritual, apparently had to be initiated himself. The ceremonies are enacted in

⁹⁹ Cf. below, p. 528.

¹⁰⁰ Heldring, *op. cit.* p. 442.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Verschueren, *Letters XI* p. 7.

¹⁰² Viegen, *TAG* 1913 p. 148.

an enclosure in which the neophytes are secluded. In fact, there are usually two enclosures. One is the real *mayo-miráv*; it is situated in the coconut gardens some way out of the village and this is where the greater part of the ceremonies is performed. The enclosure is, partly at least, surrounded by a fence of coconut-leaves. The entrances at either end of the place can be closed by means of a screen of leaves, which bars inquisitive glances. The *mayo-miráv* is forbidden territory to the uninitiated. They are not even allowed to approach it. By the side of the pathway leading to the *mayo-miráv* taboo-signs are set up to warn off the unauthorized. The signs consist of vertical sticks, half a meter in length, painted in red or yellow, with grass wrapped round the top.¹⁰³ They are of a much simpler kind than the phallic ornaments surrounding the headhunters' hut; we might describe the sign as a phallus covered with leaves, with the exception of the top, which is left bare.¹⁰⁴ The neophytes are instructed to avoid all contacts with the uninitiated, even to the extent of not being seen by them.

"Facing each other at the entrances at both ends of the *mayo-miráv*, effigies, *awong*, have been placed. They represent the tribal forefather and -mother. The tribal forefather has a big pubic shell, one of the kind used by the neophytes. On some occasions he is provided with a huge wooden phallus".¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, the wording of Gooszen's interesting statement is ambiguous; we are not certain whether he refers to two pairs of effigies, one on either side of the *mayo-miráv*, or whether the male image stands at the one entrance and the female at the other. The problem is further complicated by the captions of the photographs in the albums in the archives of the Anthropology Department of the Royal Tropical Institute at Amsterdam,¹⁰⁶ depicting such effigies as are mentioned by Gooszen. There are three of these photographs, all of them showing effigies of a highly uncommon type; not wooden sculptures, but colossal straw-puppets, with a framework of wooden sticks wholly wrapped round with thick layers or rolls of palm-leaves. Probably the leaves are coconut-leaves, but this we can only guess at, because it is impossible to tell one palm-leaf species from another when a photograph is all we have to go by, the more so when it concerns such old, discoloured photographs as the ones in the albums, as the reader may see for himself from the reproductions in Plate XII.

¹⁰³ Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 370.

¹⁰⁴ Below, p. 722; photographic album Anthr. Dept. R. Trop. Institute, nr. 199.

¹⁰⁵ Gooszen, op. cit. pp. 370 f.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. above, p. 359.

Two of the photographs, nrs. 278 and 279, were made by Heldring. He does not specify where they were made, but states that the image shown on nr. 278 stood at the eastern entrance of the *mayo-miráv* and the other at the western one. The former is about two, the latter two-and-a-half meters in height. Legs and arms stand out. Both represent male effigies, as is apparent from the big triton shells in front; they are of the type mentioned by Gooszen. A crude effort at naturalism is obvious. Even the fingers of the huge hands are indicated, being executed in rolls of palm-leaves. The upper parts of the bodies are partly covered with a skirt of grass. The heads are of wood and rather poorly carved. On the head of one of them (cf. nr. 279) a kind of cap has been outlined. Each effigy has a staff under its right arm; actually this has been passed through the layers of leaves constituting the upper part of the body. Apparently the staffs are *mayo*-staffs, though they slightly differ in type from the *mayo*-staffs reproduced by Wirz. The latter are straight and have either a beautifully carved upper end, ornamented in a way fairly strongly reminiscent of the carvings found on bullroarers and *tang*, or they end in a bird's head. The latter is more specifically the case with the staffs used by the neophytes and — according to Gooszen — those held by the *mayo-mes-ivag* when they carry the neophytes into the enclosure.¹⁰⁷ The staffs carried by the straw images resemble hockey-sticks. The bent upper end has a circle painted on it which may be interpreted as an eye, a detail suggesting some similarity to the *mayo*-staffs ending in a bird's head.

The third effigy, photographed at Bahor (?), has neither staff or grass-skirt, nor a pubic shell (the latter, at least, is not visible on the picture). It stands with legs and arms wide apart. Yet, it is a male effigy, as is apparent from the *wib*, the tail of leaves hanging down the buttocks. It is unusual in yet another respect; the head, also made of wood, resembles a bird's head and not a human head. Probably it must represent a *ndik*, but in the absence of any further information this cannot be verified.

Most curious of all is the absence of the female effigies mentioned by Gooszen. There is not a trace of them on any of the three photographs and one may wonder whether Gooszen's statement is really correct. Heldring's article is illustrated with a reproduction of the

¹⁰⁷ Wirz III p. 12 note 2 and Tafel 2, IV Tafel 55; Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 378 and Foto 6 jo. Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 468, sub 27. The *mayo*-staffs reproduced by Wirz are made of hardwood; their lengths vary from 93 to 130 cm; cf. Plate XIII.

female effigy, called *mayo-mes-iwag* by Heldring, who states that the effigy stood in the *mayo-miráv* at Okaba.¹⁰⁸ It is possible, then, that the two stood each in a different place, the male outside, the female inside the *mayo-miráv*. The effigy of the female deity is of a wholly different type, a real statue, carved out of wood, and brightly coloured. There is no special emphasis on its sex, though it is plainly indicated. She stands with her arms bent behind the head, elbows pointing outwards, the hands meeting at the back of the neck, the raised fingers protruding well above the head. The hands and fingers are stylized in such a way as to suggest two snakes' heads. Arms and hands are black, with V-shaped decorations in red, white and yellow, like two brightly coloured snakes. It is possible that they refer to a snake-species called *mayo-iwag*, which is a small snake, its back bluish-green and brown, the abdomen brightly yellow with a red patch.¹⁰⁹ Verschueren, however, points out that the snake could represent any other snake species as well, such as a *bir* or a *sami*. The V-shaped decorations are a common motif (the *taré-taré-* or *peewit* motif) and have nothing to do with the *mayo*-snake. It is only the yellow colour of the inner side of the arms which may hold a special reference to the animal, but in the absence of any native information even this is mere guesswork.

Within the *mayo-miráv* sheds have been constructed alongside the fences. They give some protection from rain and sunlight and are used for stowing away various ornaments. They are too small and provide insufficient shelter to be used during the night, which is usually spent in the village. To that end part of the village has been fenced in, and there, after nightfall, the neophytes sleep, well separated from the uninitiated. Before daybreak they return to the *mayo-miráv*. It also happens that candidates spend the night in the *mayo-miráv*, e.g. when there is reason to fear that they will be seen by the uninitiated. Thus the neophytes of Okaba had to stay in the *mayo-miráv* during the time that Gooszen was in the village. Not always, however, are there two enclosures. In areas where the beach is unfrequented, the *mayo-miráv* may be constructed on the beach and in that case the *mayo-miráv* is also used during the night. Thus Wambi has its *mayo-miráv* at Welab and Anasai at Papis-Anasai. The presence of two enclosures is, so it seems, not essential, nor is it essential that the *mayo-miráv* be located in the gardens. Yet, this is suggested by the name given to it by most of our sources, viz. *timan*, i.e. interior. It might after all

¹⁰⁸ Heldring, TBG 1913 fig. 14 facing p. 444.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Plate XII; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *majo*; Verschueren, Letters XI p. 7.

be the rule to have the *mayo-miráv* there. An interesting feature is that the arrangements for the night are of the same kind as those applicable to the young men who live in the *gotad*.

Heldring states that the sexes are not separated. Day and night, both in the *mayo-miráv* and in the village, they are together. The same is told by Berkhout, who seems to believe that continual promiscuity is the result. According to Wirz, however, all the neophytes are indeed together in the day-time, when they are in the *mayo-miráv*, but in the village, where they sleep, the sexes are kept separate.¹¹⁰ Viegen, too, insists that the sexes are kept apart; he makes mention of spacious houses which are constructed for the purpose of accommodating the neophytes: "Le jour se passe dans un enclos établi dans la forêt, et la nuit dans un enclos semblable, préparé au rivage. Dans ces enclos se trouve une cabane spacieuse, dont l'intérieur forme plusieurs chambres, séparées par des cloisons. Garçons et filles vivent à part, chacun et chacune avec ceux de sa tribu, tous comme les indigènes font dans leur village".¹¹¹ He must have got the particulars mixed up when he tried to recall them. All authors agree that there are no spacious houses in the *mayo-miráv*. Maybe there is one in the village, but it is rather improbable that the construction of such an abode should be the rule.

Controversial, too, is the information given by various authors on the *kabai-aha*, a high structure apparently of a kind comparable to the elevated platform erected in the *sosom-miráv*.¹¹² Gooszen calls it a spirit-house and describes it as "a lofty shed or elevated house".¹¹³ In Geurtjens' dictionary (voc. cit.) it is called a hut raised on tall bamboo piles, high above the ground, used for the exhibition of fruits and food on festive occasions, e.g. when the new *mayo*-initiates come out of their seclusion. Wirz describes it as "a lofty structure, about 10 meters high, covered with fruits, bananas, yam, *wati* and betel nuts and, of all things, croton- and sirih-leaves, which are suspended from it".¹¹⁴ Photographs in the album just mentioned confirm that the descriptions given by Geurtjens and Wirz are more correct; we may safely dismiss the notion of a spirit-house. Still, the name of the structure is intriguing. *Kabai* is a not further defined bird-of-prey species, and *aha* means house (cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.), but no supplementary

¹¹⁰ Berkhout, op. cit. p. 442; Wirz, M.A. III p. 7.

¹¹¹ Viegen, Sem. d'Ethn. 1923 p. 396.

¹¹² Above, pp. 476 ff.

¹¹³ Gooszen, op. cit. p. 371.

¹¹⁴ Wirz, M.A. III p. 23.

explanation can be given beyond the detail that the *kabai* makes his big, sprawling nest in rather low trees, which may explain the likeness the Mariind apparently see in the structure built for the occasion. Verschueren, who supplied the information, adds that the structure must have a deeper meaning than that of a peg for hanging fruits and vegetables on, whatever that meaning be.¹¹⁵ The siting of the structure is apparently subject to variation. According to Wirz and Heldring the *kabai-aha* is constructed in the village, but Gooszen has it in the centre of the *mayo-miráv*.¹¹⁶ The most simple solution to the problem is that there is a *kabai-aha* in the village as well as in the *mayo-miráv*. One of the photographs in the albums has a *kabai-aha* in the *mayo-miráv* (nr. 277). Unfortunately, we do not know where the picture has been taken. As Gooszen made most of his observations at Kumbe and Okaba, and Heldring in the eastern area, the difference may also be explained as a local variation. However that be, all authors agree that a snake made of grass, leaves and sugar-cane stalks is buried at the foot of the structure, its body coiled round the poles. The building and appointing of the *kabai-aha* and all that belongs to it take place a few days before the end of the ceremonies.

Local variations must have been numerous. Such at least is Verschueren's conclusion from his interviews with his informants, while Heldring explicitly states that his own description is valid only for the area east of the Maro: "The *mayo* celebration west of the Maro includes various feasts which are held between-whiles, but are as yet not sufficiently known. The main feasts, however, are identical".¹¹⁷

Now we can proceed to the description of the various ceremonies. We hear little of preparatory ceremonies connected with the construction of the *mayo-miráv*. "The beginning of the *mayo* celebration is announced by a ceremony called *kanis faho* [more correctly, *kanis vahob*], i.e. "hanging betel (*kanis*) from the sheds in the *mayo-miráv*".¹¹⁸ No explanations being offered, our comment has to be limited to the statement of two facts: first, the hanging up of betel belongs to any feast, second, betel is a *Bragai-zé* totem.

Two days afterwards, four or five neophytes who must belong to

¹¹⁵ Verschueren, Letters XI pp. 7 f.

¹¹⁶ Gooszen, BKI 1914 pp. 371 and 383.

¹¹⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 11; Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 444.

¹¹⁸ Heldring, l.c.

the *Geb-zé* phratry,¹¹⁹ under the supervision of older initiates set out to fetch loam (*gém*) and mangrove-bark (*gaténa*). From that moment onward these neophytes are not allowed to have any contacts with the uninitiated and for the time being they hide out in the bush. The collecting of loam and mangrove-bark being completed in the evening of the same day, the initiates (Heldring; Wirz says, the elderly initiates) assemble for *gaga*-singing.¹²⁰

Wirz gives an elaborate comment on *gaga*. *Gaga*, he says, is sung before every ceremony in which *déma* are impersonated. It is so important that no *déma* can be impersonated unless this is preceded by the singing of *gaga*. This is well illustrated by what Wirz experienced on this score: "One day I succeeded in persuading a few men of Bahor to impersonate two *déma*, so that I could make photographs. Contrary to my expectations, this could not be done unless they went through all the preliminaries. Even a substantial reward could not make them change their minds. First of all, it could only be done by people who were totemic relatives of the *déma*. Then, the ornaments had to meet the usual requirements, down to the smallest detail: the bodies and hairdo had to be anointed and the faces painted in the way proper to that particular *déma*-performer, and so on. Finally, when they had been completely decorated and my every wish had been fulfilled, a few old men had to come and sing *gaga*; otherwise, they believed, the *déma* were not entitled to perform".¹²¹

It is not true, however, that *gaga* is sung on every occasion where *déma* are impersonated. Grosso modo, its performance seems to be confined to impersonations staged in connection with the initiation rites and the mortuary ceremonies of *mayo* and *imo*. A *déma-wir* making part of a festive occasion such as a pig feast is preceded, not by the *gaga*, but by the *yarut*, the ceremonial dirge which makes part of the regular programme of practically every feast, because one of the objectives of such a feast is the commemoration of the dead. These are believed to attend the occasion, celebrating in the bush at the back of the village, where they have their own dance.¹²² The *yarut* has much in common with the *gaga*. Both are monotonous, solemn songs, performed without the accompaniment of instruments, except for the

¹¹⁹ The number probably depends upon how many candidates of that phratry are available.

¹²⁰ Heldring, *op. cit.* pp. 444 f.; Wirz, M.A. III p. 8.

¹²¹ Wirz, *l.c.*

¹²² On the *yarut* see below, pp. 798 f.

lime-sticks which are tapped against the gourds to keep time. Yet, we should not over-emphasize the similarity of the two. A tape-recording of *gaga* and *yarut* made by Verschuieren in 1962 gives evidence that the *gaga* songs (at least the *imo gaga* of the recording) are slightly more vivacious than the *yarut*, and are characterized by a gradually rising pitch.¹²³ Verschuieren, in his letters, points out that the *gaga* is conducted by a precentor, whose intonation of every new sentence lends to the melody a dynamic effect stronger than that of the *yarut*, an effect which, in the long run, never fails to enthrall, a quality wholly absent in the *yarut*.¹²⁴

A more telling difference between the two types of song concerns the texts. These are not wholly obscure and Wirz writes on the *gaga*: "The texts consist of a few words which are repeated countless times in different variations. In most cases they are names of places in the immediate vicinity of the village or somewhat further away, more especially such as are known to be *déma-miráv*. . . . Also in a few other songs such place-names are quoted, notably in the dirge, the *yarut*".¹²⁵ Verschuieren supplements the information with a highly interesting comment: "Actually it is a matter of course that in both songs place-names are mentioned, because the *yarut* is sung in accompaniment of the dead and the *gaga* to accompany the *déma*. According to my informants the difference is that in the *yarut* the place-names are enumerated in the order from east to west, whereas the place-names of the *gaga* are recited following the direction from west to east".¹²⁶ A contrast of this kind must have a meaning. It is suggested — a suggestion later to be substantiated with other arguments — that the key to the secret of the contrast is contained in the myth on the origin of man which begins by relating how the *déma* went underground from Eromka or Sangasé to Kondo, travelling eastward, and goes on to say that the first man who left, travelling westward, was the first man to die, viz. *Woryu*.¹²⁷ For the present we confine ourselves to stating that the direction west-east as presented by the *gaga*-songs is in perfect harmony with the sequel of the sectional celebrations of the *mayo*-rites.

The men go on singing *gaga* till about 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning.

¹²³ The tape-recordings are in the Ethnomusicological Archives, Amsterdam. Thanks are due to Mr. E. L. Heins for kindly playing them back and giving a commentary on the music.

¹²⁴ Verschuieren, Letters XI p. 8.

¹²⁵ Wirz, M.A. III p. 9.

¹²⁶ Verschuieren, l.c.

¹²⁷ Cf. above, pp. 199 f., 211.

Then the singers go to an open space in the coconut grove near the *mayo-miráv*, where they dance (*arih*).¹²⁸ The addition of the word *arih* does not simplify matters. *Arih* is a dance unaccompanied by drums, executed for the purpose of increasing the fertility of the gardens or to stave off sickness. It is attended with promiscuous sexual intercourse.¹²⁹ Wirz makes no mention of this dance, in spite of the fact that a dance of this kind would have fitted in perfectly with his contention that all through the initiation-period unrestricted sexual licence prevails among the initiates: "Every night orgies take place in the bush, to which people of other villages have free access. The neophytes were not on any account allowed to join in, except toward the end of their seclusion. Then the rules of continence incumbent upon them were abrogated and the character of the celebration became even more obscene".¹³⁰ In the long run the celebration must have been an exhausting experience for the older initiates, at least if we take Wirz's statement literally and think in terms of orgies. Still, erotic activity was essential for the *mayo* and our criticism on the statement made by Wirz has not the intention of belittling the sexual aspects of the celebration, but aims to do away with fantasies which carry us beyond the limits imposed by the weakness of the flesh. Later on we shall find we have reason to assume that, in spite of the fact that Wirz is silent on this particular point, Heldring was probably right when he called the dance an *arih*.¹³¹

At 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning the neophytes go in procession to the open space, where the *arih*-singers are still engaged in their dance. The neophytes proceed in a definite order. Going ahead are the *Geb-zé* without the *Geb-zé-ha*, then come the *Kai-zé*, *Samkakai* and *Ndik-end*, then the *Bragai-zé*, followed by the *Diwa-rek*, the *Mahu-zé*, the *Wokabu-rek* and *Zohé*, and finally the *Geb-sé-ha*.¹³² Heldring states that the 4 or 5 *Geb-zé* neophytes who were sent out to fetch mangrove-bark and loam head the procession. This implies that they do not belong to the *Geb-zé-ha* but to the coconut clan or the *uga-boan*. Arriving at the place where the dancers are, they squat down in a single row, their heads lowered and their hands outstretched as if expecting to receive something. In front of them a few coconut-leaves are set up

¹²⁸ Heldring, *op. cit.* p. 445.

¹²⁹ Cf. Geurtjens, *Dict. v. arih*; Wirz III pp. 90 ff.; below, pp. 629 ff.

¹³⁰ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 5.

¹³¹ See below, p. 556.

¹³² Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 7.

to prevent them from seeing the singers and the dancers. From behind the leaves a few male initiates come forward (the exact number is not mentioned). Their bodies are painted red, spotted with white and yellow dots. Each has his head covered with a cap of plaited cord, decorated with bands painted in various colours. Beads made of coix seeds hang down from the brim. Two boars' tusks are fastened over the mouth, indicating that the initiate cannot speak and must not be asked questions (?). They represent the *mayo-mes-ivag*, the old *mayo*-woman, and they have their loins covered with big women's aprons. In each hand they hold a *gev*, a *mayo*-staff, on which they lean, like old women supporting themselves on sticks. When they have come closer, the palm-leaves are taken away and the first *mayo-mes-ivag*, snorting and grunting, approaches the first candidate. 'She' places her left foot between the feet of the candidate and squats down in front of him. Then the candidate embraces the *mayo-mes-ivag*, who rises slowly and, with the candidate holding on to her neck, carries him to the *mayo-miráv*. There the candidate drops down and pretends to have fallen asleep on the spot. The *mayo-mes-ivag* now returns to fetch the next candidate, other neophytes in the meantime being carried in by her colleagues.

The *mayo-mes-ivag* are men, which applies to all *déma*-performers (*déma-nakari* sometimes excepted). The *gev* or *mayo*-staff has been discussed above.¹³³ Interesting, too, are the boars' tusks fastened over the mouth of each *mayo-mes-ivag*. Verschueren notes that the interpretation of the tusks as a token that the *mayo-mes-ivag* must not be asked questions, in which Wirz followed Heldring, seems doubtful. He refers to the fact that at a certain stage of the *imo*-initiation the neophytes are confronted with men grunting like pigs. Reportedly, the *mayo-mes-ivag*, too, approach the neophytes snorting and grunting. A reference to the pig is obvious and appropriate, as the pig is a totem of the *Bragai-zé* phratry, which is also the phratry of *Kanis-ivag*, *Uaba's* wife¹³⁴ and the mythical *mayo-ivag*.

When all the candidates have been brought into the *mayo-miráv*, the *mayo-mes-ivag* retire and other initiates come and take all the decorations, hair-lengthenings, armllets and leglets off the sleeping candidates. The *évati* and the men even have their pubic shells removed, but the women retain their aprons, which they will change later for aprons of plain bark-fibre. While the neophytes are still

¹³³ Above, p. 504.

¹³⁴ Verschueren, Letters XI pp. 8 f.

sleeping, initiates bring the loam which the day before had been fetched by the *Geb-zé* neophytes and put some of it into the mouth of each candidate. The neophytes are now awakened, and, by jabbing at the ground with their *gev*, the initiates make holes in front of the candidates into which they must spit out the loam.¹³⁵ Wirz has a deviant version. He does not mention the episode of the loam-gathering candidates of the previous day. The loam applied to the sleeping novices is not ordinary loam, but a black variety which, after having been mixed with sperma to make the colour hold, is used for blackening the teeth. He reports that the initiates do, indeed, rub the loam on the teeth of the candidates, without explaining, however, why he deviates from Heldring.¹³⁶ The candidates are now given food consisting of the roots of the betel palm and the bark of the mangrove tree. They are not allowed to eat or drink anything beyond what is given to them by the initiates. The menu will be augmented by and by. Each new kind of food is first introduced in small quantities of poor quality, mixed with sperma. Not until then may that specific food be freely eaten. Similarly, all daily activities have to be learned anew. They must learn how to climb a palm tree, how to beat sago or open a coconut, how to catch a fish or a crab, hunt wallabies or pigs, and so on. It will all come gradually, spread over a period of many months.

On this first day, after having eaten their poor meal, the neophytes set out to bathe in a pool, where they plaster their bodies with white clay, the women at the same time changing their black aprons for plain ones. According to Wirz the men go naked and the initiates change the usual pubic cover for a triton-shell, but Gooszen states that the male neophytes use a triton-shell, as is amply confirmed by the photographs he published.¹³⁷ Back in the *mayo-miráv*, the candidates have to sit down to listen to the instructions which are now given to them. They are told to be careful not to be seen by the uninitiated and not to leave the *mayo-miráv* unless wrapped in a garment of coconut-leaves, which they now set out to make. It is a kind of shapeless bag made of frayed leaves, which goes over the shoulders and covers everything down to the knees or even lower. Inside the *mayo-miráv* they are allowed to leave their heads uncovered or even to walk about without a garment, but outside the head, too, must be draped in a thick tangle of leaves. Male candidates are given a *mayo-staff*, in this case

¹³⁵ Gooszen, BKI 1919 p. 378; Heldring TBG 1913 p. 446.

¹³⁶ Wirz, op. cit. p. 12.

¹³⁷ Gooszen, l.c.; Wirz, op. cit. p. 13.

not a hardwood one with carefully carved upper end, but a long stick ending in a wooden bird's head, apparently that of a *ndik*.¹³⁸ When they meet somebody on their way they have to hide out in the bush after planting the staff in the path so as to warn passers-by of their presence. Toward the evening the neophytes are fed with bananas of an inferior kind, small and unripe, which are mixed with sperma. If they were given juicy, sweet bananas without sperma added, they would suffer abdominal pains and never be able to digest ripe bananas again. The new food has to be made known and tried before it can be consumed in its usual form. Wirz adds that probably some erotic scenes and fertility rites are attendant upon the occasion. Though Wirz sometimes seems too readily inclined to suppose that erotic acts are being performed, his surmise is in this case corroborated by the account given by Berkhout. The latter writes that on the first day the male initiates commit sodomy, somewhere just outside the *mayo-miráv*, but in such a way that the candidates may see. It seems probable that the men are enacting the story of *Geb* and the origin of the banana.¹³⁹ This supposition finds support in the fact that on this day the moon is full.¹⁴⁰ The scene being performed in the afternoon, the moon may be expected to rise immediately afterwards.

After nightfall the neophytes return to the village. Their garments are as yet unfinished and will be completed the next day. The night has new experiences in store for them. Apparently quite a number of rites has to be executed on this first day, making the program seem rather overloaded. This is not without reason. Actually, the candidates cannot hold out long on a menu of betel palm-roots, mangrove-bark and bananas. Some more kinds of food have to be made permissible to them lest they perish. Before we go on to describe the events of the coming night, some aspects of the ceremonies of the first day require a more thorough discussion, because they seem to have a bearing on the meaning of the whole. The earlier observers of the rites express a definite opinion on this point; Viegen, Heldring and Gooszen unanimously explain the procedure of the first day as the first phase in a process of rebirth. Strangely enough, Wirz, though he knew this to be their opinion, ignores it. The one who is most explicit in explaining the rites as a rebirth is Viegen.¹⁴¹ He bases his opinion on a deviant

¹³⁸ Gooszen, *op. cit.* p. 379.

¹³⁹ Cf. above, p. 227.

¹⁴⁰ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 14; the moon originated on a subsequent occasion.

¹⁴¹ Viegen, TAG 1913 pp. 147 ff.

(and defective) variant of the myth of creation. On the coast near Mariu, between Sēpadim and Kondo, a *ndik* was fishing for *kirub*-fishes in the sea. [The *kirub* is a gurnard, a totem of the *Zohé* or *anda-boan*; v. B.]. He picked the fishes up and threw them on to the muddy beach, where they were covered with loam. They looked like shapeless lumps of clay. They were cold and warmed themselves near a fire of bamboo tubes. Each time a small bamboo exploded, their shape became a little bit more human. Successively their ears, eyes, noses and mouths opened, but still they could not speak. With a bamboo knife they cut away the membranes between their fingers and threw them into the water, where they changed into leeches. The *déma*, on seeing the human beings, was angry and rebuked the *ndik* for having made them. The *ndik* then bit a piece of wood instead of a *kirub*-fish and ever since its beak has been crooked. At last a big bamboo exploded and all the men cried out; now they were able to speak. Thus it is the *ndik* who gave us life.

A comparison with the versions of Chapter IV¹⁴² demonstrates that Viegen did not get the details quite correct. Gooszen already had a better version of the myth, more in conformity with the versions referred to above, and not marred by the inconsistencies in Viegen's story. They hold a warning that we should treat the latter's explanations of the rites with some reserve. One of these is evidently unacceptable, viz. his identification of the *mayo-mes-iwag* with the *ndik* who picks up the *kirub*-fishes. More plausible is his statement that the leaf-garment symbolizes the shapeless form of the human beings when they had just emerged. He adds that, in the course of the ceremonies, the size of the garment is gradually decreased, which, if true, would corroborate his theory. As a matter of fact, in none of the other sources do we find any confirmation of this, and the rather generalizing tenor of Viegen's statement does not inspire the reader with the confidence that he is dealing with well-observed facts and not with some facile assumptions. Gooszen already pointed out that, at Kumbe at least, the actual procedure of the rites does not show as close a resemblance to the myth of creation as Viegen would have it. Though differing with the latter in point of detail, he nevertheless holds a similar opinion. The carrying of the neophytes by the *mayo-mes-iwag*, the loam put into their mouths and their waking up as children who have to be taught everything anew, represent, says Gooszen, a rebirth.¹⁴³ The

¹⁴² Cf. above, pp. 209 ff.

¹⁴³ Gooszen, l.c.

same explanation is given by Heldring in almost the same words; a pointer to the fact that Gooszen made use of Heldring's article, from which he also borrowed his version of the myth of creation.¹⁴⁴

The one important question, however, remains unanswered. Is the explanation of the initiation as a process of rebirth based on native evidence or on a brain-wave of Father Viegen? Uncertainty on this vital point renders the explanation given by our three authors fairly valueless. We have to re-examine the facts to find out whether they really represent a rebirth and do indeed refer to the myth of the creation of man. The relevant points are the role of the *mayo-mes-ivag*, the novices being asleep, the placing of mud in their mouths, the washing of their bodies with white clay, and the garments of young coconut-leaves. Of these five, the first two cannot have any other meaning than that of staging the conditions of a rebirth. The old *mayo*-woman cannot but be something like a primeval ancestress. We may identify her with *Kanis-ivag*, *Uaba's* wife, and in this context it is interesting to note that the first ceremonial act is called *kanis vahob*, suspending the betel (*kanis*). The *mayo-mes-ivag* plays a very important part in the rites. We shall have to discuss her role more elaborately later on in this chapter. Here the *mayo-mes-ivag* acts as a mother who carries her children and the *mayo-miráv* is evidently the place where they are born. The novices' lying down to sleep and their waking up ignorant of all things cannot be interpreted in any other way. They start afresh as newborn babies. In myth the novices are represented as babies carried about in a cradle.¹⁴⁵ A rebirth indeed, but still, not a single reference to the myth of the origin of man.

Heldring and Gooszen take the putting of mud into the mouths of the neophytes to hold a direct reference to the myth of the origin of man, but this interpretation seems hardly consistent with the contention made by Wirz that the mud is applied to blacken the teeth of the neophytes. Curiously enough, Wirz does not mention the fetching of loam (mud) by the *Geb-zé* novices on the day before the opening ceremony. Wirz must have discussed the subject with his informants, who provided him with the version as he recorded it: the loam is applied to blacken the teeth. At first sight this explanation seems to rule out the theory advanced by Heldring and Gooszen; it looks like a fair case of plain fact belying facile assumptions. On second thoughts,

¹⁴⁴ Heldring, op. cit. pp. 429 f., 447.

¹⁴⁵ See above, p. 248.

we have to admit that the facts as presented by Wirz are by no means as solid as they seem to be. Why on earth should there be so much bother over the novices' looks on the very day which, with its overloaded program, is partly devoted to the aim of making them as ugly as humanly possible and concealing their bodies from the looks of the uninitiated? Black-coloured teeth are, according to Wirz, a characteristic of the *Mayo-Marind*.¹⁴⁶ Elsewhere he states that the process of blackening begins during the age-grade of *éwati*, respectively *kivasom-ivag*.¹⁴⁷ Black teeth must be looked upon as part of the ordinary toilet of the adult. The act of blackening does not fit in with the pattern of ceremonies belonging to the reception of the novices in the *mayo-miráv*. Neither does it fit in with the fact that they are awakened after the clay has been put into their mouths, nor with their being given an opportunity to spit it out.¹⁴⁸ If the teeth have to be blackened, the mud has to be rubbed in properly and this could never be done except by the novices themselves after they have been awakened. Consequently, it is hardly possible to give credence to the version given by Wirz. A convincing argument for rejecting it is that Heldring describes a ceremony of teeth-blackening which takes place at a much later stage.¹⁴⁹ This point of view had the full-hearted support of Verschueren's informants, whose opinion was invited on the controversy.¹⁵⁰ Wirz's misinterpretation of the scene is in all probability due to a successful effort of his informants to throw him off the scent because he was becoming too knowledgeable with regard to the actual meaning of the ritual. He was an easy victim of deceit; his methods of investigation were primitive and uncritical and he has been misguided time and again by stories invented for the uninitiated, such as those suggesting ritual murder and endo-cannibalism. We conclude that a reference to mud and loam is evident.

Less evident is the role of the *Geb-zé* novices who are sent out to fetch the loam and the mangrove-bark which constitutes one of the ingredients of the first meal. The mention of mangrove, of course, may also hold a reference to mud, because it grows on the muddy coast, but it is fairly dubious whether this is what the Marind has in mind. We remember that in myth different kinds of bark are presented

¹⁴⁶ M.A. III p. 12 note 1.

¹⁴⁷ M.A. I p. 54.

¹⁴⁸ A detail supplied not only by Heldring and Gooszen, but also by Wirz.

¹⁴⁹ See below, p. 522.

¹⁵⁰ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 9.

as having been used as substitutes for betel before the *déma* discovered the sirih plant.¹⁵¹ Mangrove-bark must have been one of them; actually, it is still in use as such.¹⁵² What with mangrove being a *Sapi-zé* totem and mud a *Zohé* totem, the role of the *Geb-zé* candidates (of the coconut clan, not of the *Geb-zé-ha*) must be interpreted as a token of *Geb-zé* ceremonial leadership. Ambiguous is the use of white clay and the concealing of head and body by means of a garment of young coconut-leaves. White clay is also used as an indication of mourning; when it is applied to the face and the body the effect is ghastly, and that is evidently why it is done. The same motive might hold as regards the plastering of the neophytes. The use of the garment, too, may and evidently does serve other ends. The candidates have to wear it outside the *mayo-miráv*. Still, it is not for the purpose of disguise only. If so, they might be allowed to be seen by the non-initiated, but that is not so. On the contrary, the children (who are not to be initiated) are instructed to keep away. They are given whistles and wherever they go they must blow them to announce their presence. They are told that if they should see a *déma*, they will get a terrible punishment and will probably even die.¹⁵³ Simultaneously, the novices are instructed to hide whenever they are aware that somebody is near. A staff with a *ndik's* head, planted in the pathway, warns the passer-by that he is in the dangerous vicinity of the *déma* and had better speed away. In other words, if concealment is the purpose, the garment, which envelops the novice from the top of his head down to his calves, is fairly superfluous. The uninitiated never get a chance to catch a glimpse of the neophytes and they may well guess what their fate has been. It seems likely, therefore, that the garment (and the clay) serve yet another purpose, and this is confirmed by the fact — reported by Gooszen — that in Okaba the novices retain their hairdress and are not plastered with clay. They also have a garment (made, not of young coconut-leaves, but of frayed banana-leaves), but they need not conceal their heads when leaving the *mayo-miráv*. However, unlike the novices east of the Bian, they are not allowed to put off the garment in the *mayo-miráv* (although east of the Bian they sometimes wear it also in the *mayo-miráv*, leaving the head uncovered).¹⁵⁴ In Okaba they have to wear the garment day and night. To effect the shapelessness of the neophytes,

¹⁵¹ Above, pp. 397 and 403.

¹⁵² Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *gatana*.

¹⁵³ Heldring, op. cit. p. 441.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 13 and Gooszen, op. cit. photo 5.

and not their concealment from the uninitiated — which is effectuated anyhow — seems to be the actual aim of wearing the garment. Reconsidering all data, the contention of our early observers that the plastering of the body with clay and the shapeless garment of the neophytes hold a reference to the shapelessness of the human beings in their primeval state seems well substantiated. As these early authors were hopelessly unskilled observers, unencumbered with any wider knowledge of ethnological theory, it is after all fairly improbable that their reference to the myth of origin is a product of their own fantasy. It is more likely that their native informers provided them with a clue of some sort, referring to the myth of the origin of man. Within the procedure of the rites, in which one myth after another is enacted or referred to for the benefit of the neophytes, who have to learn what the supernatural substance and background are of all things they encounter in daily life, it is only logical that the neophytes themselves are represented in the uncouth form myth attributed to primeval man on the threshold of history. It is all in perfect harmony with our hypothesis on the contrast between *gaga* and *yarut*.¹⁵⁵ *Gaga* accompanies the *déma* on their eastward journey underground, ending with the birth of man.

3. THE MAYO-CULT CONTINUED:

A LONG SERIES OF CEREMONIES

After this long digression we return to the initiation-scene. We follow the account as given by Wirz, which deviates in some details — to be discussed later — from that by Heldring and Gooszen. By now the twilight is gathering. The episode of the introduction of the banana has been concluded and the novices are on their way from the *mayo-miráv* to the village. They are met by a number of initiates who imitate flying foxes. In their hairdo they carry a long, elastic rod topped by a lustily swinging flying fox made of pieces of coconut husk and sago-leafstalks. The male neophytes are left unmolested, but the girls who do not manage to escape are caught and teased. Erotic scenes are suggested by Heldring and Wirz. One by one the neophytes arrive, not in the village, but on the beach, where, in the light of the full moon, a number of initiates are awaiting them. They stand with their feet washed by the sea and represent the *méri-ongat-déma*. A flower-stalk of the *méri-coconut* is fixed to the hairdo and their bodies are

¹⁵⁵ Above, p. 509.

covered with coconut-leaves, but these are arranged in a far more elegant shape than the garments to be worn by the novices. Round the middle they have tied a rope or a long liana, which the novices are told to hold. The *déma*-performers walk out into the sea and the novices must pull them ashore. They are warned that the *déma* is going to make off. It is an enactment of the myth of *Méru*.¹⁵⁶ When the last initiate has safely been pulled ashore, all return to the village and go to sleep.

Early the next morning the neophytes return to the *mayo-miráv*, where they put the finishing touch to their garments. In the afternoon follows the ceremony of *ongat kamak*: making the acquaintance of the coconut (*ongat*). Each of the novices has to climb a coconut tree. He is under the supervision of an initiate and as soon as he (or she? probably so; Marind women, too, climb coconut trees) is halfway up, he is told to come down again. He returns, then climbs the tree a second time and actually he reaches the top, only to be called back the moment he is about to twist off a nut. He gets down again and after having received the necessary instructions as to how to climb a palm tree and pick a nut, he climbs the tree for a third time and at last he is allowed to bring a few nuts down with him. Now the initiate shows him how to open a coconut. Only then is he given a small coconut, the milk of which has been mixed with sperma. He is also given the meat of a young coconut to eat. The scene is, says Wirz (and there is no reason to doubt whether he is right) an enactment of the myth of *Kaipher* and the *Mayo-patur*.¹⁵⁷ From now on the neophytes are allowed to eat coconuts and to drink the milk, which is highly expedient, because they are not allowed to drink fresh water for some four or five weeks to come. Wirz reports that, in accordance with myth, a second ceremony immediately follows the introduction of the coconut, viz. that of *hayam kamak*, making the acquaintance of the *hayam* (*Inocarpus edulis*), an edible fruit growing along the beach. The relevant story forms part of the myth of the *Mayo-patur* and has been related above.¹⁵⁸ The fruits, which are a *Geb-zé* totem, are roasted and mixed with sperma by an initiate, who then hands them out to the neophytes. From now on this fruit, too, may be eaten. Heldring, however, puts the rite of making the acquaintance of *Inocarpus edulis* at the very end of the rites, after the great closing ceremony has taken

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 254 f.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 252.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 248.

place. Here Heldring is certainly right, because the fruits ripen in February and could not possibly be available at the beginning of the rites.¹⁵⁹

The order of events as presented by Heldring and Gooszen is slightly different. The eating of *Inocarpus edulis* is omitted in their account, and the day is spent in making the garments. On the third day the *ongat kamak* takes place. The scene of the flying foxes is said to follow the ceremony of *ongat kamak*. To perform this scene after the enactment of the myth of the *méri-ongat-déma* is, of course, incongruous and for this reason we gave preference to Wirz's version, although it is also possible that both the scene of the flying foxes and that of the *méri-ongat-déma* did not precede the *ongat kamak* ceremony, but followed it. It is often difficult to decide which version should be preferred. It is evident that Wirz has discussed Heldring's data with his informants, and from a formal point of view it can be upheld that whenever he deviates from Heldring he means to improve upon him. However, such corrections are not necessarily improvements. It is extremely difficult to elicit from native informants a proper account of the actual sequence of a series of ceremonies when the last celebration was performed some seven or more years before. Such is only possible — and even then at the cost of leaving out many of the more interesting details — if informants are really willing to impart their knowledge. In this case there is no indication that they were very actively cooperating. The additions Wirz made to the earlier communications of Heldring are relatively modest in scope. The absence of any explanation whenever he differs with Heldring — whose article was in fact the main source of his knowledge — does not make it any easier to accept all these deviations as corrections, even though more often than not they probably are. Given this uncertainty, we shall be following Heldring's version, unless there are very obvious reasons why we should not. Later, we shall render the sequence of events as given by Wirz. In our final comment, when all the facts have been presented, there will be occasion to express preference. In some cases the sequence of events as presented by Wirz makes for a logically more consistent and coherent whole, but this can only be demonstrated after the exposition of the facts.

The ceremonies discussed so far constitute a coherent sequel of

¹⁵⁹ Communicated by Verschueren, Letters XI p. 9.

events. Now there follows a pause lasting between 20 and 30 days,¹⁶⁰ or several days according to Wirz.¹⁶¹ In this interval nothing particular happens, says Wirz¹⁶²: for our authors an excuse to keep us wholly uninformed on how these uneventful days are spent by the novices and how they get along on their curious diet of bananas, coconut and coconut-milk. We note that all these foods are totems of the *Geb-sé*. It stresses the ritual importance of this phratry.

Then one day the novices receive small bags made of plaited coconut-leaves, of the kind used when collecting mussels and crabs. The next day they are sent to the river to catch crabs, crayfish, mussels and fishes. In the afternoon they return along some pathway, with all the initiates lined up on either side. In passing, the novices are made the objects of derisive words and gestures. Having arrived at the *miráv*, the initiates manipulate the genital parts of the images at the entrance of the *mayo-miráv*. In the *miráv* the novices hand their catch to the initiates. They are not yet allowed to eat anything that lives in the water, except, after the feast, a kind of small black land-crab.¹⁶³ Wirz, who puts the ceremony at a much later stage, gives a more elaborate description. It is true that the novices are allowed to eat only the small, inferior items of their catch, but in the big crabs small holes are made which are smeared with sperma, and then the animals are given to the novices, who, from now on, are allowed to eat all the animals of the beach which are *Zohé* totems.¹⁶⁴ He also states that at the entrance two images with enormous genitals are put up. Obviously, this is one of the occasions on which the male images are each equipped with a giant penis.¹⁶⁵ Wirz also expresses the opinion that the scene has a bearing on the *Diwa-rek* myth of the penis *déma*, but this has to remain a surmise, as the information is insufficient either to confirm or reject this view. It is improbable that the effigy at the entrance, the counterpart of the *mayo-mes-íwag*, should be identified with *Yugil*, the penis *déma*.

After an uncertain number of days there follows the ceremony of water-drawing.¹⁶⁶ In procession the novices go to a well in the bush where, from behind a screen of leaves, an initiate blows water through

¹⁶⁰ Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 449; Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 381.

¹⁶¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 15.

¹⁶² Wirz, l.c.

¹⁶³ Heldring, l.c.

¹⁶⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 17.

¹⁶⁵ See above, pp. 503 f.

¹⁶⁶ Heldring, op. cit. pp. 449 f.

two thin grass-stalks [? probably reeds, v. B.] right into the face of each novice, who bends down to fill his coconut-bowl with water. Another initiate, representing a *ndik*, walks up and down near the well. The novices, with their water-cups filled up, return to the *mayo-miráv*. They are not yet allowed to drink. First they have to drink water mixed with sperma, which the initiates hand to them in a coconut-bowl. Only then may they drink water whenever they like. The description of the scene in the *mayo-miráv* has been supplemented by Wirz.¹⁶⁷ Gooszen adds that the presence of the *ndik* is a reference to the *ndik* who picked up the first human beings from the well,¹⁶⁸ but he does not make it clear whether this is his own conclusion or a comment derived from native sources.

A few days afterwards there follows the ceremony of *kahar ba*, described by Heldring.¹⁶⁹ *Kahar* is 'black clay which is masticated to blacken the teeth'.¹⁷⁰ In the afternoon the neophytes seat themselves in a single row in the bush. From the candidates' left, starting from the rear, an initiate comes forward, dragging a banana tree by a cord. Another initiate gives a bang on the tree each time they come abreast with a candidate, and a third cries out as each blow sounds, just as if somebody had been hit. On the right-hand side of the candidates walks a man who carries a palmwood (Malay *nibung*) stick such as is used for sago-beating. Heaped on the broad end of this stick is an admixture of black clay, some bark of the water-apple, leaves and sperma. With each blow on the banana tree another man puts some of the mixture into the mouth of each of the candidates in turn. Each time the bystanders cry out: "Oh, what a big wound, see how much blood gushes from it!" Heldring confines his comment on the ceremony to the enigmatic explanation that from now on the novices need no longer eat their black clay undiluted, but may mix it with other food! Of course, it is not as bad as all that; Heldring simply ignored the custom of teeth-blackening and did not know the meaning of the word *kahar*. It is evident now that Wirz was wrong when he had this ceremony take place on the day of the entry into the *mayo-miráv*. Part of the ritual performance, however, remains a closed book. Obviously the neophytes have to be frightened, but the procedure may well refer to a mythical event which is unknown to us.

¹⁶⁷ Wirz, l.c.

¹⁶⁸ Gooszen, l.c.

¹⁶⁹ Heldring, op. cit. p. 450.

¹⁷⁰ Geurtjens, Dict. v.c.

On another day follows the ceremony of *da kamak*; making the acquaintance of the sago (*da*). The candidates are seated one behind the other, forming a single row, in the *mayo-miráv*, where *Diwai-zib* (*Diwasib*) appears, his left hand holding a *gev* (*mayo-staff*), his right hand filled with sago. Passing along the line, keeping left of the neophytes, he halts by the side of each candidate, plants his staff firmly in the ground, then puts a lump of sago into the candidate's mouth. From now on they may add sago to their menu. The remarkable fact that *Diwasib* appears as the sago *déma* has been discussed above, where we also pointed out that Wirz does not mention the name.¹⁷¹ According to Wirz sago-making follows a few days later. The female novices are led to a sago grove, where a sago palm is cut down. The initiates then show them how to beat the sago. The girls and the women, each in turn, are made to cut a chunk of the pith out of the trunk, beat it and wash the flour in a crude trough near at hand. Henceforth they are allowed to beat sago.¹⁷² Heldring and Gooszen, however, do not have this ceremony take place until a later occasion, immediately after the novices have been taught how to make coconut oil,¹⁷³ that is, when the cycle of ceremonies connected with bodily care and adornment is well underway.

Wirz makes mention of another ceremony besides, one not recorded by Heldring and Gooszen. It follows a few days after the sago-beating ceremony. The neophytes are again seated in a single row when, beautifully adorned, the loam *déma* appears. In one hand he carries a *mayo-staff*, in the other an *areca spathe* filled with wet mud. Proceeding at a slow pace, he approaches the novices, singing:

Let us make off
That we make off
Loam, loam will kill us
Tupri [the loam *déma*] kills us.

He halts in front of each novice and plants the staff in the ground. He takes some of the wet loam, which drops with a thud on the head of the cowering candidate. It is the enactment of the myth of the *Bangu-déma*.¹⁷⁴

Heldring mentions another ceremony instead, which he calls *bub*

¹⁷¹ Above, p. 417.

¹⁷² Wirz, op. cit. p. 16.

¹⁷³ Heldring, op. cit. p. 454.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. above, pp. 341 f.

tarun (*bub* is breast, *tarun* is pushing away; see Geurtjens, Dict. v.c.). Again the neophytes are seated in single file when a *déma*-performer enters, who gives each of them a prod in the breast which topples him over. After the ceremony "coconut-meat mixed with sperma may be handed out to the novices; whether this happens or not is up to the parents. The meaning of the feast is not clear. The natives contend that it is mere play; the custom is confined to the *Gawir-anim* (i.e. east of the Maro river); west of the river other plays are the fashion".¹⁷⁵ The meaning of the ceremony is, indeed, perfectly obscure.

A few days later there follows the scene to which we referred when discussing the myth of *Opeko-anem*.¹⁷⁶ The *gari*-bearer, beating a drum, enters the *mayo-miráv*, followed by a *mayo-mes-izag* performer who is linked to the *gari*-bearer by means of a spear. They come from the bush and enter the *mayo-miráv*, where, this time, children, too, are permitted to see the spectacle. The children must not stay there long, though, because the neophytes will soon come from the bush to assist the *gari*-bearer in divesting himself of his gear.¹⁷⁷ Gooszen, whose description is partly based on his experiences at Kumbe, mentions a third performer, a *ndik*, who beats the drum. His photo nr. 8 shows the *gari*-bearer and the *ndik*; the *gari*-bearer has his face and body plastered with white clay and he wears a triton-shell as a pubic cover, just like the male novices and the images at the entrances. Why the children are permitted to enter the *mayo-miráv* is not explained. It may be that the dressing-up has to take place in the village, where the materials for making the *gari* are ready to hand. The only way to prevent the children from seeing where the procession comes from would be to seclude them temporarily in the *mayo-miráv* until such time as the *déma* arrives and the dramatic final act has to be staged. A similar procedure is followed when the hunting ceremony is enacted.¹⁷⁸ Less easy to explain is the statement by Heldring and Gooszen that from now on the novices are allowed to eat yams and taro. Yams are a totem of the phratry of *Aramemb*, taro is not mentioned as a totem of any specific group. It looks as if something is missing here. The description given by Wirz does not get us any further either. It differs in certain details from the account given by Heldring and does not mention the eating of taro and yams. The discrepancies in the

¹⁷⁵ Heldring, op. cit. p. 451.

¹⁷⁶ Above, pp. 367 f., 370 ff.

¹⁷⁷ Heldring, op. cit. p. 452.

¹⁷⁸ Below, p. 530.

description need not be discussed, as they are neither very important nor sufficiently elucidated to justify comment.

We have to add yet another question-mark. Wirz, referring to the myth of *Opeko-anem* as related by him in M.A. II p. 121, states that the *gari*-bearer is *Opeko-anem*. How does he know? In Part II he only says: "Der *Gari*-Figurant stellt also bei den *Mayo*-Festen den mythologischen *Opeko-anim* vor",¹⁷⁹ a statement which sounds more like a conclusion than a statement of fact based on positive information. And if he is *Opeko-anem*, why does not the *mayo-mes-iwag* stab him, as she may be expected to? And what is the role of the *ndik*? He is not mentioned at all in the myth. Later, we shall offer an alternative interpretation.¹⁸⁰ For the present, we must proceed with our description.

In Heldring's account the scene of the *gari*-bearer and the *mayo-mes-iwag* (Heldring does not mention *Opeko-anem*'s name) constitutes an important change in the position of the neophytes. From now on rites follow which have a bearing on their personal adornment. In Wirz's account the order of the ceremonies is different. After the pause of 20-30 days separating the episodes of the first three days from the events subsequently related, his version has, successively, the scene of the *gari*-bearer and the *mayo-mes-iwag*, the introduction of sago and sago-beating, the scene of the loam *déma*, the catching of crabs followed by the manipulating of the genitals of the image with the giant penis, and the introduction of fresh water. Further on we shall find that there is reason to follow Wirz as far as the timing of the scene of the *gari*-bearer and the *mayo-mes-iwag* is concerned.¹⁸¹ In other respects we cannot indiscriminately follow him, particularly so with regard to the drinking-water scene. It is difficult to believe that drinking fresh water can be postponed beyond the point indicated in Heldring's version. A menu of coconut and bananas may keep us for some time; from the point of view of nutritional value it is not even a bad one. On the other hand, drinking nothing but coconut-milk is a practice which cannot be kept up indefinitely. As an occasional drink it is allright, but in the long run it may cause intestinal trouble.

The next item on the program, following the scene of the *gari*-bearer and the *mayo-mes-iwag* in Heldring's account, and the introduction of fresh water in Wirz's, is a ceremony which Heldring calls *mayo*

¹⁷⁹ "So the *gari*-bearer represents the mythical *Opeko-anem* during the *mayo* celebration".

¹⁸⁰ Below, pp. 553 ff.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

bru kamak. The name should properly be read *mayub-re kamak* (or something to this effect), making one acquainted with the *mayub*. Again the neophytes sit down in single file. Then the *mayo-mes-iwag* walks up to them and going in the usual way from one neophyte to the next, firmly planting her *mayo-staff* in the ground, she touches the hair of each of them with a *ban*, a needle made (in this case) of a wallaby femur, which is used for plaiting the *mayub*, the hair-strands which hold the hair-lengthenings of fibre and plaited leaves. The neophytes may now prepare their own *mayub*. It is interesting to note that it is the *mayo-mes-iwag* who gives them permission; in ordinary life it usually falls to the *binahor*-mother to render this service (of plaiting the *mayub*) to her husband's ward.

A few days later *Aramemb* enters the *mayo-miráv*, where the neophytes are seated in single file, as usual (here Heldring and Wirz agree on the sequence of the ceremonies). *Aramemb's* head is adorned with the two red parrots which according to myth grew on his head.¹⁸² He also wears the *zambu*¹⁸³ and two arrows passed through his hairdo. In one hand he holds strips of coconut-leaves and a bundle of reed grass, in the other some hibiscus-fibres (*mumbr*) and strips of palmyra-palm-leaves (*uga*), the materials used for making the elaborate hairdo of men and women. Planting his *mayo-staff* firmly in front of each neophyte in turn, he touches their heads with the bundle of leaves and fibres, singing:

Aramemb kaka wére ééh!
Aramemb-a gém-zambu ééh!
Aramemb-a mayo-anem, yambod-anem-ééh!
Mayo-anem, yaba yambod-anem ééh!

I am unable to give a full translation, but Wirz points out that *gém-zambu* is the name of the beach west of Nowari. The song having been first noted down by Heldring,¹⁸⁴ it evidently holds a reference to local conditions. Then, *Aramemb* is called a *mayo-man* (but the word is also used to denote a neophyte) and *yambod-anem*, even *yaba* (big) *yambod-anem*, lit. vulva-man, a common term of abuse which is best translated by copulator.¹⁸⁵ Heldring notes that neither the tune nor the words must be heard by the uninitiated. At Buti another initiate,

¹⁸² Above, p. 284.

¹⁸³ Ibid. p. 283; the *zambu* is the ornament of the new *miakim*.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Heldring, op. cit. p. 454.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *yambod*.

accompanying *Aramemb* but keeping to the other side of the row of novices, offers them coconut meat mixed with sperma. At Nowari this was omitted.¹⁸⁶ Having completed his task, *Aramemb* sits down under a shed in the *mayo-miráv*, where his ornaments are taken off and the initiates offer him bananas, *wati* and betel as a reward for his services.

Immediately afterwards, the novices again sit down in the *mayo-miráv*, where their fathers bring them products from the gardens. These are taken away by the novices' *binahor*- or *yarang-évai*, who bring other food instead, which in its turn is carried off by the fathers. In other words, a food-exchange takes place between the novice's father and his (her) *binahor* (*yarang*)-father, i.e. the father's wife's brother, as the *binahor-évai* and the *yarang-évai* usually are mothers' brothers to the novices. This is in conformity with Heldring's observation that, if the novice has no *binahor*- or *yarang*-father, the food-exchange is arranged between the father and some other relative.¹⁸⁷ Such a situation will, of course, occur in case the novice is a married man or woman. Wirz does not mention the food-exchange, but states that immediately after *Aramemb*'s performance there follows the ceremonial explanation to the novices of the institution of the *binahor*- and *yarang*-fathership. The initiates instruct them on everything pertaining to the institution, as if the novices had never heard of it, because this, too, has to be taught to the novices.¹⁸⁸ Between them, the descriptions by Heldring and Wirz present a fair picture of the ceremony; the food-exchange provides an excellent opportunity to instruct the novice on the point of his obligations toward his maternal relatives. The relationship between this scene and the one immediately preceding, which was presided over by *Aramemb*, is clear; as the great initiator and the creator of the different kinds of hairdo his activities necessarily have a bearing on the function of the *binahor*-father. It is a function to which various observers have paid very little attention. The homosexual claims of this functionary have been interpreted as a prerogative, not as an obligation. The fact that he is a mother's brother makes it probable enough that he should be the boy's main initiator. And so

¹⁸⁶ Heldring, op. cit. p. 453. The young people of Nowari, who had more frequent contacts with traders, on this occasion refused to swallow the brew (op. cit. p. 460). The difference here made between Buti and Nowari is unintelligible to me as the two constitute one group and may be supposed to celebrate the rites together. Or must we read Sěpadim instead of Buti?

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 454.

¹⁸⁸ Wirz, M.A. III p. 18.

he usually is in these parts of New Guinea. The parallelism between the role of the *mayo-mes-ivag* and that of the *binahor*-mother¹⁸⁹ is another argument in favour of the assumption that a similar parallelism exists between the roles of *Aramemb* and of the *binahor*-father.

Wirz has yet another addition to make to Heldring's account of *Aramemb's* role: "That night orgies take place. The older initiates assemble round a fire on the beach and the whole night they sing *gaga*, never stopping until daybreak:

Aramemb-a kamaya durkë
imararaka uar ééh etc. etc.

Aramemb appears again and walks solemnly up and down the beach".¹⁹⁰ Again I am unable to translate the text, in which only the words *durkë*, taboo, and *uar*, stork, are identifiable. We are not informed on what the orgies imply. It is possible that now the novices are initiated into the practice of sexual intercourse. That such an initiation makes an integral part of the procedure is certain. We already referred to Vertenten's report that at Okaba in 1907 several unmarried girls had a delivery after the initiation ceremonies had been held.¹⁹¹ The babies were killed, since the children of unmarried mothers are *déma*-children and have to be done away with.¹⁹² Berkhout, too, refers to many cases of premarital pregnancy in consequence of the *mayo* ceremonies.¹⁹³ It seems possible that the designation 'déma-child' for the child of an unmarried mother bears a direct reference to this effect of the *mayo*-rites. Following upon the *mayo*-initiation there was apparently a peak in the number of premarital pregnancies. That a child procreated during the initiation ceremonies was called a *déma*-child constitutes an interesting parallel to a similar custom among the *Bánaro*.¹⁹⁴ There is no doubt, then, that at one stage of the ceremonies the novices partake in heterosexual intercourse, but we have no information on its place in the sequel. The appearance of *Aramemb* provides the earliest possible occasion.

During the days which follow, the neophytes busy themselves with procuring the requisites for personal adornment. They collect the

¹⁸⁹ Above, p. 526.

¹⁹⁰ Wirz, l.c.

¹⁹¹ Above, p. 496.

¹⁹² Ibid. p. 155.

¹⁹³ Berkhout, BKI 1919 p. 442.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Thurnwald, Die Gemeinde der *Bánaro*, pp. 22, 38 f.

materials necessary for making the hairdo, armlets, leglets and so on. The ornaments and shells which they had surrendered for safe-keeping upon their entry into the *mayo-miráv*, are returned. The *éwati*, who had been wearing a triton-shell, again adopt the *sahu*-shell, which is their usual pubic cover; the girls and women change the plain apron for the customary black one. They are not yet permitted to use coconut oil and paint (except, so it seems, to dye the women's aprons). Wirz reports that gradually all the usual ornaments are put on, with the exception of the two bands covered with colourful coix-seeds which are worn crosswise, each passing over one shoulder and under the other armpit. Instead, they wear *soya*, unadorned bands of bark and reed of the kind worn in token of mourning. They have to wear these bands till well after the closing ceremony.¹⁹⁵

The actual order in which the ornaments are put on is not clear; at a later stage of the procedure, that of bathing in the sea, Wirz reports again that the ornaments of the neophytes which had been taken from them are now returned and he adds that the garments of coconut-leaves are burned, the hairdo remade and the body anointed with coconut oil. Evidently we have to conceive the return to normal adornment as a long-drawn-out process in which the necessary materials are first assembled and the various articles of dress plaited. On the other hand, Wirz's version cannot be accepted in its entirety either. Making the hairdo, which takes a long time, definitely precedes the ceremony of bathing in the sea, because Heldring describes the precautions that are taken to prevent the hairdo from getting wet on the occasion. The anointing and painting of the body, however, is done after they have returned from the sea. We describe the various stages in some detail.

First of all, there is the ceremony called *mes bik* by Heldring; *bik* is carrying in the hand, *mes* is ripe coconut. When the neophytes are seated in single file in the bush, the *mayo-mes-iwag* appears. With her right foot she shoves a sprouting coconut towards each of the candidates. After the ceremony, coconut oil may be prepared (made by chewing the meat of a ripe coconut).

The next item on the program¹⁹⁶ is the fetching of *payam*-nuts (*Aleurites moluccana*, Malay *kamiri*) by the male candidates, and of red oker by the female ones. The *payam*-nuts are charred and pulverized

¹⁹⁵ Wirz, l.c.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 454.

and then mixed with coconut oil to provide the black paint which is applied to the bodies of the male neophytes when they prepare themselves for the final ceremony. The girls and the women will then paint themselves red, using the oker.

The next day is devoted to *ohan*, the hunt. Heldring has this hunt and the gathering of garden produce precede the relevant ceremony of being introduced to the custom and technique of hunting, which is against the rule and would hardly be practical, because all the food has to be on display on the *kabai-aha* till the final ceremony. Wirz, whose description of the rite does not differ substantially from Heldring's, puts the ceremonial instruction first. However, the description of the various details as presented by Heldring forms such a consistent pattern that it is impossible to deviate from it without losing track of the details. We therefore follow Heldring's version,¹⁹⁷ leaving it to our Marind friends to take care that the food does not taint.

The hunt and the collecting of garden produce take two or three days. In both events the initiates act collectively with the neophytes. The food is displayed on the *kabai-aha*, which is decorated with brightly coloured leaves. The next day is the day of the symbolic hunt. The candidates go to the bush, where they remain all day. What they do there is not communicated, but effective measures are taken so that they cannot be seen by the uninitiated. That day and the following night the children are committed to the village-enclosure, the nightly abode of the neophytes. Towards evening the candidates return to the village. They find their way blocked by a number of obstacles, each formed by two sticks (arrows, says Wirz) implanted one on either side of the path, bent inwards and intersecting over the centre. Near each pair of sticks there stand two initiates, who ply the sticks like a pair of scissors each time a candidate steps over them. Simultaneously, the candidates are shot or stabbed with arrows made of grass-stalks, the girls in the genitals, the boys in the anus. After having been harassed all the way long, they arrive at the village-enclosure, where a *mayo-mes-iwag* is awaiting them. The initiates make way, calling out: "Open your eyes, see your *amai*" (grandmother). The *mayo-mes-iwag* then takes charge and conducts the neophytes (who, for obvious reasons, must not enter the village-enclosure) to the *mayo-miráv*. Outside there is again a number of initiates awaiting them. They beat the ground with *bing*, the heavy lower end of the coconut-leaf. Other initiates

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 455 f.

from inside the *miráv* warn the arriving neophytes that they must not sit down, because the men outside are going to beat them with the *bing*. When all have entered the *mayo-miráv*, the initiates with the *bing*, beating the ground on the right and the left of the neophytes, instruct the male candidates to bring a *bing* and the female ones to bring young coconut-leaves for the following night, when the closing ceremony will be over.

Now the neophytes go to the village and according to Heldring they will sleep in that part of the village which is outside the enclosure, because the latter is occupied by the children. In the meantime the parents and other relatives make for the gardens to collect banana-leaves, which the candidates will presently need to wrap them round their hairdo before they set out to meet *Yorma*, the sea déma, and take a bath in the sea. It is hard to believe that the relatives of the neophytes should pay a nocturnal visit to the gardens on such a trifling errand. They do not need so many leaves that they could not have brought them in during the day. It is evident that something really secret is going on, which the uninitiated are not allowed to see. We must make a conjecture here. Late that night, between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning, the ceremonies connected with *Yorma* will begin. When these are over, Heldring states, the candidates start primping for the final ceremony, which begins in the late afternoon of that same day, but Wirz does not have this final ceremony occur until a few days later, because first *Déhévai* has to appear. This, however, would have the worst of effects on the food still exhibited on the *kabai-aha*. The problem can be solved by assuming that this very night *Déhévai* appears. Well aware of the hypothetical character of the sequence suggested, we shall at this point insert the episode of *Déhévai*, our story having been brought up to the evening of the day on which the novices returned from the ceremonial hunt.

In the evening, then, the candidates assemble on the beach, where *Déhévai* comes to meet them; for an exact description of his complicated attire the reader is referred to Wirz, M.A. III p. 20. The more important elements have been discussed when we were dealing with *Nazr* as *Déhévai*.¹⁹⁸ We remind our readers of the fact that he wears a black cockatoo mask and holds a spear and a spear-thrower in his hand. He is the demon of the thunderstorm and of headhunting. Two initiates carrying torches accompany him. The spectacle must,

¹⁹⁸ Above, pp 409, 414.

indeed, be impressive. The importance of his appearance is emphasized by the fact that simultaneously *Aramemb* appears on the stage. However, he does not come to the fore and the novices are not allowed to approach him. He is recognized by the two red parrots and the *sambu* on his head. Round his middle he has a big bow, the two ends protruding on either side of his body. He dances on the beach, slowly shifting his weight from one leg on to the other, the upper part of his body swinging up and down. Wirz explains the belated appearance of *Déhévai* as a reference to the killing of the *iwag* destined to be eaten by the initiates during the supposed cannibal meal at the end of the ceremony. As there is no such meal, the appearance of *Déhévai* must have another meaning. The most simple explanation is that the novices have to meet him because he is part of the supernatural world with which they have to become acquainted. He is simply an item in the program. However, his appearance toward the end of the ceremonies and the presence of *Aramemb*, who even carries a bow as an attribute, may mean that there is more to it than meets the eye. It might be a reference to an impending headpunt. "After the *mayo* ceremonies they usually set out on a headhunting expedition; the headhunt was, in a way, the sequel to the ceremonies", says Wirz.¹⁹⁹ The connection between initiation and headhunting is not an improbable one. Among the Kiwai the initiation ceremony is to all intents and purposes a ceremony to ensure the success of the headhunts.²⁰⁰ Yet, I must confess that I am not fully satisfied. The statement made by Wirz is of a very general nature, unsubstantiated by factual evidence. The only reference earlier observers made to a possible connection of the ritual with headhunting is the following statement in the Colonial Report of 1911: "The so-called *mayo*-feasts, which are usually followed by headhunting expeditions, closed peacefully this year".²⁰¹ Contrary to the Kiwai *moguru* ceremony, there is no direct reference to warfare and headhunting during the rites, except the appearance of *Déhévai*, and this can be explained in two different ways: either by the necessity to include him because he is a prominent member of the Marind-anim pantheon, or by the fact that by now (in theory at least) the wet season is drawing near and maybe has already arrived. Most thunderstorms occur in November and December, though the months immediately

¹⁹⁹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 25.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Landtman on the *moguru* ceremony; Kiwai Papuans pp. 361 ff., in particular p. 365.

²⁰¹ Koloniaal Verslag 1911, Hfdst. C § 20.

following also have their share of them.²⁰² From this point of view the appearance of *Déhévai* fits in perfectly well with the season. Nevertheless, later on in this chapter we shall find an indication that, when all is said and done, Wirz probably had some ground for his contention that there is a relationship between the *mayo*-initiation and headhunting.²⁰³

After having met *Déhévai*, the novices may enjoy a short rest. Between the hours of 3 and 4 in the morning they are awakened again and told to wrap up their hairdo, because now they are going to meet *Yorma*, the sea déma. The latter's appearance, too, is in accordance with the season, because the west monsoon with which he is associated has either set in or may be expected any day. When the neophytes are ready to depart, the *mayo-mes-ivag* appears again to lead the way to the sea.²⁰⁴ They need not go far because, by now, the tide is fully in.²⁰⁵ Coming down the beach, a procession of wonderfully decorated déma-performers approaches. It is still dark and the beautiful figures stand out in the light of torches held up by initiates accompanying the procession. The performers represent *Yorma*, the sea déma. The neophytes are encouraged to meet him, but when they approach the performers they are given a mighty push which sends them tumbling headlong into the sea. It is evident now why the tide must be in: the landward part of the beach rises more sharply than that further down towards the sea, and at high tide one need take only a few steps out to be knee-deep in water, which means that any person who is pushed into the sea gets soaking wet. At ebb-tide this would be an impossibility; farther out to sea the land slopes down so imperceptibly that it is well-nigh impossible to tell where the sea begins and consequently it takes a very long walk even to be ankle-deep in the water.

Now the novices have been introduced to the sea and they are going to meet the canoe, represented by one of the halves of a bamboo which has been split lengthwise. It is carried by two initiates. Two others rub sticks up and down the upper surface of the 'canoe'. The sticks are the oars and the sound produced is that of the oars against the hull.

Yorma is also the déma of blood-letting (*arom*). It is still dark when the novices go to the *mayo-miráv*, where one of the initiates cuts their upperarms with a mussel-shell. Heldring says that to this end the

²⁰² See above, pp. 420 f. and below, pp. 716 f.

²⁰³ Below, pp. 551 f.

²⁰⁴ Heldring, op. cit. p. 456.

²⁰⁵ Wirz, op. cit. p. 19.

initiates have their arms tied to a tree, but that may be an exaggeration. The scar on the upperarm is said to be a token that the bearer is a *mayo*-initiate.

During the day which follows everybody is busy with the final dressing-up. The male neophytes paint their bodies and ornaments with black, the female ones with red. We recall that black is the colour of the body (not of the face) of the *éwati*, and red that of the body of the *miakim*,²⁰⁶ and also of the *wahuku*, the *kivasom-ivag* and the *ivag*.²⁰⁷ In general, red is more frequently applied by women than by men and the painting as done on this occasion does not make an exception. But the decorations of the neophytes are not confined to hairdress, body-paint and the usual fineries. All the neophytes, male and female, wear a yellow bird of paradise fastened to the end of a long elastic rod which is stuck into their hairdo. With every step the bird will swing up and down, flashing its resplendent flamboyant colours. The *miakim* (and the *amnangib*, the married male novices) have yet another ornament, viz. the head and the plumes of the *ndik*. The *ndik*'s head is perched right on top of the hairdo.

Before he leaves the *mayo-miráv*, each neophyte is presented with a new *wad*, a plaited bag of the kind every Marind always carries about with him to hold his tobacco, his ingredients for betel-chewing, some food and a variety of small items. It is between four and five p.m. when the procession leaves the place, but no sooner has the last neophyte come out than they are all called back. They return to receive a big, nicely carved lime-spatula, a *tang*, which may also be a ritual instrument.²⁰⁸ Again they set out, to be called back a second time, now to receive a smouldering *badi*, the catkin of a tree of the same name, often used as a fidibus by wayfarers.²⁰⁹ The smouldering catkins of the *badi* also have a function in the ceremonies for the dead. They are placed between the armllets of a deceased to provide him with fire on his way to the land of the dead.²¹⁰ It is impossible to decide

²⁰⁶ Ibid. pp. 14, 15.

²⁰⁷ Nollen, Anthr. 1909 pp. 568, 570 f.; cf. also above, p. 157 note 101.

²⁰⁸ As there is no difference in form or name between a *tang* used as a lime spatula and a *tang* serving as a ritual instrument, it is evident that there is only one object, a *tang*, which may serve both purposes.

²⁰⁹ There is some confusion with regard to the identification of the plant. Heldring, Wirz and Geurtjens call it *Saccharum edulis*, the latter stating at the same time that it is a tree, which is impossible, because *Saccharum edulis* is a grass. The *badi* is, indeed, a tree; Verschueren, Letters XI p. 9.

²¹⁰ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *badi*.

what meaning must be attached to this present in the context of the *mayo*. Is it a reference to the wholly new life the recipients begin now that they are initiates? If so, it means that the life of the uninitiated differs as much from that of the initiated as the life of the dead differs from that of the living. It is possible, of course, to construe a theory on this theme in which the *soya*, the unadorned shoulderbands worn in token of mourning, are explained from the same motif, but in the absence of a single word of native comment all this is destined to remain sheer conjecture. Still, the fact that the novices are now about to leave the *mayo-miráv* cannot but inspire them with some such notion. They are familiar with the fact that the *badi* is given to a deceased as a last farewell before the grave closes over him. When they arrive at the beach, something happens which may confirm this idea of a parallel. An *iwag*, fully adorned, comes forward and takes the lead. By beating the ground with a croton-leaf she indicates that the procession may proceed and follow her to the village.²¹¹ A similar ceremony takes place at a feast. When they have arrived at the entrance to the festive grounds, the performers and the dancers will wait till an *iwag*, by beating the ground with a croton-leaf, signifies that they may enter. The festive grounds are invariably laid out near the graves.²¹² An *iwag* is also the leader of the procession called *makan hawn*, which is held in honour of the recently dead.²¹³ We conclude that some association with the idea of death is present, but that it is impossible to define its purport with any certainty, though the following scene may confirm our first suggestion of parallelism. Relatives and children (the latter are now allowed to see the returning neophytes) have come out to watch the procession. The children have been instructed to offer roasted fish to their big brother or sister, but the latter walk on with their heads bent down and the children have to deposit the food in the empty *wad*, from which it will soon be taken by the initiates (again

²¹¹ Wirz III p. 22, Heldring op. cit. p. 456. I must add that Cappers, who witnessed the entry of the decorated neophytes into the village at Birok and Matara, states that when the procession, emerging from the coconut grove, arrived on the beach, it was headed by a *miakim*, followed by a *wahuku*, then an *éwati*, and then etc., whatever that 'etc.' means (Ann. 1909 p. 213). He does not mention that on the beach an *iwag* took over from the leading *miakim*, but that does not prove that it did not happen, as his description is too brief to comprise more than a few details. There is no reason to believe that Heldring's communication is not correct.

²¹² See below, p. 846.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 795.

the mothers' brothers?). The neophytes act as if they do not recognize their own mothers, sisters and brothers.²¹⁴ To all intents and purposes they are new men and women. We conclude this paragraph with Verschueren's comment on the ceremonial act of beating the ground with croton twigs. It is always an *iwag* who performs the act. The ceremony is attendant upon a great variety of occasions, in modern times for instance the procession on Corpus Christi or the festive return of the children after receiving Holy Communion for the first time. Nobody could explain the custom. Informants made mention of such purposes as warning the *déma* or warding off the spirits of the dead, but ultimately everybody confessed his ignorance. Finally Verschueren points out that the custom has its parallels among the Boadzi and the Jaqai, where the women beat the water in exactly the same manner when the men return from a headhunting expedition.²¹⁵ After all, some vague reminder of death and the dead, indicating a caesura in the life cycle, does not seem an altogether too bold supposition in the context of initiation.

The procession goes straight to the enclosure, where they circumambulate the *kabai-aha*. Then they sit down to be presented with a dish of sago, bananas and grated coconut.²¹⁶ As they have not tried this dish before, it has been mixed with sperma and before they start eating, an initiate rubs some of the food on their faces.²¹⁷ After the meal a *déma*-performer offers them the ingredients for betel-chewing; the name of the *déma*-performer is not mentioned, but Wirz (who supplemented Heldring's account with the item that it is a *déma*-performer who hands out the refreshment) supposes that it is *Mongumer-anem*, the betel *déma*.²¹⁸ The candidates put the betel and the sirih-leaves into their mouths, but when they want to add lime from the limegourd by means of the *tang* they received on their departure from the *mayo-miráv*, they are summoned to beat the lime-gourds with their spatulae. This is repeated three times.

Wirz advances the supposition that now a procession of *déma*-performers will enter the enclosure. On other occasions such a performance more or less announces the completion of the ceremonies, he writes, adding that to his regret Heldring does not mention it and

²¹⁴ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 22 f.

²¹⁵ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 9.

²¹⁶ Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 458.

²¹⁷ Wirz, op. cit. p. 23.

²¹⁸ Cf. above, pp. 378 f.

that consequently he has to draw entirely on comparisons with other feasts. It is difficult to see why he should indulge in such sterile speculation. What Heldring writes is interesting enough. "During the betel-chewing a number of *mitwar* (initiates), who are joined by the *amnangib* (married men) and *miakim* among the neophytes, move around the sitting group, all the time singing their *mayo*-songs (*gaga*). This is continued all night through. . .".²¹⁹ It is evident now who the people are who count as really fully initiated: it is the *miakim* and *amnangib*, the men who are each adorned with a stork's head and, as newly initiated, are called *noh-war*, new storks.²²⁰ They do, from now on, belong to the fully initiated. It is of interest to note that Cappers, too, observed that the *miakim* joined the older initiates who circulate round the *kabai-aha*.²²¹ Toward daybreak the singing stops. The snake which lay buried around the *kabai-aha* is dug up and dragged away to the bush outside the village, where, amidst shouts of joy, it is torn to pieces and its contents, the sugar-cane stalks, are distributed among the neophytes. The scene must not be observed by the uninitiated.²²²

Before the neophytes return, a *gari*-bearer appears on the beach and walks up to the village-enclosure. In his hand he holds a big, burning piece of wood and dancing he goes to the *kabai-aha*, bringing the fire. This ceremony is called *mayo-takaw* (*mayo*-fire).²²³ "The *mayo*-fire is brought, the initiates (*mitwar*) cry out"²²⁴ and Wirz adds that it is the mythical fire engendered by the *mayo* ceremonies. What the *mayo*-fire has to do with certain events in the bush can only be surmised. Here according to Wirz the initiates now indulge in the supposed cannibalistic repast, to which we shall come back presently. First, we must go into a few more details, because Cappers, probably the only white man ever to have been an eye-witness to the final scene, gives a slightly different version. At daybreak the neophytes go to the bush. He does not mention the grass-snake, which in fact he never saw because he had left early in the night to get some sleep in a guest-house not far from the enclosure, but he did witness the return of the neophytes. Each had a small red stick in his hand, about 40 cm. long, and they made what he calls a gesture as of blessing while they were

²¹⁹ Heldring, l.c.

²²⁰ Cf. above, p. 305.

²²¹ Cappers, Ann. 1909 p. 214.

²²² Heldring, l.c.; see also above, p. 507.

²²³ Heldring, l.c.

²²⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 24.

going round the *kabai-aha*, after which they disappeared. Immediately afterwards some ten sticks were planted round the *kabai-aha*, each with an empty bag suspended from it. Again the neophytes returned and each put his hand into one of the bags, then to disappear again into the bush. They returned a third time, and with a light gesture touched the uninitiated children who were lined up round the *kabai-aha*. At last they were real humans again: they were no longer *mayo* (novices). Hardly had the male *ex-mayo* returned to the *gotad* when all the people flocked to the beach, from where a *gari*-bearer approaches the village. He has a burning piece of wood in his hand and after having circumambulated the *kabai-aha* a few times, he disappears. For the youngsters this is a signal to despoil the building of all the food stored on it. In less than no time a few are right on top of the structure and start throwing down the sago, the bananas etc. When everything is finished, they all go home. . . .²²⁵ We conclude with Heldring that, indeed, the *mayo*-fire has been brought. However, it is not brought and put *under* the *kabai-aha*, as he reports, thereby suggesting that the structure is burned down, but it is just shown near the *kabai-aha* for all to see. As a matter of fact, none of our sources states explicitly that the structure is burned down. That nothing happens to it is evident from Cappers' report and so it is somewhere else we must look for the real meaning behind the *mayo*-fire. Something must, indeed, have happened in the bush, possibly on the spot where the snake was torn asunder and where no uninitiated person was allowed to come. The *mayo*-fire must have been made: the men would not have sung *gaga* all night long unless there was something important afoot.

Wirz was certainly right when he felt that something must have happened which Heldring's and his and anybody else's informants had withheld. As a matter of fact, our whole previous description bears witness that our knowledge may at best be called fragmentary. There is not the slightest doubt that the rites included initiation into sexual intercourse, at least as far as the girls are concerned. But we do not know when, where or how. Owing to the chance presence of Cappers at the final ceremony at Birok and Matara, we have a wealth of details, in spite of the fact that his contempt for these pagan revels made him unwilling to forego sleep and so make the best of this unprecedented opportunity.

Another example of the fragmentary character of our information

²²⁵ Cappers, l.c.

is provided by Viegen's account of what he calls the baptising of the neophytes. Evidently he was handicapped, like all early observers, by a not fully adequate knowledge of the language. "When they have arrived at 'a water', the neophytes are solemnly baptized at sunrise by *Geb* the sun, *Takav* the fire, and fifty odd other ancestors in *déma*-attire. Then with the spirits (*déma*) they throw themselves into the water and emerge as full members of the Marind society".²²⁶ On this occasion he saw no fewer than three *gari*, one in the centre, one at the head and one in the rear of the procession.²²⁷ What does the scene represent? But for the expression 'a water', it might have been the confrontation with *Yorma*. 'A water' may mean any water except the sea, which rules out *Yorma*. The addition that now the novices may wash the clay off their bodies and soon after are allowed to eat sago, gives evidence that the ceremony must be put at about the time of the introduction of fresh water. We conclude that it must be a ceremony not mentioned by other authors, purporting to acquaint the neophytes with the custom of bathing. Even so, it is difficult to determine the exact place of the event in the sequel. On the photograph published by Gooszen the neophytes are still plastered with clay on the occasion of the appearance of *gari*-bearer and *mayo-mes-ivag*. Following Helderling, we had the scene of *gari*-bearer and *mayo-mes-ivag* enacted after the ceremonies of becoming acquainted with fresh water, sago etc. If we accept Wirz's version, in which it occurs at an earlier stage, the ceremony described by Viegen may be viewed as a rite introducing the custom of bathing, which follows the introduction of fresh water and precedes that of sago. The impressive show of *déma*-performers and the presence of three *gari* prove that it is an important occasion, a decisive step forward in the life of the neophytes. Although its actual meaning is not disclosed and the one thing we know for certain is that Viegen watched the procession, a conjecture can be made which contains a fair degree of probability. The bathing necessarily precedes the adornment of the body. The latter obviously must be equated with the shaping of the limbs of the human beings who emerged from a well (cf. the myth of the origin of man). At the emergence of the first human beings several *déma* were present: *Aramemb*, the *ndik* and *Sobra*. The event is an extremely important one and it is by no means improbable that it is given special emphasis by the representation of other *déma* as well on the occasion of the re-enactment of this episode.

²²⁶ Viegen, TAG 1913 p. 149.

²²⁷ Ibid. p. 152.

The presence of the *gari*, the rising sun, is from a classificatory point of view well in place as the life of man runs parallel to that of the sun.

Where so much depends on a systematic knowledge of mythology and of the system of classification, we can hardly blame Wirz for surmising that there was some secret final ceremony which nobody wanted to disclose anything about. Only, he was on the wrong track when he thought of a cannibal feast. It is not altogether clear from where he got the notion. It is evident that he never was quite positive, in spite of a liberal use of the adverbs 'zweifellos' (doubtless) and 'sicherlich' (certainly), two words which, in any language, are indicative of implicit doubt. They should be banned from scientific vocabulary, because in nine cases out of ten they only mean that the author is prevailing upon himself not to question the correctness of his statement, but to carry on as if all were safe. Probably Wirz picked up these rumours from Indonesian traders or hunters of birds of paradise. Perhaps such a ritual murder was alluded to by his native informants, though he never explicitly states where he had these gruesome particulars from. Things are always said to be undoubtedly so. The traders and hunters could tell impressive stories and I must confess that I have been taken in myself. I remember a hair-raising story told by a trader who, at the time, eked out a rather miserable living at Domandé. In his early years, somewhere on the upper Bian, he once happened upon a woman who was pent in a cage in the forest, ostensibly for the purpose of being fattened to make a better meal. After all, it may have been a woman who was menstruating, but I must admit that my doubts were not raised until F. Verschueren gave his view, insisting that he could not believe in cannibalism, because all Marind denied its occurrence in the context of ritual. Later he published a penetrating study on human sacrifice on the south coast (Het mensenoffer op de Zuidkust van Nederlands Nieuw Guinea) in Indonesië I (1947/48), pp. 437-470.

He argued that it is not uncommon to present symbolic acts of killing as real homicide; when describing a case of sorcery, people will mention the most sensational details, presenting them in such a convincing way as to make any listener believe that they are referring, not to a symbolic act, but to a real murder. Against this background Verschueren depicts his personal experience with various rituals, beginning with the rumours circulated on the *gomai*-ritual of the *Boadzi*, in which an old woman was said to be killed and eaten. It turned out to be a symbolic killing; all that happened was that a couple

of coconuts were crushed. They symbolized the old woman. Something of the kind happened in the upper Bian cult and will be described at some length in the next chapter. It was different with the procedure followed in the *imo*-rites, but there, too, the killing proved to be a symbolic act. As far as the *mayo*-rites are concerned, all initiates deny with the utmost persistence that ever a woman was eaten. It was also denied by Kwé Kiong Sioe, who was Heldring's informant. All the information on other rituals, together with the fact that the *mayo*-initiates never failed to disclaim cannibalism, make us tend to the conclusion that if there were anything special at all killed and eaten during the *mayo*-rites, it was something symbolic of the *mayo-ivag*. Referring to my earlier analysis of the *mayo*-rites in *Godsdienst en Samenleving in Nederlandsch-Zuid-Nieuw-Guinea*, Verschueren points out that such a symbol may be found in the grass-snake buried around the *kabai-aha*. When Wirz deals with the woman who is the victim of cannibalism, he always calls her *mayo-ivag*, never *mayo-mes-ivag*. And *mayo-ivag* is also a small, brightly coloured snake.²²⁸ We shall have to return to Verschueren's hypothesis presently, but even if it should appear that it is impossible to prove its correctness, Wirz's suggestion that a young woman is eaten after having been raped by the community of the male initiates,²²⁹ must be rejected as thoroughly unproven and unsubstantiated, even in myth.

Before the more fundamental meaning of the *mayo*-rites can be fruitfully discussed, we have to wind up the description of the ceremonies. Although the bringing of the fire to the *kabai-aha* may be looked upon as the formal conclusion of the rites, a few things still remain to be done. First of all, a taboo is imposed on the coconut gardens in the vicinity of the *mayo-miráv*. The initiates (*mitwar*) paint *bing* (the lower end of a coconut-leaf — or, as the case may be, of a sago tree-leaf) with a taboo-sign, then place a number of these in the coconut gardens. Apparently the coconuts in the vicinity of the *mayo-miráv* must be given a rest. This, however, is not all. Heldring points out that there are a few things left which have as yet to be made *kamak*, i.e. made ritually known to the new initiates. These things still have to be taught. In the meantime the new initiates are allowed a good rest. They may go wherever they wish and are not secluded again. They are only forbidden to speak of what happened during the cere-

²²⁸ Cf. above, p. 505.

²²⁹ Cf. i.a. Wirz, M.A. II p. 58.

monies. Some ten days after the closing ceremony they are called upon to go out with the older initiates, hunting wallabies and pigs. The hunt being over, they are offered a dish of sago, coconut meat and the meat of wallabies and swine mixed with sperma. It is the first time that they get meat and it has to be made known to them in the usual way. In the second place, Heldring mentions the introduction of *hayam*, *Inocarpus edulis*, a fruit which ripens in February.²³⁰

A third subject taught after the closing ritual is the customs concerning betrothal and marriage. The relevant ceremony is called *parané kamak*.²³¹ "A man and a woman, in the presence of each new initiate, discuss the customs prevalent in betrothal and marriage, the mutual obligations of husband and wife, the division of labour between the sexes, etc."²³² We cannot help wondering why this kind of instruction is not given earlier. On the whole, it is strange that in Heldring's account we find hardly any reference to the sexual aspect of initiation. It is not improbable that Kwé Kiong Sioe thought it wiser not to discuss the subject, unless he was specifically asked to.

Another activity which has to be taught to the 'novices' is fishing with the *kipa*, the round fishing-net. "And likewise there are various other less important activities. What has not yet been done, whether it be the consumption of certain kinds of food or the engaging in a particular activity, is demonstrated by a *mitwar* to the *mayo-anim* (neophytes), after which they are considered to be initiated in that aspect also. When everything is '*kamak*', the drums are beaten, the fence of the *mayo-miráv* is pulled up and destroyed, the sheds are torn down, and in conclusion a merry feast is celebrated".²³³

Wirz does not mention the supplementary ceremonies, but he records the taboo on the coconut gardens. He also reports that in Kaibursé the final ceremony takes a somewhat different form. Here the *kabai-aha* has a small platform on which a cormorant *déma* takes up his stance at the moment the neophytes leave the *mayo-miráv*. Near each of the four poles of the *kabai-aha* stands another *déma*-performer, who is called *kareb* (caterpillar). Wirz was unable to obtain any information on the meaning of this performance, but tried to explain it from the association which may exist between the cormorant and headhunting.²³⁴

²³⁰ Cf. above, pp. 519 f.

²³¹ For *parané* see above, pp. 128 f. and 153.

²³² Heldring, *op. cit.* p. 459.

²³³ *Ibid.* p. 460.

²³⁴ Cf. below, pp. 789 f. on the role of the cormorant in the *mayo* ceremony for the dead.

Finally, Wirz reports that on the night following the closing ceremony there is a special dance, an *im-si*, executed by the *Geb-zé-ha* girls (*wahuki*, *kivasom* and *iwag*). No other women may join in, except when they are *Geb-zé-ha*. The girls are decorated in the same way as the day before and, two abreast, walk round a group of old men, who sing the *im-si*. No drums are used, but the girls have rattles made of crab-pincers, with which they beat the time. Men do not partake in this feast, except one young man, a *mitwar*, who is also a *Geb-zé-ha*, and who walks in front and joins in the singing. We note that this man cannot be a very young one, as he is already a *mitwar*. What is worse, we are not satisfied whether a dance of this kind is at all feasible. The *Geb-zé-ha* women by themselves can never be so many as to be able to stage a show with — if not exclusively, at least predominantly — local members of the clan. Either people from other communities must have been invited, or members of other clans are allowed to participate.

4. THE MEANING OF THE MAYO CEREMONIES

Having finished the description of the rites as far as they have become known, we now have to turn to their more general aspects and meaning, in the hope that we may discover some real order in the sequence of rather incoherent episodes. Heldring and Vertenten already pointed out that, in fact, the rites are fertility ceremonies of some kind.²³⁵ The distribution of food mixed with sperma is certainly highly suggestive of such an idea, and this is also emphasized by Wirz. More specifically, the rites should increase the fertility of the coconut palms.²³⁶ He even reports that near each of the most recently planted palms a bone is buried of the *iwag* who was eaten, and that the trunks of the palms are painted red with her blood.²³⁷ As usual, the statement is unaccompanied by any indication where and how he learned these gruesome details and what he did to ascertain whether he had been told the truth. We may be sure that, if he had come across any convincing information on this point, he would not have suppressed this sensational news, but, on the contrary, have capitalized on its every detail. As it is, we may well refer the statement to the realm of fantasy, though it is certainly not improbable that the Marind envisage a

²³⁵ Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 460; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 35.

²³⁶ Wirz, M.A. III p. 3.

²³⁷ Ibid. p. 24.

connection between the *mayo*-rites and the growth of the coconut palm. The coconut is a symbol of human life and what benefits the one may be good for the other, too. One thing is evident; the necessity to celebrate the *mayo*-rites is not primarily rationalized in terms of increasing the fertility of the crops. This may be a supplementary consideration, but we do not find that they ever emphasize the point. In view of the extreme intricacy of the rites we could hardly expect otherwise.

Any effort to grasp the meaning of the *mayo*-rites must necessarily start from their totality. Even the sketchy and fragmentary nature of our information gives abundant evidence of the extraordinarily comprehensive character of the rites. They have relevance to all the ways of life, to all foods, techniques, customs and institutions. If, for some reason, a certain food, technique or institution has not been made known in the course of the cycle, it is not left out, but has to be dealt with after the cycle has been closed.

The Marind explicitly emphasize the necessity of the rites, not only positively so when stating that everything has to be made known to the neophytes, but also negatively by explaining that the young people of to-day, who have not been initiated because the *mayo* ceremonies were prohibited by the administration, "do not know how to chew betel, how to climb a palmtree and pick or husk a nut, how to prepare sago, to catch fish or lobster, to hunt wallabies or pigs".²³⁸ Of course, the initiates do not fail to observe that the youngsters do all these things well enough from a purely technical point of view, but to their minds something is lacking and that something can hardly be anything else but the knowledge of the supernatural, mythical background, primarily the secret names which are indispensable for the performance of the magical rites required to achieve success. Wirz even goes so far as to maintain that what the initiates mean is that the uninitiated do not enjoy the full nutritional value of their food.²³⁹ In the absence of an explicit native statement to this effect, I do not feel sure that we are justified in being as specific as all that in our formulation of their feelings. Even so, it is evident that, failing initiation, the fulness of life is lacking.

The *mayo*-initiation provided an almost complete re-training. From our sources we gather that only few aspects of life were left out, and

²³⁸ Ibid. pp. 4, 5.

²³⁹ Ibid. p. 5.

from the paucity of these sources we may conclude that the extent of the education given is more comprehensive than appears from our enumeration of the successive episodes. On one point in particular our sources are extremely defective. We are not given a complete picture of what the instruction as given implies. Partly it is purely technical in scope, as is well demonstrated by the rite of picking and husking coconuts.²⁴⁰ Some of it is related to customs and usages, such as the instruction on the institution of the *binahor*- and *yarang*-relations²⁴¹ and on the making of *parané*.²⁴² But what else is there to it, making it more than just instruction on the way things are done? In some cases we found the relevant *déma* represented: *Méru*, the coconut *déma*, trying to escape into the sea; the flying foxes; the sago *déma*; the enactment of the story of *Bangu*, the loam *déma*; *Aramemb* bringing the materials for making the hairdo; the encounter with *Yorma*, and so on. A very important mythical character is the *mayo-mes-izwag*. She takes the lead in various scenes and her functions require further discussion later on in this section. It is not necessary to recapitulate all the different characters who have been reported to be performers. The number of those who have not been mentioned certainly exceeds that of the ones whose names have been recorded in the reports. Viegen mentions some fifty performers acting on the occasion of the ceremonial bath in fresh water.²⁴³ Evidently, *déma*-performers appear on a great many occasions. Wirz sums up these facets in one generalizing statement: "Not before a person representing a mythical *déma* has demonstrated the various foods and drugs, and instructed them how to perform such techniques as the making of ornaments, the plaiting of hair-strands, the preparation of sago, fishing, hunting etc., are the novices allowed to eat, one item after another, the various foods and drugs and to pursue their normal occupations".²⁴⁴ I do not think that the data as presented above permit of such a broad generalization. To give only one example, it is nowhere stated that *Kaipher* is represented by a performer when the novices are being taught how to climb a coconut tree and pick the nuts. We may agree, however, that there is a rather general tendency to have *déma*-performers on the spot. In some cases the scene may have a revelatory aspect, e.g.

²⁴⁰ Above, p. 519.

²⁴¹ Ibid. p. 527.

²⁴² Ibid. p. 542.

²⁴³ Ibid. p. 539.

²⁴⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 4.

when the neophytes are summoned to assist the *gari*-bearer and *Aramemb* in taking off their ornaments. There is not the slightest doubt that they learn the names of these *déma* and also what they represent. How they are taught and to what extent and in what detail the relevant myths are communicated is unknown and will never be revealed. Though different possibilities suggest themselves, it is most likely that instruction was given, not in the form of classroom-instruction, but individually to each single neophyte, or a couple of them, who were informed by their fathers or maternal uncles (succ. *binahor-évai*) of what to expect and how to behave and who were told what the meaning is of the particular ceremony they had just gone through. They will also inform them on the secret names which are, in spite of their secrecy, more or less common knowledge and indispensable in everyday magic. Under the circumstances, the novices may be expected to be more fully informed on the myths and secret names of their own and their mothers' brothers' *boan* than on those of other phratries. In other words, we suggest that the rites as such are public, but that the relevant information and instruction are — in the main — given privately by those relatives of the neophytes who are the best qualified and the most willing to do so. This would explain why so little has been reported on how the oral instruction is given. It does not make part of the public performance. An example of such individual initiative is found in Heldring's statement that the distribution of coconut meat mixed with sperma after the ceremony called *bub tarun* is an affair of the parents.²⁴⁵ Such private initiatives may be expected to be taken also in connection with the explanations regarding the ceremonies.

These proceedings are in perfect harmony with the procedure followed among other Papuan tribes; the maternal uncle and the father are the persons primarily responsible for the boy's initiation. When applied to the case of the Marind, this principle explains how the myths of a phratry can be phratry property without being secret vis-à-vis other phratries. Being available primarily to the own phratry-members, they are at the same time tribal property. It is the father and the mother's brother who reveal the relevant myths to the youngsters in their charge in an atmosphere of privacy which the presence of any larger number of people would certainly have broken. Both have a duty to fulfil, and acknowledging each other's services they exchange presents of food,

²⁴⁵ Above, pp. 523 f.

with the candidate acting as an intermediary.²⁴⁶ Of course, the idea that most instruction is private is a conjecture, but the present author thinks it is a fairly safe one. But for the instruction, the *mayo*-initiation could never be. As a matter of fact, the instruction, i.e. the instilling of knowledge about the various aspects of life and of doing things, is openly said to be the aim proper of the initiation and in the social conditions as prevalent the realization of this aim is primarily the task of a father and a *binahor-évai* or mother's brother.

We conclude that the *mayo*-initiation is a huge effort at re-education. Still, that education does not include the imparting of knowledge of the total mythology, which can only be acquired through long years of experience and, probably, the specific instruction given to the medicine-men. Nor would the supposedly private character of the instruction given be very conducive to acquiring a really all-round knowledge. In the main, the information imparted is by nature confined to the mythology and secret names of only two out of four phratries, viz. those of one's own (the father's) phratry and of the mother's brother's. However, there seems to be yet another restriction. At the introduction of the coconut it is not the important myth of *Yawi* that is enacted, but the story of *Méru* and the fairly silly one of *Kaïpher*. The sago is not brought by *Wokabu*, the sago déma, but by *Divwazib*, and the coconut oil, another of *Wokabu's* discoveries, is given by the *mayo-mes-ivag*. Both *Yawi* and *Wokabu* lived at Imo and the fact that they are left out of the performance suggests that their stories belong primarily to the *imo* cycle and not to the *mayo* cycle of myths. This does not imply that the stories of *Yawi* and *Wokabu* would be unknown to the *Mayo-Marind*; it is only that they have no place in the *mayo* initiation proper. We shall have to come back to this point when, later, we discuss the relationship between the two rituals.

There are two other general elements in the initiation procedure which require some attention. On the first, the element of frightening and harrying the novices, we can be brief. Frightening the novices is incidental to the occasion of the ritual introduction of the blackening of the teeth as described by Heldring;²⁴⁷ harrying to the episode of the flying foxes and that of the ceremonial hunt.²⁴⁸

A more interesting feature is the serving of the novices with food mixed with sperma. Sperma plays a dominant part in the *Marind-anim*

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 527.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 522.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 518 and 530.

pharmacopoeia. Wirz²⁴⁹ mentions the following applications: smearing it on wounds and sores makes them heal rapidly; swallowing it is good for the stomach; in the festive sago-dish sperma is often secretly mixed with the food to stimulate the men who are going to partake in promiscuous sexual intercourse during the ensuing dance; a young man who covets a certain girl will hand her some titbit which he first mixed with his sperma. Applied to natural objects, sperma makes them last longer. When in the myth of *Wariop* and *Sapai* a new tree grows from *Sapai's* mutilated body,²⁵⁰ the men carve grooves into the bark of the tree and rub them with sperma to give the tree more stamina. Sperma fixes the black pigment on the teeth and lends permanence to the scarifications of the girls. It promotes the fertility of the crops and must be applied to the buds and the eyes. It is frequently applied to the *wati*. It is also put on the leaf sheaths of coconut- and sago palms. To that end fertility rites are organized which have much in common with the rites to dispel sickness. In both cases a [usually limited, v. B.] number of women have intercourse with as many men as possible, while the excreta are collected in a coconut-bowl. In the case of a fertility rite the sperma is applied to the plants; when the rite serves to dispel sickness, part of the fluid is smeared on the bodies of all the members of the group, and the remainder mixed with the food.²⁵¹

The usual way of producing sperma is through an act of *otiv-bombari*, i.e. the intercourse of one or more (but rarely more than two, or at most three) women with all the men participating in the celebration. *Otiv-bombari* is a concomitant of a great many occasions and its primary purpose is the fertilization of the women concerned, though the rite may easily be made to serve the production of sperma for other specific purposes.²⁵² Sometimes the necessary sperma is provided by masturbation. Thus e.g. in the case of the young man who wishes to make love-magic, or of the man who is alone in the dark of the night, far from his village, and fears that he may encounter a *hais* (spirit of the dead). He will rub his forehead with sperma. These are emergencies, and we may take it for a solid fact that during the *mayo* ceremonies the sperma required for successive ceremonies is obtained through *otiv-bombari*. The rumours concerning the licentious character

²⁴⁹ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 89 ff.

²⁵⁰ Above, p. 295.

²⁵¹ Cf. below, pp. 634 ff., 817 and 820.

²⁵² Cf. Ch. XIII section 3.

of the rites must have some foundation in reality. Only, unlike Wirz, we should not speak of orgies, because orgies are primarily pleasure-rites. The role the women played in *otiv-bombari* was just a bit too exacting to give them a sense of satisfaction. What is worse, the word *orgy* distracts attention from the aim proper of the rites, which was, after all, a serious one, viz. the re-education of the neophytes, who had to be introduced to life's secret background.

We are in a better position now to consider the mythical background of the *mayo*-initiation. Above, we went to some length to demonstrate that, indeed, the initiation is a re-enactment of the myth of the origin of man.²⁵³ After having gone through all the ritual, we do not feel that our conclusion needs revision, but at the same time the curious thought crops up that our thesis could with equal right be reversed and yet be still valid. This is to say that not only is the ritual a re-enactment of the myth, but at the same time the myth is a review of the ritual. To put it in more concrete terms: the myth of the origin of man reflects what happens during the initiation rites; starting as a shapeless being, nescient and incapable of action, man is given his proper shape through the heat of the *mayo*-fire and through the activities of the *ndik*, the initiate, who moulds his body. The idea that the myth reflects the ritual is, of course, not novel. It is essentially the viewpoint of Robertson Smith, though there is this important difference that the one as well as the other are true, that ritual re-enacts myth as much as myth reflects ritual. The two cannot be separated; when myth relates the story of mankind, it cannot but give it in the form this story takes in ritual. Myth and ritual stem from one source, they are expressions of one and the same experience of a way of being in the world.

We need not indulge here in ethnological theorizing. The one essential thing is to apply the idea that myth reflects ritual to those myths which, for some reason or other, seem to refer to the rites. For our evaluation of the data it will be helpful if we first single out the leading characters of the rites, that is, as far as the descriptions allow. There is first of all the *mayo-mes-izwag*. Her effigy is at the entrance to or in the *mayo-miráv*²⁵⁴ and in the report on the ceremonies she appears on six different occasions: carrying the novices

²⁵³ Above, pp. 514-518.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 504 f.

into the *mayo-miráv*,²⁵⁵ accompanying the *gari*-bearer,²⁵⁶ giving permission to plait the *mayub*,²⁵⁷ giving permission to make coconut oil,²⁵⁸ leading the neophytes to the *mayo-miráv* following the symbolic hunt,²⁵⁹ and conducting them to the sea to meet *Yorma*.²⁶⁰

Second in importance is the *ndik*. It is represented in the *mayo*-staff of the *mayo-mes-iwag* and in the staffs of the neophytes,²⁶¹ also in the ornaments of the *miakim* and the *amnangib* whose initiation is being completed.²⁶² Its specific appearance is mentioned only twice, once in the ceremony of fetching fresh water²⁶³ and once in that of *gari*-bearer and *mayo-mes-iwag*.²⁶⁴ Ranking third and fourth in the order of important characters are, respectively, *Aramemb* and the *gari*-bearer. Both appear three times, *Aramemb* to give permission to make the hairdo,²⁶⁵ on the beach during the night following the event²⁶⁶ and again on the beach when *Déhévai* is performing.²⁶⁷ The *gari*-bearer appears in the scene with the *mayo-mes-iwag*,²⁶⁸ in the bathing-ceremony as described by Viegen²⁶⁹ and bringing the *mayo*-fire at the end of the ceremonies.²⁷⁰ There are no other characters who are reported to appear more than once, but special mention should be made of the male effigies which stand at the entrances, and which are said to represent the tribal ancestors. Their genitals are usually covered with a triton-shell, which on some occasions is replaced by a detachable giant penis.²⁷¹

With these things in mind we now review the myth of the origin of man and its variants,²⁷² in which we are confronted with the following characters: the dog, the *ndik*, the fire *déma*, *Aramemb*, and

²⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 511.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 524 f.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 526.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 529.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 530.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 533.

²⁶¹ Ibid. pp. 504, 511.

²⁶² Ibid. p. 534.

²⁶³ Ibid. pp. 521 f.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 524.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 526.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 528.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 532.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 524.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 539.

²⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 537.

²⁷¹ Ibid. p. 503.

²⁷² Ibid. pp. 209 ff.

the old woman *Sobra*. The dog plays only a very small part in the myth and does not appear in the *mayo*-rites as far as we know them. If it had to be cast in any role reflecting an aspect of the myth of origin, this should be before the beginning of the rites. Once these have got under way, any reference in ritual to the dog's role in the relevant myth would be an anomaly. The dog, then, could hardly play a part in the rites. The other four characters, however, may be identified with the four leading characters of the rites. With regard to the *ndik* and *Aramemb* there are no problems. The identity of fire *déma* and *gari*-bearer is also fairly obvious. Earlier, we already demonstrated that the *gari*-bearer is *Uaba*²⁷³ and that he is also the fire *déma*.²⁷⁴ The identification is corroborated by the fact that the *gari*-bearer brings the *mayo*-fire. Less obvious is the identification of the *mayo-mes-iwag* with *Sobra*, who, in an alternative reading of the myth of origin, emerges in complete human shape from the hole after the *déma* (apparently *Aramemb*, but in this version he is anonymous) has warned off the *ndik*. She makes the fire and moulds the shapeless human beings who come after her. Then she retires to a hole and from there she kidnaps a child, whom she devours. An old woman is charged with the crime because *Sobra* had deposited some of the left-overs of her meal near the former's house. When the men are eating the alleged murderess, *Sobra* comes out of her hole and asks the men what they are doing. After having satisfied her curiosity, she returns to her hole, later to repeat her crime. Thus she sows the seeds of suspicion and discord among the people which in due course engendered headhunting. Most of the story has been related above,²⁷⁵ but there is one curious detail which is of interest. When interviewing the men who are eating the old woman, she addresses them as *patur*.

Sobra is also associated with *Déhévai*. We noticed that she is a kind of primeval mother and the pair of them, *Déhévai* and *Sobra*, pass for a sort of double of *Dinadin* and *Nubog*, Sky and Earth, though on a somewhat lower level.²⁷⁶ On these counts *Sobra* might well be equated with the *mayo-mes-iwag*. She addresses the men as *patur*, which only a *mayo*-mother could do. Having finished her work, the initiation, she retires to incite the men to headhunting. This detail sheds some new light on *Déhévai*'s appearance on the scene toward the end of the rites.

²⁷³ Ibid. p. 372.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 239, 244 f.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 211.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 411.

Déhévai arrives at the moment when the *mayo-mes-ivag* is on the point of retreating into her hole. After all, there might be some truth in Wirz's statement that the initiation is followed by a headhunt.²⁷⁷ The frequency of headhunting expeditions is such that after a year given up to ceremonial occupations, a new headhunting expedition is anything but improbable. Headhunts were planned and executed with a frightening regularity.

Once it is conceded that the myth of the origin of man also reflects the process of initiation, and that, conversely, the process of initiation is a re-enactment of mythical history, it is only logical for the mythical history to bear the marks of its re-enactment in ritual. From this point of view several other traits of ritual and myth become more meaningful. A relevant example in this connection is the issuing of a *tang* to each neophyte on the moment of their departure from the *mayo-miráv*. The *tang's* primitive form is a fish.²⁷⁸ Fishes (*anda*) is what the neophytes were at the beginning of the ceremonies, the fishes picked up by the *ndik*, and they now receive this object, which is the image of a fish and which is associated with the penis and the bullroarer, as a means to make magic after having been taught, at the very least, the basic principles indispensable to its application. In this context it is of interest to note that the carvings on the hardwood *mayo*-staves of the *mitwar* (older initiates) are reminiscent of the ornamentation of *tang* and bullroarers.²⁷⁹

There are other myths which become more meaningful once it is accepted that they refer to the *mayo*-initiation. An outstanding example is the myth of the snake who is the mother of the *Mayo-patur* and sometimes identical with *Geb*.²⁸⁰ The reader will remember that the story ramifies into two parallels, one of which is associated with *Yawi*. As *Yawi's* story is connected with Imo, we shall in this context leave it out of consideration and concentrate on the other parallel.²⁸¹ Both stories begin with the adventure of the girl who changed into a *hayam* tree (*Inocarpus edulis*). Then the children meet with a *Ndik-end* déma called *Kaipher*, who teaches them how to climb a coconut tree, open the nuts and eat the contents. In the end, *Kaipher* hangs the cradle with the children high up in a tree and the snake helps them down,

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 532 f.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 269 f., 485 ff.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 504 and below, p. 735.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 247 f., 250, 252.

²⁸¹ For the reasons see above, p. 547.

but the youngest changes into an oriole. The snake continues on her way and one child turns into a banana. The children have some other adventures, but in the meantime the snake has dropped out of the story. The story of *Kaipher* is obviously a fairly exact reflection of the acts of the *mayo*-initiation. *Kaipher* does precisely the same thing as the initiates do to the novices. He is even called a *Ndik-énd* déma, in other words, he is a *ndik*, and that is what every initiate (*mitwar*) is. We do not know how the introduction of *Inocarpus edulis* is ceremonially visualized, but it is not impossible that here, too, some direct relationship with the myth exists. However that be, in part at least the myth renders scenes from the initiation ceremonies. This raises the question whether the return-from-the-*mayo* motif might not be an indication that a story of this type is not merely an account of events in a mythical past, but also the narrative of the experiences of the neophytes during the initiation. In the myth of the *Diwa*-canoe the presence of the stork and of a number of members of other phratries among the inmates of the canoe might be explained as a reference to the initiate (the stork) under whose guidance the novices of various phratries are sent out fishing. This, however, is merely suggesting a possibility, which is as far as we can go, because we are not sufficiently informed on the details of the rites to substantiate the point.²⁸²

At this stage a more important *mayo* myth requires reconsideration, viz. the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualirwamb*, alias *Kanis-iwag*. After all that has been said on the relevance of that particular myth to the *mayo* ceremonies,²⁸³ it is surprising that in our sources we ostensibly find hardly any reference to this most fundamental *mayo* myth. The only episode reminding us of the famous story of the birth of the fire, the cassowary and the stork was that of the bringing of the *mayo*-fire. And yet, there is sufficient evidence to the contrary; the trouble is that it has not been recognized as such, and that their informants wisely withheld from our authors any clue which might have put them on the track. The first point to be considered is the dominating position of the *mayo-mes-iwag* and the privileged position of women generally as far as this ritual is concerned. Why are women initiated and why, in this phallus-venerating community, should a woman, a mother, be the central character in the main ritual? Why is her effigy left naked and the body of the male counterpart covered up with leaves, sometimes

²⁸² On *Diwa* see above, pp. 311 f. and below, p. 758, where a new explanation of the myth is proposed.

²⁸³ *Ibid.* pp. 244-247.

provided with a huge phallus but usually left without genitals, and with a ridiculously big triton-shell instead? And worse, why has the male effigy a detachable penis?

The question will be taken up presently, when we have brought forward other evidence that the myth of *Uaba* and *Kanis-iwag* alias *Ualiwamb* is by no means without ritual dramatization. After describing the performance of the *gari*-bearer and the *mayo-mes-iwag*, we raised a number of questions, expressing our doubt as to the correctness of Wirz's statement that the two represent the story of *Opeko-anem*.²⁸⁴ Of course they do not; they can be none else but *Uaba* and *Kanis-iwag* themselves, brought back in copulation to the *mayo-miráv*. The reader is referred to the elaborate analysis of the myth of *Opeko-anem* in section 1 of Chapter VIII, where we argued that *Opeko-anem*, returning to the *mayo-miráv* with the *iwag* in that extraordinary way, was usurping the part of *Uaba*, and thus aroused the indignation of the *déma*. All that belongs to this specific story is absent from the scene as performed in the *mayo-miráv*. Evidently the descriptions of the performance cover only a part of it, more particularly the final part. The fact that the children were brought together in the *mayo-miráv*, allegedly to see the entry of the couple into the *miráv*, only to be dismissed again immediately afterwards, is a fair indication that either in the village or in the bush something happened which they had to be prevented from seeing.²⁸⁵ What it is, we should not even try to guess. We only state that the drum-beating *ndik*, i.e. the initiate, who accompanies the pair, does not fit in with the story of *Opeko-anem*, whose behaviour upset the order of the *mayo*, but is meaningful in the story of *Uaba*. *Uaba* is brought to Kondo by the men who went after him when he did not return from his pursuit of the run-away *iwag*. These men were undoubtedly initiates, *mitwar*, i.e. *ndik*.

Finally, since in myth all other personages who try to act as *gari*-bearers are openly disqualified (next to *Opeko-anem*, there are *Yavima* and *Daman*²⁸⁶) we may take it for an established fact that the scene with the *gari*-bearer and the *mayo-mes-iwag* represents the myth of *Uaba* and *Kanis-iwag*. In other words, it is a very important scene and we may well reconsider its place in the total sequence of the ceremonies. In Wirz's description it was performed much earlier in the rites than in Heldring's, actually immediately after the pause in the

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 525.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 524.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 289 and 368.

ceremonies which followed the hectic days of the opening rites. That interval lasted, according to Heldring, between 20 and 30 days. Wirz is not specific on the length of the period. He speaks of 'ettliche Tage', several days, a translation which is not wholly correct, because the word *ettlich* has a connotation of fairly many, more than is implied in the English word several. He also added that during these days nothing particular happened. If we accept the version given by Wirz, it is evident why nothing particular happened. The *mayo-mes-ivag* had fled and she had to be brought back by *Uaba*, the *gari*-bearer, before the ceremonies could be proceeded with. All things considered, Wirz's version must be the correct one. He does not inform us why he altered the sequence of the scenes as presented by Heldring, but theoretical considerations certainly had nothing to do with it. Wirz had not the slightest notion of the real connection between the facts. Always going up the wrong track in his numerous digressions, the really amazing thing is that a strictly consistent elimination of his personal opinions leaves us with a wonderful collection of meaningful data. We have to go into detail: "There was a *mayo* ceremony at Mayo near *Yavar-makan*. *Uaba* was among the initiates, he had brought an *ivag* for the impending orgies. She managed to escape, however, thus blocking the progress of the *mayo* ceremonies".²⁸⁷ Now why did she fly? Wirz does not answer the question in this context, but in the myth of *Opeko-anem* he adds in parentheses that the *ivag* offered resistance when she was being ill-treated.²⁸⁸ At the back of Wirz's mind was the conviction that the *ivag* was going to be sacrificed for the coming cannibal meal. Anyhow, he must have been given a reason to believe that in some way or other the fate of the *ivag* was a far from pleasant one. If we take the *ivag* to be the representative of the women who play a part in the *mayo* ceremonies, she was certainly not to be envied. It is the word orgies which is misleading. If we read *otiv-bombari* instead, the picture changes. I remember a case of *otiv-bombari* in which thirteen men in succession had intercourse with one and the same woman and I do not think that this was actually an exception. It would have been a well-spent night for any prostitute, but as regards the woman in question, this rapid succession of love-makers must have carried her personal experience of the sexual act well beyond the point where it ceased to be delightful. For most women

²⁸⁷ Wirz, M.A. II p. 80. In the text Wirz uses the verb "obviating" instead of "blocking the progress".

²⁸⁸ Above, p. 370.

the attractions of *otiv-bombari* were of a dubious nature, participation being an obligation rather than a matter of free choice.²⁸⁹ The flight of the *iwag* might well reflect the resistance of the women to an extension of sexual activities which made their part in them a burden to their sex. If we take the story literally, the *iwag* had ample cause to resist. The celebrations are inaugurated by *gaga*, followed by a dance which Heldring calls *arih*, which is the name of a fertility rite accompanied by sexual promiscuity.²⁹⁰ The neophytes are given mud mixed with sperma, mangrove-bark and betel palm-roots mixed with sperma, bananas mixed with sperma, and coconut mixed with sperma. Earlier, we noticed that the program for the first few days seems rather overloaded.²⁹¹ It is certainly so in respect of the women, that is, in the story, the *mayo-iwag*. That immediately after such hectic days she takes to flight, is anything but surprising.

From this point of view, the myth of *Uaba* and *Kanis-iwag* is far more than a simple myth of nature. It is also a myth reflecting the total course of events during the *mayo* ceremonies. The sordid story of *Uaba* in permanent copulation with *Kanis-iwag* appears in a new light. *Uaba* having at last regained possession of her, the *mayo* ceremonies can be continued and there is no fear that they will be interrupted again, because now the couple will be copulating without interruption till the moment that *Uaba* is freed and the *mayo-mes-iwag* gives birth to the new initiates, the *noh-war* (lit. new storks), and to the cassowary and, in a way, the *mayo-fire*. In other words, the rites of *otiv-bombari* continue throughout the ceremonies. Again Wirz seems to have been right when he asserted that "every night orgies are held in the bush",²⁹² provided only we substitute *otiv-bombari* for 'orgies'.

The situation is remarkable in its ambiguity. The woman, caught, has been subdued and compelled to do what is expected of her. But the man is in an abject condition. He is helplessly entrapped and overpowered by the woman who holds him in copulation. It looks as if the homosexual giant has submitted to the other sex. The latter reigns supreme. The men need the woman who is rearing the *mayo*-children, the neophytes, who are, not without reason, spoken of as *patur* and *kivasom* in the myth of *Bir* and the *Mayo-patur*. *Patur* and *kivasom* sleep in the mother's hut, they are in her care. We are tempted

²⁸⁹ On the women's point of view see below, pp. 815 f.

²⁹⁰ Above, p. 510.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 513.

²⁹² Wirz, MA. III p. 5.

to describe the process of initiation as the process of the growth of the foetus in the pregnant mother's womb. The fact that the older male neophytes will be called new storks, combined with the birth from the *mayo-ivag* of cassowary, stork and fire at the end of the myth, confirms that the notion does not escape the Marind. It explains why the woman is the leading character during the rites and why the fact that she is a woman is not concealed. The man is helpless, he is in her power. He is in an ambiguous position. He is overwhelmed by her, while at the same time he is overwhelming her. *Uaba*, the associate of the proud homosexual of the *sosom*-rites, is submitting to heterosexual intercourse. He is transported covered by a mat, the sun travelling eastward underground. He is symbolized by an effigy the body of which has been made of roles of palm-leaves, partly covered with a grass-skirt like that of the neophytes. The image has a detachable penis of gigantic size, but usually it is substituted by a ridiculously big triton-shell. When *Uaba*, in the role of the *gari*-bearer, enters the *mayo-miráv* together with the *mayo-mes-ivag*, he has his body covered with white clay like a neophyte and again he wears the triton-shell.²⁹³ A certain measure of identity with the neophytes is apparent; they also have the shell and the white clay.

The question should be raised when exactly the effigy is provided with a phallus. Wirz, following Heldring and Gooszen in this respect, has it coincide with the catching of crabs, a ceremony which follows the confrontation with the *Bangu-déma* and precedes the rite connected with the first drinking of water. We do not know of a myth which could explain why this should be the occasion to have the effigies provided with a phallus. We are up to the fact that the sequel of the rites as given by our sometimes contradictory sources, seems rather haphazard. The one thing which is certain is that the place Wirz assigns to the episode of the *gari*-bearer in the sequel of events, viz. immediately after the pause in the ceremonies, should be accepted as a valuable correction which makes the ceremony meaningful.

Another interesting question is why there are two male effigies. After all, there is only one *Uaba*! The fact that our sources call them images of the ancestors, when related to the actual situation, which is that one stands east, the other west of the *mayo-miráv*, gives occasion to the surmise that they represent the ancestors of the two moieties. In one version of the myth of the origin of man *Geb* and *Sami* go to

²⁹³ Above, p. 524.

Kondo, each in his own canoe, each taking aboard the members of his own moiety after their human shapes have been completed.²⁹⁴ Further, we find castrates among the *déma* of both moieties. The *Geb-sé* moiety has *Sosom* and *Konaim-anem*, the *Sami-rek Yugil* and *Awassra*. The dualism prevailing in the associations of each phratry, as well as the statement that the sun, although more specifically connected with the *Geb-sé* moiety, is of all *boan*,²⁹⁵ give evidence that the cosmic events have an impact on humanity as a whole. The members of the two moieties are equally involved in what is being expressed in the myths re-enacted during the *mayo*-rites. In essence all men are equal, even though their roles are different. It is this equality which we find embodied in the *déma*, two in each moiety, who have their genitals cut off. The difference according to moiety has a basis in identity, the fate of the males. The male is the independent source of fertility. He is caught by the female whom he needs because his gift of fertility leads to naught except in copulation. The permanent copulation of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* is a means to emphasize the male's role in the process of fertilization, as well as the admission of his dependence on female co-operation.

The dominant position of the woman in the *mayo*-ritual is stressed by the west-east direction followed in the progression of successive *mayo* celebrations. It is not only the direction of the *déma* travelling underground to Kondo or, accompanied by *gaga*, to the *mayo-miráv*, but also the direction of the *Sami-rek* moiety, of *Kanis-iwag* who is the sister of *Opeko-anem*. The *mayo-iwag* has to come from Imo.²⁹⁶ To attain this ascendancy the women have to pay a price. The rite of *otiv-bombari* is not meant for their sexual gratification but for their impregnation. For their co-operation the men in turn reward them by arranging a special dance for the women after the closure of the rites.

All this, however, does not yet sufficiently explain the curious fact that women, too, are initiated. It is true that the extensive co-operation of the women that is needed to make the ceremonies a success may render it advisable to grant them a share in the execution of the rites. In this context a reference to the *moguru*-rites of the Kiwai may be of interest. The execution of the rites depends on the willingness of an old couple to assume leadership. It is their 'medicine' which is of decisive importance for the success of the ritual and their activities are

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 85.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 224.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 435 f.

so exhausting that after the completion of the rites they die.²⁹⁷ The old woman is present when the rites are executed and the same is the case with the old woman who is associated with each men's house. She is present at all the rites there.²⁹⁸ Yet, these women are not initiated. They act because they are needed. They share the prerogatives of the chosen few who owe the privilege to their age. Among the Marind the privilege is conceded to all women by letting them share in the *mayo*-rites. So this is going even further, which is all the more remarkable because the status of Marind women generally does not seem to be an appreciably higher one than among other tribes. It is not possible, however, to discuss the point in full until we have finished the description of the big feasts and dances of the Marind. For the time being, it has to be kept in abeyance.

The leading position of the *mayo-mes-iwag* is not a permanent one. By the end of the ritual she is no longer mentioned, but there are rumours that she has been eaten. It has been pointed out that these rumours cannot be taken literally, though, nevertheless, something may happen which is a symbolic representation of the event. Verschueren suggested the grass-snake buried round the *kabai-aha*.²⁹⁹ We must refute his contention that the snake of sugar-cane stalks, wrapped in croton-leaves tied up with grass, presented a colourful spectacle, recalling the bright colours of the snake-species called *mayo-iwag*.³⁰⁰ None of our authors mentions that the snake was wrapped up in croton-leaves. It was — outwardly — a grass-snake. Moreover, it was a big snake, whereas the *mayo-iwag*-snake is a small one. Even so, Verschueren is in all probability right in substance. A few pages earlier we demonstrated that the myth of the *bir*-snake and the *Mayo-patur* reflects at least part of the course of events during the *mayo*-initiation. The *bir*-snake is a big snake (a python) and in the myth she is the mother of the *Mayo-patur*; in other words, the *mayo-mes-iwag*. One branch of the myth was left out of consideration, because in the context it seemed hardly relevant. But it is relevant here. The big snake, the *mayo-mes-iwag*, became pregnant and she gave birth to a son, who was called *Yawi* and who, later on, was killed, after which a coconut palm sprouted from his head.³⁰¹ When dealing with the myth, we

²⁹⁷ Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* p. 356.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 358.

²⁹⁹ Above, p. 541.

³⁰⁰ Verschueren, *Indonesië I* p. 464.

³⁰¹ Above, pp. 248 ff.

demonstrated the close parallelism between the story of *Yawi* and that of *Woryu*, the first man do die. That, in myth, *Yawi* exemplifies human life is confirmed by the fact that he is identical with the coconut palm, which, in turn, is a symbol of human life.³⁰² His mother could hardly have been any other but the *mayo-mes-iwag*, that is, the snake, who actually was his mother. The story goes on to relate that the snake, after having been chased, retreated into a swamp near Tomerau, where the animal swallowed a number of women. The last to be devoured was a pregnant woman, who stuck in its throat. Then the snake was caught and slit open, the women in its belly were brought back to life, except the pregnant one, but the foetus was still alive and grew into the man who became the ancestor of a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan.

The last part of the myth does not bear very clear signs of having relevance to the *mayo* celebration, although the fact that the animal is slit up, apparently lengthwise, might well refer to what happens to the grass-snake. More important is the first part, in which the big *bir*-snake is clearly, almost overtly, identified with the *mayo-mes-iwag*. Consequently, there is, at the very least, the possibility of identifying the *mayo-mes-iwag* with a big grass-snake. The case is strengthened both by the fact that another, smaller, snake-species is called *mayo-iwag* and by the circumstance that the arms of the one and only effigy of a *mayo-mes-iwag* ever reproduced, suggest two brightly coloured snakes.³⁰³ A last argument in favour of a possible identification of grass-snake, *bir*-snake and *mayo-mes-iwag* is the parallelism in the way the two snakes each meet with their end, though it must be admitted that the myth has the event placed in a confusing context.

More enlightening is the moment chosen for the destruction of the grass-snake. It must happen more or less simultaneously with the making of the *mayo*-fire, which is brought from somewhere shortly after the snake has been taken to the bush. It should be noted that every precaution has been taken against the children observing the scene. They have been called to the village enclosure, allegedly because they must be met by the new initiates. Besides, there is an additional attraction in that they are allowed to pilfer the *kabai-aha*. In the meantime the initiates can go ahead without the risk of being spied upon. The detailed description of the events in the village during the final hour of the ceremonies demonstrates that there is fairly little time available

³⁰² Ibid. p. 461.

³⁰³ Ibid. p. 505.

for the last act. It is only logical that the *mayo*-fire, which has to be kindled in one way or another, probably by drilling, should be made in the presence of the novices. Once that is accepted, the *mayo*-fire cannot be made in any other place than where the novices bring the grass-snake. The acts of destroying the snake and making the fire are, of necessity, simultaneous acts, executed on the same spot, and the shouts of joy with which the contents of the snake are said to be welcomed might be addressed to the *mayo*-fire rather than to the snake.

It was highly interesting to learn that, well after these lines were written, Verschueren inadvertently succeeded in eliciting from his informants a direct confirmation of the simultaneity of the two episodes, that of the snake and that of the fire. He consulted a group of old men, all from the neighbourhood of Wendu, on the procedure followed in the *mayo*-initiation. He found "that much had slipped their memories, especially the things connected with the prescribed sequel of the various ceremonies. The snake of sugar-cane stalks, however, was remembered very well, as well as the fact that, finally, the snake is carried off to the bush. At that particular moment one of the old men dropped the remark: 'That is when the *mayo*-fire is drilled'. He only just escaped being slapped by the man next to him, who instantly became voluble and expounded to me that the snake was made just for fun, simply as a surprise for the youngsters. Since I would not give up, they finally admitted that the fire was made by drilling".³⁰⁴

Even after so many years the vital secret is jealously guarded. We may conclude that Verschueren's earlier hypothesis that the snake is the *mayo-ivag* who is eaten, is confirmed well enough. Not confirmed is an earlier hypothesis forwarded by the present author, viz. that the snake and the *kabai-aha* symbolize a vulva and a phallus, respectively.³⁰⁵ It is possible, of course, that notions of this kind prevailed at the time the snake was buried round the *kabai-aha*. If so, these notions were abandoned at the final ceremony when the snake is carried off and the *kabai-aha* given over to the vandalism of the *burap-anim*, the uninitiated children. Far more important is another thing: during the earlier phases of the rites the man is represented by a straw-puppet made of leaves and grass, the woman by a well-carved effigy or by men who are beautifully attired. At the end of the rites the tables are turned. Now the woman appears as a snake made of leaves and grass

³⁰⁴ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 11.

³⁰⁵ Van Baal, Godsdienst p. 144.

wrapped round a sugar-cane kernel, while the man is represented by the magnificent *gari*-bearer bringing the fire. The leaves and the grass apparently refer to distress; they also form the attire of the neophytes.

Having at last come to the end of this section, a few features may be summarized. In the first place, we found that there is a close relationship between *mayo*-rites and myth. In the second place, we noticed the solemnity and the awe which are prevalent during a *déma*-performance. Acting a *déma* is not a play, but a serious rite. In the third place, we were confronted again with the parallelism between the life of man and natural life, in particular the life cycle of the sun. In the *mayo*-rites this parallelism achieves a third dimension; the initiation rites are the model of both the one and the other, and there is little doubt left that the ultimate shape Marind-anim notions of life and nature have assumed, has been deeply influenced by the potentialities of their modes of expression in ritual. These few observations must suffice for the present. We shall return to the *mayo*-initiation and its meaning at the end of the next chapter, when a clearer picture of the other cults is available for comparison.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT CULTS; THE RAPA, THE UPPER BIAN CULT AND THE IMO

1. THE RAPA-CULT

Our factual knowledge of the *rapa*-cult is extremely limited. We know that it is the cult of the Kondo people.¹ Verschueren reports that a few small groups belonging to the neighbouring Kanum-anim joined them in the celebration of the ritual.² Later he recorded that the Marind-anim of Borem and Nasem (Sarira), too, participated in the rites,³ a statement which raises a problem, because Borem and Sarira have always been reckoned among the *mayo*.⁴ It seems probable that we are confronted here with a situation similar to the one prevailing in some western villages, where part of the men follow the *mayo*, and others the *imo*. However that be, even if the whole population of Borem and Nasem should have followed the *rapa*-cult, the total number of adherents would have remained small all the same.

Another thing we know is that the *rapa*-rites were celebrated in or near a *déma*-house, and this has been described by Wirz.⁵ Finally, we have definite information that the cult is connected with the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*, alias *Kanis-iwag*; the relevant myth ends with the statement that since the genesis of the fire at the *mayo* celebration of Kondo, the *déma* of that place have no longer come to celebrate the *mayo*. They had something of their own which is more impressive,

¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 31; Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 462; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 64.

² Verschueren, Indonesië I p. 449.

³ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 6.

⁴ Wirz, op. cit. p. 6; Heldring, op. cit. p. 442. We note that Heldring also mentioned Kondo as one of the *mayo* villages, in which he was not followed by Wirz who, in other respects, closely stuck to Heldring's list. The two accounts are not independent and other inconsistencies (both have Alatep among the *mayo* villages, while it is *imo*) raise doubts as to their reliability where details are concerned.

⁵ Wirz, M.A. II pp. 84 f.

viz. the fire.⁶ The relationship with fire is confirmed in Geurtjens' Dictionary, v. *arapa*: *arapa* is fire made by drilling. Geurtjens contrasts *arapa* with *takav*, fire made by rubbing. I must add that I am not convinced. *Takav* is the general word for fire, as is, in fact, confirmed by the explanation given by Geurtjens in loco citato, where he adds that to indicate fire made with a drill the expression *arapa takav* is also used. The cult is called *rapa* and Geurtjens states that the fire was called forth by the violent passion of two copulating déma. Under the word *takav* he adds that *takav* and *arapa* are both used as metaphors for sexual intercourse.

Wirz, when in Kondo, surreptitiously paid a visit to the déma-house. The place was strictly tabooed; any stranger approaching it was supposed to be struck with paralysis by the déma. The place lay hidden in the bush, it had no entrance and was surrounded by a bamboo fence standing higher than a man. Wirz found that it enclosed a rectangular field, between 300 and 400 square meters in area,⁷ divided into two parts of equal size. The one was empty, in the other stood the déma-house, a high, rectangular building with four walls and without entrances. The walls were made of horizontally laid sago-leafstalks, but these walls did not reach down to the floor, leaving sufficient space for a man to enter crawling. Inside, everything was painted red, but whether it was blood or red clay Wirz was unable to ascertain. Curiously enough, he says the same thing in his *Dämonen*,⁸ adding on the next page that when he went home he carefully washed off the stains left by the red pigment in the spirit house. This implies that it was red clay and not blood, as our author, in a more sober mood, might have realized himself. He was extremely excited by what he had discovered. On a kind of garret he found two big, mummy-like packages, well tied up with lianas. In his *Dämonen* he states that the packages, too, were painted red. One of the packages was full of human bones, likewise painted red. There were no skulls among them. Next to the packages he found a number of red-painted sticks, which must have been used for fire-drilling, because on one end they were scorched. He also saw a piece of wood with holes caused by fire-drilling, and a great many chips of wood. In short, Wirz found convincing evidence that fire-drilling actually makes part of the cult. Unfortunately, there was also the package with the bones, which sent him plunging headlong into

⁶ Ibid. p. 83; above, pp. 243 f.

⁷ Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 193.

⁸ L.c.

the wildest speculations, although, in these parts, a package with red-painted bones need not be anything more spectacular than a collection of bones of deceased relatives. Exhuming a corpse to paint the bones and reburying it afterwards is, actually, a Marind-anim custom, as will be demonstrated in a subsequent chapter.⁹ It is possible that in Kondo such bones were kept in the *déma*-house. In New Guinea anything is possible in connection with the bones of the dead, in particular the skulls. That these were separated from the other bones may have been because the relatives of the deceased wanted to preserve them as mementos or make use of them for divinatory purposes. The Casuarina Coast people use the skull of some beloved deceased as a headrest when they go to sleep. We do not know whether any such custom prevailed at Kondo; we only point out that when building a theory on a package of painted bones one cannot dispense with a previous investigation of these possibilities.

As it is, Wirz did not give a thought to these commonplace alternatives. He was firmly convinced that the *rapa*-ritual centred on human sacrifice. As a matter of fact, rumours definitely had it so. Vertenten, who never wrote that the *mayo* ceremonies were associated with such atrocities, assures us that *imo* and *rapa* were connected with human sacrifice.¹⁰ The impact of these rumours on Wirz's interviews resulted in a thrilling story in which it is impossible to distinguish between native information, exciting rumours and the author's own conclusions. The account he later gives in *Dämonen und Wilde* of his questioning of the Kondo man who accompanied him on one of his trips to Kondo, fails again to discriminate between the informant's own communications and Wirz's conclusions. To the critical reader it is evident that the informant told him the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. The writer continues with a description of the rites ostensibly taken down from the informant, but the use of such expressions as 'Der Grundgedanke der Zeremonie' (the basic idea of the ceremony)¹¹ tells that in respect of various episodes at least, our author interpolates his own interpretation as well. In all probability Wirz is just supplementing the informant's story with what he considered the right conclusion. In his first account of the story Wirz assures us that the two packages were the *rapa*-*déma* and his wife. The *rapa* ceremonies consist of fire-drilling combined with sexual orgies. "Perhaps the fire is drilled through the pierced

⁹ Below, pp. 773, 802.

¹⁰ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 67.

¹¹ *Dämonen*, p. 197.

corpse of the victim of the sacrificial rite, as seems to be indicated by the length of the sticks used for drilling the fire".¹² As far as the effigy of the *rapa-déma* is concerned, he adds on the same page that, from other quarters, information had reached him that near Kondo, either in or outside the *déma*-house, the *rapa-déma* and his wife reside in the form of two stones, one of which is characterized by a phallus-like projection, the other by a hole.¹³ The addition does anything but enhance the probability of his suggestion with regard to the meaning of the two packages. Neither is the plausibility of his story strengthened by the more detailed versions he gives in Part III of his *Marind-anim* (pp. 31-33) and in *Dämonen und Wilde* (pp. 196 f.) of the procedure he thinks was actually followed. In part, the more recent version is based on new facts. His Kondo informant told him that on the occasion of the feast a big, fat pig is roasted. It is not cut up, but deposited in its entirety on a mass of glowing embers and hot stones. Then everything is covered with eucalyptus-bark and so it remains until the meat is thoroughly done. When the body has swollen to a great size and all the fat has melted, a small cut is made in the abdomen and the hot vapours and molten fat pour forth. They are immediately set ablaze and the flame spurts upward like a jet of fire, a signal for the women who, from afar, see the fireworks and say to each other: 'That is the fire-déma'. Wirz suggests that the order observed is as follows. First come the sexual rites in which an *iwag* of the tribe (in his *Dämonen* he says that she should be a *Kai-zé* girl) has to submit to protracted sexual intercourse with each initiate in turn. Toward the end of the sexual excesses fire is drilled and when the flames flare up the girl is thrown into them; alive, he says in *Dämonen*. When the fire is down, it is the turn of the pig to be roasted in the manner described above, after which the girl and the pig are eaten. The bones of the *iwag* are collected and the skull is prepared. The bones are painted red (probably with blood, says Wirz) and near each young coconut palm a bone is buried to promote fertility. "Actually, all the coconut palms at Kondo have red marks on their trunks, probably made with blood" etc.¹⁴

The better one analyses the story, the more improbable it becomes. First of all, dried-up blood will not remain red for a long time, certainly not when smeared on coconut palms. We already pointed out that

¹² Wirz, M.A. II p. 85.

¹³ L.c.

¹⁴ Wirz, M.A. III p. 33.

dried-up blood does not come off, which the red pigment on the house and the package apparently did. Neither is the story of the jet of fire spurting from the poor pig's belly very convincing. The women must have been quite near if they were actually able to see it, and not far away, as Wirz suggests. Most unbelievable of all is the allegation that it was a woman of the own group, a *Kai-zé* woman even, who was to be sacrificed. In its heyday the Kondo community can hardly have numbered more than one hundred people, men, women, children and all. Even if it be generously conceded that the other groups who joined the ritual swelled the number by two hundred, this does not make the story any more acceptable, particularly so because the ceremony is said to be repeated every year. The assertion that the girl must be a *Kai-zé* even makes it into a mockery. There just would not be a *Kai-zé* girl of the required age available every year.

Later informants denied emphatically that the *rapa*-cult was connected with human sacrifice. It was Verschueren who collected the relevant data and also presented an acceptable solution.¹⁵ Before we render his ideas on this point, we shall first deal with the information given by Wirz on a pig cult which was said to have been regularly celebrated by the Kanum-anim and which is supposed to have influenced the form of the *rapa* ceremonies. The alleged mythical centre of the pig cult is a *déma*-house near Sangar, which is connected with *Nazr*, the pig *déma*. Hardly any participants in the cult had remained when Wirz made his inquiries, and he did not succeed in gathering any information beyond the meagre reference cited above.¹⁶ Personally, I do not feel very much impressed by these rumours. The pig has an important part to play in almost any New Guinea ritual and from this point of view there is nothing special in a ritual ending up in the killing of a pig and the eating of pork.

Verschueren supplies the following information: "Between 1933 and 1936 I used to pay regular visits to the Enkelembu at Yanggandur, a Kanum-anim group. . . . Upon my inquiries with regard to the ritual as locally celebrated, I was told inter alia that a pig, after having been killed with a *kupa*, a disc-headed club, was roasted in its entirety. Ultimately, a small hole was made near the navel; the hot vapours escaped and, catching fire, formed a blazing spurt. In the beginning of 1936 I made a trip to the far eastern area, where I spent the night

¹⁵ Verschueren, *Indonesië* I pp. 449 f.

¹⁶ Cf. *M.A.* II pp. 169 f., III p. 46.

in a hamlet called Waya. Here I found the same *awong*-effigies as among the Marind¹⁷ and on account of these I was assured that not only in this respect did they follow the Marind, but that they also joined the ritual of Kondo. They also confirmed that they followed the same method of ritual pig-killing as explained above.

"In September 1940 I spent a few days among another remnant of a far eastern tribe, the Aroba. Like many other groups, they are growers of tubers and culturally they are very much like them [i.e. like these Kanum-groups, v. B.]. Here it was only a couple of months since the ritual had been celebrated, as was borne out by the feast-house decorated with carvings. The house had no walls, but there was a sort of attic running the length of the house, of the same kind as there was in the house at Kondo described by Wirz, and this attic had, just like the one at Kondo, been painted with red ochre. When nobody was looking, I ventured on up to the attic, where I found a few plaited bags, extremely narrow and very long. I was told that at the bottom of each bag (the openings were too narrow to allow of the objects being taken out) there were two dried potatoes, into which were inserted a couple of small hardwood bars for drilling fire. Everything was painted red. Each bag had, outwardly, the form of a scrotum. Again I was informed that the feast focused on the sacrifice of the ceremonial pig, in which they followed the same procedure as has been described above".¹⁸

Comparing these facts with what we know of the *rapa*-rites, Verschueren suggests that the story of the sacrificed *iwag* might well be the exoteric version — as told to the uninitiated — of a ceremony which actually amounts only to a pig being killed and prepared in a peculiar way. When all is said and done, this is the most sensible idea which has ever been recorded on the subject of the *rapa* ceremonies. It is perfectly incongruous that the eating of the roasted woman should have to be postponed until the pig has been roasted. On the other hand, we know that the story of the pig has been communicated to Wirz by a Kondo man, while our author does not inform us who told him of the roasted *iwag*. In other words, the story of the pig deserves to be accepted as true, far more so than that of the *iwag*. Mythologically, the pig could take her place. *Kamis-iwag* is a member of the same phratry as *Nazr*, the pig *déma*. Ritually, there is a possibility that the two must be identified. It is not only that a ritual of this description could con-

¹⁷ See below, pp. 776 ff.

¹⁸ Verschueren, l.c.

ceivably have existed, it is even fairly probable that something of the kind is the real clue to the *rapa* ceremonies.

2. THE CULT OF THE UPPER BIAN PEOPLE

Printed information on the cult of the upper Bian people is confined to the communications made successively by Wirz in his *Marind-anim* (III pp. 40 ff.) and his *Dämonen* (pp. 282 ff.), by the present author in an article published in the *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (TBG 1940 pp. 568 ff.), by Verschueren in his study on human sacrifice (Indonesië I pp. 437 ff.), by Boelaars in his *Nieuw-Guinea* (pp. 55 ff.), and lastly by the patrol-assistant Jufuway in *NGS IV* (1960) pp. 189 ff., 297 ff. Of these communications it was only those in Wirz's monograph that became more generally known. As he witnessed part of the ceremonial, his exposition was given greater credit than it actually deserved.¹⁹ It can be summarized as follows:

The main character of the cult is *Ezam*, a *déma*, whose name means husband. The same name is given to the bullroarer. Another ceremonial object is the *nakok*, a piece of bamboo between 60 and 70 cm in length, made of the same hard material as the coastal Marind use for making bamboo knives (*sok*). The upper Bian word for this bamboo-variety is also *nakok*. The *nakok* are manipulated in pairs, the closed end of the one being pounded against that of the other, thus producing a series of dull thuds, like beating a drum. The *nakok* are also given the name of *Uzum*, wife, which name, says Wirz, is reminiscent of the one given to the bamboo pipes of the eastern coastal Marind, which are called the *nakari* of *Sosom*. The origin of the cult is ascribed to a myth dealing with a *patur*, *Ezam* and *Uzum*, but the content of the story was not disclosed. The only thing Wirz could find out was that, other than *Sosom*, *Ezam* is a small, dwarfish *déma*, normally dwelling under the ground, from where he emerges once a year, at the end of the dry season. That is when the ritual must be celebrated. Women are completely excluded. Should they see the bullroarer, they will die on the spot.

The celebration takes place in a big, gable-roofed house without walls, partitioned into two halves by a high screen of bamboo and palm-leaves, which runs the whole width of the house and on both sides extends into the bush.²⁰ The sketch in Wirz III Tafel 7 has the

¹⁹ I.a. by me in Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 122.

²⁰ Cf. the sketch made by Boelaars (*Nieuw-Guinea*, facing p. 56), which is reproduced by his courtesy in Plate XIV.

screen projecting beyond the top of the house. On one side of the screen the women and children were accommodated, on the other the men and the neophytes. At the front side, where the men are, a curtain made of the fringes of young palm-leaves, hanging from the gable roof, shuts off the interior from inquisitive glances.²¹ The two parts of the house communicated by means of two small openings in the screen, through which one could pass only by going on all fours. Two big trunks (*uk*, which is also the name of the whole tree) were laid down side by side, with one end propped on a cross-beam supported by three posts set up in the ground somewhere near the front of the men's section. Aslant, the two big trunks passed right through the screen into the women's part, where the far ends touched the ground. The central buttress of the trestle near the front of the men's section was bigger than the other two and beautifully carved and painted, reminding us of a crocodile with its mouth opened wide.²² Astride the two trunks, not far from the screen, a small platform had been constructed, where the *nakok* (bamboo 'drums') were put. The bullroarers, tied to a rod by means of a string, were kept either there or in some other place inside the house. Both *nakok* and bullroarers were handled with respect. One of the bullroarers caught Wirz's attention on account of its greater size and its ornamentation.

Wirz spent one day and one night in such a ceremonial house, leaving the scene before the final ceremony was celebrated. No noise must be made; they talked in whispers and Wirz was not even allowed to open a coconut. We shall see later that there was a special reason for this. Wirz also notes that he was not allowed to touch either drums or bullroarers. He gives a perfect description of the atmosphere, heavy with a brooding silence, now and then broken by the old men singing to the accompaniment of the *nakok*. When the singing stops, silence prevails again, though people are allowed to come and go as they please. A few old men remain to keep an eye on the place. After some time one of them will take a bullroarer and swing it, squatting on his heels, thus calling on the young people who return to sound the *nakok*, after which the singing begins again. So it went on all day and through part of the night. Towards nightfall the number of men increased and the singing became more spirited. Wirz was told that in the bush the men have sexual intercourse; when returning, each brings a twig which

²¹ Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 283.

²² *Ibid.*

he lays on the elevated ends of the two trunks, in token of his having completed the sexual act. An erotic atmosphere prevailed, as could be sensed from the obscene talk. Wirz supposes that, as the ceremonies proceed, the erotic element becomes more marked. He was told that for the final ceremony a beautifully adorned *iwag* is brought to the men's section, where she is told to lie down under the two trunks. Then the orgies begin, in which the neophytes, too, partake. On a certain moment a couple of men who, without being observed, had climbed a few coconut trees near the hut, throw down a number of coconuts. This is the signal for the drummers suddenly to beat their drums, while two men jerk away the supports carrying the beam on which the two big trunks are propped up. A savage outburst of yelling and crying follows when the two trees come crashing down on the copulating couple, who are now dragged out, roasted and eaten. "So the old people told me", adds Wirz in his *Dämonen*.²³

Wirz communicated his story with an impressive realism and in my *Godsdienst* (1934) I did not hesitate for a moment when I welcomed the case as a beautiful example of a communion in which the participants eat the deity. In 1940 I still found it difficult to abandon the notion, though I had to admit that in view of the natives' unanimous denial that ever anybody was killed during the ceremonies, the position was hardly tenable.²⁴ To-day I am inclined to wonder how I ever could have believed a story which has so many flaws. The secrecy of the ceremonies is poorly guarded. A leaf-screen is all that separates the uninitiated from the scene. Every whisper can be heard, no sound is lost on them. Possibly the men see to it that the uninitiated refrain from spying, because every now and then one of the men goes round to the other side of the screen, but nobody can prevent the women hearing everything. Moreover, the women have to co-operate in the sexual part of the rites. Poorer still is the story of the *iwag* and the neophyte who are killed in copulation. Technically, it is a dubious affair from almost every angle. The trees (*uk*) are of a light, white species of wood and the trunks are hardly heavy enough to crush the couple under their weight.²⁵ But even if they were, pulling down the supports would take so much time as to give the couple an opportunity to make off. Moreover, in the small communities where these ceremonies are said to be held every year, it is impossible that the uninitiated in each

²³ Ibid. p. 284.

²⁴ Van Baal, *TBG* 1940 pp. 583 f.

²⁵ Verschueren, *Indonesië* I p. 443.

village should not be aware that every year there disappears yet another couple, who do not just vanish, but are killed on a spot actually no more than 10 meters away and separated from the uninitiated by a leaf-screen only. If a thing like that should really happen, all the young people would know only too well. As it is of necessity always the last of the neophytes who is to be killed, both the young man and the girl must know what fate is presently awaiting them. How under such circumstances the young man could manage to do with the girl what is expected of him, is beyond me. Equally unbelievable is that every year, or at least every two or three years, each of these communities of between 100 and 200 people, women and children included, should kill and eat two of its young members in such an atrocious manner. The account given by Wirz must definitely be classified as a cock-and-bull story.

The first more accurate report on the rites was drawn up by the late J. J. Z. Pirsouw, who, in 1936 and 1937, was stationed at Muting as a patrol-assistant. His report contained the results of his investigations into the celebration of the ritual at Kolam. It was written in Malay and I worked it up in my article in TBG 1940. More details were collected by the missionaries M. de Brouwer m.s.c. and J. Verschueren m.s.c. and published by the latter in his study on human sacrifice in the journal *Indonesië*. A further contribution was made by Dr. J. Boelaars m.s.c. Evaluating his data is sometimes difficult, because he admits to having leaned heavily on previous authors, without clearly differentiating between his own experiences and the findings of others. As he intended his book to be a popular introduction to missionary work, the procedure is understandable, though not commendable. We will limit our references mainly to those cases where his data differ from other sources. Finally, there is Jufuway's report, dealing with a celebration near Boha in July 1958. Here, however, the cult has no longer its typical form. It was not even called an *ézam* celebration, but an *imo*-initiation, the ceremonies as performed here and in nearby Salau having been influenced by and adapted to the *imo*-rites. The most important of our sources is, without doubt, Verschueren's article. For our account we shall make use of all the available material, taking our main clue from Verschueren's exposition. We shall have to keep in mind that local, and probably also temporal, variations in the execution of the rites are possible. The importance of local differences is stressed by Verschueren, who was the first to point out that some of the upper Bian villages, Boha and Salau in the southwestern corner

of the area, had joined the *imo*-rites and, to that end, associated with the people of Imahui and Aboi. The data communicated by Jufuway give evidence that, in spite of their association with the *imo*, the cult as performed by Boha and Salau follows, partly at least, a pattern similar to that in the other upper Bian villages.²⁶

Verschuieren states that there are three kinds of *ézam* (bullroarer), the *ézam* proper, which gives a low tone and is ca. 51 cm long, 9 cm wide and 3 mm thick; the *uzum*, the wife of the *ézam*, which produces a lighter sound because it is less wide (the dimensions are: length ca. 51 cm, width ca. 6 cm, and thickness 3 mm) and finally the child, a much smaller bullroarer, about 25 cm long, 5 cm broad and 3 mm thick. The *uzum* is also reported by Boelaars, but none of the other authors makes mention of the child. While the *uzum* has a specific function in the rites, the child bullroarer does not seem to have any special function at all.

Verschuieren gives a description of the bullroarer. In the tail-like end of the instrument a hole is made for the cord. Bullroarers of all kinds are beautifully polished, black, and decorated with carvings which are different for every clan. The *ézam* has to be preserved very carefully; when a man dies, his son inherits his bullroarer. On the occasion of his initiation a neophyte is given an *ézam*, which will be his own; this is either an old one or a newly made specimen. None of our sources informs us on the kind of bullroarer that is presented. Is it always one of the male type or may it be a female or a child bullroarer? It does not seem probable that the type of the bullroarer given varies with the clan; each of the moieties may act as feastgiver and the male bullroarer, which has a specific function during the rites, is always a bullroarer of the feastgiving moiety, i.e., is either *Geb-zé* (*Kamisé*) or *Mahu-zé*. It seems probable that each man has a male bullroarer of his own, and that the female and child bullroarers are supplementary. However that be, Verschuieren goes on to say that the recipient of the bullroarer is responsible for the object and has to take care that no uninitiated person shall set eyes on it. People are very strict about this. If any unqualified person should behold a bullroarer, both that person and the keeper of the object must die. In practice it is difficult to inflict the prescribed punishment, because usually it will be some relative or other who first gets wind of the indiscretion. If the affair becomes more widely known, another local group may act as avengers

²⁶ We return to the subject in the section dealing with the *aili*; cf. pp. 638 ff.

and in such a case not only the culprits but their whole community may be killed. On such a punitive expedition every initiate takes his *ésam* with him. Older people asserted that nearly all the fighting occurring between villages resulted from violations of the secret of the bullroarer. By way of example they referred to a big fight in which Boha, Wello, Tepas, Kolam and Salau were ranged against Muting; to the police the fighting had been explained as resulting from a theft of *wati*, but the true cause was said to have been that the Muting people had informed the administration on details of the cult. It is difficult to decide to what extent this presentation of fact is correct, for without an intimate knowledge of village gossip it is impossible to evaluate the relative weight of the reasons given for this and similar village brawls.

The secrecy prescribed does not seem to have always been observed so strictly as all that, as appears from the following statement: "The above is valid only for the true, the permanent *ésam*, because sometimes bullroarers are made just for the occasion, e.g. by people temporarily camping in the bush, when they wish — so they say — to convince their wives and children that the *ésam* is really genuine. In such a case a bullroarer is made out of any material that happens to be at hand, for example bamboo. After the demonstration the improvised bullroarer is buried in the ground, where it is left to decay".²⁷ It is difficult to understand how such demonstrations can be given without impairing the prescribed secrecy, unless we accept that it is actually the ceremonial object as such which is secret and not the technique. There is no reason to reject the surmise as improbable; similar instances could be quoted from Australian literature.

In how far the word *ésam* as used for bullroarer is secret, could not be ascertained. *Ésam*, of course, is also a common word for husband. The initiates have two other names for the object, viz. *tang* and *faroch*.²⁸ The *tang* is a lime-spatula which, among the coastal Marind, is also used as a magic implement.²⁹ To what extent the upper Bian people use a *tang* in their magic we do not know, but Verschueren points out that when it is used to denote a bullroarer, the word is obviously exoteric, adding that "as a spatula the *tang* has absolutely no magical power at all, whereas as an *ésam* it may, for example,

²⁷ Verschueren, op. cit. pp. 452 f.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 453.

²⁹ Above, pp. 486 f., 534.

change into a snake".³⁰ *Faroch*, on the other hand, is a secret name. It is the name the Boadzi people give to a secret ceremonial object, rather unlike a bullroarer in shape, which has a central place in their initiation rites (see Plate XI fig. 2 and 3). According to Verschueren the Bian people use the word to denote the bullroarer; they do not use a *faroch* of the Boadzi type. There is a mystification here, because the photo published in Plate XI fig. 2 is one of a *faroch* from the upper Bian which I presented to the Museum in Djakarta.³¹ This particular *faroch* cannot be used as a bullroarer. I did not record how the object came into my hands, but presumably I got it from Pirsouw, who, in his description of the ceremonial house of the *ézam*-cult, mentioned that a *faroch* of the kind was placed on the outer end of the tree-trunk (*uk*) described by Wirz. I only made a note that this *faroch* originated from the upper Bian, a statement indirectly confirmed by Verschueren, who noticed that the carvings on the object were not of the Boadzi type, but done in Marind-anim style.³² It seems probable that the *faroch* which Pirsouw saw at Kolam represented an accidental innovation which has not become accepted.

Finally, there is yet another name which is sometimes given to the *ézam*, viz. *Babé*, grandfather, but this name does not refer so much to the bullroarer itself as to the being whose voice it is said to be, to the *déma* who, actually, may also be called *ézam* (or *uzum*, as the case may be). The term *Babé*, however, always refers to the male being. According to Boelaars the *Babé* is also the being represented by the effigy of a human head which is made out of a coconut and placed on the ground in front of the trestle bearing the three-trunk(s), *uk*.³³ This coconut-head is mentioned by every author except Wirz.

De Brouwer also mentions the bamboo drums, but his description differs from Wirz's. They go in pairs, the one always slightly bigger than the other. Both being open at one end, the smaller one fits into the bigger. Near the lower end of each an opening has been made in the stalk; at the bottom they are closed. By alternately raising and dropping the smaller bamboo inside the bigger one a sound as of drumming is produced. The bamboo drums must not be seen by the

³⁰ Verschueren, l.c.

³¹ It has been catalogued as nr. 25092; cf. *Jaarboek Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* vol. IX (1941-1947) p. 223. The photo was first published with my article in TBG 1940.

³² Verschueren, op. cit. p. 466 note 15.

³³ Boelaars, *Nieuw-Guinea* p. 58.

uninitiated. Their secret name is *nakok-pang* and they are the *nakari* of the *déma*.³⁴

The celebration of the ritual takes place when under the stress of prolonged adversity people feel impelled to take action. In July 1940 the people of Muting performed the ceremonies because so many young women remained barren.³⁵ Early in 1938 the same people applied for permission to celebrate the rites because an epidemic of flu had taken a heavy toll of human life, and I remember they quite vehemently argued that the disease was the result of their negligence in the observance of the rites. Obviously it is such calamities as sickness, death or prolonged drought which provide the incentives for the people to celebrate.³⁶ The relationship between the ceremonies and the end of the dry season as suggested by Wirz is not confirmed. The same conclusion may be drawn from Pirsouw's statement that the *ésam* is manipulated on various occasions, particularly when a great number of people are assembled, more especially in the dry season, when big hunting or fishing parties are organized, or during the time that canoes are made.³⁷ Here Verschueren observes that canoe-making was engaged in during the rainy season.³⁸

Quite a lot of preparatory work precedes the actual celebration. Candidates for initiation are the young men between the ages of 18 and 20. All those who are uninitiated are called women (not *burap* or children, as among the *Mayo-Marind*). To-day the young people who have not been initiated are often called women by their seniors.³⁹ Once a celebration has been decided upon, those old enough to be initiated are prepared for the forthcoming event by older men, who warn them that within a short time they are going to meet the *Babé*. It is brought home to them that it is a fearful secret and that, if it were divulged

³⁴ Verschueren, *Indonesië* I p. 453.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.* and Boelaars, *op. cit.* p. 57.

³⁷ Van Baal, *TBG* 1940 p. 581.

³⁸ Verschueren, *l.c.* The wording of Pirsouw's statement raises the question whether he intended to say that the bullroarer was used also outside the ritual here described, or that he just confused cause and effect by making the celebration of the ritual conditional upon the occasional gathering of great numbers of people. This is actually the explanation given by Verschueren (*l.c.*), but the latter's own statement that people sometimes give demonstrations with improvised bullroarers might be an indication that the bullroarer may be occasionally used for other purposes than the present ritual. It is impossible to arrive at a conclusion on this matter.

³⁹ Verschueren, *op. cit.* pp. 453 f.

to unauthorized people, the *Babé* would kill them. They are told that during their initiation the *Babé* will beat them, a discomfort they have to bear with equanimity if they wish to become men. When the day has arrived for their initiation into the secret of the bullroarer, they are already adequately submissive and intimidated. The rite is extremely simple. The initiates have lined up in two rows. The neophytes have to pass between them and at the end of the line they meet an old man who simply shows them a bullroarer. It is a solemn ceremony; everybody is quiet and silent and there is no beating or shouting. When they have seen the bullroarer, the neophytes are instructed in the customs relevant to the ceremonies. They must learn how to swing the bullroarer and sing the sacred songs of the ritual, the *gumi-goaimi* or *kua*, a secret and complicated series of songs with many variations. The spoken commentary on a tape-recording of the songs made by Verschuieren in 1962 and now in the collection of the Ethnomusicological Archives in Amsterdam provides us with further details. The opening song is the *kua*. Next comes the *gumi*, which, about midnight, is followed by the *uzub gumi*, the song of the bird of paradise. All the time the men have been standing, but when the next song is set in (toward daybreak, so the commentator says on the tape), the men begin to move at a slow pace. The song is the *sasam*, of which the tape has eight different versions. Other than the *kua* and the *gumi*, the *sasam* are two-part songs, some of them of great beauty. The boys, having gone through all these preliminaries, may now participate in the rites.

The preparations are only part of the initiation. The real ceremony has yet to be celebrated and to that end a big feast-house of the kind described by Wirz has to be built. In De Brouwer's description of the feast-house at Mandom there is only one *uk* (tree-trunk), its outer end propped on a trestle erected near the front side of the men's section, but in the feast-house depicted by Boelaars there are again two trunks, one for each moiety. Boelaars had the good fortune to attend a ceremony of the same kind as the *sosom* ceremony witnessed by him at Wendu.⁴⁰ Apparently the whole district was swept by a movement to celebrate the secret ceremonies publicly, as a kind of official farewell. The purity of their intentions is, in this context,⁴¹ less interesting than the historical background of the movement as related by Verschuieren. He had made it a rule that on the occasion of the annual village-procession there

⁴⁰ Cf. above, p. 481.

⁴¹ We shall enter into this matter when discussing the *imo*; below, pp. 606 f.

should also be festivities for the older generation, lest the religious feasts developed into pure children's parties. In the Kumbe and Maro valleys this practice had been introduced in 1937. Every year the members of the older generation staged one or other (more or less innocent) episode of their old legends. Over the years these performances had become more and more popular, so that they were at that time an integral part of village-life and even of the pattern of intervillage rivalry. Weeks, sometimes months, were spent in making the necessary preparations, which went on in secret, the missionary being the only outsider to be taken into the villagers' confidence. All went well until in 1945 or 1946 the Boadzi of Bosset proposed a performance of their *gomai*-ritual, their old secret cult. F. Verschueren had his misgivings, but after prolonged consultations he finally agreed, because the Bosset people argued: "Those are the things we now reject and we just want to show the women and children how everything used to be done in bygone years". In one way or another this was noised abroad and on the day of the procession people flocked from far and near into Bosset. Half the upper Bian were present. The performance was a shock to everybody. The upper Bian spectators were profoundly dismayed, complaining that their ritual had been made public, thereby furnishing proof that they had not yet given up their own ritual and were well aware of its similarity to the Boadzi *gomai*. Nevertheless, one or two years later *ésam*, too, was brought upon the stage. Shortly afterwards the *sosom*-rites followed and finally even the *imo*.⁴² That, however, is another story and certainly not a matter in which Verschueren was implicated, because in those years he worked in the Mappi district.

After this digression we must return to the *ésam* celebration witnessed by Boelaars. The occasion chosen for it was a visitation of the Bishop of Merauke and it was in the same village of Mandom, where De Brouwer had collected his data some fifteen years earlier, that the performance took place. This time the building was constructed inside the village, though ordinarily it had to be put up at a considerable distance away from it.⁴³ Referring to the picture he made of the building (see Plate XIV), Boelaars informs us that each of the two moieties owns one of the two trees (*uk*) which lie with one end supported by the trestle at the front side of the men's part of the house. The *uk* are used, as was already reported by Wirz, as a repository for the

⁴² Verschueren, Letters XI p. 12.

⁴³ Van Baal, l.c.

bullroarers, the bamboo drums and the twigs which every man brings after having had sexual intercourse outside the grounds. Boelaars was told that the dates for the actual beginning of the first and last phases of the rites had to be set so as to correspond with certain stages in the growth of the coconuts and bananas that had been planted near the ceremonial house. When the coconuts sprouted, they were dug up and eaten. This act marked the first beginning; we presume that it preceded the initiation of the young men into the use of the bullroarer. The final rites could only take place when, some nine months later, the bananas bore fruit.

As soon as the ceremonies begin, three fires are lit in the men's section, one in the centre for the *Babé*, and one on the right and the left, respectively, that is, one for each of the two moieties, here called *Geb-zé* and *Mahu-zé*.⁴⁴ In Boelaars' picture the three fires are located outside the building, one to the right, one to the left and one in front. The latter (central) fire is the *Babé's* fire; it is sacred and must be kept going all through the ritual. It must not be used for any profane purposes.⁴⁵ The moiety-division is conspicuous. Each of the moieties has its own half of the men's section with its own *uk*, its own entrance to the women's section (located outside the house in Boelaars' picture), and its own fire. One or the other acts as the feast-giver, and as such is the first to offer its women (perhaps more correctly: one of its women). The feast-giving moiety has the right to hang one of its *éxam* from a long bamboo which stands firmly implanted near the fire of the *Babé* (see Plate XIV). It is this *éxam* which is actually venerated. Whatever activity people engage in, whether it be sleeping, eating, roasting, betel-chewing, or even relieving themselves,⁴⁶ the *éxam's* permission has to be requested first.

Boelaars' picture shows some more details. Each moiety has a tree, one on the right, the other on the left, completely stripped of its bark, the trunk decorated with red-painted bands. It is called the *wal-wal* and next to it there is a tree-stump, equally stripped and painted in red and yellow. This is the *datakav*. The function of these objects is not clear. We may, I think, translate *wal-wal* by stork, *datakav* by sago fire, but I fail to see how this can make sense. Right and left of the *uk* two poles jut out, the ends of which resemble snakes' heads. Boelaars calls them dragons' heads, but the word dragon hardly contributes to

⁴⁴ Verschuieren, Indonesië I p. 455.

⁴⁵ Verschuieren, l.c.; Jufuway, NGS 1960 pp. 205, 208.

⁴⁶ Verschuieren, l.c.

elucidating their meaning and we had better describe them as snakes' heads.⁴⁷ A more interesting object, on the ground near the fire of the *Babé*, is the decorated coconut, also called *Babé* by Boelaars. Pirsouw, too, mentioned a coconut shaped like a human head, lying in front of the structure supporting the *uk*.⁴⁸ At Boha Jufuway saw a number of decorated coconut-husks which had been piled one upon another and tied to a pole one meter high,⁴⁹ but information obtained later on by Verschueren gives evidence that it all was a fake, a deliberate attempt to deceive Jufuway.⁵⁰

From the moment the *ézam* are all in place, the main *ézam* near the fire and all the other ones on the *uk*, it is strictly forbidden to make any noise. People talk in undertones. At irregular intervals the *ézam* is swung [apparently it is the main *ézam*, handled by one of the old men referred to by Wirz; v. B.], and this is followed by the beating of the bamboo drums and the singing of the *gumi*, or any of the songs referred to above. For each of these there is a special time, and only when the appointed hour of the day or the night has arrived, may a particular song be sung. During the intervals those who attend the celebration for the first time may be beaten and abused. In explanation of the din the women are told that the *Babé* abuses and beats the new initiates. Sleep is dispensed with as much as possible. When guests arrive from neighbouring villages, one of the *ézam* lying on the *uk* is swung. The women are told that the *Babé* is growling at the late-comers.⁵¹ In another story made up for the women the *Babé* is said to be a short man who usually resides underground. In a note Verschueren comments that such stories are, on the one hand, intended to frighten them, but at the same time they keep them informed of even the smallest details. That the *Babé* usually resides underground is true; often the men bury their bullroarers in order that no uninitiated person shall see them.⁵² We might add that in this particular case yet another explanation is possible. The term *Babé* may also refer to the decorated coconut which, as it lies on the ground, is actually a very short man. It is equally true that he usually resides underground; that is

⁴⁷ Obviously he borrowed his description from explanations given in Malay. In that language *naga* is the word for dragon and, in a religious context, also for any image of a snake.

⁴⁸ Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 581.

⁴⁹ Jufuway, op. cit. p. 209.

⁵⁰ Verschueren, Letters XII p. 1.

⁵¹ Verschueren, Indonesië I p. 455.

⁵² Op. cit. note 53 (p. 468).

where the nut goes when it is planted. In his comment Verschueren makes a significant point. The secrecy permeating these stories is always of a symbolic kind, which is, in part, revealing. One may well ask whether it is dissimulation which is intended, or, on the contrary, presentation of the facts in a symbolic form. There can be hardly any doubt that it really is the latter, and we shall have to elaborate this point in another context.⁵³

The women play a part of their own in the ritual. Every night, starting after sundown, sexual intercourse takes place in the bush nearby. This promiscuous intercourse is rather strictly regulated. The women who partake have to be made available by their husbands. As a rule the husband concerned is one who has not been married long, or whose wife has recently had a delivery. Unfortunately, successive observers did not pay attention to this aspect. Information of this kind might have been revealing.⁵⁴ Be that as it may, any man who wishes to put his wife at the disposal of others puts a twig between two crossed sticks set up near the entrance of his moiety. The woman brings a bowl with her, usually made of a nibung spathe, which is partly filled with water. After each cohabitation the excreta from her vulva are added to the water, in which the man washes his penis before he leaves to make room for the next applicant. When the woman has satisfied all the participants, she gives the bowl to her husband, who sprinkles some of the liquid on the *ézam* and the *nakok*. Part of the contents is kept to be used on a later occasion.⁵⁵

Pirsouw gives a somewhat deviant version of the organization of sexual intercourse. In the men's section the men are seated in groups, all the members of a local clan-group sitting together, separated from members of other clan-groups and from those members of their own clan-group who belong to other villages. What is meant by clan-group is not clear. Pirsouw probably used the Moluccan Malay word *fam* and it is possible that, in fact, I should have translated it by moiety. Whatever it be, the women also have prepared themselves and, similarly grouped, sit down near the edge of the bush. Previously, an arrangement has been made for the women of one clan-group to have intercourse with men belonging to another clan-group and another village. The technique of assembling the semen is the same as that described by Verschueren, but in Pirsouw's account everything is done on a larger

⁵³ Below, pp. 931 f.

⁵⁴ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Indonesië I p. 456.

scale. When the men have copulated with a few women, they return, bringing as many twigs as correspond with the number of times they have had intercourse. Since these twigs have been dipped into the bowl with sperma, a few drops remain on them, which are now sprinkled on the coconut in front of the wooden structure bearing the *uk*. Then the twigs are put down on the trunk and the men are seated again, awaiting their next turn. At daybreak the bowls are handed by the women to a few elderly members of their sex, who prepare the contents for future use as a medicine.⁵⁶

On one point Pirsouw's description confirms a suggestion made by Verschueren in a footnote, viz. that the sign put up at the entrance of his own moiety-section by the husband who lends his wife, seems to indicate that the woman is made available only to the men of his own moiety, in other words, that moiety-exogamy is respected.⁵⁷ The moiety-structure being so clearly reflected in the whole organization of the rites, we could hardly expect this to be otherwise. Boelaars, too, points out that moiety-exogamy is maintained.⁵⁸ Another interesting point is that Pirsouw, who did not know Wirz's book, mentions the twigs put down in token of intercourse accomplished. The sprinkling of the coconut is an interesting addition.

More difficulties are presented by Pirsouw's statement that many (if not all) women partake in sexual intercourse. From the description as given by Verschueren it appears that the *Mayo-Marind* pattern of *otiv-bombari* is followed, according to which one woman, or maximally two or three women, were at the disposal of the whole concourse of men. In this particular case we shall possibly have to multiply the number by two; it is not improbable that on both sides of the house women were made available. Even so, the number of women is still more limited and their task proportionally more onerous than Pirsouw in his description of the rite would have it. Which is right? It is rather too facile to put the divergence in procedure down to differences in local conditions, although, in this case, an argument might be found in the fact that Kolam is near Boha, which follows the *imo*-rites. Among the *imo* people sexual promiscuity follows more generalized patterns than among the *mayo*.⁵⁹ In this case the generalization is not corroborated. Jufuway assures us that only six men and five women partook

⁵⁶ Van Baal, op. cit. p. 582.

⁵⁷ Verschueren, op. cit. note 54.

⁵⁸ Boelaars, op. cit. p. 60.

⁵⁹ Cf. below, p. 619.

in sexual intercourse, the men who supplied the women belonging to different clans (mentioned are *Geb-zé*, *Mahu-zé* and *Ndik-end*) and villages (in this case Kolam and Boha). It is almost certain that Jufuway was misinformed. That there were five men who lent their wives sounds likely enough, but that four out of the five women would have had intercourse with no more than one man each, is highly improbable. Obviously, an ordinary rite of *otiv-bombari* had taken place, the true character of which was successfully concealed from Jufuway, who was new to the area. This implies that we still have to answer the question as to what inspired Pirsouw's particular vision of the procedure. In his case, too, we have to make allowance for the probability of a good deal of deliberate distortion on the part of his Papuan friends, no easy matter because Pirsouw was not new to the area and a mature man of penetrating intelligence. However, Pirsouw's investigation, like that carried out by Jufuway, meant interference, and the participants in the rites at Kolam had good reason to suppose that a case of promiscuity based on voluntary participation would meet with less censure from Pirsouw than would have been provoked by compulsory prostitution. Personally, I am inclined to accept this as an explanation. We have no reason to discount the version given by De Brouwer and Verschueren. They had been in the area since 1931 and in their profession they had acquired an intimate knowledge of morals. The custom to have a few women serve the whole community of the men is too uncommon to allow of the assumption that the information on this point merely reflected the intentional deceit practised by a great many informants over many years. Even so, it is possible that in the upper Bian region, and especially during the *ésam*-rites, women were made available on a more liberal scale than happened to be the case among the *Mayo-Marind*.⁶⁰

It is not clear how many days were taken up by the rites. We only know that promiscuous intercourse took place every night,⁶¹ a circumstance telling against Pirsouw, because if the facts had been as he presented them, the implication would be that a heavy burden is laid

⁶⁰ Commenting on this point, Verschueren writes that the upper Bian people, too, believed in the necessity of fertilizing a married woman by a rite of *otiv-bombari*. The information he gathered makes it perfectly clear that every woman had intercourse with various men in succession. He winds up his statement by admitting that we have to make allowance for the possibility that the upper Bian people were somewhat more liberal with their women than the *Mayo-Marind* (Letters XI p. 13).

⁶¹ Verschueren, *Indonesië* I p. 456.

not only on the women, but on the elderly men as well. In most descriptions of Marind-anim rites male potency is fairly much overestimated.

After a few days the smaller bullroarers, the *uzum*, are swung for the first time. The women are told that the *Babé's* wife has arrived, looking for her husband. When a few moments later the big bullroarers are sounded, they are told that the *Babé* is growling at his wife, because she dared to come to the feast.⁶²

Finally, the time has arrived to kill the *Babé* and his wife. Two younger men — preferably married to a young wife — present themselves to perform the act. Two ripe coconuts are partially stripped of their husks, so that about one third is left. This remaining third is provided with a human hairdo. The two thirds of the inner shell which have been laid bare are polished and painted so as to make the whole represent a human head, the germ-holes functioning as the eyes and the mouth. To one of the coconuts a small beard of coconut-fibre is appended. This nut is the *ézam* (husband), the other the *uzum* (wife). The *uzum* is the first to be killed. This will be done in the early morning and during the preceding night the man who is to perform the act lends his wife. She has intercourse with an extraordinarily large number of men. At sundown she is brought to a place in the bush where about five men, one after another, copulate with her. Then she is allowed a short rest, but after some time another four or five men appear and so it goes on, till everyone has had his turn. Toward daybreak a deafening noise is made in the men's part of the house. It is then that the man crushes the coconut representing the *uzum*, using a disc-headed club. One or two nights afterwards the same thing happens to the other coconut, the *ézam*. The coconut meat is eaten by the assembled men, without any addition of sperma. The available sperma is distributed and taken home, to be drunk or applied to houses, plants or the bodies of children and adults.⁶³

A few remarks should be added to the account just given. For two reasons it seems probable that the coconuts representing the human heads are made up a few days earlier than indicated by Verschueren. Pirsouw happened to see one of them lying in front of the structure supporting the *uk*. What is more important, Boelaars informs us that they are the objects of some form of revelation to the novices. During

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid. pp. 456 f. We note that the promiscuous intercourse of the woman with the optimal number of men is strongly reminiscent of the role of the *mayo-iwag* in myth.

the ceremony he witnessed at Mandom, a condensed form of initiation was staged during which the boys, after they had been beaten up, were shown the bullroarer, and then the *nakok*, whereupon they were brought to the fire of the *Babé*. The *Babé* was laid on the outstretched arms of the first boy to appear. He had to rock the coconut like a baby. Then it was the next boy's turn. The episode can hardly have had all the features of a genuine ceremony. The one at Mandom was a condensed performance, in which the *uzum*-coconut did not figure, allegedly because otherwise sexual promiscuity could not have been avoided. Nevertheless, we may conclude that the initiation is not completed with the revelation of the bullroarer, but that two other revelations, first of the *nakok* and then of the coconut, follow. This explains the uproar and the sounds of beating which sometimes did break in upon the prevailing silence. It seems probable that at the first sounding of the *uzum* the coconut representing her is brought in and shown to the neophytes. There is one point on which our sources are silent: the bullroarers which are called 'children' and which remind us of the *patur* mentioned by Wirz.

In respect of one important item the descriptions by Verschueren and Pirsouw are in perfect harmony. In the early morning after the night of promiscuity described by Pirsouw, men and women go each to their own part of the house. The men start singing to the accompaniment of the bamboo drums. Then with a deafening roar they rap away at the coconut so that the women, frightened to death, are led to believe that somebody has been killed. The coconut is broken, the coconut milk is drained off and the meat eaten by the men.⁶⁴ This puts the story of the young couple killed while in copulation in its proper perspective and gives a satisfactory explanation as to how it originated.

Boelaars provides a number of additional details. First, we are told that the man who crushes the *ézam*-coconut must actually have volunteered for the job, because it definitely is a risky one. Should he miss the nut, he is to die as soon as he reaches his own house. The man who does the killing belongs to the moiety opposite to that of the man who is the owner of the *ézam* hanging near the fire of the *Babé*, i.e. the man who represents the feastgivers. Conversely, it is a man of the feastgiving moiety who 'kills' the *uzum*. Here, too, the two moieties co-operate, but *ézam* and *uzum* may belong to either moiety, dependent upon which

⁶⁴ Van Baal, TBG 1940 pp. 582 f.

of the two acts as feastgiver. Another detail concerns the eating of the coconut. The moment the nut has been crushed, all the men advance, moving their feet in short, rapid shuffles. One of the oldest men takes some pieces of coconut meat and goes to the women's section of the house to moisten the brows of the children and the sick. Only a few very old people actually eat some of the meat and one of them delivers a harangue in which he praises the killing of enemies. Then the coconut husks and the bamboo drums are burned in the fire of the *Babé*.⁶⁵ In the old days, however, yet another ceremony took place. In those years a bundle of arrows arranged in such a way that alternately an arrow belonging to a man of the one moiety was placed next to that of a member of the other moiety, was suspended above the elevated ends of the two tree-trunks. The bundle had the shape of a fish-trap. When the ceremonies had been completed, the bundle was taken down and laid on the outstretched arms of (a few) men who held it out in different directions. If the bundle suddenly began to weigh heavily on their arms, it was a sign that the souls of their enemies had been caught in the pseudo fish-trap and the direction in which they happened to be facing at that particular moment was taken to be the one in which the headhunt should go which had to be organized after the ceremonies were over.⁶⁶

The meaning of the ceremonies here described is obscured both by the fact that the *déma* concerned seem to be nameless and by the absence of any myth explaining either the origin or the procedure of the rites. After Verschueren it was Boelaars who also tried to collect data on the possible mythical background of the rites, but the result was fairly disappointing. The people told him the myth of *Geb* and *Mahu* in an upper Bian version. About the ritual the myth says that they celebrated the ritual together, but not a single detail was given. Boelaars then asked who made the earth. *Ndiwa* made the earth and the sky, he also made the first man, *Geb*. When the people increased in number he divided them into *Geb-zé* and *Mahu-zé*. *Ndiwa* also instituted the clans. One day, when he was cutting firewood, three chips flew off with a buzzing sound. *Ndiwa* took one of them, fastened a cord to it, and said: 'This is my *ézam*'. Here another informant interrupted: "He made two chips and said: 'these are *Ezam-Uzum*', husband and wife". To the question where *Ndiwa* came from, one of his informants replied,

⁶⁵ Boelaars, op. cit. p. 64.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 65.

after much hesitation: "*Ndiwa* originated from himself". At this juncture Boelaars dropped the subject, because he considered that the answer savoured too much of the catechism. Another informant complicated matters still further by mixing up *Ndiwa* and *Mahu*; *Ndiwa* had two wives, one of whom he presented to *Mahu*. By their very scantiness, the results of Boelaars' efforts tend to confirm that a myth concerning the ritual is really lacking. A similar conclusion must be drawn from Jufuway's account. He noted down a more elaborate version of the myth of *Ndiwa*, but the story is fairly insipid as far as the ritual is concerned. *Ndiwa* came from the place of sunrise. He instituted the *ézam*-rites, the moiety-dualism and the division of the feast-house into a section for men and one for women. Originally, it was the women who performed the rites, but one day, in the absence of *Ndiwa* and most of the women, the men forced their way into what is now the men's section and performed the various rites, thus stealing the women's secret. *Ndiwa* acquiesced and sent the women to their part of the house, after which he instructed the men. Then he went away down the river, but he had come only as far as Wan (upper Bian area) when he met with *Geb*, who had come from the west, from the area of sunset. *Ndiwa* had brought ten bullroarers, five of which he presented to *Geb*. The latter had originated the *imo*-rites and was much amazed to find that the bullroarers of the *ézam*-cult were identical with those of the *imo*. *Ndiwa* then returned, going up-river, but nobody knows what became of him. *Geb* went to the coast.⁶⁷

The name of the culture-hero *Ndiwa* and his role as an originator of ritual bear a close resemblance to the myth of the Boadzi culture-hero *Nggiwë*, who gave these people their institutions.⁶⁸ There have been many contacts between the upper Bian people and the Boadzi and the two have much in common. For this reason it may be expedient to insert the short description of the Boadzi rites published by Verschueren in his article written in 1947, and later supplemented with new data in his letters. Before we proceed, we summarize the more obvious essentials of the *ézam*-rites. The main characters are husband and wife, each of them identical with the bullroarer and the coconut. At the end of the ritual, which focuses on sexual intercourse and the collection of sperma, the two have to be killed. The killing has a bearing on headhunting; the act is executed with a disc-headed club, *Nazr's*

⁶⁷ Jufuway, *op. cit.* pp. 297 ff.

⁶⁸ Cf. above, pp. 106 f.; Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 12.

weapon, and followed by divination relevant to headhunting. The effect of the rites is to change the neophytes from women into men and to bring fertility and health to the community. Some influence on the seasons is also suggested, but this is not confirmed by any known data. If the ritual aims at delivery from prolonged drought, the period of nine months over which the complete performance extends is far too long to meet the urgency of the situation. Finally, we note that in upper Biau mythology it is *Mahu* who is associated with east, *Geb* with west, a reversal confirming the fundamental meaning of the contrast coast-interior as commented on when we were dealing with the myths of the *Mahu-zé* phratry (pp. 353 f.).

3. BOADZI AND UPPER BIAU CULTS COMPARED

The information on the Boadzi culture is very fragmentary and scattered over various sources. Apart from the data presented in Verschueren's article on human sacrifice⁶⁹ there are only my description of Bofagage in TBG 1940 pp. 1-14, and the unpublished extract from the report on the Bosset-group written by J. J. de Zoete in the days he was stationed in Merauke as a junior civil service officer, which was, as far as I know, round about 1949.⁷⁰ To these should be added Williams' note on the natives of Everill Junction in his *Papuans of the Trans-Fly*,⁷¹ Sir Hubert Murray's report on his visit in 1915, Hides' book *Papuan Wonderland* of 1936, and some miscellaneous communications scarcely contributing to our factual knowledge, such as those in Hurley's *Pearls and Savages*. Fortunately, new data were made available by F. Verschueren. Several years ago he made it his object to write a study on the Boadzi,⁷² but he had to give up the plan because rats ate the better part of his fieldnotes. From the fragments left by the brutes he compiled a survey of the procedure of the *gomai*-ritual, which he kindly put at my disposal. His communications provide the substance of the following account.

The social structure of the Boadzi was discussed in section 3 of Chapter II, where we also rendered a condensed version of the myth of *Nggiwé*, the culture-hero of the Boadzi people,⁷³ who originated

⁶⁹ Verschueren, *Indonesië I* pp. 437 ff.

⁷⁰ A photostat copy of the extract is in the files of the Anthropology Dept. of the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam.

⁷¹ Williams, *Trans-Fly* p. 61.

⁷² Verschueren, *op. cit.* p. 440.

⁷³ Above, pp. 106 f.

their social organization and initiated the *gomai*-ritual, in which a prominent part is given to a mysterious object, the *faroch*.⁷⁴ We already met with it in Pirsouw's account of the *ézam* celebrations.⁷⁵ The upper Bian *faroch* is shown in fig. 2 of Plate XI, a lightwood, fish-shaped object, pointed at both ends, 46.5 cm long and, in the centre, 6.5 cm broad and 6.3 cm thick. In respect of size, shape and materials used, it is about the same as the Boadzi *faroch* sketched by Verschueren (Plate XI fig. 3), but the carvings (called *pawam* in Boadzi) are different. The most conspicuous difference is that there is a square protuberance (*kusu-kusu*) on the back of the Boadzi *faroch*.

The simple object is held in great awe among the Boadzi. It is kept wrapped up in a woman's cap which, in turn, is swathed in a nibung spathe to which the secret name of *kwimba* is given. All the year round the package just hangs aloft in the *gia-ven*, the men's house, dangling from the central post. Another name given to the *faroch* is *nasapucha*, but its most secret name is *Bumbukjem*,⁷⁶ a mysterious being "who has never been made, who is above everything and is only good".⁷⁷ Apparently he is a kind of Supreme Being about whom nothing in particular is known and who does not play a part in mythology. The central personage of Boadzi myth is *Nggivě*, who is a member of the *Baiya* clan of the *Kaukwin* moiety. We noted already that he made the first *faroch* and instituted the rites and the social organization. In a more elaborate version of his myth recorded by De Zoete,⁷⁸ *Nggivě* travels all over the country, and wherever he meets human beings he gives them their institutions and sometimes even completes their shape by cutting open their mouths and straightening their limbs. *Nggivě* is closely associated with dogs, but what is more important is that everywhere he instructs his people in the art of headhunting and in the practice of cannibalism (that is, the eating of the limbs of slain enemies, not the kind of endo-cannibalism Wirz imputed to the Marind). According to De Zoete each of the two moieties has its own *faroch*;

⁷⁴ In TBG 1940 p. 12 I identified the ritual (which, being unaware of its correct name, I called *faroch*-ritual) with the *ézam*-rites of the upper Bian, a somewhat rash conclusion, as has been pointed out by Verschueren (Indonesië I p. 466 note 15) and will be further demonstrated in the next few pages.

⁷⁵ Above, p. 575.

⁷⁶ In this context Verschueren refers to J. G. Hides' Lake Murray informant (to all intents and purposes a Boadzi), who called the spirit of the Strickland river *Bumbukem* (Papuan Wonderland p. 23).

⁷⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 13. The reader's attention is drawn to the curious symbolism of the wrappings; the male object is kept in a female cap.

⁷⁸ J. J. de Zoete, Nota pp. 1-4; the myth is too long to be related in full.

Nggivē is alleged to have given his own *faroch* to the *Baiḡa*-clan of Bosset,⁷⁹ a presentation of fact explicitly refuted by Verschueren, who writes that there is only one *faroch* for the two moieties together, adding: "I am perfectly sure, because on more than one occasion I saw with my own eyes that the old woman's cap hanging on the central post of the *gia-ven* holds only one *faroch*".⁸⁰

In the *gomai*-ritual as celebrated at Bofagage the following things played a part:⁸¹

- a. The tabooed animal, captured by the hunting party. It may be any animal, a pig, a cassowary, a kangaroo-species, a crocodile or even a fish. Its identity is kept a secret from the uninitiated.
- b. The *faroch*.
- c. The bullroarer, *aut* or *atu gisagaru* (voice of the old woman), swung from a cord tied to a long rod. This is done by night only.
- d. The *simu faroch*, the platform of the *faroch*, a wickerwork table, 3 m in length and 1.3 m in width, hanging ca. one meter above the ground, suspended from a strong rattan which has been split up into six cords, passing down from the ridge-pole in the centre of the men's house. The table has its axis running parallel to the beam used as a lean-to.⁸² Before the beginning of the rites, a few old men construct the *simu faroch* by joining together a number of carefully peeled, red-painted rods. Except for the pointed end at the front

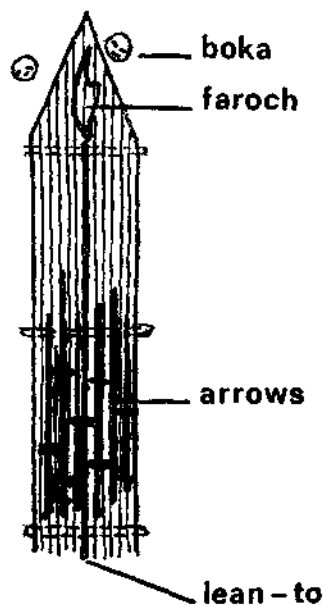


Fig. 4. The *simu faroch*. From a sketch drawn by J. Verschueren.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 13.

⁸⁰ Verschueren, Letters I.c.

⁸¹ We follow the survey made by Verschueren, which was compiled from his notes on the celebration at Bofagage and the summary description of the rites as executed at Bosset. Letters XI pp. 14-17.

⁸² Cf. above, p. 105.

side of the *simu* (cf. fig. 4), the platform is conceived as a replica of the *gia-ven*, with the lean-to (*mundaw-e*) along its longitudinal axis, dividing it into two halves, a *Kaukwim* and a *Mugaw* one. The platform is decorated with down and leaves. The *faroch* is laid on the foremost part of the platform, in line with the axis. According to a note made by Verschueren at Gammelavu the platform is suspended in such a way as to make the *faroch* face the direction of the headhunting territory. The *faroch*, the old people say, is watching the headhunting territory in order to damage the enemy and dull his vigilance.⁸³

- e. The *boka faroch*, two coconuts propped up on forked posts planted on either side of the wedge-shaped front of the platform. Obeying the instructions given by *Nggiwě*, one half of the coconut — the one with the 'eyes' — is peeled and polished. The germinal holes are made into black-painted eyes and a white mouth. The face is painted in red and the other half of the coconut, the husky part, is adorned with hair-lengthenings. The two heads, one for each of the two moieties, are propped up on the forked posts in such a way that they are facing the *faroch*. From their position we might be inclined to conclude that the two coconuts represent the enemy, but an assumption of this kind is hardly tenable as, toward the end of the ritual, the coconuts are explicitly identified with the *atu*. The *Kaukwim* and the *Mugaw* make great quantities of arrows, all of them war-arrows, which are deposited on the platform, the stacks for each moiety on its own side. The arrow-heads are made to point in the same direction as the *faroch*.
- g. Bamboo pipes, which are of the same kind as those used in the *sosom*- and in the Keraki initiation rites. Verschueren makes special mention of the shrill sound produced by blowing them.
- h. Toward the end of the ceremonies the men will rub their bow-strings with kunai-grass mixed with lime. The sound reminds the men of their enemies crying out.

On the procedure Verschueren gives the following information. Every year, round about the middle of the wet season, the rites are celebrated by each of the subtribes separately. If there are any neophytes, the rites are combined with initiation ceremonies. The candidates are young men of between 17 and 20 years of age. Even when there

⁸³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 17.

are no candidates, the rites are nevertheless celebrated by the initiates. The ceremonies take about a month. As soon as the necessary preparations have been completed, the men go out hunting, taking the novices with them (in the present description initiation is part of the rites). As soon as an animal has been killed, it is brought to an isolated spot, where a few initiates make it assume a natural posture. Previously, they have decorated the animal's head in the same fashion as that of an adult man. One of the initiates, similarly adorned, lies under the animal. The neophytes are made to come forward, their eyes covered by initiates holding their hands over them. When they are face to face with the animal, the novices are allowed to look about them. They take fright, soon to be reassured by the leader of the ceremony, who addresses them as follows: "It is not a spirit, it is only an animal and a man. It is the meat which we used to eat when, in the past, you heard the drums. From now on you are allowed to participate, but you may never inform the women, lest you die. This has been our custom since time immemorial".

If a number of animals has been killed, one or two of them are brought to the village quite openly, but the greater part of the catch is transported carefully wrapped up in some leaf sheaths of the nibung palm. On their way home the men in their canoes intone the *amayika*, the song dedicated to the *faroch*. When they have arrived in the village, the meat is stealthily brought to the *gia-ven*, where it is laid on the platform of the *faroch*. The men begin to prepare the meat. The neophytes are waiting outside. After a time they may enter the men's house, each neophyte having his eyes covered by the hands of an initiate. They are made to stand in front of the *faroch*, and the leader of the ceremonies shows them the *faroch*, the bullroarer, the coconuts etc. Simultaneously the boys are beaten and ants, mud, dirt and water are thrown at them. That night the boys are allowed to sing *amayika* together with the initiates, while all the time they dance round the *simu faroch*. The dancers carry a bow and arrows or a drum. In the morning the meat which has been roasted and the sago which has been prepared in advance, are distributed among the members of the two moieties. The men sit down, each joining his own moiety in its assigned place in the men's house, and eat the meal in complete silence.

The ceremonial hunt and the ensuing meal are repeated several times. In the meantime the new initiates are taught the myths and the secret names of the various things. After one month there is another hunt, the tabooed meat is brought to the *gia-ven* and, as usual, the night

is spent in dancing and singing *amayika*, but when the day breaks the meat is not eaten. Shortly before, the leader of the ceremony has risen and asked who is going to kill the *boka faroch*. Two married men present themselves, one of the *Mugav* and one of the *Kaukwin*, to break the coconut of the other moiety. All the men decorate themselves and the leader shouts to the women that they must come nearer to the *gia-ven*, as they are going to kill the old woman (*atu*). The women and children live in the village outside the fence surrounding the men's house. The *atu* is not new to them; during the previous weeks her name had been mentioned several times. They have been ordered to bring young bamboo for the *atu*, to fetch water for the old woman, etc. By now they assemble at some distance away from the men's house. Suddenly the men, all completely armed, come rushing out of the house, yelling, drumming and singing *amayika*. They run down the fence of the enclosure and hurry to the landing-stage of the canoes, where they step into the water. They proceed till the water comes waist-high; then they return, yelling and singing, to the *gia-ven*. In the centre of the throng, where outsiders cannot observe them, there are two men carrying the two coconuts, the *boka faroch*, which are now placed in front of the *gia-ven*. Immediately the two men appointed to break them come forward. A sudden hush falls on the crowd. Then, equally unexpectedly, all initiates cry out, "*Bumbukjem ah . . . atu nelevav nek ah . . .*", that is: "*Bumbukjem* (the secret name of the *faroch*), we kill the old woman". At that moment the two men strike a blow at the coconuts with a piece of wood, each cutting his nut into two halves. Instantly each of them picks up the nut he has broken and throws the contents over his head and over the men thronging behind him, who in response to the blow on the coconuts have given forth a sudden *hai*, followed by a rapid succession of 'oh's' ejaculated to the accompaniment of a very quick beating of the drums. The crowd begins to move and, all the time yelling *oh, oh, oh*, they go three times round the men's house. The drums are beaten steadily and the two 'killers of the *boka faroch*' carry the pieces of the coconuts. Finally, they all enter the *gia-ven*, where the coconut meat is distributed by the killers, each handing the food to the members of his own moiety, and eaten with the meat of the tabooed animal. The moment the procession entered the *gia-ven*, a sudden hush has fallen on the village. Women and children had disappeared long before; they had taken to their heels at the moment the two coconuts were smashed up.

By now the *faroch* is wrapped up again and hung in its usual place,

suspended from the central post. The *simu faroch* and all the other implements which have been utilized for the occasion are assembled in the front part of the men's house, where they are burned. The women are told that the men are burning the excrements of the *atu*. In the afternoon the ashes are collected into little heaps and each of these is wrapped up in a leaf sheath of the nibung palm; there are six of these packages, three for the *Kaukwin* and three for the *Mugav*. After the women have been sent off, four canoes are taken to the landing-stage, where they are joined together and covered with a platform so as to make a single big raft. Six young men, three from each moiety, take up their stance on the foredeck, each holding a package of ashes, while other men amidst a profound silence row the raft across the lake. At some distance away from the village the craft comes to a halt. Suddenly there is a loud yelling of *aah* and silently the six young men sprinkle the ashes over the water, scattering them as far away as possible, all on the same side, the side of the enemy whom they are going to attack shortly afterwards. The moment the six begin to sprinkle the ashes, the rowers on the platform pull the oars as fast and hard as they can, rowing in the opposite direction, so that no member of the crew should be touched by the ashes.

Whatever it was that has been burned, it was certainly not the husks of the *boka faroch* which were identified with the *atu*. They, too, have to be disposed of.⁸⁴ The next day there is again a hunt. The animal that is caught, and consequently also the meat it provides, are taboo as usual. That night, however, the men do not sing *amayika*, but simply *imbi-imbi*.⁸⁵ Before dawn the younger men bring the coconut husks and the food to the bush. Later, the older men follow, bringing the *faroch* with them. The women are informed that the men are setting out to bury the bones of the *atu*. In the bush they clear a spot measuring about 3 by 1½ meters. The place must represent the *gia-ven* and is appointed accordingly. In front there is a small platform made of rods, on which the *faroch* is deposited. Facing it are the husks of the coconuts. After some singing of *imbi-imbi* the men sit down to eat the tabooed meat, as usual, in silence. Then they dig a miniature grave, about half a meter both in length and in depth, and only 20 to 30 cm wide. Leaves are put on the bottom, and on top of these the coconut husks are laid,

⁸⁴ Cf. Verschueren, *Indonesië* I p. 441, where he is more explicit on this point than in the description borrowed from his letters.

⁸⁵ Apparently one of their more usual and less sacral songs. The Marind, too, have a dance (and song) of this name (*im-si*).

those of the *Kaukwini* in front, and those of the *Mugav* at the back, the convex side facing upwards. The whole is roofed over by means of twigs and leaves and then the pit is closed by throwing big pieces of wood across the grave and piling leaves and sand on them until a mound is raised to the dimensions of a scrub-bird's nest. Croton-twigs are planted round about the place to distinguish it from a real nest.

Toward nightfall the men return. The little boys are called to the *gia-ven*, where they receive a morsel of the tabooed meat. When they have wiped off the mouths and the hands of the boys, the men send them home, instructing them to tell their mothers that they have eaten the flesh of the *atu*. This marks the end of the feast. By now it is time to prepare for the headhunting party which follows the ritual.⁸⁶

Verschueren draws our attention to the fact that the *gomai*-ritual is not connected with sexual promiscuity. Exchange of women is not a Boadzi practice. However, sodomy has an important place in their life. The men indulge in it both in the men's house and in the bush. It also has a function in the *gomai*-ritual. The *faroch*, the *boka faroch*, the arrows, etc. must be rubbed with sperma obtained through homosexual intercourse and collected in bamboo tubes. We do not know whether the initiation into the *gomai*-rites has any specific connection with sodomy,⁸⁷ but the relatively advanced age of the neophytes does not make such a connection probable. Speculations upon the system of classificatory concepts underlying the Boadzi ritual would lead us too far afield. We should then have to go into such problems as the place of the bullroarer in Boadzi thought. The association of so eminently phallic an object with a female deity is surprising and raises many questions, the more so because the fish-shape of the *faroch* creates the impression that *faroch* and bullroarer are not wholly unconnected. Equally controversial is the result when we inventory the cosmic associations attributable to the two deities. It gives rise to the surmise that the *atu* might be associated with the sun, and the *faroch* (perhaps!) with the moon, a classification of the cosmic powers parallel to that existing among the Keraki, where the Originator is the moon who chases his wife, the sun. However, any suggestion to this effect is flatly contradicted by the myth of *Nggivē* as related in Chapter II.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 17. The connection with headhunting is explicitly confirmed by De Zoete, Nota p. 12.

⁸⁷ Verschueren, l.c.

⁸⁸ Above, p. 106.

Insufficient as our present knowledge of Boadzi language and mythology is, any analysis of this kind must necessarily end in speculation, and we have to content ourselves with the study of such aspects of the ritual as offer clear points of comparison with the cult of the upper Bian people.

One of these points is headhunting. The symbolic identity of coconut and human head is as important among the Boadzi as it is among the Marind. The Boadzi have the coconut symbol applied in a most expressive form in the context of the notion that life springs from death. The nut is buried in the huge mound of leaves in which the scrub-hen buries its eggs to be hatched by the heat produced by the putrefaction of the leaves. It may be significant that among the Marind — who do not associate the coconut with the scrub-hen — the latter is a totem of the *Basik-Basik*, the headhunters' clan.^{88a} Since headhunting is the subject of the next chapter, we shall refrain from discussing the topic here, the more so because there is little which is really specific in the fact that the rituals of the Boadzi and the upper Bian Marind both have a bearing on headhunting. Other rituals, too, have an immediate connection with warfare and headhunting.

A more rewarding task is to compare the roles of the women in the ritual. Though in both cases they are excluded from the circle of functionaries proper, there are significant differences between the *ézam*- and the *gomai*-rites. In the former, women have a more important function than in the latter. Their co-operation is needed in the sexual rites of the *ézam*, while in those of the *gomai* they are neither needed nor wanted. On the level of the supernatural a comparable difference may be observed. Although in the *ézam* the woman is the inferior of the man (alternately called *Babé* and *ézam*), as husband and wife they are on the same level and they share the same fate. The difference between their respective positions is of the same order as that between host and guest. The *ézam* belongs to the host-, the *uzum* to the guest moiety. We note that the moieties are not associated with either of the two deities in particular; the connection varies with the assignment of the host-function. The deities stand apart from the cosmic associations of the moieties. They compare with *Dinadin* and *Nubog* of coastal mythology, though there is this difference that *Dinadin* and *Nubog* have an epistemological and not a ritual function, whereas with *Ezam* and *Uzum* the ritual function predominates. There are no indications

^{88a} Ibid. pp. 400, 423.

that they have an epistemological (cosmological) function as well. There is no myth about *Esam* and *Uzum*,⁸⁹ the myth dealing with the ritual being concerned only with *Ndirwa*, the originator of the rites, who has much in common with the Boadzi originator, *Nggiwvë*.

With the Boadzi the main personages of the ritual are again man and woman, but they are no longer on the same level as husband and wife, nor are they associated with one or the other of the moieties, whether alternately or permanently. On the contrary, the man is supreme, there hovers about him a vague air of superiority and unattainability. Inasmuch as he can be said to be the object of the rites, he is an object of veneration. With the woman, it is different. Being identical with the two coconuts, the *boka faroch*, she is associated, through the two nuts, with both moieties indiscriminately. Nothing happens to the man, but the old woman is killed in the guise of the two coconuts, and afterwards buried with due respect. Whereas the man is inassailable and immortal, the woman is a symbol of mortality. It is not without reason that Verschueren calls the male deity of the *gomai*-ritual a Supreme Being.⁹⁰ Although I do not care to subscribe to a term so heavily laden with theoretical implications, there is no doubt that the being of the *faroch* and, up to an extent, the *atu* following in his wake, stand for all that is sacred, mysterious and powerful among the Boadzi. Obviously, the same may be said of *Esam* (*Babé*) and *Uzum*. They have neither human progeny nor clear, human traits. They are the incarnation of supernatural mystery, describable only in the vaguest of terms as Man and Wife. There is a slight tendency among the upper Bian people towards developing notions similar to the Boadzi. The man has two forms, *Esam* and *Babé*, Husband and Grandfather, the Woman only one, viz. *Uzum*, Wife. In another respect, too, there is a certain degree of coalescence. The bullroarer, among the eastern coastal Marind the voice of *Sosom*, the man, among the Boadzi that of the *atu*, the old woman, is the voice of both *Esam* and *Uzum* among the upper Bian Marind.⁹¹ Here the mysterious voice of the cult

⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 586 f.

⁹⁰ Verschueren, Indonesië I p. 466 note 15.

⁹¹ Among the Keraki the bamboo pipes (*ari*) are called the wife and the daughter of the bullroarer (*moiank*). Collectively, the bamboo pipes are called *Ause*, old woman (Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 186 and 198). The name *Ause* is very near to *aut*, the Boadzi term for bullroarer. It is suggested that the terms used for various cult instruments have been affected by intertribal contacts. The term *ari* is another example; it reminds us of the Marind-anim term *arih*, the fertility dance and ceremony.

instrument is the mysterious voice of the divine in its every aspect: man, woman and child, and, of course, not their real voice but the symbol of their mysterious and uncanny power.

An even more intriguing symbol of the deity is the coconut shaped in the form of a human head, in the case of the upper Bian Marind representing the male deity as well as the female, in that of the Boadzi only the old woman. It is a curious fact in itself that in both areas, upper Bian and middle Fly, such a high value is set upon the coconut, which is relatively scarce in these areas. Further away from the coast the coconut grows less plentifully; the nuts are smaller and the trees are fewer, far fewer in number than along the coast. The role the coconut plays in daily life on the coast is considerably more important. The nutritionist Luyken found that along the coast five times as many coconuts are used for daily consumption as on the upper Bian.⁹² Taking into account that the coastal nuts are bigger than those in the interior, the coconut as a nutriment is at least 7 times as important in the coastal villages as in the upper Bian district (or the middle Fly). Yet, in spite of its relatively small economic importance and in disregard of the fact that the tree is primarily a coast-dweller, these inland peoples have chosen the coconut to symbolize the beings whose ritual death is associated with ideas of fertility, health and success in warfare and headhunting.

The preference for this symbol can hardly be explained from local conditions. Rather would it be the result of notions that have become general throughout the area through intertribal contact. Along the coast the coconut is a symbol of human life.⁹³ The coconut originated from a cut-off head, viz. *Yawi's*, whose death was decisive for the fate of mankind. Had *Aramemb* arrived timely enough to administer to *Yawi* the medicine he had prepared, *Yawi* and all mankind would have attained immortality.⁹⁴ The sun, too, is a cut-off head.⁹⁵ It is nowhere stated that to the Keraki the coconut is of comparable importance, but it certainly is so to the Wiram, who live in the lower middle Fly area. They are the southeastern neighbours of the Boadzi people, whose friends and allies they are.⁹⁶ A myth of the Wiram people related by

⁹² Cf. the detailed table in Rep. Depop. Team, Annex II p. 31.

⁹³ Cf. above, p. 461.

⁹⁴ Ibid. pp. 249, 251.

⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 224 ff.

⁹⁶ Cf. Williams, Trans-Fly p. 386; the Everill Junction natives here mentioned belong to the Boadzi.

Williams⁹⁷ makes it perfectly evident that the coconut plays a leading part in local religious thought. *Sami* and *Gwavi* were making an enormous tree into a dug-out. Their dog ran off to the territory of the Wemkungiu people. Williams notes that the Wemkungiu were the traditional enemies, or rather the victims, of the Wiram and that they have long since fled from their original home. His informants added that they were 'bad' or ugly people, with crooked limbs. The dog leapt onto the shoulders of one of the Wemkungiu men, bit off his head and made off with it. When he came home, he buried the head in the mound of a scrub-hen. Then the dog went to *Sami*, his master. *Sami*, startled at the sight of the blood dripping from the dog's muzzle, attempted to chase him away, but he was not to be denied. The dog procured a bamboo knife from *Sami's* bag and placed it on his knee. The dog meant to convey to *Sami* that he must use the knife for skinning the head preparatory to stuffing it, but the hint was lost on *Sami*. Meanwhile from the buried head a coconut had sprouted. Presently, there stood on the spot a palm laden with nuts. The fallen nuts had sprouted already when the dog found them. Then he brought one of the nuts to his master, signifying to him how to open it with a bone dagger, how to drink the milk and eat the meat. *Sami* and *Gwavi* now fell to work again, but after some time an accident happened. The stone head of *Sami's* axe flew off the shaft and struck *Gwavi* between the legs, cutting off his penis and penetrating into his body. *Gwavi* became the first woman and *Sami* resumed his task [note the reversal of the functions of *Geb* and *Sami* in the interior! v. B.]. Eventually, the time had arrived when the canoe had to be turned upside down in order to dress the wood on the other side. Unable to handle the heavy dug-out alone, *Sami* cried in despair 'Alas, for men to help me'. "As he said this, all the sprouting coconuts gave a shout and turned into human beings. The place was suddenly full of them, men, women, and children, who discovered that they were fathers and mothers, wives and children, brothers-in-law, and so on, to one another". The story goes on to relate how the canoe was finished and how in the end it disappeared, taking *Sami*, *Gwavi*, the dog and a number of people up into the sky. Invisibly, the canoe stretches across the heavens, reaching from east to west.

There can be no doubt that the story here related is an important myth to the Wiram. Its specific interest in this context lies in the renewed appearance of the association coconut - human head -

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 387 ff. and above, p. 430.

headhunting, here thrown into sharper relief by the fact that all the sprouting coconuts change into men, women and children. Right at the outset, however, a human head had to be buried. We note that it was buried in a scrub-hen's nest-mound; and this is what the burial-place of the remains of the *atu*, the woman killed in the guise of a coconut, was made to resemble by the *Boadzi*. Verschueren pointed out to me that the motif of a coconut sprouting from a human head is not unknown in Boadzi mythology either. In his letters he recorded two of such myths, one in which coconuts acted like men, and another in which a coconut tree grows from a human body.⁹⁸ At the same time he reminded me of the story of a coconut turning into a human head as it was told by Hides' informant from Lake Murray.⁹⁹ Earlier, we encountered the same motif in the myth of *Yawi*. It is a specific form of a fairly widely spread motif according to which various crops derive their origin from the buried remains of a mythical being. Marind-anim mythology presents this motif in various forms. In the myths of *Yawi*, *Sapai* and *Mongumer-anem* trees are said to have grown from the buried remains; other *déma* just changed into a certain plant or reed, e.g. *Alisan* when she was thrust into the swamp by *Harau*, or *Yagil's* mother when she wished to protect him.¹⁰⁰ In a myth of the Kiwai and the Western Islanders of the Torres Straits all crops come forth from the dead body of *Soido's* first wife.¹⁰¹ It is well known that when Dr. Jensen came across similar conceptions in Seran in the Indonesian province of the Moluccas, these inspired him to his theory of *déma*-concepts, which he set out more elaborately in his book *Mythos und Kult*. It would be out of context to go beyond the statement that I have my objections against this theory; what is important is that in the case of the coconut the more general notion that crops originate from the corpse of a mythical being has been given a very specific form, which culminates in the symbolism of the human head. With this in mind, we have to return to the subject of this section, the cult of the upper Bian people.

The Wiram myth suits the upper Bian ritual almost perfectly; the interrelationship of human head, headhunting, coconut and the origin of man is well elaborated in the story. Yet, a Wiram myth is not an

⁹⁸ Verschueren, Letters XI pp. 36 add. and 18. The text of the two stories is related on pp. 729 f. below.

⁹⁹ Hides, *Papuan Wonderland* pp. 34 f.

¹⁰⁰ Above, pp. 250, 295, 378, 279 and 294 f.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Landtman, *Folktales* nr. 44 and its numerous alternative readings.

upper Bian myth. We are up to the fact that we do not know of an upper Bian myth of this kind. Though this need by no means imply that such a myth does not exist, we cannot simply assume that it does and start our discussion from this loose premise. What we know for certain is that there is much stress on the symbolism implied in the identity of coconut and human head and on the idea that life springs from death just as the tree sprouts from the grave — that there is a firm belief that headhunting is a commendable practice and that life is promoted by the application of sperma resulting from promiscuous copulating. We do not know to what extent these ideas are consciously conceptualized. We know very little of upper Bian mythology and of the prevailing concepts of life and death. We can only state that the notions just mentioned appear to be the leading ideas in their most important ritual, in which the essence of life is presented in the form of husband and wife who are going to die and then to bear fruit.

We are tempted here to indulge in theoretical speculation. *Esam* and *Usam*, present in the form of two smashed-up coconuts, are eaten by the community of the males. This presents a most attractive case of communion in which the deity is eaten by the faithful. Should not we agree that Robertson Smith was right when he stated that eating the godhead is the fundamental form of sacrifice? I think not. The data available do not allow of such far-reaching conclusions. It is true that the sacrificed 'gods', the coconuts, are eaten, both here and among the Boadzi. But the same happens to the victim of a headhunting party. Among the Boadzi it is the flesh of head, arms and legs which is eaten, among the (coastal) Marind usually only the fleshy parts of the head, but sometimes also the arms and the legs.¹⁰² Eating the coconut need not be more than a reference to the custom of eating some juicy parts of the cut-off head. Eating the godhead is a theoretical concept. What the upper Bian people do is actualizing a situation in which they give expression to their fundamental belief in the efficacy of copulating and sperma, the belief that the buried coconut breeds a new tree and that headhunting is a good thing. Underneath lies a symbolism which, when formulated in conceptual form, might lose its efficacy because it would be thrown open to criticism. The tense atmosphere of the ritual does not promote clear thinking. Wirz was acutely sensitive to the undertone of restrained excitement and vague apprehension which made the atmosphere heavy with suspense. It is this very expression of a vague

¹⁰² De Zoete, Nota p. 14; cf. also below, p. 746.

something, the vague something which is the essence of apprehension, that I was listening to that night when, round a blazing campfire, they were passionately arguing that the ritual had to be celebrated because so many people had died, because they were afraid. The deities venerated in the rites are as vague and undefinable as apprehension itself, in which life and death are closely intermingled. The ritual brings life, but a life-bringing ritual may be intimately associated with death. The old couple who are the leaders of the life-bringing *moguru* ceremony of the Kiwai islanders must die when the ceremonies are completed. They are not killed. They just die. They are felt to have spent all their energy, and the life of the community is paid for by their death.¹⁰³ Life and death are interrelated.

The case of the Kiwai *moguru* ceremony is instructive. Sexual promiscuity is the main constituent of the rites. The semen and excretion from the vulvae of the women are stored in a receptacle and afterwards applied to the sago palms, the main crop of the Kiwai. The old couple are the first to copulate and the medicine applied to the plants is, essentially, their medicine. Some time after the ceremony they will proceed to the sago groves and cut down one of the palms which has been treated with the life-giving medicine of the *moguru* ceremony. After having struck a few blows at the tree, they will smear their faces with mud and wail: "Tree fall down — two fellow go fall down; that's why two fellow he cry". The people explained to Landtman: "he been make that thing for sago tree: he die along that sago tree". The parallel with the upper Bian situation is striking. Here it is not an old couple who die, but the two coconuts, *Babé* and his wife, and they die in copulation, allegedly (symbolically) under a tree. That is the story as told to the uninitiated, and there is every reason to accept that it holds the esoteric truth. We are confronted with the following facts:

1. the powers of life are presented in the guise of two coconuts;
2. they are husband and wife and they have to copulate;
3. they must die in copulation;
4. their death brings life and regeneration.

The conceptualization of the ritual process is as hazy as its mythical personification is vague. Yet, the underlying ideas are clear and the symbolism is persuasive. On the one hand, there is the notion that the coconut is a human head and that new life sprouts from the old

¹⁰³ Landtman, *Kiwai Papuans* Ch. XXIV.

nut. On the other, it is conceived that all life is procreated by copulation. The two symbols are combined and the ensuing headhunt provides the proof. To set the stage, people are prepared to sacrifice a considerable amount of time. Constructing the clumsy contraption requiring the two trees must be a strenuous job, but they think it worth while, apparently because they wish to give substance to the fable that a young man and a young woman are killed in copulation. The two *uk* are brought down at the moment that the coconut is crushed. The illusion that a human pair is crushed is approximated as closely as possible. Crushing the coconut is altogether too simple; an integral element is the accompaniment of a thundering noise. After all, the coconut stands for so much more than a simple nut.

Of course, this does not explain everything. The ceremonial function of the three fires is, at best, only partly elucidated. The meaning of the *uk*, in spite of its more obvious function, remains enigmatic. In his description of the *imo* ceremony at Wayau Boelaars makes mention of a *déma Uk*. Unfortunately, the *déma*'s identity is highly debatable; we have no certainty whatsoever that the *déma* is really a mythical personage. He might even be an *ad hoc* creation, conceived to provide a more acceptable entourage for an *imo* celebration on the occasion of a Bishop's visitation.¹⁰⁴ It is impossible to give an explanation of all the various aspects of the upper Bian ritual. We have to content ourselves with an exposition of the main features of its crude and direct symbolism.

4. THE IMO-RITES: A COLLECTION OF MISCELLANEOUS DATA

The *imo*-rites were veiled in a strict and jealously guarded secrecy. No stranger ever had a chance to catch more than a glimpse of the performance of their secret ceremonies. The *Imo-Marind* were held in awe; nothing definite was known of their ceremonies, though various vague rumours were circulating which added to the fear they inspired.¹⁰⁵ "The *imo* feel themselves the superiors of the other coastal people who follow the *mayo*-cult", writes Gooszen. "A number of men from Sangasé, who had been arrested for headhunting, were locked in the jail at Merauke, where they were stripped of their ornaments and headgear, after which they were made to put on convicts' clothes. The oldest felt deeply humiliated and asked how they could possibly do

¹⁰⁴ Below, pp. 615 f.

¹⁰⁶ Van de Kolk, Oermenschen pp. 42 and 89 ff.

this to *imo* people".¹⁰⁶ Vertenten contrasts the *imo* people with the *mayo*. "The *mayo* people are more exuberant and jovial than the *imo*. The latter are more reserved, they are austere and haughty and have a reputation for cruelty. A *mayo* performance is a feast of sound and colour. The *imo* people are both sombre and gloomy; we might call them the black pack". He also speaks of them as the proud *imo*.¹⁰⁷ Wirz emphasizes the awe in which the *imo-anim* are held all along the coast. "The uninitiated, and particularly the neighbouring *mayo* people of the coast, are full of fear and awe because of the magic of the *imo* people, and they particularly dread everything connected with their secret cult. As a consequence, sickness and other calamitous events, e.g. floods, tempests, earthquakes and epidemics, are, then as now, attributed to the *imo-déma*".¹⁰⁸ We recall that, in myth, the *imo* people are described as the descendants of those who arrived in their present villages by night and henceforward have been *hap-rek*, i.e. of the night, painting themselves black when they have a ceremony.¹⁰⁹ The solid black of the paint, relieved only by a few touches of bright red, the less exuberant ornamentation and the solemn demeanour of *imo* people who are celebrating a ceremony, have been noted by all who watched them when they performed a public ceremony such as a mortuary rite, the procession at the close of the *bangu* ceremony, or the various dances which are part of a big feast. In contrast to the *mayo*, the *déma-wir* of the *imo* are limited in scope and in the number of participants. Best known are the *déma*-performances accompanying mortuary rites, which resemble those of the *mayo*. Besides these, there are few other occasions for *déma-wir*, while the number of performers is relatively small. The lavish ceremonies of the *Mayo-Marind*, who will stage one myth after another in an endless display of beautifully decorated performers bearing huge ornaments, are not unknown among the *imo*, but never will they attain such magnificence. Their dances, such as the *uar-ti-zi*, even though impressive and colourful, are less resplendent, less calculated to produce effect than the *waiko-zi* of the *Mayo-Marind*.¹¹⁰ Partly, the difference is a regional one; the ornamentation east of the Kumbe is, in general, richer, more ornate than west of the river, but even there the ornamentation of the *Mayo-Marind* is more varied and

¹⁰⁶ Gooszen, BKI 1914 p. 368.

¹⁰⁷ Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 67 and 65.

¹⁰⁸ Wirz, M.A. III p. 26.

¹⁰⁹ Above, p. 211.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 47 f., 29 ff.

the performances of *déma*-representations are more frequent than among the *Imo*-Marind.

The reticence of the *imo* people, their attitude of reserve and austerity, the fear inspired by the associations of their ritual with the powers of darkness and their reputation of being fierce headhunters, quick to take revenge,¹¹¹ all contributed to preserving the secret character of their ceremonies. It is only in recent years that, thanks to the tireless efforts of F. Verschueren, more has become known about the ceremonies. The earlier results of his investigations were published in his article on human sacrifice in the first volume of *Indonesië*; research carried out in 1955 was written up in an unpublished report — to be quoted as *Imo-Report* — which he kindly put at my disposal, annotating it in his letters. Apart from Verschueren's contributions, we find in Boelaars' book 'Nieuw-Guinea' a few notes on an *imo* celebration performed in 1952 as an *imo* contribution to the movement in favour of public celebrations which swept the Merauke district in that year. True to their traditional attitude, the *imo* people carefully avoided to reveal any of their more substantial secrets.¹¹² The stories told and the few paraphernalia shown to Boelaars contribute little to a better understanding of the real meaning of the rites. The latest publication on the *imo* ceremonies is Jufuway's article in *NGS* 1960. It throws hardly any new light on the *imo* as such, because it deals mainly with that section of the upper Bian people who adapted their own ritual to that of the *imo*. Earlier data on the *imo*-rites are incidental and incoherent; isolated observations are found scattered throughout the publications of Gooszen, Viegen, Vertenten, Van de Kolk and Geurtjens. Wirz gives a more comprehensive account, but admits that most of his knowledge is based on rumours which could not be verified.¹¹³ As usual, the paucity of his data could not prevent him from making suggestions with regard to the cannibalism which he and, in the case of the *imo*, all earlier observers considered to be the core of the ritual.

The centre of the *imo*-cult is the big coastal village of Sangasé. East of Sangasé coastal villages following the *imo*-cult are Domandé and part of Onggari.¹¹⁴ West of Sangasé Alatep is *imo*, and likewise the greater part of the people of Alaku and Méwi. Farther west, Okaba

¹¹¹ Cf. i.a. Gooszen, l.c.

¹¹² Verschueren, *Imo-Report* p. 10.

¹¹³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 26.

¹¹⁴ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 64; according to Heldring (*TBG* 1913 p. 463) the whole village is *imo*.

has only a few adherents of the *imo*, but in Makalin there is quite a number of them. The big eastern part of the village is predominantly *imo*. West of Makalin, the *imo*-cult has very few followers, although in most villages one or two adepts may be found.¹¹⁵ The *imo*-cult dominates in the interior. There are only two villages in the hinterland of Okaba which are reported to follow the *mayo*, viz. Yawimu and Yomob.¹¹⁶ With the exception of Yawimu, all the villages between Buraka and Bian belong to the *imo*. Participation in the cult extends as far as Imahui and two of the southwestern upper Bian villages, Boha and Salau. The association of the two upper Bian villages with the *imo* is said to be a comparatively recent one. According to Jufuway they joined it some 15 or 20 years ago, i.e. between 1938 and 1943.¹¹⁷

In the hinterland east of the Bian the Dimar-zé and Ahiv-zé (now in Senégi) are *imo* and so, probably, were the Adga-zé-anim (now in Wayau).¹¹⁸ In recent years *imo* influences infiltrated into Wayau, Koa and Kaisa, three Kumbé villages where new converts were made. They first penetrated into Koa and Kaisa, two villages maintaining close relations with the southern upper Bian settlements. Adepts were won there well before 1951, when the men of Senégi made a first effort to make converts at Wayau.¹¹⁹ The recent expansion of the cult should be seen as a revivalist movement; it makes part of the same movement which promoted the public celebration of secret rites such as the performance of the *sosom*-rites at Wendu, of the upper Bian cult at Mandom and of the *imo* at Wayau (in co-operation with Senégi), all in 1952. The alleged wish to stage a public farewell to old-time ceremonial too evidently bespoke a profound attachment to the old ritual for us to give much credit to the suggestion that a farewell was what was really meant. It may have been so in Bosset in 1946, but in the later stages of its development we had better view it as a well-considered effort to gain official support for a modified and partly modernized type of celebration. It is difficult to believe that the inroads

¹¹⁵ Wirz, op. cit. p. 30.

¹¹⁶ See above, p. 498.

¹¹⁷ Jufuway, NGS 1960 p. 189.

¹¹⁸ Verschuieren, Letters XI p. 20. Wirz (M.A. III p. 31) also includes Kaliki (erroneously identified with the Gavur-anim) among the *imo*, but they are *mayo*. The Adga-zé originally joined the Dimar-zé and Ahiv-zé. At the time the Kumbé valley was brought under control they settled at Wayau. They formed a diminutive group, numbering not more than two men among the adults. One of these was not yet married and he was never initiated; the other was an elderly initiate, who later moved to Koa.

¹¹⁹ Verschuieren, *Imo*-Report p. 11.

made by the *imo*-cult in the Kumbe valley during the years between 1951 and 1955 is a wholly independent phenomenon. In these backward areas, in which the upper Bian must be included, a revivalist movement is anything but improbable.

In the recent expansion of the cult only one of the *imo*-rites was included. The new adepts were not initiated into all of the cult's old-time secrets; rarely did a village as a whole associate itself with the ceremonies. In its recent ascendancy the cult may be defined as a sect. The same term has been used by early authors on the *imo*. The question may be raised whether the use of the term is correct. In all probability the cult is, in origin at least, a tribal ritual, as is corroborated by the fact that the Sangasé people (among whom those of Alatep should be included) speak the same dialect as the inhabitants of the Okaba hinterland. They, at least, may be considered to be a tribe. However, the other coastal villages which follow the *imo*-cult speak another dialect. In several villages only part of the people join the *imo*-cult, while others belong to the *mayo*. Here, indeed, the cult has no longer the form of a tribal cult, but of a sect or church. It is impossible to assess to what extent migrations of individuals and small groups may have contributed to the spread of the *imo* along the coast. We know of one such case, that of the *imo* people of Gelib, who belong to the *Walinau-zé*, a *Geb-zé-ha* subclan. They pretend to originate from Walinau, a mythical island in the Bian mouth, which has been washed away by the sea. The Walinau people were *imo* and they spread in every direction, inter alia to Gelib.¹²⁰ Another argument in favour of migration as an explanation of the diffusion of the cult is forwarded by Verschueren. At Kumbe there were a few adepts of the *sosom*-cult. They were born in villages in the *sosom* area and settled at Kumbe later on.¹²¹ Accidental developments of this kind may explain the irregular spread of the *imo*-cult along the western part of the coast, where most villages number among their members a few individuals who follow the *imo*-cult. It does not explain the adherence to the *imo* of the whole of Domandé and the greater part of Onggari. We conclude that in the present situation the cult is both a tribal cult and a secret sect which any man may join who is prepared to stand by the rules.

As a sect, the cult involves a better developed form of intergroup relations than is the case with the *mayo*- and the *sosom*-cults. The

¹²⁰ Ibid., Letters VII p. 5 and XI p. 20.

¹²¹ Ibid. XI p. 20.

ceremonies of the latter two are celebrated by each village separately, whereas the *imo* celebrations are more centralized. The question as to what this centralization implies, gives rise to controversy. Verschueren holds the view that, in theory at least, all celebrations have to take place in the *imo-miráv* at Sangasé. He adds that in living memory no ceremonies of this kind, attended by initiates from all the villages where *imo* people are settled, have taken place at Sangasé, because long ago the inland villages began to stage separate celebrations of their own, preferably at Senégi and Imahui.¹²² He suggests that these separate celebrations present a recent development, consequent upon government interference round about 1912. It hardly seems plausible. If it is true that all ceremonies had to be celebrated at the *imo* ceremonial centre of Owi near Sangasé, the village must have been terribly overcrowded every time the initiates convened for a ceremony. Factual evidence, too, tends to disprove the supposition. Vertenten, commenting on a ceremony celebrated at Sangasé in 1912, describes the procession which at the close of the ceremonies went from Sangasé westward to bring the *tik-déma*, the *déma* of sickness, to the Koloï river, the creek just west of Okaba. Solemnly the long procession, in which hundreds of men walked in single file, passed through Okaba on its way to the creek. Here most of them washed their feet and then turned back, but the Makalin people crossed the river and proceeded westward to their village "on the border of the *imo*, on the coast, where cult-members from the interior were to take over their task and lead the *déma* further on, far away, well across the border of Marind-anim territory".¹²³ Evidently the coastal *imo* people, as far as they lived west of Sangasé, had indeed come to Sangasé for the ceremony, whereas the inland people — at least, part of them — stayed at home, waiting for those of Makalin to return. Apparently they had to continue the celebration in their own village or villages; we are reminded of the procedure followed in the *sosom*-cult, where the onus of the celebration is passed on from one village to the next. We have no information on these inland performances, but the procedure as depicted by Vertenten is presented as an established practice. We must add, however, that Vertenten's account is not fully confirmed by Van de Kolk, who gave a description of the same event. At the time they were both stationed at Okaba, where they witnessed the procession passing through. Van de Kolk writes that while the celebration was still several days off,

¹²² *Ibid.*, Indonesië I p. 459.

¹²³ Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 67 f.

imo people from other villages, even from villages far inland, were already setting out for the feast.¹²⁴

Another indication that the *imo* people used to perform ceremonies in their own villages is given by Viegen. He informs us that the *imo* venerate an old woman, a *mes-ivag*, in a sacred house. In Alaku he came across such a place. All the boys left him when he came near the house, where he saw nothing special. At Sangasé he paid a visit to the *déma*-house of that village; an old man accompanied him, but again he saw nothing extraordinary. It was a common men's house, well-nigh empty, and it had its entrance not in the front, as is usual, but halfway down the long side-wall. He recalls that at Domandé he had seen a similar house; here the people had gently led him away from it. On the same trip, when crossing the Elam creek (west of Onggari),¹²⁵ he came upon a coconut grove which he found to enclose a broad, clean lawn. Painted bamboos and leaf-ornaments attested that the broad lawn formed the festive grounds of the *imo*. Since it took some twenty minutes to cross the lawn, it must have served for a really big celebration.¹²⁶

We may conclude that, apart from the mortuary rites which are local by nature, the *imo* had their own local celebrations, and that, next to these, there were celebrations at which people from several villages gathered. This situation prevailed well before any government interference had taken place.

This does not imply that there was not a considerable degree of co-operation and co-ordination between the different groups. It is evident that Verschueren's informants repeatedly emphasized the importance of Sangasé as a centre and of the cult leaders of Sangasé as the leading men in the whole area. As the initiation into the cult comprises various phases, it is quite well possible and even probable that the last initiation really had to take place at Owi near Sangasé.

The problem as to the nature and extent of the centralization of *imo* celebrations has been the subject of an elaborate correspondence with Verschueren, which led us to conclude that, apart from the mortuary rites, it is primarily the *aili* ceremonies which have of old been celebrated locally, and this still holds. The *aili* ceremonies are the least secret rites of the *imo*. It is this ritual which was the first (and, as far as we

¹²⁴ Van de Kolk, Oermenschen p. 89.

¹²⁵ Cf. Nollen's description of the same trip in Ann. 1910 p. 358.

¹²⁶ Viegen, TAG 1911 pp. 115 f.

know, the only one) to be exported. It has been adopted by the villages of the southern upper Bian and it spread through the Kumbe valley in recent years. Yet, even these local rites could not be celebrated without previous consultation of the *imo* leader at Alatep (near Sangasé). "I know", writes Verschueren, "from various informants who took part in the *aili* ceremonies on the upper Bian that they were not only obliged to ask for permission to celebrate, but even the day of the celebration was fixed for them by the general leader. After the celebration. . . . the local leader had to report in person to the general leader at Alatep. Once, without being aware of the object of his visit, I took such a local leader in my own canoe to the coast. . . ." ¹²⁷ The *Imo*-Report, too, gives evidence that Verschueren's informants strongly emphasized the importance of Sangasé (Owi) as the cult-centre, and of the cult leaders of Sangasé and Alatep as the leading men of the whole *imo* area.¹²⁸ As regards other rites next to the *aili* and the *imo* mortuary rites, that is, the *bangu* and the two initiation rites described later in this chapter, it is probable that the initiation rites always had to be celebrated at Owi near Sangasé. To a lesser extent the same holds true of the *bangu*. However, in recent years even some of the initiation ceremonies may have taken place at Senégi, a village so thoroughly isolated as to afford perfect protection against foreign intervention.¹²⁹

A corroboration of the supervisory function exercised by the *imo* leaders at Sangasé and Alatep may be inferred from Jufuway's account. His upper Bian informants told him that two men of Okaba have been assigned the task of reporting to the medicine-men of Senégi and Kaliki every violation of the *imo* secret which comes to their knowledge. Senégi and Kaliki then contact the *imo* of Domandé, who, in turn, take counsel with the Kumbe valley *imo*.¹³⁰ The picture as given by Jufuway is a very defective one on account of his complete ignorance of the Marind-anim social and religious system. Kaliki is a *mayo* village and could not have had anything to do with the whole story. Okaba has only few *imo* people and they could not have such an important function either. The truth is that every irregularity in connection with the celebrations must be reported by the local leader to Amalo, the general leader at Alatep. If cult-members have to be punished, e.g.

¹²⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 21.

¹²⁸ Ibid., *Imo*-Report pp. 2 and 7.

¹²⁹ Ibid., Letters XI pp. 20 f.; below, p. 646.

¹³⁰ Jufuway, NGS 1960 p. 307.

because they gave away the secrets of the rites, one of the local leaders is appointed by Amalo to act as an avenger. It is this appointee who gathers the necessary medicine-men to stage a *yémessav bombari*, a rite of lethal sorcery (*kambara*), to kill the culprit.¹³¹ This is exactly what happened in the case which inspired Jufuway to write his article. In the end Verschueren got involved in the affair and his story gives too perfect a picture of the procedure and its potential entanglements not to be recorded here:

"I happen to know that Paku, the *imo* leader of Senégi, received an order from Amalo at Alatep to kill the upper Bian people who had betrayed the *imo* secret. An *imo* initiate from Domandé, Mbirpa, conveyed Amalo's instructions to Paku at Senégi. For Paku to carry out the order was an anything but simple matter, because a couple of policemen from Muting were among the informers who had to be punished. One of them was the son of old Warumai of Koa and it was Warumai whom Paku went to see, not to inform him, but by devious means to extract the necessary information from him. This went awry, because Warumai, who had been initiated into the *ailli* at Boha a few years previously, had himself given away quite a substantial part of the secret, inter alia to the missionary. Warumai took it for granted that it was to get him that Paku had come to Koa. Immediately the lid was off. Warumai is the most important of all living old *pakasanim* of the Kumbe valley and he instantly set the whole valley against Senégi generally and against Paku in particular. A couple of public scuffles followed and the whole affair came to light when, finally, I was called in to act as a peace-maker".¹³²

Notwithstanding the recent increase in our information on the *imo* ceremonies resulting from Verschueren's investigations, our knowledge of the cult is still rather fragmentary. We know of three or four different rites, viz. a rite which is associated with the myth of the *uga*-canoe which for reasons later to be explained we shall call *bangu*,¹³³ a rite called *ailli* (also *alih*, the equivalent of east-marindinese *arih*), and two typical initiation rites. The two initiation rites are interrelated; they represent two successive stages of initiation. These rites were brought into focus by Verschueren, who described them in his *Imo-Report*. The two rites first mentioned also belong together and have an uncertain connection with initiation. We shall deal with them one by one,

¹³¹ Verschueren, *Indonesië* I p. 447 jo. Letters XI p. 20.

¹³² *Ibid.*, Letters I.c.

¹³³ Cf. above, pp. 258 ff. and below, pp. 627 f.

concentrating first on the *bangu*. The *aili* will be described as a separate ceremony. We begin our account of the *bangu* with a survey of all the miscellaneous data which may have a bearing on this specific ceremony, winding up with Verschueren's more detailed description. We shall find that even this description, although it solves many problems, is not quite complete and leaves a number of questions unanswered.

In one way or another the rite must be of basic importance to the *imo* people. The main character of the myth is the *mayo-mes-iwag* who ran away and became the *imo-mes-iwag*. Earlier in this book we pointed out that the story as presented does not substantiate the contention that the *mayo-mes-iwag* actually fled; the course of events suggests strongly that she was brought to the spot and given over to the *déma* of Imo to act as *imo-mes-iwag*, the central character of the ritual.¹³⁴ The importance of the *imo-mes-iwag* is beyond doubt. She is already mentioned by Viegen, which was as early as 1911.¹³⁵ Gooszen is even more explicit. As his communications may have a bearing on the rite under discussion, we shall quote him in full: "In a tabooed house an old woman, *mes-iwag* or *anum-anum*, is venerated. She has a bandage wrapped round her forehead, in the manner of people suffering with a head-ache. This *mes-iwag* represents the tribal ancestress. The *imo* ceremonies are celebrated amidst the greatest secrecy, in a clearing in the bush. The pathways leading to the ceremonial grounds are marked by painted axil pieces of coconut-leaves, and by poles decorated with coloured leaves and tassels of young coconut-leaves. The paintings usually represent human beings. The pathways are out of bounds to uninitiated people. Trespassing would result in sickness and death. Coastal people who do not belong to the *imo* sect must avoid meeting the members of the *imo*. By blowing a flute or a conch they inform the adepts of their presence, thus giving them an opportunity to hide away. In the festive grounds there are small huts covered with coconut-leaves, cubicles measuring between 1 and 1½ meters across. We were informed that these huts, which are taboo, are dedicated to the ancestors who first planted the coconut. There are always a few coconuts lying on the ground near these huts. But it is also possible that the 'figuur' [figure? image? the meaning is obscure; v. B.] represents the *mes-iwag*, the tribal ancestress".¹³⁶

We repeat that though Gooszen's description may refer to the *bangu*-

¹³⁴ Above, p. 435.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 609.

¹³⁶ Gooszen, BKI 1914 pp. 367 f.

rite, this cannot be in any way ascertained. What is evident is the predominance of the *mes-ivag*, a feature also emphasized by Wirz. For the rest, the latter's communications on the *imo* ceremonies contain very little factual evidence. He mentions the *déma-hut*, but he has no idea of the procedure followed during the rites. Novices are made to keep a fast, after which they are given a certain plant by way of food. This food is mixed with sperma.¹³⁷ There is singing of *gaga*¹³⁸ and there are rumours that a boy and a girl are subjected to sexual debauchery, after which they are killed by being thrown into a deep pit. Wirz continues: "This seems to corroborate other mystic statements suggesting that the *imo* perform their ceremonies underground, so as to prevent their being observed. Other obscure communications have it that a canoe plays a mysterious part in the ceremonies".¹³⁹ After having commented on the fact that in the language of the Yab-anim, who inhabit the western hinterland, *imo* is the word for canoe, Wirz returns to his main theme, the cannibal meal. A boy and a girl are eaten; the novices must drink the blood of the *ivag*, which is mixed with sperma. The passing round of the beverage is supposed to be announced by the appearance of performers who each have their head covered with one half of the husk of a split coconut, painted in red. From the husk long, black cassowary-plumes, *sobolu*, hang down, covering up the performer's head. The performers are called *sobolu-ti*, those with the cassowary-plumes. The red coconut husk refers to the bowl filled with blood from which the novices must drink.

It is a gruesome story, but for all the firm conviction with which our author presents the atrocities accompanying the endo-cannibalistic repast, there is no dissimulating the extreme paucity of the factual knowledge on which these suppositions are founded. If the fact that a red-painted coconut husk is used as an ornament has to be presented as an indication that novices are given a girl's blood to drink, substantive evidence must be extremely meagre, as, indeed, it is. All the facts mentioned, even if they are combined, fall short of providing only a single clue as to what actually happens. The one thing which is certain is the fact that ever since the time of early contact rumours have been circulating that somebody was buried alive on the occasion of a rite called *bangu*. Van de Kolk gives a romanticized version of the proce-

¹³⁷ Wirz, M.A. III p. 30.

¹³⁸ On *gaga* see above, pp. 508 f.

¹³⁹ Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 28 f.

dure,¹⁴⁰ in which mention is made of a big pit which was dug somewhere in the village, near a big fire. His information is derived from the *imo* celebration at Alatep in 1912, which was attended by *imo* people from other villages, even from far inland.¹⁴¹ He concedes that he does not really know what actually happened, but he has been informed confidentially that something in the way of human sacrifice must have been involved.¹⁴² The ceremony ended with the procession referred to above, which he describes in somewhat greater detail than Vertenten. All the participants proceed in single file, each carrying a spear over his shoulder, except for the leader, who carries a burning, red-painted piece of firewood instead. The fire was called the *déma*-fire of the *imo*. The procession takes place at ebb tide and advances along the beach, where the *mayo* inhabitants of the various villages on the way have made small fires, in which the women and girls burn their old aprons. The procession, when passing the fires, keeps to the landward side, so that all the smoke is wafted towards the processionists, a detail which confirms that the ceremony was held sometime during the east monsoon, as is stated explicitly by Vertenten, who, in his description of the procession, speaks of the annual feast of the *imo* celebrated in the dry season of 1912.¹⁴³

By the time the procession was due, the villages were almost completely deserted. All *mayo* people and all the women and children had to go to the beach, where they cowered behind their fires (which means that they were sitting on the side of the fire which is closest to the sea) 'silently and anxiously' awaiting the passing of the solemn procession on its way to the Koloï creek. "Then in each village the families [probably the wives, v. B.] of the *imo* went up to the leader to kindle a dry coconut husk from the smouldering firebrand he was carrying. This fire had to be kept for the kitchen-fires".¹⁴⁴

Apparently the ceremony is more than simply a rite for dispelling sickness. Nevertheless, Geurtjens defines *bangû*, which is the name given to the ceremony by Van de Kolk and Vertenten, as an "*imo*-rite

¹⁴⁰ Van de Kolk, *Oermenschen* pp. 160 f.

¹⁴¹ Cf. above, p. 609.

¹⁴² Van de Kolk, *op. cit.* p. 89. From the context of the story we infer that his informants were boys who, having been caught in the act of spying on a secret *imo* ceremony, escaped and made off to Okaba, where the missionaries gave them asylum. Of course the information thus obtained was nothing but a faithful rendering of the stories told to the uninitiated.

¹⁴³ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 67.

¹⁴⁴ Van de Kolk, *Oermenschen* p. 90.

for the purpose of averting epidemic disease. The ceremony ends with a solemn procession along the beach".¹⁴⁵

Finally, we must mention here the ceremony Boelaars witnessed at Wayau.¹⁴⁶ Although it was suggested that the performance made part of the *aili*, it has so many elements in common with the rite connected with the *imo*-canoe as described by Verschueren that we had better insert the description here, at the risk of adding to confusion.

On the occasion of the public *imo* ceremony at Wayau, the men of Senégi — who had taught the Wayau people all the things connected with the *imo* — had constructed three portable wooden images, made of light materials. One of these was a canoe, 3½ meters long, decorated with the plumes of birds of paradise. This canoe was called *Imo*. Another image represented a crocodile to which the surprising name of *Kav*, i.e. yam, was given. The third was that of a giant fish with two big tusks. This 'déma' was called *Uk*. The village chief of Senégi told Boelaars that the three images were made for a dance which the people of Domandé, Sangasé, Onggari and Senégi used to perform whenever sickness and death prevailed in the village. He added that the three déma resided in the Bian. At first, only *Imo* was there. At Mayo the people made *Kav* out of stone and sent him to the Bian, where he was to place himself under the orders of *Imo*. *Uk* was made in a place called Kengk and sent to the Bian with similar instructions. *Kav* and *Uk* are at *Imo's* command and when people perform an *aili* ceremony, he dispatches them there to help the people drive away sickness and death.

In the ceremony as performed at Wayau each of the three images was perched on the head of a male dancer wearing a garment of fibre hanging down in loose folds. The bearer of the *imo*-canoe was in the centre, with those carrying *Kav* and *Uk* on either side of him. Surrounded by a dense crowd of dancers, most of whom were keeping behind them, they proceeded slowly to the festive grounds outside the village. Here a few low benches had been arranged in the form of a quadrangle. The image-bearers were admitted inside this square, where they went on dancing for some time. Finally, they put the images down and mixed with the dancers, who slowly returned to the village, where everyone threw his personal ornaments into a big fire which had been lit at the other end of the village.

¹⁴⁵ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *bangoe*.

¹⁴⁶ Boelaars, Nieuw-Guinea pp. 77 ff.

Neither the myth nor the procedure followed in the dance as here described create the impression of being authentic. From a formal point of view the combination of *kav* (yam) and crocodile is, to say the least, surprising, because the yam is a totem of the phratry of *Aramemb* and the crocodile of the *Bragai-sé*.¹⁴⁷ The existence of beings sent out to help the people chase the demons of sickness and death refers to a pattern of thought we have not hitherto met in Marind-anim mythology. The procedure followed at Wayau reminds us of the one followed on the occasion of a *tik-bombari*: the *déma* of sickness leap into the river, where they leave their garments and ornaments; a meaningful gesture, because with the ornaments all that makes the *déma* is left in the river.¹⁴⁸ Here, however, the *déma* whose symbols are left behind are not *déma* of sickness, but tutelary ones, and the method of just leaving the paraphernalia on the festive grounds instead of stowing them away or destroying them is, to say the least, unusual. It is anything but surprising that the *Imo*-Report states that, according to the unanimous testimony of informants, the images of *imo*, *uk* and *kav* have no deeper meaning. "It is true that in the past such ornaments have sometimes been prepared for festive occasions, but they are not associated with any special rite. Those used at Wayau were made to camouflage the true contents of the *imo*-rites. Such at least was the effect of the relevant communications".¹⁴⁹

5. THE EPISODE OF THE IMO-CANOE AS DESCRIBED BY VERSCHUEREN

Having completed the survey of the miscellaneous data which may have a bearing on the rite connected with the myth of the *uga*-canoe, the *bangu*, we may at last turn to the more comprehensive description given by Verschueren in his article on human sacrifice.¹⁵⁰ We render it here in a revised form, conforming to instructions given in his letters, because later information made a few amendments necessary.¹⁵¹ Though the data collected by Verschueren have been gathered mainly at Senégi,

¹⁴⁷ Verschueren informs me that the artist who was responsible for the making of the three wooden images in question was not a well-balanced person. Other images of *déma Kav* made at his request differed profoundly from the one described by Boelaars. Letters XI pp. 21 f.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. below, pp. 637 f.

¹⁴⁹ Verschueren, *Imo*-Report p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ Indonesië I pp. 457 ff.

¹⁵¹ Verschueren, Letters II p. 4, VII p. 3, XI pp. 22 ff.

inland of Domandé, we may be sure that they apply to the coastal *imo* as well; the prevailing centralization of the *imo*-cult necessarily entails a fair amount of uniformity.

The celebration takes place toward the end of the dry season. First of all, the ceremonial grounds, the *imo-miráv*, are prepared. The *miráv* has to be situated in the coconut gardens. If the place is far from the village, a big feast-house is built to accommodate the participants. Such a house was built on the occasion of the secret *imo* celebration of 1937, which took place in the unfrequented area between Domandé and Senéji, some five hours' walk from Domandé. The house stands apart from the *imo-miráv*, which is an open space enclosed by a high fence of coconut-leaves. Inside the *miráv* two small huts are constructed, the *imo-aha*, *imo*-huts, where the *imo-déma* have their abode. The occupant of one of these huts is a *Kai-zé-déma*, a *miakim*, while in the other there lives a *Mahu-zé-déma*, an *iwag*.

The *imo-miráv* has two entrances. Outside, near each of the two entrances, as well as inside, i.e. within the enclosure, along the two sides, low sheds are constructed. In the centre a big round hole is dug, some 2 to 3 meters in diameter and about 1½ meters in depth. Round this pit a number of remarkable ornaments are set up, each consisting of a wooden plank which initiates have worked into a kind of shield, between one and two meters in height and from 30 to 40 cm in width. They are decorated with carvings in a peculiar design, the *kewazib*- or *pihui* (snail-shell)-motif, executed in concentric circles, allegedly an *imo* specialty. The ornamentations differ from one shield to another, each of them representing a different totem, such as the betel, the sting-ray etc. The centres of the circles, the eyes, are perforated. In due time, i.e. just before they are set up round the pit,¹⁵² palmwood arrow-heads (*arib*) will be inserted into the holes and from that moment onwards the shields are secret objects, not to be seen by the uninitiated.¹⁵³ Obviously, the arrow-heads are more important than the other decorations, the paint, the brightly coloured seeds ornamenting the plane surfaces, and the down and small plumes attached on all sides. Most important of all, however, is the name given to the shields, viz. *pahui*, the same as that of the mysterious ceremonial club carried by the head-hunters on their raids, an intriguing and widely spread cult instrument

¹⁵² Ibid. XII p. 2.

¹⁵³ The few specimens shown to Verschueren were not fitted out with arrow-heads; Verschueren, Indonesië I p. 460.

described and commented on in the next chapter.¹⁵⁴ Strangely enough, the *imo pahui*-shields differ widely from the ceremonial clubs. The latter are spears with an ornamental blade below the point, or clubs crowned with an elaborate fretwork ornament. All carvings are executed as fretwork, whereas the shields are worked in low relief. As the design of the ornamentation of the shields is not a *pahui*-motif either, the great difference in outward appearance between shield and ornamental club makes the name given to the shields all the more remarkable. Yet, a reference to headhunting seems to be implied. Later, we shall find that the implications of the *pahui*-motif are even wider and include a reference to the bullroarer as well. The function of these secret shields, set up round the pit in which they are going to be buried at the closing scene of the rites,¹⁵⁵ poses an intriguing puzzle.

The ritual is preceded by big hunts and a fishing party. In case the rites are celebrated at Senégi, the former are organized by the Ahiv-zé, the latter by the Dimar-zé, the two groups who, between them, make up the population of Senégi village. When the rites are celebrated at Owi near Sangasé, it is probable that other groups will take the lead, that is, groups which are at home in Sangasé, who know the local situation and are entitled to invite other people to hunt or fish in the territory held by the local group. In recent years Sangasé has ceased to be such an exclusive centre as it was in the past, Senégi offering much better safeguards against outward disturbance.

On the day of the actual celebration nothing happens until nightfall. In contrast to so many other ceremonies, the ritual was celebrated when there was no moon. When darkness has fallen, the old men, conducted by an old woman, begin to sing the *yarut*. Little by little the *miráv* fills up with initiates and after a time the *yarut* gives way to the *gaga*, the sacred *imo* song. By now the time has come for the *déma* to appear. They emerge from the *déma*-houses, each carrying the replica of a canoe on his head. Though the bodies of the performers are completely plastered with white clay, this is hardly visible, because they go decorated with a profusion of plumes of birds of paradise, white herons and cassowaries. The face of each performer is hidden behind a mask made of one half of a coconut; the form of the mask is not disclosed in the story. Slowly dancing to the rhythm of the drums, the two *déma*, the *Kai-zé miakim* and the *Mahu-zé iwag*

¹⁵⁴ Below, pp. 724 ff. See also Plates XV to XIX.

¹⁵⁵ "As far as I can remember, they are buried together with the other ornaments", writes Verschueren; Letters XI p. 22.

(needless to say that the latter is represented by a man) advance towards the pit. Round the pit the *pahui* have been set up in the ground, together with a number of other ornaments which are not specified. The *déma* descend to the bottom of the pit, where they continue their dancing, accompanied by the drums and the singing of the initiates who crowd round the pit. The moment that the *déma*-performers enter the pit marks the beginning of *otiv-bombari*.

The scene is a remarkable one, differing in almost every respect from those depicted in other Marind-anim rituals. The initiates are all painted black from top to toe. Though Verschueren does not say so, they probably have the usual red dots on the forehead. This is hardly important, because they are not only painted, but also masked. They wear the curious mask of a *hais*: a simple piece of dried palm-leaf sheath cut in the form of a face, with, on top, two horn-like projections (cf. fig. 5). Each mask has holes for eyes and mouth and is held in place by means of a simple cord. The *otiv-bombari*, too, is different. Here it is not one or two women who are designated to gratify the men, but all the women, or at least many of them, who partake. Completely naked, they

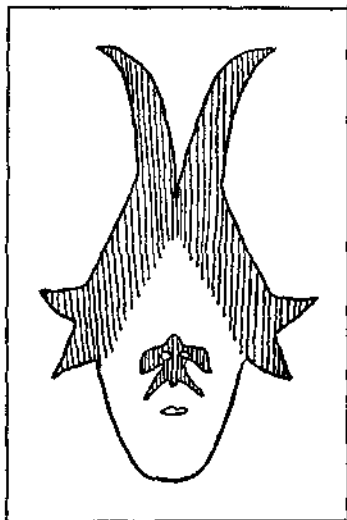


Fig. 5. Mask representing a *hais*. Reprinted from Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 220.

lie down in the sheds outside the fence with nothing to cover them but a cape of hairy swamp-grass thrown over the upper part of the body. The women of one moiety are together on one side, those of the other moiety on the opposite side.

The dancing gradually becomes more frenzied. Toward daybreak a few men quit their places near the pit, climb the coconut trees round the *imo-miráv*, and, in rapid succession, throw down a number of young coconuts. Simultaneously, all the people in the *miráv* crowd round the pit. A deafening noise is made and now the *déma*-performers cast off their ornaments and leap out of the pit, after which the bystanders throw the *pahui* and the other ornaments standing there into the pit and then frantically start filling up the hole, stamping the earth

as fast as they can. The coconuts which have been thrown down are assembled and the meat, together with the sperma, is mixed with a big festive dish which is apportioned among the participants. Where the dish comes from, is not stated, but it is evident that something has been prepared in advance. We may take it for granted that the usual sago dish, flavoured with venison (the spoils of the big hunt which was organized during the preceding days), has been held in readiness to be mixed with the coconuts and with the sperma which was, as usual, collected by the women.

The deafening noise which accompanies the throwing down of the coconuts is probably made by bullroarers. In these parts the bull-roarer is not the secret instrument it is on the upper Bian and among the eastern *Mayo-Marind*. Although the coastal *Imo-Marind* tend to deny that the swinging of the bullroarer is an essential part of the ritual, it is doubtless so among the inland *imo* people, and we may take it for a certainty that it is used in the rite just described when this is performed in an inland village, while it is probable that it was also used on the coast.¹⁵⁶

Verschueren, commenting on his description, notes that his narrative can hardly be called exhaustive, even though the actual ceremony, of which the hunting- and fishing parties do not make part, lasted only one night. He states that he is satisfied that on this point the information given is correct, but he senses that the description of the final meal may be fairly incomplete. He writes: "I do not venture to believe in the story told by a non-*imo* man of Wayau that the *imo*, too, cut a coconut into two and eat it, as they do on the upper Bian".¹⁵⁷ He goes on to point out that from the course of events it is sufficiently evident that the alleged human sacrifice is a story circulated to impress the uninitiated. Referring to the above ceremony of expelling sickness, he argues that all that is buried is the *déma* represented, who are identified with the ornaments of the performers, which are left on the bottom of the pit.¹⁵⁸ There can hardly be any doubt that Verschueren is right in his explanation of the alleged murder. He further substantiates his refusal to believe in the actuality of human sacrifice by referring to an experience he had in 1935. "A feast was celebrated just outside the village and when the next morning I tried to find out what had happened, I was told that the feast was over already. I

¹⁵⁶ See below, pp. 633, 636 f.

¹⁵⁷ Verschueren, *Indonesië* I p. 461.

¹⁵⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 462; Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 150.

came across a recently filled pit, which I mistook for a grave. When I asked who lay buried there, I was informed that the other night a dog had died and that they had buried the animal there. As I had my misgivings, I called the teacher and held a roll-call, but nobody was missing".¹⁵⁹ Of course this does not prove that nobody was killed during the ceremony, but it would be rather a reversal of the *onus probandi* if it were required that the absence of atrocities of this kind should be confirmed by legal proof. The existence of endo-cannibalism is sufficiently improbable for us to require that the alleged prevalence of the custom should be proved. Given the total absence of really factual evidence, the explanations presented by Verschuieren of the origin of the rumour that human sacrifice takes place, are perfectly acceptable. It is also true that, notwithstanding, a number of moot points remain. What has the scene with the canoes got to do with the myth of the *uga*-canoe? And what is the meaning of the coconut in the rites? Why do people wear the mask of the spirits of the dead? How can the *imo-mes-izwag* be a *Mahu-sé*? We must try to clarify these matters before we proceed to the description of the other three rites.

The first thing we note is that the association of *imo* with night and black is fully substantiated. The celebration takes place on a moonless night and the initiates are painted in pitch black. It is a scene enacted in almost complete darkness, although there must be a fire somewhere near the pit. A fire has not been mentioned by Verschuieren, but has been reported by Van de Kolk (above, p. 614). And, indeed, unless there is one, the two *déma*-performers would be invisible. It must be possible to see at least part of their carefully arranged ornaments. Moreover, there are drums, and whenever drums are beaten a fire is needed, because the tympanum is tuned up by means of lumps of wax stuck on top of the membrane, and to make it malleable, the wax must be heated to some degree. Drummers customarily gather round a fire and for that reason its proper place is near the pit. Thus the men are grouped round the pit and the fire¹⁶⁰; they can see the performers on the bottom of the pit going through the slow movements of their dance. The dense crowd thronging round the fire and the pit intercepts all the light, leaving the surroundings in complete darkness. In the low sheds outside the *miráv*

¹⁵⁹ Verschuieren, op. cit. p. 461.

¹⁶⁰ The conclusion was accepted by Verschuieren, who wrote: "At the time I made my first enquiries, no mention was made of the fire. Later, round about 1955, I got definite information that every *imo* ceremony begins with fire-drilling, which is done by a *Kai-sé*" (Letters XI p. 22).

the naked women receive the men. The association with the night is given further relief by the masks worn by the initiates. They represent the spirits of the dead, who are, more than any other beings, connected with darkness and with night. Night and death belong together; the land of the dead is beyond the place of sunset and it is the night which inspires people with the fear of apparitions of spirits. The association with the dead is further substantiated by the white clay on the bodies of the two *déma*-performers and by the axil pieces of coconut-leaves painted with images of human beings which Gooszen observed along the pathways leading to the *imo-miráv*.¹⁶¹ Images of this kind are called *awong* and they represent the dead.¹⁶² It is evident that in one way or another the dead participate in the celebration. Perhaps we should even include them among the actors.

The scene is reflected in the myth of the *uga*-canoe, which arrives at Imo in the cold of a moonless night. If we are justified in identifying the ceremony with the *bangu*, of which Van de Kolk and Vertenten watched the final procession, it is hardly surprising that the night was cold. Nights are cold during the east monsoon. In the myth we also find that a fire is lighted, so that the inmates of the canoe may warm themselves. This is the first thing *Tubab-évai* does when the canoe has run ashore. Only afterwards does he climb a coconut tree to pick some nuts.¹⁶³ Just when he is picking the nuts, a man from Imo is seen peeping through the thicket, who is invited by a *patur* to join the party. It is strange that it should be a *patur* who takes the initiative, the more so if we have to translate the term by neophyte, as we did in the case of the story of the *Bir*-snake and the *Mayo-patur*.¹⁶⁴ It is out of the question that a neophyte could have been so bold and we must therefore take the word in the sense in which it is used in the myth of *Sobra*: in the presence of the primeval ancestress, the *imo-mes-iwag*, all men are *patur*.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps we have to combine the two

¹⁶¹ Above, p. 612.

¹⁶² Below, pp. 777 f.

¹⁶³ Cf. the somewhat abridged version of the myth on pp. 257 ff., above.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. above, pp. 552 f., 556, 559 f.

¹⁶⁵ In the myth referred to on pp. 211 and 551. According to the full text of the myth (Wirz, M.A. II p. 189) *Sobra* emerges from her hole at the moment that the men are eating the remains of the mother of the boy kidnapped and devoured by *Sobra*. The latter had hidden the child's bones near his mother's hut and, wishing to make sure that she had succeeded in throwing suspicion on her victim's mother, she addressed the men as follows: '*Patur*, what are you doing?' When the men have explained that they are eating a woman who ate her own son, she is satisfied and retires to her hole. The point of interest here is the term of address used by *Sobra*.

connotations; the men are *patur* because they have to go through an experience and because they are in the presence of the *mes-ivag*. There is a reason for putting it this way, because in the story it is said that the Imo man saw the canoe, the *ivag* and the boys. A plural is used and there is no mention made of *men*. Another interesting detail is that the arrival of the Imo man coincides with *Tubab-évaï's* climbing a palm tree to pick some coconuts. The man of Imo will presently disappear to get his comrades to fetch the *ivag* and the *patur*, who are going to be sacrificed. Sometime during the rites the man in the palm tree, by throwing down coconuts, gives the signal for filling up the pit in which the performers have left the ornaments which made them into personifications of the *déma*.¹⁶⁶

Although the references to the myth of the *uga*-canoe are sufficiently evident for us to connect the rite with the myth (the canoes carried on the heads of the performers again prove that the two must be associated), this knowledge does not contribute very much to a better understanding of the meaning of the rite. To that end we must pay attention to the two performers who were announced as a *Kai-zé miakim* and a *Mahu-zé ivag*, a classification which does not fit in with the myth which presents *mes-ivag* and *patur* as *Geb-zé déma*. In our discussion of the interrelationship of *mayo-mes-ivag* and *imo-mes-ivag* in the story of the *uga*-canoe¹⁶⁷ we noted that the *imo-mes-ivag*, as a navel *déma* of the ritual, is necessarily a *Geb-zé*. However, the story as presented is to all intents and purposes a story belonging to the cycle of the *Mayo-Marind*. The escort of the *mes-ivag*, who is also called *Nasem-zé ivag*, are *Geb-zé* living on the coast in the easternmost part of the territory. We cannot expect the myth to give a complete clarification of the identity of its main characters. We have to establish this identity from elsewhere, viz. from the two initiation rites described in section 7 of this chapter; they are *Uaba* and *Ualivamb*, alias *Kanis-ivag*, exactly the same as the central characters of the *mayo*-ritual. This comes as a surprise, although it must be admitted that we might have anticipated it. The myth of the *uga*-canoe states in so many words that the *imo-mes-ivag* is the same as the *mayo-mes-ivag*, but

¹⁶⁶ Their escape from the pit just before it is going to be filled up might be explained as the escape of the *déma's wih-anem* when his body is killed. The data mentioned on pp. 197 ff. are highly suggestive in this respect. In the absence of relevant information, the supposition can neither be confirmed nor rejected; it is only a conjecture, but one which lends more substance and background to the *wih-anem* concept.

¹⁶⁷ Above, pp. 435 f.

since the point is not emphasized, we fail to realize the consequence. Knowledge of the names of the leading *déma* is, indeed, strictly confined to the fully initiated men. To the less informed participants they are a male *Kai-zé* *déma* and a female *Mahu-zé* *déma* because they are represented by performers who are members of the moieties concerned. The moiety-dichotomy is strictly observed by the *imo* people and in the present ritual the *Kai-zé* and *Mahu-zé* stand for the two moieties, and at the same time for the two sexes represented by the *miakim* and the *iwag*. The one is the male, the other the female moiety. Verschueren writes in one of his letters: "I am deeply impressed by the emphasis which is given to the opposition male-female in contrasting the moieties of *Geb-zé*, *Kai-zé*, *Ndik-end* and *Samkakai* on the one hand, with the *Mahu-zé* and the *Bragai-zé* on the other. The contrast is most explicit in the successive initiations of the *imo*. First the novices are confronted with the male *Kai-zé* *déma*, later with the female *Mahu-zé* *déma*. . . . When my informants told me of the two canoes which descend into the pit (they called it the heart of the whole matter, which was a complete secret to all uninitiated persons and the women) the contrast male-female was given the strongest emphasis".¹⁶⁸

We shall have to come back to these initiation rites later on. For the present suffice it to note that the two *déma* of the ritual are really *Geb-zé* and *Bragai-zé*, but are presented as members of the associated phratries, viz. as *Kai-zé* and *Mahu-zé*. They are, indeed, *Uaba* and *Ualivamb*, but placed in a totally different situation, in which they are not only husband and wife, but also son and mother. The precedence of the female *déma*, which we already noted in the *mayo*-ritual, is given greater emphasis in the *imo*-rites. In the ceremony under discussion the old men singing *yarut* are conducted by an old woman.¹⁶⁹ The final and really cruel initiation is the one leading to a confrontation with the female *déma*, who is presented, not in the form of a child-bearing mother, but in that of what, if the term is permissible, might be called a repugnant goddess of decay.

We must now return to the scene of the coconuts. We noted that Verschueren was not quite satisfied that his information on this point was complete. He refers to a non-*imo* informant from Wayau who told him that a coconut had to be cleft and eaten, similar to what happens at the end of the upper *Bian* ritual, but quite rightly he did not feel justified in accepting as true an isolated communication made

¹⁶⁸ Verschueren, Letters VI p. 3.

¹⁶⁹ Above, p. 618.

by an outsider. In a subsequent letter he added: "In retrospect, I feel inclined to guess that my man of Wayau had his information from the southern upper Bian, where, according to Jufuway's account, the cleaving of a coconut makes part of the ritual [the *imo aili* as celebrated there; v. B.]. However, I have never heard of the cleaving of a coconut among the 'coastal' *imo*".¹⁷⁰ And yet, in spite of all these provisos, apt though they are, the suggestion is anything but improbable. In the myth of *Geb* and *Ndiwa* as related by Jufuway, *Geb* is amazed because in the *ézam*-cult the form of the bullroarer and the procedure of that cult are the same as in the *imo*.¹⁷¹ Gooszen is more specific on the importance of the coconut. His description of the *imo-miráv* is very much similar to Verschueren's. He, too, mentions more than one *déma*-hut. He is one of the very few outsiders who ever visited an *imo-miráv* when a ceremony was in progress and it is interesting to note that he was told that the *déma*-huts were dedicated to the ancestors, who had first planted coconuts. The coconuts lying on the ground near the huts remind us of the decorated nuts in the upper Bian and Boadzi ceremonies. Although the latter are far more expressive of a specific purpose in that they have been decorated, the wording of Gooszen's account does hardly allow of the supposition that the coconuts in the coastal *imo-miráv* just happened to be lying there.¹⁷² There can be no doubt that the coconut is of fundamental importance. The siting of the *miráv* in a coconut grove and the throwing down of the nuts at the end of the ceremony (the same practice is followed on the upper Bian) confirm this. There is no need to assume that the *imo*, too, cleave a specific coconut which represents the *déma*. As a matter of fact, they say they never do, pointing out that it is an upper Bian custom which has nothing to do with the *imo*.¹⁷³ We had better concentrate on the facts: the coconuts lying near the *déma*-huts and the coconuts thrown down from the tree. As to the latter, we know for certain that the meat, together with the sperma, goes into the festive dish.¹⁷⁴ We do not know what happens to the nuts lying near the *déma*-hut. We are not even sure that they have been laid down there for a specific purpose and it is futile to enter into speculations upon this point. The role of the coconut in the ritual and its connections

¹⁷⁰ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 23.

¹⁷¹ Jufuway, NGS 1960 pp. 302 f.; above, p. 587.

¹⁷² Cf. above, p. 612.

¹⁷³ Verschueren, Letters XII p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Verschueren's comment, Letters XI pp. 23 and 24.

with the ancestors are well substantiated anyhow. Gooszen could not place this piece of information and added the obscure remark that the 'figure' might also refer to the *mes-iwag*. The *mes-iwag* was the character whose name he had heard mentioned on several occasions, but the coconut-planting ancestors were new to him. The fact that he was reluctant to pass on this bit of information confirms that it was as if it were forced upon him.

What purpose could be served by burying the ancestors who first planted the coconut? Hardly any other, of course, than that of killing the coconut *déma* in the ritual way of the upper Bian people and of the Boadzi. The coconut is the symbol of life and the *imo* ceremony is, in spite of its terrifying character, a life-giving fertility rite. We shall come to this point presently. But first something more must be said on the coconut. When dealing with the *mayo*-initiation, we found to our surprise that there the coconut is presented as originating from the *méri-ongat déma*. There is not a single indication that the myth of *Yawi* is enacted. We suggested that *Yawi* is associated more specifically with the *imo* because he died at Imo, an opinion in which we were strengthened when we found that it is *Diwazib* who is the sago-bringer in the *mayo* ceremonies, and not *Wokabu*, who lived at Imo, where he made sago and prepared coconut oil and body-paint.¹⁷⁵ The close relations between *Yawi* and the *imo* are worth elaborating. First of all, *Yawi* is the son of *Bir*, the *mayo*-mother who may be identified with the *mayo-mes-iwag*. What is more, he is not a son in a symbolic or classificatory sense, but a real son. As the *mayo-mes-iwag* is identical with the *imo-mes-iwag*, he is, in a more remote sense, identical with the son of the *imo-mes-iwag* who was raped and killed together with his mother by the people of Imo. The identification is not too far-fetched. *Uaba* is the secret name of the male *déma* and *Yawi* is a *Uaba-rek déma*. The two are closely related. *Yawi* is killed at Imo and he is killed by *kambara*, i.e. the kind of sorcery which is applied by the leaders of the ritual to ensure secrecy. *Yawi* exemplifies human life. Because he died, everybody has to die. Up to an extent he might be called a prime ancestor, whose fate is decisive for all mankind. Finally, *Yawi* is closely connected with *Aramemb*. There is never a critical moment in *Yawi's* life but *Aramemb* appears in a leading role. *Aramemb* abducts *Yawi* from Moha near Kumbé and brings him to Imo. When the boy commits adultery with *Aramemb's*

¹⁷⁵ Above, p. 547.

wife, *Aramemb* calls in the sorcerers. It is *Aramemb* again who allows *Bewra* to cut off the dead boy's head. *Bewra* sang *gaga* and during the night a coconut tree grew from the head.¹⁷⁶ All things considered, there is every reason to associate the myth of *Yawi* with the rite under discussion. The rite and the myth are based on the same idea, viz. that death brings forth new life, and on the same symbol, viz. the coconut which is identical with a human head. The explicit connection with the place Imo, where *Aramemb* brings the boy, is another indication that *Yawi* and the *imo*-rites belong together. This is not to say, of course, that the *imo*-rite described in this section is an impersonation of the story of *Yawi*. The rite deals with two *déma* who are either husband and wife or mother and son. Their roles and their identities will be the subjects of a renewed discussion in the concluding section. The point we wanted to make is that the myth of *Yawi* is inspired by ideas which are identical with those basic to the present ritual; the death of the dancing *déma* coincides with the falling of the coconuts.

A feature of the rite which originally had not been clarified in Verschuieren's account, is the procession going in the direction of the west to stave off sickness. That, initially, Verschuieren did not mention a procession does not prove much, as the *imo*-rites have been banned from 1912 onwards. This rules out the possibility that he had actually seen one. Perhaps the most interesting point in the description of the episode is the fact that the *mayo* people, although frightened and ill at ease, benefit by the good wrought by the ritual. Their women burn their old aprons and make the procession pass through the smoke. Apparently the women's aprons symbolize sickness and pollution, which, in being carried off by the *imo*, are removed from all the villages that have lit these fires. The question is whether the *bangu* which terminates in the procession is the same rite as the one we are dealing with.

There are several arguments in favour of an identification. The time of the year at which the *bangu* is held is the same as that indicated for the rite under discussion. A stronger argument can be derived from the rumours which have it that on the occasion of a *bangu* somebody has to be buried alive. They refer immediately to the rite described by Verschuieren. An argument against identification is that Van de Kolk, in a fiction-story, has the *bangu* enacted within the village.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 249 f.; Wirz, M.A. II p. 70.

¹⁷⁷ Van de Kolk, Oermenschen pp. 163-169.

It is an argument which cannot be allowed to carry much weight, because he needed the village-setting for the plot of his story. In fact, he was barely interested in Marind-anim ritual. He abhorred it and we cannot blame him for having a somewhat free way with details in a fiction-story, assuming that he actually knew that the *bangu* had to be celebrated, not inside, but outside the village. All in all, the odds are in favour of an identification of the *bangu* with the rite described by Verschueren, the more so because in the article Verschueren wrote in 1947 a certain connection between the *bangu*-ritual and that for driving out sickness is apparent, even though, in that context, he defines the latter as a minor rite.¹⁷⁸

The connection between the *bangu* and the ceremonies for driving out sickness raises a new problem, that of the interrelation of *bangu* and *aili*, the latter being the ritual for expelling sickness. Fortunately, the problem has been solved. Acting upon the promise he made in his Letter nr. XI, Verschueren set out for Senégi, where he had a long talk with a couple of old friends. "They were rather dejected when I mentioned the name *bangu*", Verschueren writes. *Bangu*, so they told him, is the secret name of the *aili*-ritual. The *bangu* had to be celebrated annually. In former times the performance took place at Owi near Sangasé, and was combined with a first initiation of some sort.¹⁷⁹ As the *bangu* and the *aili*, though performed on the same occasion, are two different rites, the initiatory aspect of the ritual had better be dealt with at the end of the next section, after we have finished with the *aili*.

For the moment another point deserves our attention. In spite of many obscurities and differences, a close resemblance appears to exist between the *bangu* ceremony and the cult of the upper Bian people. The aspects these have in common are the symbolism of the coconut, the sexual promiscuity, the effect on health and fertility, and even the use of the bullroarer, albeit that among the coastal *imo* people its function is less prominent. There is yet another link, viz. that both have a bearing on headhunting. The connection with headhunting has been kept a perfect secret by the *imo* people, but the *pahui* round the pit, notwithstanding their unusual form, suggest a rather close asso-

¹⁷⁸ Verschueren, Indonesië I p. 459.

¹⁷⁹ Idem, Letters XII pp. 1 f. The information here given is all the more important because initially Verschueren thought that the term *bangu* might apply to the initiation ceremonies called *Ndaho haru* and *kagait*; cf. Letters XI p. 25.

ciation. Moreover, it is confirmed by the facts. In February 1913 (the *bangu* ceremony described by Vertenten and Van de Kolk was held in the east monsoon of 1912, probably round about August or even later) the acting assistant-resident of Merauke set out for Sangasé and the neighbouring villages to punish them for having recently engaged in a headhunting expedition. He ordered them to hand over the heads they had taken and received a total of 24 heads which had been cut off recently: 3 from Sangasé, 5 from Alatep, 7 from Méwi, 4 from Okaba, 5 from Makalin.¹⁸⁰ The numbers are neither relevant nor exact; Van de Kolk reports that a total of 90 freshly hunted heads was confiscated. The really important fact is that the villages involved belonged, if not entirely, then at least in part, to the *imo* and had participated in the preceding *bangu*. We are not sure whether we are justified in connecting the term *bangu* with the myth of the *Bangu-boan*.¹⁸¹ If so, another connection with headhunting is implied: *Uari*, the *déma* who is the central character of the *Bangu-boan* myth, is a headhunter.

6. AILI AND ARIH

In the literature of an earlier period the term *aili* is usually written *arih* or *ari(ali)*, but Wirz already noted the use of the form *ella* or *elli* at Domandé.¹⁸² Boelaars writes *aili*,¹⁸³ Verschueren *ailé*,¹⁸⁴ and Jufuway, applying the term more specifically to the songs which accompany the dance, writes *elech*.¹⁸⁵ We preferred Boelaars' spelling because, if it is true that the words *aili* and *arih* are identical, this represents the nearest approximation to the form *arih (alih)* used elsewhere in this book, more specifically in connection with the ceremonies of the *Mayo-Marind*. However, it must be admitted that the identification of the words *aili* and *arih* is, in fact, an unproven hypothesis. Verschueren seems inclined to put a question-mark here¹⁸⁶ and we must concede that the *imo aili* differs fairly widely from the *mayo arih*. The literal meaning of the word *arih* lends only a modest support to the supposition that it is identical with *aili*. *Arih* means to

¹⁸⁰ Report of the Assistant-resident as quoted in Ann. 1913 p. 199.

¹⁸¹ Above, pp. 341 f.

¹⁸² Wirz, M.A. III p. 90.

¹⁸³ Boelaars, Nieuw-Guinea p. 80.

¹⁸⁴ Verschueren, *Imo*-Report pp. 8 ff.; Letters.

¹⁸⁵ Jufuway, NGS 1960 p. 202.

¹⁸⁶ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 23.

play, to romp, to joke,¹⁸⁷ also to hop, to dance, to be elated.¹⁸⁸ Wirz and Geurtjens point out that the term *arih* is used also to denote special dances to promote fertility or to ward off sickness, the latter, according to Wirz, being in evidence more particularly among the *Imo-Marind*, although his description holds ample proof that the western *Mayo-Marind* participated in ceremonies similar to those he ascribed to the *Imo-Marind* and in which some of the most conspicuous traits of the *aili* as described in the following pages are lacking. We begin our account by rendering those of Verschueren's communications which have special reference to the *imo* people. Then follows a comparison with data provided by other authors, mainly Wirz, Geurtjens and Jufuway.

In his *Imo-Report* (pp. 7 ff.) Verschueren writes: "The *aili-bombari* [*bombari* means ceremony] is one of the most important *imo* ceremonies, second only to the initiation rites. The *aili* includes both the *kav-* and the *kapatu-bombari*, which derive their names from the *kav*, i.e. yam, and the *kapatu*, a wild species of sugar-cane of which the flower is eaten". We note in passing that while *kav-bombari* has never been mentioned before, Geurtjens reported the occurrence of a small feast called *kapatu kamak* (try out the *kapatu*) celebrated on the occasion of eating the first *kapatu*. He adds that sexual excesses are part of the celebration. The *Kai-sé* are the first to eat the *kapatu*, then the other clans follow suit. *Kapatu-mandow* is the name of the month in which the *kapatu* ripens.¹⁸⁹ The month is not identified by our author, but it must be February.¹⁹⁰ After this digression we turn to the *Imo-Report* again.

The *aili*, if it is to be properly executed, must be followed by *suba wakun*, the exploding of bamboo (see below), a rite practised even in those villages which otherwise are *burap* (uninitiated), such as Wayau and Koa. Like all other *imo* ceremonies, the *aili* is under the supervision of Sangasé; according to Verschueren's informants, the previous consent, or at least some form of previous consultation of the leading men of Sangasé was required for a celebration.

Before the celebration, a meeting of the initiates is arranged. They convene somewhere in the bush, where the *Kai-sé* kindle the *imo-fire*.

¹⁸⁷ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *arih*.

¹⁸⁸ Wirz, l.c.

¹⁸⁹ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *kapatoc*. Geurtjens identifies the *kapatu* as *Saccharum edule floridulum*, but Dr. Ostendorf informs me that the *kapatu* probably is an aberrant form of *Saccharum officinarum*.

¹⁹⁰ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 25.

There they decide upon the time and the place of the celebration and, in conformity with instructions from *imo* headquarters,¹⁹¹ the procedure which will be followed. When the food required for the feast has been collected, the men go again to the bush. With a hardwood stick which has been smeared with sperma the *Kai-zé* drill fire. When the firewood has been set ablaze, the *Mahu-zé* go off to cut two green bamboos. The lengths of the two bamboos, which need not be the same, depend on the expected number of participants. In the meantime the other men prepare a festive dish of yams or *kapatu*. They also make a kind of porridge of coconut meat, after which each of them retires to the bush to masturbate, the sperma being mixed with the porridge. When the dish of yams or *kapatu* is ready to be covered with sheets of eucalyptus-bark, the men pour the admixture they prepared over the food, which is now covered up to be steamed. When the dish is done, the *Geb-zé* initiates put the steamed food in a nibung spathe. Forming up in a procession, they all go to the *imo-miráv*, where the women are waiting, the *Geb-zé* bringing the food, the *Kai-zé* the fire, and the *Mahu-zé* the two bamboo poles. Previously the women have extinguished their fires [apparently those in the village, v. B.]. The *Kai-zé* now light the *imo*-fire in the *imo-miráv*, whither the women come to light their own fires from the *imo*. The first fire is lit by a *Kai-zé* woman, who passes the fire on to her companions. The bamboos have been left outside the *imo-miráv*, but small quantities of sugarcane, betel nuts and sirih-leaves, together with the steamed yams or *kapatu*, are brought into the *miráv* and placed under a shed which has been constructed near the fire. The men sit down round the fire and the food, forming two semi-circles, the one made up by the *Geb-zé* moiety, the other by the *Sami-rek*. They start singing *gaga*. In the meantime the women line up. One by one they go to the fire to collect a handful of the food which lies near the fire. They enter the circle formed by the sitting men via a small opening which has been left between the moieties. First come the *Geb-zé* women, then the *Kai-zé*, the *Ndik-end*, the *Samkakai*, the *Mahu-zé* and finally the *Bragai-zé*. The men, at least the fully initiated ones, do not eat of the food they have prepared and when all the women have had their share the men make ready to start the *aili*. They stand in a wide circle. When the dancing has only just begun, the *Geb-zé* women line up and enter the circle, with the women of the other clans following in the usual

¹⁹¹ The term headquarters has been borrowed from the *Imo*-Report.

order, till all are together in the centre. The dance itself consists of an endless series of frantic jumps, with both feet off the ground.

Round about midnight the leader of the *Geb-zé* signals to the leader of the *Mahu-zé* to bring the two bamboo poles which had been left outside the ceremonial grounds. Now the *Mahu-zé-ivag* (*ivag* taken in the sense of adult women) begin to play with the bamboo. They stand in single file, the bamboo held between their legs. There are two leaders, one at the head of the line and one at the rear, who make the bamboo go through all sorts of erratic movements, so that dancing with the pole becomes an extremely exhausting exercise and it is not long before some of the women have to give up. After some time the *Geb-zé* leader comes forward and lashes the foremost part of the bamboo with a croton twig. This is the signal for all those dancing with the bamboo to drop down as if they were dead. They are brought round again by the leading old men giving them wild ginger and striking them with croton twigs over which magic formulas have been pronounced. In his letters Verschueren adds that "on several occasions I heard people say that the dancers were struck by the *imo* and that later, when they struggle to their feet again, the *imo* has called them to a new life".¹⁹² The game is started all over again, now with the next group of women participating and so it goes on till it is the turn of the men. Those who do not dance with the bamboo keep on dancing and singing the *aïli* in the centre of the grounds. They never stop till daybreak.

From Verschueren's tape-recordings, referred to earlier in this book,¹⁹³ we learn that each *boan* has its own *aïli*-songs. First, the songs of the *Geb-zé* (and the *Sambakai*) are sung, then follow those of the *Mahu-zé*, then the ones of the *Bragai-zé*, next those of the *Basik-Basik*, and finally the songs of the *Kai-zé* (with the *Ndik-end*). This sequence does not tally with the statement that the *Mahu-zé* women begin, but this need not concern us here. Men and women join in the singing of what are two-part (perhaps even three-part) songs. In the songs recorded on the tapes the *Geb-zé* make mention of their specific connection with ritual, the *Mahu-zé* sing of the sago, the *Bragai-zé* of the waves of the sea, the *Basik-Basik* of the scrub-hen, and the *Kai-zé* of the *wati*.

At dawn two forked poles are set up. From these poles all the food is hung which had been collected previously. When it is light, the

¹⁹² Verschueren, l.c.

¹⁹³ Cf. i.a. p. 509.

Mahu-zé take the two bamboos and cut them into pieces. These pieces are smeared with sperma and thrown into the fire which the *Kai-zé* light in one of the corners of the festive grounds (or, as the case may be, of the village). Here the initiates assemble, the leaders (*pakas-anim*) in front, the women and the uninitiated at a respectful distance. Again the men sing *gaga*, while they await the exploding of the bamboos. The first cracks are ignored. They know quite well how many cracks are to be expected and just before the last explosion sounds, everybody falls silent. When the last bamboo goes off, all the participants, each with one foot stamping the ground, cry out: *waaaaah!*, and the chief *pakas-anem* shoots an arrow, aiming in a westward direction. The shooting of the arrow marks the end of the first night of the ceremony. Although we have no explicit information on this point, it may be assumed that first thing in the early morning the food amassed near the poles is distributed. The night has been a hectic one and the participants can do with a hearty meal before they go off to sleep.

Verschueren does not inform us as to what musical instruments are used to accompany the singing. On the tape-recordings of the *imo* songs there is no accompaniment whatsoever and in one of his letters he affirms that the *gaga* are sung without it.¹⁹⁴ Wirz assures us that the songs, of which he gives elaborate texts, have a very pronounced rhythm and that the singers can very well keep time without having drums to support them.¹⁹⁵ There are definite rumours, however, that in the hinterland of Okaba bullroarers are used. It is not impossible that they are swung during the singing, but this seems hardly probable. The deafening noise of the instruments would be a nuisance to the singers, who continue throughout the night. It is true that Verschueren, though without suggesting a definite connection, mentions the use of bullroarers in the context of his description of the first night, but it is more likely that their application is confined to the ceremony of sending off the *tik-déma* or to the final night dedicated to sexual promiscuity and the production of sperma for magical purposes.

The day following the dancing of the *aïli* is given up to sleep, but occasionally the afternoon is devoted to a performance of the myth of the *batend-déma*.¹⁹⁶ The performer proceeds, keeping to the inside of a circle formed by the men, beating time by rapping with a boar's tusk on an empty coconut-husk. Why he appears and what his function

¹⁹⁴ Verschueren, Letters IV p. 2.

¹⁹⁵ Wirz, M.A. III p. 92.

¹⁹⁶ Verschueren, *Imo*-Report p. 9.

is, remain unexplained. At the end of this section, when all the facts have been expounded, a suggestion will be made regarding the role of this particular *déma*. For the present, the reader is reminded of the following facts: first, that the *batend-déma* is a *Mahu-zé déma* who resides on the border of the eastern land of the dead, second, that he is the son of *Sami*, a female snake which may be identified with the ancestress of the *Sami-rek* moiety, and third, that he is pursued by *Doreh*, a *déma* engaged in planting yams (*kav*) at Imo, and who, in some versions, is the father of the *batend-déma*.¹⁹⁷

The night following this scene appears to be one of relaxation, as is to be expected after the strenuous exertions of the preceding night. The next day a great drive is organized, the game being roused by big grass-fires. The night is devoted to sexual promiscuity. The *Imo-Report* is very brief on this point and simply refers to communications made earlier in the report. The reference points to the promiscuity accompanying the closing ceremonies of the final initiation ceremony called *kagaib*, which are combined with an *aili*.¹⁹⁸ In this connection Verschueren writes: "After the hunt [another drive of the kind just mentioned] a big sago-dish is prepared (a *sep*, the usual festive dish) and this is followed by sexual promiscuity. Informants say that, if properly arranged, the proceedings should stretch over two nights, the first night being reserved for an elaborate sham fight between men and women, during which every man selects the woman he covets, taking her to his place [whatever that be, v. B.], whereupon the woman elopes. The sexual intercourse takes place the next night".¹⁹⁹ We suppose that some form of dance, possibly accompanied by the swinging of bullroarers, is performed simultaneously, but on this point we have very little information. The sperma will, as usual, be applied to the feast-dish, to the bodies of all concerned and to the crops, dependent upon the primary motive for staging the ceremony. For more information upon this aspect of the ceremony it is necessary to consult other authors on the *arih* or *aili* and its meaning.

First, however, a note should be inserted on sham fights between men and women. Such sham fights are usually staged at the end of the northwest monsoon, when the rains tend to abate. Viegen and Geurtjens report the occurrence of these fights, but do not inform us whether these sham fights, which occasionally led to the infliction of rather big

¹⁹⁷ Cf. above, pp. 326 ff.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. below, pp. 653 ff.

¹⁹⁹ Verschueren, *Imo-Report* p. 7.

wounds, were associated with any specific ritual.²⁰⁰ In the eastern area the first night after the sham fight was one of dancing, during which the women were pelted with excrements by the men.²⁰¹ What is important in the present context is the fact that these sham fights are symptoms of a latent antagonism between the sexes.

Earlier in this chapter we rendered Boelaars' version of the *aili*, according to which the ceremony effects the expulsion of sickness and death.²⁰² The suggestion that the *imo*-*déma* on the bottom of the Bian river sends the *déma* *Kav* and *Uk* to drive the powers of sickness away, impressed us as an impromptu one, brought up to forestall further questioning. We already noted that Boelaars' informants were anxious to disclose as little of their secrets as possible. Jufuway, too, emphasizes the healing and fertilizing powers of the *imo*-rites and in particular of the *aili*, which was the rite he came to know on the upper Bian. Far more detailed is the account Wirz gives of the *arih*,²⁰³ which he presents as a rite of both the *imo* and the *mayo*, performed primarily to ensure the fertility of the crops. The texts of the songs are rather obscure, but in the text of the *arih* for the bananas there is a great number of words which can be identified. They refer i.a. to several species of bananas and to the sexual act. This *arih* is said to have been sung by the men who committed sodomy with *Geb*, the banana *déma*.²⁰⁴ It was from their activity that the banana originated and the repetition of the act promotes the fertility of the crop. There are also *arih* for coconuts, sago and betel. An *arih* may be performed when in sea-fishing there has been a prolonged period of poor catches. Then a *duv-arih* is called for (*duv* means beach). When mosquitoes appear in such numbers as to become a pest, the sleepless night is sometimes beguiled by singing and dancing the *nangit-arih*, the mosquito *arih*. On the occasion of a fertility *arih* the number of participants should be as large as possible. Children, too, partake and for the occasion they are

²⁰⁰ Viegen, Ann. 33 pp. 330 f.; Geurtjens, Onder de Kaja-Kaja's pp. 184 ff.

²⁰¹ Viegen, l.c.

²⁰² Cf. above, pp. 615 f.

²⁰³ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 90 ff.

²⁰⁴ Cf. above, p. 227. We may assume that the text has an erotic overtone. Jufuway (NGS 1960 p. 206) has the following text: "*Gegelo o, mbutigelo, saigelo*" which he translates by: "The bananas are appearing already, the bunch (of fruits) is bending down already" but which should be read: "*Ge* (a banana-variety) sperma o! *Mbuti* (another banana-variety) sperma o! *Sai* (idem) sperma o!" (Verschueren, Letters XI p. 23).

decorated with an artificial hairdo, plaited onto a small net which covers the head. The dance is performed on the beach or in the village. During the dance men and women have sexual intercourse in the bush behind the village. Wirz emphasizes the necessity that as many people shall partake in it as possible. There is no need here to repeat our earlier comment on the organization of sexual promiscuity by the Marind. Wirz reports that the sperma is collected to be mixed with grated coconut meat, after which it is applied to the crop for which the *arih* was performed.

More interesting in this context is the following: "Besides the fertility *arih*, the western coastal people, and more specifically the *imo*, have an *arih* which is performed to drive out the *tik*, sickness. *Suba wakun*, the exploding of bamboo, is performed only in the eastern coastal area".²⁰⁵ We note in passing that this is at variance with Verschueren's statement that *suba wakun* makes part of every *imo aili*. Verschueren is very explicit on this point: it is among the *imo* that the bamboos exploded during *suba wakun* are most meaningful. They derive from the bamboo-poles manipulated during the preceding trance-dance. As a matter of fact, the *imo* pretend that the *mayo* borrowed the *suba wakun* ceremony from the *imo*.²⁰⁶ More relevant to the present context is that, by way of example, Wirz describes the *tik* ceremony observed by him at Elebémě in the westernmost section of the coast. It was a ceremony which had first been held at Sangasé and subsequently in one after another of the coastal villages west of Sangasé.

"One day the women, at the bidding of the men, prepared a big sago-dish, as is usual on festive occasions. This dish was mixed with sperma, but only a few old women knew this. The next afternoon the people gathered in the village. Nobody was allowed to stay away. Everybody was given a portion of the dish. Toward five o'clock six performers appeared, painted black from head to foot. In their hairdo they each had fixed a long, elastic rod (*arib*) with, on top, the black head of an ibis [*ébob*, *Threskiornis moluccus*]. These *déma*-performers of the *imo* . . . entered the village in pairs . . . With solemn paces they marched up and down, several times in succession, the long *arib* swinging above their heads. Now the people went to the beach and performed the *arih*. Other men, too, appeared who in their hairdo had birds' heads perched on long rods which, during the singing and

²⁰⁵ Wirz, op. cit. p. 94.

²⁰⁶ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 25.

dancing, swung to and fro. This went on all night, but before daybreak the performers [apparently those with the *ébob*] returned again with bullroarers. The noise could be heard even while they were still a long way off. On this side of the Bian the bullroarer is no longer a secret implement and soon the performers appeared on the beach, swinging their bullroarers. The whole crowd joined them and all together they went westwards, singing and yelling, to the Wamal river. When the party arrived at the river-bank, they all threw off their decorations and dived into the river as if they wanted to wash off all the germs of sickness clinging to their bodies. Then a great fire was laid in which all the discarded decorations were burned, so as to destroy even the last traces of sickness. Finally, they returned to the village. A few days later the same ceremony was celebrated at Wamal and Baléwil and subsequently at Awehima, the westernmost settlement on the coast. They hoped that by now the *tik* had been definitely banned by chasing it into the sea."²⁰⁷

A brief comment may be inserted before we turn to Geurtjens' description of a similar ceremony. Wirz characterizes the performance as an *imo* ceremony. Yet, it must be noted that the people of the villages mentioned are, with few exceptions, *mayo* people. Whether the six performers are *mayo* or *imo* cannot be established with absolute certainty, but the odds are that they are *mayo*. A village like Elebéme could not have produced six *imo* performers, *imo* members being rare among the inhabitants of these parts. It is true, however, that their decoration is typically *imo*. Apparently we are dealing with an *imo* ceremony in which the *mayo* people participate. One point in Wirz's account remains obscure, viz. why the six performers are called *déma*-performers. As far as can be ascertained, they are simply *ébob-ti*, people with the ibis decoration.

Geurtjens describes how disease was rampant at the time of the transition from the dry season to that of the rain-bringing northwest monsoon. The people of his village (Okaba) decided to drive out the sickness: "One afternoon two dancing *déma*-performers entered the village. Their bodies were entirely covered with croton-twigs and shreds of young coconut-leaves. On his forehead, fastened to a broad crown of cassowary feathers, each wore the gay shield representing the *batend*, which concealed his face. They looked more like walking shrubs than like men. In their hands they each held a long spear, complete with

²⁰⁷ Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 94 f.

spear-thrower, ready to be hurled at the enemy. The foremost parts and the points of the spears were painted white with lime, an indication that they were aiming at the evil spirits against whom lime is a generally used charm. With mincing steps they went from house to house, halting at each door and poking their spears into every nook and cranny, hunting the invisible enemy. All the people crowded behind them. They were armed with long sticks and axil pieces of palm-leaves, with which they beat and cudgelled the ground, the houses, the scrubs and the trees, to stir up the evil spirits Amidst an enormous din they went all round the village. When at last they arrived at the edge of the village, the two performers fled to a nearby pool. They dived into it, the muddy water coming up to their heads; they remained in this position while a few helpers assisted them in getting rid of their ornaments so as to make sure that the evil spirits would not recognize them. In the meantime the crowd had returned to the other side of the village. . . . where the *arih* was started, which lasted throughout the night".²⁰⁸ Geurtjens further reports that in front of each house-door a hole was drilled by means of a red stick decorated with palm-leaves. In the hole a small bamboo cylinder containing medicine was buried.

There is no need to relate his description of the *arih*. As to the preceding ceremony, many years ago I argued that the *déma*-performers probably represent the *tik-déma*, the *déma* of sickness, who is driven back to his proper domain, the pool where he belongs and where the decorations which made the *déma* are left, at least temporarily.²⁰⁹ It is the same proceeding as that followed by the people of Elebémě, who carried the sickness to the Wamal river.

Now we must return to the *imo aili*. In one important respect it differs from the *arih*, viz. the dancing with the bamboo pole, which is lacking in all the descriptions of the *arih* as performed in public. It is apparently an *imo* performance and, as such, a secret performance which can only be executed inside the enclosure of the *imo-mirāv*. The trance element of the performance introduces a completely new aspect, one which has not as yet been reported of the Marind-Anim. It is apparently typical of the *imo* only, because it is this element which the upper Bian people have borrowed from them, adding it to their own ritual. Jufuway's somewhat awkward description suggests that in a different, though more variegated form this trance-dance is one of

²⁰⁸ Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 113 f.

²⁰⁹ Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 150.

the main features of the upper Bian *imo* celebration. Jufuway calls the song *elech*, the dance *wellu*. The festive grounds are by means of a big fence divided into two halves, a male and a female one, just as in the ordinary upper Bian ritual. The dancing ground is on the women's side. At a certain moment the *imo* leader designates ten or twelve people who have to go to the men's section to prepare the *Geb-zé wellu*. "There they fall into line, each putting an arm round the middle of the man next to him". Together, they represent a snake, the *bir*, well-known from *Geb-zé* mythology. When the bullroarers are sounded they return to the women's section, where the snake moves up and down among the dancers. The *wellu* dancers do not partake in the singing. They dance to and fro till, exhausted, they collapse on the ground. "That means that the power of the *imo* has touched them". In the meantime some old people have been chewing ginger and a root called *goraka*. They hurry towards the dancers, spit the masticated ginger and *goraka* on the bodies of the senseless dancers and beat them with twigs till they regain consciousness; the *imo* has resuscitated them. The first night the *Geb-zé wellu* and the *Mahu-zé wellu* are both performed twice. The *Mahu-zé wellu* differs profoundly from the *Geb-zé wellu*. One man represents a sago tree; sago-leaves have been tied to his body so as to turn him into a live sago palm. Other men stand two abreast, holding each other by the hand, while beating the ground with the other hand. They are the birds which eat the fruits (the flowers) of the tree. Suddenly they all throw themselves down on the ground, to be resuscitated in a similar way as the *Geb-zé wellu* dancers. During the third night the *Ndik-end wellu* is performed. In this case a water-apple tree is represented, surrounded by birds and human beings eating its fruits.²¹⁰ When the celebration is over and the people return to their everyday pursuits, they are not allowed to embrace their children until three days afterwards. The power of the *imo* is still so strong in them that close contact with their children would make the latter sick.²¹¹

Jufuway also points out that the *imo* celebration has the dispelling of sickness for its purpose. When at sunrise the *aili* has to come to an end, all the initiates, dancing, go to the banks of the Avil swamp, where with one voice they shout: *oioi!!!* Then all ornaments of flowers and leaves are torn off and thrown into the water. This means, adds Jufu-

²¹⁰ Jufuway, NGS 1960 pp. 205, 207.

²¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 212.

way, "that all the evil and all the sickness which have recently visited the people are cast off, and that the *imo* shall protect us from now on".²¹² It is interesting to note that on his sketch-map of the festive grounds²¹³ Jufuway has the Avil swamp in the upper left hand corner; if the sketch is oriented in the usual way, with the top of the page indicating the north, the swamp is west of the *imo-miráv*. This is corroborated by the fact that the *Geb-sé* fire is on the left (west) and the *Mahu-sé* fire on the right (east); in the myth of *Geb* and *Ndiwa* or *Mahu*, *Geb* comes from the west, *Ndiwa* from the east. All evil, then, is sent off to the west. In the evening of the day on which the *aili* is terminated, there follows the episode of the crushing of the coconut, described in the section on the cult of the upper Bian people.²¹⁴ When the coconut has been crushed, the performer dashes in every direction, dancing and brandishing his spear, as if wishing to kill the bystanders. That is, according to Jufuway, a sign that all the devils have been driven out,²¹⁵ an explanation which certainly fits the pattern, but is probably wrong. The threatening dancer may with more justification be explained as a reference to the practice of headhunting.²¹⁶

There are some telling differences between Jufuway's account and the procedure of the *aili*- and *esam*-rites as depicted in this chapter. He mentions the trance-dance, but not the bamboos. Instead, the dancers perform a variety of elaborate dances which resemble a *déma-wir* rather than the dance with the bamboo of the *aili*; in place of the coconuts decorated as human heads, he mentions a stick one meter high with a bunch of painted coconut-husks fixed to it. These differences rather worried Verschueren, who devoted more than five pages to them²¹⁷ and finally decided to make some enquiries of his own when visiting the upper Kumbe. Here he met with a few old friends who knew all about the matter. Jufuway obtained his information when in charge of a police-squad he made a raid on a secret celebration near Boha. He did not know that one hour before he arrived on the scene an old man who had taken a short cut through the forest had warned the performers. The story tallies with Jufuway's report, which gives evidence that he lost much precious time. The warning gave the per-

²¹² Ibid. p. 211.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 208.

²¹⁴ Above, p. 584.

²¹⁵ Jufuway, op. cit. p. 212.

²¹⁶ Cf. above, p. 586.

²¹⁷ Cf. Verschueren, Letters XI pp. 21-27.

formers ample opportunity to alter the stage. The scenes enacted for Jufuway were scenes taken from a performance executed some time before on the occasion of a Roman Catholic holy day. The bamboos had been left on the stage and went unnoticed, as expected. The wooden stick with the coconut-shells was hurriedly knocked together, a number of husks being added to the two decorated nuts which belong to the ritual.²¹⁸ There is not the slightest reason why we should discount the information given to Verschueren. Not only does it confirm all the misgivings I had from the very first (actually, Jufuway's report should never have been published in its original form), but the details of the information given to Verschueren tally perfectly well both with Jufuway's report and with the situation one would expect to be created by a police-raid.

Now we must return to the *imo aili*. It is obvious that it has a specific character, distinct from the *arih* of the *Mayo-Marind*, even though it may resemble the latter when it is combined with *suba wakun*, the exploding of bamboos. This resemblance, however, is superficial, as in the *aili* the bamboos have a far more important function, which they do not have in the *arih*. There is no doubt that the *aili* is aimed at promoting health and fertility and the occasion for its performance was often some form of distress.

Having sketched the characteristic forms of the *aili*, we now have to consider a few points which are much in need of further clarification. The first of these is concerned with the problem when the *aili* was celebrated. There are three answers to this question. The first is that it is combined with the *bangu*; ²¹⁹ the second that it follows upon the initiation ceremony called *kagaib*; ²²⁰ and the third that it is resorted to on the occasion of some epidemic disease. Thus far the point last mentioned did not get the attention it deserves. In fact, all the authors describing or mentioning the ceremony refer to it as a rite for driving out sickness. This is also the case, writes Verschueren, with the notes on Sangasé collected by F. Rievers during the years that he was a missionary in Okaba, notes which Verschueren consulted when preparing his *Imo-Report*. Among them is a description of the *aili* celebrated at Sangasé in 1938 on the occasion of the epidemic of influenza. The report, written by the local mission-teacher, ends with the dry remark

²¹⁸ Ibid. XII p. 1.

²¹⁹ Above, p. 628.

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 634.

that in Sangasé there were eight people dead when the *aili* was performed, while another 33 died after the celebration.²²¹ Obviously, we may take it for granted that the *aili*, next to making part of *bangu* and *kagaib*, was also a rite resorted to in distress. This explains how Verschueren in the description could associate the rite with *kapatu-bombari*. We noted that the *kapatu* is ripe in February.²²² By then it is the time of the wet monsoon, the time, too, that there are many sick people. As a matter of fact, the influenza epidemic of 1938 did not make an exception.²²³ Geurtjens, again, gives the time of the transition from east to west monsoon (about December) as the time of the celebration he described. Apparently there is a certain irregularity in the timing of the celebration, caused by local conditions of health. It is highly improbable that the execution of the rites in the wet season would always coincide with the performance of a *kagaib* ceremony, which was a most infrequent event. A combination of *aili* and *bangu* could never coincide with the wet season, as the *bangu* is celebrated during the east monsoon.²²⁴

A second question which has to be answered is whether the *aili* was also an initiation ceremony. In his earlier letters Verschueren refers to the *aili* as a *burap*-initiation, literally an initiation of or for the *burap*, the uninitiated. What his informant really meant is an initiation which is not taken seriously by the initiated men.²²⁵ In his last letter he writes that there is an initiation for the boys when they become *aroi-patur*, an initiation which does not coincide with the *aili*, which his informants called a simple *burap bombari*, a rite (but not an initiation rite) for the uninitiated.²²⁶ I must say that I do not feel satisfied. We shall see later that this first initiation of the boys does not amount to much ²²⁷ and it certainly does not explain the inference Verschueren made from earlier information, which he collected in the days when his knowledge of the rites was still fairly incomplete. When he inquired into the story that the secret of the *imo* really was a canoe, an old man of Senégi told him that this story must have originated from the *burap*-initiation, which, as he was told later, was the *aili*. And the two bamboos used by the women during their dance are called canoes, a statement

²²¹ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 26.

²²² Above, p. 630.

²²³ This must be inferred from what I wrote in my *Memorie*, p. 85.

²²⁴ Above, pp. 614, 617.

²²⁵ Verschueren, Letters II p. 4 and XI p. 25.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* XII p. 2.

²²⁷ Below, pp. 645 f.

repeated in Letter XI.²²⁸ This implies that the women, when dancing the *aili*, are either staging the myth of the *imo*-canoe, the *uga*-canoe, just as the men do during the *bangu*, or the myth of the origin of man in which one version has the new-born men depart from Kondo in two canoes, one for each moiety.²²⁹ A choice between the two alternatives is difficult to make; personally, I hold the view that it is a matter of both at the same time, but I do not think it is important. What really is important is the fact that the women are performing a dance which is intrinsically identical with the men's dance. This is certainly not to be made light of. They are struck by the *imo* and they are brought to life again by the *imo*. In other words, the *imo* takes possession of them. Condescendingly, the men may speak of a *burap-bombari*, but in actual fact this is the form in which the women participate and by comparison with the minor role the women are allowed to play in the Boadzi or the northern upper Bian villages, it is not an unimportant part at all. They have a share in the secret of the *imo* anyhow, and are neither excluded nor forgotten. We conclude that the *imo* have their own way of letting the women participate in the secret of their cult.

Finally, we have to return to the role of the *batend-déma*, the bower bird. Its appearance is mentioned by Verschueren.²³⁰ The *déma*-performers who appear in the *tik-bombari* as described by Geurtjens have their faces covered by *batend*-shields.²³¹ This in itself is not an indication that they, too, represent the *batend-déma*. The *batend*-shield is an ornament worn by most *déma*-performers.²³² In this case, however, the odds are that the two performers do represent the *batend*. First of all, there is Verschueren's communication to the effect that the bower bird sometimes has a part to play in the *aili*. In the second place, the *Imo-Marind* never use the *batend*-shield to cover the face of a *déma*-performer in a *déma-wir*, but avail themselves of cassowary plumes (*sobolu*) instead.²³³ The scene described by Geurtjens was, in all probability, observed in Okaba. Although predominantly *mayo*, *imo* influences are important here and, all things considered, it seems probable enough that the two performers represented the *batend-déma*.

Up to an extent the identification is supported by myth. The *batend*-

²²⁸ Verschueren, Letters II p. 4 and XI p. 25, confirmed again in XII p. 2.

²²⁹ Above, p. 85.

²³⁰ Ibid. pp. 633 f.

²³¹ Ibid. p. 637.

²³² Ibid. p. 325.

²³³ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 44.

déma, too, is chased and, as the keeper of the eastern land of the dead, he might well be identified with the déma of sickness. Moreover, morally, the *batend*-déma is a bad character. The chasing of the déma by *Doreh* and so many others might reflect the expulsion of the *tik*-déma. The very clumsiness of the bower bird's pursuers, who strike out to the right and the left, doing damage to everything except the bird, which flies farther and farther away, might be said to have its parallel in the behaviour of the village people, shouting and clubbing in pursuit of the déma-performers. There is, however, one fundamental objection to the equation, viz. that the *batend*-déma went further and further eastward and that the *tik*-déma is driven out in a westerly direction. A simple identification of the two is impossible even though a relationship of some sort seems obvious.

In this connection yet another point needs comment. The *tik*-déma, here apparently associated with the west and with rivers and pools, is sent off in a direction which has been defined as the direction of the *Geb-zé* moiety. There is an anomaly here. If the *tik*-déma must be associated with either of the two moieties, it should be the *Sami-rek* and not the *Geb-zé*. The *batend* is a *Sami-rek*, and sickness is also explicitly associated with the frigate bird, a totem of the *Yorm-end*.²³⁴ The native name of the big black bird, *muriwa*, i.e. Muli-mother, refers to Strait Marianne, the Muli, but also to the northwest monsoon (which is also called *muli*). During the east monsoon the bird is never seen. When, at last, it appears again, the gales of the northwest monsoon are impending.²³⁵ The direction in which the *tik*-déma travels, viz. from east to west, is contrary to what we would expect of an associate of the *Sami-rek* moiety. Of course, we may try to explain the difficulty away. We could suggest that the *tik*-déma is sent back to his place of origin, the water, the pools, the west. We may ensure perfect harmony with the prevailing system of classification by a slight adaptation of the formula adopted in Ch. IX.²³⁶ If to the clause, 'east-west and west-east are the distinctive characteristics of, respectively, the one and the other moiety', we add, 'because the powers of the *Geb-zé* originate from the east, and those of the *Sami-rek* from the west (resp. Imo or the interior, as the case may be)', the system of classification stands unchallenged. Only, it is not as simple as all that, because the *tik*-déma always comes from the east and goes to the west. The epidemic

²³⁴ Geurtjens, J.P. 1926 p. 160.

²³⁵ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 7.

²³⁶ Above, pp. 439 f.

of venereal granulome was attributed to the navel déma of *rapa* and *mayo* at Kondo and Brawa. These navel déma are *Geb-zé* and the *tik* sent by them should travel from east to west, as befits a *Geb-zé* déma. In this particular case we might think of an association with the déma who was the first man to die. This is another explanation and again one which harmonizes with the classificatory system. The trouble is that we cannot validate both explanations at the same time. Moreover, there is also the story of the woman killed by the Kondo people, who turned into a *tik*-déma and travelled westward all along the coast, which was in November or December 1917.²³⁷ We are dealing with what from a classificatory point of view is an inconsistency which the Marind have not been able to sort out. The way from life to death is from east to west, but death and evil come from the west and travel to the east. The *batend*-déma who killed his own mother provides a good example of the second principle. How could he be associated with the *tik*-déma, who travels in the opposite direction? There is no answer to this question. Even the possibility that our hypothesis may be wrong and that the *batend*-déma has nothing to do with the performers who impersonate the *tik*-déma, does not offer a solution. Verschueren informs us that the *ailli* celebrated at Sangasé on the occasion of the flu-epidemic of 1938 was followed by an episode which is described by the village-teacher, "and his description agrees almost to the letter with the one Geurtjens gives of the two déma-performers who, dancing, enter the village and who are followed by all the people".²³⁸ It is true that the *batend*-masks have not been mentioned in so many words, but even so, it cannot very well be denied that the *batend* played a role in the scene. It is ten to one that the masks were, indeed, used, and what with Sangasé being an *imo* village, the use of the mask implies that the performer impersonates the *batend*-déma. This sums up all there is to say about it. Apparently, primitive systems of classification are liable to the same imperfections as modern ones.

7. THE INITIATION RITES OF THE IMO

Verschueren is the only observer who succeeded in obtaining information on the initiation into the secret rites of the *imo*. There are, he writes, three successive stages. The first is the ceremony called *mbararo* or *mbararo*. It is celebrated for boys who have just become

²³⁷ Vertenten, Ann. 1918 pp. 198 f.

²³⁸ Cf. Verschueren, Letters XI p. 26.

aroi-patur. The second ceremony is *ndaho hawn* and should be performed for the young men who are *éwati*. To be initiated into the third, the *kagaib*-ritual, the young man should be a *miakim*, preferably an unmarried one, though Verschueren's informants added that often some of the candidates will already be married.²³⁹

The first of these ceremonies hardly, if at all, deserves to be called an initiation ceremony. "As soon as the boys have been made *aroi-patur*, the initiates set about gathering large quantities of garden produce, which are piled up on a heap in the *imo-miráv*. Then the *aroi-patur* are brought into the *miráv* by their *binahor-éwai*. The boys are made to stand on the pile, while the men gather round and sing *gaga* until the morning".²⁴⁰ Obviously it is a very simple ceremony. The name is enigmatic; *mbararo* seems to refer to *barar* or *mbarar* and the procedure is remotely reminiscent of that of the *barar-angai*.²⁴¹ Personally, I do not think we are justified in calling it an initiation rite. The term should be reserved for the two ceremonies performed when the boys are of nubile age. Verschueren collected his information on these rites at Senégi, and he recorded the data in his *Imo-Report*, pp. 2-7. A free translation is submitted in the following pages.

Ndaho hawn, literally, you must have a look at it, is the name of the first initiation. Before the rites can begin, the neophytes must have lived in abstinence, i.e. have refrained from all sexual activity, including intercourse with their own wives, for at least two months. [We note that the initiation may take place at a more advanced age than that of *éwati*, which, in modern times, certainly is the rule rather than the exception; v. B.] The order for the period of continence to begin is given by the *pakas-anem* of Sangasé-Alatep, who is the supreme leader of the cult. Continence is considered a prime requirement; at the time Verschueren was conducting his research, the Senégi candidates were preparing themselves for the ritual for a second time. An earlier effort at a celebration of the initiation ritual had come to naught, because the novices had failed their initiators by breaking the rule of sexual abstinence. To-day this initiation ritual may be performed at any time and in any place. Even so, a performance is apparently of infrequent occurrence. The last time the rites had been celebrated in Senégi was at Tamurik in 1935, i.e. exactly twenty years before Verschueren made

²³⁹ Verschueren, Letters XII p. 2.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Cf. above, p. 139 jo. below, pp. 828 ff.

his enquiries. The proper place for this initiation was said to be the *imo*-house near Sangasé, but when it is celebrated elsewhere, a clearing in the bush will serve as an *imo-miráv*. The place is fenced in with leaves and has only one entrance, which is richly decorated with coloured leaves and young coconut fronds.

When the preparatory period has been completed to the satisfaction of the initiates, the novices are told to line up in single file: the *Geb-zé* at the head, followed by, successively, the *Kai-zé*, *Ndik-end*, *Samkakai*, *Mahu-zé* and *Bragai-zé*. All the candidates are accompanied by their own *mitwar*, i.e. by initiates of their own clan, and not by their mothers' brothers, who, so it seems, have no specific function in this ritual. While the procession is forming up, other *mitwar* hide themselves alongside the path leading to the festive grounds. The moment the novices begin to move, a *Mahu-zé* signals to the hidden *mitwar* by blowing a whistle. Having arrived near the *imo-miráv*, one of the accompanying *Mahu-zé* initiates orders the boys (they may be married men!) to go into the thicket and defecate. Hardly have the boys retired, when the initiates disappear into the *imo-miráv*, with the exception only of the *Mahu-zé*, who await the return of the candidates. As soon as they have lined up for a second time, one of the initiates imitates the howl of a dog, then the procession moves on again. A dead silence prevails when they arrive in front of the gate of the *imo-miráv*. An old man representing a *déma*, gloriously decorated and quite beyond recognition under his ornaments, sits in perfect silence in front of the entrance, quietly pounding his betel in a wooden mortar. The *déma*-performer is in reality the *pakas-anem* of the *Geb-zé*. The boys are told to sit down near the performer, but just when they are about to do so, the old man rises and disappears into the *imo-miráv*. That very moment the earth trembles under the impact of a sudden blow, the hidden *mitwar* striking the ground with the flat of the hand, while they slowly approach from the thicket, closing in on the boys in an ever narrowing circle. They are magnificently attired and they each carry a red-painted wooden club, which they move in time to a rapid, staccato *Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh*, the only sound that is heard. Informants report that this simple technique has such a terrifying effect on the boys that they cry out in panic, hide their heads between their knees, and, fear-stricken, clutch at each other's thighs lest they should fly from the scene. On the occasion of the ceremony at Tamurik one of the boys, Waruma, could not stand it and took to his heels. When they have come quite near to the boys, the men suddenly retreat again

schueren, "are far less detailed and they give the impression that in respect of some parts at least of the ceremony I was kept in the dark". This more thorough-going initiation can only be performed in the Owi-forest near Sangasé. There we find the *imo-aha*, the *imo-house*, and whenever the word *imo-miráv* is used in this context, the *imo-house* is meant. Whereas the central *déma* of the previous ceremony was an old man by the name of *Awaba*, the main character in the present ritual is an *iwag*, *Awaba's* wife, *War-iwamb*.²⁴⁵ Of course, the names of the two *déma* are kept secret and in particular *War-iwamb's* name is never mentioned. The latter is usually referred to as *Samb Anum* (the grand woman),²⁴⁶ or *Dom Anum* (the bad woman) or *Nahi-iwag* (excrement woman). This woman is said to be the central character of the whole ritual; all the instructions regarding the rites and the ceremonies to be held emanate from her and are given by her to the *imo-leader*, *Amalo*, a man from *Alatep*, who passes them on to the initiates.

This ritual, too, is preceded by strict abstinence, primarily from all matters sexual, but also with regard to food. The novices are not allowed to eat sago, but are given bananas and taro instead. When the ceremonies begin, the novices are lined up in single file, the *Geb-zé* in front, followed on this particular occasion by the *Mahu-zé*, because here, it is said, they are the real leaders, though only in secret, just as the *imo-iwag* is in fact a *Mahu-zé*, but only to the initiates (viz. as *Nahi-iwag*, Excrement Woman). The *Bragai-zé* bring up the rear. The novices are led to the *imo-miráv* by a few initiates, while the other initiates are hiding near the entrance or sitting in front of the *imo-house*, blocking the door. As soon as the novices have arrived opposite the *imo-house*, the *Geb-zé pakas-anem* stands up, the initiates at the door step aside, leaving the entrance clear, and now the novices stand face to face with the *imo-iwag*, who, in an elaborate attire, sits motionless in the doorway. Then the *Geb-zé pakas-anem* cries out: 'Here are your men, demonstrate to them your power'. Instantly the *imo-iwag* withdraws, and at this very moment the novices are caught hold of and, with the utmost violence, dragged along, jerked round and round, now right, then left and pushed to and fro relentlessly till, at last, staggering, they fall down, completely numbed and exhausted. The initiates see to it that the *Bragai-zé* candidates fall down nearest to

²⁴⁵ In other words: *Uaba* and *Ualirwamb*.

²⁴⁶ *Anum* is the feminine form of *anem*, man, human being.

the *imo*-house, the *Geb-zé* farthest from it. Now the mouth, the nose and the eyes of each candidate are rubbed with excrements and sperma. Lying down, they must remain where they are, till small maggots appear on their besmeared faces. In the meantime the initiates are singing *gaga*, which they alternate with a few other very secret songs, *Aramembna* and *Warivona*. At the time no information could be obtained on these songs, but later Verschueren succeeded in making tape-recordings of the *imo* songs at Senégi. According to the spoken commentary, the *wariv* is sung when the novices are brought into the *imo-miráv*. Later the *awi-awi* is sung. Then follows the *gaga*.²⁴⁷ Here we have to interrupt the narrative because the names of the songs require some comment.

We note that the reference to *Aramemb* proves that he is an important mythical character in the *imo*-cult as well; his specific association with initiation has been discussed above.²⁴⁸ The name *Warivona* (or, in the text of the spoken commentary on Verschueren's tape-recordings, *Wariv*) almost certainly holds a reference to *Woliv*, the first man to die according to a western version of the myth of *Woryu*. The name *Wariv* is practically identical with *Woliv*; in the Sangasé dialect the r becomes an l and the only uncertain element is the assumed change of a into o. In identifying the two I have the support of Verschueren, who writes: "I share your opinion that *Wariv* (as I heard it pronounced) stands for *Woriv*, etc."²⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, the identification of the two is — up to an extent — corroborated by circumstantial evidence. *Woliv*, a man of *Makléw*, rises from his grave during (or just after) a sun eclipse. He follows his relatives, who have gone to a pig feast at Sangasé, and joins them there. Food is refused to him because he is dead. He then goes westward, taking his drum *Mingui* (maggot) with him.²⁵⁰ The repugnant scene just described combines various elements mentioned in the myth: the maggots, the place-name Sangasé and the association of the *imo* with death generally. An interesting trait in the story is the sun eclipse. A sun eclipse can occur only when there is a new moon, but a pig feast is held preferably when the moon is at the full. In other words, the story has been purposely distorted. *Woliv's* relatives did not go to a *basik-angai*, but to an *imo* celebration held when there was no moon. We know that

²⁴⁷ Cf. the tape-recordings in the Ethnomusicological Archives.

²⁴⁸ Above, p. 292.

²⁴⁹ Letters XI p. 27.

²⁵⁰ Cf. above, p. 200.

it must be new moon when the feast is celebrated commemorating the episode of the *imo*-canoe (the *bangu*). It is possible and even probable that other *imo* celebrations, too, may only take place when there is no moon. For *Woliw*'s relatives to visit a celebration of this kind would be all-right, but their setting out to join a pig feast when the funeral was barely over seems bad form, to say the least. If we assume that *Woliw*'s relatives went to a secret celebration, the whole story makes more sense. At the same time it becomes all the more probable that *Wariw* refers to *Woliw*.²⁵¹

Now we take up the account of the ritual again. The *Imo*-Report goes on to relate that when enough maggots are visible on their faces, the novices are carried into the *imo*-house. Here their sense organs are rubbed with secretion from under the foreskin. After some spells have been pronounced, the novices are put on their feet, being jerked up by the nose. Now at last they are coming to, and begin to see and understand. When they are told to take a bath, they go in procession to the secret swamp of the *imo*, the *War-iwar* swamp in the forest of Owi. Here lives a big, mythical crocodile; anyone who has not made a firm resolve that he will keep the secrecy of the rites will be swallowed instantly. Bathing has by now become an urgent necessity per se, for not only are the faces of the novices caked with filth, but in their fright they have also dirtied themselves.

At this point a short note should be inserted. There is a remarkable resemblance between the name of the swamp and that of *Ualiwamb* (*War-iwamb*). Moreover, she is a sister of the crocodile, which has its abode in the swamp. Verschueren informs me that, though we should be careful not to identify *War-iwar* and *War-iwamb*, a possible translation of the latter's name would be '(she) who owns the *War-iwar* (swamp)', to which he adds: "This, indeed, might well be its true meaning. Up to the present day there has always been an air of mystery and profound secrecy about this swamp behind Owi. Though my Senégi informants assure me that crocodiles are more abundant there than anywhere else, nobody ever dared to hunt them. . . . Repeatedly I have attempted, together with a few young men of Senégi,

²⁵¹ Ann. 67 (1953) p. 180 has a modern reading of the story of *Woliw* according to which *Woliw* returns to life after having been in the grave for three nights. It is possible to interpret it as a reference to the moon, but I prefer another explanation, viz. a reference to the resurrection of Christ. In this modern version *Woliw* has other Christ-like features which make the story utterly unfit to be used in our present study.

to pay a visit to the forest of Owi and the War-iwar swamp, but it never came to that, because there invariably occurred a hitch, sometimes of a completely ludicrous nature, and I presume that even the initiates of Senégi do not dare to go there".²⁵²

On their return the *Kai-zé* light the *imo*-fire and that night the novices have to lie down round this fire when they go to sleep, the members of each moiety keeping to their own side. In the meantime all the fires in the village have been extinguished by smothering them with earth. Finally a *Kai-zé iwag* approaches and collects some embers from the new *imo*-fire, which she hands to the other women. Now a dish must be prepared which has to contain elements of all the known sago species. Sperma for this dish must be contributed by the *Bragai-zé*.²⁵³ The next night is devoted to sexual promiscuity. Originally, moiety-exogamy was strictly observed, but in recent years the rule seems to be scarcely obeyed. The day following the night of promiscuity a hunt is organized, a big drive in which the game is roused by grass-fires. Then at night there is again sexual promiscuity; what Verschueren has to say on this point has already been related in connection with the *aili*.²⁵⁴ The procedure is the same, although the *kagaib* as such is a much bigger affair than a simple *aili* celebration. According to Verschueren's informants the *kagaib* with all its complementary ceremonies lasts a week. It is only in recent years that the length of this performance, like that of other rituals, has been reduced to one single night. In the spoken commentary on his tape-recordings Verschueren states that the initiation is followed by an *aili* celebration, which explains the long duration of the ritual as well as the similarities between an *aili* celebration and the final part of a *kagaib*.

This concludes the communications made by Verschueren. They add very substantially to our knowledge and there are only a few points left which need some further comment. The first of these is concerned with the *aili* ritual which is combined with the annual *bangu* as well as with the final initiation ceremony, the *kagaib*, but may also be celebrated independently. In later years the *aili* has become the most frequently performed ceremony of the *imo*. It is very well possible and even plausible that, initially, the *aili* constituted the closing rite of most

²⁵² Verschueren, Letters XI p. 28. What with crocodile skins being valuable and the animals becoming scarcer and scarcer because of excessive hunting it is, indeed, significant that the crocodiles of Owi are respected.

²⁵³ Probably through masturbation; Verschueren, Letters XI p. 28.

²⁵⁴ See above, p. 634.

of the other *imo* ceremonies, to which uninitiated people were admitted under certain conditions. If this should be the case, the inference, which is an important one, must be that the women, though officially excluded from all the secrets, played a substantial part in the celebration of every secret rite. It is the women who are taken possession of by the *imo*, at least primarily so, and this makes their association important. What else could the *imo* be but the vague and indescribable power of the ritual, among the Boadzi and the upper Rian people presented by the symbols of *faroch* and coconut?

The second point to be commented on concerns the revelation which we expect to be the culmination of the initiation. It is obvious that something has been held back from *Verschueren*. The novices have caught a glimpse, first of *Uaba*, and in the second ritual of *Ualiwamb*, and it is only logical that they should be allowed to see them a second time. It is hardly possible that they would not see them. At the end of the final ordeal the novices enter into the *déma*-house, which is the house of the *imo-iwag*. It is said that, when they are on their legs again, they come to their senses and begin to see and to understand. If there is any purpose in bringing the candidates into the *déma*-house, it would be to reveal to them the real secret of the *imo-iwag*, either by letting them behold the *imo-iwag* a second time, or by allowing them to find out that the *déma* is in reality a performer who, when 'she' has laid down her ornaments, turns out to be one of the initiates.

This must remain conjecture. We have a firmer grip on the various aspects associated with the rites. They all point in one direction: head-hunting, death, and life coming forth from death. The association of the *bangu* ceremony with headhunting, life from death and the demons of sickness has been discussed at some length.²⁵⁵ We also paid attention to the similarities between the *imo*-cult and the upper Rian cult, in particular in respect of the symbolic function of the coconut. The relationship with headhunting is confirmed in the *ndaho-hawn* ritual; the headhunter's knife is the centre-piece over the entrance to the *imo-miráv*. The connection with death is also present in the *aíli* and in the *kagaib* ceremonies. In the *aíli* the appearance of the *batend-déma* suggests a connection with death, in the *kagaib* it is the maggots which have to appear on the faces of the initiates. *Wolizv*, who is probably commemorated in the song called *Warizv(na)*, has a drum called maggot (*Mingui*) and this drum plays an important role in the notions con-

²⁵⁵ Above, pp. 626 ff.

cerning the dead.²⁵⁶ During the mortuary rites of the *imo* the participants must look hard at the ground lest they see the *déma* *Mingui* who follows the procession with his drum.²⁵⁷ Another interesting feature is that after a recent death the dead are believed to dance the *arih* (*aïli*).²⁵⁸ It is the dead who are performing the life-giving ceremony. The combination of life and death is most strongly represented in the character of the *imo-ïwag*. Her identity with *Ualiwamb* confirms that she is indeed the tribal mother she was said to be by Gooszen and Viegen. In her appearance nothing reminds us of motherhood; she is the Bad Woman, an Excrement Woman. Meeting the Woman entails a horrible ordeal which in its atrocious aspects is surpassed only by the initiation a medicine-man has to undergo.²⁵⁹ She is not a woman like the *Mayo-mes-ïwag*, who carries her children into the *miráv*. Instead, her children are severely dealt with from the moment they set eyes on her. She is the personification of evil and of all the things the Marind abhor in daily life. Their aversion from excrements is a strong one, as, long ago, Vertenten already pointed out.²⁶⁰ It became very obvious indeed in the days that statute labour still could be and actually was required. Default could be punished with three days' imprisonment, a light punishment, and sometimes the need was felt to make the three days spent in prison more uncomfortable. There was only one legal means to achieve this, and in the small prison of Okaba its effect was surprising: having the prisoners empty the cesspools. It was most effective in enforcing fulfilment of the hateful obligation of maintaining roads and bridges. It is amazing to see these same people, who so deeply loathe any contact with excrements, apply them in such an atrocious manner. There is no doubt that the treatment which the novices undergo is a real agony. The *imo-ïwag* is indeed the Bad Woman par excellence and the appearance of the maggots on the faces of the novices associates her most strongly with decay and death, as do the associations with black, night, dark moon and a pit. Another illustration of the association of woman and evil is found in the burning of the women's aprons by the *mayo* people when the *imo* procession passes by. The processionists carry all sickness away with them when they pass through the smoke of the burning aprons. What is quite in

²⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 200.

²⁵⁷ Verschueren, *Imo-Report* p. 10.

²⁵⁸ Above, p. 202.

²⁵⁹ Below, pp. 888 ff.

²⁶⁰ Vertenten, J.P. 1924 p. 630.

place in this context is the masks representing the spirits of the dead, which are exhibited on the occasion of the *bangu*-ritual. However, there is more to these rites than a demonstration of the powers of death and decay. The *bangu* is combined with sexual intercourse, and both *bangu* and *kagaib* are concluded with an *aili*, the life-giving ritual. The great surprise in the enactment of this combination of life and death is the performers. The Bad Woman and the dead are impersonated by the men, but the main actors in the *aili* ritual are the women. It is primarily the women who are possessed by the *imo*. Their position is well in harmony with the leading part assigned to the *mes-iwag*.

Enigmatic is the role played by the *imo*-fire. It must be drilled on almost every occasion and it serves to light all the hearth-fires anew. The drilling of the fire by a *Kai-zé* man obviously holds a reference to *Uaba*, the man in the ritual who is second to the woman, the real mistress of the rites, who gives her instructions to the *pakas-anem* of Sangasé-Alatep. It is on her that all attention is focused and the fact that she must be impersonated by a representative of the *Sami-rek* gives this moiety an important say in the supervision of the ritual. In this context the emphasis on fire and fire-making seems somewhat out of place. The making of the fire does not, as the logical consequence, follow from the ritual, as it does in the *mayo*-rites where the *mayo*-fire is born from the *mayo-mes-iwag*. The drilling is unrelated to the process of the ritual. None the less, it is a very important feature to the celebrating men. The making of the fire is given much emphasis and the procession which gives the *déma* of sickness his send-off is headed by a *Kai-zé* man bearing the *imo*-fire.²⁶¹ He leads the way and it is obvious that the fire has a purifying effect, that the kindling of the fire expresses the idea of a new beginning, and that it is symbolic of the virtues of the male sex and the sun. In the next section we shall return to the function of the fire in the *imo*-ritual. For the moment, suffice it to say that its symbolism is not an overt symbolism.

The *imo* well deserve their name of being reticent and secretive. There is a permanent shifting of meaning and associations, also in connection with the names and the clan-affiliations of the leading characters. The man is now a boy, then a *Kai-zé* *déma*, and again the *Geb-zé* *déma* *Uaba*, who, after all, is also the ancestor of the *Kai-zé* and *Ndik-end*. The woman is first the *Geb-zé* *déma* *Nasem-zé iwag*, but she is also called the *Mahu-zé* *déma* *Nahi-iwag*, and finally she is

²⁶¹ Above, p. 614 jo. Verschueren, Letters XII p. 2.

identified with the *Bragai-zé* déma *Ualiwamb* (*Kanis-iwag*). That actually she is a *Bragai-zé* is corroborated by the fact that the candidates of this phratry are nearest to her hut. As a tribal ancestress she may be anything and represent any aspect, but it is obvious that the aspect which is really emphasized is that of the *Sami-rek* moiety as a whole. There is a rather complicated mysticism behind all this which has an aggrandizing effect on things, and even makes them differ from what they really are. Similar tendencies are to be found in the magical practices of the Marind and it is in this context that Marind-anim mysticism had best be discussed. Among the Marind, magic is certainly not a false science, but a real religion. It is in magic that myth and ritual attain their fullest meaning for daily life.

8. MAYO AND IMO. INITIATION AND SECLUSION

The mutual relationship of *mayo* and *imo* is a curious one. The main characters in both are *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. In both rituals the woman is the central character, but in both we find that the men as it were revolt against her predominant position. The antagonism of the male sex versus the female is obvious, but the forms it takes diverge. In the *mayo*-rites, where the men feel caught in copulation, the women, in spite of the prominent place allotted to them, are humiliated by being denied the delight they might otherwise take in the sexual act. In the *imo*-rites the woman is made into a symbol of evil and decay, but the living women are cast in the main roles in the life-giving *aili*.

The differences between the two rituals are all the more intriguing because next to them there are so many similarities. A curious example is provided by the function of the fire. In the *mayo* the bringing of the fire is the apotheosis of the ritual. Its 'birth' coincides with that of the new initiates. In the *imo*-rites emphasis is laid not on birth, but on death and the grave. Yet, the fire is of no less importance. Drilling fire is the specific ceremonial function of the *Kai-zé* and they perform it on many occasions. Besides, it is important to note that it is done, not at the end of the rites, but either before or at some time halfway through the performance. In the myth of the *uga*-canoe the first activity they engage in when the party goes ashore at Imo, is making fire.²⁶² When there is a celebration of the *aili*, the *imo*-fire is drilled for the first time when the men convene to deliberate on the time and the place

²⁶² Above, p. 258.

of the ritual; the second time is when the collected food has to be prepared just before the performance is to begin; then, fire is made when they have just entered the *imo-miráv*, and, lastly, for the performance of *suba-wakun* (the exploding of bamboo).²⁶³ In the account of the *ndaho-hawn* ceremony the *imo*-fire is mentioned twice. The first reference is to the fire being brought while the boys are still outside the enclosure; the *imo*-fire is said to have been made previously. The second time the *imo*-fire is mentioned is at the end of the ceremony, though without any reference to when it was made.²⁶⁴ During the *kagaib* ceremony fire is made when the novices return after bathing.²⁶⁵ A comparison with the procedure followed during the *aili*, which need not be anything more than a component of these initiation rites, makes it probable that during the initiation rites the act of fire-making may be performed more than once. One thing is certain, fire-drilling is not the final apotheosis, as it is in the *mayo*. Nor is it in the upper Bian cult, where fire is always present (the fire of the *Babé*). In the *bangu* ceremony the presence of fire is almost as important as in the *ézam*-cult, but there is an intriguing difference; among the *imo* the fire has yet to be made. Fire and fire-drilling are symbols of sexual intercourse.²⁶⁶ The fire is also *Uaba*, the male in the presiding couple, and the *Kai-zé déma*, whose prominent totem is the fire. The *imo*-fire stands for the community of the males and for the sexual act. When fire is drilled, the drills are previously smeared with sperma.²⁶⁷ The fire of the males offsets the decay personified by the Bad Woman. The latter stands for death, whereas the men represent life and the life-giving semen. The emphasis on the fire, the function of the males, might well be an effort to counterbalance the predominant part admitted to the female sex in myth and ritual. The women must receive the fire from the men. When viewed in the context of the erotic symbolism of the fire, the act implies a reminder of the fact that all fertility comes from the males.

In the *mayo* the emphasis is different, but the association of fire with life is the same. When the fire is generated, the woman is subdued. The myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* as related by Wirz stresses the importance of the event by adding that since the fire had been generated by copulation the *déma* of Kondo have no longer come to celebrate

²⁶³ Ibid. pp. 630 ff.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. pp. 648 f.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 653.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 564.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 631.

the *mayo* because they have something of their own which is more impressive.²⁶⁸ Even when we make allowance for the fact that this addition to the myth probably stems from Wirz's Kondo informant,²⁶⁹ it illustrates the place which fire occupies in Marind-anim thought and reflects their surprise at the fact that fire was generated in a way which resembles a birth. As far as I know, the notion is unique in South New Guinea. In fact, the notion that fire is born is, at best, hinted at and by no means fully accepted, because, when we enter into detail, it was not the fire that was born from *Ualhwamb*, but the cassowary (which is the fire-bird) and the stork, the new initiate. The fire was brought forth through an act of violence — forcefully ending intercourse — which strongly resembles fire-drilling. The effect of the act, however, so closely resembles birth that we may well look upon the myth as an indication of the growing importance of the idea of birth in the mental outlook underlying the *mayo*-rites. The *imo* also have the association of fire and copulating, but there is no immediate connection with birth. On the upper Bian we do not find that either of the two associations is given emphasis. As far as the data available allow us to conclude, the main role of the fire in the upper Bian ritual is that of a hearth-fire. It is a notion that is also prevalent in the *imo*-rites, where the women have to relight the fires in the hearths by kindling them anew from the *imo*-fire. We do not find that mention is made of this aspect among the *Mayo*-Marind. Here again the *imo* occupy an intermediate position between the upper Bian people and the *Mayo*-Marind.

The same applies to the position of the *Imo*-Marind with regard to the place accorded to the coconut in their cult. Among the upper Bian people the symbolism of the coconut is the main theme; the two coconuts are man and woman, husband and wife, who die in copulation. It is — as so often — the story told to the uninitiated which holds the esoteric truth. Life comes forth from death and copulation combined. The expression given to it is of the crudest directness imaginable. In the *imo* the coconut still provides a main theme, but the gods are no longer symbolized as coconuts. They die together in a pit, but not in copulation. According to the exoteric story they are mother and son who are violated, killed and eaten. In essence the difference with the meaning of the upper Bian cult is a minor one; the gods have assumed a less undefined personality, and the symbolism has lost a little of its

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 563.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 565.

scandalous directness. In the *mayo* the copulation-theme is prominent again, but the death-theme has given way to that of birth. The coconut no longer has a part in the symbolization of the central theme. Yet, it is still important, for it makes up the main diet of the novices and the celebration of the rites promotes the fertility of the palm.²⁷⁰

An interesting difference between *mayo* and *imo* lies in the roles that *déma* and *hais* play in the ceremonies of each cult. The *mayo*-cult concentrates on the *déma*. Their glorious past is the ever-varying theme of the many ceremonies. Among the *imo* the *déma* have a far less variegated role to play and, by comparison, the part of the *hais* is hardly less important. Perhaps here again we may surmise a closer association of the *Imo-Marind* with the upper *Bian* people, who have one word for both *déma* and *hais*, viz. *nduwě*.²⁷¹ However that may be, death is of major interest among the *imo*. Man and things originate from death and from the grave. *Kambara*, the primeval cause of death, is called a specific *imo*-rite, even though the application of this act of sorcery is certainly not the monopoly of the *Imo-Marind*. The association with headhunting, too, appears to be much closer in the *imo* than it is in the *mayo*-cult. The *imo*'s reputation for being fierce headhunters was quite deserved. The *Sangasé* people in particular participated in the raids with savage determination and the data available suggest that they did every year set out on a headhunting expedition.²⁷² In parentheses we note that the annual recurrence of a headhunt corresponds remarkably well with Vertenten's statement that the *bangu* ceremonial, too, has to be celebrated every year.²⁷³

Finally, the initiation of the *kagaib*-ritual involving the sordid treatment of the novices provides an amazing example of the need which is felt to bring the novices into close contact with the powers of decay, the secret rulers of the universe. Nowhere has the contrast between the two cults assumed sharper contours than here. It is a contrast which is in perfect agreement with the difference between the roles of the *mes-iwag* in either cult: in the *mayo*, a life-giving mother who travels round with her children; in the *imo*, Bad Woman, Excrement Woman, a goddess of death and decay. It also corresponds with the character-traits attributed to the two groups: the *mayo* more exuberant

²⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 519 and 543.

²⁷¹ Geurtjens, Dict. s.v. *déma*.

²⁷² Below, pp. 708 f.

²⁷³ Above, p. 614.

and jovial, the *imo* more reserved, austere and haughty, with a reputation for cruelty.²⁷⁴

Earlier in this book the relationship between the two cults has been depicted as being modelled on the relationship between the two moieties.²⁷⁵ We may even specify the relationship; in their description of the *kagaiib* ceremony Verschueren's informants told him that the *Mahu-zé* are the real leaders of the *imo*-rites, a statement which is in perfect harmony with the dominant characteristics of the cult. Yet, the actual leader is a *Geb-zé* and the leadership of the *Mahu-zé* is, in fact, a mystic re-interpretation of the procedure. Its dominant traits do indeed associate the *imo*-ritual very closely with the dominant aspect of the *Sami-rek* moiety. The importance overtly ascribed to the *Mahu-zé* moiety is an indication that the *imo* are closely associated with the interior. The further we penetrate into Marind-anim thought, the clearer the evidence that the contrast coast-interior is as important as that between east and west. The story of *Opeko-anem* convincingly demonstrates that the interior is considered a more suitable place for a *Bragai-zé* *déma* than the coast.²⁷⁶ Similarly, the myth of *Yorma*, who destroys the old coastal Imo, fits only too well into this pattern; it is a *Bragai-zé* *déma* who chases the *imo* from the coast.²⁷⁷ In a previous chapter we demonstrated that the contrast coast-interior is associated with the extension of the ceremonial functions of the *Geb-zé* moiety.²⁷⁸ The contrast coast-interior harmonizes with that between east and west and with the one between *mayo* and *imo*. Whereas the former are explicitly connected with east and beach, and stress the aspects of birth and sunrise in their ritual, the latter emphasize the death aspect and are associated with sunset, night, underworld and the interior.

The relationship between the two rituals has been made explicit in one of the versions of the myth of the origin of man. The *déma* made a great feast underground near Sangasé. Thereupon they went eastward, travelling underground. The dog *Girui* followed them overland as far as Kondo, where he dug a hole from which the first humans emerged in the shape of *anda*-fishes.²⁷⁹ We remind the reader of the rumour

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 604.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 436.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 368 f.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 383.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 454.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 209 f.

that the *imo* celebrate their ceremonies underground,²⁸⁰ and of the fact that the two *déma* dance in a pit surrounded by shields called *pahui*, which are going to be thrown into the pit. We pointed out that the *pahui*-motif is associated with the bullroarer²⁸¹ which in turn is identical with the *anda*-fish. It seems probable that the *pahui* round the pit stand for the future human beings which are going to burrow underground to the east after having been buried with the two *déma* who dance on the bottom. The *bangu*-ritual, just like the *mayo*-ritual, is a re-enactment of the myth of the origin of man, the *bangu* impersonating the first part of the story, the feast of the *déma* underground, and the *mayo* the final scene of the birth of man.

Perhaps we must include yet another version of the myth, that of *Sobra*. She is the first to emerge and it is she who puts the final touch to the shape of the human beings who came after her.²⁸² It is she who originates headhunting; she and her husband *Nazr*, alias *Déhévai*, make a pair which presents some of the distinctive traits of a Supreme Being. It is suggested that *Sobra* is, in fact, identical with the *imo-mes-ivag*, who, after having been buried in Imo, reappears in Kondo. It would explain the perfectly isolated statement according to which the *imo-mes-ivag* resides at near-by Sangar.²⁸³ Sangar is the place where *Nazr* originated. The moral qualities of *Sobra* fit the picture of the *imo-mes-ivag* as it was drawn in the preceding pages. She is a bad woman who incites people to kill each other and thus originates headhunting.

There is yet another trait which becomes more meaningful now, viz. the role of the dog *Girui*. As long as the *déma* are underground the dog is above the surface. He does what is required if man is to be born, viz. digging the hole. From that moment onward he disappears from the scene. When the *déma* are underground, the *Sami-rek* are supreme and that is why they can be said to be the real leaders of the *imo*. When they come to the surface of the earth it is the *Geb-zé* who take the lead.

Imo and *mayo* re-enact in their rituals different episodes of the myth of the origin of man, a myth which is of basic importance to both. Of equal importance is the story of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*, the two mythical heroes who are not only the navel *déma* of the *mayo*, but of the *imo*

²⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 613.

²⁸¹ Ibid. p. 618.

²⁸² Ibid. pp. 211, 411, 551 and 622 note 165.

²⁸³ Ibid. p. 433. For supplementary evidence of the identity of *Sobra* and *imo-mes-ivag* see chapter XII pp. 739 jo. 741.

as well. The theme of their story is closely related to that of the myth of the origin of man. The latter deals with the birth of man physically, the former ritually, and in the *mayo* celebration both aspects are brought on the stage. In the *bangu*-rites only the myth of the origin of man is re-enacted and any reference to the story of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* seems to be conspicuously absent. Nevertheless, the two *déma* are there in a way. The two *déma* dancing on the bottom of the pit are the *imo-déma* and as such must be identified with *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. However, the only thing they do is dancing. There is no reference whatsoever to the dramatic events of the myth, at least, as long as we focus our attention on the two *déma*-performers and that is exactly our mistake. Round the pit stand the shields, ready to be thrown into the pit to be buried with the paraphernalia of the two dancers. They belong to the pair which, allegedly, is buried alive and for this reason a closer scrutiny of the shields might be rewarding.

There is something odd about the shields. They are called *pahui*, i.e. the ceremonial clubs of the headhunters. Yet they have neither the form of a *pahui* nor are they decorated with the *pahui* motif. Instead, the shields are decorated with concentric circles which have a hole, an eye, in the centre. Into these eyes arrow-heads are inserted and from the moment the arrow-heads rest in the holes the shields are secret objects, not to be seen by the uninitiated. Obviously, inserting the arrow-heads is a ritual act. Nobody was told when it is done, but we may take it for granted that it takes place at the beginning of the *bangu* proper, the dance of the *déma* in the moonless night devoted to singing and promiscuous sexual intercourse, probably round about nightfall to prevent the shields from being seen by the uninitiated. After all, the women are close by. The meaning of the act is clear; the concentric circles, the holes, or eyes, and the arrow-heads, they are all sexual symbols and the insertion of the arrow-heads necessarily is symbolic of the sexual act and what is more, of a sexual act to which there is no end. The arrow-heads are going to remain in the eyes and the shields will be thrown into the pit with the arrow-heads still in place. In other words, the shields are symbolic of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* who are sent off on their journey underground while in copulation. This implies that the true navel *déma* are not the performers on the bottom of the pit, but the shields surrounding it. They conform to the pattern of the navel *déma* as depicted to the uninitiated, that of a *mes-iwag* with her son. The *mes-iwag* is the shield, the man is represented by a mere arrow-head, by a symbolic penis of modest size. When compared

to the shield, the male symbol has, at best, the size of a mere boy.

Various facts become more meaningful now. Thus Viegen's statement that *Sosom* when turning inland on his way home, pays a secret visit to the *imo*.²⁸⁴ *Sosom* himself is — as a bullroarer — a penis and a penis is the boy who is the counterpart of the *imo-mes-iwag*. Moreover, cosmologically, turning to the interior is identical with going to Imo; Imo and the interior are associated with the moiety opposite to the one of *Uaba* and *Sosom*, who are so closely related that we might call them brothers. There is more to it, however, than just this. *Uaba*, imprisoned in copulation, is a mere boy, a penis. Conceived as independent of the Earth-woman, *Uaba* becomes the giant *Sosom*, but a giant who has been castrated. His gigantic phallus, erected in the centre of the *sosom-miráv*, has been separated from the body. It is not without meaning that *Uaba* and *Sosom* have so much in common, and it is not a mere whim either that a secret relationship between *imo* and *sosom* is postulated. *Sosom* and *Uaba* are one and the same power under different aspects.

Even more interesting are the details of the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* as related in chapter V,²⁸⁵ when we place them in the context of the *bangu*. Of course *Aramemb* went to Imo to find *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. They simply had to be at Imo and he could not find them because they were already copulating, i.e. they had already been buried alive, sent off on their journey underground (under the mat) to Kondo. Even the enigmatic *Rug-a-rug-évai* becomes less mysterious now. We made mention of the possibility that his name holds a reference to the *luga* or *ruga*, the platform on which the triumphant warrior dances at the feast celebrating a successful headhunt. At the time conflicting evidence prevented us from arriving at a conclusion.²⁸⁶ The fact that the *bangu* is followed by a headhunt solves the problem, at least to a certain extent. As soon as the *imo-déma* have been buried, i.e. as soon as *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* are in copulation, the men go out headhunting. *Uaba* is now underground and this is the time of the ascendancy of *Déhévai*, the male representative of the opposite moiety, who is identical with *Nasr*, the pig *déma*. In such a context a reference to headhunting is well in place and we may take it for granted that *Rug-a-rug-évai's* name refers indeed to the *ruga*. If that be accepted, the name means 'Father of the *ruga*'. However, this does not explain

²⁸⁴ Above, pp. 472 f.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 243.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 245 note 87.

everything. Wirz complains that the natives refused to give additional information on this *déma*,²⁸⁷ but he could hardly expect otherwise at a time when the ban on headhunting was still felt as a serious frustration. All the same, we are still without more precise information. A 'father of the *ruga*' may be the representative of the opposite moiety, who is a leader of headhunting expeditions, but he may also be a symbol of the victims whose death is celebrated by the dance on the *ruga*. *Rug-a-rug-évai* is killed by *Uaba* on the arrival of the party at Kondo and Kondo is not far from one of the customary headhunting territories of the Sangasé people, who did not shun an occasional raid beyond the international border. Any attempt at a more precise definition of *Rug-a-rug-évai's* relation with headhunting must necessarily remain futile. We have to content ourselves with the fact that some reference to headhunting is made in this context, which in itself is a valuable addition to our knowledge because it is another and important affirmation of the close connection between headhunting and the great rituals, the *mayo* included.

More important than all this is the close interconnection of *imo* and *mayo*. The two principal myths of the *mayo* are also the main myths of the *imo*, but the *mayo* concentrate on the final part of the two myths, which is staged in the east, and the *imo* on the opening phase, which takes place in the west. Cosmologically, the two cults constitute almost complete opposites. Later, when discussing the *pahui*, we shall have occasion to draw attention to yet another contrast, that between the secret cults and the headhunting ritual. The *pahui* as carried by the headhunters is a spear which has been passed through a *kupa*, a disc-shaped club-head, which is a female symbol. The main element is the spear, the male symbol. In the *imo-pahui* the principal element is the shield with its female symbols, to which the arrow-head is added as a male subsidiary.²⁸⁸ If ever there was a fine case of inversion, this is the one.

For the present we have to deal with the relations and contrasts between *imo* and *mayo*. First of all, we must focus our attention on a case where reality is at variance with a pattern of classification in which *imo* stands for west and night. There are also *Mayo-Marind* west of Sangasé. In fact, the *Imo-Marind* constitute a break in the middle of what otherwise would have been a continuum of a long line of coastal *mayo* villages. The centre of the cult is in Sangasé, where

²⁸⁷ Wirz, M.A. II p. 81 note 1.

²⁸⁸ Cf. below, pp. 738 ff.

the people speak a dialect of their own, identical with that of the people of the hinterland of Okaba. Other coastal *imo* are those of Domandé and of part of Onggari, who all speak the same western dialect as the *imo* living in the villages west of Sangasé.²⁸⁹ Moreover, the Sangasé dialect deviates more widely from the western and eastern coastal dialects than the latter two differ from each other. All the evidence points in the same direction: the Sangasé people are an inland group who settled along the coast at a time when the *mayo*-cult had been established already both east and west of Sangasé. Their dialect, their cult and their strict moiety-exogamy set the *imo* apart from the other coastal Marind. The coastal *imo* in the east and the west only follow the cult; linguistically and socially they cannot be distinguished from the *Mayo*-Marind of the coast, whereas the inland *Imo*-Marind have their cult, their dialect and, as far as could be ascertained, their strict moiety-exogamy in common with the Sangasé people. Even more important in this context is the fact that the main theme of the *imo*-cult, the death of a man and a woman, associated with coconut and head-hunting, is much more closely related to the cult of the upper Bian than to the main theme of the *mayo*. The latter, too, has a married couple as its main characters, but its focus is on birth, not on death.

The appearance of the *imo* on the coast must have led to elaborate interaction between the two cults. We came across a definite mark of such interaction when we stated that the *imo*-cult is partly a tribal cult and partly a sect.²⁹⁰ Other traces of interaction were met with in mythology. We pointed out that such mythical characters as *Yawi*, *Wokabu* and probably also *Dorch*, might well be of *imo* origin, though to-day to all intents and purposes they make part of the mythological ancestry of the tribe as a whole.²⁹¹ Thus we find *Wokabu* as one of the characters impersonated by *Mayo*-Marind on the occasion of a *déma-wir* at Kumbe.²⁹² Wirz's description of the occasion, a government-sponsored feast, provides an interesting picture of the interaction between *imo* and *mayo* in its ultimate phase. Here at Kumbe the *imo* people of Onggari demonstrated an *uar-ti-zi*, i.e. the stork-dance which is peculiar to the *imo*. The dance is preceded by a small *déma-wir*, another *déma-wir* than the one in which *Wokabu* was impersonated,

²⁸⁹ Drabbe, *Spraakkunst* p. 14.

²⁹⁰ Above, p. 607.

²⁹¹ It is not impossible that the concept of an eastern land of the dead, too, is of *imo* origin. This, however, is too much a matter of conjecture to be put forward as part of the argument.

²⁹² Wirz, *M.A.* IV p. 50.

which was staged when the *uar-ti-si* was completed. We do not know for certain who the performers were who staged the small *déma-wir* introducing the *uar-ti-si*, but it seems probable that it was the *mayo* people of Onggari who took charge of this part of the contribution to the feast, Onggari being a village with both *imo* and *mayo*. That the participants in the *déma-wir* were *mayo* is confirmed by the description of the *wir*. Wirz makes mention of two *nakari*, each of them holding a *gév*, a staff, in her hand, adding that the staff "is indispensable in a *mayo déma-wir*. The *imo* do not have this kind of staff".²⁹³ The characters impersonated in the introductory *déma-wir* were, first, a *hais*, then, successively, the stork, the *gari*-bearers, the yam *déma* (*kav-déma*), a pigeon, a cassowary and the *batend-déma*. Among them there are several who play a part in *imo* celebrations, viz. the *hais*, the *kav-déma* and the *batend-déma*. Whereas the cults are secret and attendance at their performance is rigorously forbidden to the uninitiated, the feasts provide a welcome opportunity for intense co-operation and exchange of views.

Feasts played an important part in Marind-anim cultural life, especially the big feasts attended by entire villages. Among the few big feasts on which we have information there are two instances of an *imo* village inviting a *mayo* one; Domandé had the people of Bahor as their guests and Méwi (which is partly *imo*) was expecting Anasai and Bahor.²⁹⁴ When Wirz makes mention of special relations, including marriage relations, between widely separated villages, two of the four cases listed concern villages of which one is *mayo* and the other *imo*, viz. Buti and Sangasé, and Bahor and Domandé.²⁹⁵ Obviously, the connections between *imo* and *mayo* were close and frequent. They were not accidental, but cultivated.

The close relations between Buti and Sangasé are of specific interest.²⁹⁶ Sangasé is associated with Owi, the *imo* ceremonial centre and the site of the *imo* navel *déma*. Buti has within its territory the seat of the navel *déma* of the *mayo*, which is in Brawa. Whereas Sangasé is the leading village of the *imo*, Buti is a centre of comparable importance among the *mayo*. Of course there is also a difference here, because the *mayo* ceremonies were never centralized to the same degree as happened to be the case with the *imo*. Nevertheless, Buti (or,

²⁹³ Ibid. p. 47.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 22; Vertenten, Ann. 1915 p. 148.

²⁹⁵ Above, pp. 95 f.

²⁹⁶ Below, pp. 946 f.; cf. also above, pp. 52 f.

properly, Buti/Nowari) constituted the biggest and most powerful group east of the Maro — and probably also east of the Kumbe. Here the *mayo*-cult has developed its most elaborate form. The annually celebrated *sosom*-cult compares with the *bangu* of the *imo*, and Viegen's statement that *Sosom* travels westward to pay a secret visit to the *imo*²⁹⁷ implies that the Marind are aware of the parallel, even though the statement seems to refer primarily to the use of the bullroarer in the *imo*-cult. The *sosom*-cult being also an initiation cult, initiation is a more elaborate process among the eastern Marind than among the western. The *mayo*-initiation, too, is more rigorous among the eastern Marind than among those west of Sangasé, where the novices are allowed to retain their hairdo.²⁹⁸ Another telling fact is that the decorations and ornaments of the eastern Marind are more elaborate and resplendent than those used in the west.²⁹⁹ Obviously, in the eastern section the *mayo*-cult has attained the highest stage of its development. Here, Buti/Nowari was a centre of intertribal relations. Wirz describes a *humum-angai* staged by the village of Buti for the benefit of their Kanum-anim friends of Mariu, Tomer and Siwasiv.³⁰⁰ Buti also kept up close trading-relations with the southern Yéi-anim.³⁰¹ With the site of the navel *déma* of the *mayo* within its territory, Buti was in every respect a worthy counterpart of Sangasé.

We need not enter into a discussion of how the position of Buti in intervillage traffic was impaired by the presence of the new government-station at half an hour's distance. The important point for us is the close relationship between Buti and Sangasé, a relationship which was cultivated by an exchange of feasts, which entailed an exchange of ideas and resulted in a complete adaptation and integration of mythological data. One of the finest specimens to evolve from this process is the myth of the origin of man. Yet, we have different versions of the myth. The one begins with a feast of the *déma* at Sangasé, the other with one at Awehima or Gelib in Eromka, the area where *Uaba* overtook *Ualiwamb* and was trapped in copulation. It might well be that the latter version reflects the *mayo*-, the former the *imo* point of view.

The present forms of the myths of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* and that of the origin of man hold ample evidence that the process of harmonizing

²⁹⁷ Above, pp. 472 and 664.

²⁹⁸ Above, p. 517.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 604.

³⁰⁰ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 61.

³⁰¹ Below, pp. 703 f.

mayo and *imo* must have had a profound impact on mythology generally. The *imo*, as an inland-oriented group, had to adapt their institutions to the basic requirements of the coastal classificatory system, which demands that the coast-oriented phratries take precedence. Conversely, the *mayo* were made conscious of the differences in orientation and had to integrate new mythological material into their coastal system. If that be accepted, we can answer some of the most pressing questions raised by our discussion of the system of classification in Chapter IX. First of all, the controversial character of *Aramemb* can be explained from his leading role in two contrasting cults. By combining his controversial traits, he becomes the superior go-between who knows all the ins and outs of every ritual. In the second place, no adaptation of the *imo*-cult to coastal conditions and coastal culture could be realized unless it implied recognition of the ritual leadership of the *Geb-zé* moiety. It was the inland oriented *Imo-Marind* who had to revise their views and adapt them to the coastal system of classification. Earlier, we demonstrated that there has been a shifting of functions from the *Sami-rek* to the *Geb-zé*, the most obvious cases being those of *Harau* and *Ugu*.³⁰² We only stated the fact as, at the time, an explanation could not be given. Once we accept that an exchange of views between *mayo* and *imo* has taken place, resulting in a complete adaptation of the *imo* system to the coastal one and the absorption of *imo* materials into the *mayo*, a shift of emphasis and functions from *Sami-rek* to *Geb-zé* ceases to be a more or less inexplicable development. The confrontation of the two systems must have made the people alive to the essentials of the prevailing system of classification. We do not know the details and we will not try to reconstruct the process. The important point is that at one time there has been a clear motive for revision. It is all we need to know to give substance to the shift of functions between the two moieties as inferred from our study of mythology.

Having completed our analysis of the relations between *mayo* and *imo*, we have to turn to the system of age-grades and its connections with initiation. Among the *imo* as well as among the *mayo* we meet with the remarkable institutions of *gotad* and *binahor*-fathership. Of the two the latter is the less uncommon. An institutionalized homosexual relationship between a boy and another man, in this particular case his mother's brother, is a feature which fits reasonably well into

³⁰² Above, pp. 454 ff.

the cultural pattern of the tribes of this part of New Guinea. It cannot be said that the same holds true of the seclusion in the *gotad*. It is of extraordinary long duration (about six years), characterized by a division into two distinct periods.

As a junior inmate of the *gotad* the boy is a *wokraved*, subject to many restrictions and to vexatious treatment. Probably he is available to the senior inmates of the *gotad* for homosexual intercourse. He is mockingly called a girl, as, among the *imo*, all uninitiated people are. He is the perfect greenhorn. The *éwati*, the senior inmate, has a more privileged position; he is no longer a girl socially, but occupies an intermediate position and has a function in warfare.³⁰³ He may partake in dancing and in feasts, he need not obey his *binahor*-father so strictly as the *wokraved*, he has a certain status as a warrior and he need not avoid the opposite sex. Nevertheless, his attire is still characterized by such traits as make us associate him with the night. The dominant colour in which he may paint his body and hairdo is black. He is not allowed inside the village, except during the night. He is not yet 'reborn', contrary to the *miakim*, who is allowed to paint himself red, who may come into the village during the day and is free to go wherever he likes. In actual practice the uninitiated *miakim* enjoys all the prerogatives of an initiate, except that he still has to go through the process. He is no longer being prepared for the process, as the *wokravid* and the *éwati* are.

The connection between the system of age-grades and the phases of initiation into the great cults is tenuous. It is clearer among the eastern *mayo* than among the *imo*. The *sosom*-initiation more or less coincides with the novice's entering into the seclusion of the *gotad*, and the initiation into the *mayo*, ideally, with the age of leaving the boys' house. The new initiate must be a *miakim* if he is to be permitted to wear the stork's feathers which are the distinctive ornament of the initiate. The seclusion in the *gotad* occupies the whole period between *sosom*- and *mayo*-initiations. We further note that the seclusion of the inmates of the *gotad* is highly similar to that of the novices during the *mayo*-initiation. In the daytime they are in the *gotad*, respectively the *mayo-miráv*, at night they sleep in the village.³⁰⁴ There is yet another similarity; the two age-grades run parallel to the two periods into which the initiation-period may be divided, the one ending with the arrival of *Aramemb* in the *mayo-miráv*, the other beginning after that

³⁰³ Ibid. p. 152.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 505.

event. During the first period the male novices go naked (like *wokrèvid*) or wear a triton-shell, during the second they gradually put on their everyday attire.

We have no data demonstrating a similar parallelism between seclusion and *imo*-initiation. The ceremony the boys have to undergo at becoming *aroi-patur* does not really deserve of the term initiation. The *ndaho hawn* is said to take place when they are *éwati*, and the *kagaib* when they are *miakim*. A comparison between seclusion and initiation does not reveal any such meaningful parallels as could be demonstrated in connection with the *mayo*-initiation. Yet, even the parallel with the *mayo*-initiation does not explain the extraordinary length of the period of seclusion.

Seclusion as such is not uncommon in this part of New Guinea. The custom has been reported from the Elema of Orokoló and from the Keraki. Among the Elema the seclusion is said to contribute to the prosperous growth of the boys. The period lasts about six months and definitely does not exceed one year. The seclusion has nothing to do with initiation and is primarily a preliminary to marriage.³⁰⁵ In these respects it resembles the seclusion among the Marind, where a marriage is also the normal sequel to a boy's leaving the *gotad*. The seclusion as practised among the Keraki has even more traits in common with that among the Marind. It follows upon the initiation into the homosexual cult. So long as the boys live in seclusion they must accommodate those members of the opposite moiety who wish to practise sodomy.³⁰⁶ The alleged aim of the seclusion is to stimulate the boys' growth, just as among the Elema, but there is this difference that what makes them grow is specifically said to be homosexual intercourse.³⁰⁷ The practices and opinions of the Keraki on this point do not differ very much from those of the Marind. Though it must be granted that the latter do not as explicitly and as generally rationalize the practice of sodomy as a means for promoting the young men's growth, the Marind often foster more or less comparable views. Verschueren points out that views of this kind are expressed in the context of the *sosom*-rites, not on other occasions. On such an occasion as a *sosom*-rite the Marind, too, are conscious of the beneficial effect of sodomy on the growth of the youngsters.³⁰⁸ What is lacking among the Marind is the direct con-

³⁰⁵ Williams, Drama pp. 55, 75 ff.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., Trans-Fly p. 199.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 204.

³⁰⁸ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 28.

nection between seclusion and initiation, which is so evident in Keraki initiation. Here seclusion links up with the first initiation ceremony, that into the secret of the bullroarer and the practice of sodomy. After some time there follows the revelation of the bamboo pipe, while the period of segregation terminates with the bestowal of the first phallocrypt. The whole process is completed within "a period of some months". The boys then return to village life, but they "continue for a year or so to play the passive part in sodomy".³⁰⁹ Some time during this period the boys have to go through a lime-eating ceremony. A small ceremony, that of the bestowal of a new kind of phallocrypt, a *fusus*-shell, marks the end of this period of dependence.³¹⁰ The difference with the Marind is evident, for the period of seclusion is short and makes part of the process of initiation. Among the Marind, seclusion has become an end in itself; it has outgrown the relations with initiation without these being severed altogether. A connection between seclusion and initiation as occurring among the Keraki is obviously more logical and we assume that at one time a comparable situation must have existed among the Marind.

The assumption raises the question why the Marind extended their system of seclusion so widely as to have it develop into their present *gotad* institution. To answer this question, we refer to the *gotad* as a place of instruction, where the boys are taught the mythology and the traditions of the tribe. According to Wirz the *gotad* is the preferred meeting-place of the men when they have to discuss matters which the women must not know about. He also points out that the purpose of the *gotad* is to segregate the boys from the women and that it serves the end of keeping them under surveillance.³¹¹ This might suit the purpose of instruction and, years ago, I concluded that the period of seclusion is, indeed, one of instruction given primarily by the *binahor-évai* of the boys.³¹² The suggestion is corroborated by information supplied by Verschueren. "The old Marind used to compare the *gotad* to a school (the Yéi-anim and the Boadzi did so, too) and — if my interpretation of what they had in mind is correct — the initiation to a kind of final examination. The basic requirement for initiation is a thorough knowledge of mythology and the fact that the women know next to nothing of mythology gives evidence that the preferred place for the

³⁰⁹ Williams, *op. cit.* p. 200.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 201 f.

³¹¹ Wirz, *M.A.* II pp. 45 f.

³¹² Van Baal, *Godsdienst int. alia* p. 181.

telling of myths was the *gotad*''.³¹³ Verschueren continues by pointing out that warfare was another subject of instruction and that the *gotad* was the most suitable place for the telling of stories and the transmitting of information and other know-how relevant to successful headhunting. Yet, when all is said and done, it must be admitted that our information on the instruction allegedly given in the *gotad* is of the haziest. The fact that *gotad* was equated with school, namely by members of the older generation, is a poor argument, demonstrating a misconception of what a school stands for rather than giving us useful information on the *gotad*. We may take it for granted that the resemblance they observed concerned the disciplining, not the instruction. What is more important, the instruction does not explain the long duration of the seclusion.

To get an answer to our question, we have to go back to the *mayo*-initiation which, among the eastern coastal Marind, begins with the *sosom*-rites round about the time the boys enter into the *gotad* and ends with the *mayo*-initiation by the time they have become *miakim*. There is a long interval between and it is suggested that the duration of the seclusion is the effect of the extraordinary growth of the *mayo*-ritual, which could be celebrated only once in a certain number of years (four or probably more). Originally the initiation rites must have been less elaborate than they are to-day. A case in point is the closing rite, the bringing of the *mayo*-fire. The event refers to the peak of the dry season. It is always difficult to define the moment when a certain season is at its height ; we must be satisfied with *termini a quo* and *ante quem*. Of the east monsoon we may state with certainty that the height of the season can never fall later than October ; rather will it be earlier, but that is not our problem. October, then, is the time of the year when, at the very latest, the closing ceremony of the *mayo*-initiation ought to be celebrated. Actually, this happens round about Christmas or even later (January or February). Obviously, the ceremonies have expanded so much as to prevent the leaders from completing them in time. It is not only the initiation ritual of the *mayo* which expanded. The splendour and diversity of the numerous feasts with their show-dances and *déma*-performances can only be explained as the results of a protracted process of development of which the increasing magnitude of the *mayo*-initiation rites is but one aspect. The feasts are closely connected with the age-grade promotions. Actually, every feast is a

³¹³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 29.

combination of a number of family feasts in celebration of some stage in the growing-up of a child.³¹⁴ The most important occasions were those of becoming an *évati* or a *miakim* and the families celebrating such an event made substantial contributions to the combined performance. Proportionate to the magnitude of the feast, the duration of the celebrations increased and, consequently, so did the period of seclusion of the candidates who had to bide their time. We must conclude that it is the *mayo*-cult rather than the *imo* which promoted the prolongation of the residence in the *gotad*.

A hypothesis of this kind harmonizes with our picture of Marindanim society as an expanding society. *Déma-wir* were staged primarily on the occasion of intervillage feasts which, in turn, promoted the development of intervillage relations which tended to ramify ever further, a development favoured by the expansion of the system of overall clans. The big intervillage feasts even may have contributed to a more active participation of the women in the *mayo*-cult. Normally, the women and children are needed as an audience, not as participants. The *Mayo*-Marind, however, needed not bother about an audience when celebrating a *déma-wir*; it was provided by the host-village and the numerous guests who came from everywhere.³¹⁵ Under the circumstances the growing magnificence of the pantomime made it attractive to widen the circle of participants. Filling the part of the *déma-nakari* offered a fine opportunity to put more and other actors on the stage and the women could join the men and help them to produce a more spectacular show. However, staging a *déma-wir* is not a profane matter and it is a requirement that a performer should have been initiated previously. This might help to explain the initiation of the women into the *mayo*-cult. Yet, it is certainly not the main reason for having them initiated. In the *imo*-cult the women have an important function in the *aili* and there is not a single argument to support the suggestion that this function was allotted to them because the *mayo* women are initiated. In both *mayo* and *imo* the role of the women is perfectly contradictory, just as contradictory as the relations between the sexes generally. The role of the women in the cults seems to be the consequence of the controversies in the fundamental relations between the sexes rather than of a more or less accidental historical development. It seems that in their development *mayo* and *imo* have been subject

³¹⁴ Below, pp. 828 f.

³¹⁵ Usually the guest-village staged the pantomime. There were guests from other villages, too, who joined the hosts as spectators.

to influences engendered by tensions in the relations between the sexes which are more or less common to both.

A last point to be made in our discussion of the differences between *imo* and *mayo* concerns the disappearance of moiety-exogamy among the *Mayo-Mariud*. Obviously, the moieties have a less prominent function in the *mayo*-rites than they have in the *imo*. The latter concentrate on the contrast between the two sexes, each represented by a moiety. All attention is focused on the main characters, *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*, the *Kai-zé-* and the *Mahu-zé-déma*, the fire and the Excrement-Woman, or in whatever form the contrast is presented. In ritual, there is a constant co-operating of the two tribal halves. In the *mayo*, where the birth and the origin of all the various features of nature and society are in the focus of attention, moiety-dichotomy has not the explicit importance it has among the *imo*. The important units are the phratries and the big clans, which have the monopoly of staging the scenes and reciting the relevant myths. This does not imply that moiety-dichotomy has lost its meaning, but only that it is less dominating than it is among the *imo*. In the pattern of thought underlying the *mayo*-ritual the dualism is obvious, but it does not dominate ceremonial action to the same degree as among the *imo*. In the next chapter however, we shall find that in other respects moiety-dichotomy has a very important ritual function among the *Mayo-Marind* as well.

CHAPTER XII

HEADHUNTING

Headhunting is an act of warfare, but in the case of the Marind-anim the definition of headhunting as a form of warfare is only partially correct. Warfare suggests some such motivation as self-defence, revenge or conquest. Here, self-defence and conquest are conspicuously absent; retaliation occasionally plays a part, but only a minor one. The prime motive of the Marind-anim organizing a headhunt used to be that the supply of names had become exhausted. A second motive sometimes brought forward was that there were so many *éwati*. In the preceding chapters we came across indications that there was a connection between the celebration of the great cults and headhunting. A ritual purpose of some kind is evident, whereas the import of the more common motives for warfare is almost negligible. The coastal Marind carried out their raids at such a considerable distance from their home territory as to prevent their victims from retaliating with counter-attacks on the raiders' villages. The risk they ran was confined to the possibility of their victims defending themselves or raiding their bivouac while they were encamped in enemy territory. It is always difficult and perhaps even impossible to explain warfare from rational motives, but in the case of the Marind the non-rational elements are so obviously dominant as to preclude any attempt at explaining their headhunting raids from one of the more conventional motives, with the exception of sheer aggressiveness, which is undeniable. For these reasons it appeared advisable first to inquire into the role and scope of aggressiveness by having our discussion of headhunting preceded by one of the conflict-situations in Marind-anim society itself. In later sections special emphasis is given to the social and ceremonial implications of headhunting.

Factual evidence of headhunting raids is found in official reports and in the short communications made by early missionaries. More detailed information is given by Vertenten in his article on headhunting in BKI 79 (1923) and by Wirz (M.A. III pp. 49-62). Their knowledge was based mainly on interviews. Foreigners never had an opportunity

to see much of the ceremonies or preparations connected with an actual headhunt. The gathering of more specific data was all the more difficult because from the very first headhunting had been explicitly and strictly forbidden by the authorities who had come to this area primarily to put a definite stop to this practice. Their raids into the Western Division of British New Guinea (now Papua) had given the Marind a bad reputation. They had been reported to strike as far east as Mawata, and the repeated protests the British Government made against the atrocities committed by the Tugeri (the name given to the Marind by the people of the Western Division) induced the Dutch Government, after a couple of unsuccessful attempts to enforce law and order by temporary measures, to establish a government station in the place which has since been called Merauke. Under the circumstances the Marind could hardly be expected to be at all communicative with regard to their most criticised custom. It was only in later years that they became more willing to talk. For this reason the data collected fairly recently by Verschueren are valuable; some of his informants had in their youth participated in headhunting expeditions themselves.¹ Others had not, but headhunting and headhunting expeditions continued to interest the young men long after the practice had been stopped. Even in the late thirties many Marind still felt nostalgic for the old days, and headhunting must have been the topic of many stories told to the young people by their elders. When, in 1937, together with a party of coastal Marind I visited the banks of the Torassi river, I had the opportunity to observe how much even this younger generation was emotionally attached to the glory of the past. Beholding the Torassi, their Rubicon in a way, they burst into lyric exclamations.

1. CONFLICT AND WAR IN MARIND-ANIM SOCIETY

Conflicts were not at all rare in Marind-anim society. Although various authors made mention of conflicts occurring either within the village or involving different villages, their communications are not the result of systematic observation, but records of accidental events. After collating the available data as well as I could, I found that they admitted of deviant interpretations. Fortunately, Verschueren gave me the benefit of his comment on my tentative and not altogether successful endeavours to arrive at a more comprehensive and fair assessment of the role of dissension and suspicion in Marind-anim society. His

¹ Verschueren, Letters VII pp. 1-3, VIII pp. 1-3, XI pp. 30, 33 ff.

criticisms were very helpful. In the following pages I shall first give the various data together with such comment as seems appropriate. I shall then give Verschueren's opinion and the conclusions to which his observations lead us.

Causes of conflict presented themselves in abundance; sorcery, women and the ownership of gardens could lead to serious dissension. Among these, sorcery is the cause most frequently mentioned, and obviously so, because any conflict may lead to the application of sorcery. According to Wirz most village- and intervillage conflicts originate from adultery "and the husband usually spares neither the seducer nor the wife who deceived him. . . . Most often the deceived or offended husband takes his revenge in secret, through *kambara*, i.e. deadly sorcery. This again leads to a counter-murder, to a blood-feud, and thus whole families are often massacred on account of a minor issue, or perhaps because sheer suspicion occasioned a murder".² The case seems fairly much overstated. Among the cases recorded, there is not one instance of a whole family being massacred. Later we shall come across a few cases of intervillage conflict. One of these, which ended in serious bloodshed, was reported to have originated from a conflict about women.³ Although the sanctions against adultery were very strict in theory, we know almost nothing of how they worked out in practice. At the time I was *controleur* of Merauke it seemed to me that the sanctions against adultery had been alleviated and that the frequency of adulterous relations had increased.⁴ Verschueren, who devoted much of his time to an investigation of the moral codes among the Marind, states that between 1920 and 1940 there was a rather serious slackening of sexual morals, probably the effect of social change, primarily of the change in the pattern of living consequent upon the compulsory introduction of single-family-houses. From 1940 onward the situation improved and there is far more conjugal fidelity to-day than there was thirty or forty years ago.⁵ All this leaves us pretty much in the dark with regard to the pre-contact situation. Obviously, there were conflicts about women. It is impossible to decide whether such conflicts had another than a temporarily disruptive effect on social life, except where they resulted in intervillage conflicts or led to accusations of sorcery.

² Wirz, M.A. I p. 69.

³ The case of Méwi and Okaba; cf. below, p. 685.

⁴ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1939 p. 384. I must add that the statement as I made it there is too strongly worded.

⁵ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 31.

Conflicts about ownership of gardens are not mentioned in literature, but I once came across the report of a case where a man was tried on a charge of serious ill-treatment of one of his fellow-villagers. In his defence he accused his victim of sorcery, but the heart of the matter turned out to be a dispute about the ownership of a coconut garden. Verschueren points out that the conflict arose at the time the old *pakas-anim* had lost their power. Originally the settling of disputes concerning property was one of their tasks, of which they acquitted themselves satisfactorily.⁶ Consequently, we may ignore disputes of this kind, at least as a source of serious dissension. We shall have to concentrate our attention on sorcery.

Every conflict, if serious enough, might lead to sorcery. Sorcery was the ultimate means of revenge. Its disruptive influence on social life is evident; open conflicts may be settled and even when they are not, they are never so dangerous as the insidious threat of sorcery, which is a constant source of suspicion and mistrust. In Marind-anim society suspicions of sorcery are frequent. They arise as soon as somebody falls ill or dies. We are assured that, the demise of very young children and very old people excepted, every death is attributed either to sorcery or to the interference of *déma*; Wirz is quite positive on this point.⁷ The statement has never been refuted; there is too much evidence corroborating it. Yet, it is worth while to raise the question to what extent supernatural causes of sickness and death are accepted as real. In my correspondence with Verschueren I first asked him what the reaction was to the death of a recently born child. He wrote me: "A stillborn child is buried without any ado and the matter is not even discussed. No enquiries are made into the cause of the death of a child who died just after birth. Does this mean that in such a case they reject the idea of an external cause? I would not care to answer in the affirmative, because often I was under the impression that in such cases a *déma* is held responsible. Only when the child dies after it has left the *oram-aha* (the maternity-hut) is sorcery one of the possibilities taken into consideration".⁸ The statement confirms that when a death occurs the Marind think of an external, supernatural cause. Yet, it seems to be hardly warranted to stress this viewpoint too strongly. If the conviction were a very strong one, every death should be followed by divination so as to establish the cause; it should be part of the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Wirz, M.A. III p. 81.

⁸ Verschueren, Letters V p. 7.

post-mortem routine. Although divination was often applied, there was no general rule prescribing it. Apparently divination was resorted to only in cases where some rather strong suspicion of sorcery prevailed.

For our present discussion it is important to know more about the frequency of cases in which death was attributed to sorcery, as compared to those explained from other supernatural causes, primarily the action of *déma*. Such knowledge would enable us to make an assessment of the strength and frequency of the feelings of hatred and mistrust prevalent among co-villagers and among members of different village communities. The belief in sorcery is not only the cause of much mutual distrust and hatred, it also results from these feelings. For a methodical treatment it is necessary that we approach our problem from the point of view — which will not be called in question until the concluding chapter — that, unless there were an ample amount of mutual ill-feeling, sorcery would be at best a theoretical possibility, a bad habit reported as existing amongst other people, but unimaginable within the orbit of one's own community. When among the Marind sorcery is reported to exert a strong disruptive influence within the community, we may take it for granted that at the bottom there is quite an amount of discord stemming from other sources. For a fair assessment of the interpersonal relations within the village community we should be informed how often members of their own community are suspected of sorcery and how often neighbouring villages are held responsible. On all these points our information is defective; all we can rely on is a small number of stories and isolated observations made by various missionaries and written down for the benefit of the supporters of missionary work who live in the metropolitan country. In the second place, we have the data supplied by Wirz, who in Part III of his book gave a far more detailed and less generalizing account than the statement criticized a few pages earlier.

It is evident that epidemic disease (*tik*) used to be attributed to the *déma*, first of all the *tik-déma*, whose identity is extremely vague. In the case of venereal disease the *déma* held responsible were the navel *déma* of Kondo and Brawa. Soldiers were said to have burned down the *rapa-déma's* house at Kondo and in retaliation the *déma* had sent the disease. Others accused the *mayo* navel *déma* at Brawa, because foreigners had cut down the bamboo grove surrounding the sanctuary.⁹ The Malay-speaking inhabitants of Merauke call the spot Bambu

⁹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 83.

Pemali, i.e. Tabooed Bamboo. In other cases the identity of the *déma* is unknown, except that he (they) travel(s) along the coast from east to west. In the early years of contact rites to ward off sickness (*tik-bombari*) were fairly common. In the case of epidemic disease accusations of sorcery would not soon be made, although they occasionally were. Vertenten tells us the story of an old man who, all cut up by the protracted agony of his son who was dying from venereal granulome, threatened that he was going to avenge the death of his son on the whole village by sorcery. However, the old man's behaviour was quite extraordinary and in the days preceding pacification he might have been killed by his scared fellow-villagers. Instead, he was sent to jail.¹⁰

A minor illness or a slight wound does not lead to suspicions of sorcery, contrary to a serious ailment, especially if the sufferings increase rapidly. Suspicions of this kind are frequent. Van de Kolk wrote on the subject: "During the first few months of my stay in Okaba [the station was founded in 1910; v. B.] I thought people were less ridden with the fear of sorcery than their fellow-tribesmen in and around Yobar [near Merauke, where he had first been stationed]. I did not even hear the word mentioned. Recently, however, the picture has changed: *kambara* here, *kambara* there, *kambara* everywhere. A fairly sudden death or an uncommon ailment must needs be the result of *kambara*; there is no arguing against it. . . . Almost every internal disease is attributed to sorcery".¹¹ The accusation may be levelled against anybody; in the case of a *patur* who died unexpectedly the boy's father was under suspicion.¹² Vertenten and Van de Kolk describe a case of revenge they witnessed at Alaku.¹³ A man had died of pneumonia while still in his prime. His brother spent a night near the grave and in his sleep the ghost of the dead man revealed the identity of the sorcerer. The brother then collected a number of helpers and together they killed the sorcerer by shooting him with arrows. It happened in the middle of the village and everybody praised the avengers. The victim was a native of Wambi who lived at Alaku. He was, says Van de Kolk, a lonely man without brothers or near male relatives and the executioners did not need to fear retaliation. The public killing of a sorcerer cannot have been a rare event; I remember there were two cases on the coast and three on the upper Bian and upper

¹⁰ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 41-44.

¹¹ V. d. Kolk, *Oermenschen* p. 38.

¹² *Ibid.* pp. 30-34.

¹³ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 61 ff.; V. d. Kolk, *J.P.* 1914 p. 652.

Maro during the two years I served in South New Guinea as a controller. A sixth case, occurring a year before my arrival, has been described by Verschueren.¹⁴ Presumably, counter-sorcery was the more common response to sorcery, but on this point our information is of the scantiest.

The suspicion that sorcery has caused somebody's death need not necessarily result in action. Generalizations often are rashly formulated. In 1916 Vertenten wrote various articles on sorcery in the *Java Post*. He mentions two cases of women whose deaths were attributed to sorcery, but apparently no action followed in either case.¹⁵ Returning to the case of the man killed at Alaku, he states that the victim of retaliation is usually a man with a low status in the community, a man who has few friends and relatives,¹⁶ but the second example he gives concerns the village chief of Sēpadim, who was killed because he was suspected of sorcery.¹⁷ A third case mentioned by Vertenten is relative to a killing which took place long ago and accordingly all particulars are lacking.¹⁸ In his *Koppensnellers* Vertenten describes the burial of a man named Kiw. Shortly after he had been buried, the corpse was exhumed and on seeing the remains the bystanders muttered under their breath that the death was due to sorcery.¹⁹ In the description of what further happened to the corpse, which, a year later, was exhumed a second time for the bones to be painted, no reference is made to any action taken to avenge his death. Apparently the suspicion had not settled on anybody in particular. The cases related by Van de Kolk in his *Oermenschen*²⁰ develop on similar lines. There are suspicions, sometimes the name of an alleged culprit is mentioned, but, in the end, nothing happens. It may be that feelings did not run so high as to warrant the risk of a major upheaval in the village, or that the evidence was not convincing enough to kill a fellow-villager or to start a fierce fight with a neighbouring village. In other words, suspicions of sorcery were frequent enough, but acting on these suspicions was kept under control, partly because anyone suspected might have a friend who would dissuade the accusers from pressing their case, partly because prospective avengers themselves feared the consequences of an

¹⁴ Verschueren, *Ann.* 1936 p. 29.

¹⁵ Vertenten, *J.P.* 1916 pp. 424 and 536.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 823.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 838.

¹⁸ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 147.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 73.

²⁰ V. d. Kolk, *Oermenschen* pp. 30-34, 38-42.

assault. After all, there were always the *déma* who might be held responsible; a case of accidental illness attributed to the *déma* is mentioned by Van de Kolk.²¹ It is only when somebody has a dream in which the deceased reveals the true identity of his murderer, as happened in the Alaku case, that action is certain to follow.

It is interesting to note that in the documents at our disposal retaliation by killing the sorcerer is confined to cases in which the sorcerer and the avengers of the deceased belong to the same village community. That, to all appearances, was the situation in Sēpadim and Alaku, although in Alaku the victim was a native of Wambi and not one born into the Alaku village community. Geurtjens gives an additional number of cases. In Okaba Duma, a man ranking low in the public esteem, was held responsible for the death of a woman and a child by sorcery, and accordingly he was killed by a party of men. In the same village, a man killed Odow's wife with an axe because he suspected Odow, a sorcerer of some repute, of being the murderer of his deceased wife.²² In Wamal a man called Ngalama was killed with an axe by the brothers of the late Bukalem, because one of them, sleeping next to Bukalem's grave, had dreamt that Ngalama bit off a tiny bit of the flesh of Bukalem's wrist, roasted it and divided it over two bamboo tubes which he put in his nostrils to sniff up the smell.²³ We are not informed as to Ngalama's status in Wamal society. The murdered man had a son, who notified the police. It is probable that, in the old days, he would have acquiesced in the face of the evidence presented by the significant dream of Bukalem's brother. Another case is reported from Eromka. Here a girl had died and her father, on being warned by a medicine-man that her death was not a natural one, slept next to the grave and found out the culprit, an old man, whom he seriously wounded. Two other old men were mentioned as the sorcerer's accomplices. Public opinion in the village strongly condemned their action.²⁴

The cases cited make it sufficiently clear that the village was not always the closely-knit community of friends and relatives it seems to be on the face of things. There must have been rather strong tensions, such as only come to light when death strikes the village, shattering the atmosphere of security. An accusation of sorcery is not to be made light of. Everybody believed firmly in magic; even the sorcerers them-

²¹ Ibid., Ann. 1914 p. 293.

²² Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 56-59.

²³ Ibid. pp. 33 ff.

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 80 ff.

selves were deeply convinced of the deadly efficacy of their art. I met with a sorcerer in Muting who gave me an elaborate account of the technique he had applied in killing an old woman. An Indonesian assistant of mine with an equally firm belief in magic, a former mission-teacher who was a native from Buru in the Moluccas, told me that he had been consulted by the village chief of Kuprik on the question whether strangers might possibly be immune against sorcery because they always flavour their meals with salt. The chief was an old man and a renowned sorcerer, who told my assistant that he had killed several people with his magic, but had failed time and again when practising his art on strangers. Under the circumstances, to accuse a fellow-villager of sorcery is a serious thing and the comparative frequency of such accusations may lead us to infer that, actually, the village community is subverted by suspicion and dissension. Yet, this conclusion is a little rash. Verschueren informs us that usually suspicions are directed against sorcerers living in other villages. It hardly ever happens that the accused is a fellow-villager.²⁵

A case in which the sorcerer was supposed to belong to another village has been described by Vertenten.²⁶ A woman of Yobar was caught by a crocodile. The Yobar people suspected the sorcerers of Kumbe of having committed the act.²⁷ Two young men of near-by Yéwati were under suspicion of having connived with the Kumbe sorcerers and Vertenten is of the opinion that only because the Government station was so near did they escape with their lives. Van der Kooy again reports that in 1913 the death of two young men of Buti was attributed to the sorcerers of Yobar.²⁸ Feelings ran high and it was suggested that Yobar should be attacked, but nothing came of it. I did not come across other cases. Evidently the fact that the sorcerer belonged to another community prevented would-be avengers from rash action. In such a case the follow-up necessarily escaped the notice of the missionaries. However, we know from other facts that there was a great deal of distrust between neighbouring villages. Vertenten informs us that the villagers are fully on the alert when there is a feast and many strangers are visiting the village. The hut in which the *wokrévid* spend the night during the dance, which they are not allowed to attend, has been surrounded with sharp, pointed bamboos to ward

²⁵ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 32.

²⁶ Vertenten, J.P. 1916 p. 536.

²⁷ Cf. the myth of *Ugu*, above, pp. 281 ff.

²⁸ J. v. d. Kooy, Ann. 1914 p. 26.

off sorcerers.²⁹ During a feast in Okaba the guests from Sangasé were very much on their guard. They did not dare to accept any food or drink and they went to the Mission station to ask for water. Of old, Sangasé and Okaba have not got on very well together.³⁰ In 1909 Nollen, visiting the western section, met with a number of people from Birok and Noh-otiv (between Maro and Kumbe) who were staying in Sangasé, where in two days' time a big feast was going to be celebrated. They confessed to him that they felt rather ill at ease in this company of fierce headhunters.³¹ Vertenten, finally, makes mention of a man living in Yobar, who had fled from Domandé, his village of origin, because he feared retaliation.³² Tensions between villages are, apparently, frequent enough and when strangers visit the village, people will be careful lest the visitors secure any objects which they might use in sorcery.

Nevertheless, disputes fairly seldom result in open conflict. An example of how a conflict may arise was given above, when the Buti people were accusing the sorcerers of Yobar. The villages are near to each other and before anything could happen those of Yobar had already been warned and their *éwati* were lying in ambush in case the men of Buti should attack. There are two cases which evolved into really serious conflicts among coastal villages. For many years, up to 1880, the Méwi people lived at Ginu, a place quite near Okaba, between this village and present-day Méwi. A conflict about women flared into a bitter fight between the two villages and feelings ran so high that the corpses of those killed in battle, seven people, were mutilated. Noses and ears were cut off and the bodies ripped to pieces. Okaba had got the upper hand and the Ginu people settled down further eastward, at Méwi. The coconut gardens of Ginu were from that time exploited by Okaba. In 1910 the Roman-Catholic Mission built a station here; the Mission bought the garden-plot from the Ginu proprietor. Vertenten notes that this ended the feud, but it is evident that, in fact, Méwi and Okaba had buried the hatchet long before. All this time only one man of Méwi had been left unsatisfied, the proprietor of the contested coconut gardens, but he had left the village and had settled at Anasai, from where he had returned only very recently. The transfer of the gardens to the Mission settled the matter also in respect

²⁹ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 57 f.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Nollen, *Ann.* 1910 p. 293.

³² Vertenten, *Ann.* 1951 p. 155.

of his stake.³³ It is interesting to note that the bloodshed in this conflict between two villages did not lead to the taking of heads, although the bodies were mutilated.

In this respect the fight between Sangasé and Makalin took a worse turn. The available information is sparse. We do not even know when it happened, but it must have been round about 1907, the year of the last *mayo* celebration at Makalin. Vertenten confines himself to communicating that Sangasé fell upon the *mayo* people of Makalin while they were celebrating their initiation ceremonies. He suggests that this made things easy for the raiders, and that the onslaught was also meant as a provocation of the despised *mayo*.³⁴ The inference appears to be fairly facile. After all, we know next to nothing of what actually happened, except that Nollen wrote in 1910: "Makalin is a powerful tribe and the number of its members will not fall far below that for Sangasé and Alatep. They were not afraid to avenge themselves on the dreaded Sangasé people whenever the latter had attempted the life of one or other of their group. The bamboo knives of the Makalin people had taken their toll of Sangasé lives, too".³⁵ Evidently Nollen is referring, not to a big raid in its classic form, but to a state of war accompanied by occasional fighting. The period in which the fighting took place is fairly well defined by his earlier communication³⁶ that the Makalin warriors cut off the head of an *éwati* from Nowari who happened to stay at Sangasé. The *éwati* had come to Sangasé about 1906 or 1907. We conclude that the Sangasé warriors' raid on Makalin may well have taken place during their *mayo* celebration of 1907, but it cannot possibly have involved such a massacre as the great head-hunting raids usually did. Of course, it was a serious matter and because of this it is all the more interesting to note that a few years later Sangasé and Makalin are friends again. The two cases mentioned are the only ones we know of.

At this point we must interrupt our survey of conflicts to make an assessment of the role played by sorcery and suspicion of sorcery in intra- and intervillage conflict. The data collected are not conclusive. They may be used as an argument to demonstrate that the belief in sorcery was a disruptive element in Marind-anim social life. The same data may serve to argue that, after all, the effect of the belief was not

³³ Ibid., I.L. III p. 76 jo. Koppensnellers p. 110.

³⁴ Ibid., BK1 1923 p. 50.

³⁵ Nollen, Ann. 1910 pp. 308 f.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 294.

so bad as it seemed at first sight, because the emotions excited by a sudden death are of a transient nature and once the people have lived down the shock, they are willing to acquiesce and ready to forget their suspicions of sorcery. As a matter of fact, the latter argument was developed in the first draft of this chapter, which was sent to F. Verschueren for his comment. His reactions were extremely enlightening, but before we render them, a preliminary question has to be dealt with first.

It is the well-known issue whether sorcery has become more frequent during the years following first contact. The Marind hold the view that the situation has worsened. In the old days any sorcerer was afraid of revenge. He might be killed on the spot as, indeed, some of them were. To-day sorcerers do as they please. The government does not punish them and such intrepid people as try to limit the evil by killing the miscreants are locked up in jail. People to-day feel wholly unprotected.³⁷ The argument sounds impressive, but there is a flaw in its logic which makes it invalid. From the earliest days of contact we hear of sorcery and the situation was not different then from what it is now. Each death or serious illness, except when very young children or very old people were concerned, was attributed either to sorcery or to the *déma*. If there is an increase in sorcery it must be because the number of cases ascribed to the *déma* has decreased. A development on these lines is not impossible and not even improbable. Under the impact of missionary agencies it will sooner be the *déma* who lose their sway over the people than the belief in sorcery. However, we never hear that, to-day, epidemic diseases, too, are ascribed to sorcery and the whole difference between the situation as it was in the past and as it is now lies in the fact that in the past people felt that they could do something to ward off the evil, viz. kill the sorcerer, whereas to-day they cannot. They feel less protected, but in essence the situation has not changed. All those deaths which are attributed to sorcery to-day would also have been ascribed to it some sixty years ago.

After this digression we must return to Verschueren's comment. He begins by reminding me of the despair and the distress which reigned supreme in all the Kumbe valley villages at the time of the influenza epidemic of 1938. I remember this only too well. Never were people more abject in their desolation than the Kumbe villagers were at that time. The villages were deserted and the inhabitants huddled in small,

³⁷ Cf. *inter alia* Verschueren, Letters XI p. 30.

isolated groups far away in the forest, all preoccupied with sickness and death. The case is well chosen; it demonstrates that these people are more afraid of death than we are inclined to infer from the attitude of utter resignation observed among sick people on their death-bed.

Verschuieren continues: "Unexpected death always entails general consternation and serious alarm among the members of the relatively small community; consternation because of the sudden death, alarm because of its unexplained cause. After a couple of days the consternation dies down, but the alarm lingers on for weeks, sometimes for months and even longer. Much depends on the verdict of the medicine-men. Often the verdict is kept a secret and its wording is always ambiguous. The anxiety does not disappear until some other group or village has been pointed out as the murderers. So much for the impact made by the death. With the after-effects it is somewhat different. I know for certain that in many cases no retaliation follows . . . often because the verdict of the medicine-men is obscure and, to say the least, ambiguous; in other cases because people are afraid of the culprit or because they are physically prevented from taking revenge . . . Sometimes there is no verdict of a medicine-man at all, but the rumours keep flying notwithstanding . . .

"I agree that the number of people killed because they have been accused of sorcery is fairly low. Actually, I think that it has always been rather low. I believe that often accusations are launched not with the intention to kill [the accused], but with a view to intimidating the community concerned. Such intimidation is always successful".³⁸

Marind-anim society is always full of rumours and about rumours connected with sorcery Verschuieren writes: "Even here in Wendu [Verschuieren's Mission station], where I cannot say that rumours of this kind are frequent, they will crop up every two or three months. The effects are various: once darkness has fallen no human being will venture outside, neither to go to the shop as they are wont to do — and this, indeed, they are fond of — nor to visit friends. Nobody will sleep outside his house, as is customary when the weather is fair. At night there is no longer any fishing with nets, a very popular and frequently practised sport. Hunting, too, is stopped, usually even in the day-time. Instead of pounding sago far away in the hinterland they now cut the sago tree into pieces which they carry to the coast to be worked there. Sometimes they prefer to buy rice instead, or to eat the produce of a

³⁸ Verschuieren, Letters XI pp. 31 f.

garden near-by. It happens that people assemble in big groups to discuss the event. In inland villages they immediately go to the missionary to tell him about their troubles. On such occasions it soon becomes evident how terribly upset they are. Finally, and this is the most outstanding fact of all, during such periods church-attendance is far above average".³⁹

After this explanation nobody can doubt the serious impact the belief in sorcery has on village life. The exposition also serves to elucidate some of the more obscure points. It is up to the medicine-men to find out the culprit, but it is only in exceptional, even very exceptional cases that the medicine-men succeed in giving a lucid, unambiguous verdict. Either the whole affair remains in the dark, or it is a group and not an individual who are accused. Even if a group is incriminated the accusation need not be in clear terms. Apparently most verdicts of the medicine-men are ambiguous and rarely give a clue which is sufficient to establish the identity of the sorcerer or the group of which he is a member. Often the accusation is launched not primarily with the objective of incriminating a group or a person, but to forestall any further outrage. Verdicts of this kind are verdicts against unknown enemies. In case a clear verdict is given, the odds are that trouble will ensue. Obviously, the medicine-men do not easily give such a clear-cut verdict. If my interpretation of the data is correct, such verdicts are confined mostly to cases in which a dream gave clear and irrefutable testimony as to the culprit's identity. In the second place, a verdict may be delivered against individuals who belong to a weak group or who are low in the esteem of their community. On such occasions the lid is off and retaliation, not by sorcery but by manslaughter, is the most probable consequence.

Although one generation after another had lived under the spell of rumours of sorcery, open conflicts were relatively few in number. Somehow people were afraid of the consequences. A case in point is the conflict between Buti and Yobar. It just fizzled out and the affair was hushed up. Yet, feelings of mistrust and hatred must have been frequent and intense. Although a state of nominal peace was maintained, people rarely felt at ease in another village, even on the occasion of a feast. A telling fact in this context is that one of the usual items on the program of an intervillage feast is a palaver on sorcery. Wirz witnessed

³⁹ Ibid. p. 33.

one at Domandé which lasted for hours. He could not follow the speeches, but evidently a fair deal of suspicion had to be smoothed over.⁴⁰ There can be no doubt that Marind-anim society was full of tensions and that the maintenance of a state of relative peace made great demands on the people's restraint, and most of all on the wisdom and discretion of the local leaders, the *pakas-anim*. The desire for retaliation was held in check by a fair notion of the uncertainties involved in divination. Real evidence was confined to an occasional dream of a set, more or less prescribed, type. In the absence of this certainty, no action which might lead to serious and lasting conflicts would be taken.

The strength of these tensions, seeking an outlet in aggressive behaviour, shows itself in the numerous assaults upon strangers during the early years of contact. Among the victims were Chinese and Indonesian traders who had ventured too far from Merauke, as well as parties of runaway prisoners, convicts who had been brought to Merauke from prisons in various parts of the Netherlands-Indies to solve the labour problem. In August 1902, 26 out of a group of 28 escaped convicts were killed in such a sudden attack. Among these cases there are only a few in which the attack could be said to have been provoked by the offensive behaviour of the victims.⁴¹ How little was needed to stir the Marind into action is best demonstrated by Vertenten's report of how a number of Kanum-anim were attacked by the *éwati* of Nowari.⁴² Three *éwati* of Nowari travelling to Kanum-anim territory met with a group of Kanum-anim at Borem. The latter refused to give them water, the *éwati* of Nowari took offence and returned to their village. That same night a number of well-armed men and *éwati* went by canoe to a place just beyond Borem, where they hid the canoe in a creek. They lay in ambush, waiting for the Kanum-anim, who were expected to come to Borem for a feast. Whenever a small group of people came by, they were invited to sit down and chew betel, after which they were killed and beheaded. The corpses were concealed in the thicket nearby. The next night the offenders returned to Nowari with many heads, but "later the whole village had to pay for the dirty trick played by a few". I must admit that I have not the faintest idea what is referred to in the quotation. Probably some action taken by the government, though I do not remember

⁴⁰ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 35.

⁴¹ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1939 pp. 330 ff.

⁴² Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 50.

having found any reference to it when going through the archives in the Merauke office.

In all these cases the victims were foreigners or belonged to another tribe. This is not to say, however, that in the old days a Marind travelling alone along the coast would have been safe. If he ventured far from home, into areas he had never visited before, he might be risking his life. Yet, it is significant that the Sangasé people, who round about 1906 killed a Chinese trader of Kaibursé, caught his four Marind-anim servants and brought them to Sangasé, where they were given the choice between discarding their clothes and breaking with foreign habits, or else being beheaded like the Chinese, a choice they did not at all find difficult.⁴³ Generally speaking, the Marind-anim would not readily fight each other and, when they did, they usually refrained from cutting off the heads of their victims. Where it occasionally happened, peace was made fairly soon afterwards. How and when, we do not know, but the peace-making ceremony seems to have been rather simple, at least if the same procedure was followed as the one Vertenten reported as being used by a war-party wishing to make peace with a hostile village in foreign territory; ⁴⁴ in such a case a few simple presents sufficed. A readiness to make peace where it concerns a conflict between Marind villages is demonstrated by the concise communication in the Colonial Report of 1910 that "conflicts between coastal villages, usually the effect of the belief in sorcery, could be settled peacefully by the administration".⁴⁵ Apparently the people were willing to be dissuaded from fighting!

The fact that relative peace could be maintained is all the more amazing because the Marind-anim were a war-like tribe who set a high value on bravery and prowess, virtues much encouraged during the seclusion period. The *éwati* were the warriors of the community and they were reputedly eager for a fight. How pugnacious they were is demonstrated by the story of the attack on the Kanum-anim near Borem. Another who had the experience of their dangerous aggressiveness was Wirz, during one of his trips to the interior.⁴⁶ Vertenten, too, makes special mention of the young men's desire to prove their mettle.⁴⁷ It is invariably the young people and most of all the *éwati*

⁴³ Nollen, Ann. 1910 p. 294.

⁴⁴ Vertenten, op. cit. pp. 48 f.

⁴⁵ Koloniaal Verslag 1910, Hfdst. C § 20.

⁴⁶ Wirz, Dämonen p. 113.

⁴⁷ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 53.

who are mentioned as the real war-mongers. As a matter of fact, we read that every man wants to have the name of being *basik*, lit. a pig, i.e. courageous. The art of fighting is mastered at a very early age. Sham fights are one of the most popular games. The boys (*patur*) of one village fight those of a neighbouring settlement. The beach is the battlefield where the two groups meet, armed with bows and toy-arrows made of reeds. The more militant among the youngsters have painted their faces and wear ornaments in their armlets. The younger boys must provide the older ones with fresh supplies of arrows. The seniors are in front, and dancing and yelling they go at the enemy. A volley of small arrows is sent hurtling through the air and some of them inflict wounds, which by no means spoils the game. It is a sport thoroughly enjoyed by the boys, and all ill-feeling is foreign to them.⁴⁸ After one of these sham fights, between the boys of Okaba and Méwi, Van de Kolk counted ten injured boys, two of whom had to have their wounds dressed.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the boys delight in it; warfare is a favourite pastime and Van de Kolk's description of the game strongly reminds me of a sham fight I once witnessed at the newly established government-station in the Baliem valley. At the time the station was still in its initial stage, being no more than a simple encampment. Six boys acted as jacks-of-all-trades in the camp and in the evening they happened to have a sham fight. The Ndani people are a warlike tribe and the boys evidently enjoyed the game thoroughly. They fought each other with javelins made of the stalks of banana leaves, rather innocuous weapons. The next morning three of them went about each with a far from superfluous bandage, but there was no ill-feeling. It is just another aspect of growing-up in a warlike tribe which highly values fighting.

In spite of all this, fighting, even fighting in anger, is kept well under control. In the village major brawls are comparatively rare. On this subject Van de Kolk writes as follows: "If there is a fight, the whole village comes running out to see the stick-beating (when women are involved) or the bows being drawn (when it concerns men). They cheer the parties on, but as soon as they see that there is too much heat, the eager onlookers turn into peace-makers. Then there are shouts everywhere of '*tiske! tiske!*' (enough, enough) and sulking and calling each other names the antagonists part ways. Very rarely do men of one and the same village fight each other, which we have always found

⁴⁸ V. d. Kolk, Oermenschen p. 108.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Ann. 1911 p. 234.

amazing. What does happen is that one village has a brush-up with a neighbouring village, but the war usually does not amount to much and in less than no time the parties are friends again. However, there is one custom which is definitely heinous, viz. blood-revenge, but a Marind does not consider this to be a fight, but an act of justice. . . [here follows the description of the execution of a sorcerer whose name has been revealed in a dream]. Fortunately, blood-revenge is rare. On the other hand, ordinary fights are rather frequent among women or between husband and wife. If there is a brawl, it is always 'cherchez la femme', but easily as a conflict builds up, peace is restored just as quickly".⁵⁰

The quotation has been given in full because the addition that they have always been amazed that men of the same village do not fight each other, proves that the author does not just make random observations. He has been wondering, just as we do, how in the long run relative peace could be maintained. Somehow the strong incentives to dissension, engendered by the belief in sorcery and its after-effects, and intensified by a war-like spirit and the value set upon warfare, were counter-balanced by equally strong inducements to peaceful co-existence. Fear probably ranked first among these. They were afraid of each other; our discussion of sorcery leaves no room for doubt on this point. They did not engage in open warfare like the Ndani of the Baliem valley.⁵¹ They launched their headhunting expeditions against far-off tribes, who never would venture into their own country to retaliate. A second point is that in the open country of the Marind, where every village and every war-party can be spotted from afar, warfare between neighbouring villages would end in disaster. The open spaces with their wide vistas are more amenable to the promoting of mutual contacts than to the isolation fostered by warfare. In fact, the Marind were fond of travelling and they kept up friendly contacts even with far-off villages. Contacts of this kind yielded as many opportunities for the celebration of splendid feasts, and celebrations the Marind loved passionately. They would attend them even though there always lurked the fear of their hosts.⁵² Overcoming their fear and misgivings made them feel *basik*, brave. Fear, love of travelling and the fondness of glamorous feasts, these combined to keep mistrust and hatred within bounds. A third factor conducive to social relation-

⁵⁰ Ibid., Oermenschen pp. 107 f.

⁵¹ Cf. Matthiessen, Under the Mountain Wall.

⁵² Above, pp. 684 f.

ships must be found in the structure of the Marind character. Van de Kolk's comment on village conflicts gives evidence that friendly relations are consciously valued. Earlier we found that good-fellowship prevails, even in the relations between the sexes. The forgivingness of women vis-à-vis men attracted the attention of many observers. Viegen was the first to write about it and the same point cropped up in my correspondence with Verschueren.⁵³ The Marind, and this holds true also of the men, are not resentful. In this respect they differ profoundly from the forest-dwelling Muyu, who will cherish a grudge. We never hear of a Marind fretting away his life in resentment. Perhaps this is why, though a firm believer in sorcery, he is nevertheless prepared to give the accused the benefit of the doubt so long as a revelation in a dream has not given a convincing proof of his guilt. When Marind-anim are concerned — who are *anim-ha*, real humans — the Marind is in for fair play. A vague notion of tribal solidarity apparently helps him to keep private grudges within bounds.

A positive factor in the maintenance of good relations was the feasts. We found that they provided an opportunity for settling old scores by discussing them. Such opportunities offered frequently. Thus we learn from Wirz that at the pig feast at Domandé, Bahor (and Wendu) were the guests of honour;⁵⁴ that Buti feasted the village of Borem and the Kanum-anim of Mario, Tomer and Siwasiv on a *humum-angai*;⁵⁵ that for a celebration of an age-grade promotion at Birok (near Wendu) relatives from Sěpadim were invited.⁵⁶ Vertenten states that to the pig feast at Méwi the villages of Anasai and Bahor had been invited, but the guests would not come because at the time they feared some specific interference by the Government, whereupon the neighbouring villages of Alaku, Okaba and Makalin and, though in a less conspicuous way, Sangasé also, attended instead.⁵⁷ Nollen notes that Yobar is related to Domandé and that Bahor, Birok and Noh-otiv attend a feast at Sangasé.⁵⁸ On that occasion the Bahor people enjoyed the hospitality of near-by Méwi. In another context Wirz mentions that specifically friendly relations existed between Buti and Sangasé, Bahor and Domandé, Okaba and Iwolj, Wambi and Dokib, and between

⁵³ Viegen, Ann. 1915 p. 331; Verschueren, Letters III p. 6.

⁵⁴ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 22.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 61.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 11.

⁵⁷ Vertenten, Ann. 1915 pp. 148 and 182.

⁵⁸ Nollen, Ann. 1910 pp. 132, 276 ff., 293.

Nowari and near-by Urumb.⁵⁹ We note that none of the villages west of Wambi has been mentioned, which may be explained from the accidental nature of the relevant observations. It is a part of the coast which is seldom visited. The interesting point is that so many villages with long distances between them maintain close relations. These constitute a kind of network which holds the whole tribe together. Next to these friendly links with distant communities, each village keeps up good relations with its neighbours. All the evidence confirms that near-by communities, whether they belong to the same tribe or not, usually are on friendly terms with each other.⁶⁰

Our final conclusion must be that all this friendship required a great amount of restraint. Experiencing the evil of sorcery, the Marind rarely had an opportunity to find out the culprits and punish them. Time and again they had to put their grievances in cold storage because there was no one on whom they could take revenge, while those in power were careful not to make random accusations. Many, perhaps most, of them were medicine-men themselves and they were unwilling to commit themselves unless they were fully convinced that they were right. Intervillage co-operation was a highly valued asset, certainly to the *pakas-anim* who kept up relations far and near. Under the circumstances, pressure must have been building up. An occasional headhunting expedition may have offered a delightful opportunity to let off steam, providing an outlet for all the pent-up energy and aggressiveness. However, there is one point which remains unexplained. It is conceded that there is a reason for aggressiveness and even for a good deal of it. Yet, this is a kind of aggressiveness which should be directed at a well-circumscribed object, viz. the one guilty of sorcery. Headhunts, however, are launched against people who had no hand in the cases of sorcery which roused the men. They are not launched to avenge sorcery; at least, we have not a single indication that they were. Here lies a difficulty to which we have to revert in section 3 of our final chapter.

2. TRADITIONAL OBJECTIVES OF HEADHUNTING PARTIES

The victims of Marind-anim headhunting are the *ikom-anim*, the strangers, who are only there to be killed. To the Marind the *anim-ha*, real humans, are the members of the Marind tribe. The *ikom-anim* are

⁵⁹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 165.

⁶⁰ Ibid. I p. 127.

inferior in every respect. The Marind's viewpoint is clearly rendered by Vertenten: "*Anim bake*, Sir (They are not human beings, Sir), let us go and take their heads. That is what they are made for!"⁶¹ The main *kui-miráv* (headhunting grounds) were the Digul river area and the territory between the international boundary and the Fly river. Accidentally, the international boundary happened to coincide with the eastern limit of the territory occupied by the Marind-anim and by such of their immediate neighbours as the eastern Marind lived in peace with.

When we consult our sources for more detailed information, they fail us. We are best informed on the eastern *kui-miráv*. We know from their own stories that the Marind penetrated as far as the eastern banks of the Fly river. It is not clear where they reached this stream. The numerous reports from British New Guinea do not make mention of any raiding further east than Mawata. The frequency of these raids, however, is alarming. The first report dates back as far as 1884. On the 24th of May 1884 Strachan fought the Tugeri (the Marind) in the Wassi Kussa.⁶² Some time during the first quarter of 1887 they are seen on the coast between Boigu and Saibai.⁶³ On April 17, 1889, the Tugeri kill an Englishman and several natives near Mawata.⁶⁴ On the 3rd of March 1890 MacGregor contacts a Tugeri war-party on the coast nine miles west of the international boundary.⁶⁵ Round about July of the same year the Tugeri are reported to have "killed four people of some native tribe",⁶⁶ perhaps the Be-ar, a tribe living ten miles east of the Mai Kussa.⁶⁷ The dating of this attack is uncertain and it seems probable that it was launched at least one month earlier. On the 24th of June of the same year "the Saibai natives reported that the Boigu people had gone up the Mai Kussa River and seen the Tugeri tribe".⁶⁸ News of enemy raids does not always travel fast in these parts and the encounter between the Boigu people and the Tugeri may have taken place in May or even earlier. April 21, 1891, the mysterious Montague is kidnapped near the Morehead river. May 15, 1892, the Tugeri are in the vicinity of Mabudauan.⁶⁹

⁶¹ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 48.

⁶² Wichmann, Entdeckungsgeschichte II pp. 338 f.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 439.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 486.

⁶⁵ ARBNG 1889/90 pp. 70-72.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 1890/91 p. 44.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 79.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 1891/92 p. 50; Wichmann, op. cit. pp. 540 ff.

A period of relative peace follows. It would be presumptuous to assume that the police-station temporarily set up by the Dutch at Sarira could really have kept the Tugeri raiders at bay. Actually, the small police detachment did not stay there for more than a month and had much difficulty in maintaining themselves against the attacks of the Marind. In 1895 the Tugeri again raid the Morehead river area.⁷⁰ The following year MacGregor at last sees the opportunity clear to teach them a lesson. On May 14, 1896, the Tugeri are beaten on the Wassi Kussa and 48 of their canoes taken.⁷¹ Two-and-a-half years later, in December 1898, the Tugeri are seen again on the Morehead river.⁷² In November 1899 the Sanana people, east of the Morehead, are raided by them⁷³ and on the 10th of November 1900 the Tugeri attack a police-patrol on the same river.⁷⁴ Early in 1902 they have launched another marauding expedition up the Morehead river, but an exact date is not given.⁷⁵

The Marind-anim themselves gave F. Viegen a detailed account of their last major expedition. Beyond the Torassi two creeks, the Yarvem and the Wares, had to be crossed before they arrived at a sandbank, Wirin, which was a regular halting-place. Farther east was another river, the Kombes. East of the river, at Nak-a-Nak, the Wendu people had a halting-place. Here they were on the border of the enemy territory, where danger became imminent. They used to proceed eastward along the coast to the Markai-anim, whom they sometimes fought and sometimes befriended. In the latter case they went inland together with the Markai-anim to fight the Batu-anim in the interior. Further to the east there lived the Sari- and Yo-anim, whom they described as very ferocious headhunters and fierce fighters. Though apparently they had some bad experience, the fear these tribes inspired did not prevent the Marind from penetrating further east to Mahi-tik, where, on the island of mBérbér, the Inggris-anim, the British, lived. Here they used to leave a small party who watched the settlement. In case of imminent danger they were to warn their friends. Most Marind did not go any further, but the people of Sangasé and Kaibursé were not to be stopped. Those of Kaibursé went furthest of all. They reached

⁷⁰ Ibid. 1896/97 p. 24.

⁷¹ Ibid. 1895/96 pp. 53 ff.

⁷² Ibid. 1898/99 p. 7 jo. 1899/1900 p. 25.

⁷³ Ibid. 1899/1900 pp. 26, 27.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 1900/01 pp. 81, 82.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 1901/02 p. 16.

the banks of the Fly river. On their last big expedition their daring became fatal to them. The Marind were beaten off and when all the other villages taking part in the raid had returned safely, the people of Sangasé and Kaibursé were still fighting their way home. On the shore the Markai-anim and their allies were lying in wait for them and at sea they were under rifle-fire from a sailing-vessel. Their retreat had been a flight and they had lost many men, but they still enjoyed the moment when an engine-propelled boat passed them whilst with their canoes they were hiding among the trees.⁷⁶

Wirz has made various efforts to identify the names given by the Marind to places situated in Australian territory. The ultimate result is to be found in his article entitled *Head-hunting Expeditions of the Tugeri into the Western Division of British New Guinea*, TBG 73 (1933) pp. 105-122. The list of place-names given there does not differ substantially from the one in the Addenda to his Marind monograph.⁷⁷ Viegen's Yarvem is probably a misprint of Yawim, which Wirz identifies with the Morehead river. Wirin is a small creek just east of the Morehead, and the Kombes or Kombis should, perhaps, be identified with the Wassi Kussa.⁷⁸ The Wares is, according to Wirz, a small creek between the Morehead river and the Wassi Kussa. Identifying these names is not a very rewarding task. There are so many uncertainties that it is not worth while to go into detail here. More important is the name Markai-anim, which is given to a group east of the Wassi Kussa. Who they were is as impossible to make out as it is impracticable to establish the identity of the Sari-anim and the Yo-anim, but the name *markai* is remarkable. It is the pidgin-english term used in this area for the spirits of the dead. Here is another proof of the fairly intimate contacts the Marind had established with some of the *ikom-anim*. Earlier in this book we already came across the word *cow*.⁷⁹ Viegen's references to their sometimes friendly relations with the Trans-Fly Papuans are amply corroborated by Wirz.⁸⁰ He reminds his readers of a Tugeri visit to Saibai reported by the Rev. E. B. Savage. The Boigu islanders stated to MacGregor in 1891 that the Tugeri used to be accompanied by another tribe called Babiri, identified with

⁷⁶ Viegen, TAG 1912 pp. 140 f.

⁷⁷ Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 132 ff.

⁷⁸ Verschueren points out that the name Kombes is also applied to the Strickland river (Letters XI p. 33). On the conflicting evidence with regard to Kombes and Yawim see above, pp. 241 f.

⁷⁹ Above, p. 424.

⁸⁰ Wirz, TBG 1933 pp. 108 f.

the Bapir by Wirz and located on his map in the same spot in Gambadi territory where Williams' map, published in *Papuans of the Trans-Fly*, has Babiri. The Boigu islanders were occasionally raided by the Tugeri, but they knew them well enough to be aware that the war-parties belonged to different groups. It does not seem at all impossible that, at times, they had friendly contacts as well. Some trading is reported by Savage on the occasion of the Tugeri visit to Saibai: "There was an exchange of all available things the Tugeri had with them, particularly bodily ornaments, in return for which they received knives and other iron tools".⁸¹ The Marind already had a word for iron, *vakr*, when Merauke was established in 1902. The stone-headed clubs they used are very much like some of the stone clubs of the Torres Str. islands and it is a fair guess that they obtained them from the Fly river district as well as from the interior.⁸²

Another interesting point in Viegen's communications is that Sangasé people were among the headhunters visiting the eastern *kui-miráv*. Wirz even carries the point a step further: "Practically all the coastal settlements in the eastern part of the Dutch territory, from Borem down to Sarira in the East and right up to the Bian river, took part in these raids into British territory. And sometimes the inhabitants of Sangasé, Alaku, Méwi and even of Okaba and Makalin also joined the expedition".⁸³ Viegen's statement that the real *kui-miráv* began only east of the Wassi Kussa, is not confirmed. Wirz holds the view that the Bapir or Babiri also suffered at the hands of the Marind.⁸⁴ That there was hostility between the Tugeri and the Gambadi who inhabit the area between Morehead river and Torassi follows also from Williams' statement that a party of Gambadi people claimed a substantial victory over the otherwise invincible Tugeri. The latter were defeated when one day they were set upon after they had raided Tonda (eastern bank of the Morehead river), having been intercepted on their return journey down the river.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Williams also reported some influences of Marind-anim material culture among the Gambadi.⁸⁶ All things considered, the friendly relations of the Marind-anim with the peoples across the border seem to have been of a perfunctory and at best temporal nature. The same may be concluded

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 108.

⁸² Cf. *Rep. Cambr. Exp.* IV pp. 190 ff.; Verschueren, *Letters* XI p. 36.

⁸³ Wirz, *op. cit.* pp. 115 f.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 110.

⁸⁵ Williams, *Trans-Fly* p. 277.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 404, 408.

from the Colonial Report 1907, where it is stated, not without pride, that in 1906 the people of South New Guinea did not raid British territory, although in May 1906 the villages of Kaibursé and Kai-a-kai (Borem) did set out on a headhunting expedition to the Yawim-anim in the southern part of the territory.⁸⁷ It is a fair guess that the Yawim-anim referred to did not live on the Dutch side of the border at all, but should be identified as people of the Yawim, i.e. either the Morehead river district or the Strickland river.

It has been suggested by many authors that the Kanum-anim, the eastern neighbours of the Marind, were decimated by Marind-anim headhunts. Statements to this effect can be found in the works of Wirz⁸⁸ and Nevermann,⁸⁹ but when it comes to giving details, the same authors do not leave any doubt that, in reality, the Kanum-anim mostly lived in peace with the Marind and often acted as their allies, accompanying them on their headhunting expeditions. Wirz states explicitly that the Marind east of the Maro are great friends of the neighbouring Kanum-anim⁹⁰ and Nevermann gives a probably realistic account when, in respect of the Kanum-anim, he writes: "They were never raided by the Marind-anim who lived in the neighbourhood, but they suffered from attacks by the Sangasé people, who had friendly relations with Buti, and by the people of Bad on the Kumbe river and probably also by other Kumbe valley villages. Apparently the Kanum people themselves never attacked either the Marind-anim or the Yéi-anim [called *Jé-nan* by Nevermann], but directed their raids against the Gambadi, Semariji and Keraki. Consequently, the Kanum-irébe were counted among the dreaded Tugeri".⁹¹ In this context Nevermann refers to Williams, who, in his *Papuans of the Trans-Fly*, mentions Hungaiar as one of the names given to the Tugeri by the Morehead river natives. Nevermann has the name Hungaiar derived from Ugangaru, a native name for the Kanum-irébe, a somewhat far-fetched etymology. Evidently Hungaiar refers to Ongaya, one of the Kanum villages on the beach.

An explanation of the contradictory nature of the available evidence is presented by Verschueren. "To all appearances the war tactics of

⁸⁷ Koloniaal Verslag 1907 Hoofdstuk C § 20. On Kai-a-Kai cf. Viegen, TAG 1912 p. 115.

⁸⁸ Wirz, M.A. I p. 23, III p. 51.

⁸⁹ Nevermann, ZfE 1939 p. 4.

⁹⁰ M.A. I p. 127.

⁹¹ ZfE 1939 p. 32.

the Marind were similar to those the Jaqai applied until a few years ago. Peace was made with small groups living in the area separating their territory from that of their main enemies. The peace that was concluded was not always a lasting one. If the headhunting party were a small one, they might very well decide to attack just these small groups in the intermediate area, because they knew their way there. Such raids used to be severely censured by the prominent leaders at home. It is quite well possible that in the old days the Kanum-irébe suffered a similar fate at the hands of small parties of coastal Marind. . . . However, it is perfectly certain that the Kanum have really been decimated by the Kumbe valley people. Expeditions launched by the latter were often joined by Yéi-anim groups and sometimes even by people from the Bian river. Regular participants in these raids were always the people of Bad, Badé, Opeko (Senam), Saring, Pim, Koa Rahuk and Bes-Rahuk. Usually those of Kékayu and Donggiab [two Yéi-anim settlements] joined hands".⁹² There is every reason to endorse Verschueren's views; they give a ready explanation of the sudden attack by Nowari *éwati* on the Kanum-anim visiting a feast in Borem.⁹³

We know very little of the history of the tribes of the interior east of the Maro. An exception must be made for the Manggat-rik, a small tribe of some 55 people living at Bud or Mbur, a bare 10 miles from Merauke. Conflicting evidence deriving from the Colonial Report, Van der Kooy and Nevermann⁹⁴ inspired Verschueren to a fairly extensive account of their history, based on information collected among the Kuprik people on the other side of the river.⁹⁵ They told him that long ago the Manggat-rik were a rather powerful tribe, who occupied all the land east of the Maro, from their present territory northward as far as Senayo. They even owned some land west of the Maro. Older people called them the real owners of the lower Maro, which a long, long time ago followed a different course from its present one, emptying into the sea near Sēpadim, where a small creek, the Taram, is about all that has remained of the old river-bed. The Manggat-rik have always been friendly with Buti and Yobar and we do not know of any hostilities between the Manggat-rik and the coastal Marind.

⁹² Verschueren, Letters XI p. 33.

⁹³ Above, p. 690.

⁹⁴ Koloniaal Verslag 1909 Hfdst. C § 20; Van der Kooy, Ann. 1915 p. 70; Nevermann, ZfE 1939 pp. 35 f.

⁹⁵ Verschueren, op. cit. pp. 34 f.

[Actually, the Manggat-rik were culturally fairly close to the Marind; according to Nevermann they even participated in the *sosom*-rites.⁹⁶ Yet, they spoke a language of their own and I do not think that the Marind looked upon them as tribal associates. v. B.]. The enemies of the Manggat-rik lived in the interior. They were the Bad-anim, the Badé-anim and the Badi-anim, [a most surprising collection of names which baffled me completely until Verschueren kindly explained the situation]. The Bad-anim are the people of Bad, a rather populous village on the middle Kumbe. Their territory extends eastward as far as the Maro, where Sermayam is an old Bad-anim settlement. The Badé-anim were a small group who had their territory just north of the Bad-anim. Their main settlement was Senayo on the Maro. At the time the Kumbe valley was brought under administrative control the Badé settled at Yakau, but in later years they usually stayed at Senayo, their old centre. The Badi-anim [part of Nevermann's N'gowugar] were a Kanum-anim group. Their old villages were Ngow-ngor on the eastern bank of the Maro and Waya, situated just beyond the Australian border. The Badi-anim were the only Kanum-anim who lived in peace with the people of Bad and Badé. Originally the equals in number of the Manggat-rik, they have dwindled to a very small group, numbering 28 people among them in 1935. At the time they lived in Waya, but to-day they are settled at Sota, where they inhabit one village together with people of other tribes.

Verschueren's account, combined with the information derived from other sources, presents a telling picture of the steady decrease in population eroding these small tribes. Living in a permanent state of war with their immediate neighbours and harassed by the raids of the Marind of the middle Kumbe, the toll taken in human life must have been a heavy one. The Colonial Report of 1909 makes mention of a raid of the Badi-anim on the Manggat-rik. In 1914 Van der Kooy in a single house counted 16 heads which the Manggat-rik had taken from the Badi-anim!

Our information on the relations between the Marind and the Yéi-anim on the middle and upper Maro is both limited in scope and contradictory in content. The Yéi-anim were the makers of beautiful arrows which were an important article of trade. Wirz, when dealing with trade generally, informs us that barter with inland communities was mostly carried on from one village to the next.⁹⁷ As far as the

⁹⁶ Nevermann, *op. cit.* p. 36.

⁹⁷ Wirz, *M.A.* I p. 127.

bartering of arrows, drums and rattan is concerned, this is probably true, but it seems that if they wanted canoes, the coastal Marind usually went up-river themselves. This was certainly true of the canoe-trade down the Maro river. In J.P. 1908 p. 124 Cappers reports that, some time before, the coastal Marind, in particular the inhabitants of Buti, had gone up-river to buy boats. They intended to go first to the Bad people [Sermayam to all intents and purposes; v. B.] and then, together with these, to the Yéi-anim. They returned rather soon afterwards, bringing three new canoes with them, but it presently came out that they had lost some of their men, who had been killed by the Yéi-anim. Cappers' communication bears no date, but it was published on Febr. 22, 1908. The affair to which he is referring cannot have taken place at any later time than toward the end of 1907. In June 1909 Nollen, finding that a number of men of Domandé were absent, allegedly because they had gone to buy canoes on the Bian river, writes: "It is curious that they always buy boats when it is the season for headhunting. And after they have returned from such a trading-expedition, there are always rumours circulating. This year Buti was buying canoes, but they were expensive; a few heads were lost in the venture. And the year before there were also difficulties. Buti and Borem clashed with the Yéi-anim".⁹⁸ The Colonial Report has a slightly deviant version. People of Buti, on their way to the upper Merauke river, were attacked by men from Pim and Rahuk (middle Kumbe), on which occasion those of Buti lost a few of their number.⁹⁹ If this be true, it is a fair guess that the Kumbe people were out on a headhunting raid, although we do not know where they were bound. It is by no means improbable that the coastal people sometimes raided the Yéi-anim. In April 1903 twenty canoes manned by Sěpadim, Kaikarikě (Borem), Sarira, Kondo, Urumb and Yatomb set out on a headhunt up the river. In the village of Gerampu, a 'Dorib-anim' settlement, they took ten heads and kidnapped a few children.¹⁰⁰ The Colonial Report does not give us the slightest clue as to where the village is situated; perhaps Gerampu must be identified with Erambu, but there is every reason for doubt on this point. It is fairly certain anyhow that the southern Yéi villages were spared. They had made friends of the people of Sermayam and Senayo and traded with them. Unlike the Yéi-anim living further up north, the southern groups have

⁹⁸ Nollen, Ann. 1910 p. 133.

⁹⁹ Koloniaal Verslag 1910 Hfdst. C § 20.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 1904 Hfdst. C § 20.

adopted several traits of Marind-anim culture.¹⁰¹ That there was some form of contact between the Marind and the southern Yéi settlements is certain. The village of contact was Po, one of the southernmost Yéi settlements.¹⁰² Friendly relations between the coastal Marind and the Yéi are also reported by Vertenten. "The coastal Marind want fresh rattan for their ornaments. . . . Their canoes, drums, cassowary-pens and bird of paradise plumes they also obtain from the interior. In case the inland people are not willing enough, the men of Sangasé are informed, who then pay them a visit in the form of a headhunting expedition".¹⁰³ Even in case of conflict the coastal Marind apparently stuck to their policy of maintaining peace with neighbouring tribes.

Nevermann gives a deviant picture. Buti kept up close trading relations with Komadeau (southern Yéi, west of Erambu). Neither Buti nor the adjacent villages ever went headhunting among the Yéi-anim, though they did not mind showing the way there to their friends from Okaba and Sangasé. No headhunting occurred between the upper and middle Kumbe villages north of Bad and the Yéi-anim. Senayo traded with Po, and Yakau with Donggiab and Kékayu. The Yéi-anim of Erambu and the N'gowugar of the Wangu river were friends, a friendship which was extended to include other Yéi-anim villages and the Kumbe-people of Yakau. The real enemies of the Yéi-anim were the Boadzi and both sides raided each other's villages.¹⁰⁴ We are inclined to conclude that the headhunting expeditions which the people of Buti and their neighbours undertook along the Maro river may have been directed, not against the Yéi-anim, but against the Wangu river people, whom Nevermann includes among the N'gowugar.

Among the coastal people the Yéi had the reputation of being fierce headhunters and, apparently, not undeservedly so.¹⁰⁵ Although comparatively few particulars have become known, their complicated trophies made of human bones bear irrefutable evidence of their dedication to headhunting.¹⁰⁶ Nevermann's account does not leave any doubt either.¹⁰⁷ Vertenten reports in 1917 that the Unum- and Tepas-anim of the upper Bian raided the Yéi-anim. They returned with eighteen heads and, besides, four young boys, one girl and a young

¹⁰¹ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 201; Rep. Depop. Team pp. 112 f.

¹⁰² Van der Kooy, Ann. 1912 p. 8.

¹⁰³ Vertenten, Ann. 1917 p. 346.

¹⁰⁴ Nevermann, B.A. 1941 pp. 139 f.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. i.a. Rep. Depop. Team p. 108.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III Tafel 8 fig. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Nevermann, *op. cit.* pp. 140 ff.

woman. The Yéi-anim retaliated and in their turn killed a number of people from Sokwan (upper Bian). Vertenten also mentions that the Wanam-zé of the Éli river raided the people of Mahéko and killed some who were sleeping after they had had a dance.¹⁰⁸ I have not been able to find out where Mahéko is; probably the Yéi-anim have nothing to do with it. More important is the fact that the Yéi-anim and the upper Bian people are presented as traditional enemies, which is confirmed by Vertenten in a later article.¹⁰⁹ We know that the Yéi fought other people as well, e.g. the southern groups of the Boadzi, but whatever they did, they never travelled as far as the coastal Marind to satisfy their aggressiveness.

Of the headhunting raids undertaken by the Kumbe valley people we know little beyond what has been communicated already. As far as the lower Kumbe people are concerned, they probably joined their fellow-tribesmen of the coast in their expeditions, while the men of the upper Kumbe participated in the expeditions of the upper Bian people. The villages of the middle Kumbe had their traditional headhunting territory in the Kanum-anim region.

A good survey of the headhunting practices of the upper Bian people is given by Verschueren.¹¹⁰ The southern villages had their *kui-miráv* beyond the Digul river, where they fought the Auyu of the Ederah-, Kia- and Womod rivers. In 1953 Verschueren, travelling from the Womod river to Muting, was taken all the way up one of their old *kui-kai* (headhunting roads). Crossing the Digul by canoe, they entered a small southern tributary. When they had arrived near the springs, the canoes were put away in the brushwood. From here they went on foot through the forest and after a four hours' walk emerged on the bank of a swamp where, after some searching, the guides found a canoe which had been hidden there. Boarding the canoe, they went to Manggis, the southernmost of all upper Bian villages. The path they had followed was a typical *kui-kai*, a straight, rather broad, cleared passage through the forest, with on either end a hiding place for canoes. If necessary, new canoes would be made on the spot. There are several headhunting tracks, all of the same type. His guides told Verschueren that there is one which begins near Kafiwako and another farther to the north, starting at Dina and leading straight out west in the direction of the Kia river.

¹⁰⁸ Vertenten, Ann. 1917 p. 104.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., J.L. IV p. 251.

¹¹⁰ Verschueren, Letters XI pp. 35 f.

The northern upper Bian villages, from Muting northward, had a more variegated program of headhunting expeditions and their *kui-kai* led out in various directions. One ran straight to Samuting and Bupul, the northern Yéi-anim. Another led to the middle Fly. Initially the Bian people had raided the Boadzi, but in more recent years they had made peace and with the Boadzi they would go to the Lake Murray region. Two or three *kui-kai* started at the headwaters of the Bian, one leading to Unggu, opposite the Kia river, another farther north to Assiké (Digul river) and a third to Togé on the lower Kao river. This implies that their headhunting grounds included the area of the Kia river, the region of the Mandobo people between Digul and Kao, the territory of the southern Muyu near the lower Kao, as well as the areas of the middle Fly and the upper Maro. Sometimes they would befriend small groups settled somewhere in the vicinity of the places where they hid their canoes. These would take care of the boats, making new ones whenever necessary, and act as guides and interpreters for the upper Bian war-party whenever their services were required.

As far as we know, the upper Bian villages did not fight each other and, when occasionally they did have a fight,¹¹¹ they would not cut off the heads of their victims. In 1923, however, Geurtjens makes mention of rumours according to which the people of Wan (southern upper Bian) had been on a headhunt among the Aboi, the southern neighbours of the upper Bian people.¹¹² No particulars are given and we have to allow for the possibility that the conflict was not primarily a headhunt, but a fight. However that may be, all the evidence confirms that the upper Bian Marind were fierce headhunters. The cut-off heads noticed by Wirz in various upper Bian settlements make it perfectly clear that they made numerous victims.¹¹³

Our information on the *kui-miráv* of the western coastal Marind is less detailed. We know that the coastal people of the Okaba district also went to the Digul, but we do not know to what area. There were many taking part in these expeditions; Vertenten speaks in terms of whole villages and he explains that they could go in large numbers because on the Digul there is plenty of sago. Expeditions were under way a long time; in 1911 the people of Alaku set out on a headhunt some time toward the end of November. It was not until the 5th of

¹¹¹ Cf. above, p. 574.

¹¹² Geurtjens, I.L. V p. 253.

¹¹³ Cf. Wirz's report on his journey to the upper Bian in Dämonen, pp. 252-279.

January that they returned.¹¹⁴ Here again we may ask, where did they go? It is improbable, if not impossible, that they should have gone by canoe via Strait Marianne. The trip takes them too far out and is too dangerous; the approaches of the Muli and the Digul have strong tidal currents which play insidious tricks on those insufficiently acquainted with the situation, even in this calm season. Of course, it is not entirely impossible that they did go by way of the Strait, but it is more probable that they took their canoes up one of the rivers, then travelled overland and when they had arrived at the Digul either built new canoes or used craft which were kept there for the purpose. Vertenten records an interview with a Marind-anim youth who, as a child, had accompanied the people of Wendu on a headhunt. They had been far, very far. They had been to the Digul, a river so broad that you could barely see the opposite bank and which it was very dangerous to cross. Nevertheless, they had made it and raided a village.¹¹⁵ It is perfectly obscure how they went about it. The one revealing fact in this story is that it was not only the people west of the Bian, but even those of Wendu, between the Maro and the Kumbe, who occasionally went as far as the Digul. As a matter of fact, so did other villages east of the Bian. Domandé is reported to have been to the Digul as late as October 1912.¹¹⁶ They were certainly not lacking in initiative or in imagination!

The western coastal section also had *kui-miráv* which were nearer by home. Those of Sangasé, who occasionally accompanied the eastern Marind into British territory, also went headhunting among the Makléw people on the Mawékrě, a tributary of the Buraka river. Wirz and Vertenten even have the Makléw figure as their traditional victims. We may well put a question-mark here. First of all, our sources do not entirely agree. According to Wirz all the people between Bian and Buraka had their *kui-miráv* in Makléw territory.¹¹⁷ He adds that the Makléw people themselves used to raid the tribes on the upper Buraka- and Eli rivers. Vertenten makes an important restriction: "At the time we arrived in Okaba, the Makléw territory still was the headhunting area of Sangasé, but Duv-miráv, Makalín and Okaba had already become the friends of the Makléw people".¹¹⁸ So it was only Sangasé

¹¹⁴ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 51.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., J.P. 1917 pp. 145 f.

¹¹⁶ Koloniaal Verslag 1913 Hfdst. C § 20.

¹¹⁷ Wirz, M.A. III p. 52.

¹¹⁸ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 48.

which fought the latter, a curious thing because in the myth of *Woliv*, the first man to die, the people of Makléw go to Sangasé to celebrate a ceremony.¹¹⁹ The myth suggests that relations between Makléw and Sangasé were normally peaceful. We have to allow for the possibility that it was not the peaceful relations of Okaba, Makalin and Duv-miráv with Makléw which represented a new development, but the war between Sangasé and Makléw.

The westernmost section of the coast had its *kui-miráv* in Frederik Hendrik Island.¹²⁰ At the same time the villages of this section kept up friendly relations with the inhabitants of Komolom. This is corroborated by the Colonial Report of 1910. A number of unarmed natives of Wamal who went by canoe to Mombum (Komolom) to celebrate a feast, were attacked at sea by enemies from Frederik Hendrik Island avenging a headhunt the Wamal people had carried out in their territory.¹²¹ It seems that the people of Eromka were not the only enemies of the inhabitants of Frederik Hendrik Island. The Colonial Report of 1911 informs us that a raid by the Sangasé people directed against Frederik Hendrik Island was stopped by the Makléw tribe.¹²² If we look at the map, this would not seem very plausible, but we have to take the information for what it is worth.

In conclusion, we must state first of all that our factual knowledge is sketchy. Of most of the inland people we know little of their head-hunting practices. From the sparse information available we may infer that these inland people usually did not go very far and had their headhunting grounds relatively near-by. This implies that they themselves were exposed to attack. Even the upper Bian people, who were not afraid to go far afield, were liable to counter-attacks and were set upon by the Yéi-anim. It is the familiar pattern of incessant feuds in connection with headhunting, well-known from other southern tribes. The coastal pattern is different. The coastal Marind strike out far indeed, so far as to make retaliation impossible. The very fact that their raids had such a wide range, however, involved considerable risk, as those of Kaibursé and Sangasé experienced on their last big expedition to British territory. The frequency of headhunting expeditions was high. During the first years of their stay in Okaba Fathers Van de Kolk and Vertenten reported headhunting expeditions every

¹¹⁹ Cf. above, pp. 200 and 651.

¹²⁰ Wirz, l.c.

¹²¹ Koloniaal Verslag 1910 Hfdst. C § 20.

¹²² Ibid. 1911.

year. On 25 October 1910 Makalin, Iwolj, Wenil, Duv-miráv, Tawala, Alatep and especially Sangasé and the villages further away were practically deserted. There were only two men from Okaba participating, and a few more from Méwi.¹²³ In April 1911 a headhunting party returns with many fresh heads. The names of the villages involved are not mentioned, but apparently Sangasé was one of them.¹²⁴ In October 1911 the villages round Okaba equipped a new headhunting expedition.¹²⁵ In the autumn of 1912 Sangasé, Alatep, Méwi, Okaba and Makalin again went on a headhunt and brought a not inconsiderable number of heads, 24 of which were confiscated when in February 1913 the Government took action.¹²⁶ A later report mentions round about 90 fresh heads.¹²⁷ Not all these expeditions were successful. The one of October 1910 was intercepted.¹²⁸ The Iwolj people undertook three successive expeditions to the Digul in 1910, 1911 and 1912, all of them failures. The other villages had the laugh of them.¹²⁹

Even so, the toll taken of human life must have been very heavy and among those responsible Sangasé was undoubtedly the most prominent. They raided along the Digul, in Frederik Hendrik Island, on the upper Maro and in the Western Division of Papua. Under the circumstances every child could have its own *pa-igiz*, literally, head-name, a name adopted from a cut-off head. Vertenten, visiting Duv-miráv, reports that the boys proudly told him that they all had real head-names,¹³⁰ and this was not exceptional. The custom of having head-names was general all along the coast and the names were given indiscriminately to boys and girls alike. Yet, this does not imply that for every child some person had to be killed. Van de Kolk writes: "It seems that it is not necessary to have a separate head-name for each individual child. Many of them are namesakes and after making some comparisons I was struck by the fact that when one and the same name is borne by several people in different villages simultaneously, it usually concerns persons of the same age, irrespective of their sex. This may be explained from the fact that villages which went on a headhunt together brought the same name home by way of booty.

¹²³ V. d. Kolk, Ann. 1911 p. 100.

¹²⁴ Hamers, Ann. 1911 pp. 244 ff.

¹²⁵ V. d. Kolk, Ann. 1912 p. 88; Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 52.

¹²⁶ Ann. 1913 pp. 196-199.

¹²⁷ V. d. Kolk, Ann. 1913 p. 212.

¹²⁸ V. d. Kolk, Ann. 1911 p. 132.

¹²⁹ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 56.

¹³⁰ Vertenten, Ann. 1916 p. 118.

Another conspicuous fact is that villages which... rarely, if ever, unite in a common headhunting expedition use completely different names".¹³¹ In another context the same fact is mentioned by Vertenten.¹³² We might conclude that we must not equate the number of heads taken with the number of Marind-anim living, as Vertenten did in his essay just quoted.¹³³ However, some renowned warriors have names saved up. It is possible that some of them never had an opportunity to bestow all the names they had available. From this point of view, again, it does not seem too far-fetched to equate the number of living Marind with the number of people killed in headhunting expeditions. We estimated that at the beginning of this century the number of coastal Marind cannot have exceeded 9000.¹³⁴ If on an average every Marind, after he has received a head-name, lives to be 30, this means that every year 300 heads were taken. Of course, fixing the lifespan at 30 years is entirely arbitrary. It may be more, it may be 40, in which case the number of heads taken drops to about 225, still a most considerable quantity and, in all probability, more than could possibly be captured. We cannot subscribe to the view that there were as many people killed as there were Marind-anim born. From a demographic point of view it is well-nigh impossible, the more so because the Marind availed themselves of their headhunting expeditions to kidnap children. In Van de Kolk's days Okaba alone numbered 22 persons who had been kidnapped and subsequently been adopted as children.¹³⁵ It does not seem probable that these adopted children, too, were given a head-name. We must make allowance for these kidnappings anyhow when computing the losses of the surrounding tribes, which must consequently be increased by 10 % and probably by another 10 % to account for people wounded or killed whose heads could not be taken. We shall never know the full extent of the losses, but even if the number of casualties in any year never exceeded 150, the toll taken from the neighbouring tribes was an extremely heavy one.

3. THE PARTICIPANTS

A headhunting expedition was a big undertaking in which several villages used to co-operate. In all the cases of coastal expeditions which

¹³¹ V. d. Kolk, J.P. 1911 p. 234.

¹³² Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 47.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 49.

¹³⁴ Above, p. 32.

¹³⁵ V. d. Kolk, J.P. 1911 p. 234.

have been recorded in something more than the broadest outline, we find that the participants came from more than one, and sometimes more than five, villages. Of the raids of Sangasé on the Yéi-anim and of Iwolj to the Digul we know nothing which could serve as a proof that they were carried out by these villages alone. Iwolj may well have run into bad luck while partaking in joint expeditions. Each village might act as an independent unit. The story of the last big raid in British New Guinea proves that on these expeditions the different villages did not act in unison, as a closely integrated army, but that every village occasionally operated independently, one venturing further into enemy territory than another. We also know that each village set out on its own. "When all preparations are completed, they depart in groups, each settlement by itself, one canoe to a clan. Some go to-day, others to-morrow, as they see fit; on their way they will come together in certain well-known places where they will be encamped for a longer or shorter period".¹³⁶ Vertenten gives more detailed information. Usually it is the men of one men's house who take the initiative. When the men's house has decided upon the expedition, the subject is discussed in what he calls a village council. All the men assemble in the *soso*, the open place just behind the village, where they squat in the shade of the coconut trees to give their views.¹³⁷

Verschueren gives a slightly different picture. In one of his letters¹³⁸ he points out that the initiative to a headhunt was taken by the *pakas-anim* of a couple of men's houses. First of all they built a *kui-aha*, a headhunting-house. The *kui-aha* was always a feast-house, a house with carved and decorated posts (*soma*) which, when the final feast concluding a successful headhunt was over, used to be converted into a common (men's) house. All the people who joined in the expedition had to co-operate in the construction of the *kui-aha*. If they belonged to another settlement they might also build a *kui-aha* of their own, but it was not necessary that each territorial group should have its own *kui-aha*. Summing up, an indispensable feature of every headhunting expedition was the *kui-aha*, sometimes even two or three, but not every territorial group felt called upon to construct one. Usually it was the group who took the initiative to a headhunt who also built the *kui-aha*.

The composition of the participating groups is rather a complex one.

¹³⁶ Wirz, M.A. III p. 54.

¹³⁷ Vertenten, BKI 1923 pp. 52 f., Koppensnellers p. 84.

¹³⁸ Verschueren, Letters VIII pp. 1-3.

Verschueren writes on this point as follows: "I gathered that it was by no means always a combination of whole territorial groups, but that the totem-groups had an important part in it. I was told that it was very well possible for the *Kai-zé* of Bahor to join the expedition while the *Mahu-zé* stayed at home, e.g. because they had no *éwati*. Yet, there was a kind of alliance between different territorial groups, which always co-operated, even if some of them did not actually join the party on every occasion. . . . To one such alliance belonged the villages of Urumb, Noh-otiv, Yatomb, and usually also Wendu, though Wendu and notably Matara rather came in with Kumbe and Saror. Kuprik also belonged to such a group, which had its centre in Buti, more specifically in Sěpadim. Sometimes these groups were extended to embrace villages even further away, and practically always individuals from other groups joined in. All things considered, it would seem that along the coast the following permanent groups could be discerned: the Gawir-group from Sěpadim to Bahor; the Kumbe-group including Wendu, Matara, Anasai, Kumbe, Saror and Kaibursé; the Domandé-group including Onggari, Kaliki (which sometimes joined the Kumbe-group), Senégi and Aboi (just south of the upper Bian); the Sangasé-group which extended as far as Alaku and part of Iwolj and embraced several villages of the interior; the Wambi-group to which Makalin, part of Okaba, Yawimu and Yomob belonged, and finally the Wamal-group, which included Galum [Galum is the main settlement of the Yab-anim, a tribe speaking another language; v. B.]. Are these groups representative? I noted the remarkable fact that several old people, when discussing a doubtful case such as Kaliki, said, 'Kaliki did not join Domandé, the latter were *imo* and Kaliki is *mayo*', or, 'Kaibursé did not go with Kumbe because those of Kumbe were *sosom*'. We note, in fact, that the groups coincide more or less with the cults. This is quite obvious in the case of Okaba, because one part of Okaba is *imo* and another *mayo*".¹³⁹

The data recently collected by Verschueren give a clearer picture than the always generalizing expositions of earlier authors, who paid a minimum of attention to the sociological aspects of the custom of headhunting. Moreover, now that so many years have elapsed, a reconstruction of the prevailing pattern of co-operation in headhunting expeditions is easier than it was to the contemporaries who were

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 2. The argument that the Kaibursé people did not join Kumbe because the latter were *sosom*, does not sound convincing. Kumbe village was not *sosom* at all, though the other villages of the group were.

confronted with too many deviant details to discern the rule. Such contemporaries would have been impressed for instance by the fact that in 1906 Kaibursé joined Borem, Kamisan and Sarira on a headhunt. Borem, Kamisan and Sarira are the easternmost Marind-anim villages of the eastern coastal section.¹⁴⁰ Deviations from pattern were undoubtedly numerous and yet, the grouping as depicted by Verschueren's informants fits in perfectly with the known facts and with such general descriptions as presented by Vertenten and Wirz.

Participation in the actual expedition is not confined to men only. They were joined by the women and even the children. According to Wirz they all go, women and children, dogs and pigs. Only the old and the sick stay at home, and also some young women who have to prepare sago for the feast which has to be celebrated on the return of the party. For such a feast gardens are prepared long before. There must be plenty of everything.¹⁴¹ Vertenten is more specific. The composition of the headhunting party varies according to circumstances of place and time. If they want to make a quick sortie, participation is confined to the able-bodied grown-ups. Those who go across the eastern border have to make provision for the fact that there is hardly any sago to be found there, and only few coconuts. The tubers grown by the local natives do not become available until after a successful attack and even then they will sustain the raiders for a very short time only. For this reason participation in the expeditions of the villages east of Merauke used to be confined to "young men, strong women, a few experienced old men who were still able-bodied and some *iwag*, young women who would not bide their time, being over-anxious to go on the long journey". In the Okaba district whole villages went, because on the Digul river there is a plethora of sago. If the supplies became exhausted, they would camp somewhere for a few days to prepare sago, after which the expedition continued on its way.¹⁴²

An expedition really was a treat. Once the men had decided to mount one, everybody, the young people in particular, wished to go. The forthcoming headhunt became the one and only topic of conversation. Everybody co-operates in the preparations. The women make

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Nollen, J.P. 1906 p. 664.

¹⁴¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 54.

¹⁴² Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 51. The canoes captured by MacGregor on the Wassi Kussa (1896) had large quantities of sago on board; ARBNG 1895/96 p. 55: "In most of the canoes were twenty or thirty bundles of sago, each bundle weighing ten or twelve pounds".

huge amounts of sago, the men prepare their weapons, their bows and arrows, and every day (??) they sing *ayasé*, the headhunters' song. When the day of departure has arrived, the provisions are stowed in the long canoes used on headhunting expeditions and then at last the party sets off, slowly moving along the coast, camping in whatever place they know to be suitable, for instance, because there are coconuts or because crabs are to be found there. They visit friendly villages and slowly move on in the direction of enemy territory. On the border, they will wait for allied parties to join them before proceeding to more dangerous areas, each party maintaining its relative independence and eventually venturing out on its own. In enemy territory they have their regular camping-sites, large enough to accommodate several hundred people. "The local natives do not appear to visit these camps or to touch the structures put up by the Tugeri".¹⁴³ Of course, the arrangements vary according to circumstances. If a war-party travels by land, the supplies brought by the expedition will be appreciably smaller, because everything has to be carried by hand. On their way they will make fresh sago, visit friendly villages, and so on. Before they penetrate into enemy territory, reconnaissance parties are sent out to spy upon the enemy. They will give warning when danger is imminent. *Cautiously they sneak up to the enemy village to take stock of the local situation, then they rejoin the main body.* If all seems safe, an attack is decided upon. The actual fighting is done by the men and the inmates of the *gotad*, though some women and children may accompany them, unless a serious fight is expected. In that case they will wait with the others for the war-party to return to their temporary bivouac. The members of the war-party and those who accompany them, the women who want to kidnap a child or a baby or who simply wish to enjoy the spectacle, the children who have come to see and learn, they all whiten their faces so that they can be recognized as friends. At dead of night the enemy village is surrounded and at daybreak they rush in to kill all the men and women they can lay hands on and to kidnap the children they manage to catch.

This, however, concerns an aspect which will be discussed later on in this chapter. For the moment we are more interested in the social implications of headhunting, viz. the composition of the participating groups and the impact of headhunting on the social life of the Marind. It is evident that headhunting was, indeed, a very important focus

¹⁴³ MacGregor in a despatch of the 19th May 1890; ARBNG 1889/90 p. 69.

of their life, and not even for the men only. The women participated in it to such a degree as is well-nigh unknown with regard to other peoples. Nearest to the Marind in this respect are their Jaqai neighbours. They have their families go with them as far as the border of the enemy territory; then the women remain behind in the camp, while the men attack the enemy village. Here it is the women who incite the men to headhunting,¹⁴⁴ which, to our knowledge, never occurred among the Marind. In all other respects, however, the situation is similar. The collaboration of the women opens up a new perspective. It is as if, among the Marind, the women have not a culture of their own. In this context it is significant that they, too, have head-names.

4. SOME CEREMONIAL IMPLICATIONS OF HEADHUNTING

A point of some importance concerns the season in which headhunting expeditions were usually undertaken. Vertenten and Wirz have emphasized that the appointed time was the very end of the dry season, shortly before the northwest monsoon set in.¹⁴⁵ Actually, there was a fair deal of variation and the data at our disposal point to a correlation between the direction (east or west) of the expedition and the season appointed for it. The period mentioned by Wirz and Vertenten applies in respect of the marauding parties of the western coastal Marind, whose destination was in the west, but not to those eastward sorties undertaken by the Marind of the eastern end of the coast. Among the various raids of the western Marind recorded in this chapter there is only one which was executed in April; all the other expeditions were carried out between October and December,¹⁴⁶ that is, just before the beginning of the west monsoon. The preference for this season was a deliberate one. "In 1911 the southeast monsoon kept blowing and when there was drought everywhere our friend Kalmu from Méwi said to us: 'Sir, pray that the Lord may send rain, otherwise the people will set out on a headhunt'. And so they did".¹⁴⁷

The headhunting season of the eastern Marind lasted through the west monsoon. Their raids were launched in the period between the end of November and the beginning of the east monsoon.¹⁴⁸ Although

¹⁴⁴ Boelaars, Mappi p. 98.

¹⁴⁵ Vertenten, BKI 1953 p. 51; Wirz, M.A. III p. 53.

¹⁴⁶ Above, pp. 708 f.

¹⁴⁷ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 52.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. above, pp. 696 f.

there were exceptions, MacGregor was almost certainly right when he wrote aboard the 'Merrie England' on the 25th of February, 1890: "This much is certain, that they are warlike and numerous, that they come round the coast from the west in large canoes without outriggers before the north-west wind and return with the advent of the south-east. . . . As this is the season at which they may be expected, the whole coast, including the Queensland islands of Saibai, Dauan and Boigu, are in a state of terror".¹⁴⁹ Ten years later his successor Le Hunte wrote about the Tugeri in a similar vein: "They send out several large expeditions every year in various directions and those that come eastward to us do so at the beginning of the north-west season — about November — and remain hunting and marauding until the south-east season begins — March or April".¹⁵⁰ The despatches from which we quoted hold ample evidence that the authors made extensive enquiries and we are justified in accepting that the statements reflect the opinion of the natives living in the threatened area.

The early experience of the Dutch administrators at Merauke points to a certain preference for the period between the west and the east monsoons. In April 1903 Sěpadim, Kai-a-Kai (Boreni), Sarira, Urumb, Yatomb and Kondo raided the Yéi-anim.¹⁵¹ In June 1904 Sangasé and Kaibursé crossed the border into British territory.¹⁵² In May 1906 the people of Kaibursé, Borem and others made an incursion across the border, or attempted to do so.¹⁵³ It only approximately confirms Nollen's opinion that April, i.e. the time between the west and the east monsoons, is the period preferably chosen for headhunting expeditions.

The preferred season is the one which gives the marauding party the advantage of the wind when they return. There is more to it, however. For the western Marind the most favourable time is when the *imo* have just finished the *bangu* ceremony; for the eastern Marind the appropriate season begins when the *mayo* ceremonies draw to a close. A second important point concerns the correlation of headhunting and rainy season. It is confirmed by the mythological association of headhunting and thunderstorms.¹⁵⁴ From observations the meteorological service made at Merauke between 1956-1960 the following total numbers of days with thunderstorms were recorded for this 5-year

¹⁴⁹ ARBNG 1889/90 p. 68.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 1899/1900 p. 27.

¹⁵¹ Koloniaal Verslag 1904 Hfdst. C § 19.

¹⁵² Ibid. 1905 Hfdst. C § 18.

¹⁵³ Ibid. 1907 Hfdst. C § 20 jo. J.P. 1906 pp. 577 and 664.

¹⁵⁴ Above, pp. 401 f., 408, 410 f.

period: January 16, February 14, March 15, April 11, May 7, June 3, July 2, August 2, September 3, October 9, November 13, December 19.¹⁵⁵ The headhunting season is characterized by a significantly greater number of thunderstorms than the period from May to September.

Another important point is the motivation of a headhunt. It is evident that, next to those openly stated, there are all sorts of motives. A headhunt is, essentially, a festive occasion. The Marind love to sally forth and see many places, always looking forward to new journeys, new adventures. They are still yearning for them, says Vertenten, quoting the men of Urumb who said to him: "Sir, let us go once more. You come with us, we shall not cut anybody's head, we only want to see those places again!"¹⁵⁶ It also provided opportunities for trading, for acquiring new canoes, stone clubs and other articles they needed. Part of these could be stolen from the villages raided, but there was also barter with foreign villages with which the Marind lived in temporary peace, as is evident from Savage's communications with regard to their visit to Saibai.¹⁵⁷ Another incentive, more especially for childless couples, was the opportunity which offered for kidnapping a child. Such children were raised as own children and enjoyed all the rights of native-born Marind. However, none of these motives was ever presented as the true motive for setting out on a headhunt. The argument that was publicly stated and that carried weight was that the store of names had become exhausted. The argument is referred to by all the authors on the subject; the Marind kept complaining that, after headhunting had been forbidden, they had no names for their children. In a discussion on the custom of name-giving, Father Van de Kolk once replied, "Don't you mind, I will give you plenty of names for your children, as many as you like". He continues his story as follows: "With a faint smile, they looked sideways at me and answered simply, 'Sir!', which meant as much as: 'you do not realize what a head-name means to us'".¹⁵⁸ They are proud of these names, writes Vertenten. "A father takes pride in having names in stock which he may bestow on his children. Not every father is a successful headhunter and not everyone has a head-name to spare for a new-born child. In that case there is usually an uncle or a grandfather who has one left. Later, if the father himself is successful, the little one may be given

¹⁵⁵ Meteorologisch en Geofysisch Bureau Hollandia, Publicatie Nr. 13.

¹⁵⁶ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 53.

¹⁵⁷ Above, p. 699.

¹⁵⁸ V. d. Kolk, J.P. 1911 p. 233.

a second head-name. Thus it occurs that one child has two, three or more head-names, particularly when the relatives are many and the children few. However, those are exceptions".¹⁵⁹

In spite of this emotional attachment to names, the act of name-giving is performed without any ceremony. Having a head-name does not bring any specific good luck, nor are those who have none to fear any unpleasant consequences. The Marind have never substantiated their complaint that they had no names for their children by arguing that such names served any specific end, as they would have been sure to do if they had held any explicit belief of this kind. We do not hear either of any specific use made of the skull from which the name has been derived, nor of any special care taken with a view to its ultimate preservation. As soon as the final ceremony has been completed, everybody takes the skull or skulls which are his property and places them in his own men's house, where they hang or lie till they fall to pieces and are thrown away. Only the mandible is preserved.

Wirz thinks that the preservation of the mandible has a religious meaning.¹⁶⁰ He points out that all the skulls that were seized by the police lacked the mandible, which had been retained. He bought many skulls himself, but the Marind refused to sell the mandibles. Most of these were kept by old women, who had them tied to their betel kit, sometimes together with an upper vertebra. He supposes that these relics were kept so long as the persons bearing the names derived from them were alive, and he thinks this is confirmed by the fact that in some cases mandibles and atlas vertebrae were offered for sale, whereas in other cases people would not under any circumstance part with them. He argues that on the upper Bian it is the custom to place a painted skull on a fresh grave. Such skulls "are, according to the natives, the property of the deceased" from which he concludes that these skulls were once taken by the deceased buried there. He supposes (without giving a proper argument) that on the coast, too, this custom once prevailed, and he goes on to refer to the ceremonies of the dead in which, allegedly, a skull plays a part.¹⁶¹ The argument is a weak one, because there is not a single native statement justifying the assumption that the mandible or skull in question was the one from which the deceased derived his name. The one thing which is evident is that skulls and mandibles are preserved for a long time, sometimes

¹⁵⁹ Vertenten, *op. cit.* p. 47.

¹⁶⁰ Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 62.

¹⁶¹ See below, pp. 786 ff.

even for a very long time, as in the case, recorded by Vertenten, of a young boy who had received his head-name from his grandfather. The grandfather had captured a skull long ago. The father kept the mandible in a *wad* (a plaited kit) which hung on the ridge-pole of his house.¹⁶² The only conclusion we are justified in drawing is that the skulls are kept as trophies and that an emotional value is attached to them. Any inference that goes beyond this is mere hypothesis, devoid of substance. There is nothing to indicate that the skull would have any supernatural quality or power, and we had better refrain from assuming something which would have been perfectly obvious if it had really been true. We must accept the fact that, notwithstanding its great emotional impact, the custom of naming people after captured skulls is not based on concepts or beliefs concerning the supernatural. A comparison with the customs of neighbouring tribes tends to confirm our conclusion. Among the Keraki, the Boadzi and the Jaqai the same custom of name-giving prevails according to which the name of a beheaded enemy is given to a child.¹⁶³ From the comments given by Williams and Boelaars it is evident that the motive is not a supernatural, but a social one, viz. that of commemorating the act and — in the case of the Jaqai — of establishing certain specific friendship-relations.

Verschueren, as a result of a discussion on headhunting he had with his informants, could add two new motives to those already given for a headhunt. The first was that there were many *éwati*, the second that a group deciding on a headhunt was particularly *yaman* (brave, bellicose; cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.). To a certain extent, the two arguments coincide, because the *éwati* form the fighting-force of the village.¹⁶⁴ The stress on the function of the *éwati* is significant. They are the fighters, the most aggressive group among the inhabitants. They live up to their ideal standards and they should do as they please. Fighting belongs to the period of seclusion in the *gotad*. Upon their entrance into the *gotad* the boys have listened to a speech by their maternal uncles in which they boastfully paraded the names of the people they had killed during headhunting expeditions.¹⁶⁵ At the same time, fighting is not the exclusive prerogative of the *éwati*. The com-

¹⁶² Vertenten, l.c.

¹⁶³ Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 177, 286; De Zoete, Nota p. 11; Boelaars, Mappi pp. 57 and 101.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. above, p. 691.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 146.

munity as a whole wants to partake in it. They are all *yaman* and want to go out headhunting, the men and also the women. The necessity of finding names for the children seems but a poor rationalization of the aggressive drive which sets them on the war-path. A headhunting expedition is a glorious event in the life of every Marind, in which he participates with all his soul, without needing any reasonable argument, because his disposition is bellicose. If ever one should feel the need to demonstrate the irrationality of war, here is a case in point, provided by people who succeeded in mustering the wisdom and restraint to keep peace with the neighbours they distrust.

In this context it is important to note that, notwithstanding the fact that some relationship between headhunting and initiation is evident, it is not specified. "I did my utmost", writes Verschueren, "to find out whether headhunting as a rite has any immediate connection with the great cults, but I have not been able to establish any such correlation for a certainty. At any rate, there is no immediate connection, because the *soma-* or *kui-aha* is built in the village and the *mayo*, *imo-* and *sosom-miráv* are situated outside the village. Whether there is some relation with the celebration of the ritual is another matter. The most surprising answers were given to my queries, such as the statement that it was connected with the pig feast". After having referred to the *gomai*-ritual of the Boadzi¹⁶⁶ and the episode of the men with coconut-husks in their mouths who are grunting like pigs during the *ndaho hawn* ceremony of the *imo*,¹⁶⁷ he concludes that he is under the impression that there is, indeed, a connection of some sort.¹⁶⁸

After giving careful consideration to Verschueren's letter, I do feel that the reference made to the pig feast is not after all so surprising. On the contrary, we shall see later on in this chapter that the final ceremony is really a pig feast. Only those who built a *kui-aha* will give such a feast, that is, one or at most two or three communities. A feast of this kind has to be reciprocated. The opportunity to go on a head-hunt, too, has to be provided in reciprocation. In due time the helpers and guests of to-day must reciprocate by assuming responsibility for another headhunt and another pig feast. It is evident that the headhunting expeditions are part of a set of social obligations, because they are connected with a final feast. Since these feasts are often given to reassert the relations with villages far-away, they explain why and

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 588 ff.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 648.

¹⁶⁸ Verschueren, Letters VIII p. 2.

how Wendu could join in a headhunting expedition to the Digul and Sangasé in one to British territory.

The relationship between the headhunting expeditions and the feasts raises a new question, that of their connection with the cults. With the upper Bian people there is no problem here, because the initiation, the cult and the feast prepared for invited guests coincide, and the celebration is followed by a headhunt. Among the coastal *imo* the celebration of the *bangu*, preferably at Owi near Sangasé, is not a feast, but a rite which — as far as we know — is not connected with the system of reciprocal celebrations. The initiative to a headhunt is taken locally and, though the headhunt may, and usually will, follow the *bangu*, we do not know how it is fitted into the over-all pattern. Even less do we know about headhunts following a *mayo*-initiation. The connections between *mayo*-initiation and headhunting are anything but clear and the way in which the headhunt following an initiation was fitted into the calendar of feasts seems, at the present stage of our discussion, a matter of pure conjecture. We will revert to this point later, when other data, pertaining to the ceremonial context of headhunting, have been analyzed.

Above we already pointed out that after the decision had been made to go on the warpath, the first thing to do was to build a *kui-aha*, a feast-house, which, when all was over, might be turned into an ordinary dwelling. Constructing it involved a great deal of effort because the poles of the house had to be carved. Vertenten published a series of excellent reproductions of these *soma*, feast-house posts, in I.A. vol. XXII (1915), Taf. XXII-XXV, a few of which have been depicted in Plate XXIV fig. 3. The decorations, usually representing a totem, are worked in half relief, the top ending in a beautifully decorated V-shaped ornament supporting the round roof-beam. The construction of such a house is apparently a necessity.¹⁶⁹ It has an important role to play in the final ritual. On their return, the men bring the newly taken heads into the *kui-aha*, where they will remain until the concluding feast. As soon as the heads have been brought in, a taboo (*sâr*) is laid upon the feast-house. It was permitted to enter the house in order to examine the heads which had been taken, but speaking was forbidden. The booty had to be admired in respectful silence.

In and around the *kui-aha* there are a few objects which deserve of

¹⁶⁹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 54; Verschueren, Letters VII p. 2, VIII pp. 1, 3.

our special attention. In the hut described by Vertenten the first items he observed were four *kui-ahat*, headhunting-forks, from *kui*, headhunt, and *ahat*, fork in the sense of a young forked tree, which is used to hang objects on or serves as a house-post with the fork supporting a beam.¹⁷⁰ The four *kui-ahat* were of an unusual type. They consisted each of a bamboo less than a meter in length, two broad strips having been cut out of the upper part on opposite sides, leaving long slits through which a cord could be passed to hang the heads from.¹⁷¹ The bamboos were elegantly painted. He found them stowed away under the roof where they were lying on two red-painted bamboo supports which were suspended from the rafters. We do not know when or how these bamboo *kui-ahat* were used. Vertenten's description of the *kui-aha* only covers the period before the expedition. It seems probable that the bamboo *kui-ahat* were used to hang the heads on during the interval between the return of the war-party and the final feast. For that feast another, bigger type of *kui-ahat* was used, as we shall see presently.¹⁷² As far as we know, there was only one such *kui-ahat* at the feast. That there were also four small ones to be used inside the *kui-aha* may be an indication that here each of the phratries had its own bamboo for receiving the spoils captured by its members.

Next, there were six small poles set up in the ground, three round the central pole of the house, and three outside. They may have been half a meter high. They were painted white, decorated with some simple circle-shaped designs, and each had a plaited ring round the base. The reader is referred to the colour-picture made by Vertenten and printed as fig. 5-10 of Plate XXI, which, by courtesy of the editors, could be reproduced from I.A. XXII Tafel XVIII. The author does not comment on the shape of the poles, which suggests a phallus, but confines himself to informing us that numbers 5-7 represent the poles inside the house, numbers 8-10 the ones standing outside. Numbers 6 and 10 are *Mahu-zé* poles, the other four are *Geb-zé*. The *Mahu-zé* one outside (nr. 10) stood in front of the house, the two *Geb-zé* at the back. Inside, there were one *Mahu-zé* and two *Geb-zé* poles, but their respective positions are not further specified, except for the statement that they were set up round the central house-post.

Finally, there is the aforementioned *kui-ahat* which is erected on the occasion of the final feast. This *kui-ahat* is shaped from a forked tree

¹⁷⁰ Vertenten, I.A. 1915 pp. 157 f.

¹⁷¹ Cf. the reproduction, Plate XXI fig. 4.

¹⁷² Cf. Plate XVI fig. 1 and Plate XX a and b.

and is much bigger than the bamboo poles kept in the *kui-aha*. This is where the cut-off heads are hung after they have been taken out of the house for the feast. "Such *ahat* I have seen in most of the villages where there had been a big dance, set up in front of the men's house where the feast had been held and the dance celebrated".¹⁷³

We do not know whether any special ceremonies were connected with the construction of the house. Information on the ceremonial part of the preparations for a headhunting expedition is confined to the fact that before leaving the village *ayasé* is sung. *Ayasé* is the headhunters' song, which is attributed to *Sobra*. According to Vertenten it is sung every morning.¹⁷⁴ Wirz has it that it is sung during the night shortly before the departure of the expedition, and as soon as they have reached foreign territory, the singing is taken up again every night. It is a solemn, sonorous song, sung to the accompaniment of a few big drums (these may be from 5 to 6 feet high; cf. Plate XXI fig. 1 and 2) which the party drag along with them. During the dance, the men have promiscuous intercourse with the women in order to become *yarét* (hot, courageous).¹⁷⁵ A text noted down by Wirz on the occasion of an encounter with a war-party on the upper Bian¹⁷⁶ has the following recognizable words¹⁷⁷: *umasa*, the covering of a slaughtered pig with fruits; *kana*, egg, spawn; *anum soa oh*, iguana woman; *moyas*, you will shoot; *mui*, fat, meat; *sai*, place; *zombi isalaka*, sleeping-place (bed) of fornication; *kui(ana) aha*, headhunt-house; *do*, blood; *katané aha*, house of the sun. We also note the word *kuiamu*, which is almost identical with the Kiwai rendering of the name of *Kwoiam*, viz. *Kuiamo*, the mythical headhunter of Mabuiag.¹⁷⁸

Verschueren recorded the following text¹⁷⁹:

¹⁷³ Vertenten, op. cit. p. 158.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., BKI 1923 p. 54.

¹⁷⁵ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 54 f.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 55. The full text is as follows:

Oh, oh, umasa kimarubu	mo yaka moyasse muya moyasse aha
oh, oh, kana mo kana nivao	oh, oh musu saya wolama iwolama ah ah
oh, oh, moyo, oh moyo aniwo	zombi isalaka
eba oh, oh anum soa oh	aha kuiana aha kuiamu amaha
oh, oh keru anim ah, ah	yavuku yu ah
oh, oh ma tomawiah	do tane ah ah loluk la luka
kambulesu kalelusa	unum ah, katané-aha labek labek aha.


¹⁷⁷ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Landtman, Folktales nr. 152.

¹⁷⁹ Verschueren, loc. cit.

Gu koramyo koreméh
oh koremayo oh oh
oh yavunku ya
oh koremayo, oh kadoro

A translation can be given only of the words *gu*, a kind of swamp-iris, and *yavun*, canoe. A third text is confined to a repetition of the name of *Sobra*.¹⁸⁰ We conclude that the texts hold references to travelling, to fighting, the headhunt-house, sexual intercourse, to *Kwoiam*, to *Sobra*, and to an undefined mythical connection with the sun. The little information we have adds to our problem rather than solving it.

There is yet another, more intriguing puzzle connected with *ayasé*. "When singing *ayasé* the men usually gather round the so-called *kui-aha* or *kui-ahat*, a peculiarly carved stick, about 120-150 cm in length. At the upper end it has a hollow butt, which is decorated with -shaped slits, an ornament which is associated with headhunting and is found also on other objects connected with headhunting. The butt ends in a peak, to which cassowary-plumes are attached. This implement occurs both on the coast and in the interior. I even saw it on the upper Bian. It accompanies the expedition wherever they go, and where they come together or make their camp and sing *ayasé*, the *kui-ahat* is set up in the ground like a kind of standard round which the headhunters assemble".¹⁸¹

The *kui-ahat* described by Wirz is not an *ahat* at all. An *ahat* is a fork deriving its shape from a young tree or a forked branch, and a *kui-ahat* is either the bamboo implement which is kept in the *kui-aha* or a brightly coloured fork fashioned out of a young tree, which is erected in the festive grounds where the success of a headhunt is celebrated. Of the latter type of *kui-ahat* two items are reproduced in Plate XX and one in Plate XVI. During the feast the newly captured heads are hung on them. The implement described by Wirz is a *pahui* or *bahwa* and by calling it a *kui-aha* or *kui-ahat*, he has added considerably to the confusion that prevails with regard to a curious cult-instrument which has a very wide spread throughout this part of New Guinea, similar implements having been reported from an area ranging from the Jaqai and Auyu north of the Digul to a region as far east as the Keraki territory in Papua. They have been discussed by V. L. Grottanelli and S. Kooyman in two articles in which a

¹⁸⁰ Wirz, M.A. II p. 191.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. III pp. 56 f.

respectable amount of miscellaneous data, fresh facts as well as items published long ago but since forgotten, were brought together.¹⁸² A discussion of the *kui-ahat* must be held over until we have completed the description and study of the *pahui* and its functions, because the *pahui* is a far more important instrument.

There are various types of *pahui*. Plate XV shows the *pahui* collected by d'Albertis in the Fly river region. They have been described by Grottanelli in Man 1951 nr. 185; by courtesy of the editors a reproduction could be made of the illustrations accompanying the article. Other *pahui*, originating from various districts, have been depicted in Plates nrs. XVI to XIX. Two main types can be distinguished. The one with the more frequent occurrence resembles a kind of ornamental spear with a leaflike, broad, fretwork blade widening out below the point. We shall call it the flat-topped *pahui*. There are at least two sub-types. In the first sub-type the idea of an ornamental spear dominates. This sub-type is represented by the ornamental spear of the Mappi district (Plate XVIII fig. 3) and by the *pahui* confiscated by MacGregor (Plate XVIII fig. 1). In the second sub-type the spear-point has been greatly reduced; there are three items in which only the pointed top of the fretwork blade represents all that has remained of the spear-point. In all these *pahui* the fretwork blade dominates. The sub-type is represented by the *baratu* of d'Albertis (Plate XV fig. 1 and 2), the Keraki *parasi* (Plate XVI fig. 3), the *pahui* in the De Jong collection (Plate XIX fig. 1 and 2) and some more recent *pahui* made as ornaments to be used at mission-sponsored feasts in the Kumbe valley (Plate XVII fig. 1-4). Some of these, notably the Kumbe valley specimens of Plate XVII nrs. 1 to 3, have the blade shaped in the form of a bullroarer. The ornamental motif is called the *pahui*-motif and is often used for the decoration of bullroarers. The same motif can be discerned in the old *pahui* of the De Jong collection (Plate XIX fig. 1 and 2). The *pahui* of the other main type consist of a staff with, at its upper end, a partly hollowed butt or cylinder ending in a point (Plate XV fig. 3, XVII fig. 5-7, XIX fig. 4). The cylinder has been carved with V- or U-shaped motifs, sometimes suggesting stylized representations of a human face (Plate XVII fig. 6). The beautifully worked specimen described by Grottanelli, however, resembles a phallus enclosed in a fretwork vase (Plate XV fig. 3), a motif discernable also in fig. 4 of Plate XIX.

¹⁸² Grottanelli, Man 1951, 185; Kooyman, Man 1952, 139.

Among the Marind both types of *pahui* occur and although they employ two different terms, *pahui* and *bahwa*, the two are synonyms, being used for either type indiscriminately.¹⁸³ A sound reason for paying closer attention to form and occurrence of the *pahui* is the curious use to which it is put by the leader(s) of the war-party. The *pahui* must be shattered on the back of a victim, after which it is thrown away. Not until then is the victim beheaded. The *pahui* is carried by the *pakas-anem*, the leader.¹⁸⁴ Undoubtedly it is a cult-instrument and a curious one, too, because a similar custom prevails among the Keraki, the Yéi-anim and the Jaqai. Most curious of all, Verschueren, who reports the custom of the Yéi-anim, the Boadzi, the Jaqai and the inland Marind of Kumbe and upper Bian, initially disputed its occurrence among the coastal Marind. In a subsequent letter, however, he conceded the possibility that at one time the coastal Marind, too, may have used a *pahui*.¹⁸⁵ It was not before the present book was already half-way finished that I succeeded in finding incontrovertible evidence that indeed they did. With a view to a correct presentation of the case, it seems advisable to have a survey of the form and function of the *pahui* among the neighbouring tribes precede a more thorough discussion of the Marind-anim specimens and their function.

There is every reason to begin our survey with the oldest specimens known, viz. those found by d'Albertis in a village on the bank of the Fly river just south of 7° S lat., i.e. in the region inhabited by the southern groups of Boadzi. The objects are described by Grottanelli as clubs, between 112 and 154 cm in length, with a flat, round- or star-shaped stone disc attached to the shaft just below the ornament surmounting the whole, a beautiful fretwork blade, some 36 to 57 cm in length and about 7 to 10 cm in width (cf. Plate XV fig. 1 and 2). In one case the fretwork is not flat, but cylindrical, the lower part encompassing an egg-shaped, phallus-like protuberance, and the top ending in a point, just like the flat specimens (Plate XV fig. 3). The fretwork on top of

¹⁸³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 36. Wirz, who ignores the term *pahui* in his Marind-anim, using the wrong, even confusing word *kui-ahat* instead, has both terms, *pahui* and *bahwa*, in his unpublished description of objects in the Museum of Djakarta. He, too, uses the two terms indiscriminately for both types. Cf. Wirz, Katalog der ethnografischen Sammlung der Abt. Neu Guinea der Königlichen Bataviaschen Gesellschaft für Künste und Wissenschaften, Weltevreden 1923; Süd Neu Guinea, pp. 11 f., nrs. 13780, 13785, 13787 and 13788.

¹⁸⁴ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., XI p. 37.

the shaft makes the club an ineffective instrument of combat, but when it is without ornament it is the main weapon of the headhunter in a man-to-man fight, and a formidable one, too. Kooyman has pointed out that the disc can be made to slide up and down part of the shaft. The disc "is prevented from flying off the shaft or slipping too far back by a cord of plaited fibre". "In battle the warrior brandishes the club over his head, making the stone slip backwards; when he delivers a blow, the disc shoots forward, greatly adding to the impact".¹⁸⁶ With the ceremonial clubs found by d'Albertis, the stone discs seem to have been fastened in such a way that they cannot slip back. An exception is made by the one reproduced as fig. 1 of Plate XV; the disc is so loosely attached to the shaft as to suggest that it may move up and down along part of the shaft. The name given to the ceremonial instrument by d'Albertis' informants was *baratu*.¹⁸⁷ Since the specimens were found in a deserted village, Grottanelli suggests that they were brought by a Marind-anim headhunting party and left behind in the confusion which ensued when d'Albertis' ship suddenly arrived upon the scene. He bases his assumption on two facts. First, that in 1896 MacGregor, in an encounter with a Tugeri headhunting party in the Western Division, among many other things captured a spear of a type similar to the ceremonial spears used by the Jaqai, and second, that there is a close resemblance between the ornamentation of these *baratu* and various Marind-anim ornaments.¹⁸⁸ Grottanelli did not and could not know that the Yéi-anim and the Boadzi carry the same kind of ceremonial implement when on a headhunting expedition. This considerably detracts from the strength of his argument. Where the area concerned is not known as a Marind-anim *kui-miráv*, but as one of the Yéi-anim, we must reject the conclusion that the implements found by d'Albertis were of Marind-anim origin. The same holds true of the other specimen discussed by Grottanelli, the one which was collected by S. MacFarlane on the upper Fly in 1885 and which Giglioli bought and identified, probably on insufficient grounds, as originating from the Saliraka Tugeri (Saliraka is Sarira, east of Sêpadim, southeast of Merauke).

Sixty years later Williams described a similar implement of the Keraki and Wiram, to which the name of *parasi* was given (Plate XVI fig. 3). "One or more *parasi* should be carried on every raid. It is

¹⁸⁶ Kooyman, *Man* 1952 p. 97.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Grottanelli, *op. cit.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 107.

evident that they are carried on ahead, something in the manner of a standard; but their real function appears in the actual moment of attacking the individual. The *parasi* are supposed to be shattered over the heads of the victims before they are finally clubbed. The light wood of the fretwork, being broken in contact with the victim's head, is allowed to remain on the scene of the foray; and the successful warrior bears home the handle, presumably as a memento. No man, I have been assured, would have the face to return from an expedition bearing a *parasi* intact".¹⁸⁹ Williams does not make mention of a stone disc slipped round the shaft. Verschueren aptly remarks that the fact that Williams did not actually see the stone disc does not yet prove that it would not really make part of the weapon. Stone discs are rare and highly valued; they are not inseparable from the ceremonial object, but may be slipped round the shaft whenever this is required.¹⁹⁰

There is every reason, then, to agree with Grottanelli that "the similarity in the general design and fretwork technique, and even in the names, unquestionably shows that the [*baratu*] and Williams' *parasi* belong to one and the same class of weapons".¹⁹¹

The information Verschueren supplies on the *bagwa*, the Boadzi *pahui*, is of specific interest. His sketch reproduced in fig. 6 is accompanied by explanatory notes on the various details: 1 is the *bagofwa*, the extreme

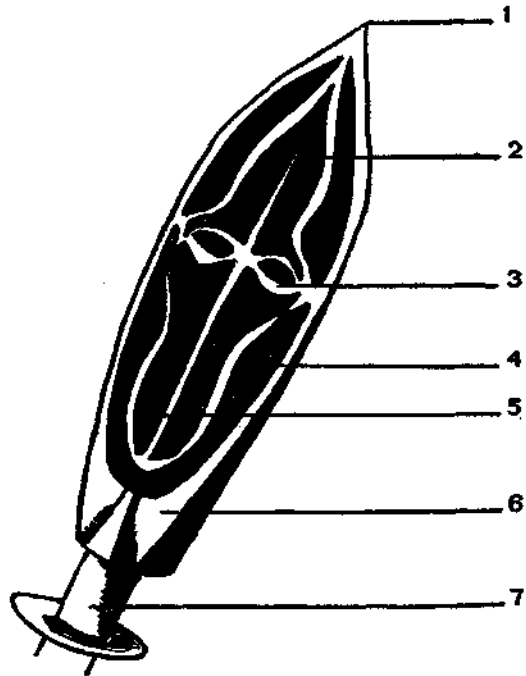


Fig. 6. A Boadzi *bagwa*
From a sketch made by Verschueren

¹⁸⁹ Williams, *Trans-Fly* p. 267.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Verschueren, *Letters XI* p. 36.

¹⁹¹ Grottanelli, *op. cit.* p. 106.

end of the *bagwa*; 2 is called *lakasisik*, crayfish pincers; 3 *bossik böi*, pig's eyes; 4 *kewaga*, beam; 5 *zita*, spine; 6 *zjavun mege*, stem of the canoe; 7 *tapo*, shaft. The name given to the whole is *bagwa*, a secret name which must not be used in public. It means 'his penis', from *ba*, penis, followed by the possessive pronoun *ga*, and *wa*, he.¹⁹²

The first *bagwa* was made by old *Anésaké*, a giant. The relevant myth was told by a *Mugav* man from Bofagage. Old *Anésaké* had two sons. The younger one died and was buried. After three days his father visited the grave. A fruit-bearing coconut had grown from the grave and the father concluded that his dead son had turned into a coconut tree. Later, *Anésaké* with his wives and his elder son went to Ienga. Here *Anésaké* made a gigantic garden. One night *Anésaké* had a dream. The next morning he said to his son: "Last night I heard the sound of drums near the river Tamu. Go there and have a look". The son went and returned, reporting that he had not found anything. The father sent him off again and this time the boy caught a fish, cut off its head, prepared it in the same way as a human head, and brought it to his father. The old man said, "No, this is our food, go once more". And the son went a third time, and prepared a different kind of fish, but still his father was not satisfied, and so he tried again, this time with a pig. The father, however, would not accept this either, saying, "No, this is an animal". Finally, *Anésaké* took pity on the boy and ordered him to chop some wood, of which he could make a *bagwa*. Then *Anésaké* made a *bagwa* and painted it, as is the custom. He suspended the *bagwa* from a pole. That night *Anésaké* sang *kiw ah*, the headhunters' song. He sang till daybreak and then ordered his son to pass a *kupa*, a stone disc, round the shaft of the *bagwa*. He now gave the *bagwa* to his son, who instantly killed him with it and cut off his father's head. The head, however, went on speaking and instructed the son how it should be prepared. From *Anésaké's* dead body worms emerged which turned into human beings, and so on.¹⁹³

Another Boadzi myth, also told by a *Mugav* man from Bofagage, runs as follows. There were many men who went out hunting. They found a coconut tree bearing many nuts. The ripe coconuts were collected. They put them in their canoe and went home. When they had come back to the village, the coconuts were left in the canoe; an old woman remained with them in the craft. The men went to the

¹⁹² Verschueren, op. cit. pp. 36 f.

¹⁹³ Ibid. pp. 18 f.

men's house to get some sleep. One man had injured his leg and could not sleep. The coconuts left the canoe all by themselves and went to the men's house. The man who was awake saw how they entered the building; he heard the lap-lap of the water inside the nuts, which were moving about. The coconuts took out the eyes of the sleeping men. The man who was awake cried out. Those whose eyes had been put out were dead, but the others took a *bagwa* and slashed the coconuts asunder. The next day they buried them in a scrub-hen's nest. Thereupon they went home and told the women that they had killed their enemies.¹⁹⁴

It is a strange story, primarily of interest because of the identification of coconuts and enemies. Yet, there is more to it. The story clearly refers to the *gomai*-cult and the *bagwa* figures in it as the weapon to be used for the killing of enemies. Even more explicit is its use as a weapon in the story of *Anésaké*, which has other important details as well. We learn from it that the *bagwa* is the wooden staff and that the stone disc is fitted round it at the very last moment, that is, after the singing of the headhunters' song, just before the killing. The detail is of specific interest because the *bagwa* is a penis and the flat stone disc a *kupa*, a female symbol among the Marind-anim.¹⁹⁵ In this context yet another detail is of interest, viz. the term *baratu*, which d'Albertis' informants used for the *pahui* he collected. Verschueren notes: *baratu* simply means *bar-atu*, stone (*bar*) of the old woman, the *atu*, well-known from the Boadzi initiation ritual.¹⁹⁶ Obviously, the *baratu*, too, is a sex-symbol, just like the *bagwa*, the stone disc representing the female genital, the shaft the male one.

Stone discs are rare. According to information collected by Verschueren in 1936 the stone implements are traded, being passed down from the Star Mountains to the south.¹⁹⁷ The Yéi-anim, too, used them on their *pahui*, the *pöggul*. Unlike the *pahui* of the Boadzi, the upper Bian and Kumbe Marind, which may be butt-topped or flat-topped, the Yéi-anim *pöggul* is always flat-topped.¹⁹⁸ This also follows from Nevermann's description, who supplies the following information besides: "When they had a rest, the instrument was set up in the ground. The warriors sat around it in a circle, singing the special

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 36^a.

¹⁹⁵ Above, p. 273.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 593 ff.

¹⁹⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 36.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

songs which apparently must stir up excitement".¹⁹⁹ More important is what Verschuieren has to say on the matter. The *pöggul* is the official attribute of the *gabelul*, the leader of the local group (*arow*, a patrilineal clan), whose position is comparable to that of a *pakas-anem* among the Marind. The bestowal of the attribute on the *gabelul* is a ceremonial act preceded by a ritual race. The *pöggul* is mentioned in myth. *Nak* and *Telle*, the mythical ancestors of the *Yéi-anim*, received the first *pöggul* from *Diwa*, a mythical being, as a means to conquer their present territory, which they had to wrest from its former occupants. Before they set out on a foray, the *Yéi-anim* bring the *pöggul* to the place where the *arow yewale*, the local spirit, is believed to reside.²⁰⁰ The *yewale* (spirit) is supposed to take up his residence in the *pöggul* to accompany his people on the raid. During the raid the leader carries the *pöggul*, which is shattered over an enemy victim in exactly the same way as the *Keraki parasí*. Just like the *Keraki* [and, as we shall see, the *Jaqai*], the *Yéi-anim* bring the remains of the *pöggul* back to their village and plant them in the ground near the spot where the *arow yewale* resides.²⁰¹ The explanation given by Verschuieren makes the act meaningful. We shall not be far off the mark if we assume that the *yewale* protects the group, and attacks the enemy as soon as his tabernacle is shattered over the first victim's back. Yet, all this does not explain the presence of the mysterious stone disc.

Among the *Jaqai* a ceremonial spear is used for similar purposes. A specimen of such a spear is reproduced in Plate XVIII fig. 3. There is nothing in the ceremonial spear which is indicative of a possible connection with a club. A stone disc is absent, and the spear is also longer than the *pahui*, *baratu* or *parasí* we know from other peoples. It is just a spear, with an elaborately carved fretwork blade two feet or more below the point. I do not know of any printed source containing information on its use, except the following quotation from a letter Boelaars wrote to Grottanelli: "Just before launching the attack, a warrior hurls. . . one of them towards the enemy, in order to ensure the success of the enterprise".²⁰² Verschuieren notes that the *Jaqai*, too,

¹⁹⁹ Nevermann, B.A. 1941 p. 142.

²⁰⁰ I had *arow yewale* translated as 'clan ancestor', but Verschuieren points out that, strictu sensu, the *yewale* are not ancestors. Ancestors are *Nak* and *Telle*, who are husband and wife. The *yewale* are spirits who originated from a tree in the Kumbe valley and went to the *Yéi-anim* territory by canoe (Letters XI p. 37). Nevertheless, the term *arow yewale* points to a close relationship between local clan and spirit.

²⁰¹ Verschuieren, Letters II p. 1, VII p. 1, XI pp. 36 f.

²⁰² Grottanelli, Man 1951 p. 107.

have the custom of taking the remains back to their village, where they are deposited in or near a well.²⁰³ In another letter²⁰⁴ he refers in this connection to the Auyu. The fact that he also mentions the Auyu conforms with my own experience. In August 1937 a number of Kia river people who were encamped somewhere between Pesnamnam and Terek south of the Digul, were raided by a party of headhunters who were supposed to have come from the Womod river area. The Kia and the Womod are right-hand tributaries of the Digul. It is Auyu territory, north of the Digul. The victims as well as the assailants had crossed the river, visiting a part of the territory where I was in charge as a controleur. Thus I was the first to be informed that a few people had been killed and that one or two broken ceremonial spears had been found on the spot. It was the first time I heard of this custom, the existence of which I have since had confirmed from various quarters.²⁰⁵

Having completed our survey of the *pahui* used by the neighbours of the Marind-anim, we may concentrate at last on the forms in use among the Marind themselves. Verschueren informs us that the upper Bian and Kumbe valley people, like the Boadzi, have the flat-topped as well as the butt-topped *pahui*. They do not differentiate between the two types; however, with one notable exception. Those of Kaisa on the upper Kumbe pass a disc-shaped club-head, *kupa*, round the shaft of a flat-topped *pahui*, and an egg-shaped club-head, *wagané*, round the shaft of a butt-topped one.²⁰⁶ The fact is of interest, even though we ignore the specific motivation of the Kaisa men in differentiating between the two types of *pahui* as far as the application of the club-heads is concerned. Whatever their motives are, one thing is certain; they must be well aware of the phallic symbolism implied.

Verschueren's communications are confirmed by the description Wirz gives of four *pahui* or *bahwa* collected in the interior; three of them are of the cylindrical or butt-topped type, one is (we should add: presumably, because the description is too brief to allow of a definite conclusion) of the flat-topped variety.²⁰⁷ I myself collected a butt-topped

²⁰³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 37.

²⁰⁴ VII p. 2.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Nooy, Ann. 1937 p. 245.

²⁰⁶ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 36.

²⁰⁷ Wirz, Katalog der ethnograph. Sammlung der K. Bataviaschen Gesellschaft, pp. 11 f., nrs. 13780, 13785, 13787, 13788. The four specimens have been collected at Wangalekat in the Aboi region, south of the upper Bian (cf. the map of the Militaire Exploratie). The catalogue has the confusing reference

pahui — fig. 6 of Plate XVII — on the Kumbe, probably one made for a feast in modern style,²⁰⁸ but it is exactly on that account that it is of specific interest. Below the butt the shaft shows a broader wooden ring fused with it. The ring plainly represents a rudimentary form of a stone disc. The Leyden Museum also has a number of modern *pahui*, collected by Verschueren in the Kumbe valley in 1958. They have not been made to be used on a headhunt, but to serve as ornaments for a feast in modern style. Only two of the five specimens reproduced in Plate XVII have a swelling below the blade which might be explained as being reminiscent of the stone ring. Among them there are one butt-topped *pahui* and four flat-topped ones. The latter are of specific interest because the elaborate fretwork carving of three out of four has the so-called *pahui*-motif, the motif used in the decoration of bulroarers as well as in the *dapa* hung over the entrance of a men's house in token of mourning.²⁰⁹

More important than the forms of the inland *pahui* is the question whether the coastal Marind, too, used the implement and, if so, what the actual shapes were like. Fortunately, we have more and better evidence to go by than Wirz's confusing statement that the *kui-ahat* (the term used in his Marind-anim for *pahui*) is applied on the coast as well as in the interior.²¹⁰ In Internationales Archiv XVII (1905) Schmeltz described a number of "Tanzattribute", dance-attributes, collected in 1902 by Mr. W. de Jong, captain of the steam-vessel placed at the disposal of the assistant-resident of Merauke.²¹¹ The collector did not supply any information on the function of the objects, nor did he specify the villages where he acquired them. "The objects were collected by him mainly during the period that he was cruising up and down the Merauke river — or in its immediate environment — in the government-steamer under his command", writes Schmeltz.²¹² However, we do know that De Jong did not go far up the Merauke river; it is practically certain that he did not even visit the southern Yéi-

'südliches Küstengebiet' for places in the interior, 'Südküste' for places on the coast. It is left to the reader to find out the difference in meaning between the two terms.

²⁰⁸ Now in the Rijks Museum voor Volkenkunde at Leyden (nr. 2385-36) and described and reproduced by Kooyman, *Man* 1951, 139.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Plate XVII fig. 1-3; on the *pahui*-motif see above, p. 618; on the *dapa* below, pp. 781 f., Verschueren, *Letters XI* p. 39 and Plate XXI fig. 3.

²¹⁰ Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 56.

²¹¹ Schmeltz, *I.A.* 1905 pp. 215-218.

²¹² *Ibid.* p. 194.

animi. During the first year of settlement very little attention was paid to the interior. There are indications that the term "immediate environment" should be taken in a fairly wide sense; the collection De Jong also included objects acquired on the Buraka river.²¹³ It seems probable that at least some of the dance-attributes he collected derive from coastal villages.

This in itself is important enough, because the collection contains various objects which are undoubtedly *pahui*. Two of them — those of Plate XIX fig. 1 and 2 — are of the flat-topped type, strongly similar to the *baratu* or *parasi* of the Western Division of Papua.²¹⁴ One of them has a completely bare shaft, the other (nr. 2) has below the ornament a beautiful imitation stone disc which is so well made and so true to nature in its colouring that not until one actually touches the disc does one become aware that it is an imitation.²¹⁵ Three other objects in the collection are of the butt-topped variety. One of them has a ring below the ornament which is reminiscent of a stone disc.²¹⁶ The other two only show a plain, club-like swelling of the shaft just below the cylindrical ornament, from which the bulge is separated by a conical incision in the shaft. If the ornament were cut off, the remaining part would make a light club. Of these two objects, one — reproduced in fig. 4 of Plate XIX — is remarkable because the shaft is continued through the hollow of the butt, the other because the butt has been carved in the form of a human face.²¹⁷

The De Jong collection also has two *pahui* of the same type as the specimens confiscated by MacGregor (Plate XVIII fig. 1), ceremonial spears with a broad, fretwork blade below the head. The blade is of special interest because it shows the concentric circles which remind us of the *pahui*-shields belonging to the *imo bangu*. There is no indication of a stone disc.²¹⁸ Finally, the collection includes a few staffs of a different type. We do not know whether these, too, were associated with headhunting. One of them ends in a male genital with a clearly indicated glans penis (Plate XIX fig. 3). The lower end of

²¹³ Ibid. p. 218.

²¹⁴ See I.A. 1905 Tafel I fig. 1 and 4.

²¹⁵ Kooyman, discussing the object, calls it a *hayam*, a term he borrowed from De Jong, who gave this word as the native term for the object. *Hayam*, however, is the name of a tree, *Inocarpus edulis*, and the term obviously refers, not to the object, but to the kind of wood of which it has been made. Cf. above, p. 248 note 99^a.

²¹⁶ I.A. 1905 Tafel VI fig. 16.

²¹⁷ Ibid. Tafel IV fig. 3.

²¹⁸ Ibid. Tafel V fig. 1 and 4.

this staff is more or less square. Higher up, there is a broad wooden ring (forming a whole with the shaft) and above that the upper end representing a penis.²¹⁹ The other staff is a heavy wooden club, 129 cm in length. On the widening upper end there are some simple, carved and painted designs, but no fretwork. The interesting point is that on one side the widened upper end has been ornamented with the *pahui*-motif, on the other side it has a *sâr-ahai* motif and a fish-head which, together, suggest the fish-head ornament on a bullroarer.²²⁰ De Jong's informants called it *gongai*. Geurtjens Dictionary gives the following particulars on this term: *gongai* or *ngo-ngai* or *gev* is a palm species, wild areca, *Oncosperma filomentosa*, aren-palm [Malay] The wood is much sought after in the manufacture of lances for festive occasions. It is also used to make bullroarers, which are likewise called *gongai*". We need not go into the question whether it was the wood species or the bullroarer De Jong's informants had in mind when they employed the word *gongai*. Probably both, as such is implied in the word. In this context it is interesting that *gongai* is synonymous with staff, *gev*. The object in question is probably a *mayo*-staff. Its measurements and ornamentation have much in common with those of the hardwood *mayo*-staves reproduced by Wirz.²²¹ The point would not have been of any interest in this context, had not one of these *mayo*-staves, to wit, specimen nr. 5 of Plate XIII fig. 2, been of an unusual type. It is a flat-topped *pahui*, similar in appearance to the two flat-topped *pahui* collected by De Jong. A somewhat broader ring just below the fretwork blade may hold a reference to the stone disc. The staff is so perfect a replica of the *pahui* that we are inclined to think that Wirz mistakenly listed the object among the *mayo*-staves. However, it is far too small to be a *pahui*, which is always taller than a *mayo*-staff, whereas this specimen, with a length of only one meter, is the smallest-sized one in the collection of staffs photographed by Wirz. In conclusion we state that the *pahui* is associated with the bullroarer. The *pahui*-motif is a recurring motif in the ornamentation of bullroarers and *mayo*-staves, while in one case we even found a *mayo*-staff which was a replica of a *pahui*, though on a somewhat smaller scale.

Another old collection of Marind-anim ethnographical objects was the one acquired by the Southwest New Guinea Expedition 1904/05 organized by the Royal Netherlands Geographic Society. The collection

²¹⁹ Ibid. Tafel I fig. 2.

²²⁰ Ibid. Tafel II fig. 2 and our reproduction, Plate XIX fig. 5 and 5*.

²²¹ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III Tafel 2 and our reproduction, Plate XIII fig. 2.

is now in the museum of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam. Unfortunately, the ethnographer of the expedition, dr. Koch, was a rank amateur who made a poor job of his assignment. All we know of those three objects in the collection which are of interest to us is that they come from Merauke. The collector omitted to make notes on either the village of origin, the function of the objects or the native terms by which they are called. Two of the objects, numbers A 367^a and A 367^b, are *pahui* of the flat-topped type. The fretwork blade has a *pahui* motif, while a wooden, ring-shaped widening of the shaft just below the blade serves as a substitute for the stone disc.²²² One of them, nr. A 367^a, has been reproduced as fig. 2 in Plate XVIII, together with a third object (nr. A 1938), a staff ending in a beautifully carved phallus above a wooden ring (fig. 4). It is suggested that the staff is, in fact, a deviant type of butt-topped *pahui*, characterized by a solid butt instead of a hollow one. If that is correct, the butt-topped *pahui* is essentially the image of a phallus, a conclusion well in harmony with the evidence adduced thus far.

Although this collection greatly enhanced the probability of our hypothesis that the coastal Marind, too, have the *pahui*, we have not yet been able to prove that they actually brought one on their head-hunting expeditions. To that end we have to refer back to MacGregor and Plate. We recall that in 1896 MacGregor attacked a Tugeri war-party on the Wassi Kussa. On this occasion he captured 48 canoes, containing considerable quantities of food, arms and objects of every description. "They left a few clubs made of pieces of metal and some half-dozen of stone. They are either of the thick disc type or shaped nearly like a turkey's egg. . . . No shields were found. There were three beautifully worked spears, two of them like partisans, of unique make, probably used for ceremonial purposes, for the spear does not seem to be ordinarily used by them in war".²²³ The ethnographical objects were sent to the Queensland Museum and Plate 10 of the Annual Report of 1897/98 has photographs of, among other things, the ceremonial spears. Although the quality of the original photographs does not come up to modern standards, they have been reproduced in Plate XVIII fig. 1 of the present work, because they are of special interest. The motif of the ornamentation is the same as that of the

²²² Cf. Koch, *De Zuidwest Nieuw-Guinea Expeditie van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, p. 600. See also Kooyman, *Man* 1952 p. 97.

²²³ ARBNG 1895/96 p. 56.

pahui shields used during the *bangu* ceremony! We further note that the shaft of the spear is sufficiently slender for a stone disc to be fitted round it. Unfortunately, none of the spears was actually provided with a stone disc. As a matter of fact, this was hardly to be expected, the stone rings being so precious that they are kept in a separate place when the *pahui* is not in use.

There is even further proof that the coastal Marind actually carried a *pahui* on their headhunting expeditions. This is given by a photograph obtained from the assistant-resident L. M. F. Plate. The picture is in the collections of the Royal Tropical Institute, nr. (951) : 392.241 N. 6 of the Fotografisch Bureau, and is reproduced here as Plate XX. The caption reads as follows: "South New Guinea; ethnographical objects, heads and skulls in the village of Sangasé; from L. M. F. Plate, The Hague". Vertenten published a rather poor reproduction of the photograph in his *Koppensnellers* (Plate IV), unfortunately without giving any particulars. Long before I discovered the original, Verschueren had called my attention to the two big oars with the painted blades, one on either side, showing on the photograph. He pointed out to me that the decoration of the oars is called *pahui* by the Marind.²²⁴ At the time I did not know where and when the photograph was made. All this has now become perfectly clear. In February 1913 Plate — or his deputy — went to Sangasé and other villages in the western section of the coast because the villagers had been on a headhunt. He reported that all the houses of Sangasé were searched and that 8 'fresh' heads were seized.²²⁵ Apparently it was not only heads which were confiscated. What happened is evident from the photograph. His police-sergeant or whoever was in command contrived a unique still-life with all the heads, the mandibles, the arrows, the spears and the paraphernalia symmetrically arranged round and on a small table covered with a cute rug. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his morbid fancy. Everything connected with headhunting is there; in the centre a phallus-like pole belonging to a *kui-aha*; on the right and left two real *kui-ahat*; three big oars with painted blades and, finally, a real *pahui* of the same type as that captured by MacGregor on the Wassi Kussa. The *pahui* (c) is next to the big oar with the skull in front of the blade. It is not easily recognizable as such because the *pahui* made a quarter turn and stands showing the fretwork blade sideways.

²²⁴ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 39.

²²⁵ Cf. Ann. 1913 pp. 196 ff.

It was not until I had the picture enlarged that I discerned the object and established its identity.

We shall not try to describe the various items visible on the photograph. Some of them need not have any connection at all with head-hunting, for instance, the image of a bird (probably an ibis) in the centre. The items which really interest us are the two decorated oars, recognized by Verschueren as *pahui* on account of their ornamentation. Going through the collections of the Leyden Museum, I discovered that the bigger of the two had found its way there, having been catalogued as an "oar used on headhunting expeditions, nr. 1889/274, presented to the Museum by the late Colonel A. J. Gooszen". The ornamentation on the back of the blade is identical with that on the front. Actually, it is not really an oar; the blade is flat and lacks the vaulting characteristic of an oar-blade. The instrument is over two meters in length and the shaft is too thick to fit the relatively narrow hole of a disc-shaped club-head. In other words, it is impossible to classify the oars as real *pahui*; they cannot be ornamented with a stone ring and they are far too solid to be shattered on somebody's head. We know nothing of their function. It may be that they are used as substitutes.

Having established that the coastal Marind, too, carried a *pahui* with them on their headhunting raids, we now have to answer the question as to its meaning and function in the religious system as a whole. Although our knowledge of its actual use is extremely scanty, what little information we have sufficiently proves that the *pahui* was an important symbol and an indispensable implement in the execution of a raid. From Wirz we know that the *pahui* is placed in the midst of the men who have assembled for the singing of *ayasé*, the head-hunters' song referring to fighting, sexual intercourse, *Kwoiam* and the sun. By inference we conclude that the coastal Marind also followed the custom of beating an enemy with the *pahui* before they cut off his head. All the surrounding peoples, and also the Marind of the Kumbe and the upper Bian, follow this practice and we have no reason to suppose that the coastal Marind would make an exception. On the contrary: the custom fits the pattern. It complicates the fighting. There is the *pahui* which must be shattered first, just when it would have been safer to kill the victim outright. Nor is this the only complication. Even after the wielding of the *pahui*, the victim cannot just be dispatched. He must be asked for his name first and then a *samb-anem*

has to come to do the actual beheading.²²⁶ It is all very inefficient and they must be strong motives indeed which make them adopt such a cumbersome procedure. The identification of the Yéi-anim *pöggul* with the local spirit of the group, and the term *bar-atu*, stone of the *atu*, used by the Middle Fly natives, bear witness to the prominence of the implement in native evaluation.

Among the Marind the *pahui* is of similar importance. In essence the *pahui* is a disc-shaped club, of the kind that was created by *Naszr* when he shot an arrow at a scrub-hen. The arrow plunged into his excrements, which turned into a stone disc.²²⁷ The stone disc is a female symbol and the incident apparently holds a direct reference to the *imo-mes-iwag*, who is called Excrement Woman. It is certainly not a mere coincidence. The arrow is a phallic symbol; set upside down in front of a hut, it signifies that the woman occupying the hut is at the disposal of her husband's clanmates for the performance of *otiv-bombari*.²²⁸ Arrow (or spear) and stone disc represent a couple in copulation; among the middle Fly natives the woman is associated with the *atu*, among the *Imo-Marind* with the *imo-iwag*. The association is strongly emphasized in the *bangu*-ritual, in which the shields representing the *imo-iwag* are called *pahui*.²²⁹ In the *bangu*-ritual the man is represented by an arrow-head, the woman by a big shield; in the headhunting ritual the man is symbolized by a sizeable spear, the woman by a stone ring. In the latter ritual the man takes precedence. On the one hand, the *pahui* is 'only' the club of *Naszr*, the fretwork top above the stone disc indicating that the club is a *déma*-club. An unwieldy headgear is the indispensable ornament of every *déma*. At the same time, however, the *pahui* is the symbol of the two fundamental powers of nature, man and woman. In contrast to the situation dramatized in the big cults, where the woman dominates, the headhunting ritual, which has the *pahui* as its focus, gives pre-eminence to the man. Actually, the woman, i.e. the stone, is apparently fitted round the shaft at the very last moment, just before the fight. Such, at least, is suggested by the Boadzi myth of *Anésaké* and by Verschueren's statement that the stones were too highly valued and too scarce to be exposed to any major risk.²³⁰ Considering the scarcity of the stone discs and the high

²²⁶ Below, pp. 745 f.

²²⁷ See above, p. 400.

²²⁸ Wirz, M.A. I p. 69.

²²⁹ Cf. above, pp. 617 ff.

²³⁰ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 36.

value set upon them it does not seem probable that the *pahui* used during a fight was fitted with a genuine stone disc. This would have involved the risk of the stone disc getting lost, and this they could not afford. It is more likely that in those cases an imitation of the ceremonial implement was used and that real stone discs were applied to the shafts on purely ceremonial occasions only (such as the singing of *ayasé*). This, indeed, must be concluded from the circumstances of d'Albertis' find. He found *baratu* with a stone disc in a deserted village "from which all the natives had fled post-haste on the previous day, scared by the sudden appearance of the explorer's steamship".²³¹ Apparently, the inhabitants were taken by surprise when they were in the midst of the ceremonial preparations of a raid. It is most improbable that d'Albertis broke in upon an invading war-party. They would not have been there at that time of day and, if they were, they would have taken their precious clubs with them.

The phallic symbolism of the *pahui* is expressed in many ways. The *pahui*-motif itself is the motif of the bullroarer. Various models of *pahui* have a wooden ring of some sort which is reminiscent of the stone disc. Of the butt-topped *pahui* collected by De Jong one has the shaft passing right through the hollow butt, suggesting a phallus in a vulva (Plate XIX fig. 4). This is even more conspicuous in the butt-topped *baratu* reproduced by Grottanelli.²³² Other butt-topped *pahui*, however, are not so obviously phallic, and the same may be said of some of the specimens of the flat-topped variety. All the same, there is hardly any reason to doubt that these, too, have a phallic connotation. The evidence from myth as well as the basic form of the butt-topped *pahui*, give sufficient evidence of the basically phallic character. Most suggestive of all is the phallic character of the whole entourage. The phallic pole in the centre of the picture of the Sangasé collection (Plate XX) is a fine case in point. The phallus is distinct and the symbol of a vulva has been painted on its lower end. The same is the case with all the phallic poles belonging to a *kui-aha* as reproduced by Vertenten in Tafel XVII of I.A. 1915 (cf. our Plate XXI fig. 5-10). They all are expressive of the same idea, a phallus with a vulva, but the phallus dominates and the vulva is an accessory, of secondary importance.

The *pahui* as a phallic symbol is closely associated with the *sosom*

²³¹ Grottanelli, Man 1951 p. 185.

²³² Man 1951, Plate H, fig. c; our Plate XV fig. 3.

(bullroarer) and the close relationship between the two cult-implements is, in a remarkable way, confirmed from a wholly unexpected quarter, viz. the Keraki. The original first bullroarer of the Keraki, obtained by *Kambel*, the Originator, from his wife's vagina, is called *Tokujejeneni*. The name (which it is impossible to translate) is used in war magic. Following the mythical example "the raiders nowadays address their weapons — arrows, clubs, beheading knives — by the same name, saying '*Tokujejeneni*, to morrow go fast and get your man!'; or by a more vivid phrase, the raider, as he shoots or strikes his victim dead, may cry, '*Tokujejeneni* is copulating with you'".²³³ The copulating of the bullroarer results in the death of the enemy. The same holds true of the *pahui*, the symbol of the copulating cosmic powers. They are not given names. They may be identified with *Uaba* and *Kanis-ivag*, with *Sosom* and Excrement Woman, or with *Nazr* and *Sobra*. Possibly we are just overshooting the mark if we try to give them names. We had better confine ourselves strictly to native information and myth. Myth in particular is instructive. In the story of *Nazr* we made mention of the sordid episode of *Mére*, the *déma* who was tied up by means of two copulating snakes.²³⁴ Our study of the *pahui* gives us every reason to ascribe a deeper meaning to the two copulating snakes. They symbolize the two big cosmic powers, the Male and the Female, who dominate the whole setting of headhunting. The snake-shape tends to emphasize the greatness of the two powers; *Gob* and *Sami*, when appearing together, are sometimes represented as snakes.²³⁵

Another myth which should be reconsidered is the myth of *Dawi*. In our analysis of the data relevant to the initiation rites of the *mayo* we arrived at the conclusion that, after all, there might be some truth in Wirz's contention that the *mayo*-initiation was followed by a head-hunt, as the custom is among the *imo*, the Boadzi and the upper Bian people.²³⁶ In the present chapter we were confronted with facts suggesting that the period immediately following the time fixed for the end of the *mayo*-rites is the preferred season for headhunting raids in the eastern *kui-miráv*.²³⁷ In the myth of *Dawi* we are told that *Dawi*, by beating the ground with his club, tried to extinguish the fire which had originated when *Uaba* was extracted from his copulation with

²³³ Williams, Trans-Fly p. 183.

²³⁴ Above, pp. 398 ff.

²³⁵ Ibid. p. 235.

²³⁶ Ibid. pp. 551 f.

²³⁷ Ibid. p. 716.

Uahiwamb.²³⁸ The episode follows immediately upon the event commemorated in the closing scene of the *mayo*-rites. There is one inconsistency in the story; the fire originates at Kondo and — in spite of the east monsoon blowing — *Dawi* first goes eastward to extinguish the fire. He even goes as far east as the Fly river, where he separates *Habé* from the mainland. The inconsistency disappears if we assume that *Dawi's* club was a ceremonial club, a *pahui*. If that be accepted, the story is simply the story of the headhunt following the initiation. It all fits in with our explanation of the story of *Habé* as the story of a cut-off head. The rattan *déma* who has the island in his power and travels all the way eastward on it, is the rattan string on which the cut-off head is carried on the way home to the *kui-aha*, where the heads are kept till the day of the final feast has arrived.

The explanation just given tallies with every detail; however, with one noteworthy exception. The *pahui* is a disc-shaped club and *Dawi's* club was an egg-shaped one, in spite of the fact that it was called a *kupa*. Were we wrong in assuming that it really was a *wagané*? Probably not. There are also *pahui* which are equipped with an egg-shaped club-head. The people of Kaisa on the upper Kumbé "pass a disc-shaped club-head, *kupa*, round the shaft of a flat-topped *pahui*, and an egg-shaped club-head, *wagané*, round the shaft of a butt-topped one".²³⁹ The disc-shaped club being the weapon of *Nazr*, nothing would be more appropriate for the *Kai-sé* *déma* *Dawi* than to have an egg-shaped one.

This is where we want to make a conjecture. As far as we know, it is only the people of Kaisa who combine the butt-topped *pahui* with a *wagané* and the flat-topped one with a *kupa*. The reason may be quite a simple one; egg-shaped clubs, *wagané*, are even scarcer than the disc-shaped ones. Under the circumstances a certain lack of discrimination in the use of stone club-heads is unavoidable. However, at Kaisa the stone-heads are associated each with one of the two main types of *pahui*, the disc-shaped club-heads with the flat-topped *pahui* and the egg-shaped ones with the butt-topped *pahui* which, in appearance, resembles an egg-shaped club-head. The conjecture we want to make is this: the flat-topped *pahui*, the weapon of *Nazr*, was the ceremonial club of the moiety of the *Sami-rek*, the butt-topped one, the club of *Dawi*, was the *pahui* of the *Geb-sé* moiety. It is a conjecture which we cannot vindicate, but at the same time it is one worth taking

²³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 273.

²³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 732.

into consideration, because we may expect some symbol expressive of the divergent roles of the two moieties. The object collected by the Southwest New Guinea Expedition and reproduced here as fig. 4 of Plate XVIII might be one. If ever there was a ritual replica of a *wagané* it is the wooden club collected by Koch.

The roles of the two moieties in the procedure of a headhunt have been systematically ignored both in this chapter and in the available literature. Yet, it is certain that the *Sami-rek* moiety fills the leading part. The mythological evidence is explicit on this point. *Nazr* and *Mahu* are the two primeval headhunters; *Nazr* is married to *Sobra*, who is sung of in the *ayasé*. As *Déhévai* and *Sobra* the two even resemble a couple of supreme beings.²⁴⁰ The role the *déma* of the *Sami-rek* moiety play in headhunting opens up new prospects with regard to the roles of the two moieties in ritual. Our final analysis of the myth of *Dawi* has given substance to the hypothesis that the *mayo*-ritual, too, is followed by a headhunt. We are justified now in assuming that the *mayo* as well as the *bangu* ritual were followed by a headhunt. That a headhunt is not just a profane act of warfare, but a ritual act is demonstrated by the *pahui* and its application. Consequently, the headhunt must be looked upon as part of the ritual. The first part of the ritual is the *bangu* ceremony of the *imo*, respectively the initiation ritual of the *mayo*, the second part is the headhunt. In the first stage the *Geb-sé* take the lead, while in the final stage leadership passes to the *Sami-rek*. It is one ritual, presided over first by one and then by the other moiety, but the picture has been blurred by the curious growth of the *mayo*-rites, which developed into such an elaborate affair that the frequency of their celebrations necessarily fell behind that of the headhunting expeditions, which had to cover the need for names. Moreover, the raids could not be postponed when the number of *éwati* exceeded a certain minimum.²⁴¹ To all appearances headhunts were more frequent than *mayo* celebrations, while the connection between headhunt and *mayo*-ritual could only be made visible on the occasion of a *mayo* celebration.

A reconsideration of the clan-system and of the totems associated with the various clans sheds new light on the contrast between the two moieties. The animal totems associated with the *Geb-sé* moiety are the wallaby, the cassowary, the stork, the crane, the tortoise and the

²⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 411.

²⁴¹ The argument that there are so many *éwati* is a recurring one, cf. above, pp. 676, 691 f., 712, 719.

iguana, together with a number of less important animals. Those of the *Sami-rek* moiety are the pig, the crocodile, the eagle, the cormorant, the dog and the shark, together with many others which do not play an important part. The two groups of animals may be contrasted with each other in more or less the same way as in Mabuig — Torres Straits Islands — totems which are peaceful are set against those which are warlike or dangerous.²⁴² Among the Marind-anim the opposition is focused on the contrast between wallaby and pig, symbols of, respectively, cowardice and prowess, the former the animal of *Aramemb*, the latter of *Nazr* or *Dóhévai*, both prominent members of the Marind-anim pantheon.

After all, the contrast of superior and inferior associated with the two moieties can hardly be so important as it appeared on the face of it. Moreover, the superiority of the *Geb-zé* moiety is offset by their association with the cowardly wallaby, the inferiority of the *Sami-rek* is partly compensated by their connection with bravery and its symbol, the pig. The superior *Geb-zé*, associated with the sun and the male sex, submit to the power of the female sex; their prominent *déma* are the powerless *Uaba*, the castrated *Sosom* and the cowardly *Aramemb*. The inferior *Sami-rek*, overtly associated with female roles and occupations and ritually transformed into women (*Opeko-anem*), are the leaders in such pre-eminently masculine occupations as warfare, not to mention their boastful references to a big penis and the emitting of sperma. The dialectics of the system are so complicated that they tend to blot out the principles of classification underlying the pattern of clans, totems and rites. We can avoid confusion if we keep in mind that the one moiety is peaceful and associated with fertility and the promotion of life through sexual intercourse, whereas the other is warlike and associated with the promotion of life and fertility through death and burial. The death and subsequent burial of the coconut, the symbol of the opposite moiety, generate new coconuts and new life. The *Sami-rek* moiety, too, is connected with the sexual act, but there the sexual act is a means to stimulate prowess. Later on we shall find that sexual intercourse is also required for a successful act of *kambara*. It is certainly meaningful that in the sexual act as connected with the war-ritual of the *Sami-rek* moiety the male is represented as dominant, whereas in the sexual act associated with the *Geb-zé* ritual the female dominates the scene. Outwardly, however, the situation is just the

²⁴² Rep. Camb. Exp. V pp. 184 jo. 172.

opposite, for the *Geb-zé* are the predominantly male moiety and the *Sami-rek* the predominantly female one. What must be kept secret is that the males when exercising their fertility-bringing function have to submit to the females. Conversely, there is the same secrecy about the fact that the death-dealing weapon of the warfaring moiety is a penis; the word *bagwa*, penis, must not be used in public. One thing is clear: the sexual act is equally connected with life and death.

5. THE HEADS

When the enemy village has been duly reconnoitred, the war-party sets out from the bivouac. The unsuspecting village is surrounded while it is still dark. At daybreak the attackers go in, each yelling at the top of his voice. Their victims take to their heels, but find their way blocked on every side. Usually not much resistance is offered, but it may happen that a few make a firm stand and in such a case one or more of the attackers may lose their lives. Vertenten makes mention of a fight in which five men of Wendu were killed.²⁴³ However, these particulars need not concern us here. They are, in principle, the same as have become known about any headhunting raid in New Guinea. But nowhere do we find any reference to the subject that interests us most of all: the application of the *pahui*. All we have is Verschueren's statement that the inland Marind wield the instrument in the same way as the Jaqai and the Yéi-anim. Those who interviewed the Marind have concentrated their research on the actual killing and the problem of how the attackers managed to elicit their victim's name. Vertenten and Wirz agree that, if possible, a victim should be caught alive so as to be asked after his name. Anything whatsoever he or she says will pass for a name. That the Marind are aware that the practice is largely based on fiction is clearly illustrated in the myth of *Nazr*. When *Mahu* objects that the victim cannot understand the men who question him, *Nazr* replies: "That does not matter. . . . he is bound to say something and this may be used as a name".²⁴⁴ No sooner has the victim made some reply, than one of the older (we had better say, leading) men takes his bamboo-knife (*sok*) and cuts the victim's throat, starting at the base of the neck. There is no unnecessary cruelty. After he has cut through all the fleshy parts, the head is severed from the body with a firm wrench. If there is no *samb-anem* present, one of the

²⁴³ Cf. the description given by Vertenten, BKI 1923 pp. 57 ff. See also above, p. 714.

²⁴⁴ Above, p. 403.

younger men will perform the act himself.²⁴⁵ When the head has been wrenched off, the killers will softly repeat the name many times over, in order to commit it to memory.

As soon as the enemies who could be seized have all been done away with and the small children captured, the houses and gardens are pilfered. Everything valuable or useful is taken, that is, if there is no need to fear a counter-attack. In some cases the legs and arms of the victims are cut off to be eaten in the bivouac. Wirz presents the fact as if cannibalism were the rule,²⁴⁶ but Vertenten assures us that the practice of cannibalism is confined mainly to medicine-men who need human flesh as an ingredient for their magic. He makes mention of a medicine-man at Okaba who kept a lump of human fat, small morcels of which were added by way of medicine to the sago-dish prepared for a sick man or woman. In case the assailants had not had any meat for a long time, all the members of the party might feast on parts of the bodies of their victims. In this respect customs vary locally. The *Imo*-Marind were more cruel than the *Mayo*. "Those of Sangasé, for instance, also killed children, roasted human flesh in sago and gave it to their children, telling them that it was cassowary meat. I myself saw a roasted, partly gnawed forearm which had been found in Sangasé. It had been preserved by the raiders who brought it there. An *imo*-member of Méwi, Widui, also returned from a headhunt bringing an arm. These cruel trophies were applied as ornaments on the occasion of the final feast".²⁴⁷ Vertenten also reports that occasionally corpses were dissected, not in an upsurge of cruelty, but to satisfy curiosity. Furthermore, it sometimes happened that young women were not killed immediately but that, for the time being, their lives were spared so that they could be raped. In all these matters the account given by Wirz does not differ widely from that of Vertenten, but we preferred the latter's because it is more specific.

As soon as the war-party has returned to the bivouac the skulls are prepared. The skin is carefully removed and braced on a coconut to be dried in the sun. Then the skull is cleaned, all the soft parts being scraped off. The occipital hole is widened in order to remove the brains from the cranium. The brains and the eyeballs are thrown away, but some of the flesh of the head, if fat, may be eaten.²⁴⁸ Wirz, however,

²⁴⁵ Vertenten, Koppensneffers p. 90.

²⁴⁶ Wirz, M.A. III p. 58.

²⁴⁷ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 62.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

assures us that the brains, too, are eaten.²⁴⁹ When the skull has been cleaned, a rattan noose is applied to the nasal aperture, the eye-sockets and the base of the nose are stuffed with the soft kernel of the sago palm-leaf, the cheeks are padded with clay and the lower jaw is tied up to keep it in place. Then the skin is carefully replaced on the skull and neatly sewn up with rattan fibre. Later, after the party has returned to the village, the skull is decorated with a small net to which the artificial hairdo worn by the Marind will be fastened. The head and the vertebrae are hung up by the rattan noose which serves as a substitute for the nose. When it is suspended from a tree, a bunch of human heads must closely resemble a fruit-bearing coconut palm, at least, as long as the heads have not been decorated with an artificial hairdo.

The homecoming is an occasion for merry-making. Messengers have brought the news to those who stayed at home, and now they decorate the village and prepare a meal. The heads are brought to the *kui-aha*, on which a taboo is now laid which will not be lifted until the final feast is celebrated.²⁵⁰ That may be a long time afterwards, as much as a year or even more, because there must be much food.²⁵¹ We shall deal with the various stages of the preparation in the next chapter, in the sections dealing with the feasts, and for the present confine ourselves to those features which have an immediate bearing on headhunting or are indispensable in the present context.

When the feast begins, a big *kui-ahat* is set up in front of the *kui-aha*. Two beautiful specimens of *kui-ahat* were collected by Plate at Sangasé (cf. Plate XX); another, in the collections of the Museum at Leyden, has, by courtesy of the editors, been copied from I.A. XXII Tafel XXXIII (Plate XVI fig. 1). The *kui-ahat* set up in front of the *kui-aha* differ profoundly from the bamboo specimens kept inside the building (Plate XXI fig. 4).

The issues have been hopelessly confused ever since Wirz identified the *kui-ahat* with the *pahui*. As a result, I was led to identify both with the *ahat-déma* mentioned by Geurtjens in his article on the mortuary rites,²⁵² an identification to which I cannot subscribe any longer, not even inasmuch as the *kui-ahat* is concerned. I grant that the *kui-ahat* resembles the two known images supposedly representing

²⁴⁹ Wirz, l.c.

²⁵⁰ Cf. above, p. 721.

²⁵¹ Vertenten, op. cit. pp. 66 f.

²⁵² Cf. below, pp. 778 f.

the *ahat-déma*, but there are differences, too, and I think these differences are significant. The most important point is that the two images both have a human head, which is in the normal place, whereas the *kui-ahat* has no such feature.²⁵³ Moreover, one of the two effigies (the one photographed by Gooszen) was not a Marind-anim artefact at all; it was found on Frederik Hendrik Island. The other, originating from Awehima in the western section of the coast, need not have anything at all to do with an *ahat-déma*. The *békai* ornament on its breast characterizes the image as an *awong*, an effigy of some deceased.²⁵⁴ Wirz's identifying the *kui-ahat* with the *pahui* is another regrettable result of his passion for historical reconstruction. There was nothing to indicate that his exposition actually amounted to such a reconstruction, because he suppressed the terms *pahui* and *bahwa*, in spite of the fact that he knew them.²⁵⁵ He advanced the theory that the *pahui* (termed *kui-ahat*) was developed from the *kui-ahat* through a reduction of the prongs, a hypothesis which he tried to prove by referring to what he called two primitive forms of *kui-ahat*.²⁵⁶ His sketch of the two artefacts has been reproduced in fig 7. It is fairly evident that they are not *kui-ahat* at all, but butt-topped *pahui* which were brought back after the upper end had been crashed on an enemy during a successful raid. The *kui-ahat* should be taken for what it really is, a fork used to hang heads on. If it must at all be compared, it should be to the two-pronged coconut tree, *Weri Jahuwé*, which, according to Viegen, grows near the place of sunrise, *Ep kwitare*. It is a tree without a top (*pa*, i.e. head), which looks like an *ahat*.²⁵⁷

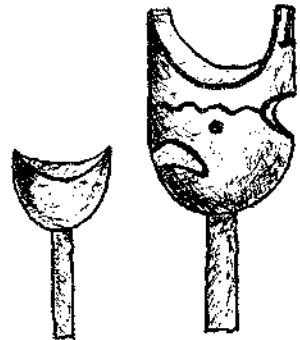


Fig. 7. Artefacts supposed to be primitive forms of *kui-ahat*. - Reproduced from Wirz, M.A. III p. 56.

²⁵³ Cf. the description of the photograph made by Gooszen in my *Godsdienst*, p. 206, and the reproduction of the effigy found on a grave near Awehima in Plate XVI fig. 2.

²⁵⁴ Below, p. 777.

²⁵⁵ That he knew the terms is apparent from his unpublished description in the *Katalog der ethnogr. Sammlung der K. Bataviaschen Gesellschaft*; cf. above, p. 726 note 183.

²⁵⁶ Wirz, M.A. III p. 56.

²⁵⁷ Viegen, interview; cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 72.

After this digression we must now return to the *kui-aha*. How and when the heads are hung on the *kui-ahat* is not known. According to Vertenten the signal for the feast to begin is given one afternoon, shortly before sunset, by the *samb-anim*, the leading men, who have taken up their stance round the *kui-ahat* to sing *ayasé*.²⁵⁸ Later, *ayasé* is substituted by *wasipé*, sung by the men and the *éwati*. Round the *kui-ahat* the drummers stand in a big circle. They are surrounded by the singers, who sing with gusto all night long. At daybreak they have a meal, while the rest of the day is spent sleeping. The next night there is *samb-zi*, the big feast-dance, followed, shortly before daybreak, by a procession of beautifully adorned young people. It may be a *war-ti-zi*, a *waiko*, or a *suba-mit*.²⁵⁹ The pattern varies and these variations need not occupy us here, nor need we concern ourselves with the *gad-zi* which according to Vertenten is held during the last night.²⁶⁰

More interesting is what happens to the heads. On this point Wirz gives supplementary information. We note that in his description of the final feast this author does not mention the *ayasé* and *wasipé* of the first night. Instead, he refers to the singing of *yarut*, which is a common element of many feasts. Apparently, this preparatory stage of the feast has been passed over by Vertenten. That Wirz does not mention the *ayasé* cannot be explained as a tacit correction of Vertenten's presentation of the facts, because the latter's article is not mentioned in Wirz's elaborate list of references. Apparently the fact that *ayasé* was sung just was not communicated to him. He was more fortunate in ascertaining what happened to the heads, his informants giving him the following details: "One morning, after a night given over to dancing, the men and the adolescents who took an active part in seizing the heads sit down somewhere in the festive grounds. On croton-leaves or on a small bench next to them are the heads, shining with paint and oil. In front sit the men who cut off the heads, the *kadahab-anim* [beheaders], who own the heads; the men who held the victims, the *hakev-anim* [seizers or holders], make up the second row, while in the third row are those who shot the arrows, the *déh-anim* [hitters; Wirz spells, incorrectly, *dé-anim* ²⁶¹]. Then, one of the men in the front row seizes the head he has captured and, holding it in both hands,

²⁵⁸ BKI 1923 p. 68. Vertenten does not in as many words say that they stand round the *kui-ahat*, but that 'the heads hang in the centre', which can have no other meaning than the one given above.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 69.

²⁶⁰ Loc. cit.

²⁶¹ Cf. the discussion on p. 410 above.

rushes down the beach and back again, crying out: . . . 'Here, here I will keep you for myself forever', and . . . 'from there you came, here you stay!' Then the head is put back in its place, and the next man goes through the same act, carrying the head he has captured" ²⁶² and so on, until they have all had their turn.

We do not know when exactly this ceremony takes place, but the fact that the heads are said to be shining with paint and oil proves that they have been freshly anointed. It is a fair guess that the scene has to follow upon the *ayasé* and *wasipé* sung during the first(?) night, as reported by Vertenten. Nobody ever even hinted that the Marind fear the spirits of those they have slain, and we may rule out the possibility that the present rite should have anything to do with animistic representations. The ceremony described is a public act of appropriation and, as such, not a superfluous one, because later, when he is delivering a formal speech, as is required of him on the occasion of the installation of a sister's son as an *aroi-patur* (and perhaps at other age-grade promotions as well), each warrior will proudly proclaim all his martial deeds, carefully distinguishing between the people he has shot, those he has caught and those he has beheaded.²⁶³ The ceremony implies the public recognition of everybody's specific part in the headhunt which is being celebrated. Unfortunately, one question must remain unanswered. Who has the right to give the name derived from the skull to a child? Is it the older man who did the beheading or is this right shared by all the men who assisted in killing the victim? Probably the latter, as the same name may be given to more than one person.²⁶⁴ The *samb-anim* are privileged anyhow. They are called upon to do the actual beheading, they sit in front when the heads are distributed and they may take the heads home and hang them in their own men's house. We may expect that the younger men also derive some benefit from their share in the venture.

The fact that it is the old men who sever the head is another indication that headhunting is more than a simple act of warfare. Yet, this aspect is not neglected. The young men who distinguished them-

²⁶² Wirz, M.A. III p. 61.

²⁶³ Cf. the speech overheard by Van de Kolk, recorded on p. 146, above. The warrior in question only distinguishes between victims caught and victims beheaded. Probably he has never ranked among the *déh-anim*, the hitters.

²⁶⁴ Cf. above, p. 709. According to Vertenten (Koppensnellers p. 90) the *hakev-anem* is the owner of the head, while according to Wirz it belongs to the *kadahab-anem*. The rite as described by Wirz suggests some form of joint ownership by all those who had a part in the act.

selves by their martial behaviour enjoy a specific privilege, that of dancing on the high platform constructed in the festive grounds. Dancing on the *luga* or *ruga* is the public reward of their prowess and marks them as eligible for future leadership.²⁶⁵

When the feast is over, the owners of the heads each take theirs to their own men's house, where they hang them over the entrance or outside under the projecting roof. After a few years the scalp has become withered and ant-eaten; then the skulls are hung in a bunch on the main pole of the house. Later they may be thrown away, but the mandible is carefully preserved.²⁶⁶ The fact that a certain value is attached to this part of the head was discussed earlier in this chapter.²⁶⁷ We also noted there that the act of name-giving is not attended by any special ceremony.²⁶⁸

That a sentimental value is attached to the bones, i.e. the skulls, the mandibles and the cervical vertebrae, appears clearly from Vertenten's account. "The mandibles were . . . carefully preserved and the owners knew their whole history, which they loved to relate to their children. When a new men's house was inaugurated there was quite a ceremony. An arch made of mandibles was rigged up over the entrance, the skulls were suspended somewhere in the house, and every man put his collection of cervical vertebrae on a string, which he hung over his sleeping place. They still remember a great head-hunting feast in Borem, which at the time was a big village. The men had the whole of the festive grounds ringed round with one big garland of cervical vertebrae! (These vertebrae were also worn on the breast by way of decoration)".²⁶⁹ They took great pride in the trophies of their headhunting expeditions and Vertenten points out that the children (*patur*) used to play at headhunting, going through the whole procedure from beginning to end. First, in all earnest, they held a meeting and there it was decided to organize a headhunt; with their toy-arrows they shot small birds and carefully skinned the heads, then they cleared the skulls and refitted the dried scalps over the clean skulls, making them into toy-heads. "Their whole life, their history, their legends were saturated with headhunting".²⁷⁰

²⁶⁵ Above, p. 66.

²⁶⁶ Vertenten, BKI 1923 p. 70. Often the 'seizers' and 'hitters' will belong to the same men's house.

²⁶⁷ Above, pp. 718 f.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 718 jo. 135 f.

²⁶⁹ Vertenten, *op. cit.* pp. 70 f.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 71.

6. THE IMPLICATIONS OF HEADHUNTING

Having completed the description of the process, we must now find an answer to the question as to the meaning of headhunting. First of all, we must reconsider its ritual aspect. Many of our previous discussions were devoted to this subject. We established that the headhunting raid follows upon the celebration of the cult, an important fact because it implies a connection between headhunting and the primeval events which resulted in the origin of man. The connection is acknowledged in the myth of the origin of man — which is, in essence, the story of his initiation. The version in which *Sobra* plays a part ends with the story relating how the first men were incited to warfare and headhunting. Similarly, the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* terminates with the story of *Dawi*. What the two stories have in common is that they do not explain why headhunting is such an important ritual occupation; they just state that it occurs and, in thus stating the fact, present it as a hard and fast rule.

A reason for headhunting is not given; if there is any, it must be inferred from either the myth of the sun or that of *Yawi* and its various related readings current among neighbouring tribes, explaining how men originated from coconuts and a coconut tree from a cut-off head. Thirty years ago, in my doctoral thesis, I proffered an explanation based on the sun myth. The argument ran as follows: the human head is identical with the coconut and with the sun. Headhunting favours the growth of the coconut palm²⁷¹ and is a cosmic ritual. The sun is captured (the cut-off head) and delivered into the power of the underworld through its transfer to the *kui-aha*, which is also called a sun-house. A house is always the underworld, as is demonstrated by the myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb*. The final feast, which like every major feast is celebrated on the graves, symbolizes the victory of the sun over the powers of the underworld. The taboo on the *kui-aha* is lifted, the heads are brought outside the house and identified with new-born children who receive their names, a resuscitation of the cosmos is celebrated in a big dance and a *déma-wir*, repeating the primeval establishment of the divine order. The final feast celebrates a cosmic revival in which the community shares.²⁷²

The argument is not convincing. A cosmic ritual must be celebrated annually, and always in the same season. Although a certain regularity and a distinct connection between headhunting and the wet season are

²⁷¹ Geurtjens, M&M V p. 326; Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 191 note 143.

²⁷² Van Baal, *Godsdienst* pp. 201-210.

undeniable, there is just too much variation as regards the time chosen for each headhunting expedition and too much room for doubt whether all groups participated in these annual raids, to prove that the correlation is more than an in itself interesting association. Moreover, if it were a cosmic ritual, the Marind might be expected to ascribe more important consequences to headhunting than the vague expectation that it favours the growth of the coconut. The extreme vagueness of the expectations connected with headhunting is one of its most discouraging aspects. A case in point is the custom of name-giving, which the Marind have in common with the Boadzi, the Keraki and the Jaqai.²⁷³ The name does not convey either supernatural protection or power.

In developing a theory on headhunting, we may conveniently start from the fact that there is a widely spread complex of representations connected with headhunting, common to all or at least most of the tribes who carry a *pahui* with them on their headhunting expeditions. The use of the *pahui* has its correlates in the identification of the implement with a penis, the belief in a connection between coconut and human head and life, and the custom of bestowing the name of the victim on a child.²⁷⁴ Obviously, the three traits belong together. In Marind-anim myth the combination of the traits and their mutual connection is dealt with in a rather perfunctory manner. The most important reference to the complex is found in the myth of *Yawi*, in which we are told how the coconut originated from a cut-off head and how since *Yawi's* death all men have to die some time.²⁷⁵ References to the *pahui* are absent from the story; they are confined to the myths of *Dawi* and *Nazr*. More explicit is the Wiram myth of *Sami* and *Gwavi*. It is the dog *Diari* who is the first headhunter. He buries the head in the mound of a scrub-hen, where it changes into a coconut tree. It bears fruit within a miraculously short time. The nuts fall on the ground and when they sprout they turn into human beings.²⁷⁶ No mention is made of the *pahui*, which is, however, elaborately dealt with in the Boadzi myth of *Anésaké*, who is killed immediately after the *pahui* has been completed. Human beings come forth from the worms developing in *Anésaké's* dead body. The identity of human head and

²⁷³ Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 177, 286; Boelaars, Mappi p. 101.

²⁷⁴ We are not sufficiently well informed to verify whether each of the three traits mentioned was actually in evidence among each of the tribes using the *pahui*; at the same time, the information is sufficiently encompassing to permit of a fair degree of generalization.

²⁷⁵ Cf. above, pp. 249 f.

²⁷⁶ Williams, Trans-Fly pp. 387 f.

coconut is related in the first part of the myth.²⁷⁷ The identity of human head and coconut and the idea that the ritual death of the coconut favours the well-being and fertility of the tribe has been discussed in greater detail in the section describing the cult of the upper Bian people. The fact that a headhunt follows upon the celebration of the cult implies that the headhunt completes the relevant process, which has culminated in the killing of the coconuts.²⁷⁸ New life sprouts from the dead coconut as well as from the beheaded enemy. That the names of the victims are given to young children seems to hold the inference that somehow headhunting is believed to promote fertility and well-being, vague though this belief may be. The children are, as it were, the fruits of the headhunt, the tangible proof of its salutary effect. It is not merely a matter of male vanity when the Marind wish to have names in stock; one should have a name for a child before it is born. The custom of bestowing a *mahudi-igis* on the bride proves that the act of headhunting must have been completed long before the child is born.²⁷⁹ The birth of the child conclusively shows that the headhunt has served its purpose. As such, the name cannot have any supernatural effect on the child's well-being. If we should be entitled to speak of cause and effect in this context, the birth of the child is the effect of the headhunt. However, we are not entitled to put it this way. The only effect the Marind consciously ascribe to a successful headhunt is the salutary influence on the growth of the coconut. Although the coconut is the symbol of human life, the symbolism is not consciously expressed in this context, which is rather amazing because the symbolism is so obvious.

A remarkable fact in this connection is that young children are not killed, but kidnapped. Availing ourselves of the metaphor used by the Marind, we might say that what the headhunter is after is not the young sprouts, but the ripe nuts (*mes*), which must be cut off and planted to bear new fruit. However, they do not make the comparison and the salutary effect of headhunting is never formulated in such clear terms as we would expect, considering the high value they set upon it.

At this point we must interrupt our study of the ritual aspects of headhunting for an investigation of its psychological effect on the warrior. Why does the Marind, who is by no means the brave and

²⁷⁷ Above, p. 729.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 598 and 586 ff.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 129 f., 135 f.

fearless fighter he pretends to be, glorify in headhunting and why is he so anxious to go and hunt the *ikom-anim*? We must refer back to the first section of this chapter, in which we examined the role of aggressiveness among the Marind. We found that their whole education is focused on restrained aggressiveness. In childhood, they organize sham fights; in adolescence, they are harshly disciplined, subdued and told to bridle their passions; the *pakas-anim*, protected by the fear inspired by their magic power and knowledge, keep a check upon such flaring passions as may lead to serious conflicts with neighbouring groups.

The first time I dimly realized that underlying this weird and formidable culture there is a well-restrained, though powerful aggressiveness was on the occasion of a *waiko-si* which on my initiative was celebrated at Merauke on the 31st of August 1937. It really was a glorious spectacle and I had thoroughly enjoyed every detail, the monotony of the sombre but sonorous song, the steady beating of the stout drums, the proud and haughty demeanour of the dignified dancers in their magnificent attire, forming two wide circles which moved in opposite directions round a big fire, the rows of dancers lighted by torches held by their admiring women walking on the outer side of the circle. As the night wore on, the spectacle as a whole aroused in me an ever growing awareness of a scarcely contained savage aggressiveness, which gradually began to sway the whole celebrating group. Of course this is not a rational argument. It was just an impression, but the impact was strong enough to make me realize that I had to step in. Much against my initial intention, I persuaded the leaders to stop the performance at four o'clock in the morning, because I felt that passions were being whipped up which could only provoke a clash with the new order.

Although it is merely an incident, nothing but a highly personal experience, the experience was not an isolated one. Wirz, describing a *waiko-si*, had a similar sensation: "One cannot help being reminded of the days of yore, before the arrival of the whites, when a successful headhunt was celebrated with a feast of this kind".²⁸⁰ These considerations cannot but lead to the conclusion that any further analysis of Marind-anim headhunting will have to start from this basic aggressiveness. There is ample reason to prefer this approach. Aggressiveness is a major motive in this part of New Guinea. A study of the Kiwai

²⁸⁰ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 31.

and their mythology is truly revealing of the unrestrained aggressiveness prevalent among some Papuan tribes.²⁸¹ All along the south coast war was a dominant feature. The Marind-anim were the only tribe who had succeeded in establishing more or less friendly relations with their neighbours, so that they could live in relative peace with them.

From a rational point of view the Marind-anim had no reasonable motive for their headhunts, unless they felt that they must build a reputation for prowess in war, so as to convince their neighbours of the desirability of good mutual relations. It could, indeed, have been a motive. If ever there was a country to which Grotius' rule *si vis pacem, para bellum* applied, it was South New Guinea. However, it seems rather futile to look for rational motives. In their aggressiveness the Marind do not differ from the surrounding tribes. They only differ from them in their restraint, their ability to let reason prevail over suspicion in their relations with neighbouring and related groups. In other respects they shared the innate passion for killing with all the tribes surrounding them.

The attractions of warfare were numerous. We shall not waste time in discussing the more obvious motivations. We are interested in the association of successful warfare with tribal well-being. It must have a deeper foundation than personal vanity and the rivalry of individuals striving for social fame. Success in warfare was a basic condition for survival in this part of New Guinea and the generally prevailing insecurity necessarily led to an over-estimation of the values of prowess and aggressiveness. They were, as we said, the basic condition for survival and the attitude towards martial virtues need not necessarily change once social relations with neighbouring tribes have improved and the feeling of insecurity has consequently become somewhat less acute. On the contrary, the state of relative peace that prevailed between the Marind and their immediate neighbours could hardly ever have come about if their mutual fears had not been strong enough to curb their suspicions and restrain their longing for avenging alleged acts of sorcery. They had every reason to fear each other. In open country an attack by night is such an easy matter, especially during the dry season, as to make mutually friendly relations a primary condition for survival. The restraint imposed by this necessity does not automatically lead to a diminution of aggressive drives. Suspicions of

²⁸¹ An outstanding example is the myth of *Kuiano*, but it is not the only one. Landtman's collection of Kiwai Folktales has many other cases.

sorcery were frequent enough to make it abundantly clear that keeping up good relations required a good deal of restraint as well as the necessity to make the own group strong enough to inspire a wholesome respect. Psychologically, an externalization of aggressiveness as displayed by Marind-anim headhunting is, in fact, a conceivable response to the challenge their situation presented, a situation of which we shall have more to say in our final chapter. For the present suffice it to state that a successful headhunt was an outlet for their deep-seated aggressiveness as well as a guarantee of security and prosperity. The emotional satisfaction derived from successful warfare must have been great and fundamental. Marind-anim warfare is the expression of a way of life dominated by dark feelings of hatred and enmity as well as by a powerful longing for security.

In its institutionalized form, viz. the headhunt following the *mayoritual* (or, as the case may be, the *imo bangu*), this emotional satisfaction found its most eloquent expression. The headhunt is only an episode in a long sequel of events, but it is the episode culminating in the glory of the final apotheosis. The cycle begins with the re-enactment of the feast celebrated by the gods in the mythical Mayo, then follows the copulation of the two cosmic powers and lastly the generating of the fire and the re-birth of the neophytes as new storks. We are only half-way through now; the rest of the mythical history is still to follow. It will be dramatized in the *déma-wir* staged on the occasion of the feast celebrating the return of the warriors, who left the scene after the initiation had been completed. It is only when they have returned victorious that the forked tree can be erected on which the heads are hung like coconuts growing from a palm. The Wiram and Boadzi myths of the fallen coconuts which change into human beings seem to hold a direct reference to the *kui-ahat* with the cut-off heads which represent the future children who will be named after them. Not until the *kui-ahat* has been set up in the festive grounds like a fruit-bearing coconut tree (a symbol of fertility and possibly a reference to *Weri Jahuwé*, the forked coconut tree in the place of sunrise) can the *déma-wir* take place. Now one after another the *déma* come to the village to show their glory and, by re-enacting the past, to repeat their deeds. The headhunt is part of a long sequel of ceremonies expressing what to the Marind is the essence of life. The headhunt is an expression of aggressiveness, just as other ceremonies of the sequel express sexual appetite, concern about food or sheer admiration of the gifts of nature. All these ceremonies have one thing in common: they commemorate events and

express feelings; the magical effect of the rites is an element which is at best of secondary importance. What matters is the moulding of the essence of life into its proper form, the *déma*, who are the expression of everything life and nature stand for in the confrontation with man.

What is required in this atmosphere is not a concrete effect, but to have things done in the proper form. If only the ceremony is properly staged, the effect will be salutary anyhow. The effect of the rites is a problem apart, which will be examined in greater detail in the Chapter on Private Rites.²⁸² Here we must concentrate on the form of head-hunting, which is a most unusual one. Its essence can be summarized in one word, *pahui*. Much of what can be said of the curious implement has already been discussed in the preceding section. Yet, a few more points should be made. We demonstrated that the *pahui* is the club of *Naer*. However, it is also a penis and here we come upon a remarkable coincidence. We are inclined to explain the identification of the *pahui* with a penis from the effect of headhunting on the fertility of the symbol of humanity, the coconut palm. Though we do not deny that the penis-symbol may have a bearing on fertility and everything promoting it, we would nevertheless consider it a misconception if fertility and its concomitants were held to sum up all that the symbol actually represents. The penis conceived as a *pahui* is above all a deadly weapon. How can this be? Again it is mythology which provides the answer. The *pahui* represents not just an ordinary penis, but a very long one, which must be carried over the shoulder. The penis, and more specifically the long penis, is one of the main totems of the *Mahu-zé*. Of *Yugil* it is said that "he had to carry his penis slung over his shoulder".²⁸³ When in this light we reconsider the content of the myth, we find that all the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle now fall into place. Attacking the enemy is presented, just as among the *Keraki*, as a case of sexual assault, as *Yugil* importuning the girl. The cutting off of the penis is the crashing of the *pahui*. The feast at *Senayo* is the head-hunters' feast to celebrate the successful headhunt of *Yugil*, who is on his way to it. It is also clear now why the crew of the canoe was such a motley group. That *déma Sok* was among them is only natural; *sok* is the headhunters' knife. The stork, too, is one of the company. A head-hunt follows upon an initiation, through which the neophytes have been changed into *noh-war*, new storks. The *déma* came, indeed, from the celebration of a *mayo* ceremony, and a headhunting party has its

²⁸² See below, pp. 913 ff.

²⁸³ Above, p. 311.

participants recruited from among all the phratries. Consequently, there are also *Kai-zé* déma.

The present reinterpretation of the myth does not invalidate our first analysis. The one interpretation is not only as good, but also as true as the other. An interesting point is that here again we have it confirmed by mythology that the *mayo* celebration is followed by a headhunt. Another point is that the *pahui* is the penis of *Yugil*, alias *Diwa*,²⁸⁴ the *Mahu-zé* dema whose phratry-ancestor *Mahu* was one of the first two headhunters. However, there is another déma with a long penis, *Sosom*. Only, it is nowhere said that he carried it over his shoulder. On the contrary, there is little emphasis on its length²⁸⁵ and his penis is identified, not with the *pahui*, but with the bullroarer.²⁸⁶ The penis of *Sosom*, who is closely related to *Uaba*, is the penis in its life-giving aspect, the property of the *Geb-zé* moiety; that of *Diwa* is the penis in its death-inflicting aspect, the weapon of the *Sami-rek*. It is clear now why our efforts to find out whether any important function was filled by the *Sami-rek* moiety in the cults produced such meagre results. The cults are the property of the *Geb-zé*, just as headhunting is the ritual of the *Sami-rek*. In the execution of its specific rituals the leading moiety is assisted by the members of the opposite tribal half, but there is no sharing of leadership.

We may raise the question whether the ritual of the *Mahu-zé* moiety, the headhunt, must be said to have no bearing at all on cosmology, the great cosmic events being more specifically associated with the *Geb-zé*. It is difficult to give a definite answer. The *Mahu-zé* moiety being closely associated with the wet season and the northwest monsoon, we would expect cosmological implications of some sort. The fact that one of the *ayasé* songs refers to a *katané-aha*, a 'sun house',²⁸⁷ might be an indication that the song refers to the sun while it is underground. Unfortunately, our knowledge is too limited to venture a conjecture. More interesting is the story of the dog *Diari* in the *Wiram* myth, in which he fulfils functions similar to those of the dog *Girui* who, in the myth of the origin of man, dug the well from which the first human beings emerged.²⁸⁸ *Girui* is a *Mahu-zé* déma and, as such, a head-

²⁸⁴ Probably we should also include *Awassra*. If that is correct, his club would not have been a *wagané* but a *kupa*, and not an ordinary *kupa*, but a *pahui*.

²⁸⁵ Above, p. 314.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. pp. 270, 272.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 723.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 599, 753 and 209 f.

hunter. The scene seems to indicate that the headhunters are on the war-path during the period that the *déma* are burrowing underground, an explanation which we found to be in harmony with our description of the procedure of the *bangu* ceremony.²⁸⁹ However, the story does not fit into the context of the *mayo* ceremonies. They, too, are followed by a headhunt, but then the sun and the fire have been born already and all the headhunter can do is to extinguish the fire, a motif which has not been elaborated though it would suit the functions of the *Sami-rek* moiety. Incidentally, the *déma* engaged in putting out the fire is not a *Mahu-zé*, but a *Kai-zé* *déma*, and he is not very successful. It seems that, after all, the fire is extinguished by *Yorma*,²⁹⁰ who is, indeed, a *déma* of the right moiety, though one who has little to do with headhunting. In conclusion we state that whatever indications there are of headhunting having cosmological implications, these are correlations which are scarcely emphasized. The main contribution the relevant moiety makes to ritual is not the enactment of a particular episode in cosmological or tribal history, but the provision of human heads. This implies that it creates the conditions required for the celebration of a great feast. Not the ritual, but the feast with the big show-dances and the *déma-wir* is their specialty.

The *Sami-rek* contribution to ritual is by no means a minor one. The great feasts are grand affairs. The *déma* and the *hais* are impersonated and a gigantic show is arranged which in its glorious beauty gives an impressive demonstration of the greatness of the past and the might of the present. That the feast is the preserve of the *Sami-rek* moiety is confirmed by myth. The great reveller of the mythical era is *Wokabu*, the sago *déma* and the inventor of coconut oil and body-painting.²⁹¹ The narrow link between feasts and headhunts confirms that the primary effect of warfare is an enhanced feeling of security. While headhunting provided an opportunity to give rein to aggressiveness and malice, the feast was an occasion for reconciliation and the renewing of friendships. In this respect, too, new life springs from death.

At this juncture, a thorough revaluation of the roles of the moieties and the functions of the cult is called for. Once it is admitted that the headhunt and the ensuing feast complete the cycle inaugurated by the preceding *mayo*-rites or, as the case may be, the *bangu* of the *imo*.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 627 ff., 662.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 244.

²⁹¹ Ibid. p. 340.

it is no longer possible to maintain that the *Geb-zé* moiety is the ceremonial, the *Sami-rek* the non-ceremonial tribal half. Actually, to the *Geb-zé* moiety falls the secret cult, to the *Sami-rek* the public celebration. The extent to which the two moieties constitute a whole is demonstrated by the fact that the secret ceremonies supervised by the *Geb-zé* are celebrated in the *timan*, the hinterland associated with the *Sami-rek*, while the place of the *kui-aha* and the festive *déma-wir* is the village in the immediate vicinity of the beach, which is a totem-relation of the *Geb-zé*.²⁹² Here we come to the hard core of the dualism of the Marind-anim classificatory system. The secret of the cult is that the male has to submit to the female. He is caught in copulation and presented, now as the powerless *Uaba*, now as an arrow-head, the son of the *imo-iwag*. The secret symbol of the cult is the *pahui* shield of the *bangu* ceremony with the arrow-head inserted. It is, indeed, a secret, because the exoteric truth is that all fertility comes from the male sex and that it is the male sex which is dominant. Accordingly, the *Geb-zé* are associated overtly with the male sex, dominance and the east monsoon, in other words, with all the brighter aspects of life, which in the esoteric cult are represented as being in peril. The symbol of the *Sami-rek* is the symbol of masculinity, the huge penis penetrating a small vulva. This penis, however, is not a life-bringer but a death-inflicting implement and the moiety associated with it is overtly connected with warfare and sorcery, as well as with female occupations and with the public feasts. They are the counterparts of the *Geb-zé* moiety. The dualism inherent in the ambiguous position of the *Geb-zé* *déma* in ritual entails a corresponding ambiguity in the equipment of the opposite tribal half, which has the symbols of life associated with death.

The antithesis of the functions of the two moieties and their mutual relationship is more explicit in the context of the *bangu* than in that of the *mayo* ceremonies. The headhunt is the logical follow-up of the *bangu*, while the connection between *mayo* and headhunt is of a less compelling or — to say the least — a less obvious nature. In the *mayo* the idea of birth preponderates, it has superseded the notion that death engenders life. Yet, the latter idea is not wholly absent. The *mayo-iwag* must be killed in the shape of a snake, and the headhunt still follows upon the initiation into the cult. In myth this sequence is so much a matter of course that it is never even presented as a custom which

²⁹² Cf. above, pp. 505 f. and 720.

at one time was inaugurated. The *mayo* being completed, *Dawi* as well as *Diwa* set out on a headhunt.²⁹³

Another aspect of headhunting is its obvious connection with initiation. Native sources state emphatically that a headhunt is more or less inevitable when there are many *éwati* in a village.²⁹⁴ It would be naive to subscribe to the explanation that the raid was inevitable because the *éwati* wanted to fight. Of course they wanted to fight, the headhunting expedition made part of the procedure of their coming of age. Among the *Mayo-Marind* the initiatory aspect of headhunting was more obvious than among the *Imo*. Unlike the *mayo*, the *bangu* ceremony of the latter is not really an initiation ceremony.

Now that we know we are dealing with a complete cycle of initiation, headhunt and feast, the procedure followed by the *Mayo-Marind* can no longer be seen as a very exceptional one. Whereas the upper *Bian* people have initiation and feast combined, the *Mayo-Marind* have the feast as the final part of the process and the difference between the two is more a matter of the greater complexity of the *mayo*-rites than of difference in procedure.

In this context yet another possibility presents itself, that of a connection between *sosom*-rites and headhunting. The eastern *Marind* returned from their raids into the Western Division at the beginning of the east monsoon, i.e. the time when a visit of *Sosom* is due. This might explain why *Viegen* has him represented as a giant wearing a string of cut-off heads suspended from his left shoulder.²⁹⁵ The *sosom* ceremonies are annually recurring ceremonies and they might in some way be related with headhunting, just as the annual *bangu*-ritual is. Yet, there is a difference, for if they are associated with headhunting, they must be associated with the return of the war-party and not with the preparations for the raid.

More important than the possible connections of headhunting with the other ceremonies of the *Marind* are the various facts presented by myth and ritual which have a bearing on the position of the *Sami-rek* moiety. We have already mentioned *Verschueren's* statement that the *kui-aha* is built within the village, and the *sosom*- and *mayo-mirón* are constructed in the bush. Another point of interest is that there are two important feasts in *Marind-anim* mythology, the one at *Senayo*,

²⁹³ The resemblance between the two names suggests that the two are conceived as a pair of contrasts, similar to stork and eagle.

²⁹⁴ Cf. above pp. 676, 691 f., 712 and 719.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 480.

a *Mahu-zé* centre, the other at Sangar, a *Bragai-zé* centre.²⁹⁶ The close relationship between the *Sami-rek* moiety and feasts has been commented on already at the end of Chapter VIII.²⁹⁷ Here a few salient points may be recalled, such as the fact that the *déma* of the feast-house post (*soma*) is a member of this group, that the *batend*, the most coveted article of festive decoration, is a totem of the *Mahu-zé*,²⁹⁸ that *Doreh*, also a *Mahu-zé*, is a successful planter of yams, the festive food,²⁹⁹ and that *Nazr* is interested in the plaiting of upperarmrings and other items belonging to the celebration of a feast.³⁰⁰ It all fits in with the role of the moiety, and the same may be said of the moiety's association with the bow³⁰¹ and of *Sangar-anem's* interest in the purchase of war-arrows.³⁰² *Diwa* is a *déma* who obviously is far more important than we were inclined to believe when commenting on his life history. He has two names, *Diwa* and *Yugil*, and there are two *Kai-zé* *déma* — one of whom is also a headhunter — who have names which are similar and yet different, viz. *Dawi* and *Yagil*. What is more, *Dawi* and *Yagil* are so closely related as to be almost identical (above, p. 297), forming a pair of synonyms comparable to *Diwa* and *Yugil*. The structured antithesis of the names leaves no room for doubt that the Marind were well aware of *Diwa's* prominent function as the real *déma* of the *pahui*. It is this function which accounts for the fact that the killer of the festive pig, *Divazib*, bears his name. There would not be a feast unless there had been a headhunt first. *Diwa* as the *pahui-déma* is a prominent personage. In the *mayo*-initiation he takes *Wokabu's* place. He is such an important character that we may well raise the question whether we are justified in upholding our previous interpretation of the toppling feast-house post, the fall of the *ser-déma* and the tumbling of the pole to which the *swar*-canoe had been tied, as symbols of castration-anxiety. There is every reason to explain them as *pahui* being crashed upon a victim's back. Nevertheless, in the context of the total complex of *Mahu-zé* myths in which, inter alia, the story of *Béto* should be included, I do not feel that any revision of our previous interpretation is justified, provided we agree that if we

²⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 438, 433.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 424.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 326, 328.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 327.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. pp. 398 f.

³⁰¹ Ibid. pp. 345, 380.

³⁰² Ibid. p. 393.

explain the falling of the penis as a blow struck with a *pahui*, this is an interpretation which is just as true and as valid. Dualism is a basic feature of Marind-anim thought. We have to bear in mind that the *Bragai-zé*, in spite of the ritual feminization of *Opeko-anem* and the association of their moiety with female occupations, are so closely connected with the emitting of sperma that Wirz could call sperma their most important totem.³⁰³ And yet, this is the phratry of head-hunting and sorcery, the phratry of imminent death! The dualism recurs in an intriguing manner in the vowel-shift apparent in the names *Yagil* and *Yugil*. In contrasts of this kind the u is indicative of the female sex, the a, e or i of the male. Thus, e.g., in *ezam-uzum*, husband-wife, *namek-namuk*, brother-sister, *wanangib-wanangub*, son-daughter, *anem-anum*, man-woman. Here again the *Mahu-zé* déma *Yugil* seems to be associated with the female sex and the *Kai-zé Yagil* with the male one.

³⁰³ Ibid. p. 381.

CHAPTER XIII

OTHER RITES AND CEREMONIES

In the present chapter data concerned with many different rites and ceremonies have been brought together, not because they are specifically related, but simply for the sake of convenience. They could not be ranged under any of the preceding chapters, nor do they come within the scope of the chapter on private rites. Nevertheless, they had to be fitted in somewhere. The first two sections deal with the dead and the ceremonies held for them. Then follow the sections describing various sexual rites, dances, minor ceremonies and feasts.

1. THE DEAD; BURIAL, TABOOS AND MOURNING CUSTOMS

Ideas and notions concerning the dead and the hereafter were discussed in section 3 of chapter IV. Here we shall deal with the actual rites and customs connected with death. Our main sources are Wirz's monograph and an article by Geurtjens in *Mensch en Maatschappij* vol. V, entitled "Het schimmenoffer bij de Marindineezen".¹ Then, there are the communications made by the Fathers of the Sacred Heart Mission in a variety of articles. As usual, it is Vertenten who gives the most detailed descriptions. Special mention should be made of the papers reprinted in his *Koppensnellers*, and also of his essay on the decorative art of the Marind in *I.A.* vol. XXII (1915).

A complicating factor in the description of the procedure followed by the Marind in their disposal of the dead is its variability. There is no rigid time schedule for the performance of the various rites and we are not even sure of the details of the established order of the ceremonies. Because the authors of our sources paid little attention to these variations, we are confronted with quite a deal of discrepancies. They are, in fact, less important than they appear at a first cursory comparison of the data available. Accidental events, in some cases the wish to

¹ Translation: "the sacrifice to the shades among the Marind". It need not concern us here that the title does not seem wholly appropriate.

combine the successive mortuary ceremonies for individuals who died shortly after one another, may occasion deviations from the prevailing pattern. Another important factor is the impact made by the death. The very old, who had long been a nuisance to their family, may be interred without much ceremony. There is no wailing and no display of grief where everybody feels their passing away as a relief. In such a case nobody even cares to pretend grief. In a previous chapter we have already pointed out that old people who are infirm or suffering, and wholly dependent on the care of their relatives, may be buried alive.² The very young, too, are buried without much ado.³ It is only natural that between these extreme cases of minimal care and full observance of all the customary ceremonies for the beloved deceased who passed away in his prime, there is a wide range of alternatives. In the following pages we shall try to give a description of the complete cycle. As far as possible, we differentiate between ceremonies which are never omitted and those which are optional. The lack of concrete data, however, remains a major handicap. Apart from the established fact that no ceremonies are performed for children who died in the maternity-hut or for people buried alive, there is little detailed information with regard to the variability of the ritual, except that we are assured that the celebration of the full cycle of rites is confined to the cases of people who died in their prime. We shall take this up again when dealing with the mourning rites proper. Finally, there is the unfortunate circumstance that our sources are limited in scope, describing only the ceremonies observed for male persons. Those for females are for the greater part ignored. From the descriptions it may be inferred, however, that the mortuary rites for a deceased woman are mostly analogous to those for men, but on account of the total absence of details we must needs confine ourselves to the demise of a male person and its aftermath. That the Marind may also be profoundly afflicted by the death of a woman is convincingly demonstrated by the story of the man who wanted to follow his wife to the *hais-miráv*.⁴

With regard to the Marind-anim attitude towards death Vertenten observed: "As they themselves admitted, the Marind are afraid to die. . . . Yet, when they are really going, most of them appear to accept their fate with resignation. The ones at whose death I was present (and they were many) nearly all passed away very peacefully. They

² Above, pp. 171 f.

³ Ibid. pp. 133 and 679.

⁴ Wirz, M.A. III p. 128.

are not given to complaints; they groan softly when suffering much pain, and usually they keep stoically silent".⁵ The confusion caused by a sudden death and the terror inspired by such epidemics as described in the preceding chapter confirm how much, indeed, the Marind is fear-stricken when death knocks at his neighbour's door.⁶ He enjoys life and this positive appreciation is borne out by his attitude towards suicide. Cases of suicide are extremely rare. As a matter of fact, I have never heard of any, whereas they are fairly common among the people of Frederik Hendrik Island.⁷ The story of how Judas committed suicide was received with roars of laughter by F. Vertenten's Marind-anim audience; 'what a blockhead, this Judas!' ⁸ Committing suicide is something which is simply not done.

When somebody is dying, he is laid down with his head resting on his wife's or his mother's lap. His relatives gather round him, sitting in silence, though some of the female relatives may start wailing well before he actually expires.⁹ In this context mention should be made of a case witnessed by Van de Kolk, when the wife of a dying man wanted to close his eyes and tie up his mouth while he was still breathing. Van de Kolk comments: "On several occasions I noticed that a dying person is looked upon and treated as one already dead, and if he comes to, it is said that he was dead but has begun to breathe again".¹⁰ In this particular case the rash action of the wife must not be imputed to any lack of love or compassion. In the same story we are informed by the author that here he was a witness of a demonstration of genuine affection. The lamentations of the dead man's wife, sisters and brother, their praising him for his goodness, courage and eloquence, their upbraiding him for his having passed away, are elaborately related.¹¹

Soon after death the deceased is put in a sitting posture on a mat or on some pieces of eucalyptus-bark which have been spread out in front of the hut or under a shed.¹² Whether the corpse be a man's or a woman's, it is always near a woman's hut that it is put down. "As soon as a boy or a man is so ill that he needs nursing, he is

⁵ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 71.

⁶ Above, pp. 688 f.

⁷ Cf. *Serpenti, Cultivators* pp. 180, 194.

⁸ Vertenten, *J.P.* 1917 p. 421.

⁹ Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 124.

¹⁰ V. d. Kolk, *Oermensen* p. 67.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 68.

¹² Wirz, *l.c.*

entrusted to the care of the women and takes up his residence with them".¹³ Now the nearest female relatives (Wirz mentions the mother, wife and sisters, but we have no reason to exclude the possibility that other women may assist in the task) adorn the corpse. The body and the head are painted black, but the eyes are set off with yellow and red circles.¹⁴ According to Cappers the face is beautifully painted in red, black, and yellow colours.¹⁵ The corpse is decorated with all sorts of ornaments: a headgear of birds of paradise plumes, nautilus-shells on the breast, and a new hairdo which is plaited onto the hair-strands. The latter is the *uga-* or *baisam-bosa*, the hairdo of the *éwati*.¹⁶ The deceased is surrounded with his personal belongings such as his *wad* (plaited bag), his weapons and a bamboo container.¹⁷

In the meantime relatives arrive from far and near, bringing bananas, sugar-cane, young coconuts and betel nuts, which are deposited round the corpse or hung on tree-forks set up near by. Cappers notes that the lower part of the body is covered with tubers, bananas, *wati*, betel and croton-twigs. The latter have a specific function. Many of the female guests will take a twig home with them to plant it in their gardens. Later, they will use twigs from this plant to adorn the children of the deceased, telling them that the cuttings derive from the twigs used on the occasion of their father's burial. When presently the sons and adopted sons (?) of the deceased arrive, they bring twigs of *wati* or croton which they strew over the corpse, simultaneously giving vent to their grief.¹⁸ Wirz mentions the fact that sometimes those children of the deceased who are *patur* and *kivasom* are called upon to walk up to the corpse and step across the legs. This will protect them against the bites of sting-rays and other dangerous fishes.¹⁹ The gathering round the decorated corpse in front of the women's house is mainly an affair of the women and a few old men. They have all laid off their personal adornments including their hairdo and plastered their bodies with clay. The women have changed their black-painted aprons for white ones. The old people now and then sing the *yarut*, the ceremonial dirge, a solemn and monotonous song. Occasionally one of the women bursts into a loud, passionate wail. All around, other people sit down,

¹³ Cappers, K.M. 35 (1909/10) p. 149.

¹⁴ Wirz, l.c. Cf. also Plate XXII fig. 1.

¹⁵ Cappers, l.c.

¹⁶ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 124 jo. I pp. 50, 51.

¹⁷ Cappers, l.c.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 124; Vertenten, J.P. 1918 p. 538.

the men further off, silently chewing their betel or talking in subdued voices. Children and young men keep far away from the spot. Generally speaking, the care of the dead and the wailing fall to the women, the singing of *yarut* to the old people.²⁰ Nevertheless, the younger men are not wholly inactive. One of the coconut trees of the deceased (preferably one near the village) must be cut down on the day of his death. In the interior (i.e. in the upper Bian area) it happens that one or more of his sago trees are hewn down. According to Wirz this all serves to enable the *hais* to cross the river.²¹ The men also dig the grave. We do not know who the men are who perform this task. It is very well possible that it is the men of the deceased's men's house, because the grave is dug quite near to the house where he died. According to Wirz the dead used to be buried inside the house, but this statement is wholly conjectural, being based on the assumption that the practices followed on the upper Bian and among the Yéi-anim must at one time have been prevalent on the coast, because there a small roof is occasionally constructed over the grave. The argument is a poor one, irreconcilable with the testimony given by early observers, and incompatible with the fact that for the celebration of feasts platforms are constructed over the graves, which are dug near the houses. Burial takes place toward sundown,²² a statement corroborated by instances quoted by Cappers, Nollen, Geurtjens, and Joosten, the latter describing how one of the missionary fathers interfered with the burial of a man who was carried to his grave while still alive.²³

A Marindinese grave is a small, rectangular pit, up to 1½ meters deep and one meter wide, in which the body is laid full length. The grave is dug in the sand, the four sides dropping perpendicularly. On the bottom a kind of plankbed is constructed; this consists of four short, forked posts driven into the sand at the bottom of the grave and connected by sticks running lengthwise, with other sticks serving as cross-bars, the whole trellis-work being firmly secured. When the frame has been covered with dry sago-leafstalks, the body can be lowered.²⁴ The grave here described is an ornate one, made for a man for whom all the ceremonies are going to be held. Otherwise, it

²⁰ Wirz, l.c.

²¹ Ibid. p. 125 and above, p. 202.

²² Wirz, l.c.

²³ Cappers, K.M. 35 p. 151; Nollen, Ann. 1910 pp. 294 f.; Geurtjens, Onder de Kaja-Kaja's p. 92; Joosten, Ann. 1911 p. 102.

²⁴ Vertenten, Koppennellers p. 72. Cf. Plate XXII fig. 2.

may be somewhat simpler in structure, shallower and less carefully constructed.

Before the corpse is buried, there may be a last farewell. Cappers, describing a burial, records that the sister of the deceased throws herself on the corpse and, sobbing loudly, embraces it.²⁵ The few times our sources are more explicit on the family relationships between the deceased and the mourners sitting round the corpse, there is special emphasis on the role of the sister. Van de Kolk, recording a burial, reports that the youngest sister of the deceased, who had been sitting silent and motionless near the corpse while the other women were wailing, suddenly rose and, confronting the corpse, burst out into a dirge, sung in a high-pitched, heart-rending voice. The whole song consisted only of the passionate reiteration of the words 'brother, my dear elder brother, here is your younger sister'. Now and then she pushed the corpse with her foot as if she wanted to wake up a sleeper. The tone of her voice was so passionately imploring and plaintive that all the bystanders were touched to the heart. A brother, who till then had kept aloof, now came up to the corpse and started wailing in his turn.²⁶ The point of interest is the role of the sister. In various Papuan societies the relationship between siblings of opposite sex is a very close one.²⁷ We are inclined to believe that here a similar intimacy between brother and sister prevails; the custom of sister-exchange, even in the diluted form in which it is practised among the coastal Marind-anim, is a fairly common concomitant of such a relationship.

Often the deceased is buried with all the finery which has been applied to decorate the corpse. Our information on this point is contradictory. According to Wirz the more valuable objects are gathered up by the relatives.²⁸ Geurtjens, on the contrary, states that all valuables are either destroyed or buried along with the corpse.²⁹ Elsewhere he points out that valuable shells are smashed to pieces in the grave, and that dogs are killed to accompany the deceased.³⁰ Apparently the one as well as the other is possible, as is demonstrated in Nollen's eye-witness account of the burial of an *éwati*. He records that at the moment the corpse was about to be wrapped in eucalyptus-

²⁵ Cappers, l.c.

²⁶ V. d. Kolk, *Oermenschen* p. 68.

²⁷ Cf. V. d. Leeden, V. Logchem, Pouwer and Van Baal in *Bulletin Int. Comm. on Urgent Anthr. and Ethn. Research* nr. 4, 1961, p. 28.

²⁸ Wirz, M.A. III p. 125.

²⁹ Geurtjens, M&M 1926 p. 164; TAG 1929 p. 227.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, M&M 1929 p. 321; Onder de Kaja-Kaja's p. 92.

bark, dissension arose because some of the young man's ornaments had been taken away. "After a good deal of whispering and gesticulating most of the ornaments had been put back in their place".³¹

Other things, too, are buried with the deceased, namely his drums, a piece of sago, his betel-kit, and, in his armband, some fire, represented by a smouldering catkin.³² His weapons, i.e. his bow, his arrows and his spear, are either deposited in the grave or set up in the earth covering it.³³ Here again there are inconsistencies between the data provided by various authors. Geurtjens states that drums, canoes, iron or stone axes and spades go to the sons, fishing nets (in case the deceased is a woman) to the daughters,³⁴ but Vertenten, describing the burial of an adult man, mentions the drum of the deceased, together with his knife and his water-vessel, among the objects which are laid beside the body in the grave.³⁵

In the grave the corpse is covered with eucalyptus-bark; when the pit is filled up again, the sand is carefully pushed in, so that it shall not touch the naked body. Sometimes a kind of canopy made of bamboo and sago-leafstalks is constructed right over the corpse to prevent the sand pressing down on the body. Our sources assure us that this is more particularly the case when it is intended to re-open the grave on one of the following days, but it would be rash to conclude that efficiency is the main reason. A baby who dies after he has left the maternity-hut is buried in the cradle in which his mother carried him. This cradle is suspended from a stout stick in the grave, where it hangs as in a vault.³⁶ In this case the motive is entirely sentimental.

The grave is always filled up with sand. The bows and arrows of the deceased are put on the grave, with his rattan wrist-guard (which protects the wrist from being injured by the bowstring) slipped over the top of the bow. Freshly cut bamboo boughs are laid on the grave to prevent the pigs and dogs from rooting up the spot.³⁷ In the interior, along the Buraka and the lower and upper Bian, the grave is fenced in, but along the coast no such preventive measures are taken. In Saror (lower Kumbe) Wirz once saw a small hut over a grave.³⁸

³¹ Nollen, Ann. 1910 p. 294.

³² Geurtjens, Dict. v. *badi*; Onder de Kaja-Kaja's p. 92.

³³ Wirz, l.c.

³⁴ Geurtjens, TAG 1929 p. 227.

³⁵ Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 72.

³⁶ Ibid., J.P. 1919 p. 69.

³⁷ Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 72 f.

³⁸ Wirz, l.c.

Noilen reports that near the lower end of the grave a number of croton-twigs are planted.³⁹

If there is suspicion of sorcery, the grave is opened again on one of the following days. Vertenten describes such a case and states that, if sorcery really was the cause of death, the natives could tell this from certain symptoms visible on the corpse (which, by now, is already in a state of decomposition).⁴⁰ In spite of the fact that the alleged symptoms of sorcery are described in some greater detail by Wirz, it is difficult to give much credence to the assertion that such symptoms are accepted as evidence. In the preceding chapter we found that the identity of the sorcerer must be established by means of a dream of a relative who sleeps in or near the grave.⁴¹ The examination of the body for outward symptoms can hardly serve any other purpose than that of finding out whether there is sufficient ground for going through the whole process of divination. In the case described by Vertenten there is reason to doubt his statement that the men standing round the open grave exchanged meaningful looks and whispered that sorcery had been afoot. The logical sequence to such a verdict would have been for someone to spend the night near the corpse, but on this point Vertenten is perfectly silent and the suspicion arises that the description is based on hearsay and not on direct observation.

A discussion of the ritual, which is the subject of the next section, will open up new perspectives with regard to the custom of opening the grave. For the present we must confine ourselves to the motivations brought forward by Vertenten and Wirz, who state that the re-opening of the grave may serve two different purposes. In the first place, it will enable the medicine-men to collect fluid from the corpse, cadaveric fluid being one of the main ingredients of their medicine. This being common knowledge, the drawing off of the fluid is not done secretly.⁴² In the second place, re-opening may be necessary for performing the act of divination just mentioned. The relative (he must be a medicine-man according to Wirz) who will sleep next to the corpse has to lie down in the grave.⁴³ According to Geurtjens he lies down either close to or in the grave, after having drunk some of the cadaveric fluid mixed with *wati*.⁴⁴ The drinking of the fluid is also mentioned by

³⁹ Nollen, Ann. 1910 p. 295.

⁴⁰ Vertenten, op. cit. p. 73.

⁴¹ Above, pp. 681, 683, 689 f.

⁴² Wirz, M.A. III pp. 125 and 66.

⁴³ Wirz, op. cit. p. 125; Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 62 f.

⁴⁴ Geurtjens, Onder de Kaja-Kaja's p. 81.

Vertenten.⁴⁵ The thick smell of the corpse and the putrid concoction may well be conducive to dreaming in the sleep produced by the *wati*. Before the re-opened grave is filled up again, the corpse is decorated a second time and new offerings are deposited in the grave. Wirz does not specify these offerings; probably they consist of some food and a smouldering wick. The corpse is now left undisturbed for a long time, probably a year or so,⁴⁶ though Vertenten mentions a case of another opening of the grave in the night preceding the *déma-wir* for the dead. He does not inform us as to what happened next on this occasion.

Much later, when a year or so has elapsed, there is a last re-opening of the grave with a view to the final disposal of the bones. Vertenten has left us an eye-witness account in his *Koppensnellers*. "When I arrived at Alaku, two men were busy on the grave, down on their knees, removing the top-soil. When the sheets of bark were laid bare, the women were called. Women's hands are careful, they say. Meticulously, everything was removed: the sand, the bark, the sago-leafstalks and the sticks. There lay Mébé, or, more correctly, his skeleton. The sight was not repulsive at all, but never did the stark image of death rise so overwhelmingly before my eyes. All Mébé's ornaments, discoloured and partly decayed, were there, on and in the skeleton. The stout leglets and armlets plaited of split rattan, which once had been clasped round brawny legs and arms, now encircled spare bones. The beads and the shells, the garland of dogs' teeth and the pigs' tails, once the young man's pride, now dangled tarnished and mouldy between and over the ribs; the skull rested on a network of musty hair-plaitings and dull black earrings. The drum, the rusty knife, a set of partly decayed arrows, everything lay grey and desolate in the grave. . . . Cautiously a woman descended into the pit and re-arranged all the various small ornaments, putting them somewhere in the centre. The small bones of hands and feet were similarly disposed. Then the tree-bark with the skeleton lying on it was lifted out of the grave and put on a layer of fresh bark spread out beside the pit. Now the skull was anointed with coconut oil and afterwards coloured with brightly red paint. Fresh croton-twigs were inserted into the armrings, other twigs were scattered over the skeleton and finally some red paint was sprinkled over the whole. The fresh green-and-yellow leaves with their brownish red nerves contrasted strongly with the grey and yellow

⁴⁵ Vertenten, l.c.

⁴⁶ Wirz, l.c.

bones covered with red dust. A woman brought a big lump of sago and laid it on the carcass. That was for his soul, *hais-nango*; to eat, *tamu-nango*. Now the long strips of bark were folded over the skeleton, other straps were wrapped round it from right and left and then everything was tied up with split rattan. All the sticks and stalks having been removed from the grave, the package was lowered with care. All the articles which had been in the grave before were placed in it again — except the drum — and the pit was filled in with sand. On the grave a hardwood stick was planted to indicate the spot where (he) had been buried".⁴⁷ Although a ceremony like the one just described is not performed for every deceased, it is very probable that it makes part of the normal procedure for one who passed away in his prime. Being performed very quietly and long after the burial, a ceremony of this kind easily goes unnoticed.

The discussion of the treatment of the corpse in the grave has taken us far ahead of the actual sequel of events. We have to return to the time of the first burial. According to Geurtjens and Vertenten a funeral meal is prepared and the food distributed among the mourners on the next day. This meal is given the name of *avasi-kavahib*, allaying the tears.⁴⁸ Sometimes it is preceded by a hunt. In his Dictionary (s.v. *avasi*) Geurtjens makes a restriction, which is omitted from his article in M&M as well as from Vertenten's communication in his *Koppensnellers*, to the effect that a meal of this kind is a custom specific of the Okaba area. Collating the data from the available literature, we had it confirmed that this meal is, indeed, a custom which is confined to the western section. Vertenten and Geurtjens have most of their data from that part of the territory, whereas Wirz has most of his information from the eastern section, and he does not make mention of a meal of this kind. That such a first meal does not play a part in the ceremonies in the eastern section appears more clearly from the description Cappers gives of a funeral he attended at Nowari in 1910. Just when the corpse is being prepared to be carried to its grave, a woman distributes the food which the guests have deposited all about the corpse among the women who had gathered round the deceased.⁴⁹ There is no such special meal as in the Okaba area, where a big sago-dish is prepared on the day following the burial. There is a slight

⁴⁷ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 74 f.

⁴⁸ Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 321; Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 79.

⁴⁹ Cappers, KM. 35 p. 151.

resemblance in procedure to the extent that the meal is not a communal one in either case. In Okaba, too, the food is just distributed among the attendants, who each take it with them to their own house, where they eat in private.⁵⁰ Even so, it is evident that in Okaba the funeral rites are a shade or two more elaborate than in the eastern section.

When a man dies, a taboo is laid on his coconut gardens, but before the taboo becomes effective, the women collect as many coconuts as they can manage and bring them to the house of mourning, where they are distributed among those present. Supplying this information, Geurtjens adds that sometimes on this occasion a few of the coconut palms of the deceased are cut down.⁵¹ From the statements made by Geurtjens and Wirz we must conclude that in the Okaba area the taboo on the gardens follows the ceremony of allaying the tears, in the eastern section that of the *yamu*, the big funeral meal which is prepared about a month after the burial. On the length of this period our sources disagree. According to Wirz it is one or two weeks, while Geurtjens says it may be several weeks or even a month. The longer period is customary to-day and there is no reason to believe that this is a recent development. Later, when discussing the ceremonies, we shall find evidence that the taboo is not connected with *avasi-kavahib* or the *yamu*, but with the *déma-wir* for the dead.⁵² It is impossible to establish whether there is any qualitative difference between the *yamu* in the eastern section and that in the western.

The taboo on the coconut gardens is among the various prohibitions consequent upon a death which have to be discussed one by one. Of these taboos it is the one which has the longest duration, viz. between one and, in exceptional cases, three years.⁵³ The taboo (*sâr*) is signified on the pathways leading to the garden by means of painted axil-pieces of the sago-leaf (*bing*) decorated with certain traditional designs. Some of them have been reproduced by Vertenten in his article on the decorative art of the Marind (I.A. XXII Tafel XX). One of these (fig. 1 and 2) refers to a *déma*, who is not further defined.⁵⁴ The painting is geometrical in design and has been applied to the leaf

⁵⁰ Cf. Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 322.

⁵¹ L.c.

⁵² Wirz, M.A. III p. 136 jo. p. 129; Geurtjens, M&M 1929 pp. 322 f.; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 80; below, pp. 785 ff., 790 f.

⁵³ Wirz, op. cit. p. 136. All other authors mention a period of about one year. In the upper Bian area this may, occasionally, be extended, viz. if the deceased was a renowned *lulu* (*pakas-anem*); Verschueren, Letters XI p. 39.

⁵⁴ Vertenten, I.A. 1915 p. 157.

sheath, the whole having been set up with the stalk resting in the earth. It is remarkable that, in this case, a coconut-leaf had been tied to the *bing* as an additional indication of the taboo, coconut-leaves being tied also to the taboo-signs erected in the village. Among the taboo-signs reproduced by Vertenten in Tafel XX are a few short poles, phallic in form, and with a plaited ring round the base. Unfortunately, the author does not make any comment on these interesting objects which suggest that the dead, too, are represented by a phallic symbol. He concentrates on the *bing* decorated with paintings in the fashions called *sâr-ahai* and *awong*. These predominate in the account by Vertenten and also in that by Wirz, who gives some additional reproductions in Tafel 17 of Part III of his book. Some of the taboo-signs have geometrical designs or representations of animals (reproduced are a ray, two flying foxes and an iguana). Some of the paintings have been executed, not on the axil-piece of a palm-leaf, but on a pole. For reproductions of the more common taboo-signs the reader may be referred to Plate XXIV fig. 1 and 2 and Plate XXIII fig. 1. Two unusual forms, both from the western area, deserve of special mention. One is a wooden phallus (nr. 10 of Wirz's Tafel 17) and the other the wooden image of a man adorned with a kind of wooden fork poised on his head (nr. 21). The phallus reminds us of the unexplained little phallic poles depicted by Vertenten. The wooden phallus and the image reproduced by Wirz were found in a small hut (*sâr-aha*) in the tabooed coconut garden. This again is a custom peculiar to the western section of the coast (in this case the area west of the Kumbe), where the construction of huts for keeping the taboo-signs is common practice, while they are unknown in the eastern area.

In his account Wirz emphasizes that the *sâr-ahai* design is related with the custom of building a *sâr-aha*: "The *sâr-ahai* design and consequently also the *sâr-aha* are completely unknown east of the Kumbe. West of the Kumbe, and more specifically west of the Bian, the *sâr-ahai* design is a very frequently occurring motif".⁵⁵ Geurtjens says that the custom of constructing a *sâr-aha* is confined to the area west of the Bian, from Sangasé to Makalin.⁵⁶ It is evident that among the western Marind the cult of the dead is somewhat more elaborate than in the east. We further note that the taboo-signs with geometrical or animal designs reproduced by Wirz were collected in the eastern area, those representing a human body (*awong*) or showing the *sâr-*

⁵⁵ Wirz, M.A. III p. 137.

⁵⁶ M&M 1929 p. 329.

ahai design in the western section. Before entering upon a more detailed discussion of these designs, we note that the absence of *sâr-aha* and *sâr-ahai* designs among the taboo-signs collected by Hunger at Kumbe⁵⁷ fully corroborates our earlier statement that these designs are confined to the area west of the Kumbe. Those pictured are all animal (or plant) designs, viz. a lizard, a *Zohé*-fish, an iguana, a tortoise, a turtle, a crocodile, a flying fox, and one representing a crab or a betel nut. All the phratries are represented in these totems. The difference between the two areas is evident. The prevalence of the human shape among the western taboo designs implies a direct reference to the dead, which is lacking in the eastern area.

The *awong* is an image of the deceased, usually showing only the upper part of the body.⁵⁸ The breast is always decorated with a red ornament, representing the heart, *békai*. Since *békai* also means alive, breath, we may agree with Geurtjens that the *awong* represents the deceased as a living being. On its head the *awong* has a festive headgear, in the case of the wooden image collected by Wirz a fork sprouting from the head. This fork resembles a pair of horns and a similar design is characteristic of the *sâr-ahai* motif represented in Plate XXIV fig. nr. 3.⁵⁹

The *sâr-ahai* has been the subject of lengthy discussions. Wirz assumes that the word has been derived from *sâr-aha*, which can neither be denied nor confirmed. More important is the resemblance between the *sâr-ahai* design and the mask representing a *hais* (cf. fig. 5, p. 619). In both we find the same horn-like projections on the top of the head, an intriguing phenomenon because horned animals had not been known in New Guinea until the arrival of the whites. For this reason Wirz suggested that the horns on the head might have evolved from a pair of arms and in this connection he referred to a most remarkable artefact found near a grave (or was it, actually, a *sâr-aha*?) in the neighbourhood of Awehima; this was a human effigy with ski-like arms. The object, which is now on display in the Leyden Museum, has been reproduced as fig. 2 in Plate XVI. The *békai* on the breast

⁵⁷ Museum R. Trop. Inst., Amsterdam, cat.nrs. 146-1-8; they have been reproduced and discussed in NION IX (1924/25) pp. 351 ff. Two of them (nrs. 3 and 8) have been reprinted in Plate XXIV fig. 2.

⁵⁸ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *awong*; M&M 1929 p. 322.

⁵⁹ Hunger collected a second image from a *sâr-aha*, representing a complete human form. This object (its place of origin is unknown) had no horns on its head (Hunger, op.cit. pp. 353 f.; Museum R. Trop. Inst. cat.nr. 146-9). A nail driven into the head suggests that the image was at one time provided with a headgear (note borrowed from the museum filing card).

of the figure leads us to classify the image as an *awong*, in this case one of extraordinary beauty. The deceased honoured by it must have been deeply mourned, as appears to be amply confirmed by the collector's note recording that he had the greatest difficulty in getting the people to part with the image.⁵⁹

Wirz's hypothesis has been elaborated by Geurtjens, who presents another etymology of the word *sâr-ahai* by deriving it from *sâr-ahat*.⁶⁰ The linguistic grounds on which he bases his theory are even more shaky than Wirz's premises. His more important argument is that the Awehima *awong* can, indeed, be conceived of as an *ahat*, a fork, of the kind used at the final feast following a headhunting party. He adds that the Marind are acquainted with the image under discussion and actually call it the *ahat-déma*. When there is a *déma-wir*, the *ahat-déma* is represented by a performer carrying two beautifully decorated laths, one on either side of his body. At a point two-thirds down from the top each lath has been provided with a hole, through which he puts his arm. The longer part, above the hole, is held pointing upwards and the figure thus represented closely resembles the Awehima artefact. He also argues that the Marind of Okaba know of an *ahat-déma* who has his abode on the bottom of the Koloï creek. Whenever there is a strong swell in the mouth of the creek, the *déma* is stirring up the waves with his hands. We are reminded, says Geurtjens, of a swimmer of whom nothing is visible but the head and the arms, just as it happens to be the case with the *sâr-ahai* design.⁶¹

In my Godsdienst I followed Wirz and Geurtjens and elaborated their suggestions even further by pointing out that the *sâr-ahai* represents the deceased in the guise of a head hanging on a forked tree, in the same way as the severed heads are hung on a forked tree after a headhunt. I argued that the *ahat-déma* is a representative of the underworld and that the *sâr-ahai* shows the deceased as one who is in the power of the underworld.⁶² To-day I do not care to subscribe to this theory any more. Apart from my growing dislike of terms such as underworld and upperworld, there are other objections. First of all, the Awehima artefact has the head in the anatomically right place, that is, implanted between the shoulders; but for this very reason there cannot be any reference to a cut-off head and so the artefact is

⁵⁹ Cf. Fischer, I.A. 1915 p. 232.

⁶⁰ Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 325.

⁶¹ Op. cit. pp. 324-326.

⁶² Van Baal, Godsdienst pp. 220-222.

not really a *kui-ahat*. Secondly, the theory finds no support in the views obtaining among the Marind, who hold that the horns on top of the *hais*-mask represent the head-ornament of the *hais*, more especially the plumes of a bird of paradise.⁶³ Finally, there is the fact that the *ahat-déma* is not an important character in the Marind-anim pantheon. He is not mentioned in mythology. His identity is vague, a subject on which Verschueren wrote to me as follows: "It is possible that in the Koloï there resides a *déma* called *Ahat*. A man from Alatep says that on several occasions he heard people speak of a *déma* in the Koloï whose name was *kui-aha*, headhunters' house. (This, indeed, is a very common motif, e.g. in Boadzi mythology and among the Yéi-anim, where the house is a *déma* emerging from the river). All informants deny any knowledge of an *ahat-déma*, of whom they declare never to have heard before".⁶⁴ In other words, Geurtjens' *ahat-déma* can hardly have had the importance which according to this theory should have been ascribed to him. Moreover, it is possible to give yet another explanation of the horns of the *hais*-mask. At the end of his exposition Wirz writes: "It is only in parentheses that I mention a third possibility . . . the mask just mentioned has two horn-like projections, and these need not in every case have been specially cut, as more often than not they are a natural feature of the . . . bark-like tissue covering the young leaf sheath of the coconut".⁶⁵

On the strength of these sobering arguments I think it is somewhat preposterous to see more in the protrusions of the *hais*-mask than the Marind do. The fact that the materials used in making the mask often have the horns as a natural feature, more or less settles the dispute. That the Marind explain them as birds of paradise plumes confirms our view. I often noticed that these plumes, when used as a headgear (and I saw this on different occasions in the Mappi area), have a natural tendency to cluster into two tufts, with the parting in the middle. The horns of the mask are a fairly exact, plane perspective of such a headgear. This conclusion has a direct bearing on our interpretation of the *sâr-ahai* design. It is evident that it represents a human face. The more elaborate decoration on the top of the head should be interpreted as a headgear. When all is said and done it must be conceded that it can hardly be anything else, because the deceased is dressed up with a headgear of bird of paradise plumes

⁶³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 139; see also Geurtjens, op. cit. p. 324.

⁶⁴ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 2.

⁶⁵ Wirz, l.c.

before he is buried. If the *sâr-ahai* has something to do with the dead — as it certainly has — it is only logical that this picture of the deceased should be made so as to preserve the memory of him as he really was, i.e. adorned with a headgear. There is every reason to consider the *sâr-ahai*, and also the *awong*, as images of the dead guarding his coconut garden. In this context it is important to note that the nuts which fall on the ground, or part of them at least, are collected and deposited near the hut where the *awong* or *sâr-ahai* resides. There they are left to sprout and to be distributed by the time the taboo is lifted, when they will be planted by the recipients in their own gardens.⁶⁶ The lifting of the taboo will be discussed in the next section.

First we have to return to the other taboos which may follow upon a funeral. Most important among them is the taboo imposed on the section of the village where the deceased lived. A couple of hardwood poles are erected, one on each side of the relevant section of the village, and a coconut-leaf is tied to each of them as a token that the place is taboo. The taboo does not include a prohibition to enter, but serves as a warning that no noise should be made, that there should be no feasts, no singing and, above all, no beating of drums.

A second taboo is that on the totem of the deceased, e.g. on the betel palm for a dead *Bragai-zé*, on the sea and the sea-fish for a *Zohé*. Our information on this point is scanty. We do not know who are subject to this taboo, nor to what portion of the gardens or the sea the taboo is confined. It is certainly not a taboo on the totem generally. Apparently this kind of taboo is relatively rare. Wirz is the only author to make mention of it. Of far wider application is the taboo on the coconuts (more correctly, on certain coconut gardens) which, according to Wirz, may be substituted by a taboo on the sago trees in those areas in the interior where coconuts are rare.⁶⁷ Apparently it is the upper Bian area which he had in mind. On the coast taboos on the coconut gardens are not confined to the occasions of a death occurring. A garden may be tabooed every time the owner wishes the trees to proliferate. In such cases the fallen nuts are allowed to sprout. This is said to have been customary after each *mayo*-initiation "which had the increase of the coconut crop for its main objective".⁶⁸ A more simple explanation is

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 140.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 136.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 137.

found in the fact that the *mayo-miráv* was in a coconut garden, which cannot but have been thoroughly pilfered.

The taboos are part of the mourning customs which, originally, were more elaborate than they were at the time the observations were made which have been worked up in our sources. In those years increased mortality possibly led to a simplification of the mourning practices.⁶⁹ In recent times the outward signs of mourning were confined to the discarding of all ornaments and of the hairdo, to the plastering of the body with white clay and the wearing of special bands and armlets made of plaited fibre. A good description of the various details is given by Wirz.⁷⁰ In an earlier phase of their history the coastal Marind used to wear a kind of mourning-garb which resembled that of the Yéi-anim and the upper Bian people. Wirz points out that in the museum at Djakarta there is a kind of smock made of plaited cords, which completely covered the head and the upper part of the mourner's body. He also mentions that, formerly, capes akin to the elaborate plaitings worn by a Yéi-anim mourner were used, adding that when he was in the Marind-anim region he never saw them worn. At that time the upper Bian widow or mother, when in mourning, still wore the plaited mat which covered the back.

For a more detailed discussion of the various articles of mourning-dress the reader is referred to the relevant communications in Wirz's monograph. In the context of our discussions we may confine ourselves to stating that, here as elsewhere, mourning imposes heavier obligations on the women than on the men. The women's special preoccupation with the deceased on the occasion of the funeral constitutes only part of the functions fulfilled by their sex. They are also the chief mourners, a point which may have a bearing on the association of woman with death.

An interesting detail is the mourning sign which is applied to the men's house when an inmate of the house has passed away. This is an oblong ornament fixed over the door. It is called *dapa*, sago-bark, after the material of which it has been made.⁷¹ Fig. 3 of Plate XXI shows a reproduction of the *dapa* as depicted by Vertenten for his article in I.A. XXII. To all appearances it is the same as the one photographed by Van de Kolk and published in his *Oermenschen* p. 115 and in *Ann.* 31 p. 199. Wirz gives other specimens (cf. Part. III

⁶⁹ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 133.

⁷⁰ *Op. cit.* pp. 132-136.

⁷¹ Vertenten, I.A. 1915 pp. 156 f.

Tafel 21). Plate IV of the present work has a men's house with two *dapa* in front. Contrary to Vertenten, who states that the *dapa* is a token of mourning which is removed when the mourning-period is over, Wirz presents the *dapa* as a structural element of the men's house. He holds the view that it serves the purpose of keeping the sago-leafstalks over the entrance in place. The *dapa* outside has its counterpart inside, the two being connected by means of lianas, which secure the whole structure.⁷² As far as he could ascertain, the ornament had no specific meaning. As a survey of the available photographs of men's houses reveals that the *dapa* is not an indispensable part of the structure of a men's house (it is lacking in the photograph of the men's house reproduced in Tafel 19 of Part III of Wirz's monograph), there is reason to uphold Vertenten's opinion that it is a mourning-sign. As such it is remarkable. The item reproduced by Vertenten and Van de Kolk is, to all intents and purposes, an enlarged reproduction of a bullroarer. Verschueren noted that the motif in the ornamentation is very clearly the *pahui*-motif.⁷³ In five other objects depicted by Wirz (III Tafel 21) the bullroarer-shape is less evident. In my *Godsdienst en Samenleving I* took them to be stylized snakes,⁷⁴ but on re-examining the designs I think that of these, too, the basic shape is a bullroarer. However, three of these five items have been executed in a form reminiscent of a snake. One of them is quite evidently a phallus (nr. 4). The interesting point is that of the six specimens known (one reproduced by Vertenten and five by Wirz), three show the *sâr-ahai* design and one a human head at the end of the *dapa*. This implies that the *dapa* represents the deceased in the shape of a bullroarer, a fact which is all the more noteworthy because west of the Bian (and it is fairly certain that Vertenten's *dapa* comes from the Okaba area) the bullroarer has ceased to be a secret implement, even though it may fulfil a part in ritual.

2. THE CEREMONIES FOR THE DEAD

The mourning rites vary in number and elaborateness, depending, it would seem, upon the violence of the emotional impact made by the death. In the absence of exact information on its implications, we shall do well not to over-emphasize this variability. Except when they

⁷² Wirz, M.A. III p. 180.

⁷³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 39.

⁷⁴ Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 222.

concerned the very young, or some very old people who died after a prolonged period of infirmity, or those who had been sick or infirm for such a long time as to have become a burden to their relatives, the various rites may have been performed somewhat more faithfully than is suggested by the repeated statements that some categories of deceased persons are not bewailed at all. Of course, the pomp and circumstance of the rites vary according to the wealth and the size of the group of close relatives, and to the popularity or respect enjoyed by the deceased. Under certain circumstances the ceremonies due to one person may have been observed conjointly with those for others. The ever-increasing rate of mortality, which found its culmination in the influenza epidemic of 1918, when in a fortnight's time 18.5 per cent of the coastal population succumbed, must have had a disturbing influence on the pattern of mourning rites. Since most of the observations referred to were made in the period between 1910 and 1922, we may hardly expect them to give a picture of an entirely normal procedure. Our observers were, without exception, poorly trained fieldworkers, inclined to rash generalizations and highly unsystematic in their methods of data-collecting. The campaign for the eradication of venereal granuloma started only in 1922, when a quarter of the adult population had been infected. Between 1915 and 1925 the population along the coast east of Merauke decreased in numbers from 1034 to 484, between the Maro and the Bian river it fell from 2410 to 1572, and in the area between Sangasé and Makalin from 1508 to 1031. Under such conditions the normal pattern of mourning tends to be upset, the more so when it is as elaborate as among the Marind. It is for this reason that we refrain from over-stressing the variability of the rites; during the period of observation the people had every reason to simplify the mourning arrangements. Even so, the conspicuous fact should be noted that we have not one case of a *déma-wir* or a *makan hawn* celebrated for an old man. We never read that the grave of an older person is re-opened. All the emphasis is on those who died in the prime of their lives. Yet, when we recall that, at least as far as the upper Bian people are concerned, the taboo on the coconut gardens tends to be prolonged for such deceased as were important leaders during their life-time, this should put us on our guard against rapid generalizations.⁷⁵

In the preceding section taboos and occasions for re-opening the grave have been referred to, irrespective of their place within the

⁷⁵ Cf. Verschueren, l.c.

sequel of the rites, because our sources made it fairly difficult to establish a connection with these rites. In the present section we have to find out whether we can relate these customs to the rites to be described and analyzed. These rites are the following:

- a. *avasi-kawahib*, the meal for allaying the tears;
- b. the *déma-wir* for the dead;
- c. *makan hawn*, a procession;
- d. the *yamu*, the ceremonial mourning-meal;
- e. the ceremonies for the discarding of mourning and the lifting of the taboos.

Time and again we shall have occasion to note the lack of consistency in the observations made by the authors of our sources. A systematic and comparative analysis of a number of cases has never been undertaken. There is only one case which has been described in some detail and even that shows serious gaps (Vertenten in his *Koppensnellers*, pp. 71 sqq.).

a. *Avasi kawahib* has been described in the previous section. It is a custom peculiar to the western area. Nothing is said about the taboos laid on the relevant section of the village (the ban on beating drums and making noise), but we may take it for granted that these taboos become effective as soon as a death has occurred and that the relevant taboo-signs are erected soon afterwards. The *dapa* at the front of the men's house may be put up a few days later because the sign has to be painted first, which may take some time.

b. *The déma-wir for the dead* is an interesting ceremony, which varies according to whether initiates of the *mayo* or of the *imo* are concerned. The most comprehensive information we have is on the *mayo* version, which has been described by Vertenten, Wirz and Geurtjens successively, the data provided by Wirz and Geurtjens being the most elaborate. In the following pages we concentrate first on the *mayo*. The time set for the ritual is, according to Geurtjens, the morning of the third day,⁷⁶ according to Wirz it is not celebrated until two or three weeks after the burial,⁷⁷ while Vertenten in one place says "a few weeks" and in another "about a month",⁷⁸ Apparently, there is no standard procedure, because there are factors which may cause a delay in the performance of the rites.

⁷⁶ Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 329.

⁷⁷ Wirz, M.A. III p. 141.

⁷⁸ Vertenten, I.A. 1915 p. 158; *Koppensnellers* p. 73.

Another point of interest is the following. "All ceremonies are celebrated in public, but the *Mayo-Marind* do not celebrate a *déma-wir* for every deceased. . . . For young people it is customary to arrange a *wir*, whereas it was usually not considered to be necessary for an old man or an old woman".⁷⁹ The quotation is of interest, not so much because it says that the performance may be omitted in the case of old people, a difference in treatment which we discussed above, but on account of the statement that the *wir* is also held for dead women. The ceremony is an honour, the bestowal of which is not dependent on the sex of the deceased, but on what Wirz calls membership of the *mayo*, that is, being an initiate. Yet, I think it probable that similar honours are bestowed on on uninitiated *éwati*.

During the night preceding the *wir* the men sing *yarut*.⁸⁰ Wirz gives some interesting details: "The ceremony requires certain preparations; sago-making, the gathering of vegetables and fruits, and a hunt. On the eve of the ceremony the men return to the village with even more solemnity than on previous days. . . . 'Somebody has arrived', people say when interviewed on the aim of the preparations in progress. Apparently they mean the spirit of the deceased (*hais*), which in their opinion returns from the hereafter about this time. After nightfall they start singing *yarut*".⁸¹ We shall not argue here whether Wirz is right in assuming that round about this time the *hais* returns from the hereafter; he goes on to say that a few men spend the night sitting round a fire beside the grave. Also that night, when everybody is asleep, the corpse is exhumed and freshly painted with a red colorant. Before, it has been washed with water mixed with sperma, a detail mentioned by Wirz only. Bright leaves are inserted into the armlets and the deceased is wrapped up in fresh eucalyptus-bark and now buried definitely. The *déma-wir* follows on the next morning.⁸²

Geurtjens' account differs only slightly from that of Wirz. The men sing *yarut* all through the night, till daybreak. Then the grave is re-opened, fluid is collected from the corpse and drunk by the relatives in the hope that, in a dream, the deceased will reveal to them the identity of his murderer. The closing of the grave does not take place until after the *déma-wir*, which follows upon the redecoration of the corpse.⁸³

⁷⁹ Wirz, l.c.

⁸⁰ Wirz, M.A. III p. 142; Geurtjens, l.c.

⁸¹ Wirz, l.c.

⁸² Wirz, op. cit. p. 149.

⁸³ Geurtjens, l.c.

The ceremony is centred on a small hut which has been constructed near the grave⁸⁴ or on an isolated spot in the village.⁸⁵ The first to appear is the *kar-a-kar*, the cormorant,⁸⁶ who is always impersonated by a *Zohé* youth. As a matter of fact, he enters the hut when it is still dark. He is decorated in *déma*-fashion, though, as far as can be judged from the description, not with the splendour proper to a festive *déma-wir*. In his hands he holds a bundle, which according to Wirz contains a skull, according to Geurtjens a coconut. He walks up and down inside the hut, holding the bundle, all the time imitating the call of the cormorant: *ku-ku-ku*, or *kul-kul-kul*! After sunrise two dog *déma* appear, rhythmically beating a drum which they carry in their hands. Sounds as of barking and a dog-like bearing must suggest the animal which their outward appearance is hardly reminiscent of. They walk a few times round the grave and then by way of the beach proceed to the hut of the cormorant. Barking and whining, they try to catch his eye, but the cormorant is not to be distracted and goes on playing his own part. After some time the dog *déma* give up and retire to the bush. Then two *ndik-déma* (Wirz's version has only one) appear, acting like storks and following in the footsteps of the dogs. They, too, fail to attract the attention of the cormorant and also retire to the bush. Finally two *gari*-bearers appear, followed, says Geurtjens, by two men beating drums.⁸⁷ They walk one behind the other, following the same way as the other performers, now and then turning round to face each other, making dance-steps. They walk round the hut, going in opposite directions, and finally they kneel down, one on either side of the hut, the tops of their *gari* almost touching. On their arrival the cormorant has become restless. At last he comes out of the hut and, after some hesitation, kneels down between the two *gari*-bearers and hands his bundle to two young men. After having scattered a few handfuls of sand, reaching out backwards between his legs, he rises and follows the young men to the bush. The *gari*-bearers now also retire and via another route return to the place where the performers have dressed and where they are now to lay off their ornaments. The accounts by Geurtjens and Wirz differ only in one minor detail; the latter has the cormorant hand the bundle to one of the *gari*-bearers.

What happens to the bundle and what, in fact, are its contents?

⁸⁴ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 142.

⁸⁵ Geurtjens, *l.c.*

⁸⁶ Here called a sea-eagle by Wirz, but identified as *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*.

⁸⁷ The form of the relevant *gari* has been discussed above, pp. 357 f., 362 f.

Vertenten and Wirz assure us that it contains a skull, the latter adding that the bundle is brought to the *gotad* by the youths who have received it from the *gari*-bearers, thus confirming that they are really "Jünglinge" (*éwati*). Geurtjens holds another opinion. The cormorant brings a coconut from one of the trees owned by the deceased and this coconut has been wrapped up in croton-leaves.⁸⁸ When the cormorant has handed the nut to the young men, they bring it "to the *sâr-ahai* near the hut or the image of the deceased"; then he continues: "Now the coconuts have been allotted to the deceased; nobody is allowed to pick or take coconuts from his gardens".⁸⁹

Which is right in this matter? Both parties are positive in their statements that the bundle contains a skull, respectively a coconut. There is, however, one difference; the coconut is wrapped in croton-twigs (Geurtjens), the skull in banana-leaves or eucalyptus-bark (Wirz).⁹⁰ Vertenten confines himself to stating that the skull is firmly wrapped up.⁹¹ Comparing the two cases, we can establish that evidently the coconut must have been visible in spite of its wrappings, croton-leaves making poor wrapping material unfit for covering things. On the other hand, the materials which are used to envelop the alleged skull effectively hide the contents of the package from observation. In other words, Geurtjens could see his coconut, whereas Vertenten and Wirz were unable to see the skull. Years ago, when I interviewed Geurtjens on this subject, he confirmed that it was, indeed, a coconut, adding that natives of the interior had told him that originally in their ceremony it used to be a skull, while those of the coast did not wish to express an opinion.⁹² In a situation in which a coconut is the common symbol for a skull, we can hardly expect a fresh interrogation of the natives to get us any further. We may even ask whether it does matter much, considering that skull and coconut are interchangeable symbols. We can only state that Geurtjens' account is based on observation and that he confirmed the earlier information in an interview which made him realize the implications. On the other hand, it is evident that Wirz did not have an opportunity to really see the skull. The bundle was taken away — to the *gotad*, he says — while he was watching the performance in the village. Moreover, he was very much satisfied with the information that it was a skull, thinking that at last he had

⁸⁸ Geurtjens, *op. cit.* 329.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 330.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 329; Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 142.

⁹¹ Vertenten, *I.A.* 1915 p. 158.

⁹² Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 223 note 259.

found a clue to the solution of the problem of headhunting. He builds quite a theory on the skull, assuming that it is the skull after which the deceased was named. The scene is enacted to enable the dead one to appropriate the "Lebenskraft" (which we might translate here by *mana*) of the skull.⁹³ It was a thesis which, from the point of view of the theories of religion prevailing in those days, seemed quite satisfying. These theories capitalized on the notion that the aim of religion is to enable the faithful to increase their *mana*. However, such hypotheses are too rationalistic to be accepted without reserve and in the case of the Marind-anim they lead us nowhere. In the previous chapter we recorded the absence of even a single indication that the cut-off head is thought to be a receptacle of supernatural power of some sort. The theory expounded by Wirz does not disclose what the Marind-anim themselves actually think or feel about the subject, but simply lays down what he thinks they ought to. If we want to do them justice, we have to refrain from speculating and find out what really motivates them. Did Wirz see that the bundle was brought to the *gotad*, or did he only assume so, considering that it was some *éwati* who received the skull from the *gari*-bearer? We just do not know. What is beyond doubt is that the procedure as witnessed by Geurtjens is meaningful. It relates the taboo on the coconut garden to the ceremony and to the deceased himself, whose grave was re-opened during the night preceding the ceremony. The performers first pay a visit to the grave before they wait upon the cormorant. If relevant to this taboo, the bundle held by the latter could contain a coconut from the garden of the deceased as well as a skull, certainly so if, as Wirz supposes, the skull should be the one from which the deceased derived his name. The important fact is that by means of the ritual the re-opened grave and the deceased are connected with the taboo on the garden.

Wirz already pointed out that some of the leading characters are the same as those that play a part in the myth of the origin of man, viz. the dog, the *ndik* and the *gari*-bearer.⁹⁴ He thinks that the latter's function is unclear, but the *gari*'s connection with fire makes it fairly easy to fit the *gari*, too, into the pattern of the myth. It is true that Wirz found that the bearer of the *gari* may be a member of any phratry. It is also true that on this and on other occasions the *gari*-bearers act in a way suggesting that they are the representatives of the

⁹³ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 145.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 146; cf. above, pp. 209 f.

two moieties.⁹⁵ Yet, the *gari's* association with the sun and the fire is so fundamental as to justify the conclusion that it is the three dramatis personae of the myth of the origin of man who pay their respects to the cormorant. They appear in the same order as in the myth. However, two important personages are absent from the scene. One of them is *Aramemb*, but he need not be present in person because he may be substituted by the *ndik*. Really significant is the absence of the very protagonist of the episode, the catfish (*anda*), who was the direct object of the activities of the three powers impersonated by the performers. Actually, the catfish could not really have been present. The *anda* is the symbol of the young, unfinished, uninitiated man, while the present context is one of completion and death. The place of the *anda* is now taken by the cormorant, who acts as the counterpart of the three protagonists. The cormorant is a *Zohé* (*anda-boan*) totem and the part must be performed by a *Zohé*. He is *Gengé*, the mythical fish-thief of the *anda-boan*.⁹⁶ The cormorant feeds on fish and his gregariousness is proverbial. We shall not be wide of the mark if we look upon the cormorant as the one who swallows the catfish (*anda*), as Death who swallows the deceased, and now hands a substitute to the *gari*-bearers, (a skull or) a coconut which, when placed in the tabooed gardens of the deceased, will sprout and bring forth new life.

Unfortunately, the present conjecture cannot be substantiated with other mythical material. The myth of *Gengé* does not hold a single clue. Nevertheless, it may be significant that in the eastern area, where no *sâr-aha* is constructed, the cormorant, too, does not figure in the *déma-wir* enacted for the dead. East of the Kumbé the *wir* is celebrated — says Wirz — two or three weeks after the burial and before the *yamu*. The grave is re-opened and the corpse decorated, while the medicine-men are given an opportunity to extract cadaveric fluid if they should need it. In the early morning, after a night of *gaga*-singing, there first appears the stork (*ndik*), then two dogs, and finally two *gari*-bearers. They each go round the grave a few times and then retire. In the absence of a cormorant performer there is neither a skull nor a coconut to be taken somewhere. The *wir* is confined to the simple ceremonial visit the *déma*-performers pay to the grave. Here the scene is wholly in the nature of a farewell bidden by the powers who assisted in the birth of mankind and — as is implied — in the initiation of the deceased into the secrets of the *mayo*.

⁹⁵ Above, pp. 373-375.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 344 f.

Obviously, the cormorant is specifically connected with the episode of the coconut (or skull) which has to be deposited near the *sâr-aha*. Wirz was deeply interested in the mythical role of the bird, because he believed in an association with headhunting. His quest for further mythical information remained fruitless.⁹⁷ The one thing he learned was that at Kaibursé — and at Kaibursé only — the cormorant plays a role in the *mayo* ceremonies. When the novices leave the *mayo-miráv*, the cormorant takes up his stance on the top of the *kabai-aha*. Below him, at each of the four corners, there stands a performer who is called *kareb* (caterpillar).⁹⁸ The meaning of the episode is obscure. Kaibursé is one of the villages where the cormorant also plays a part in the *déma-wir* for the dead and we are inclined to postulate a connection of some sort. An association with headhunting as suggested by Wirz is, of course, one of the possibilities, but there is little sense in evolving further hypotheses. The one important point is that the powers connected with the birth and the origin of man are present near the open grave in which the deceased lies, adorned with an *éwati's* head-dress, but painted red like a *miakim*. There is an interconnection of life and death which is really baffling. Life sprouts from death: the coconut is a cut-off head and the symbol of human life. The taboo on the nuts has only one aim, viz. that they shall sprout again. When the taboo is lifted, many will plant in their own gardens the fresh sprouts originating from the garden of the deceased.

Now at last we can grasp the import of the custom of re-opening the grave and the meaning of the interrelationship that exists between a number of customs regarding the dead. Obviously, the re-opening of the grave is not primarily the preliminary to an effort at divination, but part of the normal procedure of bestowing loving care on the deceased. Of this opportunity the relatives may avail themselves to perform divination. That is why there is so much variation in the timing of both the re-opening of the grave and the tabooing of the coconut garden of the deceased. If there is some delay in staging the *déma-wir* and the relatives feel strongly on sorcery, they will open the grave at a very early date, only to have it re-opened a few weeks later on the occasion of the *wir*. This is what happened in the case mentioned by Vertenten.⁹⁹ In other cases they may wait until the *déma-wir*, so as to have the divination coincide with the preparations

⁹⁷ Like that of Verschueren; Letters VII p. 1.

⁹⁸ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 24 f.

⁹⁹ Cf. above, p. 773.

for the ceremony. It is also possible that no effort at divination is made at all. Our authors have always presented the re-opening of the grave as conditioned by divinatory practices. In the preceding chapter we noted that divination was often omitted, even in a case in which the word *kambara* was whispered by the men who stood round the open grave and looked at the corpse.¹⁰⁰ It is quite clear now why divination was not applied. The grave was re-opened, not in order to practise magic, but to enable the people to bid a last farewell to the deceased and apply the final decorations to the corpse. The fundamental idea of the ceremony is neither fear of the dead nor hatred of the sorcerer, but sentimental love and attachment. At the same time the community takes comfort in measures to ensure future life, such as the taboo on the coconut gardens of the deceased, where new coconuts, symbols of human life, will sprout. A relationship between the *déma-wir* and the taboo on the coconut garden such as Geurtjens describes for the western area may exist also in the eastern section of the coast, but then in a less explicit form. On account of the absence of both cormorant and bundle in the eastern rites, the relationship cannot be expressed in such a clear and direct way as it is west of the Bian. Even so, a connection of some sort is probable enough, because in the eastern section the interval between the demise and the laying of the taboo on the gardens covers about the same period.

The rites executed by the *Imo-Marind* shortly after the funeral are, in the main, of a comparable nature. Information on these rites is confined to the data collected by Wirz, and a short article written by Vertenten in the *Java Post*.¹⁰¹ It is surprising to learn that in 1918 (or perhaps 1917) the *Imo-Marind* decided that because of the presence of so many strangers in their country the traditional secrecy about their rites had ceased to serve its purpose and that therefore they would give a public demonstration of their mourning rites at Makalin. It was a big event and onlookers flocked in from far and near. It can hardly have been anything like a real celebration. A mourning rite is by its nature unfit to be made into a spectacle. Vertenten's account, written in the popular, condescending style which invariably betrays that the author is at best mildly interested, makes it sufficiently clear that the demonstration must have served several purposes simultaneously. All the night through they danced *alih* (or *aili*), in which everybody was

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 682.

¹⁰¹ Vertenten, J.P. 1918 pp. 333, 358.

allowed to partake; an uncommon procedure for a mourning rite, to put it mildly. Vententen does not make mention of trance-symptoms. Still, it is interesting to note that even on this early occasion the *alikh* (*alili*) already made part of a public *imo* performance. In the years to follow the *alili* was going to be the main feature of *imo* propaganda. The motive, too, is interesting. The wish to execute the ceremonies in public because of the diminishing relevance of secrecy cropped up again and again, for example in 1937 at Bad after my intervention in their *sosom* celebration, and in 1951 in the context of a nativistic movement which swept the whole district.¹⁰² Resistance to secrecy seems to be one of the standard traits of this culture. Yet, secrecy must have continued to be felt as a need, because whatever public performances are celebrated, they remain isolated events. The adepts turn to secret celebrations again as if nothing had happened, instilling the same fear into the uninitiated as before. Apparently it is not the secrecy which inspires fear. We must put it the other way round: these celebrations are secret because they are dangerous, because they symbolize the hidden powers of nature. In the present context we cannot go further into this matter; we must concentrate on the mourning rites proper. Fortunately, Wirz made extensive enquiries into the celebration at Makalin, which he had been unable to attend. His account¹⁰³ can be summarized as follows.

About three days after the death of an *éwati* or a young adult who is a member of the *imo*, the initiates celebrate their mourning rites.¹⁰⁴ They begin in the afternoon. Three *sobolu-ti* and three or four *arib-ti* appear, the former crowned with long cassowary-plumes (*sobolu*), the latter each wearing a long elastic rod in their hair to which the head of a black ibis (*ébob*, *ibis moluccana*) has been fixed. The *sobolu-ti* have their faces painted with a special design which is called the decoration of the *tarétaré*, a peewit species. The *tarétaré* is a *Bragai-zé* (*Wawar-rek*) totem, the *ébob* a *Ndik-end* (*Yawima-rek*) one. The old men, painted in pitchy black, with yellow triangles marking the eyes, have assembled near the grave. There, while the old people sing *yarut*, the *sobolu-ti* and *arib-ti* emerge from the bush and, walking in

¹⁰² Cf. above, pp. 481, 493, 577 f., 606 f., 615 f.

¹⁰³ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 146-149.

¹⁰⁴ Wirz writes "nach dem Tode eines Jünglings oder jungen Mannes, falls er zum Geheimbund gehörte" (M.A. III p. 146). It would be rash to conclude from this that an *éwati* may already be an initiate. The sentimental attitude towards the dead, particularly where an *éwati* is concerned, could easily lead to the deceased being treated as if he were an initiate.

circles, go round the group, keeping the grave in the centre. They move in opposite directions and when now and then they come to a halt the *sobolu-ti* stand on tiptoe and the *arib-ti* sway the upper part of the body to and fro, causing the rods to swing violently up and down. Then they resume their march, the same scene repeating itself over and over again, till the sun sets. Then they discard their ornaments and join the others. *Yarut* is sung all night through. Toward daybreak the grave is re-opened. When the dead body is laid bare, the deceased "is bewailed and the bystanders whisper that he may have died as a result of sorcery (*kambara*). They go by the appearance of his belly, his legs and his head, because internally the muscles and sinews have been severed, as the old people say".¹⁰⁵ The corpse is washed with water and sperma, painted afresh with a red colorant and redecorated, after which the grave is closed again.

Now the secret part of the ceremony begins. Women and children are ordered to leave the village. Then, one pair after another, various performers appear, proceed round the grave and retire again to the bush from where they came. The first to appear are two *tarétaré* (peewits), then two dogs and after them two pigs. The next to appear are four richly decorated performers who enter upon the scene, coming from the beach. They are all painted in black, but two of them are decorated with croton-leaves. These two dance, swinging the twigs, while the other two slowly beat the drums they carry. Presumably, the description is not quite complete. His Wendu informants assured Verschueren that the *Imo-Marind* display a *gari* on the occasion of their mourning rites. Its size is small in comparison to the *mayo gari* and its application is confined to the mourning rites.¹⁰⁶ The two men followed by the two drummers remind us so strongly of the two *gari*-bearers followed by drummers who perform in the *mayo* mourning rites, that there is reason to suppose that the two in front should be identified as *gari*-bearers. However that be, the four are followed by a fifth character, who is called *Takav*, the fire. He is hailed by the men with hand-clapping and a monotonous singing of *ohô! ohô! ohô! ohô! ohô!* The *takav*-performer has been painted a bright red. He brings two fire-sticks, which he lays down in front of the grave, after which he retires. Other men take the sticks and start drilling fire. Over this fire a meal is prepared, which marks the end of the ceremony.

¹⁰⁵ Op. cit. p. 147.

¹⁰⁶ Verschueren, Letters VII pp. 5f.

An analysis of the identity of the performers participating in the ceremony is rewarding. Three of them come from the bush, viz. the *tarétaré* (*Bragai-zé*), the dog (*Mahu-zé*) and the pig (*Basik-Basik*). The other group and the performer representing the fire come from the beach; they comprise the party whom we presumed should be identified as *gari*-bearers and who, in this context, might represent the *Geb-zé*, while the fire (*Kai-zé*) belongs to the phratry of *Aramemb*. If, indeed, the party of four is made up of the *gari*-bearers of the *imo* (they were explicitly referred to by Verschueren's informants in the interview quoted on pp. 365 and 367) the scene is in perfect *imo*-style and expresses a salient moiety-dichotomy, those of the *Sami-vek* coming from the interior (the bush) and those of the *Geb-zé* from the beach, as, in fact, it should be. Each of the phratries is represented; in the western section, west of Sangasé, the *Basik-Basik* constitute more or less a phratry of their own.¹⁰⁷ Since the descriptions given by Wirz and Vertenten are based on a performance at Makalin, it is evident that the various performers are, indeed, the representatives of their respective phratries. In a slightly different manner, the *Imo-Marind* have enacted the same idea as is staged in the *déma-wir* of the *Mayo-Marind*, i.e. a farewell bidden by the total community of the males, who assemble to take care of the corpse, to adorn and decorate it, who even treat it with life-giving sperma, and then withdraw. We do not hear of any specific connection with the taboo on the coconut gardens of the deceased, except that such a taboo is customary and that the *sâr-aha* is a common feature also in the Sangasé area. It is probable that here, too, the imposition of the taboo and the *déma-wir* are connected; at least, they coincide more or less.

The connection which through the *déma-wir* was established between the taboo and the care bestowed on the deceased in his re-opened grave, throws some light on yet another custom, viz. that of portraying the dead with a *békai*, a heart, which is also a symbol of life. The notion that the dead are living beings fairly obviously finds expression in the washing of the corpse with water and sperma. It is also emphasized in the ideas concerning the dead. The ritual coincides with the experiences which the dead one is supposed to go through on his way to the land of the dead, but for a discussion of this parallelism to be really fruitful, the subject had better be held over till the end of the present section.

¹⁰⁷ Above, pp. 77-79.

c. *Makan hawn* means seeing the earth, that is, seeing the places the deceased used to visit. This, too, is a touching ceremony; in contrast to the *déma-wir*, which is staged to give the community of the males an opportunity to bid farewell, this is a ceremony in which it is primarily the women who commemorate the departed one. The ceremony takes place a few days or one or two weeks after the burial, and not, as I mistakenly wrote in my *Godsdienst*, at the end of the mourning period.¹⁰⁸ Our sources do not hold a single indication whether the ceremony precedes the *déma-wir* or comes after it.

Wirz gives the following description. "A procession forms up in which the women and children also participate. They visit the gardens and other places frequented by the deceased during his lifetime. The children, the girls and the young men decorate and paint themselves as though it were a festive occasion, while the old people, bringing up the rear, are plastered with clay and wear [mourning apparel]. The contrast is striking. Usually the procession is headed by one or two *iwag* who have decorated themselves as *éwati* and plaited the *dapis*, the *éwati's* hairdo, on to their hair. Another *iwag* walking in the procession probably represents a mythological character, viz. the *mayo-mes-iwag*. She does not wear any ornaments, but her entire body has been painted red, spotted with white and yellow. On her head she wears a small cap in yellow and red, the so-called *ud* . . . In a long procession, the young ones in the lead, the old people bringing up the rear, they leave the village in the early morning, walking through the gardens and coconut groves, scattering some sago and betel nuts here and there". He adds that it is explicitly stated that they intend to visit the places the dead used to frequent in his lifetime; he also points out that small offerings are deposited in the places that were the favourite haunts of the deceased.¹⁰⁹ His suggestion that the painted *iwag* with the *ud* represents the *mayo-mes-iwag* is fully confirmed by the fact that her decorations are identical with those of the relevant performer in the *mayo-rites*.¹¹⁰

Vertenten gives a shorter and slightly deviating description. "Women in mourning and handsomely decorated girls accompanied and chaperoned by a few men . . . visit the places frequented by the deceased. Often these processions called at the Mission station. There are specific

¹⁰⁸ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 74; Van Baal, *Godsdienst* p. 224.

¹⁰⁹ Wirz, *M.A.* III pp. 131 f.

¹¹⁰ The cap of the *mayo-mes-iwag* is also called *ud* and the descriptions of the cap and the decoration are identical. Cf. Wirz, *op.cit.* p. 11; above, p. 511. Geurtjens mentions its use in the ceremony in his *Dictionary* (v. *oct*).

spots where they sit down to have a rest, to chew betel and to scatter betel nuts, some lime and also sago. Did not the bewailed deceased chew his betel and roast his sago on these very spots? They shed many tears in heart-felt sorrow on such occasions".¹¹¹ Geurtjens, in his Dictionary (v. *hawn*), confirms that *iwag* are dressed up like *éwati*, and that small offerings are deposited in the places frequented by the deceased in his lifetime. With Geurtjens and Vertenten the emphasis is on the individual, whereas Wirz speaks only in one place of the deceased as an individual, and mostly refers to the dead as a collectivity, suggesting fairly explicitly that the ceremony is held preferably when there are several departed ones to be commemorated at the same time. This may be ascribed to the high mortality which prevailed at the time he made his observations. Verschueren, who often witnessed the ceremony during his early years in the area, writes that he never saw it performed for more than one person at a time.¹¹²

There are other differences besides. In Vertenten's account the ceremony is, to all intents and purposes, a ceremony of the women. The men function only as chaperons. The emphasis on the dominating role of the women is lacking in Wirz's description. Yet, the predominance of the part played in it by female performers does not leave any doubt that the ceremony is indeed a special commitment of the women, as is confirmed by Verschueren. Unfortunately, by the time the latter arrived in the area it was no longer possible to see the young women dressed up in their traditional attire. Clothes had already been introduced and "it was only the older women who were in mourning, whereas the girls used to be dressed up in their best clothes".¹¹³ He further adds that the custom was not restricted to the western area; he also saw it performed in the Kumbé valley and by the Yéi-anim. Among the latter the men joined the processionists and planted arrows on the spots frequented by the deceased,¹¹⁴ a remarkable custom which reminds us of the western Marind-anim practice of applying phallic symbols as taboo-signs in the coconut gardens of the deceased. This Yéi-anim custom of planting arrows tends to confirm our suggestion that the dead are represented in phallic form.¹¹⁵

The important feature of the ceremony is the presence of the *mayomes-iwag*, who is this time represented, not by a man, but by a woman.

¹¹¹ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* pp. 79 f.

¹¹² Verschueren, *Letters XI* p. 39.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* p. 40.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Cf. above, p. 776.

This makes the ceremony the perfect counterpart of the *déma-wir*. During the *déma-wir* the community of the males bade the deceased a last farewell. The leading character, next to the cormorant, was the *gari*-bearer, the representative of the male sex. Here it is the *mayomes-ivag*, the tribal mother, who is present and she is surrounded by women. The dressing-up of the girls as *éwati* emphasizes the ceremonial role of the women. It is the women who act and their performance as *éwati* holds a direct reference to the deceased, who was also dressed up as an *éwati* when he was buried. *Makan hawn* can only be interpreted as a women's ceremony in honour of the dead, the counterpart of the *déma-wir*.¹¹⁶ Its touching, more personal character is well in harmony with the fact that the actors, the women, have private rather than public and ceremonial ties with the deceased.

d. The *yamu* is the official mourning-meal. It is possible that in the eastern section it is celebrated somewhat earlier than in the western, where they have yet another distribution of food on the day after the burial. However, we have no certainty on this point.¹¹⁷ Evidently the *yamu* follows fairly close upon both the *déma-wir* and the *makan hawn* ceremonies. The *yamu* is strongly emphasized as the most important event after the burial, one in which the deceased participates. All other ceremonies may be omitted, but, as far as can be ascertained even from older authors, never the *yamu*. It is the one ceremony which has survived the cultural revolution. The *déma-wir* for the dead was the first rite to fall into desuetude; in the early thirties it was still possible for Verschueren to observe the *makan hawn*. To-day only the *yamu* is left and — what is more important — never omitted. It is celebrated about a month after the demise, sometimes a few days earlier, mostly somewhat later. Every deceased has his own *yamu* and this is never combined with any other.¹¹⁸ In the description of the ceremony we follow the detailed account given by Verschueren in his letters,¹¹⁹ indicating when we borrow from other sources.

The *yamu* has two main elements, the *yarut* or dirge, and the *yamu* proper, the meal. The *yarut* is the part exclusively devoted to the dead,

¹¹⁶ Dressing up like an *éwati* is not wholly uncommon for girls. Cf. above, pp. 159 f.

¹¹⁷ Above, pp. 774 f. and 784.

¹¹⁸ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 40.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 40-42. Another important source is the spoken comment on the tape-recordings he made of the *yarut*. On the recordings cf. p. 509 note 123.

whereas the *yamu* is primarily concerned with the living relatives of the deceased.

The *yarut* is sung by elderly people only. If the deceased was a man of some importance, participants congregate from far and near. "Last year, on the occasion of the *yamu* for the village chief of Bahor, who had died unexpectedly, people came to Bahor from villages as far off as Sarira in the east and Domandé in the west. However, when the *yamu* for an old man of Bahor was celebrated a few weeks ago, there were even several people of [adjacent] Wendu who did not bother to attend".¹²⁰ To-day the *yarut* is preceded by a requiem mass, celebrated as soon as the *sep*, the feast-dish, has been wrapped up (see below). The participants then assemble for the singing of the *yarut*, which is at intervals interrupted by prayers. It will be fairly late before the singing starts. In the old days the participants would congregate sometime toward midnight. There used to be several breaks in the singing, during which the singers refreshed themselves with some coconut water or chewed betel.¹²¹ A reference to breaks of this kind is found in the myth related above; the deceased attends the *yamu* held in his honour. He is accompanied by other *hais* and during the singing of the *yarut* the *hais* assemble outside the village to sing *samb-zi*. In between they nibble at the food deposited on the graves and partake of the sago-dish and the fruits. Anticipating their wishes, some food has been placed on the graves. When there is a lull in the singing, the drumming and the singing of the dead may be overheard.¹²²

The monotonous *yarut* is rendered at the lowest possible pitch, the time being indicated by beating a small stick or spatula against a coconut husk or a lime-gourd, in exceptional cases by means of a big drum.¹²³ Verschuieren points out that the natives distinguish between two different kinds of *yarut*, the ordinary one and the *depo*. The latter is said to have a slower rhythm, a statement not borne out by the recordings, but nonetheless explicitly endorsed by Verschuieren's informants. The songs, some of which are *yarut* and others *depo*, are rendered in a fixed order, determined by the name of the place commemorated in each individual song. These places are mythical ones and the order in which they are arranged is from the far east to the far west. It must be left to future research to find out whether

¹²⁰ Verschuieren, op. cit. p. 40.

¹²¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 130.

¹²² Above, pp. 202 f.

¹²³ Wirz, l.c.

the difference between *depo* and *yarut* has any connections with the moiety-dichotomy; it might be that the *depo* is sung in commemoration of spots associated with one moiety, the *yarut* proper of places connected with the other one. The series recorded on the tape successively refers to the following places: Gom, Mayo, Bangu, Saror, Sisir, Wama, Soréya, Yo-onde, Bokem, Bira, Anim-sakir and Sinda. Gom must remain unidentified, but Mayo and Bangu are well-known from mythology. Saror is not the Kumbé valley village of that name, but a locality in the hinterland of Sarira; Sisir is near Yobar, Wama near Kuprik. Nobody could tell Verschueren where Soréya is, but Yo-onde is in the hinterland of Wendu, and so on. The complete *yarut* comprises some hundred odd names. The old people know the sequence by heart, though as the singing proceeds there may arise an occasional dispute as to which song should come next. Informants stated unanimously that the *yarut* is sung to accompany the deceased on his journey from east to west, a view which is in perfect harmony with the notion that the deceased first travels east to meet the *déma* of the *mayo*, an event staged in the *déma-wir* for the dead, and then travels all along the coast to the western *hais-miróv*.

The preparations for the *yamu* proper have been completed when the singing starts. This means that the men have been out hunting and for a week, or even longer, the women have been beating sago. It is only the local women who prepare the sago. Verschueren gives the following account. "The women of Wendu may be assisted by the women of Bahor and Matara (the three villages are virtually one), but not by women from other, more distant communities. In the afternoon preceding the celebration the young men of the village collect an immense quantity of half-ripe coconuts. They take them from their own trees or from other trees pointed out by the owners, but not from the gardens of the deceased. The women sit down in small groups to rasp the meat of the nuts, mixing it with the sago which has been moistened with coconut water. In the meantime the men have set fire to a huge pile of wood interspersed with stones from white ants' heaps. They have also constructed a bamboo grate, equal in length to the *sep* (sago-dish) which is going to be prepared, and twice as broad. The grate is entirely covered with a thick layer of banana-leaves and now the women bring the sago and the coconut-scrapings, which are spread out over one half of the grate, forming a layer about two inches thick. Next come the men, who cover the dish with slices of meat from the game captured during the hunt. Then a few older men pour water from big

bamboo containers over the dish. The dish having been moistened, the banana-leaves are carefully folded up, enclosing the dish. Finally, the remaining half of the grate is bent over the leaves, covering them. With a few stout bamboos serving as handles, the whole is put on the ashes and the hot stones of the fire, which has now died down. Then the *sep* is covered up with thick layers of eucalyptus-bark and left to simmer. Around the *sep* the members of each of the local clans set one or more forks up in the ground on which every *boan* hangs the additional food contributed to the feast, such as bananas, taro, yams, young coconuts, bunches of sago, and, of course, *wati*. Each *boan* has its own fork. Guests from other villages add their gifts to those hanging on the fork or forks of their respective *boan*.

"In the early morning, after the *yarut* is finished, the sago-dish is distributed. A few men remove the outer cover, but presently their place is taken by the women, who address themselves to the inner layers, handling them with the utmost care lest the food be soiled. A few old men — they need not be relatives, but they must be expert carvers and members of the territorial group — cut the dish up into small parts, which are distributed among those present, nobody being excluded. They perform their task with much skill and in a very short time; complaints that somebody is overlooked or not being given a fair share are never heard. After the sago-dish, the *wati* is distributed. The other food, however, is lifted from the forks by those who presented it and taken home for a ceremony which follows in the afternoon. Toward the evening the women carry the food to the graves, that is, not only the tomb of the deceased for whom the *yamu* was celebrated, but the graves of all those who have died recently. An exchange of food follows. When a particular grave is that of a *Kai-zé* man who was married to a *Mahu-zé* woman, it is the *Mahu-zé* women who deposit the food on it. When the grave is that of a *Geb-zé* woman who was married to a *Ndik-end* man, the *Ndik-end* women bring it there. They deposit the food on the grave and sit down quietly, chewing betel and talking . . . Not long afterwards the *Kai-zé* people bring food to the grave of the *Kai-zé* man, the *Geb-zé* to that of the *Geb-zé* woman. Their food-gifts are laid down on the grave and without a word being spoken the food is exchanged, each taking home the food brought by their counterparts. This happens on every grave. Nobody who is not familiar with the local situation can possibly grasp what, in fact, is going on. Even for me [Verschueren] this is often difficult, because in one *boan* there may be several recently dead, each of

them with different in-laws. The women, of course, know exactly who is who and within a quarter of an hour all the food has been exchanged and the participants go quietly home. According to the natives the meaning of all this is to keep up good relations with the in-laws. Somebody who is fully acquainted with the situation may conclude from the quantity and the quality of the food exchanged whether there is a flaw in the relationship between the bartering groups. If the *Kai-sé* bring very little to a grave on which the *Mahu-sé* lavished their bounty . . . then there is something wrong and the women, on coming home, will immediately inform their husbands who, being men, do not personally participate in the food-exchange".¹²⁴

e. *The discarding of mourning and the lifting of the taboos.* The length of the mourning period is undefined, but it seems that the conventional period for cases in which the full cycle of ceremonies has been performed may be estimated to cover about a year. This is the span mentioned by Geurtjens and Vertenten,¹²⁵ which confirms the overall impression gathered from the literature, viz. that the mourning period did not extend over an unduly long time. Our information on the ceremonies connected with the laying aside of mourning is poor and of a rather haphazard nature. None of our sources even attempts to give a survey of the different items which in one way or another have to be co-ordinated: the opening of the grave and the painting of the bones, the laying aside of the mourning attributes, the lifting of the taboos on the village-section, the drums and the coconut gardens and of the incidental taboo on some totem.

Vertenten and Geurtjens inform us that a small, festive meal marks the end of the mourning period. It is called *hus-* or *haus-angai*; *hus*, *haus*, means fire, making fire for cooking a meal.¹²⁶ One afternoon relatives from the village of the deceased and from neighbouring villages get together with a few friends. They sit down, forming a circle round a number of small fires in which bananas and tubers are roasted. Part of the food is left in the fire; it is the share of the deceased. During the night after the meal the men sing *gaga*. On hearing the *gaga* the *hais* approaches and begins to move to the rhythm of the song. When the wind sets the plumes on the heads of the assembled men quivering, the people think that the spirit passes by. "Such is the farewell of the

¹²⁴ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 41. Verschueren here gives a valuable improvement on and an addition to Wirz's account; cf. Wirz, M.A. III p. 131.

¹²⁵ Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 331; Vertenten, Koppensnellers p. 79.

¹²⁶ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *hoes*; Vertenten, op. cit. p. 80.

spirits of the dead: they cannot so suddenly part with everything they loved. Those they leave behind also need time; and to assuage their grief they indulge in sweet practices . . . which have on more than one occasion deeply impressed me. 'That is our prayer, Sir'. It goes on all through the night".¹²⁷ It must be left undecided whether the *gaga* mentioned by Vertenten is not, in fact, a *yarut*. The two songs have much in common. There are other gaps as well in Vertenten's account. Nothing is said of the custom of painting the bones of the deceased, a custom he described in some detail in another context.¹²⁸ It has been dealt with in the preceding section, when we noted that after this final bestowal of the bones a simple hardwood stick is planted on top of the grave to mark the place.¹²⁹ We are led to assume that the ceremony takes place on the morning before or after the ash-meal.

From Geurtjens we learn that *hus-angai* is combined with the lifting of the taboos. "The hut with the effigy is left to decay, but the other taboo-signs are taken away to be solemnly burned. As is customary at every feast, vegetables and fruits are collected and a big dish is prepared. Besides, various fruits and vegetables such as bananas, tubers, betel nuts and twigs with coloured leaves are arranged in a large circle. Inside this circle the taboo-signs are burned, together with that part of the vegetables that has been allotted to the deceased. The other vegetables are taken out of the fire as soon as they are roasted, to be distributed among the participants. The feast is also called *sopr-tamu*, ash-meal, either because the share of the deceased is burned to ashes or because the food of the living, being roasted without wrappings, becomes coated with ashes. Through this ceremony the gardens of the deceased are transferred to the heirs".¹³⁰

Geurtjens' account constitutes a major improvement on the description of a *sopr-tamu* given by Wirz, who defines it as a kind of second *yamu*, held to commemorate several deceased simultaneously.¹³¹ Since the meal as described by Wirz does not serve any clearly defined purpose, his presentation must be rejected, while we uphold the accounts by Vertenten and Geurtjens, who are the only authors to pay at least some attention to the laying aside of mourning. On the other hand, Wirz gives some additional details on the lifting of the taboos,

¹²⁷ Vertenten, *op. cit.* pp. 80 f.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 73-75.

¹²⁹ Above, p. 774.

¹³⁰ Geurtjens, M&M 1929 p. 331.

¹³¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 131.

in the first place those on the coconut garden. He was a witness of such a ceremony at Bahor. Two men of the coconut clan, richly ornamented, appeared on the beach. One of them held a spear in his hand, which he jabbed into the coconuts lying on the ground, which were still taboo. The other men shoved the pierced nuts on a heap. When all the nuts had been speared, the villagers came to collect the nuts and plant them in their own gardens. The two performers manipulated magic stones to increase the germinating power of the nuts and of the palms generally. Next, they went behind the village, where there were also tabooed palms. Several people climbed the trees and threw the nuts down. When the last nuts were being carried off to the village, another performer appeared from the bush. He impersonated a flying fox and took two nuts from one of the men, which he carried rapidly to the bush, as if he wished to prevent the people from taking all the coconuts to the village.¹³²

Taboos on the totem of the deceased are lifted in a more simple manner. Such taboos are rare and the only cases noted by Wirz concerned a taboo on betel palms (presumably only those of the deceased or of his subclan) for a *Bragai-zé*, and one on fishing in respect of a certain portion of the beach for a *Zohé*. When the taboo was lifted, some betel nuts were brought to the village and given to a young boy and a girl, who chewed them. After that, everybody was free to use the nuts. In the case of the taboo on fishing a little boy and a girl, children of the deceased, were festively adorned and sent walking all along the tabooed portion of the beach, imitating various fishing methods. When the children had finished, the taboo-signs in the village were removed and now the adults went fishing. A hearty meal rounded off the ceremony.¹³³ In the upper Bian area Wirz was a witness to the ceremonial lifting of the taboos on sago and on drums. One night the children of the village were given some sago, after which the taboo was lifted and everybody could make as much sago as they pleased. That same night they started singing and dancing and thus the taboo on the drums expired.¹³⁴ Here again we must assume that the taboo did not apply to the use of sago generally, but to sago obtained from the trees of the deceased. Verschueren aptly notes that Wirz can only have seen one half of the ceremony, and then even the less important one. The really significant acts in the process of lifting the taboo are

¹³² Ibid. p. 140.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid. pp. 139 f.

the cutting down of the sago tree and the working of the pith.¹³⁵ It is to be regretted that while all this information was gathered, no attempt was made to establish the correlation with mourning and with the ceremony of painting the bones. It is very well possible that some taboos are lifted long before the end of the mourning period. The taboo on the drums, for instance, may well be broken much earlier or, which is even more likely, be confined in its application to a very small section of the village, leaving other people free to stage celebrations.¹³⁶ The really important taboo is that on the coconut gardens. To lift it, the services of *déma*-performers may be required, at least in the case of Bahor. On the other hand, as a taboo it is not much of an encumbrance, being laid on certain gardens only, not on coconuts generally, which may be collected in any other place.

Reviewing the mortuary customs as a whole, we cannot help being impressed by the highly sentimental impact of interpersonal relations. In spite of their ostensibly rude behaviour and the often hard-handed way in which they treat their wives, the Marind appear to be emotionally strongly attached to each other. Their farewell rites have a touching note of sincerity, while there is little of the mandatory, ostentatious display of sorrow prevailing in Australian mortuary rites. When there is not much genuine grief, the extent of the ceremonies is limited, but when feelings run deeper, these are expressed in a way which directly appeals to the western mind. Orphans are given croton-twigs cut from plants which have been cultivated from the twigs that once covered the corpse of their deceased parent.¹³⁷ The touching ceremony of *makan hawn* or seeing the places, the loving care with which the grave is dug in which a dead baby is hung lying in its cradle, the solemn farewell staged by the society of the males at the death of an initiate, all these constitute as many proofs of sincere feelings of grief expressed outright, without any excesses of self-mortification. But at the same time the Marind shock our feelings by their tampering with a stinking, decomposing corpse, their drinking of cadaveric fluid and the repeated exhumations of the corpse.

Another interesting point is their firm belief in the hereafter. Early observers had some remarkable experiences. Heldring records the following: "In 1907 a medicine-man states that the spirit of a man who

¹³⁵ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 42.

¹³⁶ See also Verschueren, l.c.

¹³⁷ Above, p. 768.

had recently died at Yéwati is missing. A trader tells him that the spirit is at Merauke, in a little statue in the inner gallery of the house of the police-sergeant. A number of men and women, carrying loads of food, set off to Merauke, where they deposit the food in front of the statue. Satisfied, they go home again in the assurance that now the spirit of the dead man will come back to the village.

"In September 1908 about 300 people set out to entice the spirit of one recently dead to return from Merauke to Buti".¹³⁸ After the arrival of the whites the belief spread that the actual location of the *hais-miráv* is in Surabaya, the port of embarkation of the white newcomers.¹³⁹ The missionaries are repeatedly asked questions about the abode of the dead and there is little doubt that the hereafter was a matter on which the natives held firm convictions. The spirits of the dead are among the realities of everyday life; when the night is dark a Marind does not venture far from the village and there are quite a number of stories of encounters with spirits of the dead.

The same firm belief is expressed in the various ceremonies for the dead. During the *yamu* the dead are supposed to be present and to eat of the food that has been prepared for them. Food is also given to the dead during the *makan hawn* procession and on the occasion of the ash-meal. We shall find that, during the great feasts, the dead are again commemorated and that food is set apart for them. Most interesting of all is the parallelism between the myth recorded on pp. 201-203 and the mourning ceremonies as they are actually performed. The *hais* first go eastward to the eastern *hais-miráv*, where they meet the *mayo-déma*, apparently a reference to the *déma-wir* near the grave and to the *mayomes-ivag* leading the procession of women in the *makan hawn* ceremony. Then they return westward and, crossing the river via the trunk of a palm tree (the tree that was cut down after their death) the *déma Adak* removes their intestines, thus making them into real *hais*. *Adak* means to press, to indent (Geurtjens, Dict. voc.cit.) and it is not too far fetched to consider the incident as holding a reference to the drawing off of cadaveric fluid before the grave is closed a second time. From now on the body of the deceased is left to decay and he becomes a real *hais*. The *hais* travels to the western *hais-miráv*, but then returns to attend the *yamu*. The myth evidently refers to the various stages of the mourning procedure and it is interesting to note that the singing

¹³⁸ Heldring, TBG 1913 pp. 438 f.

¹³⁹ Heldring, l.c.; Cappers, J.P. 1909 p. 122; V. d. Kolk, J.P. 1911 pp. 167 and 779; Vertenten, J.P. 1916 p. 614.

of *yarut* was supposed to have a comparable function, that of accompanying the deceased on his progress westward.

Yet, the connection between the ceremonies for the dead and the myth relating their travels is not a very close one. Numerous details of the myth are ignored in the ritual, even when it is performed in its most elaborate form. The flying to Siwasiv, the meeting with the pig *déma*, the leaping across the fiery wall, the sojourn with the *hais* of an old woman, the inspection by the red parrot and the chasing of the bower bird are not reflected in the ceremonies for the dead. Apparently, part of the notions concerning the hereafter are unrelated to the ritual. Moreover, there is no hint whatsoever that the ritual would affect the fate or the well-being of the dead. Regardless of whether the ceremonies are celebrated in full or not, the dead go first to the east and then to the west. The *yarut* invariably begins in the east, irrespective of the question whether a *déma-wir* or a *makan hawn* has been celebrated. The fundamental concept is that the dead follow the life-cycle of the *déma*, going first from west to east to reach the mythical Mayo, and from there travelling west like *Woryu*, who died at Kondo when he was an *éwati*. The dead are dressed up as *éwati* and they go to the country beyond sunset. What they do there and what the country looks like is — strangely enough — a matter of minor concern; there are no standard notions concerning the land of the dead. The important thing is that they partake in the west-east and east-west movements of the cosmic powers and the living.

As far as could be ascertained, the ritual does not affect the fate of the deceased and the extreme care bestowed on those who died in their prime is, to all intents and purposes, more an expression of the feelings of the community than an effort to increase the well-being of the deceased. These feelings are most acute when it is one of the young people who has died. Although the death of an elderly man who, as a *pakas-anem*, a leader of his community, enjoyed the respect of all, can hardly be less of a shock than the demise of a young man who is, socially, a nobody, the ceremonies performed on the former occasion seem to be confined to *awasi-kawahib*, the cutting down of a coconut tree, and the *yamu*; a taboo will be laid on the dead man's coconuts, but a *déma-wir* or a *makan hawn* ceremony are probably not performed. At least, this is what must be concluded from our sources. Why are such elderly men denied the favours of being represented as *éwati*, of being introduced to the *mayo-déma*, of having their bodies exhumed and painted afresh with red ochre and anointed with sperma?

To the Marind-anim the death of old people is a matter of course. The flesh is consumed, they say. We also found that there is a lust for life; suicide is to them a most uncommon act, which is even beyond their understanding. One who dies in his prime is dressed up as an *éwati*, painted with the festive ochre, decorated, anointed with the life-giving sperma, represented in an *awong* complete with *békai*, which means both heart and life. All this expresses the wish to deny his untimely death. Those who are given the benefit of the full series of mortuary rites are the ones whose deaths are felt to have occurred prematurely. The loving care bestowed on them implies their being represented as living, youthful, vigorous dead who, travelling to the eastern *hais-miráv*, meeting the *déma* and following in *Woryu's* footsteps, enjoy some kind of life in the realm of the spirits, which compensates them for that which has come to such an untimely end. There certainly is no justification for the supposition that the rites ensure a better and more satisfying life in the hereafter to those who died young. We have no right to interpret these ceremonies as magical rites. Their purport is simply to express a feeling and a wish: that as a *hais* the deceased may enjoy some kind of real life, have the privilege of meeting the *déma* of the *mayo*, see all the inviting places connected with myth and ritual, which are so dear to the Marind. It is the least which the hereafter may be expected to have in store for him. Fundamentally, the touching ceremonies of the Marind convey a protest against premature death. There is no cause for any demur where the old are concerned. The Marind are not motivated by an unmitigated lust for life which claims eternal bliss for everybody. As it is, they express the wish for a fair deal, which by the contingency of death is denied to those who die at an early age. In a way, the most pathetic expression of protest against untimely death is the simple, but beautifully worked phallus erected as a taboo-sign on the occasion of the death of a small boy. Among the specimens reproduced by Vertenten, this is the fairest and tallest of the phallic symbols representing a deceased.¹⁴⁰

3. SEXUAL RITES

Otiv-bombari is the term used to denote promiscuous sexual intercourse. It is a concomitant of nearly every feast, dance and ceremony,

¹⁴⁰ Vertenten, I.A. 1915 p. 157, Tafel XX fig. 8, reproduced in Plate XXIV fig. 1 nr. 4.

and the high frequency of these opportunities for sexual licence lent substance to the reputation for hypertrophic sexuality which the Marind-anim established for themselves at an early stage of contact. The term *otiv-bombari* was, rightly or wrongly, more especially associated with the curious custom that the bride has to have intercourse with her husband's claimants (or, as the case may be, phratry- and even moiety-mates) before the bridegroom is allowed to have access to her. The custom has been referred to on several occasions.¹⁴¹ In spite of the fact that a fair deal of attention has been paid to this custom by successive observers, there are astounding gaps in the information as to the restrictions incumbent on the participants in this savage marriage ceremony. But there is no lack of the most unbelievable stories, presented in dead earnest; these would have us believe that during the marriage ceremony the bride has intercourse with as many as 30 or 100 men;¹⁴² that the *ius primae noctis* is exercised by all the men and *évati* of the bridegroom's village, and men and *évati* of neighbouring villages may also claim this right; that even the male members of the bride's own clan are not excluded from having sexual intercourse with her.¹⁴³ Apparently our informers did not give much thought to the physical feasibility of the alleged abuse.

Fortunately, other authors held more sober views. Viegen, when I asked him about the matter, told me that not more than five or six claimants were allowed to have access to the bride during the first night; if there were more, intercourse was resumed during the following night. He added that the order in which the men follow each other was established beforehand.¹⁴⁴ Geurtjens and Pöch state that it is the fellow-members of the husband's *boan* who have the privilege.¹⁴⁵ The Report of the Depopulation Team records that the claimants to the right of the first night are the local members of the husband's moiety. The number of participants was restricted; in the course of one night not more than between 5 and 10 men were allowed to have intercourse with the bride, and consequently the ceremony often took more than one night.¹⁴⁶ I remember a case (without knowing for sure whether it was on the coast or somewhere in the interior) in which the bride

¹⁴¹ Above, inter alia on pp. 163, 280, 548 f., 555 f., 619, 634.

¹⁴² Verslag Milit. Exploratie p. 247.

¹⁴³ Wirz, M.A. I p. 73.

¹⁴⁴ Van Baal, Godsdienst p. 43 note 130.

¹⁴⁵ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *otiv*; Pöch, Sitzungsber. Kais. Akad. Wien 1906 p. 901.

¹⁴⁶ Rep. Depop. Team p. 71.

was assisted by another young woman in order to satisfy the altogether too numerous men.

This factual information does not provide the answers to all our questions, but it certainly has the merit of reducing the alleged licentiousness to culturally and physically more realistic proportions. It is a fair guess that the number of participants in an act of *otiv-bombari* was usually not much above ten or thereabouts. I know of one case where thirteen men were involved and the Report of the Depopulation Team quotes another, similar instance.¹⁴⁷ The term used to denote the custom probably holds a reference to the high number of male participants. *Bombari* means ceremony, performance, custom; *otiv* is many, numerous, and is also used for men's house. The term *otiv-rek* is translated by, successively, one of the men's house; a man who has or had several wives; a man who loves company.¹⁴⁸ A performance involving many men and one woman (or a very few) is what, in essence, *otiv-bombari* stands for. Yet, we should not ignore the reference to the men's house. The inmates of the husband's men's house are the first to claim intercourse with her. As far as can be ascertained, the term is not specifically associated with the marriage ceremonies, but refers to all occasions for sexual licence indiscriminately, although there seems to be a certain tendency to reserve the term *otiv-bombari* preferably for the wedding ceremony. We shall return to this point presently in another context (p. 816).

Among the *Mayo-Marind* sexual promiscuity did not take the form of a direct exchange of wives. "The old men assured me that even at the biggest feasts there was no question of a general exchange of women; usually not more than one woman — sometimes two, but never more than three — was made available for the feast by each of the *boan*. I am not sure, however, that this holds true also for *imo* and *ezam*. The *imo* in particular do not follow the custom of assigning specially prepared lonely spots to the *iwag* of the feast; with them, all the women of one moiety stay together in one place, naked except for the upper part of the body, which is barely covered".¹⁴⁹ In other words, if there is any question of wife-exchange among the *Mayo-Marind*, it is a deferred exchange.

The Report of the Depopulation Team gives a probably fairly com-

¹⁴⁷ Above, p. 555; Rep. Depop. Team p. 72 note 1.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Geurtjens, Dict. voc. cit.

¹⁴⁹ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 4.

plete list of occasions requiring the performance of *otiv-bombari*.¹⁵⁰ In the following pages we have drawn heavily upon this inventory. After the reference to the marriage ceremony, the list makes mention of a comparable occasion for sexual license, viz. when a woman, having been barred from licentious intercourse during the period of her (advanced?) pregnancy and early motherhood, resumes her functions in extramarital sexual relations after the first post-parturient menstruation. She then adorns herself again and her return as a participant in social life is celebrated with a small feast, which is called a *mahi-angai*, feast of decoration, by the authors of the Report (p. 72). Presumably Wirz has mistaken the *mahi-angai* for — or identified it with — the small feast sometimes given on the return of the couple from the maternity-hut to the village. It is also possible that the *mahi-angai* on the occasion of the woman's resumption of extramarital sexual functions coincides with a *vaseb-angai*, the feast held in celebration of the child being put into a *vaseb* (sitting bag).¹⁵¹ Other feasts, such as a *barar-angai*, celebrating the bestowal of the first armet, are also called *mahi-angai*, as are, indeed, all feasts to celebrate age-grade promotions, because a change of *mahi*, decorations, is involved.¹⁵² A *mahi-angai* is always an occasion for *otiv-bombari*. It is important to note, however, that the simple fact of the renewed occurrence of the menses leads to the resumption of extramarital social duties and is celebrated with *otiv-bombari*. It is evident that this resumption of social duties can also be explained the other way round; because menstruation has set in again, a new period of fertility has begun, which must be inaugurated through a common act of fertilization. To this explanation we shall revert later on in this section.

The Report of the Depopulation Team classifies *mahi-angai* among the celebrations of *otiv-bombari* which are motivated by social obligations. The masters of ceremonies, their assistants and others who had an active part in a feast must be rewarded for their services. Next to the various forms of *mahi-angai*, the Report also ranges under this category the *otiv-bombari* on the occasion of *basik-angai* (pig feast), the *yamu* and the *hus-angai* (cf. the preceding section dealing with the ceremonies of the dead), the *patarê-angai* (the feast on the graves which is, in fact, always a *basik-angai*) and the *wambad-bombari*, the feast celebrated when a new garden has been prepared.

¹⁵⁰ Rep. Depop. Team pp. 71-75.

¹⁵¹ Cf. above, pp. 134, 136 f.

¹⁵² Rep. Depop. Team p. 72; cf. also Geurtjens, Dict. v. *mahi*.

Though there is no reason to question the truth of the statement that all these occasions involve the performance of *otiv-bombari*, the explanations are such as to require some further elaboration. First among the functionaries who have to be rewarded is the *apanapnē-anem*, who performs the decisive ritual act, and he is usually the child's mother's brother. Thus, for example, in the case of an age-grade promotion. We might expect the wife of the feast-giver to be the one best qualified to bestow the sexual favours which the occasion demands, but this is impossible because the first *apanapnē-anem* is her brother, while among his assistants and among the other contributors to the feast who should be compensated there are many members of her phratry, or at least of her moiety. It is evident that a difficulty of this kind can only be solved if different families belonging to opposite moieties (or at least to different phratries) jointly organize one feast for the celebration of their various ceremonies. This is, indeed, what actually happens. The combined celebration makes it possible to provide the requisite sexual amenities without coming into conflict with the rules of exogamy.¹⁵³ Family feasts usually are joint celebrations involving more than one family.

In the Report the ceremonies associated with the promotion of fertility make up the second category of feasts giving occasion to *otiv-bombari*. Under this heading the Report mentions the following feasts, *kapatu-bombari*,¹⁵⁴ *kav-bombari*,¹⁵⁵ *manenggop-bombari* (the feast in connection with a big fishing-party), *ohan-bombari* (for a big hunting-party) and *humum-bombari* (the feast to precipitate the coming of the rains). The definition of these ceremonies as fertility rites is not a very convincing one. *Kapatu-bombari* and *kav-bombari* are celebrated when the flower of a certain species of wild sugar-cane (*kapatu*) and the yam (*kav*) become available for consumption. Whether big hunting- and fishing-parties can be organized depends upon the prevailing season. There is no direct connection with fertility and, unless these celebrations make part of a more comprehensive ritual which is connected with the promotion of fertility, the sexual licence involved might just as well serve no other aim than that of heightening the festive character of the occasion. We do know, however, that *kapatu-bombari* and *kav-bombari* make part of the *aili* celebration of the *imo* and although such an *aili* is primarily a ritual for the dispelling of sickness,

¹⁵³ This was explicitly confirmed by Verschueren's informants; Letters XI p. 42.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. above, p. 630.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

there are also *aili* purporting to promote the fertility of certain crops.¹⁵⁶ In such a context the *otiv-bombari* may be seen as part of a fertility rite. A similar argument may be advanced with regard to *otiv-bombari* as combined with hunting- and fishing-parties; in the course of an *aili* celebration at least one big hunting-party will traditionally be organized.¹⁵⁷ The connection with fertility is evident, but the explanation fails to demonstrate that an *otiv-bombari* on the occasion of a hunting-party is a fertility rite in a more specific way than an *otiv-bombari* arranged for a *mahi-angai*. Our misgivings on this point are strengthened by the fact that the sexual licence attending *wambad-bombari*, the ceremony held after the completion of a new garden, is classified, not as a fertility rite (which is what we might expect), but as a compensation for services rendered.

Other opportunities for arranging *otiv-bombari* mentioned in the Report of the Depopulation Team are those provided by the rites for dispelling sickness, such as *suba-wakun* and *tik-bombari*.¹⁵⁸ An intriguing fact is that *otiv-bombari* is associated also with the magical rites performed by the medicine-man, both with a view to curing a patient and killing a victim. The sexual gratification implied was only to a certain extent a remuneration for the services rendered by the medicine-men involved; the sexual act was indispensable for the production of the 'medicine' administered by the medicine-men. Although details are lacking, the wording of the Report of the Depopulation Team leaves no room for doubt on this point. It is interesting to note that the number of *messav* called in for the purpose of curing a sick person is much smaller than that required when somebody has to be killed by sorcery. In the former case, the number of medicine-men co-operating in the healing-rite is never more than five; actually, one would be sufficient. In case the services of the medicine-men are required for killing a personal enemy, there must be at least six participants and often there are eleven or even more.¹⁵⁹ Earlier in this section I mentioned a case of *otiv-bombari* in which 13 men had intercourse with

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 635.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 634.

¹⁵⁸ *Suba-wakun* is always combined with an *aili* or a *tik-bombari*; cf. above, pp. 629, 636 ff., 644 f.; Wirz, M.A. III p. 94.

¹⁵⁹ Rep. Depop. Team p. 74. It is most improbable that all participants in the rite of sorcery are *messav*; the passage quoted does not speak of medicine-men but of sorcerers. It refers to *kambara*, a lethal rite executed under the guidance of a *messav*. Cf. below, p. 904.

one and the same woman. The rite was carried out as a preliminary to an act of *kambara* the men had promised to perform.

The Report of the Depopulation Team emphasizes two different aspects of *otiv-bombari*, viz. the magical one of fertilization and the social one of remuneration for services rendered. Other sources usually stress a third aspect, the association of *otiv-bombari* with feasts and dances such as *ayasé* and more particularly *samb-zi* (lit. great dance). The specific connection between *samb-zi* and *otiv-bombari* is confirmed by the Report of the Depopulation Team.¹⁶⁰ We might, indeed, call *samb-zi* another occasion for celebrating *otiv-bombari*. All things considered, it is difficult to decide which of the three elements, the fertilizing effect, the social reward, or the festive aspect, is the most important motivating factor. They all play a part and as soon as we go deeper into the matter it becomes evident that each of these elements is firmly rooted in Marind-anim culture. The importance of *otiv-bombari* for magic and ritual is evident from the fact that the collecting of sperma is, indeed, one of the main motives, sperma being needed as a medicine both to be mixed with the food and to be applied to the body, sometimes even to plants. It is not clear whether sperma is collected every time *otiv-bombari* is celebrated. The Report of the Depopulation Team, in a survey of the occasions for collecting sperma mentions *otiv-bombari* performed in connection with age-grade promotions, with initiation rites, with the *yamu*, the wedding-ceremonies, *tik-bombari*, and the healing- and sorcery rites of the medicine-men.¹⁶¹

That the sperma collected during the rite is used for some specific purpose does not mean that the performance of *otiv-bombari* could not, at the same time, be a remuneration for services rendered. Wife-lending in payment for services is a custom of long standing among the Marind. MacGregor, commenting on his first contact with the Marind in 1890, reported that they offered him women in payment for articles of trade¹⁶² and Wirz records that "a man who wishes to clear a patch of woodland, make a garden, build a house or do any work requiring the co-operation of several people, discusses his plans with his male companions, to whom he lends his wife for one night. An arrow set upright in front of his house signifies that the woman is available".¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Rep. Depop. Team p. 73.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 72.

¹⁶² ARBNG 1889/90 pp. 71, 72.

¹⁶³ Wirz, M.A. I p. 69.

Comparable customs have been reported from the Purari Delta¹⁶⁴ and from the people living along the Casuarina Coast.

Finally, wife-lending is also an act of hospitality. In this respect we have positive information from the upper Bian, where the feast-givers are the first to put their wives at the disposal of the guests.¹⁶⁵ Apparently the gesture is indicative of the existence of a more general pattern. In the myth of *Ginggini* and *Endalo* the former offers his bamboo-wife to his guest, whereupon the latter decides to give *Ginggini* one of his own (real) wives.¹⁶⁶ We have no definite information on the occurrence of this form of hospitality along the coast, except for Wirz's very loosely formulated statement that "against payment, any wife may be lent to any villager or stranger".¹⁶⁷ All sources agree on the readiness with which married women were made available and we can hardly doubt but that hospitality was one of the more important motives in this context. It certainly was the responsibility of the hosts to see to it that, during a feast, women were available.¹⁶⁸ This does not imply that the guests, in their turn, should not offer a number of their wives to the hosts, as is the custom among the Keraki.¹⁶⁹ It is even probable that some form of reciprocity prevails, but providing the women is necessarily the host's responsibility. Sexual intercourse is part of the feast and it is evident on every count that *otiv-bombari* is an attraction as well as a ritual act promoting the fertility of the women concerned; because it is both, it can also serve as a form of payment or as a remuneration.

The above survey of occasions involving *otiv-bombari* gives abundant evidence of the frequency of extramarital relations among the Marind. Yet, we will not follow the Depopulation Team who tried to calculate the approximate incidence of these relations by estimating the number of times that each of the various ceremonies is presumably celebrated, thereby arriving at an annual sum-total of opportunities for *otiv-bombari* for each woman which is definitely too high. In the first place, quite a number of these occasions coincide. A wife's ceremonial resumption of her duties in extramarital relationships will usually coincide with another feast, either a communal feast or a family feast.

¹⁶⁴ Williams, Purari Delta p. 56 and Ch. XVII.

¹⁶⁵ Above, p. 579.

¹⁶⁶ Van Baal, TBG 1940 p. 578; cf. the abridged version on p. 306, above.

¹⁶⁷ Wirz, M.A. I p. 69.

¹⁶⁸ Verschueren, Letters VII p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ Williams, Trans-Fly p. 159.

Family feasts are mostly joint undertakings, which not only involve the respective families, but are, if possible, combined with a headhunters' celebration, a *pataré-angai* and so on. It is true that a *samb-zi* always entails *otiv-bombari*, but a *samb-zi* is only danced when a celebration is called for and it is this celebration which involves *otiv-bombari*. Similarly, the big hunting- and fishing-parties are always combined with feasts of which *otiv-bombari* forms an integral part, such as a *yamu*, an initiation ceremony, a *bangu*, a *tik-bombari* and so on. In other words, the opportunities may be numerous, but exactly because they are numerous, they coincide.

In the second place, not every woman partakes in the exchange, at least not among the *Mayo-Marind*, where at a big, communal feast each *boan* never makes more than three women available, sometimes there are two, but usually only one.¹⁷⁰ This means a very important reduction in the number of times a woman has to submit to the exhausting practice of *otiv-bombari*. It is true that the onus mostly falls on the younger women, but even so, the fact remains that their services are required at greater intervals. On the other hand, we gather from myth (cf. the story of *Mongumer-anem*) that feasts provide opportunities for illegitimate love-affairs. There is reason to suspect both men and women of some irregular philandering, but such affairs are beside the main point of interest in this field, viz. the fact that *otiv-bombari* is not primarily a form of sexual promiscuity, but of prostitution. It is a form of sexual intercourse which may to a certain extent satisfy the men, but cannot possibly be appreciated by most of the women.

The women do indeed complain about the custom. In myth, the *mayo-ivag* runs away and has to be brought back.¹⁷¹ The investigation undertaken by the Depopulation Team revealed that for the women an *otiv-bombari* was rather a traumatic experience. They were said to be in fairly bad shape after such a night. The next day they could hardly walk, sometimes they could only move crawling on all fours, so the women told the interviewers. On the whole, it was a burden to them. Nevertheless, several female informants confessed that they participated, not primarily because it was their husbands' wish, but because they felt it was a necessity.¹⁷² Why they felt so is further explained by Verschueren in his letters. There were two different reasons for it. Either the women believed that unless they submitted to

¹⁷⁰ Verschueren, l.c.

¹⁷¹ Above, pp. 555 f.

¹⁷² Rep. Depop. Team pp. 75 f.

the rite they were not to have children, or they feared that if they abstained from it, they would fall ill, be stricken by the *déma*, as some of them said. Fundamental was the belief in the fertility-giving power of *otiv-bombari*. Most persistent of all was the custom of *otiv-bombari* in connection with the wedding ceremony and with supposed infertility. Verschueren refers to a young couple; the husband was very much opposed to the custom, but the wife submitted to it because — so she explained tearfully — she felt that *otiv-bombari* might help towards having children.¹⁷³

The Report of the Depopulation Team also gives some information on the performance of the men in *otiv-bombari*; most men committed the sexual act in the conventional way, but some had to give up and achieve emission by masturbating.¹⁷⁴ It is interesting to note that the procedure apparently did not wholly gratify the men either. This raises the question as to why the Marind turn sexual licence into a procedure unfit to satisfy the majority of the women and a small minority of the men besides? Why do they spoil the game by organizing sexual licence in such a way as to detract from the rapture normally associated with sexual indulgence? In this context yet another point must be made. Geurtjens, in his Dictionary, differentiates between *dóm-bombari*, *otiv-bombari* and *wambad-bombari*, reserving the term *otiv-bombari* for the bride's promiscuous intercourse on the occasion of her wedding, and *wambad-bombari* for fornication accompanying garden-making. *Dóm-bombari*, Geurtjens says, is the general term for fornication (Dict., v. *bombari*). As the term *bombari* means ceremony, it is obvious that he wants to include all the occasions for (ritual) promiscuous intercourse to which we applied the term *otiv-bombari*. The term *dóm-bombari* is an intriguing one, because *dóm* means bad, ugly, bad in a moral sense. It is also used with reference to the tainting of food (op. cit. v. *dóm*). We are inclined to explain the use of the term from missionary influence. However, at the time Geurtjens collected the data for his dictionary, missionary influence had not yet sufficiently asserted itself to make the Marind condemn one of their most cherished customs as morally reprehensible. As far as can be ascertained, the term *dóm-bombari* and its application are genuinely Marind. The reprobation involved in the use of the term is an important indication that the rite of *otiv-bombari* was by no means a pleasure rite, but an obligation giving rise to certain objections.

¹⁷³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 42.

¹⁷⁴ Rep. Depop. Team p. 75.

Among the Marind sex is not simply a matter of desire and gratification. They have very definite notions with regard to the function of the male sex in the procreative process and the promotion of fertility, and these notions have a direct bearing on the unsatisfactory nature of sex-relations. Fertility is before all a matter of sperma. Sperma is the essence of life, of permanence, of health and prosperity. Living beings can be born from sperma even outside the womb. A live wallaby is born from an emission of semen in *Aramemb's* girdle-shell;¹⁷⁵ *Ugu* originates from the sperma spilled on *Harau's* mat during the *otiv-bombari* held in celebration of her marriage;¹⁷⁶ yams grow out of *Aramemb's* head and shoulders after he has anointed his body with sperma;¹⁷⁷ *Yano* makes living wallabies by smearing slices of wallaby-meat with sperma;¹⁷⁸ bananas grow out of *Geb's* wounds after they have been treated with sperma.¹⁷⁹ In parentheses we note that all the examples which can be derived from myth refer to the *Geb-zé* moiety, which once again proves its superiority and its association with the male sex.

Sperma protects the novices when they are given a new kind of food to eat. It is smeared on the bodies of both the sick and the healthy so as to dispel sickness and fear; it makes part of the medicine of the *messav*. Sperma is the essence of life and every ceremony leads to the effusion of sperma. Among other peoples we met with the notion that prolonged cohabitation is necessary because the sperma is believed to serve as food for the foetus in the womb, a conception which among the Keraki leads to sodomy, since they hold the prosperous growth of the neophytes to be conditioned by homosexual intercourse.¹⁸⁰ Among the Marind the belief in the superior powers of sperma finds an even more consistent expression. With them, sperma is a far more regular ingredient of ceremonial meals and magical concoctions than among their eastern neighbours. The role of the women in the procreative process is too conspicuous to be entirely ignored, but the Marind are fully convinced that it is the male sex whose function is definitely preponderant.

Male pride and superiority find their fullest expression in the homo-

¹⁷⁵ Above, p. 279.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 280.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 284.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 299.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 227.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 493 f.

sexual *sosom*-rites. Here the male genital is glorified in its replica, a formidable red phallus. *Sosom*, as a *Kai-zé déma*, is the counterpart of *Uaba*, the representative of the male sex. In the homosexual rites the superiority of the male sex is absolute, but the Marind has to submit to the harsh reality that this superiority is perfectly sterile, in spite of the life-giving qualities of sperma. All the same, he does not give up the notion that the sperma is the essence of fertility. *Otiv-bombari* is, in fact, a fully convincing demonstration of the Marind-anim faith in the superior powers of sperma. Unless the woman is given a surfeit of sperma, there will be no real fertility. The treatment must be repeated. Every opportunity for promiscuous sexual intercourse is seized so that the women may copulate with many men in succession. They are even prepared to be satisfied with a performance of the act that can never give them the delight they would otherwise have experienced, because they expect that it will bring fertility and the Marind need fertility very badly, because the rate of reproduction is low. They have to kidnap children to make up for their own deficiency in procreating. For this reason *otiv-bombari* has to be repeated time and again. The men have to concentrate their efforts on such women as are lacking in reproductive capacity, i.e. the young, married women who have no children. According to Viegen a woman is even expected to be childless during the first years of marriage (personal communication). As we have no information confirming that in the case of these young wives barrenness is intentional, we may take Viegen's communication for a statement of fact: because the young women are childless they have to be made the objects of *otiv-bombari*. And that is, indeed, what happened. Van de Kolk is very definite on the point of "the high degree of immorality with regard to recently married women".¹⁸¹ Of course, if the aim is to stimulate fertility, *otiv-bombari* is a very dubious means to this end. Though we need not agree with the Report of the Depopulation Team that excessive cohabitation is the main cause of the high degree of infertility among Marind-anim women,¹⁸² we may concede that the methods chosen to improve the situation were eminently fit to make it worse. If in the hypothesis of the Team — which is that chronic irritation of the female genital has a bearing on fertility — there be only a grain of truth, the remedy applied contributes to sterility rather than diminishing it, thus setting off a chain reaction of ever more

¹⁸¹ V. d. Kolk, J.P. 1912 pp. 100 f., 1911 pp. 536 f.

¹⁸² Rep. Depop. Team pp. 165 ff.; see also above, pp. 27 f.

frequent *otiv-bombari* to stimulate the fertility which this very rite impairs. Therefore ordinary sexual promiscuity has had to give way to *otiv-bombari*; the sexual feast of unbridled licence was made ancillary to the promotion of fertility by sacrificing its more enjoyable aspects to the desire for more children. In the course of the development of Marind-anim culture this may have led on the one hand to an increase in the opportunities for promiscuous intercourse, on the other to the progressive transition from a general exchange of women to the prostituting of a few. We find this view confirmed by the fact that in the cultural pattern of the *Imo-Marind* there are still definite indications that formerly a general exchange of women must have been the rule. To the Marind *otiv-bombari* is more than just a matter of sexual indulgence. In one of his letters Verschuieren writes: "In the initial period of every marriage there is the inescapable necessity to have that marriage fertilized by the community, and according to our experiences in the Depopulation Team this fertilization is necessary each time a wife enters a new cycle of fertility after confinement".¹⁸³ The practice of *otiv-bombari* on the occasion of a marriage was continued long after the rite had been banned by the authorities; often it was not the men but the elderly women who were the instigators. In spite of the unpleasant aspects of the rite, these elderly women considered its execution a necessity. Of course, except when it concerned a marriage-ceremony, the purpose of fertilization of the women was more or less overshadowed by the more direct aim of collecting sperma, which was to be mixed with the food and used for magical purposes. That does not imply that the idea of fertilization of the women was absent; there was no need to mention it because there were more tangible objectives to be referred to as the more immediate and proper reasons for performing the rite. And what is more important, the idea of fertilization is confirmed in myth. *Kanis-ivag*, the *mayo-ivag*, is in permanent copulation with *Uaba* and it is this uninterrupted copulation which leads to the birth of cassowary and stork and to the originating of the fire.¹⁸⁴ The symbolism holds no secrets for a Marind-anim woman. She knows that this uninterrupted copulation refers to the unbroken cycle of *otiv-bombari* performances attendant on the *mayo*-initiation, which, in a way, celebrates the fertilization of the *mayo*-mother, who is the mother of all mankind and everything else in this world.

¹⁸³ Verschuieren, Letters VII p. 4.

¹⁸⁴ Above, p. 556.

One point has thus far been ignored in the discussion, viz. the remarkable preference for the use of semen obtained from the vulva of the woman after copulation. From the point of view of male superiority we might have expected a preference for sperma emitted in masturbation. Yet, apart from the cases in which previous copulation is impossible, we came across only one instance in which the fluid was obtained by means of masturbation. This concerns the sperma which had to be added to the food which the men had prepared for the women at the beginning of the *imo aili*.¹⁸⁵ Of course, it is quite well possible that besides the one just mentioned, there were other occasions on which masturbation was called for and which have escaped our notice, but this cannot detract from the obvious fact that the ordinary procedure for obtaining sperma is copulation. There must be a reason for this. We do not know of any native rationalization explaining the preference. Probably they never bothered about it, because to them there is no problem. Our analysis of the real secret of the rites, which was presented at the end of the preceding chapter, has made it sufficiently clear that in the process of fertilization the women's part is not nearly so negligible as is suggested by the overt emphasis on the importance of the male sex. The secret of the great cults is that the male has to submit to the female, whose part in the process is a substantial one. The preference for sperma obtained post copulationem confirms the correctness of our conclusion. The term *dóm-bombari* need not necessarily convey a moral judgment. With equal right it may be conceived as the expression of the homosexual male's disinclination to copulation. This may even be the more likely explanation.

Otiv-bombari, when thus conceived, holds the key to the puzzle presented by the remarkable tensions between male superiority and the emancipated position of the women in ritual, between sex-antagonism and the mutual affection of spouses, between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Under the impact of so many conflicting motives, there evolved the outwardly self-contradictory expressions of Marind-anim life and culture, culminating in a form of sexual licence which must needs fail to leave the participants fully satisfied. It explains how a multitude of extramarital relations can be quite compatible with a general stability of marriages. Extramarital intercourse is submitted to such conditions as to discourage the forming or developing of emotional ties between participants of different sex.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 631. For other cases see p. 548.

The present section must be concluded with an observation on the social obligations ensuing from this form of wife-exchange. It is evident that prior to each *otiv-bombari* the women had to be designated who were to take part in it. A few casual remarks by early observers tend to confirm this, but these observers failed completely in respect of the recording of the rules governing the exchange of women. The paucity of information on this point inspires the suggestion that in Marind-anim society rules regulating mutual obligations are few and unimportant. The inference is misleading; time and again we come across situations which require a good deal of organizing and this, in turn, cannot be achieved unless mutual obligations are standardized according to more or less rigid patterns. These patterns have never been studied, but they must have included various kinds of extramarital obligations. The Marind wisely managed to avoid making these a subject of discussion. They could not expect that the rules governing a pattern of behaviour which the whites condemned as immoral, would meet with any sympathy.

4. DANCES, MINOR RITES AND CEREMONIES

The dances of the Marind can be divided into three groups: ordinary dances, special dances and dances for great ceremonial occasions. The classification is ours and made for the sake of convenience only; we do not know how the Marind themselves would classify their dances. The ordinary dances, the *gad-zi* and the *samb-zi*, are those which make part of the regular program of every feast. Special dances are the dances performed for a specific purpose. We know of only one case that falls under this heading, viz. *ayasé*, the headhunters' song and dance. The dances for great ceremonial occasions are the magnificent parades staged by large numbers of richly ornamented performers. They have prepared their show well in advance and often it is the guests who thus make a contribution to the feast. As this kind of dance is given by one party for the benefit of the other, the dancers are not to be joined by other people attending the feast. Such dances require a crowd of spectators and do not call for general participation, as other dances do. Ceremonial show-dances of this kind are *waiko-zi*, *uar-ti-zi*, *wasipé* and *humum-angai*. They will be described in the sixth section of this chapter. *Ayasé* having been discussed in the chapter on headhunting, we may here confine ourselves to a short comment on *gad-zi* and *samb-zi*.

Zi is the Marindinese word for song and dance. In their commentary on the word *zi* Wirz and Geurtjens put the stress on the notion of song rather than on that of dance.¹⁸⁶ *Gad-zi* was the dance of the young people; the older men did not participate in it, confining themselves to *samb-zi*.¹⁸⁷ The *gad-zi* is a dance purely for pleasure.¹⁸⁸ It is said to have been adopted fairly recently from the eastern and north-eastern neighbours of the Marind. New songs are regularly being imported. According to Nevermann they originate from the Semariji or the N'gowugar;¹⁸⁹ another possibility is that they are of Boadzi origin. However that be, the words of the songs are unintelligible to the Marind, but that does not prevent them from singing them with gusto. The melodies are lively and variegated; the Marind sing them wherever and whenever there is an opportunity for singing. During a long walk this is a favourite way of whiling away the time. Dancing to the *zi* is confined to celebrations. The statement that the *gad-zi* is, in fact, a novelty should not be taken too literally. Wirz very aptly remarks that the *gad-zi* must have been known for quite a long time, because some of the melodies were said to be *tanama gad-zi*, *gad-zi* of olden times.¹⁹⁰

The dance that accompanies the *gad-zi* is devoid of artistic pretensions. Like all Marind-anim dances it has none of the vivid movements characteristic of the Kanum-anim *itor*, a dance which is almost a gymnastic exercise. When *gad-zi* is danced, the girls and the women — young women — stand or walk in the centre. They are surrounded by the young men, some of them beating small drums, i.e. drums not more than two feet in length, the big drums, which may measure up to six feet, being reserved for the big dances such as *samb-zi*. When dancing *gad-zi*, the men first move forward in time with the drums, then they stand still awhile and finally take a few steps backwards, after which they start again with the forward move, and so on. With every beat of the drum the men slightly bend their knees, sometimes they also move the upper part of the body backwards and forwards, thus setting their feather head-ornaments swaying. The procedure is typical of Marind-anim dancing in general. It is designed to set the headgear and the *wib*, the tail of reeds hanging down from the back,

¹⁸⁶ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 2; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *zi*.

¹⁸⁷ Wirz, l.c.

¹⁸⁸ Verschueren, spoken commentary on the tape-recordings in the Ethnomusiological Archives, Amsterdam.

¹⁸⁹ Nevermann, ZfE 1939 p. 28.

¹⁹⁰ Wirz, op. cit. p. 3.

moving to and fro. In the *gad-zi* the headgear need not be very elaborate. It is a dance performed for pleasure, and the preparations required are few and fairly simple. The role of the women in the dance is insignificant. They quietly walk up and down with the men. They, too, may bend their knees and sway their bodies, but there is less determination in their movements; often it seems as if they are just strolling up and down in the centre of the singing crowd. Wirz ascribes an erotic character to the movements of the dance, adding that some of the men do not join in the singing, but make a hissing sound with every beat of the drums, a noise — “sh, sh, sh, sh” — “which should anyhow be conceived as erotic”.¹⁹¹

It is very difficult to form a definite opinion on this point. Considering the presence of the women in the centre of the crowd, it would seem fairly safe to assume that the *gad-zi* has an erotic component anyhow. In the dances of many peoples there is such an element. Does it mean that among the Marind the *gad-zi*, which is always danced during the night preceding a feast, is the harbinger of the sexual intercourse which is a concomitant of the feast? From one point of view it is hardly probable, the dance being the dance of the young people, a dance in which *éwati* and *kivasom-iwag* are allowed to participate, while they have to abstain from sexual intercourse. On the other hand, young married people may partake in the *gad-zi* as well, and these young people certainly will share in the forthcoming sexual rites. Only, the performance of these sexual rites used to coincide with *samb-zi*. In spite of various suggestions that the *gad-zi* is accompanied by sexual promiscuity,¹⁹² we hold the view that, originally, *gad-zi* was not necessarily associated with sexual promiscuity, as *samb-zi* was. Wirz is quite explicit in his reference to the sexual connotations of *samb-zi*, and rightly so,¹⁹³ but he does not state that *gad-zi* has any such implications. Yet, it is impossible to take a stand on the matter without leaving room for reasonable doubt. In recent years *samb-zi* has disappeared completely. Verschueren had great difficulty in finding a few old people who could sing the melodies for his tape-recordings. The *gad-zi*, however, has survived. Even to-day the *gad-zi* is still the most popular form of entertainment of the Marind. When the *samb-zi* disappeared, the *gad-zi* took over its functions, and often a *gad-zi* proved to provide a choice opportunity for *otiv-bombari*. This does

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² See e.g. Geurtjens, Dict. v. *ngad-zi*.

¹⁹³ Wirz, op. cit. p. 6.

not warrant the inference that it has been so from the first. It is certain that in the old days the *otiv-bombari*, which made part of any feast, was performed during the *samb-zi*. This is not to say that *otiv-bombari* might not also be held during the preceding night, which was devoted to *gad-zi*, but it is hardly probable that such a combination was the rule. *Otiv-bombari* was more than a form of merry-making, as, fundamentally, *gad-zi* was. It belonged to the sphere of *samb-zi* rather than to that of celebrating pure and simple.

Samb-zi, also called *yaba-zi*, is the festive song proper. *Samb* and *yaba* are almost synonymous, both meaning great. The great *zi*, *samb-zi*, is also said to be the *zi-ha*, the song (dance) proper. Originally it was the dance of every major feast, and was invariably accompanied by *otiv-bombari*. When *samb-zi* is sung, the big drums are beaten. In Wirz's days the singers were the men of about middle age and beyond; the younger men did not yet know the words. We should not conclude from this that the question of who sang the *samb-zi* was really decided by age. In those days *samb-zi* was already being ousted by the *gad-zi* and the former having become the preserve of the older generation, the situation described by Wirz may be seen as a stage in the process.

Participants in the dance are the men only. They assemble round a big fire in the festive grounds or on the beach. This fire has to be made there anyway with a view to heating the drums so as to brace the tympanums. The older men begin to dance and gradually the younger men join them. They all stand close together, keeping in the same place, and by slightly moving the knees and the torso they set all the ornaments swinging which crown their heads or hang down from their bodies. Big plumes have been fastened to their hairdoes. Sometimes a fringed coconut-leaf or even a wooden phallus is attached to the shell at the front of the girdle and the wooden phallus swings up and down with the rocking movements of the body. All the time the women and the girls have been standing apart. They were the last to arrive on the spot. Without stirring, they stand in a group, some distance away from the men, but it may happen at times, when the tempo of the dance quickens and the plumes of the men are swinging frantically up and down, that some of the girls get excited and start jumping up and down in an ecstasy.

Wirz was much impressed by the *samb-zi* and he gives a vivid description of its variety and richness of expression: "It would be utterly impossible to take down the song in staff-notation. It is not a song pure and simple; it is more like each man singing something

different, and nevertheless the whole, when heard from afar, sounds melodious and impressive. The song starts in a moderately fast tempo, a deep *oh-ah-oh* is all that is heard, although in-between a few unintelligible words are sung or recited very rapidly. Now the tempo becomes faster and faster, the drums are beaten frantically till a climax is reached . . . Then the tempo slows down and changes into an adagio. The words are, as it were, flung at the drums with such a strong emphasis that it seems as if they wish to chastise them. In fact, no song of the Marind is so expressive and has so many different motifs as the *samb-zi*. In contrast to the very melodious *gad-zi* — which, however, soon becomes boring — or the extremely monotonous and solemn *yarut*, *samb-zi* is pleasant to listen to. In the *samb-zi* there is everything at the same time! Now the motifs are fervent and impulsive, then they are monotonous and solemn".¹⁹⁴

The high degree of variegation Wirz observed in the *sambi-zi* is confirmed by Verschueren's tape-recordings in the Ethnomusicological Archives at Amsterdam. In the spoken text the commentator points out that the *samb-zi* is composed of three different parts, the *im*, the *suba-mit*, and the *bendor*, three names which occasionally crop up in descriptions of Marind-anim dances, but which are here for the first time classified as parts of the *samb-zi*.¹⁹⁵

Verschueren, too, calls the *samb-zi* the festive dance proper of the Marind. It is this dance which is invariably accompanied by *otiv-bombari*, a combination we discussed earlier in this section.

The minor rites and ceremonies of the Marind, which we shall now deal with, are of two kinds, viz. the ceremonies connected with growing up, and a number of rites and ceremonies performed on a variety of occasions. Rites and ceremonies of the first category will be discussed in the next section. Those falling into the second category are *wambad-bombari*, the festivities celebrated at the beginning of the dry and of the rainy seasons, the inauguration of a new bridge, canoe or house.

Of *wambad-bombari* (from *wambad*, to dig, to spade for the purpose of making a garden-bed) we know next to nothing. Earlier we noted with due regret that our information on Marind-anim agriculture is highly deficient.¹⁹⁶ Even worse is the situation with regard to the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁹⁵ Geurtjens (Dict. v. *im-zi*) mentions the *im-im-zi*, which he identifies with the dance of the girls of the *Geb-zé-ha boan* after the closing ceremony of the *mayo*-initiation. Cf. above, p. 543.

¹⁹⁶ Above, p. 19.

ritual and magical acts performed in the gardens. All we know of *wambad-bombari* is that a man lends his wife for one night to the men who have assisted him in making a new garden-bed. It is fairly improbable that *wambad-bombari* should be confined to a simple act of prostitution in payment for services rendered. Some kind of application of sperma to ensure the prosperous growth of future crops seems likely. Only, we know nothing about it.

Hardly more specific is our knowledge of the ceremonies for celebrating the onset of the dry or the wet seasons. On the customs connected with the beginning of the dry season Viegen gives the following information: in the course of the month of April, when the rains abate and the hours of sunshine gradually increase in number, the Marind prepare themselves for a new series of feasts. One celebration follows another. It is the women who usher in the new period. After a rainy night they disappear in the early morning, while the men are still asleep in the men's houses. They return, carrying branches which are still dripping with water, invade the men's houses and chase the men out amidst peals of laughter and abundant frolicking. Later in the morning, when the sun is shining, the men, who had withdrawn to the bush, reappear on the scene, bringing all the wet clay they can carry in their arms. They tag after the women, who are thoroughly plastered with it. Finally, men and women together have a bath in the sea. The next night but one there is a big dance, which Viegen did not attend because he had been warned that one of the features was for the men to throw excrements at the women.¹⁹⁷

Apart from the fact that this is not the only occasion on which the two sexes oppose each other and that painful injuries are sometimes inflicted, Viegen's article gives very little definite information. The same may be said of Geurtjens' record of a comparable event in the Okaba area where, toward the end of the rainy season, two parties of men, ludicrously ornamented, fight each other with banana-stalks, standing on a long and narrow bridge across the swamp. The women look on, but after some time the men turn on the women, who jump into the water and splash about, sparring and romping, till from sheer exhaustion they have to give up. After having cleaned their bodies in fresh water, they sit round a fire to dry themselves, then they go to the village, where a feast-dish had been prepared in advance.¹⁹⁸ A similar

¹⁹⁷ Viegen, *Ann.* 1915 p. 331.

¹⁹⁸ Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 185-187.

scene has been reported by Vertenten from the area of Merauke. He does not describe it as a ceremony attending the onset of the dry season, but as an occasional entertainment belonging to the wet monsoon. "Every year, after excessive rainfall, some new bridges are constructed" and the completion of the work is celebrated with a sham fight. After their return to the village, the participants indulge in a festive meal.¹⁹⁹ Apparently this celebration in the eastern area is not identical with the tussle between the sexes reported by Viegen from the same area.

The coming of the wet season is attended by performances of a different nature. When the rains are due, the *dongam-anim*, the rain-making specialists, get to work, but their activities are performed in private. These are not in the nature of a public ceremony and will be described in the next chapter. Yet, some public celebrations seem to have attended the transition from one season to another. Whether this was an established practice and, if so, whether its observance was general, is impossible to decide. The Report of the Depopulation Team makes mention of a performance of *otiv-bombari* on the occasion of a feast celebrated for the purpose of 'calling for' the black clouds of the rainy season.²⁰⁰ Nollen is the only one to describe some such ceremony, however, without intimating whether performances of this kind were really general. He simply gives a description of the ceremony he attended on the afternoon of the 4th of December 1909 at Domandé. Some ten or twelve women and four or five men were anointed with a nondescript magical concoction. The ceremony was concluded with a short, wild dance of the men, who were brandishing their weapons. Later, during the night, there was a dance, a *hai-si*, literally rain-dance. Other particulars are lacking.²⁰¹

Finally, we must mention the festivity on the occasion of the inauguration of a new canoe. The new canoe is wetted with *wati*. A meal is arranged and a dance performed, but particulars are lacking.²⁰² On the inauguration of a new men's house cf. p. 48 note 33.

Probably there were yet various other occasions for feasting and dancing. Heldring refers to the monthly banquets which have to be discontinued during the *mayo*-initiation.²⁰³ As most feasts are cele-

¹⁹⁹ Vertenten, J.P. 1922 pp. 166 f.

²⁰⁰ Rep. Depop. Team p. 73. Apparently the same occasion as the *humum bombari* mentioned above, p. 811. *Humum* means cloud.

²⁰¹ Nollen, Ann. 1910 pp. 341-343, 356.

²⁰² Cappers, J.P. 1908 pp. 124 f.

²⁰³ Heldring, TBG 1913 p. 442.

brated when the moon is full, Heldring's reference need not apply to any special occasion, the moon regulating the rhythm of all celebrations anyhow.²⁰⁴ These celebrations included also the lesser and greater feasts which will be discussed in the next section, and such ceremonies as *arih*, which might be held either for dispelling sickness or for promoting the fertility of the crops. The *arih* has been dealt with earlier in this book;²⁰⁵ it is implied in the specific character of the *arih* that the celebration may take place at any time of the year.

5. FEASTS

Descriptions of Marind-anim feasts are numerous. Unfortunately, there are only a few among them which result from systematic observation and even these are incomplete because the marriage-relationships determining the pattern of food-exchange and the technique of the distribution of gifts remained unnoticed or were summarized in empty generalizations, plainly indicating that the observer had not the slightest notion of their social relevance. Sometimes, the descriptions are confusing, too. We are confronted with a profusion of different names, suggesting a variety of feasts of all sorts, such as *vaseb-angai*, *barar-angai*, *mahi-angai*, *soma-angai*, *basik-angai*, *pataré-angai*, *kui-angai*, *humum-angai* etc. They are all *angai*, feasts, but what are the specific traits in which they differ the one from the other? We are inclined to differentiate between family feasts and feasts involving the cooperation of a whole territorial group, an approach which I followed in the original draft of the present section. In an elaborate and detailed exposition F. Verschueren demonstrated that such a classification is not consistent with the rules underlying the organization of a Marind-anim feast.²⁰⁶ Fundamentally, there is only one type of feast, the family feast to celebrate one or other of the many landmarks in the growth and development of a child, an age-grade promotion or, in some cases, a marriage, the latter more particularly when a pig feast has been organized where the bridegroom acts as the *Divazib* who kills the pig raised by the bride.²⁰⁷ A feast may be called *vaseb-angai* because a child is put into a sitting-bag (*vaseb*) for the first time in its life, or *barar-angai* because a mother's brother gives the child its first *barar*

²⁰⁴ See above, p. 226.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. pp. 629 ff.

²⁰⁶ Verschueren, Letters XI pp. 43 ff.

²⁰⁷ Cf. above, pp. 398 note 125, 406 ff., 416 ff.

(upperarmring),²⁰⁸ a *mahi-angai* because somebody's hairdo is changed or made up anew,²⁰⁹ a *basik-angai* because one or more of the celebrating families have a pig killed on the occasion, a *soma-angai*, because a feast-house with carved and decorated posts has been constructed, or a *pataré-angai* because the food (or rather the dead pig) is displayed on a platform constructed over a grave. Such feasts may be held to celebrate a successful headhunt, when the newly captured heads are brought out from the *kui-aha* and hung on the *kui-ahat*.²¹⁰ In that case, the feast may be referred to as a *kui-angai*. Similarly, a feast may be called a *humum-angai* if in the course of the celebrations a *humum* is performed, a show of richly decorated men combined with a *déma-wir* of some sort.²¹¹ It all depends on what specific aspect is foremost in the speaker's mind when he refers to the feast, because a feast is always a combination of a number of individual feasts and it will consequently include all their several aspects. As far as could be ascertained, the *yamu* and the *hus-angai* are never combined with a feast. These are ceremonies for the dead which seem to be too closely associated with mourning to allow of their being related to a really festive occasion, even though, as a *pataré-angai*, the celebration may include a night of *yarut* singing as a last farewell to the burial-site of a beloved deceased.

The procedure followed is a simple one. The Marind-anim territorial group is a weakly organized entity consisting, in fact, of a great number of men's house communities, which are the basic units of the society. And it is such a men's house community which sponsors a family feast. However, it does not act as a self-sufficient unit. A major contribution to a feast has to be made by the mother's brother of the child for whom the celebration is organized. This implies the co-operation of a men's house community of another phratry, more often also of the other moiety. The men's house communities involved may expect the assistance of befriended men's house communities of their own phratry. As our description proceeds, we shall find that the feast is, in fact, an occasion for food-exchange between families and clans in which many groups and families participate. The feast grows into a major event if several families (men's house communities) decide to hold their individual celebrations on the same day. There are important motives

²⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. 134, 136 f., 139.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 810 jo. p. 136.

²¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 747 ff.

²¹¹ See below, p. 855.

for such joint undertakings. In the preceding section we mentioned one already; with a view to the sexual gratification of the main performers of the ceremonies, the *apanapnē-anim* or masters of ceremonies, another celebration, simultaneous with their own, by a group belonging to the other moiety or — at least — another phratry, is often a necessity. Though it need not be the child's own mother who is made available for the *otiv-bombari*, the other women of the men's house community, too, belong to a group which, more often than not, is sexually taboo for the *apanapnē-anim* because they may be classificatory brothers and sisters.²¹² The difficulty can be solved when the celebrations are combined with those staged by people belonging to the opposite moiety.

Apparently, this combined celebrating of feasts was much stimulated by other factors as well. We found that during a *mayo*-initiation age-grade celebrations were barred.²¹³ This implies that all celebrations were held in abeyance until after the return of the warriors from the headhunt appurtenant to the initiation ceremonies. Then all the various groups of the community, each having their own reasons for celebrating, would combine their efforts to realize a magnificent apotheosis in the great cycle of ceremonies which started with the *mayo*-initiation. Such a feast would probably be a *kui-angai*, at least, if one of the men's houses of the territorial group had taken the initiative to build a *kui-aha*. In the preceding chapter we discussed the procedure; one or more men's house communities in some village or other took the lead and after having ensured the backing of the other groups of the community, they started constructing a *kui-aha*, assisted by all who had promised to co-operate. Participants from other settlements could join them, but they might also build a *kui-aha* for themselves which, in time, would be the centre of the *kui-angai* the builders had planned.²¹⁴ It seems probable that each territorial group participating in a headhunt following a *mayo* celebration would have its own *kui-aha*. Somehow, one men's house community would take the initiative, a men's house community strong enough to make an important contribution to the feast. In a big men's house community there would always be children whose entering into one of the successive stages of growth provided the formal reasons for a celebration. Another asset may have been the presence of affinal relatives in other villages. The glamour of a feast is enhanced when the number of guests from other villages is

²¹² Cf. above, p. 811.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 502.

²¹⁴ Ibid. p. 711.

considerable. When a mother's brother from elsewhere was asked to act as *apanapnē-anem* on the occasion of his sister's child's feast, this provided an opportunity to invite his entire village.²¹⁵ The guest-village would gratify the hosts with a splendid performance and numerous gifts. Unfortunately, we know nothing at all concerning the procedure followed. Evidently, an invitation to another village, especially if it was a distant one, required the backing of the entire territorial group. The descriptions of the feasts prepared by Méwi, Domandé and Birok²¹⁶ do not leave any doubt that the whole group fully endorsed the invitation, but our sources do not disclose how and by whom the formal overtures were made. It must have been a men's house community that was rather high in the esteem of the territorial group and big enough to shoulder a substantial part of the burden of the preparations.

Not every feast was a *kui-angai*. Children grow up and their progress through the successive stages of growth afforded many opportunities for feasts in the years intervening between one really big feast and the next. The various moments of transition in the development of a child had to be celebrated, even though they do not all of them call for elaborate ceremonial. A *vaseb-angai* is a much simpler affair than an age-grade promotion. A feast for a first-born son will be more lavish than that for a younger one. Small men's house communities cannot afford to entertain so many guests as a big one. Consequently, there are feasts of every description and occasional remarks by earlier authors such as Van de Kolk give reason to surmise that often the celebration was rather a perfunctory one. Describing the promotion of a boy who became *aroi-patur*, Van de Kolk states that usually the ceremony passes off without much ado and we must conclude that the feast in question — which was, after all, a modest one — constituted an exception rather than that it illustrated the rule.

What were these simple celebrations like? Because they were so unpretentious, they have not been described at all. Apparently they consisted of a small family-gathering at which the mother's brother or *binahor*-father performed the required ceremonial act, after which the participants exchanged small quantities of food and enjoyed a meal and drank *wati*. Probably the meal will always have consisted of a *sep* (sago-dish) which for the occasion had been flavoured with meat.

²¹⁵ See below, p. 836.

²¹⁶ Cf. Vertenten, Ann. 1915 pp. 148-153, 164-166, 181-184; Wirz, M.A. IV Ch. 2 and 3, *Dämonen* pp. 118 ff.

What we would like to know is whether such a celebration would be called a *mahi-angai* and be accompanied by *otiv-bombari*. If the latter were the case, it could hardly have been such a simple celebration at all because there could be no sexual remuneration of the *binahor*-father (who usually is the candidate's mother's brother) unless another woman of the celebrating group, belonging to another phratry than that of the child's mother, were to be made available for the rite. There is little to be gained by hypothesizing. When all is said and done, it seems fairly probable that there were several stages in the development of a child the entry into which was marked by a rather perfunctorily performed ceremony and a very small feast which only in certain respects followed the pattern of a real feast. A real feast calls for a dance and in periods of mourning dancing would be banned, and this ban applies, if not to the whole village, then in any case to fairly important parts of it, more particularly so if the death were a recent one.

The feasts described are the ones following the complete pattern. Even so, there are many variations and we shall start our survey with a discussion of some descriptions given by Van de Kolk, Geurtjens and Vertenten of celebrations on a relatively modest scale.²¹⁷ Seven cases are presented by them and in no fewer than five is there only one child mentioned as the centre of the feast. The authors do not explicitly state that there were no other families holding their celebrations at the same time. On the contrary, there is some reason to suppose that our authors, for simplicity's sake, have concentrated their observations on the more spectacular scenes, disregarding lesser aspects. In the two cases described by him, both promotions, one of a girl becoming *wahuku* and the other of a boy becoming *aroi-patur*, Van de Kolk makes mention of the nocturnal *zi* (dance) which followed. This implies that the feast was a public event, anyhow. The feasts observed by Van de Kolk were celebrated when dancing had not yet been made subject to the previous permission of the administration. The feasts described by Geurtjens were held in the days when dancing was practically forbidden. In his account of a feast celebrated in 1917 Vertenten, too, makes mention of a *zi* following the distribution of food and his comment does not leave any doubt that the *zi* was accompanied by *otiv-bombari*. After all that has been said on this point, it is practically certain that these and similar celebrations were the

²¹⁷ Van de Kolk, *Oermenschen* pp. 27-29, 62-66; Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 31 f., 180-182; Vertenten, *Ann.* 1917 pp. 330 ff., J.P. 1919 pp. 608 f., I.L. II pp. 354 f.

fruits of the combined efforts of two or more families, each celebrating its own festive occasion. The great publicity given to the feast in these and in other cases dealt with in this context, and the great number of people present at the ceremony, warrant the inference that the *binahor-éwai* who performed the ceremonial act were rewarded in the traditional way and consequently enjoyed the sexual amenities.

All authors make mention of the *sep*, the sago-dish larded with meat, which was described in section 2 of this chapter in connection with the *yamu*. In Okaba the *sep* was covered with loads of bananas, tubers, betel nuts and other refreshments which had been piled upon the layers of eucalyptus-bark covering the dish. Mention is also made of the forks planted round the *sep* and the abundance of garden produce hung on them. Apparently, there is a similar display of food as in the case of a *yamu*. Verschueren, too, mentions the forks as one of the requisites for the show, the context being a description of the pig feast.²¹⁸ From him we know that it is on these forks that the parties concerned hang their food-gifts. After the ceremony each party will take the food contributed by their opposite number.²¹⁹ Van de Kolk's statement that the bystanders told him that the food on display comes from the gardens of the father and the *yarang*-father of the candidate²²⁰ confirms that they were the two parties who had assumed the responsibility for the food-exchange, even though in respect of the origin of the produce we had better read 'father's group and *yarang*-father's group' instead of 'father and *yarang*-father'. Evidently other groups, too, contributed to the festivity. Geurtjens, in a description of a feast for a *wahuku* at Okaba, informs us that a big *sep* is prepared which is covered with garden produce. Then the *yarang*-father takes the girl by the hand and leads her through the village; they are followed by a whole procession of men and women, the men carrying *wati*-plants, the women bananas, sago or sugar-cane. They go all through the village, following a route marked by poles set upright in the ground and decorated with fruits and twigs. In the end, the girl climbs the pile of food on top of the *sep* and here the participants in the procession deposit their gifts all round her, until at last the girl is almost completely hidden from view. This is the moment for the *yarang*-parents to decorate the girl with the ornaments characteristic of her newly acquired

²¹⁸ Verschueren, Letters IX pp. 8 f.

²¹⁹ L.c.

²²⁰ V. d. Kolk, op. cit. p. 28.

status, after which she is allowed to retire.²²¹ There is not a word on the distribution of the food. As a matter of fact, all our authors are extremely reticent on this point, although they do not omit to inform us that it is this very distribution in which the parties concerned are most lively interested. Van de Kolk confines himself to stating that everybody takes as much as he can carry; there is a distributor, but his function is not explained and within a quarter of an hour's time everybody has had his share. And Vertenten restricts his comment to the pious quotation 'quorum deus venter est'!²²² Fortunately, we have Verschuieren's descriptions of pig feasts and *yamu*.²²³ The pattern which emerges is similar to the one sketched by the previous authors; a pig or a *sep*, or both, as the case may be, surrounded by forks hung with the food which one party has brought for the other. The food is taken away at the moment the *sep* is going to be shared out. The only difference in this respect between a *yamu* and a feast is that the food presented on the occasion of a *yamu* is first taken from the forks by the respective givers, while the exchange is effected later on the same day by the women, who carry it to the graves, whereas at a feast each party immediately collects the food-gift presented by the other group. There is a direct exchange between the two groups which, in the villages of the Kumbe valley (where Verschuieren made most of his observations) each tend to comprise one moiety, the various clans (phratries) of one moiety often helping each other to achieve a maximal effort. Yet, when Verschuieren enters into detail, he does not speak of two bartering moieties, but of two bartering clans, that is, in the case mentioned by him, the *Bragai-zé* and the *Kai-zé*.²²⁴ Apparently, it is primarily an exchange between the two clans; Verschuieren adds the remark that in case the contributions of the two parties should not be even, it is certain that the party which gave the lesser gift bears a grudge against the other.

We do not know to what extent the feast-giving parties in coastal communities, where the moiety-system has come to play only a subordinate part in the regulation of marriages, are assisted by groups other than those belonging to their own phratry. The one thing which is certain is that all feasts follow the same pattern, involving two

²²¹ Geurtjens, op. cit. p. 181.

²²² Vertenten, Ann. 1917 p. 332.

²²³ Verschuieren, Letters IX pp. 8 f.; above, pp. 799 ff.

²²⁴ Letters IX p. 9.

opposing parties. Verschueren leaves no doubt on this point²²⁵ and in his description of a pig feast he gives a number of details which equally apply to feasts without pigs. As a matter of fact, the very incomplete accounts given by the authors to whom we have referred, all confirm the more detailed data submitted by Verschueren. That we are dealing with one common pattern is evident also from the fact that the feast has to be preceded by a hunt. The festive dish must be larded with venison and Geurtjens, when he described the feast for a *wahuku*, makes special mention of the fact that the women made sago while the men went out hunting.²²⁶ We have not the slightest reason to doubt that similar provisions were made on the other occasions here mentioned.

Yet, there are minor variations on the pattern. The child may be placed on the pile of food, as it was in Okaba, but it is also possible that a feast-house is constructed. This happened on the occasion of the feast described by Vertenten, a feast arranged for three girls who were made *wahuki* and for a boy becoming *aroi-patur*. The feast-houses constructed for this occasion had no *soma*. They were simple platforms, each with a slanting roof as a protection against the sun. First, there was a procession of many people carrying garden produce. On their way a woman now and then scattered sirih, betel nuts and white and red *djambu*.²²⁷ When they were approaching the festive grounds, croton-twigs and taro were planted alongside the route. Upon their arrival at the grounds, the candidates seated themselves on the platforms, where they "sat, literally on, in, between and under the food, mountains of food".²²⁸ One girl in particular was positively smothered in the food brought by relatives and friends who came from everywhere, piling up bunches of sago and bananas all around her. In the end only her face was visible. With down-cast eyes she sat there, motionless, buried under the gifts. When no more presents were forthcoming, two women gave her a hand so as to enable her to get out. The huge stack shrank rapidly as the food was being distributed among close acquaintances.²²⁹

²²⁵ Op. cit. p. 7.

²²⁶ Geurtjens, l.c.

²²⁷ A fruit; *djambu* is the Malay term. The Latin name is *Syzygium malaccense*.

²²⁸ Vertenten, Ann. 1917 p. 331.

²²⁹ Ibid. The extreme vagueness of the final clause is characteristic of the merely perfunctory attention paid to social obligations by early (and many later) observers.

Though pigs are a major asset on any important occasion, they are by no means indispensable. Wirz describes a feast which he attended at Birok near Wendu where they did without.²³⁰ Two *évati* had to be promoted to *miakim*, and an *aroi-patur* to *wokraved*. Moreover, two children had to have their earlobes pierced, one family wanted to celebrate a *barar-angai* and one a *vaseb-angai*. The two main candidates were the two *évati* and, the mother's brother of one of them being a man from Sêpadim, the village of Sêpadim had been invited to the feast. Several weeks in advance the men had prepared the *angai-aha*, the feast-house. Again, it was not a *soma-aha*; the posts were of bamboo, but on this occasion the bamboo styles were painted. In all other respects it was a very simple contraption, a platform with a roof over it. This was where, at some stage in the celebrations, the two prospective *miakim* and the *wokraved* were to be seated. A few days after the completion of the feast-hut the villagers began to collect garden produce, which was hung from the styles of the feast-hut and from forked trees and bamboo poles planted in the festive grounds. The last episode of the preparations was marked by a big hunt. The men stayed away for three days, spending the nights in the field, every evening roasting the spoils of the day (the second night also those of the previous day) in order to keep the meat from deteriorating. Meanwhile the women in the village had been preparing a gigantic sago-dish (*sep*), which measured as much as ten meters in length. This dish, consisting of sago and grated coconut, was made for the guests. For themselves, says Wirz, the hosts prepared a tastier meal, one larded with venison. He adds that the big sago-dish for the guests (*kaka*) is a special item, which is served only when there are no pigs to be killed.²³¹ When formulated in this way, the information is confusing. It is unthinkable that the hosts would fare better than the guests. Obviously, what happens is this: the spoils of the hunt go to the various feast-givers, who prepare their own *sep* larded with meat, and these will be shared out among those participating in or attending the respective private feasts. It is not so that the better dishes are reserved for the hosts, rather are these prepared for the private celebrations which together make up the feast. The *kaka* for the guests is provided in addition to all the food they will be given at the various special celebrations, and consequently it will be eaten by guests from outside the village only. Everybody has been preparing sago and grating coconut, of which

²³⁰ Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 10-21.

²³¹ Op. cit. p. 12.

by that stage there are lavish quantities, and it is this profusion of food which makes a joint undertaking feasible. The women of the village join hands in making sago, and so do the men in hunting. This pooling of many individual efforts involves the whole village in the preparations for the feast.

The day of the arrival of the guests is an extremely busy one. People are coming from everywhere, carrying the food they contribute to the feast and hanging it on the posts and poles erected in the festive grounds. The hosts are still occupied with the preparations for the various meals. In the *gotad*, where the old men have assembled to watch the proceedings, the two prospective *miakim* are each decorated with their specific ornament, the *zambu*. Wirz gives an excellent description, clearly demonstrating the erotic symbolism of the ornament. The decorating is not completed until it is almost dark. Then they all go down to the village to eat. The feast has not yet begun; it is the night of the arrival of the guests, who are slowly approaching along the beach, singing *gad-si*. When they enter the festive grounds, all the young people join them and the *gad-si* goes on until daybreak; the older people meanwhile quietly squat together, gossiping. The *gad-si* is the dance for the young people.

In the early morning hosts and guests disperse. The latter will enjoy the hospitality of their respective *boan*-mates. It is the custom for anybody who visits another settlement to go to the members of his own *boan*, who will provide him with food and lodging.²³² They do not allow themselves much time to rest. Early in the morning new preparations are started. In the *gotad* the two *miakim* are painted again. Everywhere people are anointing their hairdoes. Young girls are munching coconut meat to extract the oil, other youngsters are chewing *wati*-stalks to prepare the brew which in coconut bowls will be offered to the *apanapnë-anim* who perform the various ceremonial acts. About ten o'clock in the morning all go to the *gotad*. The first of the two *miakim* comes out, led between his mother's brother from Sëpadim and his mother's brother's wife, who hold him each by an arm. Then follows the second *miakim*, who is led by his mother's brother, himself an *évati*, and his own sister. The mother's brother of the *aroi-patur* who is to become a *wokraved* now takes him by the arm and slips two bone needles through his hair as a token that now, for the first time in his life, his hair is going to be plaited into *mayub* (strands). On this

²³² Verschueren, Letters XI p. 43.

occasion the female *apanapnë-anim*, leading the prospective *miakim*, are as beautifully adorned as the men. Their heads are decorated with the plumes of birds of paradise. The procession meanwhile makes its way to the beach. The candidates must first of all see the beach, the two *miakim* because now for the first time since many years they are allowed to visit it in the day-time, the *aroi-patur* because for a long time afterwards he will be forbidden to go there. In token of the obligation to hide himself from the women, a man holds a palm-leaf in front of his body.²³³ Leaving the beach, the candidates are brought to the village, to the feast-house, where the two *miakim* sit down on the platform to be gazed at and admired by the guests, their relatives and the girls. The *aroi-patur* takes his seat on the far side of the platform, where he is surrounded by bunches of bananas piled up so high as to hide him from view. Relatives come from everywhere to hand small presents to the new *miakim*, chiefly bundles of sago, bananas or a betel-basket. Everything is done in a strictly formal way. "It is astonishing to observe the starch and solemnity displayed by the otherwise vivacious and impulsive Marind", writes Wirz, emphasizing the rigid formality observed on festive occasions.²³⁴ The contrast with normal behaviour is clearly demonstrated by the haste with which the two new *miakim*, when the ceremony is over, return to the *gotad*, visibly relieved that they are through with it. The *aroi-patur* is still on the platform. He lies down, his body covered with a mat, while two women plait his *mayub*. It has become afternoon when they have finished. Then his mother's brother takes the boy to the *gotad*, where the boy's grade-mates will work up his new hair-lengthenings into the *mayub*.

Meanwhile the other celebrations, already referred to, have been taking place. They are followed by a distribution of food. Part of it goes to the *apanapnë-anim*, their helpers and all those who assisted in decorating the candidates. Big piles of garden produce are assigned to the mothers' brothers. Wirz also mentions the bowls of *wati* which are handed out among those who performed some function, and the sharing out of the feast-dish (*kaka*) among the guests, who all receive

²³³ The ceremony illustrates that the *aroi-patur* grade is, in reality, a transitional one. The boy has not yet received the hairdo characteristic of a novice; he is still a *patur*, though a *patur* who is, in fact, bound to obey the rules of conduct mandatory upon a *wokraved*. From now on, he has to observe these rules strictly, and not in the more or less haphazard way in which he had previously been allowed to follow them.

²³⁴ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 17.

a lump of sago and a *wati*-stalk. The amounts of food distributed (and exchanged) are enormous. The photograph of Tafel 6 in Part IV of Wirz's monograph gives ample evidence of the munificence of the gift-givers. Details, however, are sadly lacking. As a matter of fact, they could only have been given by an observer who was fully aware of the marriage-relations governing the pattern of exchange, which Wirz certainly was not.

In the afternoon the activity in the *gotad* is resumed. The *miakim* are given new ornaments, this time those of a real *miakim*. The *zambu* is taken off and they struggle into the *ségos*, the broad and very tightly fitting rattan girdle which must somehow be forced over the buttocks before it encloses the loins. This is a tall order; four men are pulling and wrenching at the girdle with all their might. The buttocks of the poor candidate are greased with oil to make them smoother. Holding his balance by clinging to a coconut palm, he tries to make his body as slender as possible. At last the *ségos* fits tightly round the waist. Another girdle, a long one made of rushes and called *wib*, is fixed over the *ségos*. On the back the *wib* ends in a long tail; at the front a *kékéwin*, a *semifusus*-shell, is fixed to it. The *miakim* has his penis pulled upwards, tucked in between the body and the tightly fitting *ségos* (cf. Plate I). When he has donned his other ornaments, the *miakim* is ready to return to the village. By now the twilight has gathered already and in the village the people are sitting round small fires, preparing their evening-meal. Later in the evening they start the great festive dance, the *samb-si*. It goes on all night. Towards the end the women and girls bring lumps of sago-bread, which they hang on the arms of their husbands and brothers. Then the *samb-si* is resumed, even more frenziedly and passionately than before, until, suddenly, it stops and the men reach for their bows and shoot their arrows into the walls of the nearest men's house. The dance and the feast have come to a close. The men hurriedly chew their *wati* and gradually the festive grounds are emptied of merry-makers.

The description of the feast presented by Wirz gives, in spite of all its deficiencies, a clear idea of how a combination of privately sponsored feasts results in a great celebration in which the whole territorial group participates. There is one feature, however, which is not mentioned in his description of the feast at Birok, nor in any of the other accounts previously mentioned. This is the singing of *yarut* in the night preceding the celebration. It is a feature which, for reasons to be ex-

pounded presently, belongs more specifically to pig feasts. All the feasts which have been commented on so far were not pig feasts, however, and therefore we must now proceed to give a more detailed résumé of the main traits of this type of celebration. Fortunately, we are on firmer ground here, as we may have recourse to the data made available by Verschueren in his letters.²³⁵

Since part of the procedure has already been dealt with,²³⁶ the reader is here reminded of the fact that the raiser of the pig is not the owner. Usually he is a relative belonging to the opposite moiety — or, at least, to another phratry — and preferably an in-law. At the time the pig is given, neither the owner nor the raiser can have any preconceived idea as to what future occasion the pig is to be killed on. As it is, it takes some five years for a piglet to grow into a stout and fat boar, which is too long to allow of any planning ahead.²³⁷ Not until the pig has sufficiently fattened to be ready for slaughtering in the near future, will plans for a feast be made. First of all, the raiser consults the owner, whose assent is indispensable, as he has to contribute substantially to the occasion. It may happen, too, that the raiser dies before the boar is full-grown. In that case the pig will probably be killed on the *yamu* held in his honour.

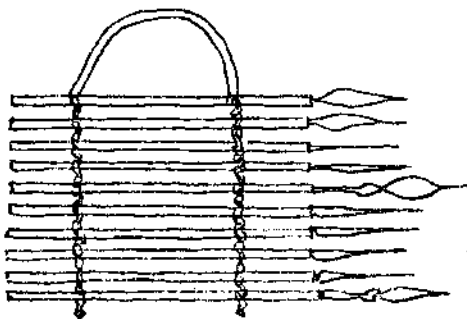


Fig. 8.

Tanggé. From a sketch made by J. Verschueren.

The owner of the pig is ipso facto the *Diwazib* and to him the raiser or his deputy goes to invite him to kill his pig. On this occasion a date

²³⁵ Verschueren, Letters IX pp. 7-9, XI pp. 44 ff.

²³⁶ Cf. p. 828 note 207.

²³⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 45.

for the event is agreed upon, which, as a rule, will be after about one month. When the day has been appointed, both parties make preparations. The raisers construct a platform on which the pig is to be cut up, and they must make the sago for the festive dish. Since they cannot do this unaided, they will solicit the assistance of their moiety-mates.²³⁸ The owner has yet other tasks awaiting him. He must collect a sufficient quantity of *wati* to cover the entire carcass of the boar when it is laid down on the platform. He has to supplement his gift with yams and taro, bananas and sugar-canestalks. Finally, he has to make a *tanggé*, a bundle of arrows which are tied one to another so as to form a kind of trelliswork (cf. fig. 8). Valuable items such as stone axes, birds of paradise and other ornaments (nowadays it is chiefly knives and clothes) must be fixed to the *tanggé* when he hands it to the raisers of the pig by hanging it on the back of the woman who reared the animal. He is now in the attire of a *Divazib*. In former times the woman — often the giver's own sister — walked up and down for a while, displaying the gift for the onlookers to admire it; to-day she puts the *tanggé* down immediately.²³⁹

Obviously, the owner of the pig is even more dependent on the assistance and co-operation of his moiety-mates than the raisers are. How onerous his obligations can be is illustrated by the following experience Verschueren had at Saror. A few years previously somebody had given a breeding-sow (of European stock) to the village. The sow was barren and consequently it had to be killed one day. The animal had been raised by the wife of the village chief, a *Mahu-zé* man. It so happened that the chief died and that shortly afterwards his widow followed him in the grave. The animal was then taken care of by the chief's brother and his wife. Since the giver of the pig, a compatriot of Verschueren, had left New Guinea, he was invited to take the owner's (the giver's) place and act as *Divazib*, apparently on the *yamu* for the chief's widow. Verschueren continues: "I enquired whether they wanted me to officiate in the traditional manner and with a laugh they replied: 'Yes, we are prepared to risk that because it is you, and you at least know all the implications'. So I had to provide the *wati*. To get it I went to Bad and Wayau, because I would need quite a lot of *wati* to cover up the big imported sow. In

²³⁸ Verschueren here refers to a Kumbé valley situation. In the more populous coastal communities the raisers might confine themselves to applying to their phratry-mates for help. It all depends on the projected size of the celebration.

²³⁹ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 7 jo. XI p. 46.

the two villages only the *Geb-zé*, the *Kai-zé* and the *Ndik-end* with the *Samkakai* were willing to help me, as I was considered to be a *Diwazib* of their moiety. They did indeed collect everything that was needed and together we celebrated the feast, everybody receiving, of course, their legitimate share". In parentheses Verschuieren adds that the members of the *Geb-zé* moiety of Saror were also among the participants, but as they were unable to provide all the *wati*, he had been obliged to go to Bad and Wayau.²⁴⁰ The case provides an apt illustration of the importance of the moiety-system in Kumbé valley social relations. It gives evidence, too, of the extensive degree of co-operation required for even such a simple event as a *yamu*.

There is so much variation in the numbers of pigs that are killed on any pig feast that it is perfectly impossible to establish an average. There are feasts for which only one or two pigs are killed, but in 1933 Verschuieren attended a celebration at Yatomb where 34 pigs were slaughtered. Vertenten makes mention of 27 pigs that were killed at the pig feast of Méwi, but he also refers to a feast involving not more than two animals.²⁴¹ Wirz attended a pig feast at Domandé, a really great feast, where only five pigs were killed,²⁴² whereas Verschuieren mentions numbers of 17, 4, 6, 3, 7, 4, 3, 9 and 1 animals killed at various pig feasts celebrated since 1956. Vertenten's assertion that in olden times the numbers of pigs killed during a pig feast ran into 30, 40 or even 50²⁴³ need not be questioned, but then such feasts were major exceptions, which becomes the more likely if we consider the heavy obligations contracted by the owners.

Each pig which is to be killed has its own *Diwazib*. This does not imply that every *Diwazib* goes through the ordeal of dancing all the night through. It often happens that some of them confine themselves to just killing the pig. Actually, none of our printed sources has more than one *Diwazib* performing the nocturnal dance. Verschuieren, however, saw at least four *Diwazib* at work in Yatomb, where 34 pigs were killed, and at the pig feast of Méwi (27 pigs) the *Diwazib* was accompanied by six performers beating drums. Yet, there was only one man who danced.²⁴⁴ It seems that there is a tendency to leave the night-

²⁴⁰ Ibid. IX p. 11.

²⁴¹ Vertenten, Ann. 1915 p. 164, I.L. II p. 354.

²⁴² Wirz, M.A. IV p. 34.

²⁴³ Vertenten, J.P. 1920 p. 357.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. Ann. 1915 p. 151.

long dancing, which is very exhaustive, to only one, or a few, of those entitled to this privilege.

The complete procedure, described by Verschueren, is as follows. In the evening the *Diwazib* (the owner) is invited to the raiser's house. Here a mat has been spread on which he sits down. The raisers and their relatives bring him food and *wati*. Raw sago is put in his lap, bananas, *wati*, taro and other vegetables are piled up around him. Finally a fresh loaf of roasted sago is handed to him and this marks the end of the ceremony. The *Diwazib*, assisted by his own people, puts on his ornaments and climbs the platform, where he dances until daybreak. In the meantime the old people assemble elsewhere in the village to sing *yarut*. Later in the night the *gad-si* is set in (this at least is what happens nowadays; formerly the *Diwazib* could have performed his dance during a *samb-si* or even a *waiko-si*.)²⁴⁵

At daybreak the big, heavy, decorated club is brought and the *Diwazib* gets down from the platform. The ornaments on his head and arms are taken off, but he must retain the fibre skirt, which is arranged round his loins. Now the woman who has raised the pig comes forward and sprinkles or rubs some chalk on the *Diwazib's* shoulders and forehead. The natives say that this serves to make his shoulders strong and his head clear, but also that by this means the raisers of the pig indicate that they do not blame the *Diwazib* for killing the animal.²⁴⁶ Verschueren also points out that Wirz's account, according to which the *Diwazib* himself rubs his arms with chalk, is at variance with the facts. He goes on to tell us that the pig is lured to the place of slaughter by the woman who raised it. She now feeds the animal. If it keeps quiet and just guzzles its food, the *Diwazib* may try to hit it where it stands, but more often a few young men seize it by the legs, throw it and hold it down, thus enabling the *Diwazib* to hit it between the eyes, striking one mighty blow which should be forceful enough to kill the animal instantaneously. One blow rarely suffices to finish off the poor pig, particularly when it is a big specimen. One or two members of the *Diwazib's* party do the rest. Even if the animal has been killed by the first blow, they will yet deal him a few more. The man who has been given the task of apportioning the pork is among the helpers. When the pig has been killed [or is about to expire, v.B.] a few young men drag it away and put it on a platform which has been constructed over a

²⁴⁵ Cf. the descriptions of the feasts at Méwi (Vertenten, op. cit. p. 164) and Domandé (Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 30, 31).

²⁴⁶ Verschueren, Letters IX p. 8.

grave, so as to make the blood drip on the tomb. The pig is not struck down on the grave, though the actual spot, of course, is not far away from it.

The raisers of the pig now bewail the animal, a detail reported by various authors. Shortly afterwards "the owner of the pig (the *Diwasib*), assisted by the members of his group, covers the animal with *wati* and food. Croton-twigs are added to lend colour to the picture. On the right and the left of the platform forked posts have been erected and on these the owners and their people as well as the raisers and their kinsfolk hang presents consisting of various kinds of food".²⁴⁷

"Finally the distributor, a member of the owner's moiety, ascends the platform. As soon as the raiser and his people have removed the food and the *wati*-stalks which cover the carcass, he begins to cut it up. It does not take him long. Following an old tradition, he starts at the snout, making two long cuts, straight down to the tail. After some additional chopping and skinning the animal falls apart, the top half comprising the upper part of the head, the back and the hindlegs, and the bottom half the lower jaw, breast, belly, forelegs and intestines. They at once proceed to give the lower half to the raisers, while the owner and his group keep the upper half for themselves. Both parties now get ready to apportion their shares among themselves. The bones are removed and the meat is cut up lengthwise into long, fairly narrow strips. Each party appoints one or more elderly men who portion out the meat among the members of their respective groups. In allotting the shares, they have regard to the services rendered by each individual member as well as to his social position. It seldom happens that people grumble at their share. The rules are fair, and before long everybody has been given his due, whether this be large or small.

"In the meantime the women prepare a meal. The big sago-dish (*sep*) which has been distributed is, in fact, only an extra. The men now drink *wati* and then have their meal. Presently the village looks deserted. This, now, is the pig feast. Usually, there is a combination with other, minor feasts, such as *bahar-angai* or *ihir-angai* [piercing the earlobes, v.B.]. These ceremonies take place after the pig has been killed and the carcass covered up [with *wati* and vegetables]. These activities stand quite apart from those organized by the raisers and the owners of the pigs. However, if there are enough pigs, the organizer of such a minor ceremony will take the child who is going to be

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

decorated and bring him to a pig of his own moiety (i.e. a pig whose owner belongs to his moiety), standing him on the back or the hindlegs of the animal".²⁴⁸

For two reasons the exposition given by Verschueren is of considerable interest. First of all, it gives a clear picture of the extensive obligations a man has in respect of his sister's family. A marriage is concluded without a bride-price being paid or valuable gifts presented, but later in his life a married man has to bestow considerable largesse on his wife's family. At the feast of Domandé Wirz noted a gift presented to the raisers of the pig which consisted of twenty new betel-baskets, one sleeping-mat, a *tanggé*, glass pearls, knives, tobacco and several *karuri* (a headgear made of birds of paradise plumes, which, in those years, was an expensive present because the export of these birds had not yet been forbidden).²⁴⁹ The facts call for a reconsideration of our views of the prevalent pattern of social relations. On the face of it, throughout his life-time the individual is more or less confined within the circle of his own *boan*. Nothing could be further from the truth. The hard facts are that, from the age of twelve or thirteen till his marriage some seven years later, a boy is under the supervision of his mother's brother, stays with him in his men's house, works for him, receives presents from him and has a close homosexual relationship with him. The bonds uniting mother's brother and sister's son are the closest imaginable. Their homosexual contacts may contribute to a further emotional strengthening of their relationship. The two families participate in these relations. The father has to arrange one feast after another to celebrate the successive occasions on which his children pass on to another stage of their lives and the mother's brother is the ever-present guest who contributes so substantially to the occasion that these feasts are, in fact, not feasts given by the boy's family, but by the two families together. At the same time the mother's brother also gains by the relationship. As a *binahor*- or *yarang*-father he enjoys many privileges and the lavish provisions he must make for the feasts given in honour of his wards are fairly well balanced by the services they render him or his wife. Moreover, not all feasts are really expensive. It is primarily the pig feast which makes heavy demands on his resources. He cannot accuse his in-laws of having manoeuvred him into that situation. After all, he is the owner of the pig and by giving

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 9.

²⁴⁹ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 34.

it to his wife's brother he started the cycle which, when completed, yields a reward in the social prestige he earns.

The second important point made by Verschueren is that the pig feast is connected with the cult of the dead. The feast is preceded by the singing of *yarut* and the pigs are cut up over the graves, which soak up the blood dripping from the platform. We do not know whether the particular grave selected as the site of the platform is that of a deceased related to both parties. The one thing we know for certain is that a pig feast is a last commemoration of the departed. When the feast is over, the stick which had been planted on the grave after the bones had been painted will be taken away and the spot is given over to oblivion. Vertenten, in his description of a feast at Yéwati, notes: "Presently the two pigs will be carved up on one of the trestles constructed over the graves. This is the proper way to do it; the blood dripping down on the sand is like a last farewell to the deceased. When everything is finished, the hardwood sticks which marked the sites of the graves will be pulled up and the graves will fall into oblivion . . . the children have their ears pierced, receive their first armbands or hairdo on the grave of a father, a grandfather or an uncle. That is as it should be".²⁵⁰ We must leave Vertenten responsible for his assertion that the blood dripping down on the sand signifies a last farewell to the deceased. The natives do not state this in so many words. The one explicit statement we have was made by a man of Méwi; on meeting Vertenten, who was walking over the festive grounds where many dead pigs were lying on the graves, he said: "Look here, sir, this is why we raise pigs, for a very feast like this. The pigs are laid on the graves. After that, the dead will be forgotten forever; we pull up the hardwood sticks which up to this moment have marked the sites of the graves".²⁵¹

Earlier authors have reported on the connection between a pig feast and the graves, but they did so in general terms, suggesting that the feast was celebrated on the graves.²⁵² From Verschueren's letters we know what this must be understood to mean. They do not dance on the graves, but the pig is cut up on a platform constructed over the grave of a dead relative. This homage to the dead is not confined to people who died in their prime. Wirz makes mention of a platform constructed over the grave of the mother of a young man who had been

²⁵⁰ Vertenten, I.L. II pp. 354 f.

²⁵¹ Idem, Ann. 1915 p. 165.

²⁵² Cf. Cappers, J.P. 1909 p. 121; Van Baal, Godsdienst p. 232 referring to an interview with Viegen; Wirz, Dämonen p. 125.

promoted to *éwati*.²⁵³ She must have been a somewhat elderly woman.

6. FEASTS (CONTINUED)

Sometimes a feast becomes a highlight in the life of the Marind-anim. This happens when the feast stands out among others on account of the high number of participants, the abundant supplies of food or the magnificence of the show. A *kui-angai* following upon the headhunt organized at the completion of an initiation, might stand a good chance of becoming such an event, the topic of village gossip all along the coast. The presence of a great number of guests from other villages, including, if possible, some that are far away, is a major condition if a feast is to become a big feast, a *yaba angai*. If it should be the rule that it is primarily the guests who perform the big show-dances which make up such an important part of the program, a feast cannot really be classified as a major event unless at least one entire village has been invited. Wirz, however, is the only author to say that there is such a rule.²⁵⁴ Anyhow, it is not a hard and fast one; from Wirz's description of the *humum-angai* at Buti the reader gathers that here the host village had an important part in staging the main show. However, it was not an ordinary feast, considering that the guests were, primarily at least, Kanum-anim, who are unable to produce anything that comes up to the Marind-anim standards for a show-dance.²⁵⁵

There is no fixed program for such a big feast. All sorts of variations are possible, and what in any particular case the actual arrangement will be, depends partly upon whether freshly captured heads or pigs are available, partly on what kind of show the participants envisage, and even these shows themselves may vary considerably. One thing is certain, the preparations for such a feast are extensive. Vertenten mentions the following stages in the preliminaries to a *kui-angai*, a headhunters' feast:

1. *suba*, bamboo. Bamboo is fetched for the fence round the festive grounds, which are usually rectangular, measuring some 100 by 50 meters. The *kui-aha* and a few other houses belonging to the men's house which has taken the initiative, are enclosed in it;
2. *essara*, the platforms on which the participants will sit and sleep; they are built all along the inner side of the enclosure and each is covered with a simple roof;

²⁵³ Wirz, l.c.

²⁵⁴ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 22.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 61 ff.

3. *takav*, lit. fire, here referring to firewood, of which great quantities are needed for stewing the dishes;
4. *sakai*, lit. white ants' heap. Chunks broken off from a white ants' heap, which is as hard as stone, are heated and used for stewing the sago;
5. *da hor*, beating sago, of which there must be an abundant supply;
6. *baisam*, plaiting the hairdress;
7. *dirari*, bamboo water-vessels from which water is poured on the sago-dish and which contain the drinking water for the dancers;
8. *ahat* and *bes*, hardwood forked trees and hardwood clubs, the former to hang the gifts of garden produce on, the latter to kill the pigs with, if the feast is also a pig feast;
9. *kav manop meb*, the yams are hung on the forked trees;
10. *rug*, *Terminalia catappa*, a tree with horizontal branches growing in tiers. A tree of this kind is cut down and the branches trimmed so as to form three distinct platforms. Singing and laughing, the men carry the *rug* (or *luga*) to the festive grounds, where the tree is firmly set up in the earth. The two lower platforms are used for the display of food, the upper one for dancing;
11. *kumbu*, grating coconut (for the sago-dish); the feast is near at hand;
12. *ohan*, hunting during the last four days preceding the feast.²⁵⁶

Vertenten does not mention the construction of a *soma-aha*, a feast-house with carved posts. A *soma-aha* is constructed for a pig feast. It takes the place of the platform on which the pig is cut up. Wirz reports that there was one at the pig feast in Domandé. Apparently it was constructed for the pig raised by the man who was the prime mover of the feast. The *Divazib* who killed this animal was a man from Bahor, the village invited. Other owners of pigs had contented themselves with simpler contraptions.²⁵⁷ Wirz further informs us that east of the Kumbu the construction of a feast-house with carved posts used to be celebrated with a small feast for the children.²⁵⁸

In Vertenten's account the *soma-aha* is omitted, because he confines himself to sketching the bare outline of a *kui-angai*, which is not

²⁵⁶ Vertenten, BKI 1923 pp. 67 f.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. pp. 22 f., 33 f. jo. Verschueren, Letters XI p. 45. According to the latter's informants the man who constructed the *soma-aha* must have been the man who took the initiative and, consequently, almost certainly a *pakas-anem*.

²⁵⁸ M.A. IV p. 23.

necessarily also a *basik-angai*. The pattern of the *kui-angai* is summarized as follows. Shortly before sunset the feast is inaugurated by the old men singing *ayasé*. Later *ayasé* is substituted by *wasipé*, sung by the men and the *éwabi*. This goes on till sunrise. Then they have a meal, after which they sleep the whole day.²⁵⁹

The second night is the night of the *samb-zi*. During the *zi* the guests from neighbouring villages arrive, also singing *samb-zi*. People carrying flaming torches walk to and fro among the groups of dancers, who all enter the festive grounds, never interrupting their dance, each group keeping apart and singing its own songs. The *ruga* or *luga* is ascended by the most popular young man of the celebrating village. He dances alone on the high platform. Verschueren, too, mentions the lonely dancer on the *luga* and points out that the young man who enjoys the privilege of performing is a future *pakes-anem*. Being allowed to dance on the *luga* is not merely an attestation of popularity; it is the reward for courage demonstrated in warfare.²⁶⁰ Vertenten continues his description by stating that, in the early morning, there is a parade of beautifully ornamented young men. From the description I gather it is a *wasipé* or a *humum-angai*. Vertenten adds that a *kui-angai* may also be combined with a *uar-ti-zi*, a *waike-zi*, a *suba-mit* or a *basik-angai*. We shall revert to the dances later on in this section. The third and last night is devoted to *gad-zi*.²⁶¹

Wirz gives another outline of the pattern of a great feast. From the description we conclude that the context is that of a pig feast, because he states that the first night there is *yarut*, the second night *samb-zi*, while the third and, as the case may be, also the fourth night, are devoted to *gad-zi* and one of the great show-dances.²⁶² Actually, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to give a blueprint of the average great feast. They are all different and the criteria for classifying a feast as a major one are varied and often rather subjective.²⁶³ There is more to be gained by studying the detailed reports on a number of feasts than by making generalizations which do not and cannot hold true, because each feast had its own, individual form.

In spite of the obvious shortcomings of Vertenten's account in the

²⁵⁹ The ceremony with the captured heads is not mentioned by Vertenten; cf. above, p. 749.

²⁶⁰ Verschueren, Letters II p. 2, XI p. 44. Cf. also Vertenten, Ann. 1941 p. 122.

²⁶¹ Vertenten, BKI 1923 pp. 68 f.

²⁶² Wirz, op. cit. p. 22.

²⁶³ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 44.

Annalen 1915,²⁶⁴ his description of the feast celebrated at Méwi in August 1914 has a few interesting aspects. Originally, it was to have been a *kui-angai*. In the autumn of 1912 Méwi had been on a headhunt, and a very successful one, too. All would have been well if the new assistant-resident of Merauke had not interfered. In February 1913 all the western villages, Méwi included, which had participated in the expedition were punished, and the feast had to be postponed. The Méwi people then announced that they would hold a big pig feast. They invited the people of Bahor and Anasai (east of the Kumbe), but these, fearing that the authorities might interfere, did not dare to accept the invitation. The pigs being fat and numerous, the feast had to be celebrated notwithstanding, so Okaba, Makalin, Alaku and even Sangasé²⁶⁵ were invited instead. Once the difficulties caused by repeated delays had been overcome, Méwi succeeded in organizing quite a big celebration, an impressive achievement when it is considered that in recent years the population had dwindled to 93 people, children included. There were many separate private celebrations, for *éwati*, *wahuki*, the piercing of ears and the plaiting of hair-lengthenings. All this necessitated the killing of 27 pigs and the laying out of two different festive grounds. The first night (the one after the return of the hunting-party) there was *gad-zi*. In the afternoon of the second day the guests arrived. That night *samb-zi* was danced. Early in the same night the *Diwazib*, preceded by six drummers, appeared and climbed the platform, where he danced all night through. In the early morning the pigs were killed and the distribution of the food and the exchange of gifts occupied the better part of the day. The third night the old people sat down inside the enclosure round the festive grounds to sing *yarut*, while on the beach the young people were singing *gad-zi*. The old ones continued even when, toward daybreak, the *gad-zi* stopped because a *humum-angai* was going to be presented by the *éwati* of Méwi, Alaku, Okaba and Makalin.

We note a few deviations from the usual pattern; the *yarut* is sung, not in the night before the killing of the pigs, but in that following the slaughter, and the *humum-angai* is presented, not by the people of one of the visiting villages acting by themselves, but by the *éwati* of all the visiting villages together with those of the host village.

More detailed is Wirz's description of the feast celebrated at Domandé

²⁶⁴ Vertenten, Ann. 1915 pp. 148-152, 164-166, 181-184; incompletely in J.P. 1915 pp. 533-535.

²⁶⁵ The relations between Méwi and Sangasé were rather strained at the time.

round about Christmas 1917.²⁶⁶ The guests were the people of Bahor and Sangasé, though primarily of Bahor. A man of Bahor was going to act as *Divazib* and kill the pig raised by the man who constructed the *soma-angai* mentioned a few pages previously.²⁶⁷

Wirz notes how a festive mood gradually settles on the villagers. When the days fixed for the celebration draw near, the young people sing *gad-zi* on the beach every night. The first night of the feast, however, there is only *yarut*, the ceremonial dirge sung by the old. There is no *gad-zi*; the young ones are asleep. In the early morning sago-loaves are distributed among the singers. In the day-time the village looks deserted, but in the afternoon everybody comes home, bringing fresh supplies of sago. Presently the girls are singing a merry *gad-zi* on the beach, where the *éwati* join them, beating drums. They dance and sing till midnight. Then from afar the rolling of the drums announces the arrival of the guests from Papis-Domandé, Little Domandé, the sister village of Samb-Domandé (i.e. Great Domandé) where the feast is celebrated. Apparently the people of Bahor are among them. The guests are singing *samb-zi*. At daybreak they enter the village; it has taken them six hours to cover a distance which would normally be made in a quarter of an hour.

In the course of the day other guests will arrive, coming from far and near. In the afternoon preceding the third night the guests are busy preparing their decorations for the *waiko-zi*; in the village many jostle round one of the smaller feast-huts where an *éwati* is being decorated for his age-grade promotion. About five o'clock in the afternoon the festivities begin. The *waiko* is always preceded by a small *déma-wir*. The *déma-wir* performers approach from the beach, coming from the west. The first to arrive is the stork (*ndik* or *uar*), led on two decorated cords held by an *iwag* who represents the *déma-nakarū*. Both are beautifully ornamented; the girl is painted red from head to foot. When they are nearing the festive grounds, another *iwag*, painted in black, comes forward and, beating the ground with a croton-twig, gives the performers permission to enter. Presently, another stork appears, then a scrub-hen, then two cockatoos followed by two flying squirrels, while two flying foxes bring up the rear.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 22-39, Dämonen pp. 118-137.

²⁶⁷ See above, p. 848.

²⁶⁸ It is not impossible that they represent the four phratries; the stork is a totem of the phratry of *Aramemb*, the scrub-hen of the *Basik-Basik*, the cockatoo of the *Mahu-zé* (at least if it is of the white variety) and the flying fox and the flying squirrel of the *Geb-zé*.

Now a long procession of fantastically decorated men and children approaches from the east.²⁶⁹ They wear light, softwood images of birds, fishes and other animals, swinging to and fro at the end of the long elastic rods which rise above the *humum*, the elaborate, delicate structure of fragile laths lined with down and plumes which crowns their heads like a nimbus. Darkness has fallen now and the women surrounding them carry flaming torches. When they have arrived near the festive grounds, all kneel down, the *iwag* comes forward again and, beating the ground with croton-twigs, permits them to rise and enter the enclosure, where the dance goes on till daybreak.

Toward midnight another performer has entered the festive grounds, viz. *Diwazib*. Followed by a torch-bearing *iwag* he slowly ascends the platform at the far end of the grounds and dances until the early morning. Then the *waiko* is alternated by a final *samb-zi* and shortly afterwards the dance is over. *Diwazib* descends from the platform to go about his task. The rest of the day is devoted to the distribution of pork, the exchange of gifts and the celebration of the various family feasts.

We note in passing that, in his *Dämonen*, Wirz has the *Diwazib* perform, not during the *waiko-zi*, but during a *gad-zi* which is sung some time during the next (fourth) night of the feast. More important is what follows in the afternoon after the distribution of the food. An old man delivers a long harangue on the subject of sorcery, on which he gets quite eloquent. Other *samb-anim* then take the floor and they, too, speak about sorcery. Lengthy deliberations follow, all suspicions must be removed and everybody must be made to feel that he is among friends who can be trusted. Unfortunately, Wirz could not follow the speeches, but perfect harmony prevailed in the end.

The ensuing night, the fourth after the beginning of the feast, the older people sing *samb-zi*, while on the beach the younger ones dance *gad-zi*. Toward midnight a fresh group of dancers appears on the scene. Two at a time the *éwati* come forward, each with a long bamboo

²⁶⁹ We do not know whether there is a rule to the effect that the *déma* must approach the festive grounds from the west, the *waiko*-performers from the east. At a *humum-angai* at Buti, which was preceded by a stork and two *gari*-bearers, the performers came also from the west (Wirz, M.A. IV p. 61), but at the *humum-angai* held at Kumbe they entered the grounds coming from the east (Wirz, *Dämonen* p. 27). Unfortunately, we do not know whether the latter, too, were preceded by performers who could be classified as *déma*-performers. Probably all this is not so much a matter of principle as of convenience, dependent upon the location of the men's houses or the *gotad* serving as dressing-rooms for the performers.

rising above his head, strapped to his back. The bamboo has retained all the small twigs with their leaves, and these have been dotted with fluffs of down. By means of a long cord the top of the bamboo is connected with one of the *éwati's* hands. With the other hand he holds a big drum and with every beat on the drum the bamboo is bent down. Each *éwati* (there are twenty of them) is accompanied by his mother or an *iwag* or *kivasom-iwag* who holds up a flaming torch, which throws its light on his fantastically adorned and painted figure. The dancers move round the group of older men, who had previously been singing *samb-zi*. The dance of the *éwati* is the *wasipé*. East of the Kumbé the decorations are more elaborate than west of the river. Toward daybreak the *éwati* retire to the *gotad*. The men resume their *samb-zi* and before long the dancing comes to a close.

The next night, the fifth in succession, feast-givers and guests unite in *gad-zi*. At daybreak there is the usual distribution of food and then the guests begin to load their canoes. They want to go home. Shortly before they leave, a few *déma*-performers appear from the western end of the village. Two of them represent storks, the others are *sobolu-ti*, i.e. adorned with cassowary-plumes. *Domandé* is an *imo* village and the *sobolu-ti* are typically *imo*. One of the performers grabs a few young coconuts, another gets hold of a lump of sago, a third of a few *wati*-stalks, all of these being taken from the departing guests. A fourth performer robs them of some yams and a fifth of an old coconut. The performers rapidly make away, like thieves scurrying off with their haul. The guests (the people from Bahor) are visibly alarmed. Then the stork turns up, placidly helps himself to some of their *wati*, and strides off. The scene is meant to convey that the people of *Domandé* have given their guests all they had. In order that the hosts may not be short of food, the *déma* interfere and take back some of the food which has been presented. Now the guests board their canoes and push off, shouting a last farewell to their hosts.

We shall not try to give further examples. Instead, a few words must be said about the various show-dances. It is impossible to enter into detail; the reader who is interested in the technique of making the elaborate and highly variegated decorations is referred to Part IV of Wirz's monograph. We must confine ourselves to a few salient features. After all, the various dances have much in common.

The *waike-zi* is characterized by the fact that it is preceded by a small *déma-wir*. The dancers wear skirts made of fringed coconut-

leaves or painted fibres. They also have fibres tied to their arms. A long elastic rod has been inserted in their hairdo, with, at the top, the image of a bird or some other animal, made of very light material and painted in bright colours. The image swings to and fro with every step or other movement of the body. The dancers arrange themselves in two concentric circles, moving in opposite directions round a group of men who are beating drums. The women perambulate round the outer circle of dancers, the light of their torches falling on their sons, brothers and husbands. Participating in the dance are men, boys and small children. The dance lasts all night through.²⁷⁰

The *uar-ti-si*, the dance of the storks' feathers, is the western equivalent of the *waiko*.²⁷¹ It is also preceded by a *déma-wir*, which is opened by a performer representing a *hais* and wearing the *hais*-mask reproduced in fig. 5.²⁷² The *hais* may be an indication that the *uar-ti-si* performers are *imo*. However that be, the *hais* is followed by a stork and, next, by four *gari*-bearers who take up their stand two by two on opposite sides of the festive grounds. Then enter a yam *déma*, a pigeon *déma*, a cassowary, and the *batend-déma*, apparently accompanied by several others.²⁷³ Then at last the *uar-ti-si* performers arrive. An *iwag* gives them permission to enter, after which they proceed, four abreast. On their heads they wear a kind of small *gari*, not more than 40 cm across.²⁷⁴ Projecting from the hairdo, a long rod passes through this headgear. At the top are a few storks' feathers, from which the dance derives its name. Participants in the dance each wear a skirt similar to that of the *waiko* dancers. They dance throughout the night. Children and *éwari* are not allowed to partake in it; the *uar-ti-si* is danced by *miakim* and married men only. Evidently, the *uar-ti-si* is a formal affair. Storks' feathers are the distinctive orna-

²⁷⁰ For further details cf. Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 27-31. Unfortunately I did not avail myself of the opportunity presented by the *waiko-si* celebrated at Merauke (above, p. 755) to make enquiries with regard to the moieties of the dancers moving clockwise, respectively going in the opposite direction. Reconsidering the movements of the two *gari*-bearers circling round the hut of the cormorant (above, p. 786) I have an inkling that the two groups moving in opposite directions when performing the *waiko-si* might represent the two moieties. Lacking any positive information we can only express the hope that this matter may some time become the object of further research.

²⁷¹ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. pp. 45-49.

²⁷² Cf. above, pp. 619 and 779.

²⁷³ Among those mentioned the phratry of *Aramemb* is represented by the stork, the cassowary and the yam, the *Mahu-zé* by the pigeon and the bower bird (*batend*).

²⁷⁴ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. Tafel 25 fig. 1.

ments of the fully initiated men. Among the *Mayo-Marind* it is only the initiated *miakim* who are allowed to wear them after the completion of the *mayo*-initiation.²⁷⁵ In respect of the *uar-ti-si* a similar rule apparently prevails.

Waiko and *uar-ti-si* have a common pattern. Preceded by a stork and a number of other *déma*-performers, the dancers are magnificent to behold, staging shows in which the community of the males parade in ornaments of overwhelming beauty. These are not feasts that call for merry-making; everybody is solemn and dignified. The singing, too, has no festive overtones; it is monotonous, serious and impressive, with an undertone of savage aggressiveness. In a previous chapter I gave my personal impression of a *waiko-si*. Wirz describes the *waiko* in terms which suggest that he experienced the same feeling; he was reminded of olden times and successful headhunts.²⁷⁶

The *humum-angai* which Wirz observed at Buti resembles a *déma-wir* in many respects. In fact, it seems that here *humum-angai* and *déma-wir* were combined.²⁷⁷ The two authors who described a *humum-angai* both have the show start round about sunrise.²⁷⁸ According to Wirz, who gives the more elaborate account, the procession of dancers is opened by a number of *déma*-performers; first comes the stork, then two *gari*-bearers, then a number of performers carrying multi-coloured fences hanging on sticks which are raised above the head, thus representing the sky at sunset. Another performer wears a big, butterfly-shaped ornament representing the clouds, while yet another holds two oblong fences which represent the waves of the sea. Then follow the *humum-angai* performers proper. Perched on the top of his head, each wears an animal figure, fastened by means of a long rod which passes right through the hairdo and the body of the animal and ends in a long plume. Slipped round the rod, below the plume, is a *singsingi*, a rattle consisting of a piece of bamboo filled with the hard kernels of some fruit. The animal's figure is set off against a kind of nimbus, a construction of ribs of palm-leaflets dotted with down.²⁷⁹ The nimbus is called *humum*, literally cloud, clouded sky, and this name

²⁷⁵ Cf. above, pp. 534, 537.

²⁷⁶ Above, p. 755; Wirz, op. cit. p. 31.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Wirz, op. cit. pp. 60-63.

²⁷⁸ Wirz, l.c.; Vertenten, Ann. 1915 p. 182.

²⁷⁹ Volume 33 of the *Annalen* (1915) has quite a number of delightful sketches of these ornaments drawn by Vertenten. For a photograph of a performer representing a cloud at sunset see Plate XXV fig. 3.

came to be applied to the whole show. In Buti the *humum-angai* was followed by a *déma-wir*.

The *wasipé* has been described earlier in this section.²⁸⁰ It is a show performed by the *éwati*, who appear round about midnight and dance till early in the morning. According to Wirz the dance is called *suba-mil* in the area east of the Kumbe, a term which should be read *suba-mit*, the name of a part of the *samb-zi* (cf. the Berichtigungen zum IV Teil). Whatever the connection with *samb-zi*, the word *suba*, bamboo, is quite apt as a reference to this dance, because a bamboo is the most substantial part of the distinctive decoration of the dancers.

Finally, we have to consider the *déma-wir*, the most impressive and solemn part of a Marind-anim show. For sheer length, a *déma-wir* beggars description. We must confine ourselves to noting a few main points, for more details referring the interested reader to Part IV of Wirz's Marind-anim, which contains long descriptions and a wealth of photographic material, eminently fit to convey a lively impression of the ornate spectacle of colours and designs which unfolds at a genuine feast. Nothing short of a Broadway show could match the brightness of its colours. There is only this difference: it is not a matter of merry-making, but a really solemn occasion and the same holds true of the big dances preceding or following a *déma-wir*. The performers are self-possessed and grave. They move with downcast eyes, never smiling, fully conscious of their importance.²⁸¹ This is not to say that anybody would think that the performer in a *déma-wir* is really a *déma*; everybody knows what it is all about,²⁸² but nevertheless the performer must be a totem-relation of the *déma* represented, he must not speak during the performance, and everything is staged in such a way that the on-looker "is deeply impressed by the solemn behaviour of the performers and the elusiveness of the mysterious scenes"²⁸³

The *déma*-performer is bedecked with an extraordinary variety of ornaments. His face is concealed by a brightly coloured yellow shield representing a bower bird (*batend*). His head is adorned with birds of paradise plumes, in his ears he wears special ornaments, another ornament keeps his lips sealed, indicating that he is not allowed to speak. All kinds of finery cover his breast and back, and round his waist he has a skirt made of hibiscus-fibres. At the back of his head

²⁸⁰ Above, pp. 852 f.

²⁸¹ Vertenten, Ann. 1915 p. 151.

²⁸² Wirz, M.A. IV p. 41.

²⁸³ Ibid. p. 58.

he proudly wears the *humum*, the ornament, often of an enormous size, which we described when we discussed the *humum-angai*. Moreover, each *déma*-performer has his particular face-painting and also the ornaments which refer to his mythical past. Those proper to the coconut *déma* are a few flying foxes, the sago *déma* has a centipede, and so on. Making all these ornaments, which must fit to size, requires a sustained and strenuous effort, in which the old *messav* (medicine-men) take the lead, because they have seen the *déma* and know how they should be impersonated.²⁸⁴

A festive *déma-wir* is performed either shortly before sundown, when it is introductory to *waike-zi* or *uar-ti-zi*, or in the early morning following a big dance or a *humum-angai* celebration. During the years between 1916 and 1918 the local authorities organized a number of big feasts as a reward for the statute labour performed by the coastal villages. During these feasts a few very extensive *déma-wir* were celebrated. By a stroke of good fortune, this period coincided with Wirz's first term of fieldwork. Of one of these elaborate shows he has given a lengthy description.²⁸⁵ It was all of such grandeur as, perhaps, had never been seen before. Among the performers we note first a *hais*, then a stork, then four *gari*-bearers. Now a yam *déma* appears, adorned with representations of the vegetable symbolized by him. A pigeon and a cassowary follow. The latter runs up to another performer who carries an *obyara*-tree, the fruits of which are a favourite food of the cassowary. Then a *batend-déma* appears, guided by two *iwaq*, his *nakari*. Presently there follows the *uar-ti-zi* and the next morning, when the *zi* has been finished, one mythical scene after another is staged. The sago tree *déma*, with four *nakari* leading the way, enters the festive grounds. He ascends a platform, and then a couple of men go up to him and symbolically cut down the tree which the performer carries on his head. Thereupon a number of red-painted *kivasom-iwaq* come forward and take away the sago-rolls which have been laid on the platform. It is the story of the sago tree and *Wokabu*.²⁸⁶

Then follows the scene of *Méru*, the coconut *déma*.²⁸⁷ He goes down to the sea, but a *nakaru* follows him and brings him back. When he arrives at the festive grounds, an accident happens. The tree which the performer carries on his head topples over, dragging the performer

²⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 41.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. pp. 45 ff.

²⁸⁶ Cf. above, pp. 337 f.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 254 ff.

down in its fall. Nearly strangled by the cords which held the tree in place, he lies senseless. The people crowd round him, shaking their heads: the *déma* has entered into him and not until they have driven the *déma* out by beating the performer with a croton-twig, are the cords unfastened which almost suffocated him. Performing a *déma-wir* is, obviously, not merely the putting on of a show; fundamentally it is a matter of the utmost gravity.

And so it goes on and on, the myth of *Konaim-anem*, episodes from the myth of *Yorma*, from the myths of the crab *déma Hoyom*, the *Diwa*-canoe, the bamboo *déma* and the bow *déma*, from the myth of the stork and the eagle, the myth of *Ganguta*, scenes from the life of *Aramemb*, they succeed each other in an endless variety of primitive but highly interesting theatre.

This, of course, was a very big *déma-wir*. Nevertheless, the small one performed at Buti, which followed the *humum-angai*, involved a creditable number of scenes, too. First came the *gomar-déma* of Senayo, who is *Ugu's* teeth,²⁸⁸ then, successively, the *batend-déma*, the *soma-déma* *Ganguta* of Senayo, the banana *déma* of Kuprik, and finally the *uga*-canoe and its crew. Each of these scenes was enacted by men from the particular village which had a part in the relevant myth. Men of Yobar staged the scene of the *uga*-canoe, a man of Senayo impersonated the *soma-déma*, one of Kuprik the distinctive banana *déma* of that place. Apparently the requirement that a specific relationship should exist between *déma* and performer is a very strict one, a fact explicitly noted by Wirz, who points out that the rule that a performer may impersonate only such objects as are his own totem-relations is even more meticulously observed in a *déma-wir* than in a *waiko-zi*. An infringement of the rule would bring on the revenge of the *déma*.²⁸⁹

The fact that *déma-wir* is a really serious matter does not imply that women are excluded. On the contrary, the women play the roles of the *déma-nakari*, even married women being allowed to act. When mythical scenes are enacted, all the age-grades of either sex may appear in them,²⁹⁰ an interesting point because women are excluded from partaking in *waiko*, *humum-angai*, *uar-ti-zi* and *wasipé*. They hold the torches lighting their splendidly arrayed husbands, sons and brothers, but they do not share in their glory, with the exception, in

²⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 281.

²⁸⁹ Wirz, M.A. IV p. 45.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 64.

the *waiko*, of a few little girls who may be decorated and join in the dance. It is evident that, as has been noted earlier, in the *déma-wir* the co-operation of the women is indispensable.²⁹¹ Many hands are needed to make a successful *déma-wir*. Moreover, the *déma-wir* is staged in the day-time. At night the women fill the function of torch-bearers, a very essential function, as the show must be admired by the other visitors and the hosts. During the day the co-operation of the women is required to make a bigger *wir* than would have been possible if the men had had to do without their help.

However, in associating the women with the ritual the Marind will even go further than this. It sometimes happens that they feel that the women are entitled to a feast of their own. Such a women's feast was organized at Wendu in October 1921.²⁹² It was a pig feast. A *soma-aha*, a feast-hut with carved posts had been constructed and lengthy preparations preceded the feast. The women brought sago and vegetables, the men went out hunting. The first night of the feast *yarut* was sung, as usual. The next morning the women (again as usual) went to the gardens to fetch vegetables, while the men made the final arrangements for the coming feast. When so engaged the men do not care to be observed, because the result of their endeavours must be kept a surprise. In the afternoon a *déma-wir* was staged, presented by the men in the customary way. The first to appear was the stork, followed by the other *déma*. That night there was a big *gad-si* in which everybody participated. The next morning the tables were turned: the men went to the gardens and the women made themselves ready for a *déma-wir*. In the afternoon, when the men returned from the gardens, the women entered the village and staged a *déma-wir*. That night there was another *gad-si*,²⁹³ and at midnight *Divasib* put in an appearance and danced till the early morning. *Divasib* was impersonated by a man, because the killing of the pig has to be done by a man.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Cf. above, p. 674.

²⁹² Wirz (M.A. IV p. 65) has 1911, with the rider: "This was a pig feast (headhunt feasts have already become things of the past)". The use of the perfect in the remark in brackets (the original is in the present tense: *Kopijagdfeeste gehören bereits der Vergangenheit an*) and the rather detailed character of the description suggest that he describes a scene which he has seen and which therefore must be dated to 1921.

²⁹³ Both nights they danced *gad-si*, that is, also the second night, in which *Divasib* appeared; another indication that 1911 is an error of print and that one should read 1921.

²⁹⁴ Wirz, l.c.

It is interesting to note that the part played by the women is not felt to be quite equivalent to the men's. It is alright for them to stage a *déma-wir*, but it is the men who have to set the example. Yet, the fact that the women have their *wir* proves that the men are in a way really considerate to the women and are aware that they owe them something. Moreover, the dance of the *Diwazib* is staged during the women's night. It provides another illustration of the curiously contradictory relationship between the sexes. We may interpret it as an indication that among these adepts of the *sosom*-cult the *mayo*-cult, with its emphasis on the role of the mother, is a ritual in which the women have an important part to play. In the myth of *Sosom* as related by Verschueren there is much emphasis on this point. It has *Sosom* sending the women away, pointing out that they go the way of the *mayo*, whereas the men should follow his way.²⁹⁵

Before we conclude this chapter, the reader's attention is called to yet another inconsistency in Marind-anim culture: the magnificence of their feasts and the splendour of their decorations contrast sharply with the general meanness of their houses. Even the feast-houses with their carved posts dwindle to insignificance when compared to the giant men's houses of the Kiwai and the Elema. All the constructive effort and technical skill which the Marind can muster are lavished on decorations of a very transitory nature. He never used these faculties to a more lasting purpose, for instance in the construction of durable dwellings which would transform his village into a really permanent settlement, marking man's adequate response to the challenges of nature. Instead, he contents himself with miserable huts which are replaced whenever the sand, raised by the wind, compels him to accommodate to the vagaries of nature, which he accepts as self-evident. A Marind-anim village is the very picture of squalor and neglect. It is well-nigh unbelievable that these same villages provide the background for the most colourful performances which have ever been staged.

In conclusion, we have to answer the question: what is the feast, and, more particularly, the great feast with its strong impact on inter-village relations? As a social phenomenon we might characterize it as a friendly potlatch, a broad exchange of gifts on a quid pro quo basis. However, underlying it is not that spirit of keen competition charac-

²⁹⁵ Above, p. 272.

teristic of the real potlatch, but a genuine desire to earn public approval and acknowledgement. The tribute paid by the guests who have been satisfied and the admiration of the onlookers who enjoy the spectacle are the highest rewards. It is an attitude which favours the consolidation of friendly relations, the ideal of Marind-anim intervillage connections. As a matter of fact, the whole feast is a fine example of intervillage co-operation. The guests provide the pig(s) and arrange the great dance, the hosts raise the pig(s) and provide the food and the accommodation. The endeavour is not thwarted by the greed of leading individuals in the community, who wish to accumulate wealth. Valuables are relatively scarce. The Marind-anim never developed a system of shell-money, as the mountain tribes did. Their wealth is confined to objects of practical value, such as plumes and a few shell-ornaments to be worn on festive occasions, or stone axes and clubs serving a practical purpose. The substantial exchange of presents, a concomitant of the great feast, is modest in comparison to the gift-exchange of the Gulf of Papua tribes. Wealth is important so long as it is embodied in a practical commodity. It is not an end in itself and accordingly the accumulation of wealth is of limited importance. Wealth is not used as a weapon in a social contest. The Marind-anim feast is geared to the promotion of intervillage friendship, not to the channelling of tensions and even less to keen competition and scoring off other people.

From a religious point of view the great feast constitutes an affirmation of the group's solidarity with the world of the *déma*. Among the four great dances there is only one, the *wasipé*, which is not combined with a *déma-wir*. The *wasipé*, however, is only an extra, presented by the ostentatious *éwati*. On the other hand, *waiho-zi*, *humum-angai* and *uar-ti-zi* are preceded or followed by a *déma-wir*. These dances are virtually solemn parades. Even more solemn is the *déma-wir*. Usually it is not performed separately, independently of the great dances. The *wir* is more than a show; if something goes wrong, it is the *déma* stirring. The *déma* impersonated by any one performer is his private *déma*; he prefers the *déma* to whom, locally and genealogically, he stands closest. In other words, in the great feast the performing group brings its own mythical past to life. It realizes itself by enacting its mythical history, by demonstrating its real essence. All their pride goes into the performance, but the very fact makes them apprehensive lest something should go wrong. The *wir* is an expression and a demonstration of all that is essential to their identity and the

performers may even be selected from among those living in the places most closely connected with the event which is going to be enacted. Such at least happened in the case of the *humum-angai* at Buti. What is socially important is that they perform, preferably, in a foreign village. There they show the best they have, thus playing a vital part in the amazing co-operation characteristic of Marind-anim intervillage relations. What they show is theirs, but it is at the same time that which is essential, in a closely related form, to their hosts.

The *déma-wir* and the concomitant show-dances have yet another dimension. They make part of the ritual cycle inaugurated by the *mayo*-initiation, continued in the headhunt and carried to an apotheosis at the ensuing *kui-angai*, the great feast in which the ritual cycle is completed by the return of the *déma* in their glory. This return is not merely a revitalization of the past. It is far more; it is a confirmation of the essence of life as it has always been and always shall be.

CHAPTER XIV

PRIVATE RITES

The rites which are described and commented on in this chapter are ordinarily ranged under the general heading of magic. Unfortunately, the term magic is equivocal. Many students hold the view that magic and religion are opposites, characterized by contrasting attitudes. The alleged opposition is based on theoretical considerations of an ethnocentric origin rather than on fact; it has contributed very little towards achieving improved standards of observation and description of religious phenomena and has resulted in a fruitless debate on supposed mental states. It is the present author's opinion that in a definition of observable phenomena one should avoid referring to mental states which are not observable at all, or, at most, partly so. Religion had best be defined as comprising all ideas and notions relating to a reality which cannot be determined empirically and all acts implying such ideas and notions. The almost universal assumption of the presence of an empirically indeterminable reality is not only a hard and patent fact; it is, in itself, a phenomenon so curious and specific as to deserve of being recognized as the basic characteristic of a special category of human thought and behaviour, viz. the religious.¹ The logical consequence of the present definition is that magic, however described, is recognized as a religious phenomenon. That is not to say that the term magic has lost every applicability. It is, and probably always will be, a convenient shorthand expression if we want to denote religious acts of a private nature aiming at a tangible result which seems to be attributed to the correct performance of the act rather than to the intervention of a supernatural being.

As a matter of fact, the term magic thus interpreted is often so convenient that it was impossible entirely to avoid using it in this book. Nevertheless, its employment as a scientific term gives rise to some fairly serious objections, even when it is defined as above. Who

¹ Cf. Van Baal, *De Magic als godsdienstig Verschijnsel* (1960; English translation in *Higher Education and Research* 7 pp. 10 ff.).

is to decide that the effect of the act is attributed to its correct performance rather than to an intervening supernatural being? It is a conclusion we arrive at (and often altogether too rashly) without consulting the natives concerned. If they were asked the question who or what it is that produces the effect aimed at by the act — at least if the question could be so framed as to be comprehensible to them — it is not at all certain that their answer would agree with our views. They might object to differentiating between the correct performance of the act and the intervention of the supernatural being, asserting that the opposition implied is void because in essence the act and the supernatural being are inseparable. Nobody ever interviewed the Marindanim on this point, and the fact remains that many of their spells make mention of the names of one or more of their *déma*. They utter the spell in such a manner as to raise doubt whether the spell had not better be classified as a prayer. Even more significant is the fact that one of the few observers who is really proficient in Marind, F. Verschueren, writes in one of his letters: "You contended that [these spells] are not prayers because the formal characteristics of humility and dependency are utterly lacking. Is that really so? I know from experience that the spells are recited in a manner bespeaking respect, suggesting the presence of feelings of submission and humility. The fact that, occasionally, a magician behaves rather arrogantly does not at all justify the conclusion that the *gamo méen* (spells) could not be prayers. Actually, most of the spells can be recited by people who are not professional magicians. All that is needed is for the applicant to belong to the *boan* of the totem concerned. I must confess in all honesty that more than once I have been edified by the devotion of the old men applying their *gamo méen*. And, consequently, I feel perfectly sure that in his *gamo méen* the Marind has his prayers".²

The passage quoted provides sufficient reason for preferring the term private rites to the shorter and more customary, but rarely wholly appropriate, word magic. Although it is impossible consistently to avoid the word magic without becoming priggish, we will give precedence to the term private rites, which defines the observable general characteristics of these acts fairly precisely; they are rites because they are related to the supernatural, and they are performed either in private or at the request of private groups or individuals.

Most of our data on these rites are derived from Wirz's monograph.

² Verschueren, Letters V p. 6.

He devoted almost 60 pages to a detailed description of the various 'magical' practices of the Marind.³ Compared to the wealth of information contained in these pages, the data presented by other authors are very limited in scope. Wirz is the only author who has the valuable details on the spells which make such an important and highly interesting part of these rites. The texts of these spells give much information on Marind-anim religious thought. In the next section we shall deal with the spells and the private rites performed by people who are not specialists. In the second section we describe and discuss the practices of the religious specialists and the training of the medicine-men. The religious meaning of the private rites and their connections with myth and ritual generally are commented on in the last section.

1. PRIVATE RITES PERFORMED BY NON-SPECIALISTS

The religious specialists are the medicine-men (*messav*) and the *dongam-anim* (rain-makers, lit. thunder-men). Among them we shall also include the *kambara-anim*, the performers of the lethal rite of sorcery called *kambara*, although the *kambara-anim* do not, as specialists, constitute a clear-cut category, as the medicine-men and the rain-makers do.

Apart from the rites performed by these specialists, there is a wide spectrum of rites serving all sorts of purposes such as fishing and hunting, gardening and sago-making, love-making and injuring the genital parts, and performed by any man or woman who feels inclined to do so. The main element of these rites is the spell, the *méen* or, as Verschueren has it, the *gamo méen*. There is a great deal of confusion concerning these terms. Wirz differentiates between *gamo* and *méen*, reserving the term *gamo* for the unintelligible formulas borrowed from a foreign language and used to inflict sickness and afflictions such as ulcers, blindness, paralysis, etc. *Méen* are the intelligible spells; "very often they are addressed to a *déma* and therefore they are, up to an extent, primitive prayers, mostly referring to the myths or to specific names or circumscriptions of an animistic nature of the relevant object".⁴ According to Geurtjens and Cappers *gamo* is the term generally applied to denote spells which inflict sickness and effect cure.⁵ They do not confine the range of the term to unintelligible spells of

³ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 63-119.

⁴ Ibid. p. 100.

⁵ Geurtjens, Dict. v. *gamo*; Cappers, J.P. 1908 p. 664.

foreign origin. The opinion presented by Wirz has to be rejected. Actually, his interpretation of the term *méen* cannot stand criticism either. *Méen* means speech and it is a term in common use. When applied to religious formulas it requires an adjective, unless the context makes further specification superfluous. For this reason the term *gamo méen* brought forward by Verschueren ought to be preferred.

Yet, the opinions of Verschueren and Geurtjens do not quite agree. The latter points out that *gamo* is also a persistent skin disease, attributed to 'gamo-sorcery'.⁶ Verschueren, however, emphasizes that *gamo* is used preferably for formulas serving socially approved ends, whereas formulas used for evil purposes are called *wagum* (or *wagum méen*).⁷ He is borne out by Geurtjens' Dictionary to the extent that *wagum* has, indeed, always an unfavourable connotation. It is used in respect of formulas meant to inflict sickness and of the uttering of terms of abuse.⁸ More interesting than the dispute on the exact meaning of the various terms is Verschueren's explanation of their use. Again he stresses that the *gamo méen* has an element of supplication. "Having lived among the Marind for so many years, I have come to be impressed more and more strongly by the importance of these *gamo méen* for daily life. A medicine-man pronounces his *gamo méen* when he wants to cure a patient, addressing himself to the *déma* involved. A clansman utters his *gamo méen* when planting one of his totems, and if somebody else wants to plant that particular crop he will first call upon a member of the totem-clan associated with the species to have the relevant *gamo méen* recited. A man in distress addresses his own *déma* with his *gamo méen* so that he may find a way out of his predicament".⁹ When in a subsequent letter Verschueren discusses the contrast between *gamo* and *wagum*, he writes: *Déwati*, a *Ndik-end* man planting his *wati*, mutters his *gamo méen* while he puts the 'eyes' (cuttings) in the hole. He does this so as to make his plants grow prosperously and when the job is finished, he feels sure that they will do well, first because he uttered the words, and secondly because they are really effective, in other words, the *déma* will indeed give their help. . . . However, now comes Baarpe, a *Mahu-zé* man who nurses a grudge against *Déwati*. He pronounces some words over a tuft of kunai grass, spits on it and buries it in the garden-bed in order to make the *wati* of *Déwati* dry

⁶ L.c.

⁷ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 47.

⁸ Voc. cit.

⁹ Verschueren, Letters V p. 5.

up. No Marind would call Baarpe's words *gamo méen*, but always *wagum méen*. . . . That is why I — and I believe, also the Marind — think that *gamo méen* are always salutary words and *wagum méen* maledictory words. The same applies in case of illness. A sorcerer causes the illness by means of *wagum méen* and a medicine-man cures the ailment with *gamo méen*.¹⁰

We shall not try to go further into the difference between the two kinds of formulas. I must confess that I am not fully convinced that *gamo* is always social or beneficent. Several data, such as those brought forward by Geurtjens, and the use of the term *gamo-ti* as referred to below, in note 13, suggest a more ambiguous content than Verschueren cares to admit. However that be, all spells, whatever the term used for them, have the rigid form of an established formula, they have to do with the supernatural, they may work either good or evil and the *gamo méen* among them may sometimes be equated to prayers. I must add, however, that here again I want to put a question-mark; I presume that *wagum méen*, too, may under certain conditions be called prayers. The Hebrew psalms present a number of well-known examples of prayers for the extermination of adversaries. When he is out to avenge himself, a man may be more desperately in need of supernatural help than when the prosperous growth of his *wati* is at stake.

We shall not dwell here on rites applying unintelligible formulas. From Wirz's description we gather that formulas of this kind are used to do harm to other people and that these formulas are acquired on the occasion of visits to tribes speaking another language.¹¹ Wirz does not give a single concrete example and the wealth of data dealing with intelligible formulas makes it highly probable that these unintelligible formulas constitute a small minority among the vast array of spells applied in private rites.

If possible, the spell is pronounced over the object which is instrumental in the rite. When addressing the sea, the fishes or the crocodiles, the formula is recited over some masticated food which is then thrown into the water. When clouds are addressed, the formula is pronounced into the conjurer's hand, after which he waves his hand at the clouds.¹² I have actually seen this done in an even more expressive way; the formula having been pronounced into the open hand, the

¹⁰ Ibid. XI pp. 47 f.

¹¹ Wirz, M.A. III p. 100.

¹² Ibid. p. 99.

hand was closed and its contents, the formula, thrown up at the clouds that came drifting on. Sometimes the object of the rite is spat upon with saliva mixed with betel juice. As long as the red spittle is visible on the object, e.g. a tree, the conjuration holds, serving as a warning that the object (the tree) is *gamo-ti*, has been conjured.¹³

We do not hear that in these rites the *tang* is used, the magical spatula discussed in the chapter on the *sosom*- and *mayo*-rites.¹⁴ The presentation of *tang* to the new initiates at the end of the *mayo* ceremonies gave rise to the surmise that *tang* are manipulated also in everyday private rites. This is not confirmed by the data at our disposal. Wirz is the only author who treats this subject at some length and he presents the *tang* as an implement of the medicine-man. It is possible that laymen may procure them and utilize the *tang* for some specific purpose. It is even possible, though not probable, that the application of the instrument is wider than we know, but our data do not permit of conclusions to this effect and, consequently, we shall deal with the *tang* in the section on private rites conducted by specialists.¹⁵

The main constituent of the private rite is the formula. In the elaborate comment prefacing the list of spells he collected, Wirz discusses the elements which characterize the formulas.¹⁶ In the first place, there is the great importance attached to names. Names are mentioned in every formula, and these names are secret, except for a few which are more generally known. In part, these names are the *igiz-ha*, the real names of the objects involved. They are *déma*-names or derive from the *déma*. They are jealously guarded secrets. However, the mythological origin of a good many of these names is not demonstrable and Wirz suggests that they should be explained as playful additions, comparable to the names which children give to their toys.¹⁷ We shall take up this point later. For the present suffice it to say that names are very important generally. Every individual has his *igiz-ha*, his real name, which is his head-name. In mythology secret names are

¹³ Op. cit. pp. 100, 101. The passage quoted seems to refer more specifically to unintelligible formulas, but further on in the same chapter it becomes evident that it refers to intelligible formulas as well. Cf. those in connection with the *hanpra* (p. 111) and with *Harau* (p. 113). Remarkable, too, is the use of the term *gamo* in this context. It is an indication that Verschuieren's identification of *gamo* with social, beneficent, is too narrow.

¹⁴ Cf. above, pp. 486 f., 534.

¹⁵ Below, pp. 895 i., 906 f.

¹⁶ Cf. Wirz, M.A. III pp. 101-104.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 102.

prominent. Recalling what he experienced when he was collecting mythological data, Wirz states: "The natives always thought that it was the secret names I was after. Instead of telling me the myth which I had been asking them to relate, they often confined themselves to whispering a series of names in my ear, saying, 'Now you have got what you asked for', supplementing the information with an exhortation not to pass on the names to others".¹⁸

A second characteristic is the frequent use of *déma*-names. Often it is not only a matter of mentioning a *déma*'s name, but of addressing the *déma* and their *nakari*. Wirz writes: "The effect of the formulas. . . is greatly enhanced when the *déma* are involved and addressed",¹⁹ an interesting statement because it contains another affirmation of Verschueren's viewpoint that often these religious formulas are more in the nature of prayers than of compelling spells.

The third point emphasized by Wirz is the part played by symbolism in these formulas. A banana-leaf is called an oar and a boar's mane are equated with that special variety of men's headgear which is made of cassowary-plumes. In this same context mention should be made of the tendency towards anthropomorphism which Wirz observed in Marind-anim perception. A bow is a human person with a nose and a foot; a canoe is given the shape of a human being; the germinal holes of the coconut are its eyes and mouth; a drum has a mouth and teeth. These anthropomorphisms remind the Marind of the *déma* who is the primeval maker of the object.²⁰

This last observation carries us back to the *déma* and their prominent place in the formulas. The close relationship between *déma* and clan raises the problem of the connection between private rites and clan-membership. We found that Verschueren is explicit on this point. The spell over a certain crop has to be recited by a totem-mate of the crop. Wirz holds a similar view, but he does not state the general principle in such clear-cut terms as Verschueren. Nor could he, because, going into greater detail, he could not fail to become aware of the apparent objections to an all-embracing generalization. They are obvious from his elaborate account of the spells pronounced over the bow. Wirz found that not only has the object as a whole its secret *igiz-ha*, but that this also applies to its several parts. One informant even had such a name for each separate node in the bamboo bow, six in all. Although

¹⁸ Ibid. II p. 41.

¹⁹ Ibid. III p. 101.

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 103 f.

the bow *déma* is more specifically *Zohé*,²¹ other phratries, too, have their bow-myths and, consequently, their own *igiz-ha* and spells. The *Geb-zé* claim affiliation to the bow because the bamboo is their *amai* (grandfather, totem); the *Bragai-zé* have their own myth of a bow; ²² the *Basik-Basik*, too, have a specific connection with the bow because both *Nazr* and *Bomaid-anem* were accomplished marksmen,²³ whose names are invoked in the relevant formulas of the *Basik-Basik*. Even the *Ndik-end* and *Kai-zé* have their own myths. They assert that the bow originated from the *orib*-fish which had been born from *Wariop*. *Bébukla* put the fish into a bamboo tube, whereupon the bamboo changed into a bow.²⁴ Wirz adds that he heard the story only once, but anyhow it is evident that the members of the phratry of *Aramemb* also have their own story and their own names for the bow.

The reason why there is such a variety of myths and names is obvious. Man and his bow are inseparable companions; he carries it with him wherever he goes and, whenever a situation arises in which he needs it, it will not be possible for him to ask somebody else to do the conjuring he wants at that particular moment. It is evident that for the provision in urgent needs or, as the case may be, just ordinary daily ones, he cannot depend on other people's magic. When these needs arise, every individual must be able to help himself. There is something to say for the supposition that this is the main reason why the different phratries have their own sub-species of sago and banana.²⁵ The knowledge of their secret names enables the members to conduct the most urgent rites on their own account, though in other situations they may apply to a member of the relevant totem-clan. When dealing with fertility rites, Wirz states that, according to the Marind, the sperma of a member of the coconut clan has the best effect on the growth of the coconut palm and that of a *Mahu-zé* on the sago trees.²⁶

One question remains completely unanswered. This concerns the manner in which each individual man or woman acquires the knowledge of the formulas they need for their daily life and work. It is fairly certain that a father and a *binahor*-father teach their (*binahor*-)son, but whether they are the chief sources of his information or whether

²¹ Above, pp. 345 f.

²² Ibid. p. 380.

²³ Ibid. pp. 398 ff., 404.

²⁴ For *Wariop* and *Bébukla* see above, p. 295.

²⁵ Above, p. 338.

²⁶ Wirz, M.A. III p. 93.

other people are willing to impart their knowledge to junior clan members and, if so, to what extent, is purely a matter of conjecture. In this context reference may be made to our discussion of the instruction given to the neophytes during the *mayo*-initiation.²⁷

Having completed our introductory survey, we must revert to the religious formulas. To this end a translation is given of the spells collected by Wirz,²⁸ followed by a preliminary discussion of their general characteristics.

Setting out on a hunt, a *Zohé* addresses his bow, and more particularly his bow-string, as follows: '*Uarawi! Uarawi!* closely embrace me'. *Uarawi* is the wife of the bow *déma* and symbolizes the bow-string.²⁹ He may also address his bow with the words: '*Mumbis!* Wake up! Wake up from your sleep! I am hungry for fishes, hungry for wallabies!' *Mumbis* is the *igiz-ha* of the bow.

"Having conjured his bow for the hunt, the Marind sets off. When he has arrived at his hunting grounds, he will address the arrow or the bow whenever he is about to shoot, in order to increase the effect. He also conjures the grass which he may have set afire. Wishing to fan the flames, he addresses the wind, by a wave of his hand dismissing the clouds in case a shower should threaten. The snakes, too, are conjured, because he wants their co-operation; they must bite the legs of the wallaby. '*Arengo! Arengo hai! Arengo hai! Dambu hai! Ararma hai! Saramke hai!*' he calls out to the snakes. *Arengo, Dambu, Ararma, Saramke* are surnames of the snakes, the proper names of the different species of snakes. Another formula runs as follows. . . . '*Tail of Arengo! Tail of Idzi! Coil round (the wallaby)! Teeth of Samana (igiz-ha of snakes)! Stuff yourselves with food!*'"³⁰ Unfortunately, we do not know to what phratry the man belonged who taught Wirz these spells. Nor do we know this in respect of any of the following spells.

Dogs are given various kinds of medicine. Besides, they are conjured as follows: '*Hai Yodkap! Hai Mizerangib! Hai Yodayod!*' *Yodkap* etc. are the mythical *igiz-ha* of dogs³¹ and shouting *hai* is the customary way of goading the dogs. Another spell is: '*Kékus-teeth!* bite into *Saparim*-coconut!' *Kékus*-teeth are the dog's teeth, *Saparim*-

²⁷ Above, pp. 545 ff.

²⁸ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 109-119.

²⁹ Cf. above, p. 345.

³⁰ Wirz, op. cit. p. 109.

³¹ Cf. above, p. 323.

coconut is the flesh of the wallaby, tender like a young coconut.³² The words (names) *Kékus* and *Saparim* remain unexplained.

The arrows, too, are addressed. In respect of an arrow with a bamboo head the following formula may be used: '*Gandi! ah kill! Goru, ah kill! Manai, ah kill! Patai! ah kill! Kibi, ah kill!*' *Gandi, Goru* etc. are *igiz-ha* of the *sok*, the bamboo arrow-head. Or they say: '*Hai Gandi! Penetrate into Yakora-heart!*' Here *Yakora-heart* is the heart of the wallaby. Another formula is '*Mabora! Tear up! (the wallaby)*'. Here *Mabora* is the *igiz-ha* of the arrow. Or: '*Dangiwra! That one, Samakor, kill for me*'. *Samakor* stands for the pig, while *Dangiwra* is the *igiz-ha* of the arrow. We note that, other than most of the names previously mentioned, *Dangiwra* is a name known from mythology. It is one of the names of *Méru*, the *méri-ongat-déma*.³³ Similarly, *Gandi* is the name of the *déma* who by pronouncing a formula over *Mongumer-anem's* betel nuts caused them to be blighted by worms.³⁴ To what extent the two *déma* are relevant to the context is obscure.

Another kind of arrow, the heron-beak (*darau-angib*), is addressed in this way: '*Darau-angib! Hot-tempered one!*'³⁵ Bite into blood!' Other spells for arrows are: 'Bite the flesh! Bite the body-fluid!'; or 'Bite the heart'; or '*Movir, one heart, that one, kill for me*'. In the formula last mentioned *Movir* is the *igiz-ha* of the arrow.

An interesting example of symbolic language is provided by the following formula pronounced over the arrow before it is aimed at a boar: '*Sakapu-uar kagub! Gundo-uar mabata kagub!*' which may be translated as: 'Break *Sakapu-stork! Break Gundo-stork!*'³⁶ The term *uar*, stork, is also used to denote the storks' plumes sometimes applied in a man's hairdo. The mane of the boar are equated with such a head-dress. "*Sakapu and Gundo are mere nicknames, referring to the boar*".³⁷ Another appropriate formula is: '*Gawi-tendons! Must tear up!*' Here *Gawi-tendons* are the tendons of the swine. If the hunter wants to catch the animal with a swine-catcher, a rattan noose with a long handle, he will pronounce the following formula over the instrument: '*Wurame! Wurape! you catch him first, then I*'. *Wurame* and *Wurape* are *igiz-ha* of the rattan swine-catcher.³⁸

³² Wirz, l.c.

³³ Above, p. 255 (*Dangiwra*).

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 378 f.

³⁵ Wirz's translation as 'be not hot-tempered' is incorrect.

³⁶ The word *mabata* is an exhortation; Verschueren, Letters XI p. 48.

³⁷ Wirz, op. cit. p. 110.

³⁸ Ibid. pp. 110 f.

"Equally numerous are the formulas applied in connection with fishing: nets, hooks and fish-traps are made more effective by magical formulas devised to ensure success".³⁹ Before she takes up the *haupra* (fish-trap) which is stored in or near the house, a woman speaks a formula into one of her hands. Only then does she pick up the trap and immediately afterwards she whispers a formula into the other hand because she holds the *haupra* alternately in one hand and the other. '*Vesse! Vesse! Vesse!* let yourself be rocked on the hand!' *Vesse* is the *igis-ha* of the *haupra* and instead of the present formula the woman may also say: '*Vesse! Vesse!* let yourself be taken by the ears' (i.e. by the handle).

The nets (*kipa*) are addressed as follows: '*Sakau! Sakau! Kipa-Sakau!* Hold *yamar, kirub, anda* for me!' *Yamar, kirub* and *anda* are fish-species.

When he is collecting the worms which are to serve as bait for the *orib*-fishes (*Plagusia marmorata*), the fisherman calls out, '*Arowar!* come here, onto the hook'. *Arowar* is the *igis-ha* of the worms. Before throwing the line, the angler conjures the fish as follows: '*Abadu! Abadu!* bite my hook!' *Abadu* is the name of the *orib-déma*, who is the son of *Wariop* and who played a part in the myth of the stork and the eagle.⁴⁰ *Abadu* is also mentioned in a formula applied to increase the number of *orib*-fishes: '*Abadu! Abadu!* multiply'. Sometimes *Abadu's* mother *Wariop* is invoked: '*Wariop! Wariop!* Give birth to many fishes!' The reference to mythology is obvious.

Gardening is another activity requiring the knowledge and application of a great variety of formulas. When the dry season lasts a considerable time, many people resort to rain-making. Apart from the efforts made by the *dongam-anim*, ordinary people, too, try to entice the powers of nature to bring rain. The clouds are addressed with the formula '*Uai!* open yourselves! *Uai!* open yourselves!' *Uai*, meteor, is the *igis-ha* of the clouds. When drinking-water is running short, people go to the dried-up wells, where *Dawéna*, the *déma* of the ground water⁴¹ is invoked in the words: '*Dawéna! Dawéna!* on this spot urinate!'

Before people start the toilsome work of making a garden-bed, the earthquake *déma* are called upon to ease the burden by gently shaking the earth. All things planted have to be conjured first. On many

³⁹ Ibid. p. 111.

⁴⁰ Above, pp. 295 and 303.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 382.

occasions *déma*-stones are applied⁴² and the formulas are often made more effective by the application of various ingredients and by sperma. The formulas "demonstrate that they are essentially primitive prayers or formulas, addressed to the *déma*, the originators of the relevant plants", says Wirz,⁴³ once again expressing a viewpoint which is closely akin to the ideas so strongly emphasized by Verschueren. When planting a sprouting coconut, people say, '*Baringau!* Stretch your legs on this place!' *Baringau* is the secret name of the coconut *déma*.⁴⁴

When sago-sproutlings are set, quite a number of *déma* are called upon: '*Wokabu! Sangon! Harau! Elme!* Come! Come hither from Imo!' They are the *déma* of the sago and of sago-making, and their adventures have been related in the chapters on mythology.⁴⁵ When a sago tree has to be cut down, it is addressed in the following way: '*Mayab*-feet be lifted!' *Mayab*-feet are the feet of the palm, that is, the trunk, while *Mayab* itself is an unintelligible word. When the tree has come down and its stem has been split lengthwise, the woman may begin her part of the work, that of beating the pith; but first she will pronounce these words into her hand: '*Harau!* come here!' and then beckon with her hand to the *déma* thus invited. *Harau*, the mythical sago-maker, must give her assistance. When the woman is at work, she will address the tree-trunk, saying, '*Arud*-juice! Out with it!' *Arud* is an unintelligible name, applied here to specify the pith of the tree.

Much special care is bestowed on the *wati*. The garden-bed is shaded over with a screen of leaves because the earth must be moist, while the bed (which is also called *yavun*, canoe, because of its form⁴⁶) is addressed in the following way: '*Darmbu*-canoe, do not dry up'. *Darmbu* is an unintelligible surname. When the *wati*-cutlings have been planted, the gardener says, 'Hairs from the stork's armpit, stand up! Hairs from the stork's beard, stand up!' The reader is reminded of the fact that the *wati* originated from hairs which *Wonatai*, the stork *déma*, took from his armpit.⁴⁷ Another formula is '*Senge!* *Senge!* open your eyes in this place'. *Senge* is the *igiz-ha* of the *wati*-cutling and the eyes are the nodes characteristic of the kava stem. In another formula the gardener addresses the stork *déma*'s wife *Hoyom*.⁴⁸

⁴² Cf. below, p. 894.

⁴³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 112.

⁴⁴ Above, p. 250.

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 336 ff., 279 f.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 19.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 302.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 344.

'*Hoyom*, give birth! *Gemor*, give birth! *Ibo*-mother, give birth!' The names *Gemor* and *Ibo*-mother remain unexplained; they are applied also in the following formula, again in combination with *Hoyom*: '*Hoyom! Ibo*-mother! *Gemo!*'⁴⁹ put it into the cradle'. Here the garden-bed is equated with a *kabu*, a cradle for a baby, and the mythical women are encouraged to put their children into it. Before concluding this paragraph on formulas stimulating the growth of *wati*, a short comment should be added. We do not know who Wirz's informants were and, consequently, we are left guessing what particular phratries the owners of the various formulas belong to. We note, however, that the *wati* is a totem of the *Ndik-end* and of the phratry of *Aramemb* generally, whereas *Hoyom*, the wife of the *ndik-déma* *Wonatai*, is classified as a *Zohé*. This prompts the suggestion that the formulas invoking the aid of *Hoyom* are used by members of the *Mahu-zé* phratry, while those referring to the hair from the stork's armpit could be the special property of the phratry of *Aramemb*.⁵⁰

Wirz gives three spells for promoting the growth of bananas.⁵¹ The first is uttered when planting a banana-sproutling: '*Gomat*-oar! on this spot thou shalt bend!' Here the banana-leaf is equated with an oar, which is given the non-intelligible name of *Gomat*. The second formula is meant to exhort the tree to bear fruit: '*Boré! Boré!* bring forth bunches of bananas!' *Boré* is the *igis-ha* of the banana *déma*. When the fruits have developed and the process of ripening has set in, the bunch is wrapped up in banana-leaves to protect the fruits from flying foxes. On this occasion a formula is applied which aims at promoting the process of ripening: '*Abang-gabangma! Abang-sabama!* put on the *Mayura*-decorations! put on the red body-decoration, put on the *Indu*-red body-paint!' *Abang-gabangma* and *Abang-sabama* are the names given to the banana plant. *Mayura*-decorations refers to the colouring of the bananas, just as red body-paint refers to the reddish tinge of ripe bananas.

For sugar-cane the following formula is used: '*Garbuya!* on this spot thou shalt rise!' *Garbuya* is the *igis-ha* of the sugar-cane. A similar

⁴⁹ Probably an alternative form of *Gemor*.

⁵⁰ Commenting on this passus, Verschueren wrote me that for various crops the different *boan* often each have their own *gamo mēn*. To be effective, the formula must be used by a member of the *boan* which owns the formula (Letters XI p. 48).

⁵¹ Wirz, op. cit. pp. 114 f.

spell is applied to sweet potatoes: '*Wemba! Wemba!* You should grow!', *Wemba* being the *igiz-ha* of the sweet potato.⁵²

Other formulas are applied to a wild pandanus-species, the aerial roots of which supply the fibres for a *wokraved's* hair-lengthenings.⁵³ The trees are of moderately infrequent occurrence and when the aerial roots have been cut off, the plant is encouraged to produce new roots, being addressed in the words: 'I am *Yuna!* I am *Yarikib!* I am *Gop-a-gop!* I am *Anib!* I am *Bongayurib!*' Wirz's comment on this text is not very clear. It seems that the names are the secret (or imaginary) names of the aerial roots. We note that *yuma* is the name of a pandanus-species (Geurtjens, Diction. v. *joema*); the words *yuma* and *yuna* are so nearly similar as to suggest either a slip of the pen or an allusion. *Anib* may be the same word as *anep* or *anip*, he, him. A second formula used for promoting the growth of the roots is the following: 'Do have *Kapara-mayub!*' *Mayub* are the hair-strands onto which the hair-lengthenings are plaited.

A special category is formed by the formulas referring to sexual life. When a woman suspects her husband of being unfaithful to her, she will go to some pool frequented by him and throw a leech into the water there. The leech is addressed as follows: 'Leech! Leech! cling! Bite the anus! Bite the penis! Bite the scrotum!'⁵⁴ The formula 'Scrotum grow (big)', when uttered over a stick, may result in a tumor of the scrotum,⁵⁵ an ailment which in these parts, where filariasis may cause serious cases of elephantiasis of scrotum and legs, is not altogether exceptional.

Young people frequently apply love-magic. A young man wishing to induce a girl to have sexual intercourse with him may say, '*Walina nahagita, iki-ikir mad kadhasab hakazub*', an untranslatable and possibly corrupt text, on which Wirz gives the following comment. *Walina* is the apron (*nowa*), *iki-ikir* the waistband (*upip*), and the formula expresses the wish that the girl's genitals may tingle, thus rousing in her the longing for an embrace.⁵⁶ Another formula serving the same purpose is '*Madura, you are Yehur, come along, I, here I am!*' *Madura* is used to denote the girl, but the name *Yehur* remains unexplained. Wirz adds that the young man is more likely to succeed if the formula

⁵² Ibid. p. 115.

⁵³ Ibid. pp. 115 f.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 118.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 119.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

has been pronounced over some food or refreshment offered to the girl. One such formula runs as follows: 'Stir up! Stir up! Stir up the blood! Stir up the vulva! Blood you shall stir! Flesh you shall stir! Labiae you shall stir!' Most effective of all is the formula if it is muttered over some food which the man has polluted with his own sperma. If the girl accepts the viands and eats them, the man feels sure he is to have his way.⁵⁷ He has, of course, a sound reason to be confident about the outcome. A girl knows that the food she accepts from a suitor may be enchanted. If she has scruples, the food is extremely helpful in overcoming them; she may then put the blame for her weakness on the charm.

A final category of spells noted down by Wirz comprises those conducive to harming other people. The more serious forms of black magic are the special preserve of the medicine-men, but ordinary people, too, may harm their fellow-men by the application of simple formulas. It must be noted that, on this point, there is some uncertainty. The first three formulas of this kind that have been communicated by Wirz were taught him by a medicine-man. He does not inform us how he came to know the other formulas and it is quite possible that these, too, were taken down from informants who were also medicine-men. Not only are medicine-men numerous among the Marind, they are also the best informants on these matters. Yet, it seems hardly probable that harmful formulas should be entirely absent in the layman's repertoire. Formulas are so much common property and their use is so general that everyone may be expected to have at least one or two spells at his disposal which he may use whenever he feels that he should avenge himself because of some slight. Moreover, the formulas Wirz learned from his *messav*-informant were of a fairly innocent kind. The effect of these spells was confined to a bout of stomach-ache. They must be uttered over a morsel of sago, which the sorcerer afterwards smuggles into his victim's bag, hoping that he will eat of it. The spells were, 'Earth, earth, be put into it!'; or, '*Nau-nau* sago, be put into it!'; or, '*Yapau*, catch!' The meaning of the three formulas is rather obscure. The word *Nau-nau* in the second one is an inexplicable name given to the morsel of sago, and *Yapau* in the third spell probably refers to the victim.⁵⁸ In this context Wirz notes that the effect of the spells is enhanced if *wati* is used as a medium. When the spell is uttered while masticating the *wati* which, later, the victim is to drink, the words will

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 116.

make the heaviest impact possible. Wirz's surmise that *wati* is a favourite medium because on account of its wry taste an admixture of poison will go unnoticed, is not quite convincing, as there are no sufficient indications that the Marind made use of poisonous drugs.

A more harmful spell is the following, addressed to the doorposts of the victim's house: 'Side of *Brunes*, side of *Zero*! Prepare!' *Brunes* and *Zero* are the names given to the doorposts, and the word prepare is supposed to convey that the doorposts should prepare for an opportunity to kill the victim. This, at least, is the explanation given by Wirz.⁵⁹

More innocent are the spells pronounced over beetles and ants, which are afterwards thrown at the victim so that they may bite or sting him. An example is '*Barumba, veng-a-veng, pong-a-pong, buzz!*' The names used are the common words for different kinds of beetles; the two first mentioned have also been noted down by Geurtjens in his Dictionary. Another formula is, '*Bang-a-bang teeth! You should bite!*' The expression '*bang-a-bang teeth*' is used to denote the orifice of the beetle; it refers to the *bang-a-bang*, a bulbous fish, tetrodon, the entrails of which are highly poisonous. A third formula runs as follows: '*Sirau!* that one heart tear up for me'. *Sirau* is the name given to the beetle, which is held in the hand. To refer to the heart the word *békai* is used, which also means life. The formula is meant to have a more sweeping effect; the victim has to be attacked by swarms of beetles. If ants are to assail the victim, another formula is used, which is uttered over an ant: '*Bungai!* bite!' *Bungai* is the *igiz-ha* of the ant. A similar formula is used to cause a man to be infested with lice: '*Saham-imu!* bite!' *Saham-imu* is the *igiz-ha* of the louse.

When the sea is turbulent, the waves are conjured by throwing into the water scraps of food over which the following words have been pronounced: '*Wandus! Wandus!* You should lie down!' *Wandus* is the name of a *nakaru* of *Yorma*, the sea déma (her name has not been mentioned before in this book). If, on the contrary, one wishes a gale to rise and the waves to do damage to a village or drown a hated sailor, *Yorma* himself is addressed in the spell uttered over the object thrown into the sea: '*Yorma! Yorma!* kill!' ⁶⁰ "While a *Bragai-zé* man addresses the sea déma *Yorma* when he wants to hurt an enemy, a *Zohé* will invoke the loam déma *Uari*: '*Uari! Uari!* visit this place!" These

⁵⁹ Loc. cit.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 117.

words hold a direct reference to the myth of *Uari* at Bangu;⁶¹ the *déma* is encouraged to repeat his action in the place indicated.

The total number of formulas recorded by Wirz is 61, almost all of which have been rendered above. Tabulating these spells, we find that in 52 of them a proper name is used which is not the proper name of the victim, but, on the contrary, either a recognizable *déma*-name borrowed from mythology, or a name said to be an *igiz-ha*, or a name which could not be further identified. The difference between *igiz-ha* and the other, unidentifiable names applied in the formulas is not quite clear. Only those names have been accepted as *igiz-ha* which are explicitly recorded as such. In respect of a few of the other names (which are not *déma*-names either), Wirz notes that they are names used ad hoc. Evidently, they are not really *igiz-ha*, secret names which have a long-standing tradition behind them. Yet, it would be rash to infer that such names are arbitrarily chosen. It is fairly certain that these names, too, are traditional names, only, they are not commonly recognized as *igiz-ha* and have no immediate connection with mythology. We might look upon them as names rated below the *igiz-ha*, which, as regards importance, are more or less on the same level as the *déma*-names. One of the *igiz-ha* mentioned is, in fact, a *déma*-name, viz. *Baringau*, the coconut *déma*.

Of the 52 formulas containing proper names not more than 17 have proper names which are neither *déma*-names nor *igiz-ha*. In these 17 formulas we did not come upon any direct references to mythology. Of the remaining 35 formulas there are 17 which have a *déma*-name or the name of a *déma-nakaru*, one holds a direct reference to the myth of origin of the *wati* (the hairs in the armpit of the stork) without names being mentioned, and 17 formulas have *igiz-ha* only. There are cases in which the use of *déma*-names or *igiz-ha* is combined with that of other names which could not be identified as *déma*-names.

Another specific trait of the formulas is that they avail themselves of rather bold metaphors. Often these metaphors are combined with unidentifiable names, such as the *Gomat*-oar in the formula for planting banana-sprouts. We noted 9 cases in which metaphors of this kind were employed; only in 2 of them was there no combination with a proper name.

Finally, there are 9 formulas in which no proper names are used.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 118 and above, pp. 341 f.

Among them are two applying a metaphor instead. This means that in a total of 61 formulas couched in intelligible terms there are 7 confining themselves to matter-of-fact statements. Two make use of a metaphor, and 52 of proper names of some sort, which in 7 cases are combined with a metaphor. In section 3 of this chapter we shall have to revert to this subject; the preponderance of proper names in a random collection of formulas such as the one presented by Wirz, is so obviously significant as fully to justify some special attention being paid to it. The predominance of proper names is probably even more significant than appears from these figures. Given the secrecy in which these names used to be veiled, there is a fair chance that at least some of the 9 formulas falling under the category of spells not containing proper names should not be classified as such, the names having been withheld by the informants. The use of the name *Anib*, i.e. So-and-so, in the formula for the pandanus trees recorded on p. 876 is a case in point.

2. PRIVATE RITES PERFORMED BY SPECIALISTS

In the class of specialists a small group is made up by the *dongam-anim*, the rain-magicians (lit. thunder-men). Rain-making is the privilege of only a few, says Vertenten. In Okaba there were two of these, in Birok one, that is, one who counted for something.⁶² If a person wants to become a *dongam-anem*, he is only required to learn the relevant technique, which is not a complicated one. According to Wirz it is the technique which was applied for the first time by *Yawima*, the mythical *dongam-anem*.⁶³ His story has been recorded in an abbreviated form on p. 288 above. Once, during a severe and persistent drought, his mother sent him to the forest to make rain. There *Yawima* dug a deep pit. "On the bottom he put taro tubers and scrapings from the stem of a banana tree, together with other plants growing on humid soils, such as croton and magical herbs, after which he filled the pit with water. Then he threw stones and clods of earth into the water so as to make it splash up. Finally, he took a morsel of lard, which he held over a fire till it began to sizzle and frizzle. Shortly afterwards, clouds gathered everywhere in the sky and rain came down in buckets. Lightning set the heavens ablaze and the thunder roared mightily . . ." ⁶⁴ Vertenten gives a fairly detailed description of the *dongam-anem's*

⁶² Vertenten, Ann. 1918 p. 80, 1919 p. 248, J.P. 1923 p. 318.

⁶³ Wirz, M.A. III p. 64.

⁶⁴ Ibid. II p. 99.

technique as he observed it. The rain-maker goes to a low-lying loamy spot far from the village, taking some lard, a dry coconut spathe, a stone and his betel-kit with him. On his way he collects some croton-twigs and bananas from his garden, and also some betel nuts and a few water-plants. The same is done by a few other men with whom he has arranged to meet on the appointed spot. Here they dig a pit, working down to a depth where the ground water comes welling up. The loam excavated from the pit is deposited in a place some distance away. Round the pit a small garden is made, which is planted with sprouts of banana and croton-twigs, while the soil is strewn with water-plants and betel. A young sagostalk is bent into the shape of an arc spanning the pit; it represents the rainbow (*marob*). Now the *dongam-anem* kneels down and sets the dry coconut spathe on fire. He holds the lard in the flame and soon the fat begins to sizzle, a small trickle dropping with a hissing sound into the water below. All the time he mutters his spells and, finally, he throws the stone into the water, which splashes up. From now on heavy thunderstorms may be expected.⁶⁵

The activities of the *dongam-anem* fairly closely resemble those ascribed by myth to *Yawima*. Yet, some variations are possible. According to Geurtjens there are at least three different methods, one more or less resembling the technique just described, a second involving the use of big stones which are rolled up and down a miniature canoe, imitating the roar of thunder, and a third concentrating on the making of clouds by means of the smoke of a burning fire.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the descriptions given of the three procedures are too poor to be of any use. There is every possibility that the three different techniques are mere variations on the main theme, but that did not bother Geurtjens, who wrote for simple souls and who felt called upon to amuse them with his equally simple jokes.

Vertenten was a more scrupulous writer when he addressed himself to the subscribers to missionary periodicals. He states that the *dongam-anim* will never perform their rites before the rainy season is really due. He reports that on more than one occasion the rains began to fall well before the rain-magicians had started their work. But this did not daunt the *dongam-anim*. They just bided their time.⁶⁷ In Vertenten's eyes this behaviour is contradictory, and so it would be if the rite were really an act of magic pure and simple. Of course, there is no doubt

⁶⁵ Vertenten, Ann. 1919 p. 249.

⁶⁶ Geurtjens, Onder de Kaja-Kaja's p. 132.

⁶⁷ Vertenten, Ann. 1919 p. 248.

that the Marind do see the performance as a means to bring on rain. Vertenten also gives us the story of the rain-maker at Birok who was approached by a delegation from Urumb and Noh-otiv, whose gardens were situated at a lower level than those of Birok. They asked him please to stop the rains, a request with which he obligingly complied.⁶⁸ Even so, the act is not just an act of magic pure and simple, there is more to it. It has to be performed every year, secretly, with only a few people assisting⁶⁹ and the timing of the performance is not conditional on the rains holding off or having set in already, but determined by the arrival of a certain period of the year. In other words, it is not timed to the needs of the people, but to the ideal succession of the seasons. The orientation is cosmic, not social. It is true that the fact that the rites are performed even when the rains are already falling may be explained as a precaution against any untimely cessation, but with equal right another explanation may be given. The rite can also be seen as an act accompanying, ritualizing the change of the seasons, which has to be performed anyway, whatever the actual weather conditions. From this point of view, the act is primarily a pious act. That the performers sometimes tend to view things in this light seems to be corroborated by the remark which a *dongam-anem* made to Father Geurtjens, who had witnessed his performance: 'Now this is our way of praying'.⁷⁰

Finally, we have to solve the problem of the identity of the *dongam-anim*. There are only a few of them. Unlike the *messav*, they need not go through a process of initiation. They perform their ceremony in secret and they are assisted by only a few people. That is all we know. However, we may add Vertenten's observation that if a piece of lard is found in a men's house, this is almost certainly the house of a *dongam-anem*.⁷¹ We also know that the rite is a repetition of the rite which was for the first time performed by *Yawima*. The spells muttered by the performer (which have not been recorded) are, almost certainly, spells deriving from or referring to *Yawima*. It is probable, then, that the *dongam-anem* must be a member of the *Yawima-rek*. Given the fact that the rite is a repetition of *Yawima's* performance, none other could be qualified but a member of this particular clan. Notwithstanding the paucity of our sources in respect of this point, the con-

⁶⁸ Idem, J.P. 1923 p. 318.

⁶⁹ Idem, Ann. I.c.

⁷⁰ Geurtjens, I.c.

⁷¹ Vertenten, I.c.

clusion seems safe; it is corroborated by the secrecy of the performance and by the number of men co-operating, which is small, but for that very reason may represent the inmates of one men's house. Consequently, when it is stated that in order to become a *dongam-anem* one has only to learn the relevant technique (cf. p. 880), this must be rejected as false.

The really important specialists are the *messav* or medicine-men. Much has been written on them, primarily by Wirz, but also by Ver-tenen, who contributed substantially to our knowledge of their activities and training in his book *15 Jaar onder de Koppensnellers*, and in the short articles published in the *Annalen* 1918 pp. 34-36, 56-60 and 79-81.

Etymologically, the term *messav* is said to mean old housewife (from *mes*, ripe, old, and *sav*, married woman). As so often, the etymology leaves us none the wiser, because Geurtjens, our authority on this point,⁷² does not inform us whether the Marind, too, subscribe to it. The uncertainty is considerably increased by the circumstance that *messav* might well be an abbreviated form of the word *yemessav*. Although Geurtjens assures us that *yemessav* is a plural of *messav*, there is ample reason for doubt. We never heard of a prefix *yé* indicating a plural. In view of the free way our author has with linguistic data, we might justifiably be accused of being over-confident if we accepted his etymological explanations at face-value.⁷³ Verschueren, finally, uses the term *yemessav* in connection with sorcery. In *Indonesië* I p. 447 he gives the term *yemessav bombari* as a synonym for *kambara*.

On the social position of the medicine-men Wirz has this to say: "They do not constitute a special social class in the village community; they do not enjoy special privileges which set them apart from their fellow-tribesmen; nor are the esteem they enjoy and the influence they wield great enough to give them more power than is accorded to those who have no experience in the art of magic, because everybody, even a woman, may become a medicine-man, provided he or she has completed the [prescribed] term of apprenticeship under an older *messav*. As a rule the number of medicine-men in a village is not inconsiderable. Usually every family-group has one or more *messav* among its members. However, there were also settlements where nearly everybody was a *messav*, the women included. Of course, such settlements enjoyed a

⁷² Dict. v. *yemessav*.

⁷³ I have to confess that, in the past, I too eagerly accepted explanations which suited my line of thought; cf. Van Baal, *Godsdienst* pp. 90 and 241.

certain measure of prestige among the people of other areas. . . ."74

Obviously, Wirz's statement that the *messav* do not constitute a separate social class must be taken to the letter. There is not a *class* of medicine-men, but that does not prevent the Marind from holding the medicine-men in special esteem. Elsewhere, Wirz writes that the *messav* have a leading position in the community and are rated rather high in the social scale on account of their knowledge, adding that this is 'undoubtedly' the reason why so many young men aspire to become medicine-men.⁷⁵ Apparently the knowledge and secret power of a medicine-man are important assets which raise his social status and add to the influence he may wield. This is amply confirmed by Vertenten: "The *messav* should not only be accorded respect, but they should also be placated with presents so as to make them friendly disposed. . . . A *messav* may dispense sickness and even death".⁷⁶ "When a medicine-man asks for something, people would not dare to refuse. When he meets with a rebuttal, he may swallow his saliva and this means, 'You wait! I'll get even with you!' That is enough to make life unbearable for one. Mandi, one of the best-reputed among our boys, had just got married when, visiting his village with his young wife, a medicine-man made him indecent proposals. Mandi turned them down, and the medicine-man swallowed his saliva. Mandi was very much upset, fearing that he had to die. . . . Many have pined away because they considered themselves bewitched".⁷⁷

The fear inspired by the secret powers of the medicine-man may be exploited for purposes of blackmail. I remember the case of a widow who was killed by a sorcerer because she had refused to become his wife. This happened somewhere on the upper Bian. Yet, this does not justify the conclusion that the medicine-men generally abused their powers. As a matter of fact, the opportunities for blackmail were considerably reduced by the fact that every family-group (whatever the term may mean) had its own medicine-man.⁷⁸ Vertenten agrees with Wirz when he says that medicine-men are numerous and, which is important in this context, he emphasizes the fact that the esteem in which the medicine-men are held varies widely in degree from one

⁷⁴ Wirz, M.A. III p. 67.

⁷⁵ Ibid. I p. 68.

⁷⁶ Vertenten, Ann. 1918 p. 35. Vertenten always uses the term *tovenaar* (sorcerer), but as he does this indiscriminately, the term as it occurs in his writings^s refers to *messav* as well as *kambara-anim*.

⁷⁷ Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 59 f.

⁷⁸ Idem, Ann. 1918 p. 35.

individual to another. Some are famous, others are little known.⁷⁹

The social status achieved by the medicine-man is determined not only by his success in curing patients, but also by his knowledge of names and ritual. "The instructions for the representation of a *déma* (in a *déma-wir*) are usually given by the old *messav*, who pretend to entertain special relations with the *déma* and to be able to see them. They tell the performers how the ornaments and masks must be shaped. Thus an old *messav*, engaged in devising the very complicated ornaments for the representation of the coconut *déma*, told me that when, one day in the bush, he was about to drain off a coconut, he had imbibed the coconut *déma*. The moment he brought the coconut to his mouth, the coconut *déma* lept out of it and entered into his mouth".⁸⁰ Better than anybody else, the medicine-men know the *déma*. We shall return to this point later on.

The *messav* do not constitute a special class; consequently they do not necessarily pass on their knowledge to their descendants. Although a certain preference for initiating a son or a foster-son (*binahor*-son?) is reported, there is no general rule to this effect. All depends primarily upon the wishes of the individual concerned.⁸¹ Vertenten states that the son inherits his father's secrets because the knowledge of the *messav* adds to the power of his family-group.⁸² Elsewhere he points out that it is the finest young men who are selected to succeed a father or an uncle as *messav*. It also happens that they are apprenticed to a famous medicine-man or that they apply to such a celebrity for some special instruction. Sometimes one friend teaches the other.⁸³ Evidently, there is a selection; the young man singled out to become the *messav* of his group may be their candidate for *pakas-anem* when the present functionary retires. There cannot be any doubt that many prominent *pakas-anim* were also *messav*. A telling case is that of Yadjo, who, round about 1900, was one of the most influential leaders of Okaba. He had treasured up no less than eleven mandibles of heads he himself had taken, and he was also a great medicine-man. His son, Amul, succeeded him as *messav*, but the family-group [read: men's house community, v. B.], declining in number, lost its influence. Moreover, Amul was a very mild-tempered man and after some time he announced that he had

⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 35 f.

⁸⁰ Witz, M.A. IV p. 41.

⁸¹ Ibid. III p. 67.

⁸² Vertenten, I.L. II p. 455.

⁸³ Idem, Koppensnellers p. 50.

ceased to be a medicine-man, and this was generally accepted. Actually, Amul waived his claim to leadership and thus made sure that he could no longer become involved in conflicts or be suspected of sorcery.⁸⁴ The association of leadership with the functions of a medicine-man is also demonstrated by Vertenten's statement that a great medicine-man inspires his group with confidence. He is the protector and helper of his group.⁸⁵ Yet, we should carefully avoid generalizations. Though the medicine-man may become an influential leader, honoured both in his group and outside it, in some cases he is just a despised sorcerer whose status in society depends primarily upon the fear he inspires. Moreover, not every *pakas-anem* is a medicine-man. There are many ways to achieve social prominence and "I know a fair number of influential people, old *pakas-anim* included, who know nothing of magic. The old men assured me that being a *messav* was not a necessary condition for leadership in the past either".⁸⁶ Summing up, the function of *messav* and the knowledge implied were an important asset for an aspirant to leadership, but not a necessary condition.

To a certain extent, the functions of medicine-man and chief of a men's house community are even incompatible. The qualities the latter functionary is required to possess differ fairly widely from those making one a good medicine-man. "Often the really important *messav*, and more especially the malicious ones, are rather self-contained and solitary individuals who rarely seek prominence. They sit by themselves alone, avoiding other people's company, or prefer to retire to the savannah or the forest. In the evening, when the men have assembled round a fire, they keep apart, day-dreaming. Often they are physically handicapped, having one short leg, crooked hands or a serious defect of speech. Even *messav* who are generally appreciated are often found to have some of these characteristics. I know an old man of Matara, called Dombai, a highly respected *messav*, consulted by people coming from far and near, who has both his surroundings and me completely puzzled. He is an eccentric. I once happened to have him calling on me, sitting in my house, pleasantly talking and being perfectly sociable, when suddenly, stopping in mid-sentence, he rose, walked to the door and without saying another word, disappeared into the night. It was only after three days that he returned to his home, which is at a quarter of an hour's distance from my house. Even now nobody knows or can

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 60.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 50.

⁸⁶ Verschueren, Letters XI p. 48.

even guess where he had been or what drove him. I will give one curious instance of his art. He is an expert in the technique of *papus uzub*.⁸⁷ About a year ago the wife of the village chief of Saror suddenly died while she was here in Wendu. Her husband was not present and Dombai volunteered to call in the people of Saror. . . . He ordered one of the young men to write a note. It was about eight o'clock p.m. Dombai slipped the note into a small piece of bamboo and disappeared into the night. Shortly afterwards he returned, reporting that he had sent the letter to Saror. His stolidity and self-possession intrigued me. The next morning, toward eleven o'clock, the first men of Saror arrived and the *messav*, Kumb-Sav, told me quite blankly that he had received the note. He is completely illiterate, just as Dombai. It is possible of course that in the night somebody secretly went to Saror on foot, but I never succeeded in finding anything in the way of a clue".⁸⁸

In the present context the question of the veridity of paranormal phenomena can be left undiscussed. The point of interest is that the personality of many a medicine-man deviates from the normal pattern, and though it is well attuned to the practice of occult experience, it is not of the kind fitting a social and political leader. As a matter of fact, there are also female *messav*. We hear very little of them and obviously they are a minority. Van der Kooy, however, gave a description of the performance of a female *messav*⁸⁹ and Verschueren wrote on a female *messav* at Koa on the upper Kumbé who was so successful that the local guest-house had to be extended because people came from everywhere to see her. This woman was a faithful christian, curing her patients by prayer. Yet, many renowned male *messav* assured Verschueren that she was the greatest expert they had ever known.⁹⁰ We may conclude from all this that the function of a medicine-man offers a rare opportunity for poorly adapted individuals to achieve status and renown, and to translate their antisocial feelings into action. Fortunately, not every medicine-man is a criminal and in spite of certain abuses the knowledge and art of a *messav* are so highly appreciated that these accomplishments are definite assets for a prospective *pakas-anem*. Yet, the specific characteristics required for making this knowledge successfully operative may be incompatible with the personality structure which

⁸⁷ Lit. 'small bird'. It is the technique of spiriting small objects away to distant places. See below, pp. 892 jo. 898 ff.

⁸⁸ Verschueren, Letters XI pp. 48, 49.

⁸⁹ Van der Kooy, Alm. 1916 p. 42.

⁹⁰ Verschueren, op. cit. p. 49.

makes one a leader. The prospective medicine-man will find out soon enough whether he is fit for the job or not. The weird trial of the apprenticeship is very effective in helping him to make up his mind.

The procedure of the initiation of a medicine-man has been described by Wirz and Vertenten.⁹¹ On the main points their data agree, which is important because no outsider ever witnessed the proceedings.⁹² The candidates, of whom there are usually two or three in any one ceremony, according to Vertenten, must retire to a place far from the village, where they build a hut. The spot has been pointed out by the medicine-man who is their instructor. If it is situated on the beach, taboo-signs are erected to warn off passers-by, who will make a long detour because they fear the *gamo* attached to the signs. If the hut is built in the bush, similar signs are placed on the pathways leading up to it. The only individuals ever to come near to the spot where the boys are being initiated are their mothers, who bring them their meals, but they, too, will keep at a respectful distance. In actual fact, during the first five or seven days even they will not come, because the boys are being submitted to a severe fast, so that apart from the magic herbs they are given to eat, they are allowed no other food than water and now and then a young coconut (Vertenten) or "only a certain kind of roasted bananas" (Wirz).

In the meantime the *messav* sets about preparing his medicine, which consists primarily of a wide variety of masticated herbs. The herbs and also the medicine itself are called *messav-dé*, *messav*-herbs. Mostly, they are leaves and roots with a reputedly wry taste. They are blended with leaves of various croton-sorts, which are an absolutely indispensable element. An important ingredient is citrus-leaves; some *messav* are supposed to remain allergic to citrus-leaves throughout their lives.⁹³ According to Wirz the main ingredients are the following: first of all *gavnam* or *ngavanam*, a root defined by Geurtjens (Dict. v. *ngavanam*) as sweet flag (*calamus*) or *aroidca*. It has a wry taste and the *messav* will masticate a morsel of it preparatory to every rite they perform. It is of some interest to note that *gav-gavai*, a word apparently deriving

⁹¹ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 65-67; Vertenten, Koppensnellers pp. 50 ff.

⁹² Unfortunately, the two descriptions are not wholly independent. Wirz knew Vertenten's articles in the *Annalen* and the *Java Post* and referred to them, Part III p. 65 note 1. There are, however, so many differences in detail and in presentation as to justify the assumption that Wirz had much — if not most — of his knowledge from independent sources.

⁹³ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 80 where the allergy is said to be confined to a few *messav* only.

from the same root, means "to be or to become raving or furious".⁹⁴ Next, *kundama* (croton?⁹⁵); *yarangar* (*Crinum asiaticum*), a plant bearing bunches of flowers, large and magnificently white;⁹⁶ *hit-dé*, *pitawé*, and *pak*, three ornamental shrubs which are not further defined; *tadi*, a citrus-species (*Citrus hystrix*); three varieties of ginger, viz. *ukap*, *bagau* and *serbagau*; *ngasi*, another ornamental shrub;⁹⁷ and unripe fruits of *Capparis speciosa*. To this concoction are added suet of *kadivuk* (iguana) and an unidentified species of waterfowl (*ko*).

Collecting the ingredients is not an easy task, especially during the rainy season; consequently, initiations of this kind are usually performed during the dry season. When everything is ready, the herbs are masticated (either by the *messav* or by the candidates⁹⁸) and the spittle is collected in a coconut bowl. The contents are given to the novices to drink on a day defined by the medicine-man. On that day they are not allowed to partake of any other food.

Now the *messav* sets out to collect the really important ingredient, indispensable in the creation of a new medicine-man, viz. cadaverous fluid. Whenever possible it must be drawn from a dead *messav*, because the *messav* derive their art from *Ugu*. The first *messav* acquired their supernatural powers by consuming *Ugu's* body.⁹⁹ A few days later the master hands the novices a coconut bowl with cadaverous fluid, together with two small bamboo-tubes. Through the tubes the fluid is carefully trickled into the nose of each candidate, who inhales and swallows down the medicine till the bowl has been emptied.

Though the result of the treatment is bad enough, it is not what we would expect first of all, viz. death caused by ptomaine. Wirz writes: "the effect is such as to prevent some people from ever becoming medicine-men. Often unconsciousness is the immediate consequence; others behave like madmen, running up and down, leaping into the water or swallowing powdered lime, which only serves to increase their woes, as it causes an inflammation of the eyes. To alleviate their nausea the *messav* gives the novices a young coconut from which they drink the water. After a few days, when the candidates have more or less

⁹⁴ Geurtjens, op. cit.

⁹⁵ An ornamental shrub anyhow. Wirz calls it both croton and *Cordyline variegatum*, probably an erroneous identification.

⁹⁶ Identification by Wirz; see also Geurtjens, Dict. v. *jarangar*.

⁹⁷ *Cordyline fruticosa* Backer according to Wirz and Geurtjens' Dict.

⁹⁸ According to Wirz by the medicine-man, but in Vertenten's version (Koppensnellers p. 57) by the candidates.

⁹⁹ Wirz, op. cit. p. 75; cf. above, p. 281.

recovered, a second treatment with cadaverous fluid follows. This time the fluid is trickled into their eyes, causing an even worse inflammation. The cure must impart to the novices the ability to see things which are invisible to common people, such as the *déma*. They also see the morning-star shining with a brighter light and at a closer proximity than ordinary mortals ever do. Again a few days pass . . . [and then, for the third time,] cadaverous fluid is administered to the novices because their bodies must be fully saturated with it. The *messav* procures a big sago-loaf (*goramo*) which contains an admixture of mussels, added before it was roasted. With a rod he pricks numerous small holes into the loaf and then he pours cadaverous fluid over it until the bread is completely saturated. Then it is served out and given to the candidates to eat".¹⁰⁰

Sometime during the next few days they must again drink a brew of herbs (*messav-dê*) such as was administered in the initial stage of the treatment. "Then, at last, they are intrinsically ready to be *messav*: their eyes are clarified and capable of seeing invisible secrets; their blood is of a different composition, enabling them to achieve things beyond the capability of others".¹⁰¹ Now at last the instruction proper can be given.

The proceedings revealed by Wirz seem unbelievable, but they are confirmed in substance by Vertenten. The latter's rather unsystematic description of the procedure has most of the main points, and a few other ones besides. The use of herbs is confirmed and the allergy of the *messav* (or at least some of them) to citrus-leaves illustrated. Vertenten once tried this out on a newly initiated medicine-man who was said to be sensitive to the smell. He rubbed down a citrus-leaf between his thumb and index-finger and then held his hand under the man's nose. "He rolled his eyeballs, then he closed his eyes and slumped down on the ground, where he kept tossing to and fro for some minutes".¹⁰² Vertenten also mentions the use made of ginger and sweet flag, and the eating of bird's fat, adding that the fat makes the adepts as light as birds. "They must eat lime and subsequently drink coconut-water to prevent or cure the harmful effects. *Hau*, cadaverous fluid, plays an important part; especially potent is the cadaverous fluid drawn from a dead *messav*. . . . The novices must drink cadaverous fluid mixed with *wati*. They must also sniff it up through long, thin straws, and

¹⁰⁰ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 66.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 67.

¹⁰² Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 54.

the master blows it into their eyes, which assume a blood-red colour. Small wonder that they get exalted! By now they see the world through quite different eyes, spirits' eyes. They roll on the ground, panting, they are soaking wet with excessive perspiration. In their extasy they behold the most wonderful things, such as monsters, and everything is red. What are the dreams they have? It should be noted that when they visually represent their legends by impersonating the *déma*, these representations are always very fantastic and often monstrous. The *déma*-ornaments and images are always painted in polychrome, with a red overtone, and they are plastered and lined with a profusion of scarlet seeds.

"Finally, the novices faint or else go to sleep. If they faint, they must first be brought to with fresh ginger spittle, a big spurt of which is ejected over them by the master *messav*. When, at last, they wake up, they do not exactly know what has happened to them, but they know for sure that their spirit is returning from a mysterious world, that the *déma* took possession of them, that they have seen one or more *déma*. Now they are ready to absorb all the secrets of the black art. . . ." etc.¹⁰³

The following details have not been mentioned by Wirz: the use of bile and human fat, sniffing the ashes of burned nails and hair taken from the armpit of a corpse, and the immersion of the heads of the novices in water. "Sometimes they go to the riverside or to a pool. For a long time, as long as possible, they keep their heads under the water, until the blood drums in their temples and their ears ring. They hear wonderful noises and see strange apparitions, the water *déma*, who appear before their closed eyes".¹⁰⁴

The treatment to which the novices are subjected is certainly not devoid of risk. Fatal casualties are mentioned by Vertenten, Geurtjens and Drager.¹⁰⁵ Much to our surprise it is the concoction of herbs which Vertenten and Geurtjens consider particularly objectionable, more so than the cadaverous fluid, although a deadly infection undoubtedly is the most serious of the hazards the candidates are exposed to, even when allowance is made for the greater resistance of primitive people resulting from previous infections which had to be lived down without proper medical aid. However that be, the risk is obvious, as

¹⁰³ Ibid. pp. 55 f.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 53.

¹⁰⁵ Vertenten, *op. cit.* p. 51; Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* p. 129; Drager, *Alm.* 1931 p. 39.

obvious as the candidate's loathing of the putrid concoctions he has to swallow. The violent reactions mentioned by Wirz give evidence, not primarily of a morbid indulgence in tampering with corpses, but rather of a wilful submission to a highly revolting treatment which is expected to impart certain supernatural powers. The procedure has a parallel in the final initiation of the *imo*, during which the novices have to lie down, their faces besmeared with excrements, not being allowed to clean themselves until the maggots become visible. In their case we found factual evidence that excrements are abhorred.¹⁰⁶ The two rituals present a common problem to which we shall have to revert in section 3 of this chapter.¹⁰⁷

Elaborate as the descriptions are of the initiation and preparation of the novice preceding the instruction which every would-be practitioner is required to receive, the communications made on the contents and the process of the instruction itself are brief. The seclusion of the novices continues 'for a time', but from the end of the initiation onwards they are allowed to eat ordinary food and they want for nothing.¹⁰⁸ The candidates are taught the various techniques and formulas, one after another. Of all these techniques Wirz describes only one, that of spiriting away an object, e.g. an arrow-head or a bone needle. The *messav* shows them how to proceed. Having chewed his sweet flag (*gavnam*), he pronounces his spell over the object, which is passed under the armpits and between the legs, moved round the body and finally held firmly in the clenched fist, the other hand clasped over it as if to throw it away. . . . and suddenly the object is gone. The novices now have to practise themselves, the object (e.g. a needle) being at first spirited off into some axil-leaf of a near-by palm. Once they succeed, the distance between them and their target is increased, and finally they have to fix on a far-off object or person. He who can perform the trick is an expert *messav*.¹⁰⁹ The description of the procedure has obviously been noted down from an informant who was a *messav* himself, the actual process, as so often happens, being concealed behind the thick veil of a strictly consequent symbolism.

The meagre communications available on the actual instruction given to the prospective medicine-man concentrate on his preparation for

¹⁰⁶ Above, p. 655.

¹⁰⁷ Below, pp. 927 f.

¹⁰⁸ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 67.

the role he will play as a sorcerer, or at least as a conjurer. Yet, there is sound reason to doubt whether these roles of healer and sorcerer, though definitely spectacular, are necessarily his most important ones. According to Vertenten the novice, having completed his period of initiation and instruction, is dismissed by his instructor with the words: "My son, now you know; you have become one who knows. Never abuse your knowledge and your power; apply them only to do good".¹¹⁰ The exhortation cannot be explained as referring specifically to his functions as a healer and a sorcerer; the emphasis is on the knowledge and it is the hidden knowledge which time and again is stressed as the medicine-man's special gift. The *messav* knows the *déma*, he is an expert on ritual, because he has seen the *déma*. Describing the horrors of his initiation, Wirz and Vertenten stress the necessity of the ordeal as the means to impart supernatural capabilities and see the invisible. He acquires the capabilities of a *hais*, says Wirz, and Vertenten explains that he sees the *déma* and is temporarily possessed by them.¹¹¹ Our authors agree that the technical instruction cannot be given until the novice has passed through this process, as when the eyes have been clarified and the blood has changed. It is their ability to associate with the *déma*, mixing with them and talking to them, which defines their social status. Knowledge of the *déma* involves leadership in ritual. It is the *messav* who knows how the *déma* have to be impersonated, because he has seen them. Evidently, the *déma-wir* is not a mere matter of convention; it is up to the *messav* to introduce modifications in the ornamentation and presentation, modifications inspired by his dreams and trances.

Very little is known about these occult experiences. Information is confined mainly to the practice of a *messav's* dreaming in or near the grave of one recently dead. Of the *messav's* trances we know even less. Trance phenomena are explained as tokens of a *déma* having taken possession of the *messav's* body, but not every medicine-man appears to be able to get into a trance at will.¹¹² A few of them succeed by sniffing the smell of a citrus-leaf, but of their actual experiences we know nothing. We are also told that in a case of sickness caused by a *déma*, the *messav* diagnose the cause and conjure the *déma*,¹¹³ but we do not learn how it is done, nor what is said to the *déma* to

¹¹⁰ Vertenten, l.c.

¹¹¹ Wirz, op. cit. p. 66; Vertenten, op. cit. pp. 55 f.

¹¹² Wirz, op. cit. p. 80.

¹¹³ Ibid.

induce him to comply with the conjurers' wishes. We only know that in such cases the co-operation of several *messav* (up to five) may be required.¹¹⁴ The practice of conjuring the *déma* has been mentioned also in other contexts. The reader is referred to the story of the *Salawak-déma*, who had to be brought back to the Bian river from Welab beach, where he had been washed ashore in the guise of a dead sperm-whale.¹¹⁵ Another, and simpler, method of conjuring the *déma* is that applied to persons who have swooned during an *aili* or a *déma-wir*. They are brought to by spitting ginger upon them and beating their bodies with croton-twigs.¹¹⁶

We are somewhat better informed on the *messav*'s preoccupation with *déma*-stones.¹¹⁷ Finding a *déma*-stone, an object which is either a petrification of some sort formed in an animal's stomach, or a peculiar pebble lying about somewhere in this stoneless country, is always a matter of chance. The *messav*, however, knows how to locate such stones. When he has succeeded in finding out the place where a *déma* resides in the earth, he visits the spot all by himself. Here he beats the ground with both hands, thus inducing the *déma* to appear. The latter wants to run away, but the *messav* seizes him and while he rubs him between his hands, the *déma* changes into a stone. He then smears the stone with sperma and stows it away in a small plaited bag which he may wear suspended from a cord round his neck.¹¹⁸ Wirz mentions various examples.¹¹⁹ A man at Kumbe had a stone resembling an areca nut. The name of the stone was *Anod* and he used it when hunting crocodiles. Then he addressed the stone as follows: '*Anoda! Anoda! Catch the crocodile for me!*'

The *messav* meet the *déma* in their dreams, as is explicitly stated by Vertenten and by Wirz, the latter adding that, to this end, they drink an exceptionally large quantity of *wati*.¹²⁰ We have no information on these dreams. In his description of the initiation of the *messav* Vertenten suggests that they see the *déma* in the guise worn by a *déma*-performer in ritual, but concrete data are sadly lacking. We have to make do with the general statement that the *messav* see the *déma* and speak with them. Yet, the suggestion that the appearance of

¹¹⁴ Rep. Depop. Team p. 74.

¹¹⁵ Above, p. 186.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 632 and 858.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 182 ff., 185.

¹¹⁸ Wirz, op. cit. p. 98.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 95 ff.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 80; above, pp. 890 f.

the *déma* in the *déma-wir* is inspired by the appearance they have in dreams, is important. It links the images of present religious experience with those handed down by tradition.

The high value set upon the contacts of the *messav* with the *déma* and the contribution they are consequently expected to make to ritual and to the welfare of society, cannot detract from the obvious fact that the prevalent trend in their initiation, as well as the secrecy and deceit contingent to the practice of the occult art, are most apt to attract such individuals as are motivated by an inferiority complex and secret grudges rather than by a genuine interest in the hidden powers and meaning of the invisible world. How profoundly that world is a world of danger, is adequately borne out by the necessity to become immersed in the world of the dead in order to get access to that of the *déma*.

Special attention should be paid to the *messav's* implements, the *tang* and the *mangon*. The *tang* has been discussed earlier in this book, when its identity with the bullroarer and its role in ritual were demonstrated.¹²¹ Wirz calls our attention to the association of the implement with a snake. Many *tang* have the shape of a snake and the word *azaki*, which is used for snake in this context, is of interest because it has a corresponding form in the *Imas* dialect, viz. *ahaki*, which means 'it bites'.¹²² It is not improbable that the word holds a reference to the danger that lurks in the *tang* as a magical instrument.

The association of *tang* and snake does not detract from the former's connections with the bullroarer. Among the Kiwai bullroarer and snake are closely related¹²³ and among the Mariud we met with a fairly clear case of a corresponding association in the shape of the *dapa*.¹²⁴ As a matter of fact, snake and bullroarer belong to a common complex of interrelated symbols associated with the penis. The symbolic identity of snake and penis in Marind-anim religious thought became apparent from the myth of *Sosom* and from a detail of the story of *Sobra*.¹²⁵ The association of penis and bullroarer was demonstrated when we discussed the myth of *Sosom*. Evidently, the *tang* makes part of the same complex. The reader may be referred to the explicit statement by Verschueren's informant that *tang* and bullroarer are one and the

¹²¹ Above, pp. 486 f., 534.

¹²² Wirz, M.A. III p. 68; Geurtjens, Dict. v. *azaki*.

¹²³ Cf. Van Baal, BKI 1963 p. 205.

¹²⁴ Above, pp. 781 f.

¹²⁵ Ibid. pp. 271 and 401.

same thing. It was this very informant who told him that only *Sosom* is able to cure a person of *kambara* (sorcery), and in this context we may read bullroarer instead of *Sosom*, thus bringing the *tang* into play again.¹²⁶

The *tang* vary in size. Some are so small that the *messav* can keep the object tucked away in his hand, while other specimens have a considerable length. The power of the implement does not depend upon size or ornamentation, but on its proven effectiveness. Some *messav* have a reputation for proficiency in making good, i.e. effective, *tang* (and *mangon*). "Before being applied, the instrument must be addressed in terms of religious formulas and rubbed with various magical herbs and ingredients, first of all sperma, and probably cadaverous fluid as well".¹²⁷

The *tang* is used for various purposes, for instance, to hurt or to kill a person at a great distance. The implement is handled in the same way as the small arrow mentioned on p. 892. It flies off and when it has got near to the victim, it changes into a snake which bites him.¹²⁸ The term *ahaki*, 'he bites', is certainly appropriate here. A *tang* may also be made to keep watch over the gardens or to guard the front of the house or the sleeping-place in the village where its owner stays for the night. For the gardens any piece of wood which has been given the shape of a snake may be used. The tail-end is inserted in the ground after the *tang* has been addressed as follows: '*Oba! Oba! Oba!* Kill him for me'. Or, '*Vegui, Vegui*, one leg, this one for me!' *Oba* is the common word for both *tang* and *mangon*, in other words, for any 'magical' implement. *Vegui* in the second formula is the proper name given to the *oba*. In both cases the *tang* is enticed to change into a biting snake whenever the circumstances require this. When a person spends the night in another village than his own, a real *tang* is used. This is an easy matter, because a *tang* is usually a lime-spatula which any man can carry about with him without making himself conspicuous. The relevant formula is not communicated, but the *tang* is supposed to give protection not only against hostile attacks, but also against the spirits of the dead.¹²⁹

The fact that *tang* are said to be prepared by famous medicine-men, the implement's close resemblance to a lime-spatula — which enables

¹²⁶ Ibid. pp. 486 f.

¹²⁷ Wirz, op. cit. p. 69.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 70.

the owner to use it without drawing suspicion on himself — and the distribution of *tang* among the new initiates at the end of the *mayo* ceremonies,¹³⁰ these are all indications that the *tang* is of frequent application. Unfortunately, we have no definite information on this point.

The *mangon* is the more dangerous implement. Because it is applied in *kambara*, it is also a more mysterious implement than the *tang*. It is made of a dwarf-coconut and has the form of a pig's head with a gaping mouth (cf. fig. 9). At the other end there is a hole through

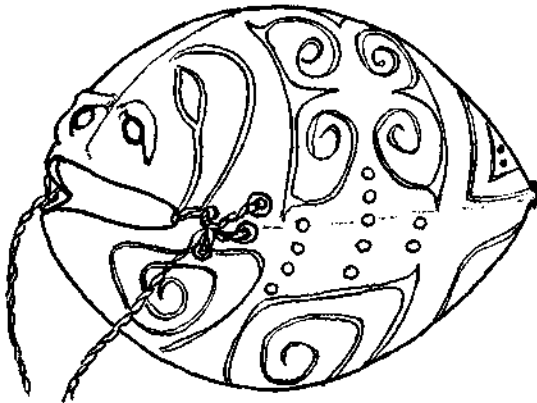


Fig. 9. *Mangon*, a sorcerer's implement.
(Drawing of a specimen in the Museum of the R. Trop. Inst., cat.nr. 2368/13,
made by Miss Susan Taub).

which a cord is passed. When he has thrown it, the magician can recover his *mangon* by pulling the cord, an indication that, in this case at least, the *mangon* is not symbolically spirited away but actually hurled, a point to which we shall come back when dealing with *kambara*. According to Wirz the *mangon* may be applied in two different ways: either it may penetrate into a victim's body and cause various ailments, or it may lure the victim to where the *kambara-anim* are waiting for him. Considering that the *mangon* is tied to a cord, the latter method seems the more appropriate. I never heard of a *messav* finding a *mangon* in a patient's body. Nevertheless, the possibility that it is put to some such use must not be excluded altogether. Wirz also states that the *mangon* may be provided with a *papahi*, which is a scrap or some other

¹³⁰ Above, p. 534.

tiny fragment from the victim's body or clothing. When it has been spirited away, the *papahi* may change into a snake or hurt the victim in another way. It may also entice him to follow the *mangon* and be lured to the *kambara-anim*.¹³¹ However that be, using the *mangon* as a medium by which to catch hold of the victim is certainly not an uncommon practice.

Wirz says that *tang* and *mangon* are sometimes referred to by the common term *oba*.¹³² According to Geurtjens' Dictionary the term *oba* is a synonym of *mangon*, but here Geurtjens is probably misinformed, because on p. 79 of volume II of his monograph Wirz reproduces a picture of a neatly carved arrow-head to which he gives the name of *kui-oba* because it is used during a headhunting raid (*kui*). After having been duly conjured, the object is either spirited away so that it may lead the prospective victims towards the spot where their assailants are waiting for them, or is upended in a footpath leading to the enemy village in the hope that it may hurt some chance passer-by.

Wirz gives an elaborate account of the various techniques employed by the *messav* who wants to harm other people. Most important among these is the *kaiwa*-magic.¹³³ The basic ingredient is *papahi*, which may be anything deriving from the victim, such as hair, bits of excrement, shells of the betel nuts he chewed, etc. The *papahi* are put into a bamboo, if need be into a hollow piece of wood which has been given the shape of a snake. When the bamboo is buried or thrown into a swamp, the victim will fall ill; when the bamboo or the piece of wood is burned, he will die. To procure the *papahi*, the *messav* may make use of his magic. A small object such as a miniature arrow is assigned to fetch the *papahi*. An object of this kind is called a *papus usub*, little bird, and spirited away after having been conjured in these terms: 'Little bird! hit him! Hit him during the night! Hit him in the afternoon! Hit him in the morning! On the spot hit him!' ¹³⁴ After some time the *papus usub* will return with the *papahi*. Wirz reminds us of the fact that a *mangon*, too, may be sent out for such a purpose.¹³⁵ The procedure as it is actually followed has not been observed by any of the authors writing on the subject.

¹³¹ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 68 f., 71.

¹³² Ibid. p. 67.

¹³³ Ibid. pp. 72-74.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 73.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 74.

The same holds true of other techniques of the medicine-man, such as the magic he employs in stealing. To that end the *messaw* sends out the talon of an eagle, which will return with the coveted object in its claws.¹³⁶ Even more mysterious is the *ugu*-magic which is ascribed to the medicine-men of Saror because *Ugu's* skin is said to be kept there.¹³⁷ In this case it seems doubtful whether even a purely symbolic act is performed. Unfortunately, the observers of the practices of Marind-anim medicine-men have all somewhat rashly jumped at the conclusion that these practitioners are frauds. Too little attention has been paid to the circumstance that the *messaw* are dealing, not with hard-tack facts, but with symbols. They do not really cheat; they set in motion some sort of supernatural process which in order to be effective must be symbolically represented in the guise of concrete fact. That is apparently how the magic of the *messaw-uzub*, lit. medicine-man-bird, must be conceived.¹³⁸ The magic originates from the Kurkari people near the border of the Territory of Papua. The performer has to eat the fat of a bird which is known to be a good flyer. Then he has to submit to a period of fasting. Subsequently he retires to a small hut constructed in the bush, where he puts the flight-feathers of a heron on his arms. Then he sets the hut on fire, without leaving it. Amidst the smoke and the flames he is supposed to be carried aloft and fly to the spot he wanted to visit. Here again we are confronted with something which, to all appearances, is the literal description of a symbolic process, based on hearsay, leaving us completely in the dark as to what extent and in what manner magic of this kind is being practised.

More interesting are the descriptions of the medicine-man's exertions in curing the sick or retrieving stolen goods. Activities of this kind are performed in public and may be freely observed, unlike those aimed at harming other people. What the treatment often comes down to is a simple extraction of the object which is supposed to have been juggled into the patient's body by a hostile magician. Conjuring, massaging and a gentle beating against the patient's foot-soles precede the final extraction, which is effected either by sucking or by massage; the session ends with the *messaw* proudly showing the bystanders the blood-stained object which caused the disease. This may be anything; a piece of bamboo, a stone, or even a fragment of a broken bottle.¹³⁹ The

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 73.

¹³⁷ Cf. above, p. 283.

¹³⁸ Cf. Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 74.

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 72; Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 53.

bystanders are deeply impressed; never do they have the slightest doubt. On the contrary, one day, in court, I accused a *messav* who pretended to have extracted a pebble from his son's belly of fraudulent practices. It was altogether too evident that the stone was of his own procuring, and by no means originated from the boy's body. My arguments were persistently set aside, not only by the medicine-man in question, but also by the numerous witnesses present. I examined them for almost an hour, but they never wavered in their faith. Not for a moment did any of them give in, in spite of the fact that a number of them at least must have known all about the trick. The outcome might have been different if the boy had not recovered from his ailment, but in the present case they all stood firm in the conviction that the stone had been extracted from the boy's belly. I learned from the experience that sometimes symbols may be more real than facts.

In this context an observation made by Vertenten is of interest. "Though they do not have a word for 'suggestion', they are somehow aware that it exists and act accordingly. Little Kunga was dangerously ill. Mother Mabuda told me that he would soon recover. 'Just look, Sir, at what they extracted from his little tummy!' and she showed me a round, hard, brown fruit. I scoffed at it. She gave me a grave look, which conveyed that I was not to give the show away. She knew quite well herself, but if little Kunga believed that the cause of his illness had been removed from his body, he might recover rapidly. The mother herself had devised the trick and played the medicine-man. But when a real *messav*, a professional, juggles the most ridiculous objects out of a patient's body, everybody firmly believes it".¹⁴⁰ Apparently the Marind is deliberately brought up in the belief in the veridity of symbols.

A more complicated procedure has to be followed if the *messav* decides that the sickness has been caused by *kaiwa*-magic. In such a case the patient's *papahi*, which have been hidden by the sorcerer, must be retrieved. To that end the *messav* dispatches a *papus-uzub* (see above) in the form of a bone needle (*han*) or an arrow-head (*arib*), enjoining it to trace the bamboo containing the *papahi*. The *papus-uzub* is addressed as follows: '*Mungus! Kimus! Yandir!* guard the newly deposited *papahi!*' *Mungus*, *Kimus* and *Yandir* are the *papahi-nakari*, a kind of *déma-nakari*. There must, writes Wirz, also be a *papahi-déma*, but he is never mentioned. The *papahi-nakari*, on the contrary,

¹⁴⁰ Vertenten, op. cit. p. 46.

play an important part both where the patient's illness and his recovery are concerned. They play with the *papahi*, throwing it up and down, and all the time the patient's sufferings continue. This goes on until the *messav* dispatches his needle or arrow-head. It pierces the bamboo and returns with the *papahi*. The *messav* who is in charge of the treatment waits for a while after he has sent off his *papus-uzub*. He listens and then tells the bystanders that from far away he hears voices calling out *Ah! ah! ah!* They are the *papahi-nakari* who are playing with the *papahi*. At that moment they are hit by the needle or the arrow-head and that is why they cry out. They will deliver up the *papahi* which, in turn, the *papus-uzub* is to hand over to the *messav*. And, indeed, that night the *messav* goes to the patient again and proudly shows him some scraps of food, excrements, hair or any other such item. 'Here is a *papahi*', he says, 'now the illness will soon be gone from you'.¹⁴¹

A more or less similar procedure is followed by the *messav* who is consulted with a view to recovering an object which has been stolen. The medicine-man sends off a *papus-uzub* in the form of a bamboo sliver. Later that day the *papus-uzub* is found in the hairdo of the thief. In reality, says Wirz, the *messav* secretly inserts a bamboo sliver into the hairdo of the man he suspects of being the wrongdoer and, rightly or wrongly, he will be identified as the thief and punished accordingly.¹⁴²

Finally, among the categories of private rites discussed in this section there is the lethal act of *kambara* which, in spite of its seemingly antisocial nature, deserves, with better right than any other of these ceremonies, to be called a rite, because its execution requires the co-operation of at least five or six and often as many as eleven or more performers.¹⁴³ According to Wirz the *kambara-anim* had, originally, nothing to do with the *messav*; the rite has been instituted by the mythical *kambara-anim* of the *Sapi-zé* subclan, a subdivision of the *Basik-Basik* who belong to the *Bragai-zé* phratry, whereas the *messav* derive their art from *Ugu*, who, in spite of the fact that his father *Elme* was a *Mahu-zé*, is a *déma* of the phratry of *Aramemb*.¹⁴⁴ Yet,

¹⁴¹ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 72 f.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 73.

¹⁴³ Wirz has "several, but usually five" (M.A. III p. 75); according to Verschueren the number lies between six and eleven and is sometimes even higher (in Rep. Depop. Team quoted above, p. 812).

¹⁴⁴ Wirz, M.A. III p. 76; above, pp. 405 f. jo. 421 f., 459; 280 f. jo. 454 f.

it is difficult to believe that the *messav* would have no part in it. The number of *messav* being considerable, it is, for this reason alone, fairly certain that they are the first to become involved in the execution of the major rite of sorcery which *kambara* fundamentally is. Another ground on which it may be argued that they actually lend their co-operation is the considerable amount of skill and knowledge required for a correct performance. We find this explicitly confirmed by Verschueren, who states that there must be at least one real *messav*, who acts as the leader of the team of performers.

Kambara is the most dreaded form of sorcery; death follows within one or two days and there is no preventing this lethal effect, except, so it seems, for the intervention of *Sosom*, who as *Kobu* is invoked by the assembled medicine-men in behalf of the patient they are trying to cure.¹⁴⁵ In written sources *kambara* is the oft-recurring term for black magic. References to other forms of black magic such as *kaiwa* are exceedingly rare and the surmise seems justified that vis-à-vis foreigners the word *kambara* has become the generic term covering all forms of deadly black magic, an assumption amply confirmed by a description Van de Kolk gave of a case of *kambara* which is clearly one of *kaiwa*-sorcery.¹⁴⁶ The fairly high number of performers required for an effective act of *kambara* makes it a form of black magic which is rather ill-suited to the purpose of secret and vicious revenge. Yet that is the very aim of *kambara*, at least according to Wirz and all the other authors on the subject, except Verschueren, who wrote in a comment on the secrecy enjoined upon the initiates of the *imo*-ceremonies: "There are strong indications that the so-called *kambara* . . . originally was, and for the greater part has been till to-day, nothing but the penal sanction on an infringement of the laws of the secret cult-organizations, and if my information is correct, more particularly those of the *imo*. However that be, a short time ago I had the opportunity to attend the performance of such a *yemessav-bombari* [*kambara*, v. B.] by the *imo*. In this particular case it was directed against an initiate who in their opinion had disclosed too many old *imo* secrets after he became a christian. Conforming to custom . . . an *imo*-initiate had lodged a complaint against the accused by informing the collectivity of *imo*-members (to that end the plaintiff visits the various *imo*-villages). The plaintiff is called the *gongai-anem*. Subsequently several *imo*-members are designated in secret to execute the sentence, which they

¹⁴⁵ Above, p. 486.

¹⁴⁶ V. d. Kolk, *Oermenschen* p. 39.

carry out under the leadership of at least one real *messav*".¹⁴⁷

In a footnote to the passage quoted Verschueren states that "what the word *kambara* really denotes is not the art of sorcery, as Geurtjens has it in his dictionary, but the condition of a person who has been struck by sorcery. As such it means, sorcery-stricken". If correct, the interpretation would imply that there is not really a specific rite called *kambara*, but one termed *yemessav-bombari*, and that *kambara* is the impact of this rite on the victim, as well as the effect of any other rite of black magic. This might explain why we hear so much about *kambara* and so little of *kaiwa*-sorcery; it might explain also why *kambara* is interpreted by most authors as a form of secret and vicious revenge, in spite of the fact that the great number of performers involved in what Wirz calls *kambara* makes secrecy well-nigh impossible. Unfortunately, the issue is not so simple as all that. In the myths noted down by Wirz *kambara* is spoken of as a specific act of sorcery, executed by specialists called *kambara-anim*, who derive their art from *Sapi*, the pig *déma*, more specifically, the bush-pig *déma*. It is evident that here *kambara* is presented as a specific act of sorcery, and on these considerations we can accept Verschueren's interpretation of the word only as an indication that the term *kambara*, besides denoting sorcery of a specific kind, is also applied to the effect any act of deadly sorcery has on the victim. Maybe the latter connotation is a relatively recent one, the term having first been used in this sense following recent contacts with strangers who were poorly informed on all the various techniques and kinds of sorcery and consequently unable to discriminate whenever a case in point presented itself. The fact, however, that *kambara* is also a specific rite cannot be easily gainsaid, not even if it is accepted, as in the present case, that the term *yemessav-bombari* is a current synonym.

Equally interesting are two other footnotes to Verschueren's article. In the first (nr. 32) he points out that *gongai-anem* (the plaintiff) refers to the *gongai*, a palm-species the wood of which is used i.a. for the making of bullroarers, which are called *gongai*.¹⁴⁸ We may conclude that the plaintiff in his progress from one village to another carries a bullroarer with him, that is, in all probability, a *tang*, because the two are identical.¹⁴⁹ It is evident that the whole procedure is a

¹⁴⁷ Verschueren, *Indonesië* I p. 447. The story is continued on p. 906.

¹⁴⁸ We have already dealt with the *gongai* when we discussed the *pakmi*; see above, p. 735.

¹⁴⁹ Above, p. 486.

ritual performance, as is confirmed by the last footnote (nr. 33) to the passage in question, in which the retaliating party is said to consist of five men or more, with at least one *messav* among them, while Verschueren adds that often this number is doubled or even trebled.

Verschueren's data give evidence that *kambara* is an act of sorcery executed at the behest of the community, and not an act of private revenge. However, he is the last to deny — as is amply confirmed by our correspondence — that *yemessav-bombari* often serves as a means to private ends. Accordingly we find that *kambara* — the term applied by other authors where Verschueren uses *yemessav-bombari* — is employed also to other purposes besides that of punishing people who have betrayed the secrets of the *imo*-cult. In myth *kambara* is applied for the first time in history against *Yawi*, because he had committed adultery with the wife of *Aramemb*, his foster-father. He is punished because he has perpetrated, not a ritual crime, but a social one. We may take it for granted that the occasions on which *kambara* was resorted to were certainly not confined to breaches of the law of ritual alone. Although the fairly great number of performers made it advisable to secure the backing of the entire community, it is certain that it was also applied in private revenge. Our sources cite various cases which do not fit into the pattern of an established semi-public rite. We shall have to revert to this point later, after we have finished this survey of the rite as such.

The procedure has been described by Wirz and by Verschueren, each of them concentrating on a different aspect. Wirz focused his attention primarily on the spells. His account can be summarized as follows: When the five *kambara-anim*¹⁵⁰ have agreed on how to deal with the case, they wait until a favourable opportunity offers, which may arrive, for instance, when the prospective victim leaves the village to spend some time in his gardens. The signal for the conspirators is a stone club, a *kupa* (which in Wirz's reference is usually a club with an egg-shaped head, a well-known phallic symbol¹⁵¹), upended in front of the leader's men's house. One by one the *kambara-anim* go to a certain spot in the bush, which is their previously arranged rallying point. When they are all assembled, one of them conjures the *oba* (according to Wirz a *mangon*) in the following terms¹⁵²:

¹⁵⁰ The number is derived from myth; cf. above, pp. 249 and 405.

¹⁵¹ Cf. above, pp. 273 f. I must add that I am not sure whether in this case it really is a *wagané* (egg-headed club).

¹⁵² Wirz, M.A. III p. 77.

I am <i>Yogum!</i>	} according to Wirz these are names by which the <i>kambara-anim</i> call themselves
I am <i>Kekawé!</i>	
I am <i>Bombara!</i>	
I am <i>Ande-Bombara!</i>	
Bring <i>Nané</i> here for me!	} <i>Nané</i> , <i>Bumés</i> and <i>Yumal</i> are names given to the victim
Bring <i>Bumés</i> here for me!	
Bring <i>Yumal</i> here for me!	
I am <i>Adé-sikaver</i>	?
<i>Gui-buribud</i>	<i>gui</i> is a shaggy tail
<i>Kassim buribud</i>	<i>kassim</i> is a grass-variety (<i>Phragmites karka</i>)
<i>Akur buribud</i>	<i>akur</i> is a grass-variety (<i>Phylidrum lanuginosum</i>)
<i>aa! oo! ah! oh! oh! ha! hi!</i>	—
<i>Wo Bumés-ka kahazin!</i>	you run after <i>Bumés</i>
<i>Igiz, nok Yogum-ka!</i>	name mine is <i>Yogum!</i>
<i>Anga-ganga kahasonab!</i>	?
<i>Mavi-ka nok</i>	I am <i>Mavi!</i>
<i>Hai Mavi! hai Pavi!</i>	<i>Hai Mavi! hai Pavi!</i>
<i>Hai! Suba-Pavi hai!</i>	<i>Hai! Bamboo-Pavi hai!</i>
<i>Mavi! hai Pavi!</i>	—
<i>Warangau a-na tapata!</i>	?

The text differs markedly from the one Wirz gives in M.A. II p. 68 in connection with the myth of *Yawi*, the translatable section of which runs as follows:

I am *Aramemb!*
Sabib penetrate!
Dongau penetrate!
 Penetrate into the body-fluid of *Baringau* (the *igiz-ha* of the coconut,
 Mother, throw yourself upon him! [i.e. *Yawi*)
Hais, throw yourself upon him!
 Father, throw yourself upon him!
 Mother, throw yourself upon him!

Baringau, dance (or: forward)!

In this text the *kambara-anim* identify themselves with *Aramemb*, who gave them their assignment. The victim, *Yawi*, is called by his secret

name of *Baringau*. In the first text the *kambara-anim* give themselves names which, except for the first, do not refer to any known mythical name. *Yogum* is a name by which *Aramemb* called himself in a hymn he sang when he resumed his way along the beach after he had chased *Yawima*.¹⁵³ The other names, although differing very little from words which convey a definite meaning, are unintelligible.

Wirz's informants gave the following description of the act of *kambara*. All the time that the conjurer is reciting his spell over the *oba*, the other *kambara-anim* are dancing, shifting their weight from one leg to the other, and waving the croton-twigs which they carry in their hands. The *oba* vanishes and not long afterwards they hear the victim approach, blissfully ignorant of his fate. They wait till he is within striking distance. Then, from behind, they hit him on the head with a club. He falls down, unconscious, his heart 'being small', i.e. beating faintly. Presently, without visibly damaging the skin, they cut his muscles and intestines. With the thorny tail of a sting-ray they tear shreds of flesh out of his body. Throughout, his heart keeps beating faintly. When they have finished, they bring him to again by beating him with croton-twigs, by blowing in his ears and by calling *ku, ku, ku, ku!* to his heart so as to quicken its beat. Finally, he wakes up. The *kambara-anim* have disappeared and without realizing what has happened to him he continues on his way. That very night he feels indisposed. He has a headache, develops a fever, cannot get any food down and before long he has a bout of diarrhea. He spends a restless night and the next day he is dead.¹⁵⁴

Verschueren one day was a witness of such a rite, which he describes as follows: When the performers of the rite of *yemessav-bombari* (executed to punish a disloyal *imo*-member; cf. the preceding passage of his narrative quoted on pp. 902 f.) have been appointed, the assistants have sexual intercourse with the wife of their leader, the *messav*. The sperma produced during this act of *otiv-bombari* is collected and mixed with scrapings of young coconuts [and water, v. B.]. The mixture is applied to the implements of the performers, such as the *tang*, the *oba*, and the *kupa* (stone club). They also smear their own bodies with it, while the remainder, distributed over a number of bamboo-tubes, is taken along by the participants. The contents of the tubes are later drunk by them, after the 'blood of the victim' has been added to the

¹⁵³ Above, p. 283.

¹⁵⁴ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 78.

mixture. During the night the performers, led by the *gongai-anem*,¹⁵⁵ go to the house of the victim. While they are getting closer, they quietly form into a single file, the *messav* in the lead. He sprinkles his helpers with the mixture containing the sperma and then begins to conjure his *tang*. Suddenly the *tang* has vanished. It is said to have gone off to fetch the victim. Shortly afterwards the leader pretends that the victim has arrived. He gives a few beats on the ground with his club, then takes a bamboo knife and makes some movements as of cutting. After that, blood (usually of a wallaby, which has been brought in the bladder of the animal so that the secret of its origin may be preserved) is poured into the bamboo-tubes containing the water and the sperma. The blood is the victim's blood, which the assailants now drink. Sometimes they also eat of his flesh, symbolized by a young coconut mixed with sperma. The leader then pronounces a second formula, upon which the victim is believed to wake up and return to his house, where he will die within a couple of days. The party see to it that some token is left on the spot, so that people may know what has happened during the night. Otherwise, the *gongai-anem* will take care that the person in question is not left ignorant. If the victim should not die presently, the ceremony will be repeated after some time.¹⁵⁶

Verschuieren's experience is a rare and very important one. It highlights the symbolic character of the procedure. To the participants it is as effective as a real execution. Sometimes, repenting, the participants accuse themselves of murder, or, in case the effort miscarried, of attempted murder. The ritual works and if it fails — as it sometimes does — it is because one of the collaborators has surreptitiously counteracted the rite. He is expected to die in consequence.¹⁵⁷ The belief in the effectiveness of *kambara* is an unshakable one. The symbols applied, being the incarnations of the essence of reality, evidently are more real than actuality itself.

The medium applied in the case witnessed by Verschuieren was a *tang*. Other authors mention the *mangon*. It is, of course, a most useful instrument in performing a conjuring-trick. According to information received at the time I was a controleur at Merauke, the *mangon* was thrown in the direction of the victim, after which it was recovered by pulling the cord back. The victim follows the *mangon* and when he has arrived on the fatal spot, his abdomen is cut open and all the

¹⁵⁵ See above, p. 903.

¹⁵⁶ Verschuieren, *Indonesië* I p. 448.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Letters XI p. 50.

entrails are removed. These are replaced by grass and thistles, after which the poor wretch returns to his house without knowing what has happened to him. He will die within a few days. When noting this down in my *Memorie*,¹⁵⁸ I added the following story which old Kwé Kiong Sioe had told me. There was a man in the village who suffered much pain from a big and ugly abscess in one of his buttocks. Some of his fellow-villagers decided that they would cure him by means of *kambara*. Kwé Kiong Sioe was invited to be present. He saw how they summoned the man by throwing a *mangon* in his direction, after which he quietly walked up to the group waiting for him. They laid him down on his stomach and opened the abscess, which they scooped out with a mussel-shell. Then they made him come to again and sent him home. The remarkable thing is that the man could not remember what had happened to him. As regards Kwé Kiong Sioe, the events related in his story provided him with a welcome opportunity to consult me on the implications of hypnosis and I very much regretted my ignorance of the subject, which prevented me from repaying him with an equally good story.

Being anthropologists, we are inclined to disbelieve tall stories told by a simple Chinese trader. I have already pointed out that Kwé Kiong Sioe was a man who displayed an exceptional interest in native lore.¹⁵⁹ In this case his 'tall story' is amply confirmed by the following communication made by Wirz: "*Daida kambara*, i.e. literally, *kambara* of a transitory nature, is the act of bringing a person into a state of unconsciousness by magic means, in order to be able to perform a painful operation such as pulling out an arrow-head . . .".¹⁶⁰ Wirz notes that he does not know what means are applied; personally, I am inclined to endorse my Chinese friend's explanation and ascribe the effect to hypnosis, even though I have to confess that I feel this is little more than a convenient term for a process too superficially described for us to understand how it works.

An interesting detail is provided by the reference to the entrails being removed from the victim's abdomen, a theme well-known from Australian forms of sorcery. In Wirz's account the procedure is to cut the muscles and tendons of the victim and extract shreds of flesh from his body. "A *messav*, when calling on a patient, closely examines his body, looking for a small bump which may have been caused by an

¹⁵⁸ Van Baal, *Memorie* p. 64.

¹⁵⁹ Above, p. 497.

¹⁶⁰ Wirz, *M.A.* III p. 79.

object which has been lodged there in a mysterious way. At the same time he feels all over the body, carefully fingering the tendons to find out whether they are all in place and assure himself that they have not been cut, which would give unequivocal proof of *kambara*".¹⁶¹ In stories communicated by Geurtjens and Drager, the sorcerers are accused of having eaten their victims after they had cut out shreds of flesh from their bodies.¹⁶² Summoned to give evidence in court, the witnesses declared that there had been no outward signs of violence. The crime had been detected in a dream. Contrary to the prevailing pattern discussed, the number of sorcerers involved in these instances was small; in one case there was only one accused, in the other, reported both by Drager and Geurtjens, there were three. The information given in these stories is rather contradictory; the interesting point is that the victim is thought to have been devoured by the sorcerer(s). In essence, it is the same point as that made by Wirz in connection with his description of the rapidly worsening condition and subsequent death of a victim of *kambara*: "'*Mui baren*', 'the flesh has been consumed' [lit. has petered out, is finished, v. B], say the natives, i.e. he is worn away, and so by implication they give expression to the feeling that it is a matter of *kambara*".¹⁶³ The same phrase, *mui baren*, is used when a man dies of old age.¹⁶⁴ The fact that one and the same expression is employed to denote two different cases of death, each attributable to a specific cause, the one the opposite of the other, is interesting. In both the flesh is said to have withered away, in one as a result of the long process of wear and tear culminating in old age, in the other this is imputed to the sudden impact of magical activity. What happened is in both cases essentially the same, viz. the wasting away of the flesh. The difference lies only in the length of the process. Apparently *kambara* is, before everything, the cause to which sudden, untimely death is ascribed. Earlier, we found that the problem of and the protest against untimely death are the main motives underlying the ceremonies for the dead.¹⁶⁵ It is not death as such which really constitutes a problem, but untimely death. If it is also a sudden demise, then the prompt and premature attrition of the flesh, which is the essence of death, is attributed to some deliberate act, viz. symbolical consumption. This is, indeed, what the performers do; after the victim, who has been

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 82.

¹⁶² Geurtjens, *Onder de Kaja-Kaja's* pp. 33 ff. and 81; Drager, *Ann.* 1927 p. 103.

¹⁶³ Wirz, *op. cit.* p. 81.

¹⁶⁴ *Loc. cit.* See above, pp. 199, 679 ff., 807.

¹⁶⁵ Above, p. 807.

lured to the spot by the *oba*, has been declared to be present and has subsequently been cut up by the leader of the ritual, they drink 'his' blood (the wallaby's) and eat 'his' flesh (the meat of the coconut). Kwé Kiong Sioe's communications give rise to the surmise that the victim may even be actually present, but on this point I prefer to be sceptical. His actual presence would be more of a liability than an asset in symbolic action. Regarding the symbolic nature of the act there is no misunderstanding, and this applies to the performers as well as to the bystanders. In an amusing account of the trial of a man charged with killing a sorcerer, Geurtjens has the accused explain that the dead body of the sorcerer's victim was outwardly perfectly unscathed, but inwardly eaten away.¹⁶⁶

In this context the more important fact is that death by *kambara* is explained, not as a special kind of death, but as one in which the process of dying, fundamentally a process of aging, evolves with incredible speed. It is the rapidity which is accounted for, not the process itself, for that is taken for granted. The ordinary course of a man's life coincides with the course of the sun. This implies that ultimately he must die, namely, when the full course is completed. *Kambara* interrupts the course; it brings on untimely death by symbolic action.

How can symbolic action have such dire consequences as are attributed to the act of *kambara*? It would be beyond the scope of this book to formulate a general theory on sorcery, but at least we may try to define the belief in sorcery somewhat more accurately. All authors agree that the belief in sorcery is of the firmest. My own experiences tend to confirm that we may speak of a really unshakable belief. And yet Verschueren, at the end of his notes on a rite of *kambara* performed in his presence, remarks: "If the victim should not die, the ceremony will be repeated after some time".¹⁶⁷ At first, I was inclined to conclude that somehow or other the performers do not feel so confident as they pretend. Reconsidering Verschueren's reactions to my expressions of doubt on this score — and the answers he provided have in part been worked up in the preceding pages — I think that the matter should be seen in a different light. Nobody knows for certain what the future will be, but the men conspiring to kill their victim by symbolic action are deeply convinced that they are hurting him, even killing him,

¹⁶⁶ M&M 1926 pp. 161 f.

¹⁶⁷ Above, p. 907.

unless something unforeseen, something beyond their power, interferes and saves his life. It is worthwhile to note that not only in this case, but in other, similar, instances as well, they always have a rationalization ready which explains why the act of magic failed. In the case of *kambara* it is the counteraction of one of the participants, in that of the *gamo méen* for the prosperous growth of *wati*, the interference of a sorcerer.¹⁶⁸ It is in vain that we ask for an explanation why magic works. Its efficacy is taken for granted, but not its failure.

Of course, not every failure requires an explanation. On several occasions I have seen them making magic to ward off an impending rainstorm. Though the results invariably failed to materialize, this did not in the least surprise them. But there the situation was different. From the very outset the action had merely been an experiment, the outcome of which was uncertain. Nor was it an important matter. Likewise, the failure of a garden-bed which has not been properly tended does not call for an explanation, even though all the pertinent magic has been duly practised. It is different when the garden has been well cared for, an example being provided by Déwati's *wati*-garden. Such an unexpected, unforeseen failure must be explained. The fact of the failure is emotionally unacceptable and rationally inexplicable.

This is most patently the case where sudden death is concerned. Here the explanation is found either in the mysterious action of a *déma* or in the malevolence of a sorcerer or a group of sorcerers. It is obvious that in giving an explanation of sudden death the rule that causes must be equivalent to their effects is not ignored. That eating the flesh is presented as an explanation of its rapid decay is as surprising as the death itself. Yet, the problem which remains is how man can believe in magic and acquire such powers as are attributed to the *kambara-anim*.

Although a full answer to this question cannot be given until the next section, a few anticipatory remarks are in order here. The powers of the sorcerer are certainly not taken for granted. It is not merely a matter of knowing the mysterious spells, although this, of course, is an element of the action, and a very important one, too. It takes more than that to be a sorcerer. He must be a *messav*. The leader of the rite of *kambara* is always a *messav*. He is different from ordinary people. He can see the *déma* and speak to them, an accomplishment to which he has attained by submitting himself to a most repugnant treatment

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 866 f.

in the course of which his whole body must become saturated with cadaverous fluid. The initiation is a terrible ordeal and it is quite a feat of self-conquest to have endured it to the end. The *messav* is literally steeped in death, and it is worth noting that of the *hais*, the spirits of the dead, more or less the same is said as is told of the *messav*, viz. that they meet the *déma* on their way to the *hais-miráv*.¹⁶⁹ The Marind have never formulated a theory which would explain why the disgusting treatment is required, except that they state that the eyes of the *messav* are brighter, that they can see the *déma* and that their blood is of a different texture, and that, consequently, they are able to do things which cannot possibly be done by ordinary men.¹⁷⁰ It follows that the *messav* has acquired supernatural powers through his contact with death and we already pointed out that there is a close parallel with the *imo*-neophytes, who are submitted to the elements of decay.¹⁷¹ These tangible exponents of decay, corpses and excrements, cadaverous fluid and maggots, are the means by which contact with the invisible world of the supernatural is established. Death and decay are the gateways to the realm of the supernatural, the world beyond this world, and its essence. The *messav* and more particularly the *imo-messav* (no wonder the *imo* are dreaded above all others)¹⁷² have gone further than ordinary mortals — they actually went as far as was humanly possible — in their effort to get to the bottom of the secret of death, which is also the secret of life, because life comes from death. The initiation of the *messav* is, in fact, not only a repetition of a main theme of the cults, it even pursues this theme to its extreme end.

The *messav*, then, has specific powers, but the nature of these powers can only be defined in the next section, after we have analyzed the interrelationship of spell and myth. Here we must confine ourselves to pointing out that the *tang*, too, plays a role in the rite of *kambara*. In this respect also the rite makes use of the strongest possible media, as the *tang* is identical with the bullroarer, the *pahui* and the penis, the source of the all-powerful sperma which, again, plays a role in the performance.

A last question which remains to be dealt with concerns the frequency with which sorcery in general and *kambara* in particular are applied and believed to be applied. We noted that there are several indications

¹⁶⁹ Above, p. 202. Cf. also pp. 805 f.

¹⁷⁰ Wirz, M.A. III pp. 66 f.

¹⁷¹ Above, p. 892.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* pp. 603 f.

that *kambara* is primarily an act of official or socially approved punishment, inflicted not only on people who gave away the secrets of a cult, but on other wrongdoers as well. We also noted that *kambara* is relatively ill-suited to the conditions prevailing in the case of private revenge. *Kaiwa*-magic is far better adapted to the requirements of such a situation. In many cases, however, *kaiwa*-magic, if effective, was called *kambara* and it is impossible to decide to what extent either kind of sorcery was applied or believed to be applied. Neither can we assess the number of deaths attributed to sorcery in proportion to the number of cases explained from the action of *déma* or from other causes. The problem has been discussed in full in the introductory section of the chapter on headhunting, so that here we would just refer to our conclusion that the fear of sorcery is great among the Marind and that many a death is ascribed to it, even though retaliation is relatively rare, being confined to cases in which either sufficient evidence is brought forward or no counteraction is to be feared.¹⁷³ Among the various forms of sorcery *kambara* or *yemessav-bombari* is the one most frequently mentioned, even up to the present day. Nevertheless, proficiency in this particular form of magic cannot be acquired within Marind-anim territory. Those who wish to be initiated in the technique have to go to Kanum-anim territory, to Tamargar, the residence of *Sosom*.¹⁷⁴ Whether this is a recent development is impossible to decide, but it is certainly meaningful that the belief in the close association of the most lethal form of sorcery with the symbol of the phallus, *Sosom*, is still unshaken.

3. THE PRIVATE RITES IN THE CONTEXT OF MARIND-ANIM RELIGION

The formulas discussed in section 1 of this chapter are revealing in that they point to a close relationship between the religious formulas of the private rites and mythology. In a total of 52 formulas containing proper names, 8 referred directly to myth. It is evident that the private rites do not by themselves make up a separate department of the supernatural, contrasting with religion proper as it is represented in myth; on the contrary, many of these rites are directly rooted in myth. Conversely, myth refers to these private rites, at least, inasmuch as they

¹⁷³ Ibid. p. 689.

¹⁷⁴ Verschuieren, Letters XI p. 50; above, p. 475.

are practised by religious specialists. The rain-makers derive their art from *Yawima*, the mythical *Dongam-anem*; the *messav* originate from *Ugu*, whose flesh was eaten by the first medicine-men; the *kambara-anim* have their ritual from the mythical *kambara-anim* called in by *Aramemb*, and from *Sapi*, the bush-pig *déma*. *Aramemb*, one of the main characters in the mythical *mayo* ceremonies, is closely associated with the art of the medicine-men and of the *kambara-anim*. The latter's magic, the most dreaded form of sorcery, is not only the main weapon in enforcing the rule of secrecy incumbent on the initiates of the *imo-cult*, it is also the principal instrument in private retaliation. Formally, it is perfectly impossible to draw a line dividing religion from magic in Marind-anim religious concepts. They certainly do not make this distinction themselves.

It is equally impossible to differentiate between the attitudes proper to the private rites and those belonging to the rites of the community as a whole. It is just as impracticable to demonstrate that the humility which is supposed to be a characteristic of the religious attitude is the determinant of the collective rites, as it is unfeasible to prove that the private rites are primarily expressions of pride and command. We pointed out that Verschueren explicitly states that on various occasions he had been impressed by the devout attitude of the men reciting a religious formula. Occasionally, Wirz, too, called the spells a kind of primitive prayer.¹⁷⁵ An analysis of the content of the formulas demonstrates that it is impossible to classify them as either simply imperative or simply supplicatory. There is a touch of both elements in them, and sometimes nothing of either. Which prevails when the hunter addresses his bow as follows: '*Uarawi!* closely embrace me!' Is it command? Or prayer? Or perhaps identification of the speaker with the bow *déma*? There is no definite answer, just as there is no answering the question when it is applied to the formula used to set on the dogs: '*Hai Yodkap! Hai Mizerangib! Hai Yodayod!*' The one thing which is evident is that the dogs are given mythical dogs' names, but does that mean that they are identified with the mythical dogs? Is it by way of prayer or of command that *Abadu*, the mythical *orib*-fish, is called upon to bite the fisherman's hook? And what is foremost in the speaker's mind when *Dawéna* is requested to urinate on the spot prepared by the man waiting for the rains to come? In the formula '*Harau!* come here!' we may recognize an irreverent imperative, but

¹⁷⁵ Above, pp. 865, 869 and 874.

we may also interpret it as an urgent appeal to the relevant *déma*, made in the realization of the speaker's utter dependence on her assistance. The question as to reverent or irreverent, commanding or supplicatory, is unanswerable. In fact, it is irrelevant. It presupposes a contrast. The contrast between the two is ethnocentric in origin, deriving from the high value set upon humility in Christian doctrine. One need not be a regular worshipper to realize that the opposition does not lead us anywhere. One of the recurrent themes in Christian sermons is the exhortation to the faithful that their prayers be real prayers, said in a spirit of utter dependence on the Lord's mercy, and that they beware lest they pray in a compelling manner. It even happens that certain forms of prayer are condemned as word-magic. If that is possible even in the case of Christian prayers, then how could we ever try to define the attitude appropriate to Marind-anim spells?

A more promising approach is that provided by an examination of the matter-of-fact content of the spells. They all convey a definite wish. It may be that the relevant *déma* is called upon to act or that the object is addressed by its *déma*-name, its *igiz-ha*, a non-identifiable name, a metaphor or even, in a direct way, by its common name. In one case the conjurer calls himself by a *déma*-name. It is certainly not by chance that this is in the formula recited by the *kambara-anim*; they call themselves by the names of the mythical *kambara-anim*, one of them even by one of the names of *Aramemb*. We may view this as a symptom of the over-exertion involved in the act. A second case of identification in which the conjurer calls himself by a *déma*-name is that of the spell serving to promote the growth of the aerial roots of the pandanus.¹⁷⁶ Here, however, it is not really the speaker who identifies himself with the *déma*, because it is actually the aerial roots which speak through him.

Earlier we demonstrated the important part played in the spells by names and symbols.¹⁷⁷ A number of these names are wholly unidentifiable, they are neither *déma*-names nor recognized *igiz-ha*. Wirz calls them "sinnlos und spielerisch erfunden", meaningless products of a playful fancy,¹⁷⁸ but that is evidently an over-statement. At one time they may indeed have been products of playful fancy, but now, as part of the spell, they have acquired an established status. And of course they have a meaning, though it is different in kind from what Wirz

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 876.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 868 f., 879 f.

¹⁷⁸ Wirz, M.A. III p. 102.

conceived it to be. A name, even an imaginary name, is as good a word-symbol as any word. It is, like every word, the expression of a something. If that expression is confused, obscure and unintelligible, the assumption seems justified that it refers to a state of mind or an experience which is likewise confused or obscure. When regarded as a symbol, a word is never better than the concept or the representation it symbolizes. Topping the scale of precision in symbols is the mathematical symbol. It stands for clearly defined concepts, leaving no room for any misunderstanding or equivocality. Somewhere halfway down the scale is the word of common parlance; it may stand for a clear and well-defined concept or image, but it may have different meanings, according to the specific context, or it may have connotations which set the word in an emotional atmosphere of some kind. Still further down the scale are the symbols of myth and dream, the confused images haunting the neurotic and the shamanistic medicine-man. These symbols are translations of a state of mind as confused and hazy as the symbols themselves.

Once these symbols have been accepted as expressions of a something, a closer inspection of the symbols of myth and religious formulas becomes a rewarding task. This point can be illustrated by the formula quoted by Wirz as an example of playful imagination, to wit, the formula spoken when a young banana-shoot is planted, '*Gomat-oar!* on this spot thou shalt bend!' ¹⁷⁹ Here we have all the elements combined. The banana-leaf is addressed as an oar, and not just an ordinary oar, but a *Gomat-oar*, an oar with a personality of its own. The name *Gomat* is meaningless only inasmuch as it is impossible to have any special significance, any mythical relation attached to it. Nevertheless, indefinite though it may be, the addition of *Gomat* to oar produces an effect. It gives the oar a personality of its own, a personality which is ill-defined, as unidentifiable as the owner of the name, who may have been anybody. There is nothing strange in this, provided we accept that words express a meaning or an experience. If that is accepted, it is evident that the formula under discussion conveys some very definite information on the light in which the planter sees the banana-shoot he is planting. Evidently he is thinking, not of the shoot itself, but of the banana-leaf which will grow from it. It is the future leaf which he not merely compares to, but even identifies with an oar, and, what is more, with a very specific, more or less mysterious oar, a *Gomat-oar*. Why

¹⁷⁹ Above, p. 875.

does not he speak of a leaf? Because that would fall short of expressing what he feels. To him the leaf is not just a leaf pure and simple; it is more than that, and that extra bit is expressed in the circumscription *Gomat-oar*.

The Dutch essayist Multatuli once told a delightful little story which I cannot help quoting, in spite of the fact that it illustrates only one aspect of the case in point. It is the story of Hasan, the pious date-vendor at the market in Baghdad. He brought a charge against a fellow-vendor, because the latter promoted his sales by telling the public that his dates were the biggest and the best in all Baghdad, whereas in actual fact they were neither bigger nor better than anybody else's dates, including Hasan's. The *cadi* gave him a wonderful piece of advice. Hasan, he said, do not sin by telling lies. However, it is not a sin to tell people something utterly absurd, which anybody can see through. Next time when you are at the market, you shout that Hasan's dates are bigger than they are. There is nothing sinful in that; everybody is bound to realize that it is nonsense. Hasan did as he was told and he became a man of substance.

Now the case of the banana-leaf is analogous to that of Hasan's dates. It is represented as more than it is. It is not just a banana-leaf, it is an oar, and not an oar like any other, but a *Gomat-oar*, an oar with an individuality, a personality of some sort, which is specific to it. It is an ill-defined personality, because nobody knows who or what *Gomat* is, but the simple addition of the name turns the oar and the banana-leaf into very special specimens, different from ordinary ones. Why should the banana-leaf have some sort of ill-defined personality in the religious formula? The question should be generalized: why are the objects of the spells represented as items which are made to appear as more than they really are by veiling them in metaphors, giving them more or less ill-defined personalities by naming, surnaming and supernaming them?

The immediate effect of this personification is that the object of the spell is presented as a mysterious subject, motivated by a will or intention of its own. Could it be that the mystery in which the object has been wrapped by the spell is the form given to intentions apprehended to be the true movers of the visible world? In the following exposition of my ideas on this point I have relied heavily on Bergson's critique of Lévy-Bruhl's theory of primitive mentality. His argumentation convincingly demonstrates the impact of the concept of inten-

tionality and I may for once be allowed to make a side-step into the field of ethnological theory, because the concept is of fundamental importance to our present study of Marind-anim thought. Where Lévy-Bruhl finds that primitive man is attributing effects to occult causes, we are always confronted with events concerning man, events having a human meaning, which Bergson analyses as follows: "For instance, he [primitive man] sees that a man is killed by a piece of rock torn off during a hurricane. Does he deny that the rock was precariously tilted already, that the wind has detached the stone, that the crash has shattered a skull? Obviously not. He admits, just like we do, the action of these 'causes secondes'. Why then does he introduce a 'cause mystique', such as the will of a spirit or a sorcerer, which he advances as the main cause? A careful scrutiny makes it evident that what is explained by primitive man from a supernatural cause is not the physical effect, but the human meaning (la signification humaine) of the event, its impact on man and, more specifically, on one man in particular, the one whose head was smashed by the stone. There is nothing illogical and, consequently, nothing 'prelogical', nothing even which would demonstrate an 'impermeability to experiment', in the belief that a cause must be proportionate to its effect and that, the fissure in the rock and the direction and the violence of the wind having been duly noted, there still remains to be explained the fact, and to us an extremely important fact, of the death of a man. The cause contains the effect in the highest degree, said the old philosophers; and if the effect has . . . a human meaning, the cause must have a meaning which is at least proportionate. Anyhow, the cause must be of the same order, that is, an intention".¹⁸⁰ To state it more directly, why should the man be on the spot at the moment that the stone fell down!

Bergson continues with an exposition on the human experience of resistance generally, a theme which I elaborated elsewhere.¹⁸¹ There I pointed out that even in our own culture we do not ignore the human significance of an event, provided it concerns us immediately and deeply. When death brutally knocks at our door or when political upheavals shatter the very basis of our existence, we, too, ask: 'why!' The word may die away on the lips of wiser mortals, but the realization of the pointlessness and contingency of life is crueller and more difficult to accept than any interpretation involving the intentional activity of

¹⁸⁰ Bergson, *Les deux sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, pp. 151 f.

¹⁸¹ Van Baal in *Higher Education in the Netherlands* 7 pp. 17 f.

some mysterious agency. The fact that discerning an intention is sometimes infinitely more comforting than the absence of any intention may nevertheless not induce us to limit the occurrence of the experience of intentionality in a modern milieu to intensely emotional situations. Everyday speech offers so many instances of situations in which things are handled as having a will of their own. Just think of the engine that *refuses* to start, or the car which *will* simply not go. This does not mean that we visualize the engine or the car as having a will of their own, but that in this instance language expresses a marginal experience of intentionality, experienced solely in an 'as-if' manner, but still real enough to be reflected in speech.

Once the fundamental nature and spontaneous occurrence of the experience that events have an intentional character is recognized, and the fact is accepted that in affect-laden situations there is more comfort in acknowledging that intentionality than in denying it, it is no longer surprising that primitive people see something more in the course of events than a tissue of cause and effect and that they accord to this intentionality a more important place than we are inclined to do. They have less reason than we to deny this intentionality, as their insight and knowledge are less comprehensive and their thinking is untrained. On the other hand, they have more reason to accept this intentionality, for their lives are filled with uncertainty and danger to a greater extent than ours. Hunger, death and fear knock on their doors with a regularity of which we can scarcely conceive.¹⁸²

Where modern science concentrates on the observation of physical causes and their effects and accepts chance as a fundamental datum in every situation, the Marind, when confronted with situations fraught with uncertainties, have capitalized on the concept of intentionality. With surprising precision the spell expresses the experience of the intentionality of nature and the human impact of physical events. By means of a metaphor, nature, presenting itself in the form of a natural object, is made to appear as more than it is, is depicted as whimsical by means of its representation as a person who may be either a *déma*, mysterious by definition, or an unknown someone whose very unknowability veils him in mystery. After all, intentions are not known, they are apprehended, being vague and undefined by nature. The survey presented in section 1 of the present chapter abounds with examples. The banana-leaf represented as an oar, the flesh of the wallaby address-

¹⁸² L.c. I should have stressed the role that silence plays. Lasting silence is always a speaking silence.

ed as coconut meat, the orifice of the beetle identified with the teeth of the *bang-a-bang*, they all have a dimension added to their qualities. Apart from the fact that they have an intentionality of their own, these similes refer also to the intentions of the speaker. The leaf should be as big and straight as an oar, the meat as tender as that of a coconut (or the wallaby should be caught like a nut waiting to be plucked!), the beetle should be as venomous as the tetrodon. The intention of the speaker being embodied in the metaphor, the intentionality of the object is expressed in the personal name. The oar should be a *Gomat*-oar, and heaven knows what kind of an oar that is! The teeth of the dog are not just ordinary dogs' teeth, but *Kekus*-teeth and nobody can say what that means. Here we have mystery and whimsicality, the intention of the performer and the apprehended intentionality and waywardness of the object, all combined in the spell.

For the present we shall leave aside the intentions of the officiant of the private rite, to return to them after we have finished our discussion of the apprehended intentionality of the Marind-anim universe. The spells — and we might add, the myths — reflect the uncertainty and contingency prevalent in the conditions of life. Yet, it would be a misjudgement of the facts if we explained myths and spells as spontaneous reactions to the conditions of life. Though some, or even many of them, may have originated from a spontaneous reaction or a personal experience of the individual, the body of spells and myths has been passed on by each successive generation to those that came after them. Each generation may have contributed modifications and additions, but as a whole the spells and the myths are a cultural heritage, which each new generation have to make their own, and which constitutes a basis and a guide-line on which they model their thoughts and their behaviour. A guide-line for conscious thought, too; all through our discussion of myth and ritual we found proofs of conscious, deliberate patterning. Telling examples are the myths of *Geb* as sun and moon, of *Diwa* and *Dawi* and the forms and implications of the *pahui*.¹⁸³ One generation after another has contributed to shaping the forms expressive of the intentionality apprehended to be the true essence of nature. The *messav*, retiring to the loneliness of the savannah or the forest, is brooding over something. The result is the surprisingly systematic pattern of myth and ritual emerging from our analysis. It is

¹⁸³ Above, pp. 227 f., 763 f., 738 ff. and 758 ff.

a structured whole and because it is an intelligently structured whole, it is impossible to explain Marind-anim spells from spontaneous reactions inspired by experiences of apprehended intentions of some sort. In many cases spontaneity is conspicuously absent.

A case in point is the banana-leaf, which was the main item in our discussion. Here the element of uncertainty contingent to the experience of apprehended intentionality is minimal. There is a fair chance that our gardener, had he planted his banana-shoot without performing the rite, would never have been harassed by any feelings of uncertainty at all if he had not known that there is a particular rite for furthering the growth of banana-shoots. The banana being a fairly prosperously growing plant, there is not much reason for him to worry about possible crop failures. If he is concerned about a shoot which was planted without the rite having been observed, the case may be called one of default: it is the non-observance of the rite which causes uneasiness, and this is a different situation from that in which pre-existing anxiety is dispelled by the performance of a rite.¹⁸⁴ Uncertainty is, in this case, hardly a possible rationale at all. It almost certainly is, however, in such occupations as *wati*-planting, because *wati* is a notoriously risky crop, or fishing with a hook, the angler quite obviously being dependent for success or failure on the willingness of unseen fish to take the bait.

Similarly, there are also situations which are really fraught with danger, and which the Marind has to meet without having an apt formula available. Unfortunately, our information on this point is of the scantiest. All pertinent data deal with the occasions on which formulas are used; nobody has ever paid attention to the precarious situations in which people did not resort to them, either because no formula befitting the occasion was available, or because nobody thought of performing a rite, notwithstanding their awareness of the risk inherent in the situation. Thus we do not know whether a formula is pronounced before climbing a coconut tree. It is possible that, in this case, a specific formula is available; during the *mayo*-initiation special attention is paid to the climbing of coconut palms.¹⁸⁵ It is practically certain, however, that there is no ready-made formula which may be used when climbing other trees. Of course, when he is up against

¹⁸⁴ Cf. the discussion of the anxiety motive by Cl. Lévi-Strauss in his *Totemism*, pp. 66 ff.

¹⁸⁵ Above, p. 519.

heavy odds, a man may call upon his own *déma*,¹⁸⁶ but more often than not he will just climb the tree and come down again without any further ado. Curiously enough, the situation has its parallels in the religious life of our own society. Even the most pious Christian, whose whole life is dedicated to devotions, will hardly think of saying a prayer before crossing a street, in spite of the fact that the dangers presented by modern traffic ought to make any pedestrian commend his soul to the Almighty when venturing out on the streets of a town.¹⁸⁷ He simply does not recognize the situation as one which has a religious impact. Not until he is really thoroughly frightened does he become aware of it and will he interpret his predicament in religious terms.

A religious system, even a religious system which pretends that it offers salvation from every situation of distress, does not really cover every need, nor does it meet the urgencies of every accidental event. It offers a general framework for those seeking relief, giving special emphasis to some situations and ignoring others. The Marind-anim religious system provides a case in point. There is no formula to protect a man climbing a tree, because there is no danger, unless a sorcerer has applied his magic. General protection against sorcery is impossible. If it were not, there would be neither death nor sorcery. The one remedy which can be applied is counter-sorcery, but this cannot be effected by way of prevention but only *ex post facto*. The actual method applied by the sorcerers has to be found out first. On the other hand, the planting of bananas is given special emphasis. The banana is an important crop and it ranks high in religious evaluation, the fruit having been called into being by *Geb* in his moon-guise. The banana makes part of a culturally important complex, while the climbing of an old tree does not. The religious system is the product of the notions and concepts developed in respect of the powers apprehended to be the secret forces governing the universe. It provides standard forms for the expression of what I have called *apprehended intentionality*, a term which I propose to use for that complex of undeated feelings which is at the basis of the phenomena described in the preceding pages; a vague awareness of a something, the undefined apprehension that things and events have a hidden meaning or secret intention. The form in which these feelings are expressed is standardized by tradition. Situations which are culturally relevant are favoured, while in other con-

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 866.

¹⁸⁷ One of my students told me that in Spain women sometimes cross themselves before going across a crowded thoroughfare.

figurations the apprehended intentionality may be ignored, all this for reasons which have to be sought for in the structure of the religious system itself.

We must return to the intentions of the officiant of the private rite. He expresses them in clear terms; nobody can be in doubt what his wishes are. But why does he expect them to be fulfilled? We cannot solve the problem by referring to the well-known fact that talking to the object of one's toil creates an atmosphere of comradeship which inspires the worker with a feeling of confidence that after all the job need not be as hard as it seemed to be at first sight. Complying with the ritual prescriptions certainly inspires the officiant with confidence, but it is not a confidence that the work as such will be successful, but that it will bear fruit in an unforeseen future. Performing the rite is more than a gentle act of reassurance. The spell works. The plant will grow prosperously. Why does he believe in the effect of his formula, in the willingness of the *déma* to answer his call?

There is one curious thing about the *déma*. On the one hand they are weird and whimsical, reifications of all man's dreads and apprehensions. The same *déma*, however, are also ancestors, not of all and sundry, but each of some clan whose members can be asked to say the formula which will guarantee success, at least as long as sorcerers or other *déma* keep aloof. We might conclude that the *déma* as reifications of apprehensions are also reifications of the wish that somehow or other the danger may recede and the wish be fulfilled. This, however, is an over-simplification seriously distorting the picture. The world of the *déma* is a comprehensive world, a well-ordered universe and though apprehended intentionality and whimsicality are important characteristics, they are not the only ones. *Yorma*, the sea-*déma*, though a fine specimen of apprehended intentions where he represents the sea in its destructive aspects, has his place in the universe accurately defined. He originates from some place far away in the interior, the son of Depth and Groundwater, socially a *wokraved*. *Nazr* comes closer to being a specimen of whimsicality. In his life-history he fully demonstrates the whimsicality attributed to the boar. Besides, he is the personification of thunderstorm and headhunting, which completes the picture. On the other hand, a *déma* such as *Geb* is different. It is impossible to maintain that the intentionality attributed to a specific department of nature dominates his personality. He is the ancestor of the ceremonial moiety, associated with the beach which, in its turn, stands in oppo-

sition to the interior. As such, *Geb* is primarily the beach, the long, white, broad beach extending from the place of sunrise to that of sunset, which also mark the beginning and the end of the journey of the moon. The sun, progressing on its course parallel to the beach, is *Geb's* cut-off head, which is now on his shoulders, now at his feet. *Geb* is also the *déma* of the banana, a typical moon-symbol. He is even the moon himself. It is a weird world. Do the Marind really think that the sun is a head and the moon the sodomized *Geb*? If they did, they would soon be thrown into confusion. *Uaba*, too, is the sun, and the moon is symbolized by various *déma*, notably *Saripa*.

Marind-anim myth does not pursue ontological purposes. It gives shape to the apprehension of the human impact of the universe. The mystery of that impact is not an object of analysis, but the starting-point of all speculation on man and *déma*. The fact that the *déma* are ancestors is of fundamental importance. It expresses the belief that man and his universe are one. In a way, it is a fundamental truth that man is part of his world, and the pursuit of a mystic union with one's universe is one of the few possible answers to the existential problem arising from the unescapable fact that man, consciously facing his universe, dissociates himself from the universe of which he is part and parcel. Contemplating on his universe, man inevitably recognizes his world as dissociated from him, as inimical to his desires. A logical analysis of his situation necessarily leads to a progressive alienation from his world. And yet, the only way to happiness and to a meaningful existence of some sort is to live and function as a real part of one's universe.

The Marind, capitalizing on a notion of apprehended intentionality, is not confronted with a problem of alienation from his world. He has transformed his world into a world of intentions, a world which, weird though it may be, has human characteristics. His attitude is based on a universal trend in human perception, viz. a tendency to project emotional contents into the act of perceiving. When an adversity is experienced as a situation laden with an intentionality of some sort, the situation is being experienced in human terms, that is, the subject is translating the situation into human terms. He ascribes to it certain traits originating from his own self. In the daily routine of a modern man's life the experience of an apprehended intentionality is — at best — of secondary importance, a sensation with a purely emotional import which should not be acted upon. The Marind take the experience seriously and act upon it, translating their whole universe into human

terms, projecting their own self into it, even to such an extent that they have their world populated by ancestors. This is why the rite is effective. It is based on secret knowledge of the esoteric meaning of the universe and its parts. It is this esoteric meaning, this intentionality, which is the cause of unpredictable events and by approaching the object in its esoteric aspect the inherent unpredictability of its behaviour is affected.

Thus far, the sensation of apprehended intentionality has been presented as a sensation accompanying the experience of resistance, of adverse situations. The sensation derives from the active, projective character of human perception generally. This implies that the apprehension of intentionality — though strongest in the face of adversity — need not and cannot properly be confined to these specific situations, but may also arise in other, less trying circumstances. In Western civilization the contemplation of the beauties of nature — and I may refer here to the poetry of Wordsworth as a classic example — may lead to rather similar projections. In Marind-anim culture we have the story of the man who on his return from the interior greets the beach in poetic terms,¹⁸⁸ comparable to those employed by the Lake Poet. There is one difference; the Western poet describes a world in respect of which he as well as his audience are aware that it is an imaginary world, whereas the man on the beach, referring to *Yorma*, the son of Depth, was alluding to some being who has a vaguely outlined, but nevertheless very real impact on reality. In Western culture the projective components of perception are distrusted or carefully restricted to the domain of aesthetics, in Marind-anim culture these components are conceived as characteristics of the universe. Consequently, this universe is not solely refractory and mean by nature; the powers embodying its secret meaning also reflect the more beneficent aspects of nature. It is an important point. The Marind loves his country. In the missionary periodicals we find various telling examples next to the one quoted above. In the opinion of the Marind-anim there is no better country than their own and the arrival of strange people from oversea was readily explained. They were *émér-anim*, hunger-people, who had no coconuts in their own country.¹⁸⁹ In the *déma* the glory of this world is as patently manifest as are its minatory traits. They reflect the beauty of the universe as well as its imminence.

¹⁸⁸ Above, p. 181.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Van Baal, TBG 1939 p. 331.

As a result of the fact that the *déma* are ancestors the apprehensions of otherness and danger are combined with those of being related and befriended. An ancestor is, before all, a relative and all the fright he inspires by his otherness does not detract from the fact that the common bond warrants certain expectations of help and sympathy. In the *déma*-concept fear and apprehension are blended with hope and expectations of supernatural succour.

In the present context one aspect is of specific interest, viz. the secrecy in which the images of human projections in the universe are veiled. The fact that the world of the *déma* is regulated on the same principles as the human world does not detract from its mystery. To the believer the human world just reflects the order of the *déma* world. The latter is secret by nature. As a projection of human apprehensions, including human fears as well as expectations, the *déma* world reflects man's vaguest and most undefined mental conditions. It could not be but mysterious. At the same time, this *déma* world poses the most intriguing of problems to the Marind because it represents the secret meaning of his universe, the unfathomable something which accounts for its unpredictability. What he needs is knowledge of the *déma*, which, in principle, is knowledge of the inner world of *déma* and symbols.

We found the Marind willing to undergo the most gruelling trials to penetrate into that world by associating with the dead. In this world of meaning the symbol of a thing is more important than the thing itself. The inveterate belief that the stone which the medicine-man pretends to have juggled out of the patient's belly was really so extracted, is characteristic of the high value set on symbols of this kind. The sickness which has been cured by the act was inside the body, while now it is outside, embodied in the stone. Of course it was the medicine-man himself who actually brought the stone with him, but this is denied, because the recovery of the patient after the treatment by the medicine-man proves that the stone which carries the sickness must have been in the body. What amazes us is the consequent refusal to admit that the stone is only symbolically the bearer of the sickness. The stone as a symbol is more real than the object itself. As a symbol the stone stands for the essence of reality and this is why symbol and reality have to change places: the symbol (the stone embodying the sickness brought forth from the patient's body) taking the place of reality (the stone is brought to the scene by the healer), and reality (the patient is cured) being substituted for the symbol (the sickness was caused by the stone). The order of reality is inverted by reversing

the facts, a recurrent feature in Marind-anim religious life and notions, the most telling case being that of the *pahui* and the inversion of the roles of the two moieties in cult and headhunting.

The paradox is combined with the symbol as a means of formulating the unspeakable, of expressing the reality apprehended to lie behind the reality of the factual universe. The paradox is itself a symbol: it emphasizes the fact that there is a difference as well as a similarity between the phenomenal world and the world of meaning; moreover, it contains all the contradictory elements belonging to the mythical symbol and is as good a means as any to translate the hidden intentionality of the universe and the mysterious bonds connecting nature and mankind, which in the final analysis are more important than the visible world. The Marind grow up in a world rich in symbolism. As the young children are brought up there is instilled into them the firm belief that the symbolic act of the medicine-man is a real fact. The story of the mother and her sick child recorded by Vertenten is instructive on this point.¹⁹⁰ Through progressive stages of indoctrination it is brought home to the young Marind that the invisible world is more important than the visible. It is that invisible world which they are reaching out for in their numerous rituals, which throws its spell over them when they are listening to a myth, quietly squatting round the fire, softly clicking their tongues in amazement and shaking their heads while the story-teller proceeds, building up an ever-thickening atmosphere of mystery that envelops the heroes who worked their miracles just round the corner of yonder pathway, where an age-old tree still holds the memory of that event. . . . The mythical age is no more than a few generations ago¹⁹¹ and miracle and mystery are still near in time and space.

In this atmosphere with its firm belief in symbolism and its acceptance of the paradox as a vehicle for expressing the vague apprehensions of hidden intentions, death, in spite of its terror, must be fascinating. The dead are nearer to the *déma* than the living. It is only a few generations which separate the living from the mythical age. Moreover, they belong to the same supernatural world as the *déma*. They are more human than the *déma*, but nevertheless linked to them by common descent. Above everything else, the nauseating practices attendant upon the initiation of medicine-men and *imo*-novices prove the genuineness

¹⁹⁰ Above, p. 900.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 182.

of the Marind-anem's religious interest, i.e. his quest for what is at the bottom of his universe. We found no evidence that he indulges in these practices because of a morbid pleasure in tampering with excrements and corpses. He hates excrements and the ultimate prospect of death frightens him. Yet, abhorrence may be combined with preference, and we have to revert to the morbid aspects towards the end of the next chapter. For the moment we must confine ourselves to another facet, the similarity between these practices and those customarily described as religious self-torment. They are conceived as the means to force the secret of life. How could, in any philosophy, the secret of life be fathomed more effectively than by penetrating into the secret of death? The *messav* may, indeed, assert that he has been under the shadow of death. That accounts for his knowledge and his power, which is the uncanny, undefinable power of the mysterious, the essence of all things extant: intention, mystery, oneness. It is not primarily a matter of analytic thought; first and foremost it is apprehension, not analysed, but accepted as a token and as the unquestioned basis of the remarkable dialectics of Marind-anim religious speculation.

The Marind-anim pattern of thought differs from that of modern man, not in the way in which it applies the laws of logic, but in its approach of the outer world, to which it ascribes meaning and intentions whenever pragmatic knowledge falls short or an emotional situation is provocative of apprehension. We might characterize their way of thinking as *ascriptive*, contrasting it with that of modern man, which could be defined as *descriptive*. Yet, we should refrain from over-emphasizing the opposition. In everyday life Marind-anim thinking, too, is descriptive, whereas modern thinking may turn ascriptive as soon as our knowledge has reached its limits and the inadequacies inherent in rational thought call for a metaphysical completion of our world-view. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between modern and primitive ascriptive thought, the former preferring solutions of a transcendentalist nature, the latter remaining within the framework of the immanent world.

CHAPTER XV

THE BRIGHT GLORY AND THE DARK SECRET

In the course of our description and analysis of the various aspects of Marind-anim life and culture we were confronted with a bewildering richness in attitudes and symbols which, often contrasting and even contradictory, could nevertheless be proved to make part of a well-structured whole. However, a few questions remain to be answered. As we tried to unravel the tangles of Marind-anim ritual we ran into a few knotty problems which have to be solved before we can say that we have arrived at our journey's end. One of them concerns the overtly carefree demeanour of a people given to so much speculation on a secret inner world. Next, there is the strong belief in sorcery in communities anxious to live in peace with their neighbours. Then we must try to find the key to the relationship between the two main principles of orientation of the classificatory system, the cosmological and the ritual. Finally, we have to go into the highly equivocal relations between the sexes and their impact on the secret of the ritual. Not until we have satisfactorily dealt with these moot points can our study be considered complete.

1. THE GOOD LIFE AND THE MYSTERY OF THE DÉMA

Introducing the déma-concept, we wrote: "The Marind-anim are an easy-going people, ready to enjoy a good joke and to appreciate the amenities of life. Outwardly they do not appear to be impressed by that invisible world which induces them to so much strenuous effort. A realistic approach to everyday life goes hand in hand with elaborate ritual and the frequent application of magical and ceremonial practices. Two attitudes exist side by side, thus creating another problem over and above that presented by the bewildering richness in ritual manifestations and mythical beings".¹

¹ Above, p. 177.

The problem cannot be solved by imputing all religious belief and activities to the specific influence of the medicine-men, who are often eccentrics. Not just they, but all the people participate in the rites, believe in the *déma* and are afraid of sorcery, and yet there is nothing to demonstrate that the common man would be really preoccupied with the occult. The Marind are proud of their culture and of their country. They are self-assured generally, the youngsters more buoyant, the elderly people more dignified, but all of them aware that they are the *anim-ha*, the true humans. Even to-day, in their contacts with other tribes, they display a genuine superiority which is all the more conspicuous because it comes naturally to them. There is no submissiveness in their attitude towards the whites either. I had known him for over a year when at last I found out that my friend Wagér spoke Malay. Actually, he spoke it better than I did. It was an act of friendship when he dismissed the interpreter who had been our go-between, just as it was a calculated act of hostility that he spoke a polished, grandiloquent kind of Marind every time he met a certain priest whom he did not like and whom he knew to be insufficiently versed in the vernacular to follow the intricacies of his speech. Wagér was no exception. The Marind is proud of his language.

Does this outwardly self-assured demeanour of the Marind imply that he is not so deeply interested in matters of a religious nature as the frequency and the magnitude of the rites would suggest and that, consequently, there must be something wrong with our analysis of the *déma*-concept? I do not think so. The definition of *déma* as the inner meaning and the secret intentionality at the bottom of all things in the universe fits in with the elaborate circumscription of the concept given in Chapter IV. It all harmonizes only too well with the idea that everything has its proper *déma*, that the *déma* and the mythical age are near at hand, that the marks of mythical *déma*-activity are still visible in certain trees and peculiarities of the landscape, that the term *déma*, usually denoting the mythical story-folk, may also be used as an adjective, indicating things unusual which for some reason or other are awe-inspiring or bear trace of having been the victims of the *déma*'s wrath.

What is more, the Marind, in spite of their seemingly secularist attitude, do listen to the secret language of things and events, they do probe to find out what may be at the bottom of it all. They have even a word for it, *kuma*, i.e., what is inside a thing, the interior of it or what is at the bottom of it, that which is secret or hidden, while, in a

figurative sense, it refers to the female genital. *Kuma méen* is figurative language as well as the thoughts one keeps to oneself² and, we might add, what is not said aloud. The one author who makes mention of the concept — next to Geurtjens in his Dictionary — is Viegen. He pointed out that the term is used to denote the kernel of a thing, as well as all things secret, confidential and important, also the underworld and, again, the female genital.³ Viegen is explicit on the interest the Marind take in all things *kuma*: “Nous voilà en présence d'un mot mystérieux, qu'on retrouve à chaque pas dans la vie du Marind”.⁴ I remember the emphasis he laid on its importance from the interviews I had with him more than thirty years ago.

From the connotations of the term *kuma* it must be inferred that the word secret should not be taken in its current sense, signifying something which other people should not find out, but in the more subtle sense of something shrouded in mystery, inaccessible to the profane, something about which no knowledge can be acquired except by the hard way of penetrating into its depth, like penetrating into the earth. Increasing one's knowledge about things *kuma* is both imperative and dangerous. The uninitiated have to know about its occurrence and must be kept wondering, but they must not know any particulars. These must be disclosed by an act of revelation. It is surprising to note how much the connotations of the *kuma*-concept agree with the attitude vis-à-vis the secrets of the great cults. Earlier, we drew attention to the curious fact that the stories about the ritual told to the uninitiated often are not just cock-and-bull stories, but present the real, esoteric truth in a symbolic form.⁵ The truth is not hidden from the uninitiated, but shown under the cover of a veil, sufficiently transparent for the cosmological implications to be discernable, yet thick enough to distort the true picture and so keep the outsiders guessing. What is secret in our pragmatic sense of the word is the procedure of the cult and the secret names, in other words, all such particulars as are needed to make the required knowledge operational.

It can be maintained that the secrecy observed is a means to protect the ritual procedure against ridicule, because, being a human effort to visualize the unfathomable, this procedure necessarily falls short of its purpose. More important, however, is the fact that the kind of

² Geurtjens, Dict. v. *koema*.

³ Viegen, Sem. d'Ethn. 1923 pp. 386, 390.

⁴ Ibid. p. 390.

⁵ Above, p. 581.

secrecy conveyed by the word *kuma* is an adequate expression of a fundamental experience which has existential value: the apprehension that the world, one's universe, has a meaning, a hidden intention which must be deferred to or else avoided as dangerous. It is imperative that all people should know about it, but the powers involved are as dangerous as apprehension itself and it belongs to the nature of their mystery and menace that one is not admitted to their presence unless one has undergone previous trial, initiation and revelation.

Our present problem is concerned more specifically with the fact that the attitude of the Marind-anim vis-à-vis their universe is now pragmatic and matter-of-fact, now religious and respectful. Actually, it is not the only case of contrasting or even conflicting attitudes in Marind-anim culture. The secret cults and the attitudes towards women are characterized by comparable contrasts and we shall have occasion to elaborate on this matter in section 3 of the present chapter. For the time being, we have to consider the circumstances in which it became possible for the Marind to be pragmatic, easy-going and proud at one time, while at another they are deeply interested in the occult, alive to the voices of hidden intentionality and secret meaning, and dedicated to the multitudinous tasks imposed by an intricate ritual. Yet, this juxtaposition is not so strange as it seems at first sight. The religious attitude is always a special attitude and in this respect the Marind-anim do not differ from other peoples. The fact that this world is a world full of intentions does not imply that an ascriptive attitude is required at every turn and on every occasion. There must be some specific reason to take account of these hidden powers, and this reason lies only in the situation which is either of an emotional nature calling for ritual action, or culturally defined as a religious one. In all other circumstances the situation is religiously neutral and a simple matter-of-fact approach is the required attitude, that is, the one which we called descriptive.

Among the Marind the situations culturally defined as religious are numerous, more so than among many other peoples. Consequently, we should suppose them to be obsessed with an exacting spirit world, always ready to disturb the very equanimity the appearance of which they so successfully keep up. In reality their spirit world is not as bad as all that. Two reasons at least may be mentioned which prevent the *déma* from becoming obsessive. The first follows from the dualistic character of the *déma*-world itself, the second from the well-ordered organization of ritual and the division of functions attendant on it.

Both points will be briefly elucidated.

The *déma*-world, awe-inspiring as it may be, is not solely a frightening world. The *déma* are not just ogres; though weird and wilful, they are also the originators of custom and the disseminators of all good things; their glory and greatness is the central theme of feasts and ceremonies. As personifications of the inner meaning and intention of the world they are the personifications of its glory and beauty as well as of its wilfulness. Nowhere is the pride the Marind take in that world better illustrated than in the sharp contrast between the splendour of a *déma-wir* and the squalor of the village in which it is enacted. The *déma* represent the world the Marind is proud of, while housing is unimportant to him.⁶ Better and more ornate houses would set him apart from a world which is his glory, to which he adapts himself because it is the root of his existence. In such a world man can afford to be easy-going and to appreciate the amenities of life. They make part of that world and constitute solid grounds for his pride.

The second reason why the vagaries of the *déma* are not allowed to interfere very much with daily life and its amenities is the order of ritual itself. It is true that the mysterious world of secret meaning is there, but man need not be constantly on the alert, as he is already doing everything which can be done by way of precaution. Life with the *déma* is not primarily a life of contemplation, of a nervous listening to secret voices. Perhaps this is true for some of the *messav*, who are professionally occupied with the occult, and who thus become innovators of ritual, but the common man knows already what he has to do. Through well-directed ritual activity he is able to allay his fears and live in relative peace with the awe-inspiring *déma*. Moreover, nobody is compelled ceaselessly to engage in ritual activities. The various tasks have been systematically assigned because the structure of the *déma*-world coincides with that of the human world and of ritual activity. A spell is not automatically effective; it must be pronounced by a member of the phratry or clan concerned.⁷ Only a member of that specific clan has the right connections to set things in motion, to the exclusion of members of all other clans. Not much can be achieved in life without some member of another clan lending his co-operation, an interdependence which extends to all the clans and consequently is an important asset to the social life of the Marind, because the main foods and

⁶ Ibid. p. 860.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 866 and 869 f.

narcotics are fairly evenly distributed among the phratries. The *Geb-zé* have the coconut and the banana, the phratry of *Aramemb* the wallaby and the *wati*, the *Mahu-zé* the sago, the shell-fish and the fishes of the shallow waters, the *Bragai-zé* those of the deep sea, the pig and the betel. No one can do without somebody else's help, a help of which he may be assured, because marriage-relations imply extensive co-operation. It is fairly certain that these ritual functions are not functions of the phratries, but of the relevant clans, primarily the 'big name' groups. Thus the *Bragai-zé-ha* are explicitly associated with crocodile and betel, the *Yorm-end* with sea and fish, the *Basik-Basik* with the pig, the *Ndik-end* with *wati*, and so on. Rain-making is the specialty, not of any clan, but of a subclan (the *Yawima-rek*). So important are these ritual functions of the various clans that in everyday life three of the four phratries are not even mentioned by name. It is only the big clans, the 'big name' groups which have names, which function as distinctive units in social intercourse, even to the extent that the intrinsically more comprehensive functions of the phratries are blotted out.⁸ We shall not be wide off the mark when we assume that it is the functions of these 'big name' groups in the private rites which make them so important. At the same time, however, there is implied an important division of ritual labour, as it is the member (or members) of one single clan who perform the private rites required by members of the other clans. On each occasion it is only a few people who become ritually active, the others being free to follow their own pursuits or to act as mildly interested spectators. In other words, something is being done to ensure congruence with the world of the supernatural and these activities are embedded in the system of social intercourse. The demands of the supernatural are such as to make the individual dependent on the ritual co-operation of his fellow-tribesmen. The fact that the performance of the ritual activities prescribed by custom is automatically conducive to the maintenance of good social relations, enables the individual to keep his nerve and face the supernatural world with equanimity.

Enough has been said to demonstrate that the two attitudes — outward self-assuredness and indulgence on the one hand and mystic pre-occupation with the invisible world on the other — can exist side by side. However, this medal, too, has its reverse, as we shall see presently. First, however, we must make another observation. An important point

⁸ On the prominence of the big name groups cf. *inter alia* pp. 90, 91 above.

in our discussion of the ritual functions of the clans was our conclusion that the dependence of the individual on the co-operation of all the clans implies that the territorial group is a much more closely knit unit than has ever been realized. Marind-anim social life has a sound and almost unshakable basis in the interdependence created by the need for co-operation among the clans. This explains why those settlements or village sections which are mere fractions of a territorial group that split away from the main body, tend to comprise men's house communities of all phratries within their precincts.⁹ Ritual dependence provides a solid ground for aspirations to local self-sufficiency.

Thus far we have been arguing that the menacing power and weirdness of the *déma* did not prevent the Marind from enjoying the amenities of life. Yet, living a life oriented toward observing the secret meaning of intentions apprehended to be at the bottom of all events and of all the universe will not fail to affect the individual's outlook and the equanimity which he sustains as long as all goes well. It may be true that the dealings with the *déma* tend to have a strongly operative character, but there is also a marked tendency towards contemplation, even though it is a kind of contemplation directed towards the translation of its objects into patterns of ritual action. It is primarily the *messav* who are given to this kind of contemplation. They have dreams and visions. Unfortunately, we know little of the content of their experiences. Next to Vertenten's account quoted above,¹⁰ we have only Wirz's story of the *messav* who made certain specific alterations in the decorations of the coconut *déma*-performer in a *déma-wir*. This man one day imbibed the coconut *déma* when drinking from a coconut in the bush and consequently knew what the *déma* looked like.¹¹ The behaviour of the *messav* as described by Verschueren gives additional evidence that some of the medicine-men at least are given to more or less habitual brooding on the occult.¹² Obviously, there are a few individuals whom the preoccupation with the hidden meaning of the world affects to such an extent that it changes their way of life, and we cannot just dismiss their deviant behaviour as eccentricism because these same people appear to be innovators of ritual whose words and ideas carry weight.

In a world in which all people are from early youth conditioned to

⁹ Above, p. 45.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 891.

¹¹ Wirz, M.A. IV pp. 41, 52.

¹² Above, pp. 886 f.

be alive to the intentions and inner meaning apprehended to be at the bottom of events and things existent, it is not only the medicine-men who are seized by the intriguing mystery of that secret world. As long as all goes well, one is liable to forget that this secret world can also be frightening, violent and revengeful, but as soon as a sudden accident happens, when death knocks at a door in the village, the people are frightfully upset and see spooks everywhere. The communications made on the subject by Verschueren are highly instructive.¹³ They demonstrate that under the prevailing conditions there is no alternative. A world full of occult powers, which are the bearers of secret intentions, becomes a frightening world as soon as something unforeseen comes to pass. To all intents and purposes the world is already frightening enough when the night is dark. The Marind are afraid when it is dark.¹⁴ They want to be *basik*, brave pigs, but they seldom are.¹⁵

The most heinous effect of Marind-anim ascriptive thinking and the preoccupation with secret intentions apprehended to be at the bottom of events is the strong belief in sorcery. A universe controlled by apprehended intentions may obey certain rules, but it leaves no room for chance. Every unexpected event with an emotional impact is a token. The event must have a meaning. It is understood that man dies of old age because the flesh is consumed, but untimely death must have a cause stemming from the world of secret meaning. Most South New Guinea tribes, such as the people of Frederik Hendrik Island,¹⁶ attribute every death to sorcery. The Marind have a problem here. When a death occurs, they are sure that there is something wrong, but they are very reluctant to saddle anybody in particular with the responsibility. Mostly, the verdicts of the medicine-men as to the cause of a death are ambiguous,¹⁷ it seldom happens that they are positive in their findings. It is somewhat facile to say that a rash verdict would jeopardize good intra- and intervillage relations to an extent incompatible with the medicine-men's wish to maintain peaceful intercourse. Of course this is true, but in the few cases that a divinatory dream yields positive indications, they are ready to overcome the scruples inspired by this wish to maintain friendly relations. Somehow, a certain

¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 688 f.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 204, 226.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 693, 756.

¹⁶ Cf. *Serpenti, Cultivators* pp. 185 ff.

¹⁷ Above, p. 689

hesitancy prevails. Actually, the Marind are already more reluctant than their neighbours to ascribe death to sorcery. Death of an epidemic disease is caused by the *tik-dema*, in the case of venereal disease by the *rapa-* and *mayo* navel *déma*. In other cases, notably when neglect of a *déma*-spot can be proved, the death of an individual, too, may be ascribed to the *déma*.¹⁸ Yet, there is the apparent dilemma that if every death were imputed to the *déma*, these would be cast in a more invidious role than they are actually conceived to play; as ancestors they are supposed to be willing to help. The Marind might have found a way out by blaming the spirits of the dead, but in their attitude vis-à-vis the dead loving memory prevails to such an extent as to make this a most unattractive solution. Anyway, they chose to lay the blame elsewhere and consequently had to look for the culprits among the living.

When first discussing the subject of sorcery, we started from the hypothesis that what really underlies the belief in sorcery is discord and hostility stemming from social conflicts.¹⁹ Actually, the facts do not bear out the hypothesis. There is ample reason to grant that a good deal of discord stems immediately from the belief in sorcery. Time and again it was confirmed that Marind-anim society is a closely knit unit and that friendly relations and peacefulness within the tribe are encouraged. Of course there are conflicts, but all the evidence tends to demonstrate that, rather than conflicts and hatred between individuals, it is the belief in apprehended intentions lurking behind events which is the cause of the belief in sorcery and of the ensuing aggressiveness. This explains why there is so much reluctance and uncertainty when the guilty sorcerer must be found out. The case is interesting because it tends to prove that aggressiveness, hatred and conflicts need not necessarily be the causes of sorcery, but may represent its effects as well, or, more precisely, the effects of a world-view capitalizing on apprehended intentionality.

2. THE BASIC ORIENTATION OF THE CLASSIFICATORY SYSTEM

Unravelling the intricacies of the classificatory system is one of the central problems of our enquiry. At the end of Part II we drafted a preliminary survey which was based on the assumption that we were

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 683.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 680 and our conclusion on p. 695.

dealing with a ceremonial moiety and a non-ceremonial one. This opinion we had to revise in Chapter XII, when we concluded our analysis of the headhunting ritual.²⁰ One moiety appeared to be associated with the secret cult, the other with headhunting and public celebration. Even this statement of the position does not solve all our problems. Two major themes are discernable in the system, one of cosmological contrasts, the other of ritual specialization. Up to an extent the two coincide, but there are some intriguing discrepancies which require a final discussion. Returning to the subject of the classificatory system, I would almost feel inclined to apologize to the reader who may argue that much time could have been saved if I had begun by expounding the system, thus sparing him the laborious progress from one theory to another. When nevertheless I chose this indirect approach, it was because I wanted to let the facts speak for themselves instead of having the author speaking for them.

Our discussion of the classificatory system must begin with what has gradually proved to be the basic fact and starting-point of all classification, to wit, the fundamental equality of all men. This is not as we had expected initially. The differentiation according to totem and the assignment of specific functions to each particular clan, together with the differentiation in rank reported by early authors,²¹ all combine to suggest that there is a difference in essence between the members of one clan and those of another. The suggestion is false, and its fallacy can be demonstrated in various ways. First of all, we note that there is a telling difference between the great cults, headhunting and the celebration of feasts on the one hand, and the performance of the private rites on the other. The latter are performed by the members of the relevant clan for the benefit of the members of all the other clans. This is a clear case of specialization. The great cults, the headhunts and the feasts, however, require the co-operation of the members of all the clans, none excepted. Participation or performance as such are not restricted to one moiety, but all the clans actually take part. It is the leadership which devolves on the *Geb-zé* moiety in the secret cult, on the *Sami-rek* in headhunting and feasting, while in each case the members of the other moiety participate as followers and co-operate by fulfilling the functions allotted to them. If we conceive of the secret cult, the headhunt and the feast as parts of one big

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 760 f.

²¹ Ibid. pp. 98 f.

cycle — and this is what they actually are — there remains only this difference between the two moieties that the one moiety has the lead in the first part and the other in the second. They could not be less different.²²

That the members of the two moieties are equals is further confirmed by the fact that the distinctive symbols representing the leading *déma* of the various rites are all identical. In the *imo Uaba* is represented by an arrow-head, in the *sosom*-rites his relative *Sosom* by a huge red-painted phallus and a bullroarer. In the headhunting ritual the *Mahu-zé* have the *pahui* as their symbol, and this is the penis of *Diwa*, but also the weapon of *Nazr*, while there are indications that the *Geb-zé* moiety has a *pahui* of its own, viz. the butt-headed variety.²³ The phallus, now an arrow-head, now a pole, a bullroarer or a catfish, a *tang*, a *pahui* or *Nazr's* club, is the property of every *boan* and the symbol of every male. Even more significant are the curious representations of the superior male sex in *mayo* and *imo*, respectively a clumsy straw-puppet with a detachable penis and a mere arrow-head wedged in a shield decorated with female symbols. It is true that the other moiety, symbolized by the feminized *Opeko-anem*, is here associated with the female sex, but the esoteric truth of the rites is that the female sex is represented as the more powerful. In the headhunting ritual the moiety associated with the female sex is the owner of the *pahui*, the long penis of *Diwa*, and the connections of this moiety with the male sex are further emphasized in the association of the *Bragai-zé* with the emitting of sperm. All this goes to prove that, though the men of the *Sami-rek* moiety are associated with female roles and tasks, this does not affect their status as males. Essentially, all men are equal and in one way or another both moieties are associated with the male sex and the emitting of sperm as well as with castration and submission to the female sex. This implies that the functions which the members of the various clans fulfil in ritual and myth must not be taken to reflect any intrinsic qualities of those holding them, but that they must be viewed as roles which they have been given to play in the celebration of ritual. The fundamental equality of the clans is further substantiated by the curious fact that, whatever their phratry, all the clans may claim to be related to the sun, even though she is associated

²² In this context the reader may be reminded of the two male effigies at the entrance of the *mayo-miráv*, above, pp. 504 and 557 f. It is fairly probable that they each hold a reference to one of the moieties.

²³ Above, pp. 742 f

more specifically with the *Geb-sé* and the *Kai-sé*.²⁴ Initiation makes a stork of every neophyte who is a *miakim*, whatever his clan or moiety.²⁵ Even among the *imo* the decoration with storks' feathers is the prerogative of the *miakim*.²⁶

We conclude that the associations of the various clans are primarily determined by their roles in ritual, the private rites included. However, there is system in the distribution of the roles, a pattern which is primarily based on cosmic contrasts, such as those between southeast and northwest or between coast and interior. This is the system of classification as it was first formulated in Chapter IX, where we signalled a number of notable deviations, which we classified under the heading 'the dialectic aspect of the associations of the various phratries'. Although later on, at the end of Chapter XII, we were led to assume that there was yet another principle of classification, viz. the contrast between secret cult and public ceremony, we need not have recourse to this second principle to explain the fact that such a thing as a dialectic aspect prevails. To a certain extent its occurrence is the logical consequence of the fundamental equality of all men, which enables them to participate in all the major rites, each in his proper function. Thus the *mayo*-rites, because they are secret, cannot be performed on the open beach or in the village; the celebration has to take place inside an enclosure in the *timan*, the interior,²⁷ which is associated with the *Sami-rek* moiety. In a way they give hospitality to the *Geb-sé*, who are the leaders of the cult. In their turn, the *Sami-rek*, celebrating the public feast in the village or on the beach, are the guests of the *Geb-sé*, who are specifically connected with the beach. Accordingly, the *Wokabu-rek*, who are associated with feasts, have a connection with the beach, coconut oil and body-paint. There is co-operation, not only in respect of the place of the celebrations, but also as regards the time chosen for them. Proceeding in this vein, we may interpret the association of the *Geb-sé* with the moon as another function of the *Geb-sé* in the celebration of the feast, because moonlight is an indispensable element. The fact that all men are equal and participate in all the major rites of *mayo* and *sosom* (respectively *imo*), in headhunting and in feasts, implies that those who do not belong to the moiety which has the leading role in that particular event, nevertheless

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 224, 247.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 534.

²⁶ Ibid. pp. 854 f.

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 505 f.

become associated with certain of its specific features. A telling case is that of *gaga* and *yarut*.²⁷ The two songs have much in common. *Gaga* belongs to the cults and consequently to the *Geb-zé*. Nevertheless it commemorates the journey of the *déma* from west to east. Similarly *yarut*, which is sung on the occasion of a feast and for this reason must be associated with the *Sami-rek*, refers to the westward journey of the *hais*. There is a thorough intermingling of contrasting motives. Where the two moieties co-operate, a certain degree of overlapping of the categories of the classificatory system is only natural; besides, it constitutes an additional affirmation of the essential equality of all participants.

Nevertheless, it can not possibly provide the explanation of each and every deviation. Actually, in our analysis of the system in Chapter IX we have already introduced one criterion borrowed from ritual, viz. the role of *Imo* as a *Sami-rek* characteristic.²⁸ It is true that, in myth, *Imo* has certain cosmological components — it is associated with the night and the west generally — but by origin it is a ritual and not a cosmological concept. It is mostly in the field of ritual that we meet with deviations which are incompatible with the system of cosmological contrasts, viz. rain-making,²⁹ the rites of the medicine-men³⁰ and, at Buti, the association of the *Sapi-zé* with the *Kai-zé*, the *Sapi-zé* being associated with *kambara*.³¹ Finally, we also had some difficulty in accounting for the classification of *Harau* as a *déma* of the phratry of *Aramemb*.³²

We begin our discussion with the case of *Harau*, which stands more or less by itself. In Chapter IX we concluded that *Harau's* is a case in which there has been a shift from one moiety to another. On second thoughts, I wonder whether this admittedly far-reaching conclusion was wholly justified. *Harau* married *Elme*, *Mahu's* son, and on that score it is perfectly right to call her a sister of *Aramemb*. It is true that in other respects (she also had sexual intercourse with *Aramemb* and in the *Kumbe* valley she is even called a *Mahu-zé déma*) she is a typical *Mahu-zé*, but I think that, after all, the answer to the problem lies elsewhere. There are two myths of *Harau*. In one she is associated with *Habé* and *Aramemb*, in the other she comes from the upper *Bian*

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 508 f., 798 f.

²⁸ Ibid. pp. 434-437.

²⁹ Ibid. pp. 288 ff., 455 f.

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 454 f.

³¹ Ibid. pp. 298, 308, 421 ff., 459 f.

³² Ibid. pp. 278 ff., 443, 456.

and works for *Wokabu*.³³ The two are inextricably mixed up, but that is not the point. More important is that there are two conflicting traditions, one connected with *Aramemb* and the other with *Wokabu*. It is suggested that the one is a *mayo* tradition, the other an *imo* myth, because *Wokabu* is closely associated with Imo and specific *imo*-traditions.³⁴ That, ultimately, *Harau* has been classified as a member of the phratry of *Aramemb* is, as has already been argued, probably due to her ritual functions as the originator of *otiv-bombari* and the creator of the female hairdo and, as such, of the female age-grades.³⁵

This again puts her case on a level with the other three cases mentioned. The first is that of *Yawima*, the mythical thunder-maker who introduces the northwest monsoon, though the real *déma* of thunder and thunderstorms is not the black stork *déma Yawima* of the phratry of *Aramemb*, but the pig *déma*, either *Sapi* or *Déhévai* himself, both protagonists of the opposite moiety.³⁶ We recall, first, that in the stork clan we found traces of an explicit contrast of black stork and white stork and, secondly, that *Yawima* is closely associated with Sangasé and, for this reason, might be another *déma* who originated from the *imo* pantheon.³⁷ There are other arguments besides. *Yawima* travels eastwards with the *gari* and the *ivag*, but he does not get any farther than just west of Kaibursé, where the accident occurs which puts an end to his journey. Kaibursé is the first *mayo* settlement east of the *imo*, and thus *Yawima's* peregrinations are strictly limited to *imo* territory. In view of these facts we must give some serious consideration to the possibility that the ornithologists are right and that there is only one variety of the stork.³⁸ If that be the case, the black stork does not constitute a specific variety, but is simply the stork of the *imo* people, said to be a black stork because all things pertaining to the *imo* are black. The *imo* are *hap-rek*, of the night! *Yawima*, then, is the *imo* initiate. As a thunder-maker he creates the conditions for the headhunt, as a stork — the ideal initiate — he is associated with either moiety, the father of east- and west monsoons, originally a *Basik-Basik*.

Ugu's case, however, does not show any traces of a connection with the *imo*, and yet it provides the most patent example of a shift from

³³ Ibid. pp. 278 f., 282, 337.

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 446, 547 and 666.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 456.

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 406, 411 ff.

³⁷ Ibid. pp. 304 f., 288 ff.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 304.

one moiety to another. By birth *Ugu* is a *Mahu-zé* and yet he is classified as a *Kai-zé*. We shall not again list all the grounds on which it can be argued that he should be a *Mahu-zé*, just as his father.³⁹ We only want to point out that his magic, which is the magic of the medicine-men and, what is more, which he made so particularly effective in his crocodile-skin, suits the *Sami-rek* moiety far better than the *Geb-zé*. After all, in its lethal aspects it is rather closely akin to the kind of sorcery associated with the *Sapi-zé*.

That a shift has taken place is undeniable. A satisfactory explanation cannot possibly be given, unless the shift can be fitted into the context of a growing emphasis on the opposition of secret cult and public ceremony, the opposition which the study of headhunting brought into relief. Is it possible that this contrast of secret cult and public ceremony is a comparatively recent development? No hypothesis to this effect can be validated unless we start from three solid facts. First, we must take into account that an opposition of ritual functions was already implied, be it in a less explicit form, in the classificatory system, that is, inasmuch as it is based on cosmological contrasts. The relationship between headhunting, thunder and the wet season is obvious and is just as solidly embedded in the mythology of the *mayo* as the association of the *mayo* with the east monsoon, the fire and the sun. The difference between the two moieties is poignantly summarized in the opposition of *Diwa* alias *Yugil* and *Dawi* with son *Yagil*. The two protagonists and their stories patently belong to the *mayo*-cycle of myths.⁴⁰ We also refer to our hypothesis on the two forms of *pahui* as another indication that the auxiliary function of the *Geb-zé* moiety in the head-hunts which are led by the *Sami-rek* moiety has a long history behind it and is firmly rooted in myth.⁴¹

In the second place, we must be aware that the opposition of secret cult and public ceremony is only partially integrated in the classificatory system. A number of functions which — from a cosmological point of view — belong to the *Sami-rek*, have been transferred to the *Geb-zé* moiety, notably the magic of the *messav*, the ritual of rain-making and — albeit only locally — *kambara*, the kind of sorcery attributed to the *Sapi-zé*. We find no traces of a shift of functions from the *Geb-zé* to the *Sami-rek*. If the principle had been consistently applied, the *wati*, the festive drink par excellence, should belong to the *Sami-rek* moiety.

³⁹ Ibid. pp. 454 f.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 763 f.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 742.

We would also expect the wallaby to have been included among the *Sami-rek* totems, as the wallaby is the most important quarry and a main ingredient of the festive dish.⁴² A consistent application of the contrast of secret rite and public feast might even have impaired the association of the hairdo, the characteristic decoration of the age-grades, with the phratry of *Aramemb*, although in this case the connection of the age-grades with initiation, tenuous as it may be, could have been an argument in favour of a continued relationship.

In the third place, we shall have to make allowance for the fact that the shift of certain functions from the *Sami-rek* to the *Geb-zé* moiety is actually reflected in myth. In the case of the transfer of the magic of the medicine-man, there are evident traces, while the susceptibility to change in respect of the position of *kambara* in the classificatory system is apparent from the deviant position of the *Sapi-zé* at Buti. It is especially these facts which suggest that we are confronted with a fairly recent development.

Let us now turn to the confrontation of *imo* and *mayo*. At the end of Chapter XI we pointed out that the *Imo*-Marind are inland-oriented, as is borne out by their ritual, their dialect and their social connections with other groups in the interior.⁴³ We are fully justified in assuming that, originally, they came from the interior and that, arriving on the coast, they adapted their institutions to those of the other coastal Marind, notably the *Mayo*-Marind. This adaptation implied one rather radical change. We found that in the interior the system of classification is not only less complicated than that of the coastal Marind, but that it is also reversed. Inland, the *Mahu-zé* take precedence; they are associated with coming from the east, while the *Geb-zé*'s association is with coming from the west. In inland mythology *Geb* is a headhunter and associated with black magic.⁴⁴ When they penetrated into the coastal area, the *Imo*-Marind had to revise their system. A reminder of the transition may be found in the fact, reported on p. 661, that in essence the *Mahu-zé* are the leaders of the cult. Yet, officially, the *Geb-zé* have become the leaders of the ritual and the *Mahu-zé* of headhunts and feasts. What happened is obviously that the adaptation to the *mayo* system was not carried to completion. Though the *Geb-zé* adopted the leadership of the ritual and ceded that of headhunts and feasts, they

⁴² The hunt preceding a feast is primarily a wallaby hunt.

⁴³ Cf. above, pp. 665 f.

⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 231 f., 353 f., 587, 588.

retained their relationship with certain magical practices, the private rites connected with rain-making and the *messav*.

This explains much, but it also gives rise to a question, and an important one, too. Why did the *Mayo-Marind* follow suit? The answer must be that the confrontation of *imo* and *mayo* resulted in a new and strong emphasis on the contrast between all that is secret and that which is public. There was every reason for such an increased emphasis. Not only is the stress on secrecy very strong among the *imo*, but the cult introduced by them is closely connected with the concept of *kuma*.⁴⁵ *Kuma* is both underworld and secret; it provides the setting of the *bangu*-ritual, which is celebrated 'underground', that is, on the bottom of a pit. There is an important difference between the *mayo*-ritual and that of the *imo*. The latter is more akin to the upper *Bian* ritual with its baffling combination of copulation and death and its immediate bearing on headhunting. The *imo*-cult has the same combination of motives, albeit in a slightly different and less direct form. The *mayo*-cult is different. The death-motif is confined to the headhunting complex and there is no question of an intermingling of death and sexuality, which is a characteristic of the *imo* and the *ésam*. The secret of the *imo* is, in fact, a terrible secret; its frightening character is strongly emphasized by the ordeal of initiation. Compared to the *imo*, the secret of *mayo* and *sosom* has a mild flavour and rather serves as a means to stress the importance of the rites than that it is a reflection of their terror. The *Marind* were well aware of the difference between *mayo* and *imo*. The *Mayo-Marind* were, in fact, deeply impressed. "For the *imo* the *mayo* is something inferior . . . on the other hand, the *Mayo-Marind*, though content to be *mayo*, respect the *Imo-Marind* and are afraid of them".⁴⁶ The *Mayo-Marind* pay their respect to the *imo*-procession terminating the *bangu*-ritual.⁴⁷

The association with death as implied in the *imo*-rites sets a pattern which is entirely different from that of the *mayo*, who had the death-aspect confined to the headhunting ritual, the specialty of the *Sami-rek* moiety. To the adepts of the *mayo*-cult the association of the *Sami-rek* with *kambará*, the magic of the *messav* and that of the *dongam-anim* is quite in the nature of things. The situation is different in respect of the *imo*, with whom death is a major theme of the cult-ritual. For the *imo* it is only logical to have the death-aspect combined with the moiety

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 930 f.

⁴⁶ Vertenten, *Koppensnellers* p. 69; cf. also above, pp. 603 f. and 614.

⁴⁷ Above, p. 614.

that has the leadership of the cult-ritual, the *Geb-zé*. From the *imo* point of view the association of this moiety with magic and sorcery is a natural one. The same may be said of the rain-making ritual of the *Yawima-rek dongam-anim*. They precipitate the beginning of the wet season and as such they are connected with the *imo* headhunting period which follows the celebration of the *bangu*.⁴⁸ On this point the *Mayo-Marind* must have compromised and they could do this because the strong emphasis which the *imo* lay on the secrecy of their rites — the effect of which the *mayo* greatly feared — must have induced them to stress the secret character of the *mayo*-cult as well. An increased emphasis on the notion of secrecy, *kuma*, fits the situation only too well. It makes the cult seem more important and by having the *Geb-zé* adopt some of the specialties of the opposite moiety they could stress the fact that their ritual, too, was fraught with danger and that it possessed the dangerous qualities of the representatives of death and the underworld. What enabled them to emphasize this aspect was that the term for underworld, *kuma*, refers inter alia to the course of the sun underground. In the version of the sun-myth told by Viegen, *Geb*, chased because he kidnapped boys who were playing on the beach, disappears *kuma*, underground. "Nous demandons ce que ce *koema* signifie ici. La réponse est '*Koema*, mais cela veut dire *Koema*'. Nous voilà en présence d'un mot mystérieux, . . . Nous traduisons ici le mot par 'fosse' ".⁴⁹ The central theme of the *mayo*-ritual refers to the sun (*Uaba*) who was made a captive by chthonic powers, while the element of *kuma* (it is also a word for the female genital) is eminently present in the ritual. However, the *Mayo-Marind* would not allow all ritual activities connected with *kuma* and the power of death to be transferred to the *Geb-zé* moiety. The *kambara*-ritual remained the specific function of a *Basik-Basik* subclan, the *Sapi-zé*. Yet, it is significant that in the territorial group which must have played the most important part in the confrontation of *mayo* and *imo*, in Buti,⁵⁰ the *Sapi-zé* were regrouped and separated from the *Basik-Basik* to be incorporated as a *Kai-zé* subclan.⁵¹ As it is, the Buti people are more deeply involved in the confrontation because they are the keepers of the *mayo* navel *déma* and also constitute the *mayo* group which kept up the closest relations with Sangasé. Consequently, they went farthest in making

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 715, 716.

⁴⁹ Viegen, *Sem. d'Ethn.* 1923 p. 390.

⁵⁰ Above, pp. 667 f.

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 92, 298, 308 and 423.

secrecy and the performance of secret rites a *Geb-zé* moiety concern. The fact that a shift has taken place must have affected the positions of the *Sapi-zé* and the *Yawima-rek* in the clan-system. This is amply corroborated by the deviations observed in the connubium-relations of the *Basik-Basik*, which we analysed on pp. 77-80. We noted that the *Basik-Basik* of the western coastal section often marry partners belonging to other clans of their own phratry (the *Bragai-zé*), albeit that they do not marry them as freely as they do members of other phratries. The *Sapi-zé* are the dominating subclan of the *Basik-Basik* in this section. Even if we make allowance for the fact that the list of annex V is very incomplete, it is undeniable that the *Sapi-zé* are numerous in this section, and we conclude that the deviating marriage-pattern of the *Basik-Basik* there is not a deviation from the prevailing system, but that it simply reflects the unsettled position of the *Sapi-zé*. The conclusion is corroborated by a remarkable deviation in the marriage-pattern of the *Ndik-end*. We found that the rate of intermarriage between *Ndik-end* and *Basik-Basik* is well below what might have been expected, again primarily so in the western section, where the *Yawima-rek* predominate among the *Ndik-end* (cf. annex V). Since the *Yawima-rek*, the mythical thunder-makers, must at one time have made part of the *Basik-Basik*, it is evident that our original explanation of the phenomenon as a matter of chance, is void. The *Yawima-rek* apparently are still conscious of their close relationship with the *Basik-Basik*. In this context even the statement criticized on p. 85 — in Urumb the *Basik-Basik* were associated with the clans of the phratry of *Aramemb* because they all are hairy — becomes meaningful as another symptom of the confusion produced by the shifting positions of *Sapi-zé* and *Yawima-rek*.

We conclude that, indeed, the adoption of the secret rites as a second principle of classification presents a comparatively recent development. It never gained absolute ascendancy. Its application is confined to those specific activities which meet the requirements of the *imo*-ritual. Consequently, the occurrence of deviations from the basically cosmologically oriented system of classification is confined to the *Geb-zé* moiety. These deviations should not be confounded with those relevant to the dialectic aspect of each phratry, an aspect which reflects the fundamental equality of all men, whatever their phratry. The dialectic aspect is part of the original *mayo* system. It belongs to it, as it is the function of each moiety to be the leaders in one part of the cycle of great ceremonies (cult, headhunt and feast) while in the other part they are the followers

and helpers. It is a leadership which is apparently concerned with formal precedence and the accomplishment of certain roles rather than that it is a leadership *in re*. In the *imo*-rites the influence exerted by the *Mahu-zé* is conceptualized as a leadership *in essence*.⁵² During the *kagaib*-ritual Amalo, the *Geb-zé* leader of the *imo*, is little more than a delegate of the *Mahu-zé* impersonator of the *imo-iwag*, who gives his instructions.⁵³ A leadership with a dictatorial tenor would rather go against the general pattern of social control among the Marind. In myth the functions of the leader of the ritual are not given any relevance at all. Of *Uaba* and *Moyu* it is simply stated that they were among the initiates,⁵⁴ and in one place it is said that *Uaba* made another *mayo* ceremony.⁵⁵

The basically cosmological orientation of the system of classification affords another and final proof of the fundamental significance of the role played by apprehended intentions in the Marind-anim worldview. The universe is a universe full of intentions. It is not southeast and northwest by themselves which convey a meaning, but going from southeast to northwest and vice-versa; travelling with the southeast wind that brings sunshine and brightness or with the northwest wind pregnant with rain and sickness; frolicking on the beach or penetrating into the uncanny interior. The cardinal directions governing the system of classification are not fixed points, the products of a mathematical approach, but the life and movements of nature itself, the result of much intent listening to its mysterious tale.

3. THE DARK SECRET

Marind-anim religion is a phallic religion. All life derives from sperma and the phallus brings both life and death. *Sosom* is the bull-roarer and he is the *tang*, the instrument manipulated by the *kambara-anim*. The only one who can cure a patient struck by *kambara* is *Sosom*.⁵⁶ The phallus is the life-giving penis and the death-dealing *pahui*, the symbol used in commemorating the dead⁵⁷ as well as the red-painted pole which is the centre of the *sosom* celebration.⁵⁸ Every-

⁵² Ibid. p. 661.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 650.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 256.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 258.

⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 486 ff.

⁵⁷ Ibid. pp. 776, 782, 796, 807.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 479.

thing derives from it and yet, the secret of the great cults is that the men must submit to the women, caught *in coitu*, powerless. During the *imo*-initiation rites even the leader of the cult has to ask the *imo-mes-ivag's* permission before every ritual act.⁵⁹ The man is represented as a mere arrow-head in the *imo*, as a straw-puppet with a detachable penis in the *mayo*, and the great phallus of *Sosom*, round which the men dance, is, after all, a penis which has been cut off.⁶⁰ The great secret is that the venerated power is not really as powerful as it is pretended to be. The source of all life, sperma, is effective only — at least, in principle — if produced in copulation.⁶¹ These self-sufficient males need the females and they know it; only, they do not care to admit it. At least, not overtly so. In secret, in the celebration of the rites, they will allow their dependence and immediately afterwards they go out headhunting. It is as if by that time their rage has mounted to such a pitch that they have to find an outlet for it.

It is fairly probable that these pent-up feelings of discomfort are, indeed, a major source of aggressiveness. It is an aggressiveness directed toward the innocent. Somebody has to be killed and there is no real motive for the act. Of course, it may well be that sorcery which could not be avenged because nobody could find out who the culprit was, did stimulate aggressive feelings. The argument would be a strong one if the *ikom-anim*, whose heads are taken, were under suspicion of having practised sorcery against the Marind. Actually, they are not. The participants in the headhunting parties are well aware that the really dangerous sorcerers are not among the victims of their wrath. It is a poor vengeance, which is directed against the innocent and, consequently, the argument that unavenged cases of sorcery are the principal source of aggressive feelings is unconvincing. The anger of the headhunter lacks a specific object and, all our efforts to explain his aggressiveness having hitherto failed,⁶² we had better look for a motive in some basic conflict that galls him, because he is discontented without knowing why, or how to find an outlet for his unsettled feelings.

It is certain that among the Marind the relations between the sexes are beset with conflicts and institutionalized controversies. There is a

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 650.

⁶⁰ Cf. *inter alia* pp. 663 f.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 820.

⁶² Cf. above, p. 695.

strict, even a rigid segregation of the sexes, but it is not effective.⁶³ There is freedom of choice of a marriage partner, and yet it is restricted by the exigencies of sister-exchange.⁶⁴ There is a great deal of extra-marital intercourse and yet divorce is rare and marriage-bonds are lasting.⁶⁵ There is much beating of wives and yet couples seem to be strongly attached to each other.⁶⁶ There are secret rituals and yet the women have a part in them, and not an unimportant one either.⁶⁷ There are occasions on which the two sexes fight each other.⁶⁸ There is sexual promiscuity which more often than not is an ordeal for the women, while it fails to give satisfaction to the men.⁶⁹ The men, moreover, are homosexuals who practise institutionalized sodomy on an uncommonly large scale. In short, their sexual life, in spite of its intensity, is fundamentally unsatisfactory. The alarmingly low fertility-rate of the women is an indirect, but nevertheless convincing symptom of a serious unbalance in their sexual life. When all is said and done, it is hardly amazing that in recent years there has been an important change in sexual mores.⁷⁰

The effect of sodomy on sexual relations generally should not be minimized. Though the contracting of a marriage and the participation in *otiv-bombari* are obligations which every male has to comply with, just as he is obliged to establish certain homosexual friendships, this does not imply that we are justified in concluding that either the two sets of relationships exist side by side without influencing each other, or that, after all, heterosexuality prevails. It is not as simple as all that. The Marind-anim man presents himself as a homosexual (cf. Plate I). He appears in public with his penis drawn up in front of his abdomen, symbolizing an erection. His buttocks, however, he keeps carefully covered with a tail of rushes. If we may assume that the Marind-anim male has a sense of shame, then it must be one of the anal kind rather than of the genital. The social approbation of homosexuality is reflected in myth. *Geb* and the *Geb-zé* are men without women. They live on the beach or come from it and they must obtain their women from the inferior interior. *Geb* is presented with a woman by *Mahu*,

⁶³ Ibid. pp. 48 f.

⁶⁴ Ibid. pp. 128 f.

⁶⁵ Ibid. pp. 163 f., 165.

⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 168 f., 170 f.

⁶⁷ Cf. *inter alia* p. 674.

⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 634, 826 f.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 816.

⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 26 ff., 678.

the *Mayo-patur* find their women in the middle Digul region.⁷¹ From a classificatory point of view the *Geb-zé* are the true homosexuals, superior to the *Sami-rek*, who are the copulators. And yet, how perfectly pitiable these proud *Geb-zé* are. Poor *Geb* has to make do with a bamboo for a wife. In ritual it is the *Geb-zé* moiety who suffer the humiliation of having to submit to the female because they are trapped in copulation, whereas the inferior *Sami-rek*, who are associated with the female sex, enjoy the privilege of leadership in war. In myth the conflict of homosexuality and heterosexuality is reflected in the castration anxiety motif, a recurrent theme in the mythology of either moiety. It plays a part in the life-histories of *Uaba*, *Sosom* and *Konaim-anem* as well as of *Opeko-anem*, *Diwa* and *Awassra*, but castration and castration anxiety are more obvious in the *Sami-rek* myths than in those of the *Geb-zé*, as is only natural for a group of homosexuals who are cast into the role of copulators. In everyday life the conflict is borne out by the ambiguous attitude vis-à-vis excrements. Excrements are abhorred, applied in the *imo*-ritual, exhibited in the *sosom*-rites and used as missiles when men and women have a ritual fight.⁷² The original culture of the Marind did not provide a way out of the problem. The glorification of their sex put the males in a position which they experienced as humiliating. The symbolism of the rites does not leave much room for doubt on this point. There is a good deal of aggressiveness in *otiv-bombari*; the woman is made the object of copulation instead of functioning as a co-operating subject. The rite itself is called *dóm-bombari*, a bad rite. As far as can be ascertained, this evaluation is not inspired by moral considerations, but by a certain dislike the performance engenders,⁷³ a dislike fitting into the pattern of a homosexual context. Aggressiveness is emphasized again in the symbolism of the *pahui* in the myth of *Diwa*; importuning the girl with a penis is the equivalent of headhunting.⁷⁴ The woman in myth and ritual is the Excrement Woman, *Kanis-iwag*, who is in effect a crocodile,⁷⁵ or *Sobra*, a *hais* who initiates headhunting. The women are despised and the men are afraid of them. They are afraid lest they be caught in copulation. It is somewhat far-fetched to explain *otiv-bombari* from fright, but it is certainly probable that there is also an element of

⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 230, 252 f.

⁷² Ibid. pp. 655, 651 f., 477, 826.

⁷³ Ibid. pp. 816, 820.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 758.

⁷⁵ Above, pp. 652, jis. 243 and 246.

fear in the rite, the fear lest a man should enter into too intimate relations with a woman. The myth of *Uaba* and *Ualiwamb* might be interpreted in this light. Equally significant is the association of the *Sami-rek* moiety with the female sex, copulating, headhunting and sorcery.

The inadequacy of the relations between the sexes is sustained by another peculiar facet of Marind-anim culture. It is a culture of males and the women have no culture of their own. They follow the men in their system of age-grades and they are inclined to dress up like men.⁷⁶ The women are the travestees, more so than the men. They accompany the men on the war-path⁷⁷ and they join them in *mayo* and *imo*. They may even have a *déma-wir* of their own, in the same way as the men have one. Among other tribes the men act and the women make up the audience for their spectacular performances. They parade for the women. Thus, for instance, in the *hevehe*-rites of the Elema. Among the Marind the pattern is entirely different. When the men parade, the women hold torches to show them off to an audience of strangers. It is the males who count and the women — as is typical for a situation in which homosexuality prevails — are unimportant to them. The women accept; they take pride in their males and comply, acting the role of junior members of the gang. In daily life, too, there is hardly so much as a woman's domain; the women's hut can be easily watched from the men's house.⁷⁸ These women have little to offer which is their own. They are, of course, different from the men, but they are too much like them to exercise that attraction which is the prelude to happy relations between the sexes. It seems probable that the efforts of the females to imitate the males were inspired by the unsatisfactory place which their sex occupied in the cultural pattern and we are inclined to suppose that there is a causal relation of some sort between the frustrations of the female sex and the low fertility-rate. Unfortunately, the available data do not allow of casting the hypothesis in more specific terms. We shall never know the intimate stirrings of a woman's life in the pre-contact situation, but all the evidence tends to suggest that sexual life was emotionally unsatisfactory, not only so for the females, but for the males as well.

In a culture so entirely preoccupied with sex as the mainspring of life, the inadequacy of sex-relations is a terrible problem. In fact, it is

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 159 f.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 713, 715.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 48 f., 165.

so terrible that, in ritual, the motifs of death and sex are inextricably mixed up, certainly so in the *imo*. The use of the term *pahui* for the female shields with the arrow-heads, set up round the pit on the bottom of which the two *déma*-performers are dancing, is a ghastly symbol of the revengeful aggressive reflexes associated with copulation. The Marind are well aware that life comes from copulation, but behind this recognition, which is incompatible with the monopoly of the male sex, there also lurks the dark notion that life stems from death in the way symbolized by the coconut which is also a human head. The ambiguity of the emotions experienced by the males finds its expression in the rites. The ritual stimulates the men into a frenzy, prepares them for a headhunt. The male sex has to reassert its superiority and monopoly by an act of violence which can be explained as a life-giving act because life comes from death. This is the undertone of aggressiveness which is caught by the attentive observer of such impressive dances as the *waiko-si*.⁷⁹ All the time, the women are with the men. They hold the torches during the *waiko-si*, they are present during the celebration of the secret rituals, they accompany the men on their headhunting expeditions and copulate with them during the *ayasé*. Their presence is a never-diminishing stimulus to aggressiveness. The women simply have to be there because the men want them to be fecund. The self-sufficiency of the males is an absurdity, but the absurdity is maintained; it is the justification of male pride. The insoluble contradictions resulting from the pretended absolutism of the male function in the life-giving process lead to the equally irreducible inconsistency of a combination of copulation and death in the cult.

Throughout, there is a remarkable difference between *imo* and *mayo*. In the *imo*-cult the motives of death and copulation are more immediately connected. There is something in it of the opaque directness of the symbolism of the *ésam*-cult. In the *mayo*-cult the two motives are separately treated in successive episodes. The humiliation of the man is effectively symbolized by the male effigies to the east and west of the *mayo-miráv*, but at the end of the rites the only one who is killed is the woman, the snake, symbolizing the *mayo-mes-íwag*.⁸⁰ In this drama the male is the winner. It does not end in the complete annihilation of the two main protagonists, as in *imo* and *ésam*. The fury of the male is directed at the female, who is killed. Although

⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 755, 855.

⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 559 ff.

the *mayo* celebration, too, is followed by a headhunt, the passion for killing does not reach that unbridled intensity which results in the symbol of the male sex being included among the victims of the ritual slaughter which is the apotheosis of the *imo*- and *ézam*-rites. The *mayo* is milder and there is not that threatening expression of a sweeping anger which characterizes the *imo*-cult. In daily life, too, the same difference applies. The *mayo* are said to be more exuberant and jovial, the *imo* both austere and gloomy.⁸¹ The difference is all the more intriguing because we might have expected that among the *mayo*, who went to the extent of institutionalizing homosexuality in promiscuous initiation rites, sex would present an even more serious problem than among the *imo*, who never went to such extremes in sodomy and who also managed to maintain a form of heterosexual promiscuity which is less thoroughly perverted than the *mayo otiv-bombari*.

The surprising difference between things as they are and as they might have been expected to be, holds a useful warning that we should not try to explain all the idiosyncrasies of Marind-anim ritual life from sexual problems. One thing is certain; not only is the *mayo*-ritual richer than the *imo*, but it has one extra dimension. Next to the two aspects of death and copulation, it has a third one, which is conspicuously absent from the *imo*, but elaborately dramatized in the *mayo*, viz. the aspect of birth, of the revelation of the meaning of life in its multitudinous forms. The *mayo*-ritual gives to the women a function which is obliterated in *imo* and *ézam*. Somehow those who penetrated farthest into the dead alley of homosexuality managed to find the way to the redeeming recognition of the function of the second sex. The resulting richness of the *mayo*-cult is a specific achievement, which sets the *Mayo*-Marind apart from all the surrounding tribes. What brought this development about can merely be guessed at. There is only one south-coast culture which in its richness of ritual expression is comparable to that of the Marind. It is that of the Elema and it is a remarkable coincidence that they, too, are settled in an area where a long, wide beach provides an inviting means of communication. It would be stretching the argument if we were to explain the process from the presence of a long, wide beach. The most we can say is that the two peoples have made the best of the favourable ecological conditions and developed a system of social interaction which contributed to cultural growth. In this process the *Mayo*-Marind have displayed a noteworthy

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 604.

sensitivity to the greatness of their universe, giving shape to its apprehended meaning and delighting in its richness, while at the same time they gave expression to their gloomy experiences stemming from the combination of an indulgence in sex with an unsatisfactory sexual life.

4. EPILOGUE

Many years ago, when I recast my views on Marind-anim religion — unfortunately without simultaneously submitting the data to a fresh analysis — I ventured the suggestion that its systematic structure might be the result of a non-reflective attitude, of a refusal to give adequate thought to the basic problems of life and death which nobody can evade. The analysis which we have just completed gives ample evidence that I was on the wrong track. There is no question of a non-reflective attitude, but simply of an ascriptive way of thinking. The Marind have always adhered to the principles of a strict logic. They appear to be capable of skilful and conscious speculation on the symbols which incorporate the one thing that is important in life, viz. the secret meaning and intention of the universe. They are conscious of their language and proud of their culture. They know that they stand apart from other tribes.

The most intriguing feature of Marind-anim culture is the strict consistency of its structure, a consistency which is consciously pursued. The question arises whether such consistency is a normal phenomenon in the world of primitive peoples or whether it should rather be considered as exceptional. From what I know of other South New Guinea tribes I am inclined to conclude that it is indeed exceptional. To my knowledge the only people who ever developed a comparable culture in this area are the Elema, but it is impossible to substantiate this allegation because the great and interesting collection of mythical material gathered by the late F. E. Williams seems to have been lost during the war. The latter's masterly monograph 'Drama of Orokol' does not by itself suffice to give a satisfactory picture of the systematic structure of their culture.

It is on the Kiwai that our information is more extensive in this respect. The immense collection of Folk-tales published by Landtman is a rich source of information. Nevertheless, the analysis of the contents did not yield any definite results. Twice I made an attempt to deal with their mythology on the same lines as I followed in the case of the Marind and both times I had to give up. Among the Kiwai the

whole pattern has been left unfinished; there is not a single thread which has been spun off. After all, what else could be expected of a people so poorly disciplined as the Kiwai, who show very little restraint in their interpersonal relations, as is well demonstrated by the Folk-tales with their emphasis on senseless and unrestrained violence. The absence of a moiety-system — except at Mawata — is another indication that their culture is not as rigidly structured as that of the Marind.

A more promising outlook is offered by a comparison between Marind-anim culture and the civilizations of various Australian tribes. The Aranda present an extremely interesting case because they, too, have a phallic religion, but they symbolized it just the other way round. Instead of emphasizing the function of the male genital and the fertilizing effect of sperma, they denied the male's role in procreation, making his function in the process of fertilization the secret which, among the Marind, is that of the female. In the *Engwura* ritual the phallus is called an uterus, but the way it is manipulated convincingly demonstrates its real function.⁸² A comparison with and a more incisive analysis of Australian ritual would be highly rewarding.

I have to confine myself to these few comments. We must revert to Marind-anim culture, one aspect of which has been passed over in the discussion, namely the aspect of their acculturation to modern conditions. It is an aspect which is outside the scope of this book, for that is the past. Yet, a few observations ought to be made. Acculturation has not made great strides among the Marind. Though the coastal Marind embraced the Roman-Catholic faith and adopted new sexual ethics, at the same time allowing most of their traditional feasts and ceremonies to lapse, they never demonstrated a distinct longing for change or an aspiration to partake in modern activities. They remained very much on their own, occasionally making some copra or hiring out as labourers to earn the cash they needed, without ever whole-heartedly co-operating in development projects. For a time they might be interested, but it always ended in their returning to the village and to traditional village-life. They never indulged in cargo-cults. Wealth has never been an important focus of cultural activity among them, and they consistently refused to be dazzled by the wealth and technical perfections of western civilization. There is one thing they —

⁸² Van Baal, BKI 1963 pp. 210 ff.

that is, the coastal Marind — never lost, and that is their dignity, the consciousness of their identity. Even in the direst distress they would not lose their pride. This is still so to-day. I remember the day when, round about Christmas 1951, I paid a visit to Mimika to see Pouwer who had just taken up his first field-assignment; on that occasion he drew my attention to two young Papuan women, who were supervising the girls in the playgrounds of the Mission-school. They were taller and shapelier than any of the women of Mimika. Unperturbed, they strode amidst the noisily romping children. 'Look', said Pouwer, 'princesses, perfectly superior! They are from Sangasé'. It may partly have been due to their pride and the gratifying realization of being Marind, *anim-ha*, that they refrained from participation in cargo-cults. Therefore, it is all the more intriguing why the reaction of the Elema, another people with a well-integrated and comparable culture, was so much different. The cultural life of the latter never incurred the censure of the Government and yet they did away with its finest expressions and gave themselves over to the Vailala-madness instead. The only explanation which I can think of is their lack of tribal or, for that matter, village solidarity. The performances of the great ceremonies of the Elema were subject to repeated, prolonged delays consequent upon internal discord.⁸³ The execution of the successive rites was more often a source of friction than an expression of solidarity and common feelings. In one way or another the magnitude of their rites had outgrown the potentialities of friendly social interaction and unanimity among the local clangroups. In this respect they differed widely from the Marind, who had a marked capacity for friendly, ritual co-operation.

These few observations will have to suffice. This implies that we shall refrain from giving a recapitulation of traditional Marind-anim life and ritual, in spite of the fact that it might have been a rewarding task to combine the recapitulation with a further study of the impact which the contrast of homosexuals and copulators has on the system of classification. The identification of this contrast with the difference between the two moieties was the surprising discovery made in the preceding section and it is evident that it is of fundamental importance for the whole system. However, a recapitulation should result in a more

⁸³ Williams, *Drama* pp. 183 ff.

or less complete model of the structure of Marind-anim culture and for the construction of such a model we must know far more than we actually do, notably with regard to the individual and his reactions. Moreover, any effort to this effect should be preceded by an analysis of their language. The existing system of nominal classification might supply new data adding to our insight into this rigidly structured culture, though I wonder whether our present knowledge of the language is comprehensive enough to allow of well-founded conclusions in this field.

There are other objections to a renewed analysis. Resuming the study of the data as expounded in the preceding pages, we could not avoid entering into speculation upon the influence exerted by the interaction of *imo* and *mayo* on the clan-system. We should try to answer such questions as: 'why have the Marind two coconut clans?' In fact, the actual occurrence of a coconut-variety called *méri-ongat*⁸⁴ seems rather dubious. As long as we do not have the benefit of a botanist's statement that this obviously exceptional variety does occur in these parts and is found in such numbers as to explain its adoption as a totem, there is every reason to consider the possibility that, originally, the *Moyu-rek* were the *Mayo*-Marind coconut clan and the *Uaba-rek* those of the *Imo*-Marind. The case of the two storks might have a parallel in that of the two coconuts! Speculations of this kind are attractive, but they conflict with the character of this book which was announced as a description and an analysis. We must stick to facts.

For all these reasons it is not feasible to present a comprehensive picture of the structure of Marind-anim culture, approximating the perfection of a mathematical model. We have to content ourselves with the fact that the human aspects of this remarkable culture have become clearer. Curiously enough, now that I have come to the end of this elaborate analysis, I do no longer regret that I have to give up the idea of constructing a more exact model. I have been analyzing this culture altogether too long. After all, I have known the Marind. I have lived among them. I have seen something of their glory and more of their misery; and even in their distress they were grand, maintaining their identity. I cannot think of them without hearing their melodious songs, sounding like trumpet-calls: proud, assertive and frank. While I am writing, I cannot help seeing their young men, striding buoyantly along the beach, the endless, broad, delightful beach. Apart from all other motivations, I began this work because I was

⁸⁴ Cf. above, p. 253.

aware of a debt, somehow feeling guilty of many things, most of which I cannot help and nobody can help, but things for which destiny made me responsible. Twice I have been vested with authority over them. I have tried to pay my debt, calling up the image of the past.

It was a great past in which they tried to give form and substance to the unfathomable meaning of their universe. Their effort reminds us of the final stanza of Goethe's *Faust* :

Alles Vergängliche
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;
Das Unzulängliche,
Hier wird's Ereignis;
Das Unbeschreibliche,
Hier ist es getan;
Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.

The Marind have successfully realized the idea embodied in the first part of the *chorus mysticus*, viz. that all things transient are but similes. Time and again they have reified the unfathomable in the weird phantoms of their *déma-wir*. Unfortunately, they had not the deep wisdom of that old sage and wizard, Goethe, and failed in their appreciation of the female sex. They recoiled where they should have been charmed. Yet, for all its oddities, its entanglements and contradictions, this past is a human past, and even more than that. In its failure — and more particularly in this than in anything else — it is also a human glory.



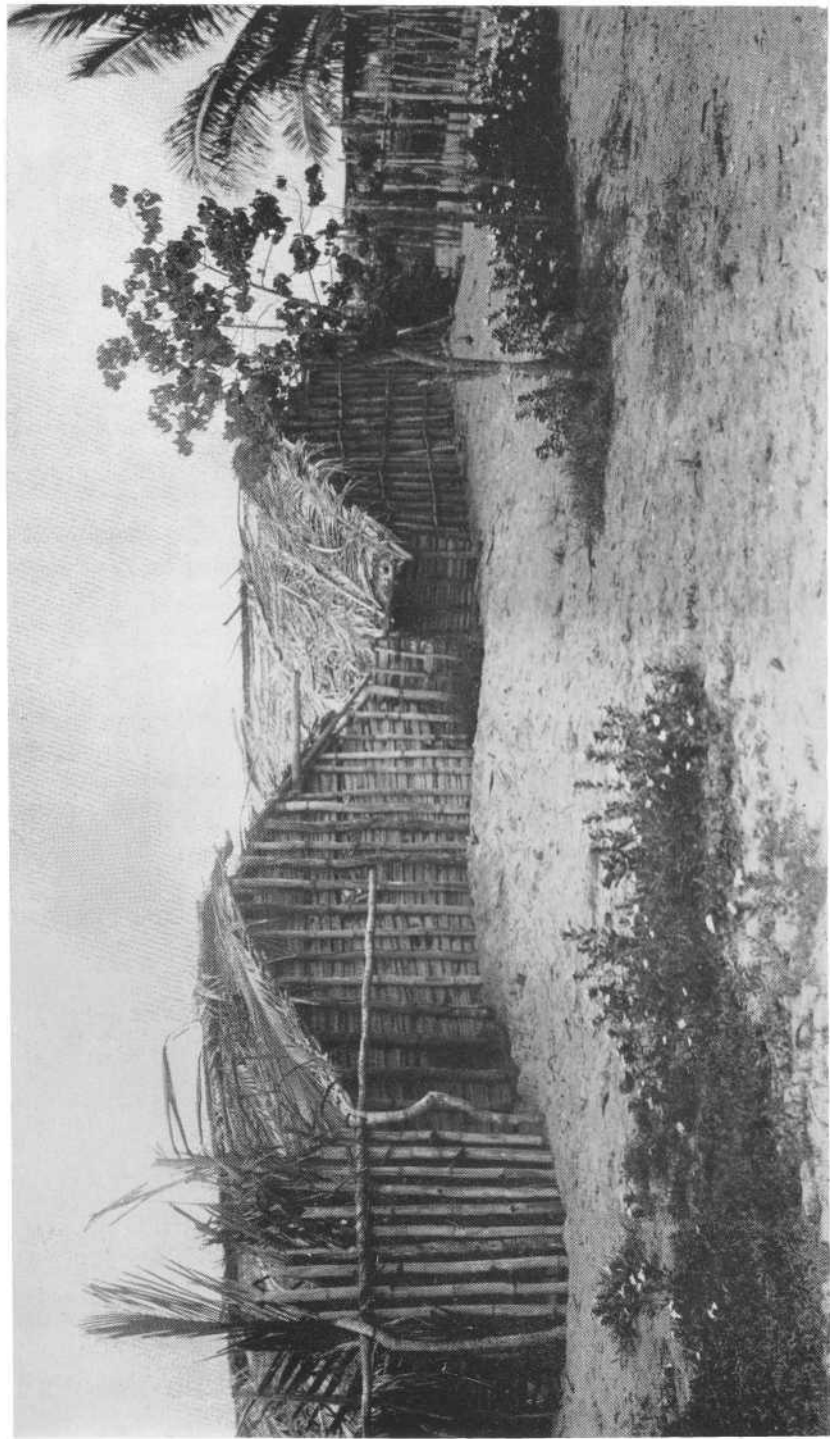
1. The beach near Nowari

From an oil-painting by V. van Aken

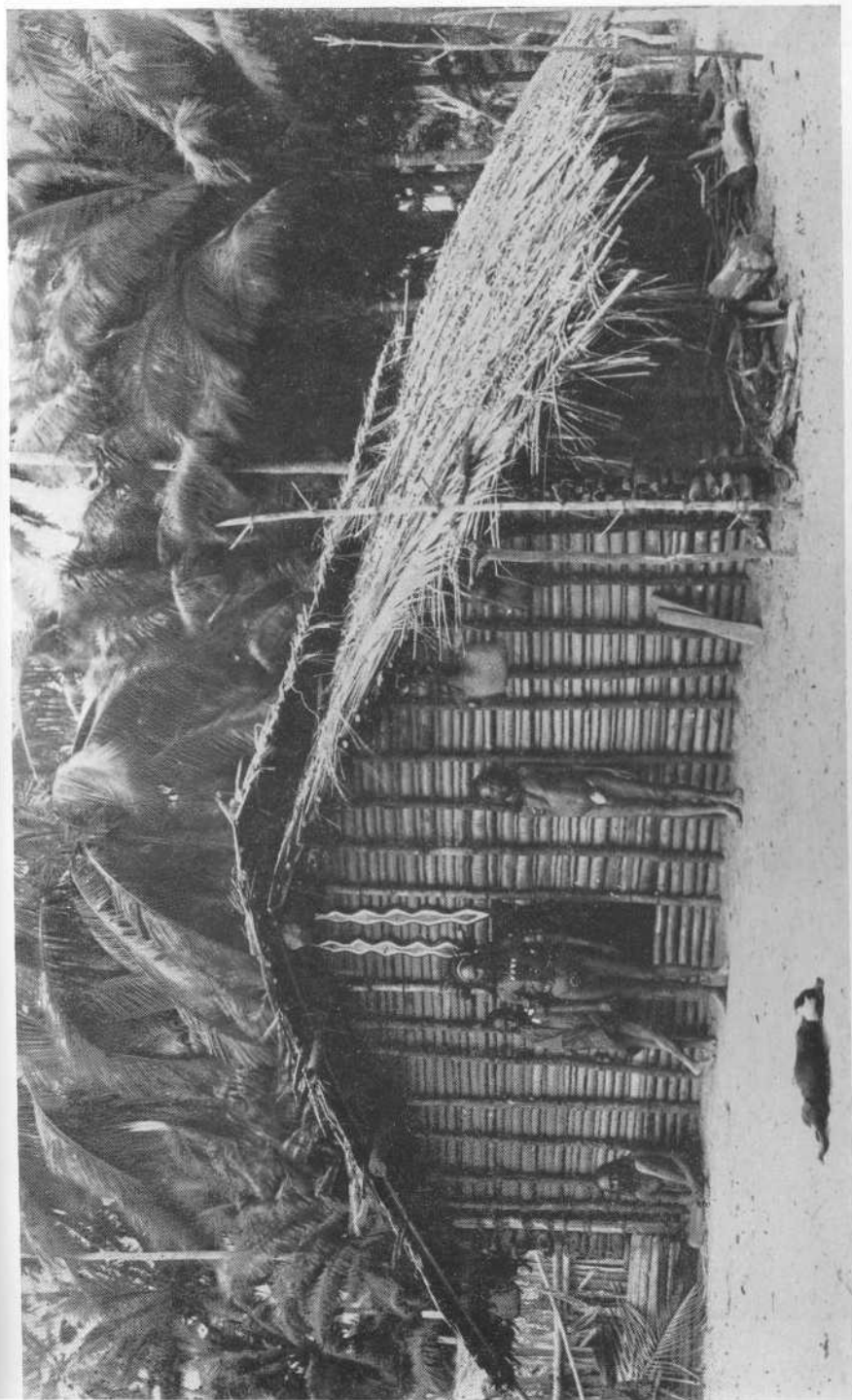


2. The savannah landscape behind Merauke

Photo Lorentz Exped. 1907; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 551.451 N 1



Marind-anim houses in a coastal village near Merauke



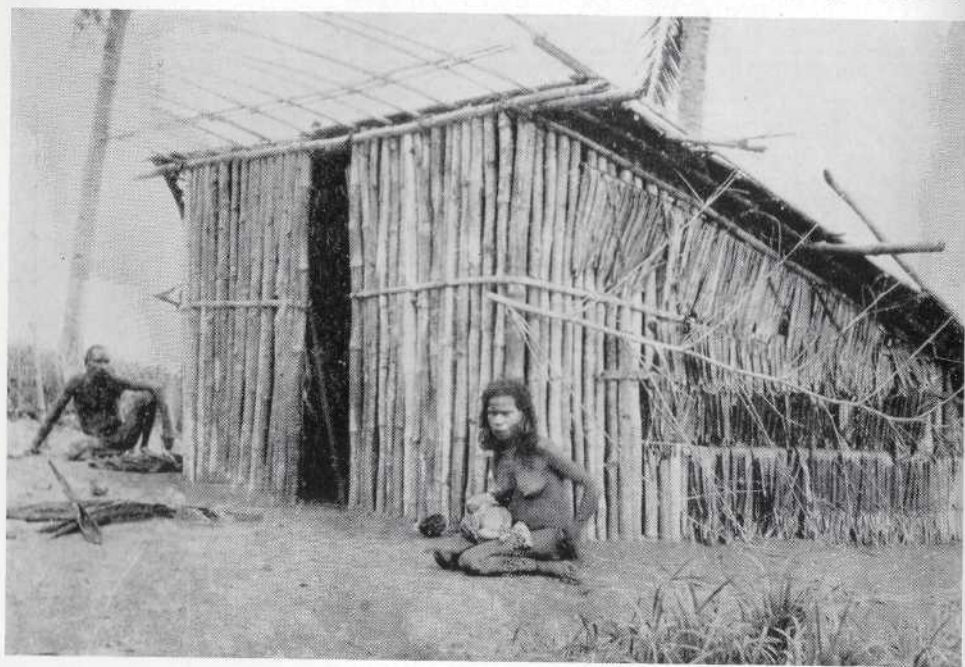
Men's house at Kumbe

Photo L. M. F. Plate; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951) : 728.1 N 26



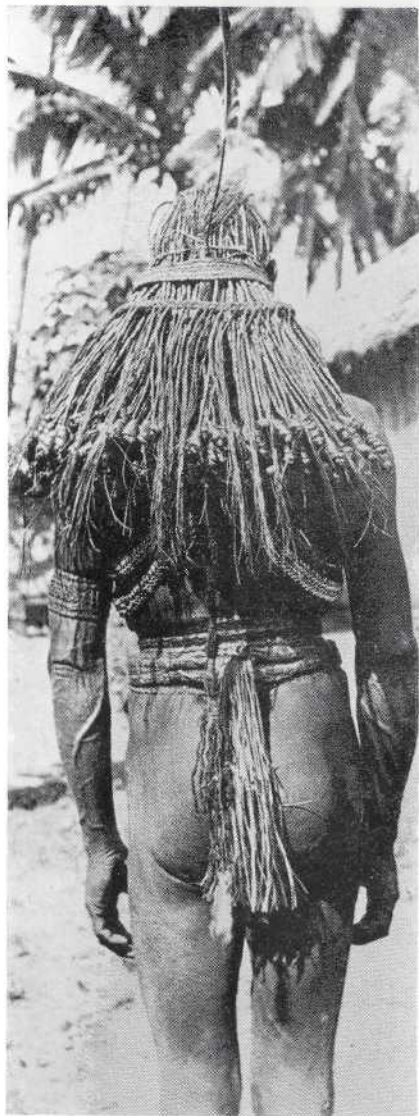
1. Model of a feast-house

Museum R. Trop. Inst., cat.nr. 260/4; phot. coll. nr. (951) : 728.1 N 47



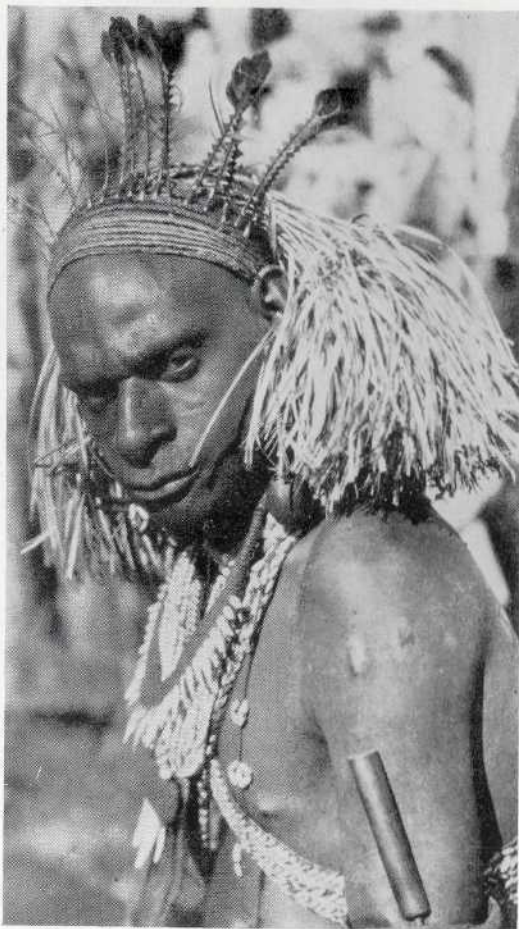
2. Oram-aha, maternity-hut

Photo Geurtjens; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951) : 392.1 N 9



1. Male hairdo

Photo A. J. Gooszen; phot. coll.
R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 391.7 N 12



2. Male hairdo

Photo Kalthofen; Phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst.
nr. (951): 572.9 N 317



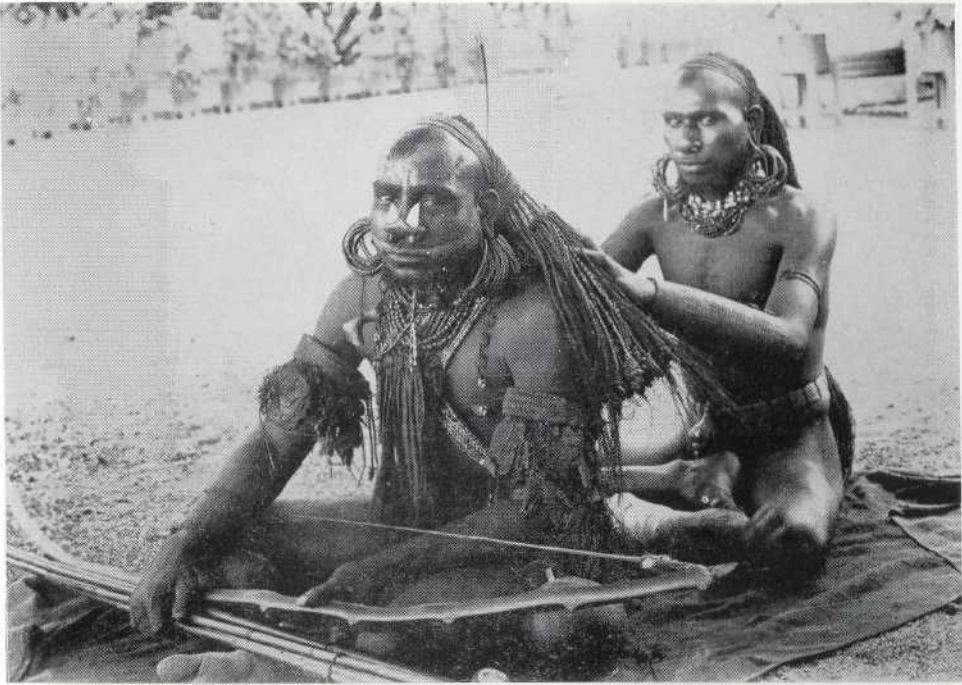
1. Female hairdo

Photo coll. Anthr. Dept. R. Trop. Inst.



2. Young man with disc-headed club

Photo H. Nollen; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 391.7 N 6



1. Plaiting the hairdo

Photo L. M. F. Plate; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 572.9 N 319



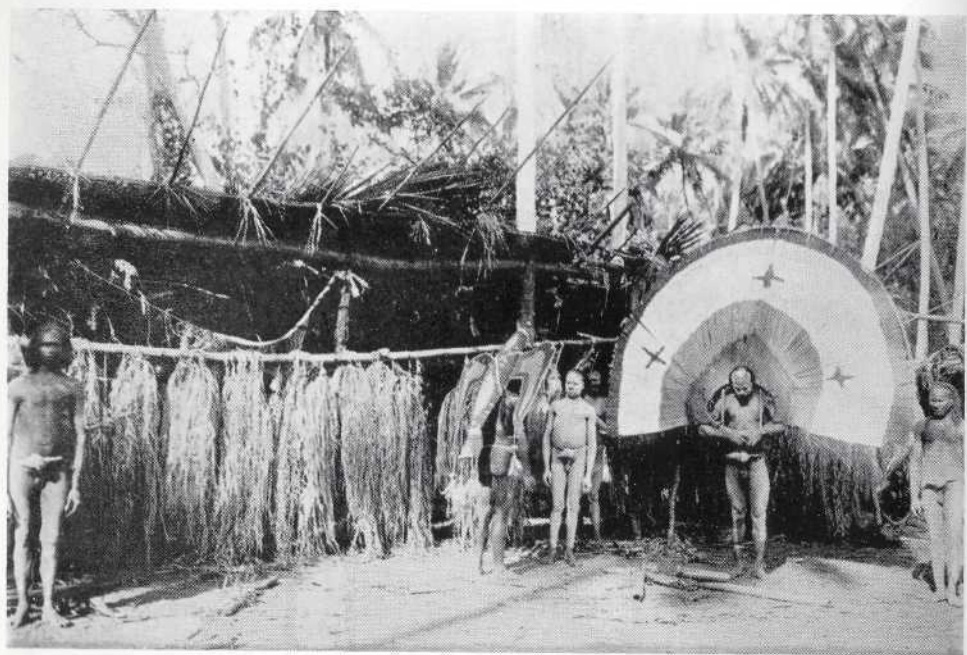
2. Female hairdo

Photo J. V. Meininger; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 392.5 N 6



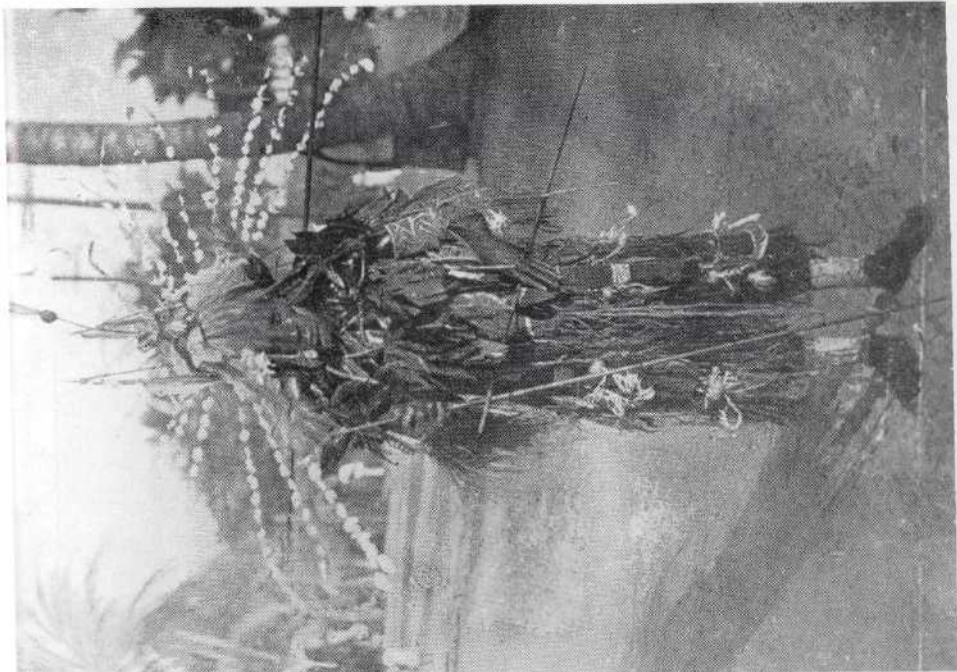
1. Two *gari* displayed at a celebration in Wendu

Reproduced from Almanak 33 (1923) p. 55



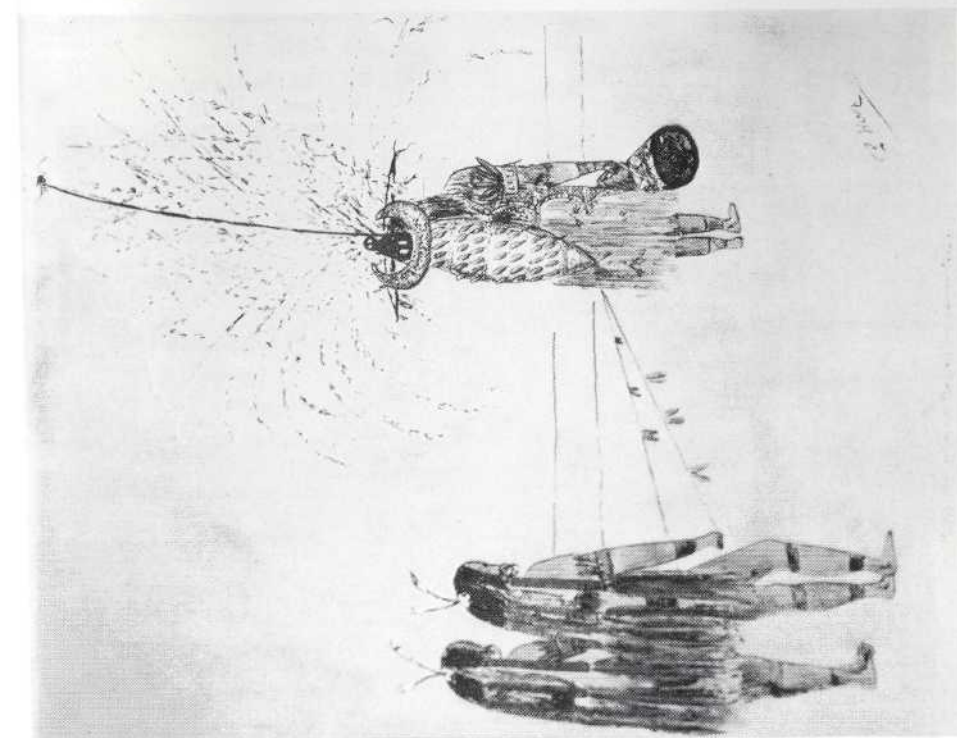
2. *Gari* and *ndik* in the *mayo-miráv*

Photo A. J. Gooszen; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951) : 291.2 N 14



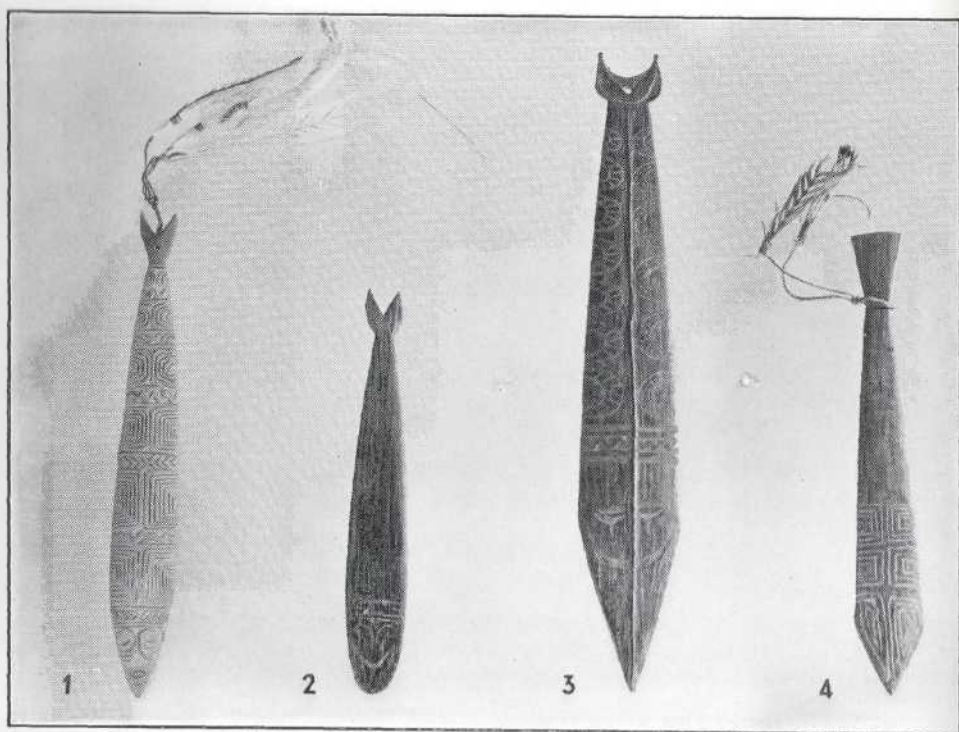
2. Déma-performer representing the bow déma

Photo P. Wirz; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951) : 291.2 N 18



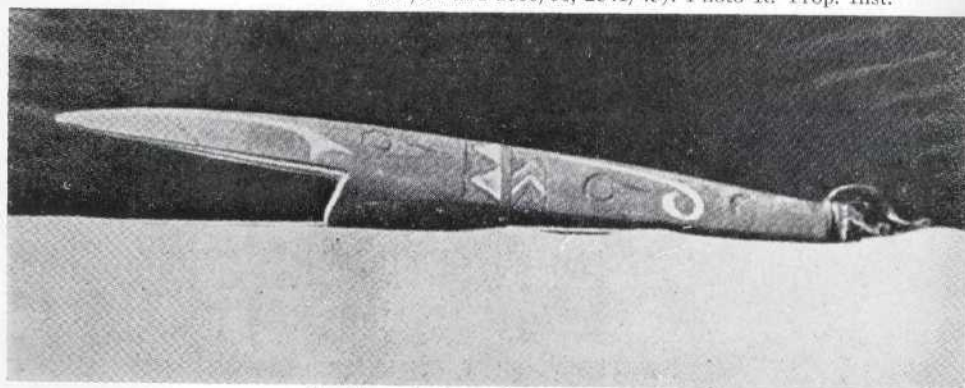
1. Déma-performers representing *Mongumer-anem*
and his *nakari*

Reproduced from a coloured sketch by P. Wirz in M.A. IV Tafel 45



1. Bullroarers (nrs. 1 and 3) and *tang* (nrs. 2 and 4)

From the collections of the R. Trop. Inst. (cat.nrs. 520/74, 2834/54 and 2563/56, 2541/45). Photo R. Trop. Inst.



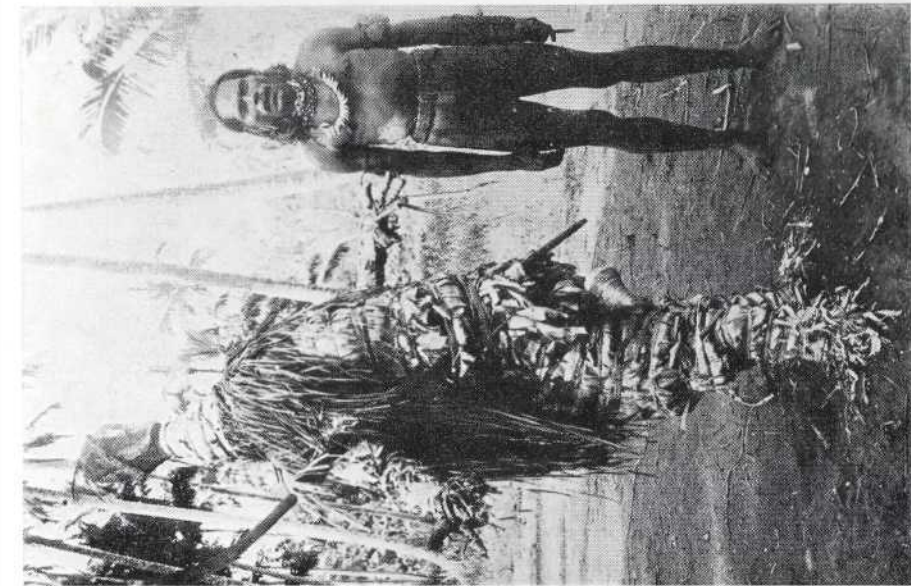
2. *Faroch* from the upper Bian

Photo van Baal



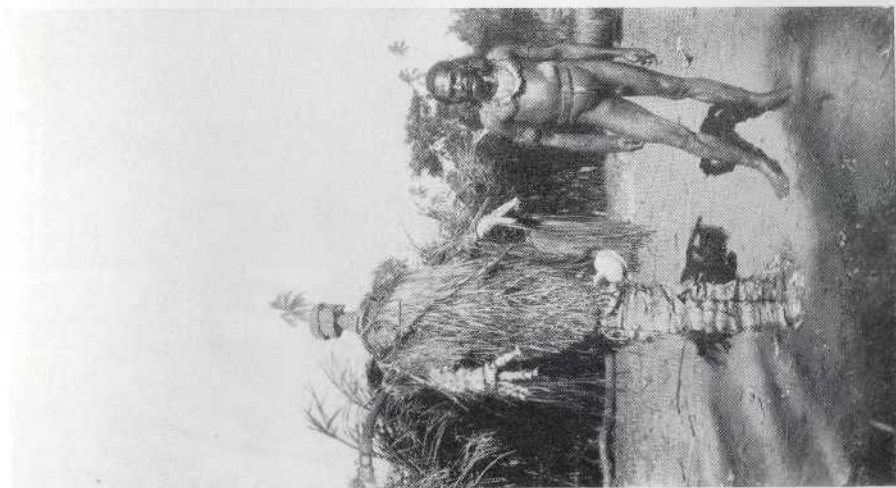
3. *Faroch* of the Boadzi people

From a drawing made by J. Verschueren



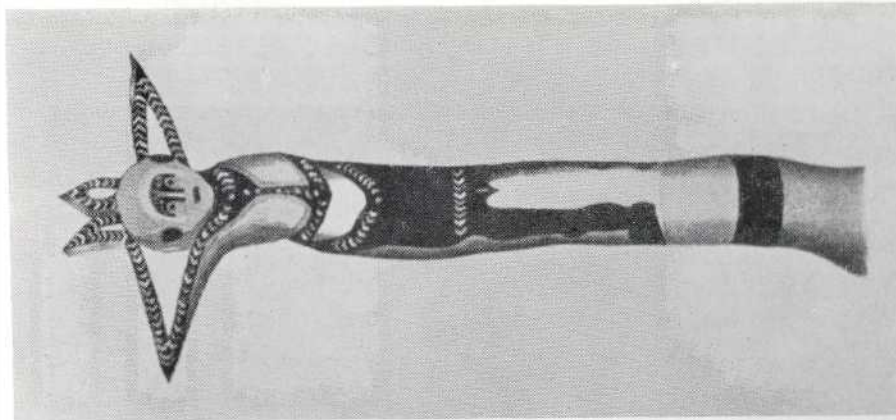
1. Straw-figure at the eastern entrance of the *mayo-miráv*

Album Anthr. Dept. R. Trop. Inst. nr. 278



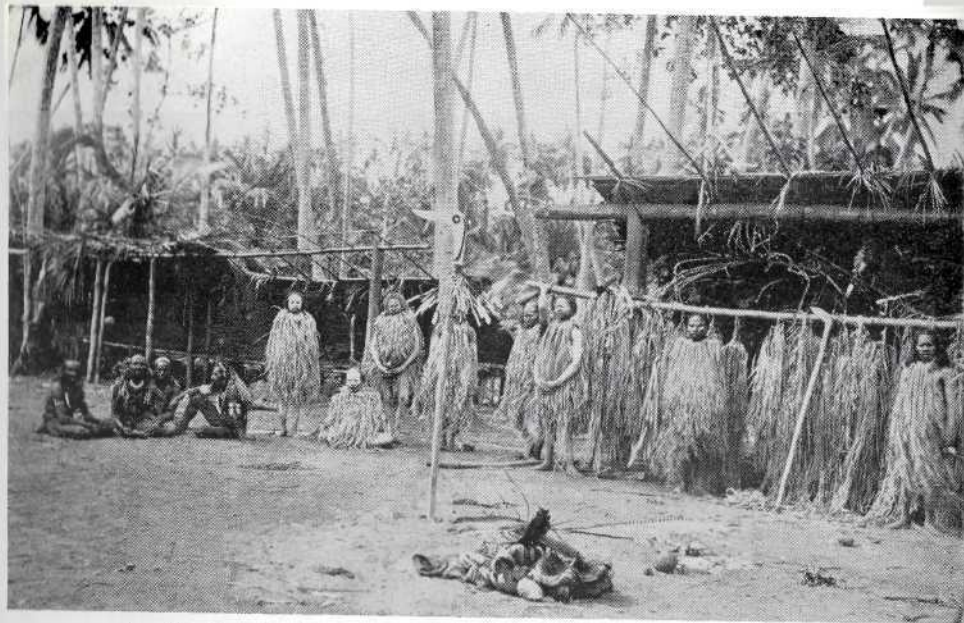
2. Straw-figure at the western entrance of the *mayo-miráv*

Same album nr. 279, and phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951); 291.2 N 63 with caption 'photo A. J. Gooszen'.



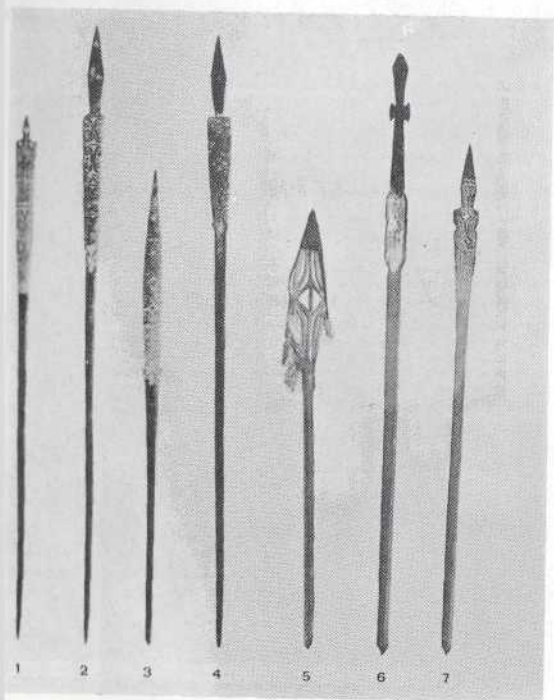
3. Effigy of the *mayo-izayag* in the *mayo-miráv* at Okaba

Reproduced from Heldring, TBG 1913 fig. 14, opp. p. 444



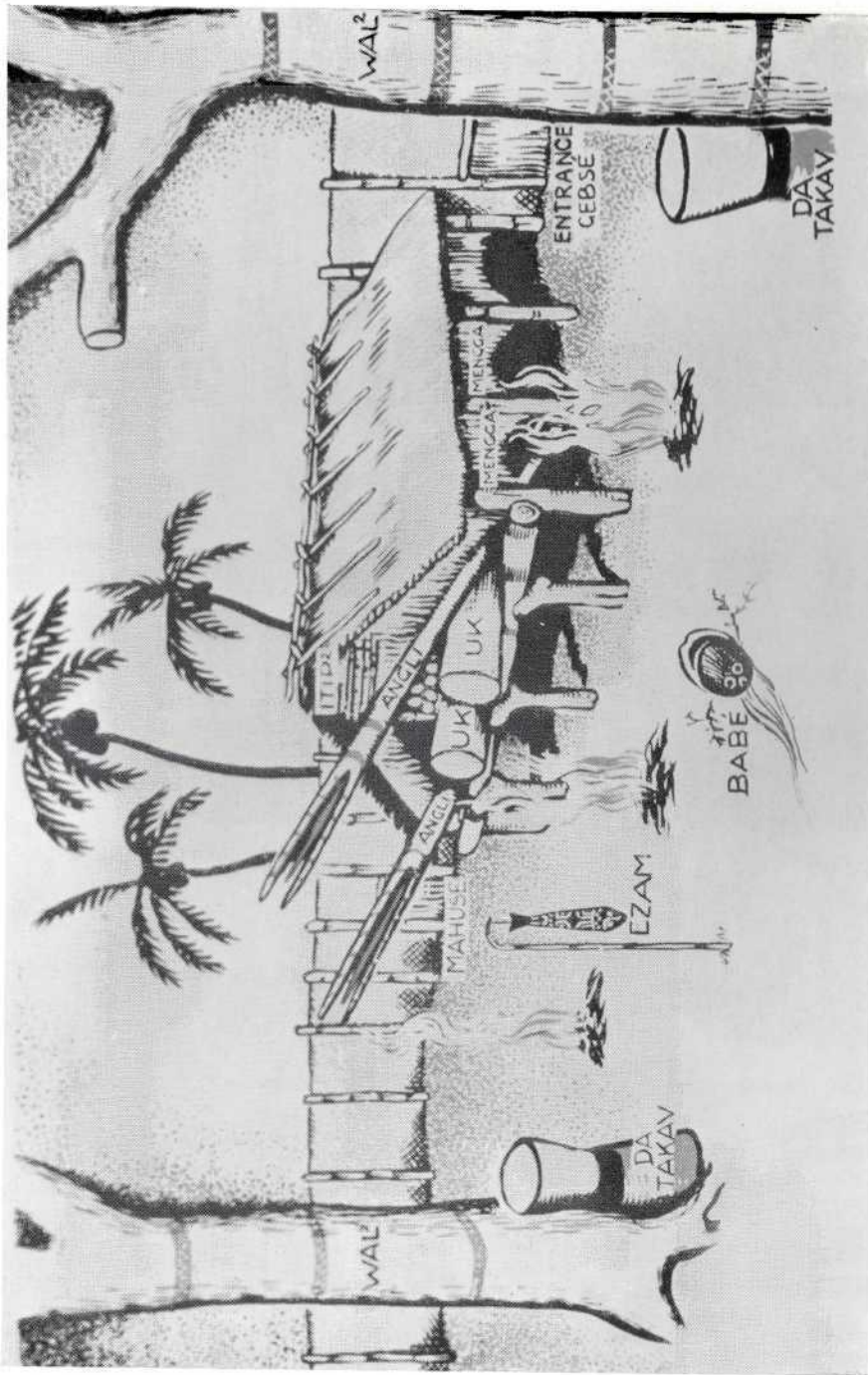
1. Novices in the *mayo-miráv*. In the foreground a *mayo-staff*

Photo A. J. Gooszen; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 291.2 N 57



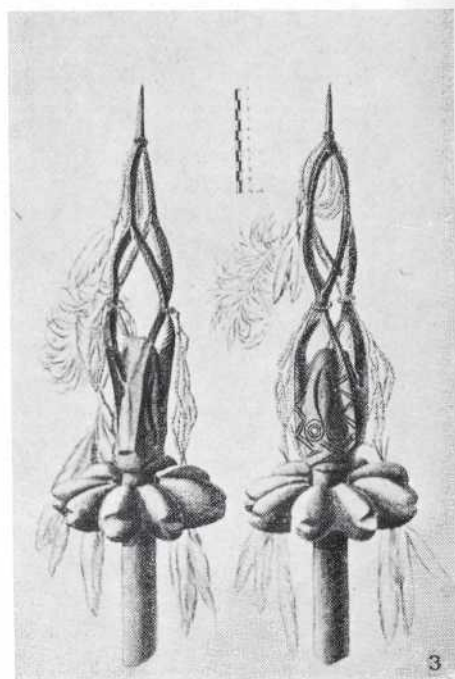
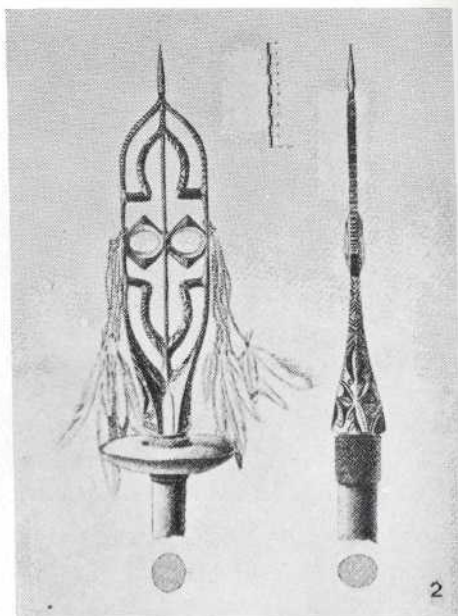
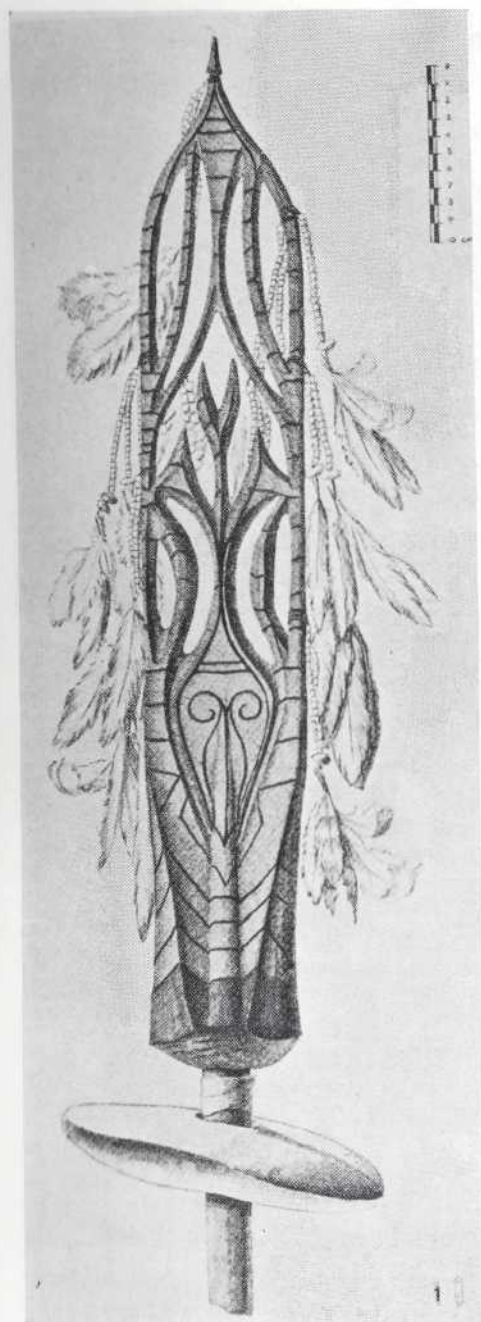
2. *Mayo-staffs*

Reproduced from Wirz, M.A. III
Tafel 2



House and ceremonial grounds for the *esam* celebration

Drawing by J. Boelaars, reproduced from the coloured plate in his *Nieuw-Guinea* opp. p. 56



Baratu clubs from the Fly river region

Reproduced from V. I. Grottanelli, *Man* 1951 nr. 185, Plate H

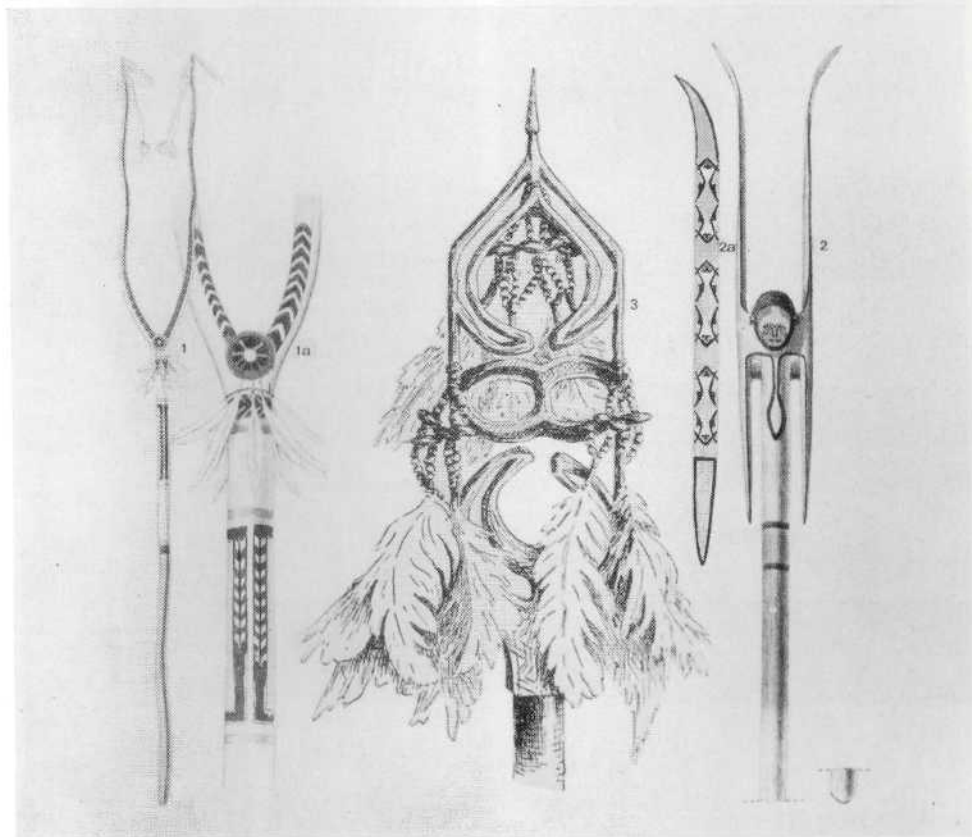


Fig. 1 and 1a *Kui-ahat*

Collections Leyden State Museum cat.nr. 1447/62.
 Reproduced from I.A. XXII Tafel XXXIII fig. 1 and 1a

Fig. 2 and 2a Effigy made to commemorate the dead

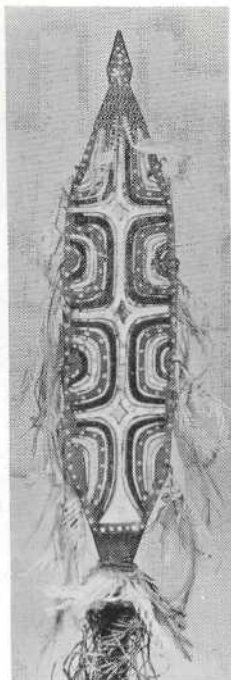
Collected at Awehima, Leyden State Museum cat.nr. 1447/78.
 Reproduced from I.A. XXII Tafel XXXIII, fig. 7 and 7a

Fig. 3 *Parasi* of the Keraki

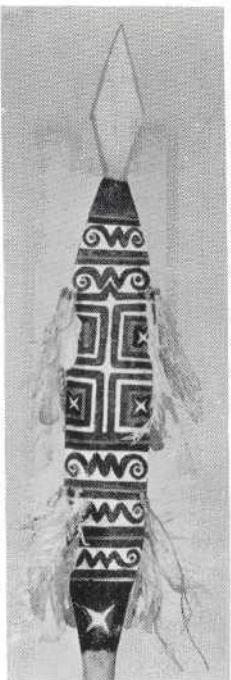
Reprinted from Williams, Trans-Fly p. 266



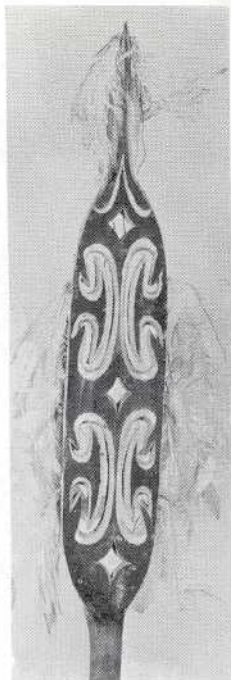
1



2



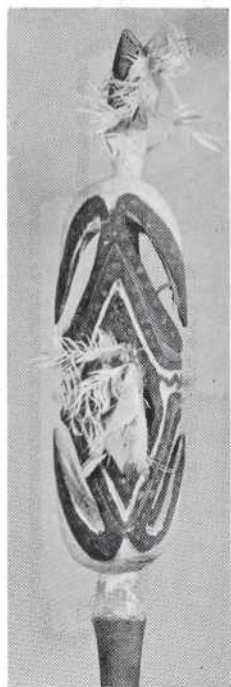
3



4



5



5a



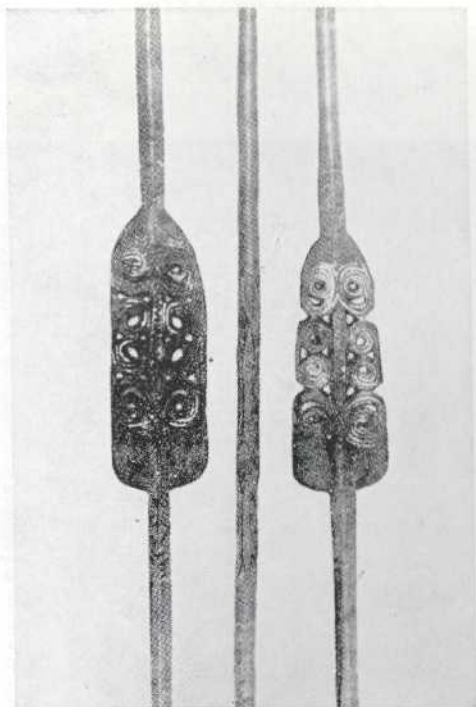
6



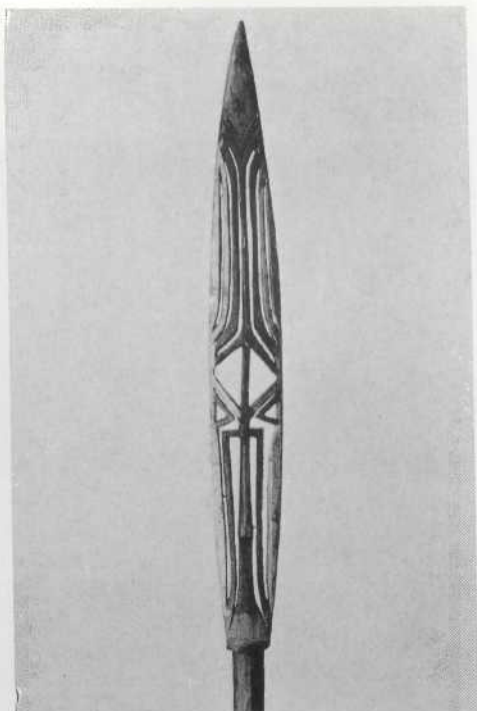
7

Pahui in the collections of the Leyden State Museum

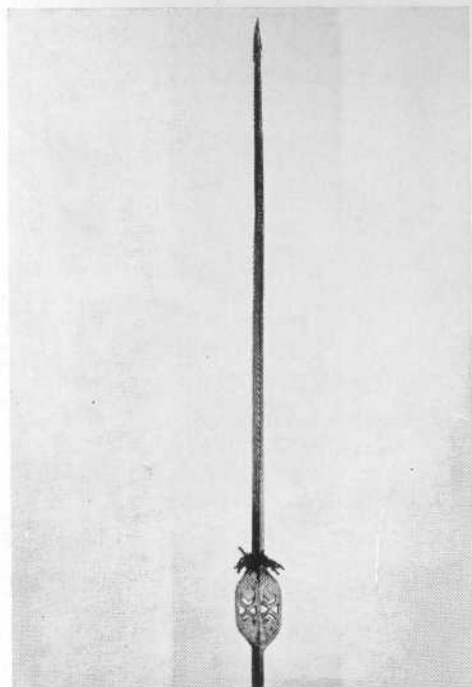
Fig. 1-5a, cat.nrs. 3532-1 to 5, *pahui* collected by Verschueren in the Kumbe valley round about 1957. The nrs. 1-3 are decorated with the *pahui*-motif. (The text was already in print when I found out that, originally, the *pahui* of fig. 1 had a loose wooden disc round the shaft, below the blade. The disc having got separated from the shaft, the photographer slipped it round the top!)



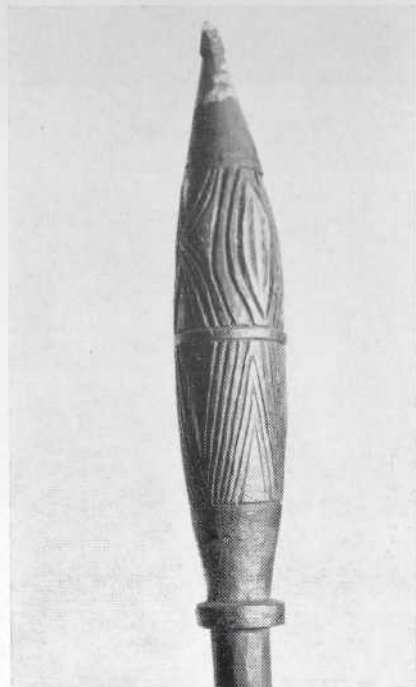
1. The *pahui* captured by MacGregor
in 1895
Reproduced from ARBNG 1897/98 Plate 10



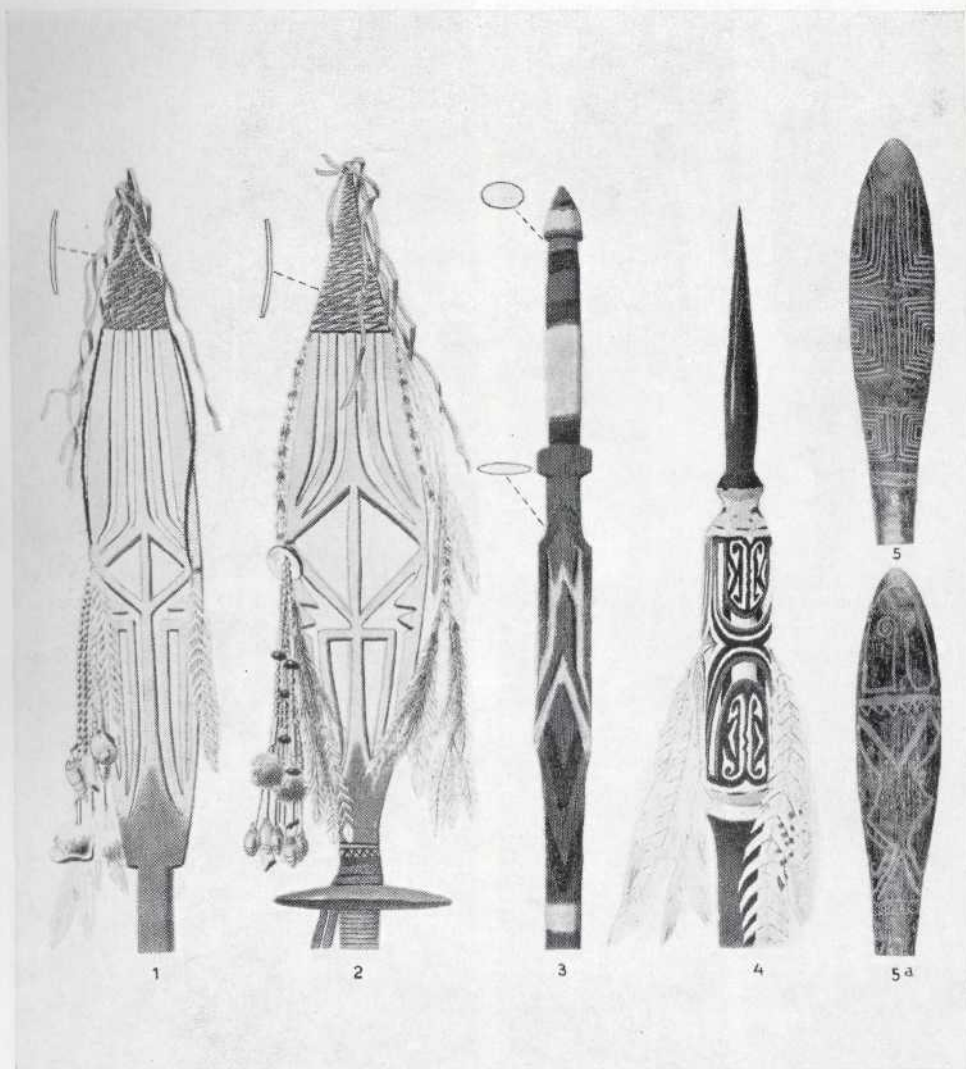
2. *Pahui* collected by the Southwest
New Guinea Exp.
Museum R. Trop. Inst., cat.nr. A 367 a



3. Ceremonial spear from the
Mappi district



4. Ceremonial staff collected by the
Southwest New Guinea Exp.



Staffs from the De Jong collection, Leyden State Museum

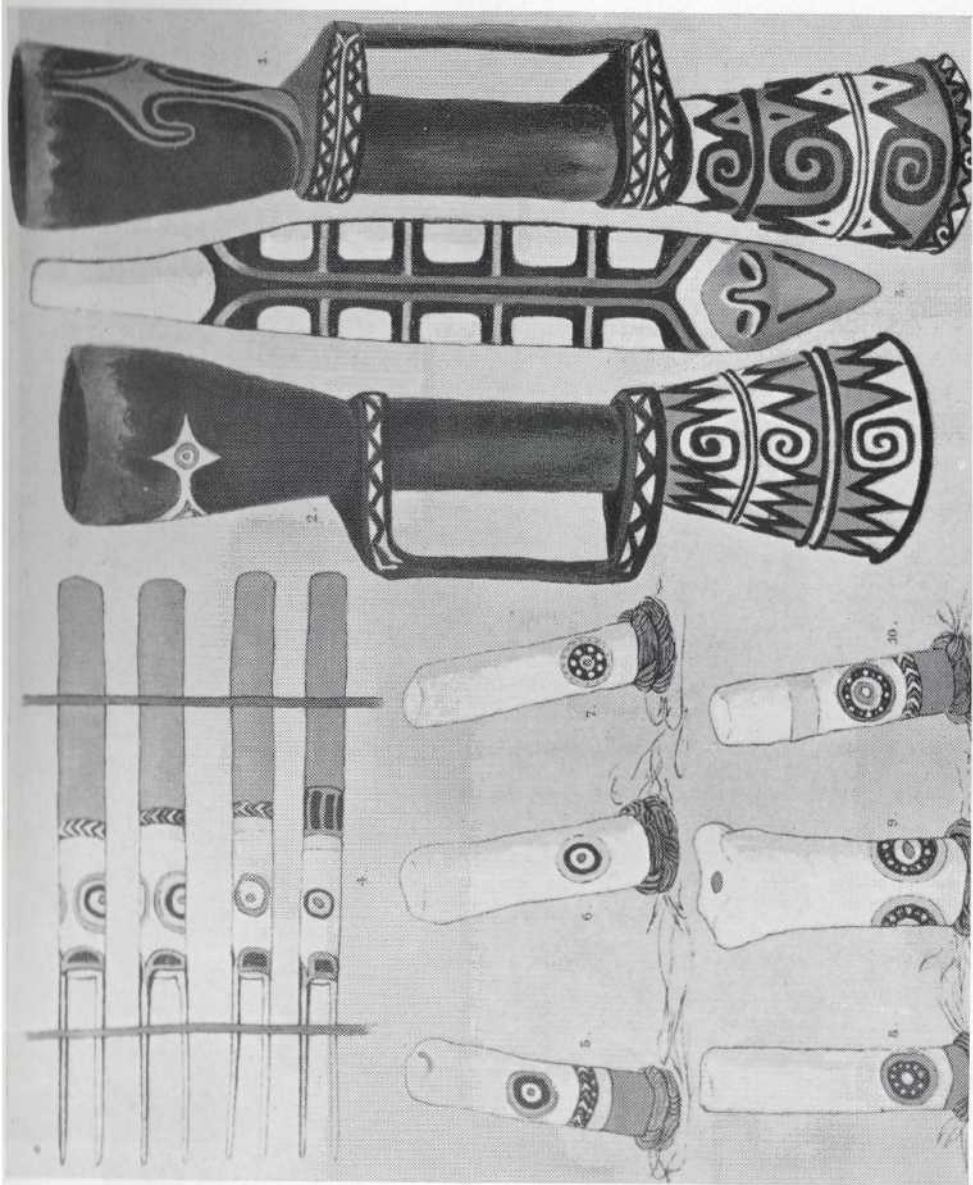
- | | | |
|---------------|--|------------------------|
| Fig. 1 | <i>Pahui</i> | Cat.nr. Leyden 1392/62 |
| Fig. 2 | <i>Pahui</i> | Cat.nr. Leyden 1392/63 |
| Fig. 3 | Phallic staff | Cat.nr. Leyden 1392/52 |
| Fig. 4 | Butt-topped <i>pahui</i> | Cat.nr. Leyden 1392/55 |
| Fig. 5 and 5a | Hardwood staff, decorated with <i>pahui</i> -motif | Cat.nr. Leyden 1392/61 |

The fig. 1—4 have been reproduced from I.A. XVII Tafel I and II; fig. 5 and 5a from photographs made by the Leyden State Museum



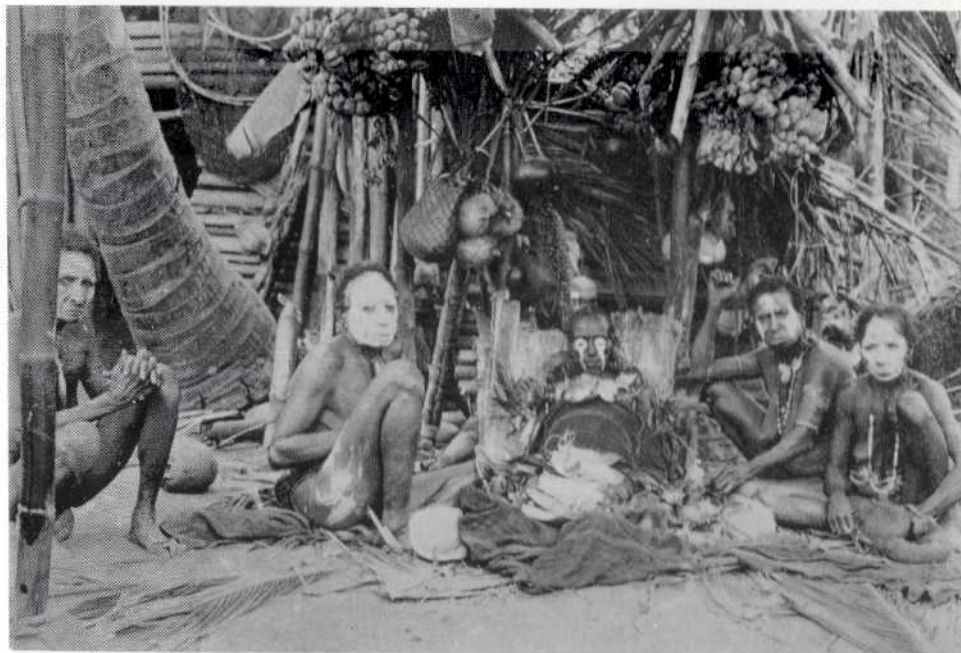
Headhunt trophies collected at Sangasé in 1913; a and b : *kui-ahat* ; c : flat-topped *pahui*

Photo L. M. F. Plate; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951) : 392.241 N 6



Ethnographical objects depicted by Vertenten

Fig. 1 and 2 drums; fig. 3 *dapa*; fig. 4 *kui-ahat* kept in the *kui-aha*; fig. 5-10 phallic poles belonging to the *kui-aha*
 Reproduced from I.A. XXII Tafel XVIII

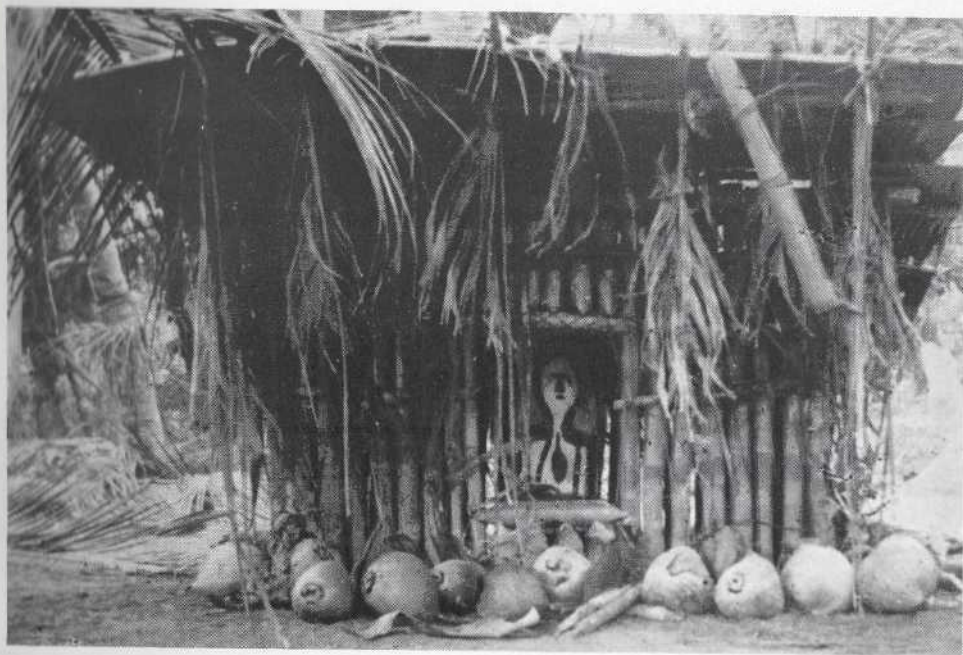


1. Bewailing the dead

Photo L. M. F. Plate; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 393 N 11

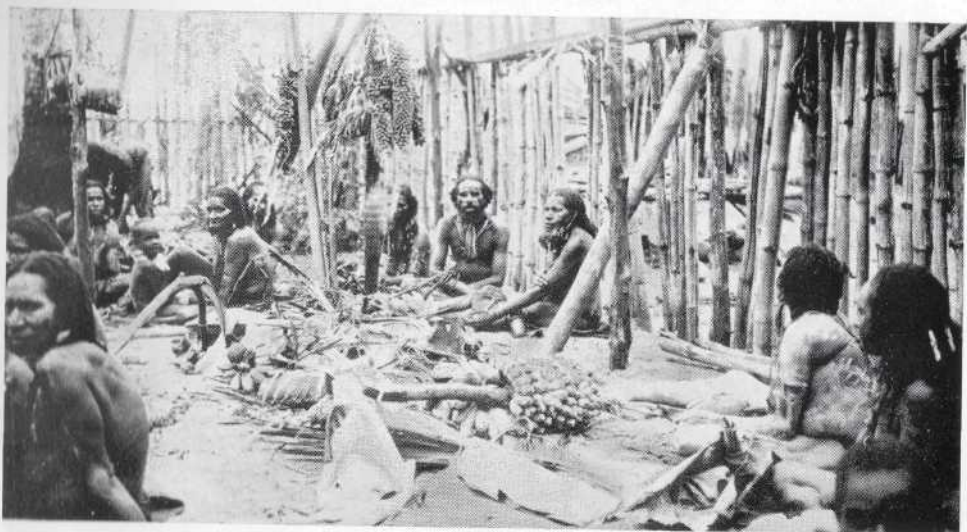


2. The grave



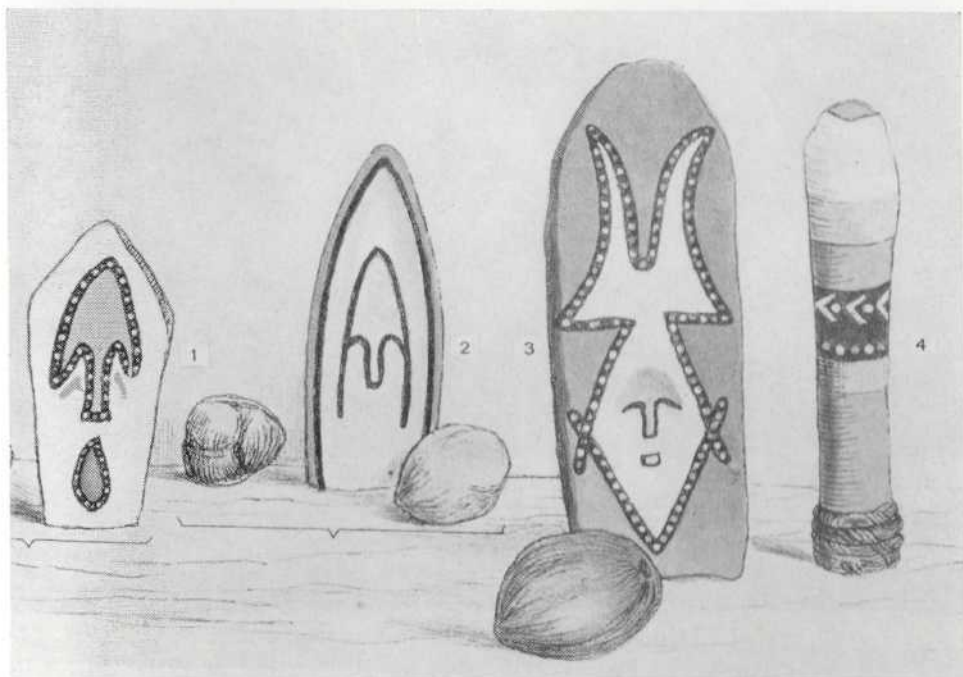
1. *Sâr-aha* with *azvong*

Photo H. Geurtjens; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951) : 393 N 36



2. *Yamu*

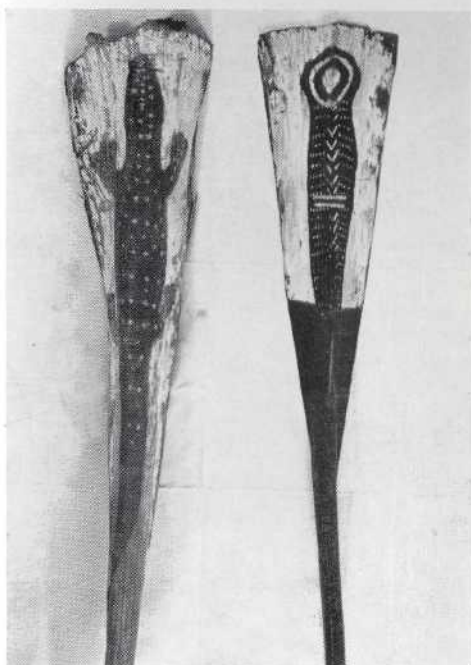
Photo A. J. Gooszen; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951) : 393 N 13



1. Taboo-signs at Okaba depicted by Vertenten

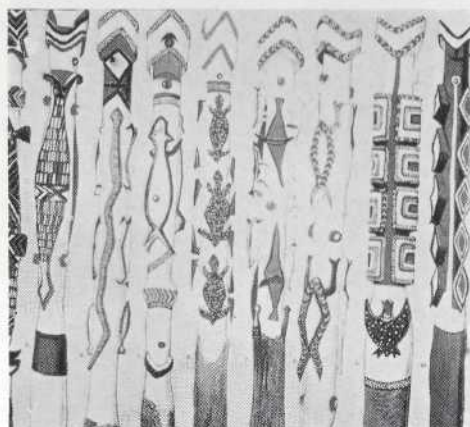
Nr. 3 has the typical *sâr-ahai*-motif in an elaborate form; nr. 4 shows a pole erected to commemorate a deceased *patur*

Reproduced from I.A. XXII Tafel XX fig. 5-8



2. Taboo-signs from the eastern section of the coast

Museum R. Trop., Inst. cat.nr. 146-3-8:



3. Feast-house posts pictured by Vertenten

Reproduced from I.A. XXVII Tafel XXV



1. Déma-performers in action in a *waiko-zi*

Photo P. Wirz; phot. coll. R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 291.2 N 16



2. Déma-performer

Photo J. V. Meininger; phot. coll.
R. Trop. Inst. nr. (951): 291.2 N 7



3. *Humum-angai*-performer
impersonating a cloud at sunset

Photo P. Wirz; phot. coll. R. Trop.
Inst. nr. (951): 391.7 N 14

REFERENCES

Short articles in popular magazines have been listed without titles. Abbreviations of titles of works frequently quoted are given in brackets after the full title.

ABBREVIATIONS OF TITLES OF PERIODICALS

Alm.	Almanak van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart; ed. Missiehuis, Tilburg
Ann.	Annalen van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart; ed. Missiehuis, Tilburg
Anthr.	Anthropos; Internationale Zeitschrift für Völker- und Sprachenkunde
ARBNG	Annual Report of British New Guinea
B.A.	Baessler-Archiv; Beiträge zur Völkerkunde; ed. Baessler-Institut
BKI	Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde; ed. Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde; 's-Gravenhage
I.A.	Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie; Leiden
IL.	Het Indische Leven; a weekly edited at Weltevreden, Batavia
JAI	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great-Britain and Ireland
J.P.	De Java-Post; Weekblad van Nederlandsch-Indië
K.M.	De Katholieke Missiën, geïllustreerd Maandschrift; ed. Missionarissen van het Goddelijk Woord
K.T.	Koloniaal Tijdschrift; ed. Vereeniging van Ambtenaren bij het Binnenlandsch Bestuur in Nederlandsch-Indië; 's-Gravenhage
M&M	Mensch en Maatschappij; Tweemaandelijksch Tijdschrift voor Sociale Wetenschappen
NGS	Nieuw-Guinea Studiën; Orgaan van de Stichting Studiekring Nieuw-Guinea
NION	Nederlandsch Indië Oud en Nieuw; Den Haag
NRC	Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant
TAG	Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap
TBB	Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlandsch Bestuur; Batavia
TBG	Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, uitgegeven door het Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen
TNG	Tijdschrift "Nieuw-Guinea", uitgegeven door het Nieuw-Guinea Comité en den Nieuw-Guinea Studiekring
VBG	Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen
VKI	Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde; 's-Gravenhage
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Explanatory Note. Many entries in the Subject Index refer to the Index and Glossary of Native Terms and Names and vice versa. The most frequently occurring names and terms (e.g. coconut, *Geb-zé*) were left out. The translations in the glossary are of the briefest. For the explanation of kinship-terms and of terms denoting age-groups and age-grades the reader is referred tot pp. 113-115 and 143 f., respectively.

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