Lamaholot of East Flores:
a study of a boundary community

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St Catherine's College &

Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology

University of Oxford

Thesis submitted in candidacy for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Social and Cultural Anthropology

Trinity Term, 2012

ABSTRACT

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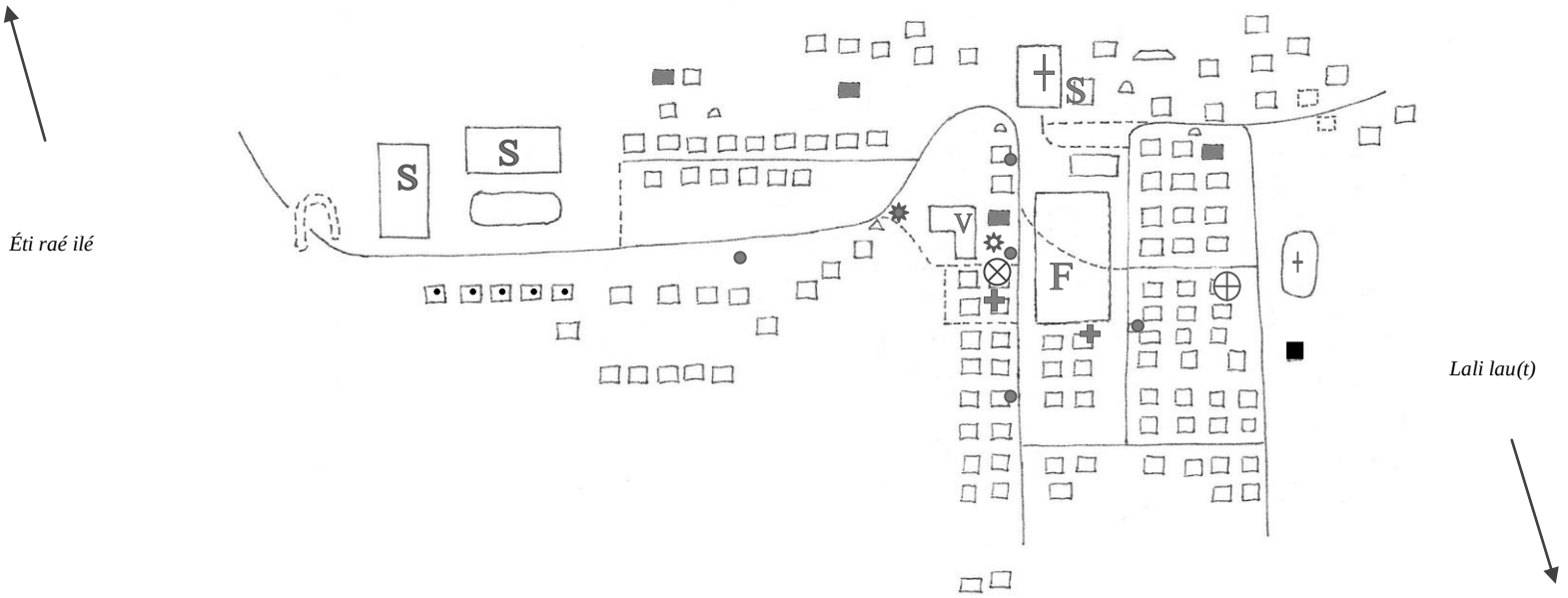
Lamaholot is a population found on Flores and in the Solor Archipelago of Eastern Indonesia. The population is village-based and divided into patrilineal descent groups. Marriage is coupled with bridewealth and follows a pattern of asymmetric marriage alliance between descent groups. This thesis shows that a small group of Lamaholot in the administrative regency of East Flores shares certain traditions with a neighbouring population called Ata Tana ʻAi. Ata Tana ʻAi are a sub-group of the Sikka population in the administrative regency of Sikka. Descent group among Ata Tana ʻAi are matrilineal and households were traditionally based in scattered gardens. Marriage is not coupled with bridewealth and instances of asymmetric marriage alliance between descent groups are here a consequence rather than a cause of marriage. The current fieldsite seems to have been part of the ceremonial system of Ata Tana ʻAi and also to have shared a tradition of dispersed settlement in the gardens. The descent groups might initially have been matrilineal, but in the recent past there was also a habit of dividing children between the parental descent groups. Recent traditions of dividing children can be found throughout central-east Flores, but seemingly not

to same extent as at the fieldsite. The payment of elephant's tusks was a central feature in the acquisition of group members at the fieldsite and could be paid by both men and women. These payments were not necessarily tied to marriage and did not serve as bridewealth. In the last century outer social factors, such as the Catholic mission and the creation of the Dutch colonial state, have resulted in that many of the traditional practices at the fieldsite have been replaced with traditions from Lamaholot elsewhere. The residence pattern is now village-based, but gardens retain a central social and ritual position. The role of the elephant's tusks has taken different expressions throughout this period of social change, and alongside the changing role of tusks, the traditional social and material authority of women at the fieldsite has declined, whereas that of men has increased. This thesis examines the current and the traditional practices in and around the fieldsite, and focuses on local definitions of descent group, kinship, and inheritance, looking at both biological and social perspectives.

Till mamma och pappa

NILÉK NOHÉNG (PALUÉ) 2009



House	Lord of the Land	Gateway (to be rebuilt)	Water cistern	Road
House foundation	Head of Village	Monument	Power station	Footpath
Vacant house	Teacher	Statues	Mill	Playing field
Village office	Church	Cemetery	Store	
School/preschool	Polyclinic			

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by my side from my first day on Flores and with whose support I managed to get through the most difficult times in the field. Ultimately, it was he who taught me what kinship can mean among Lamaholot.

My most sincere gratitude, however, goes to my supervisor Bob Barnes, who introduced me to Lamaholot and suggested that I do my doctoral research in East Flores. He has offered immense support and advice throughout this research process, and I am extremely grateful for all of his efforts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

f.	female
f.s.	female speaking
B.I.	Bahasa Indonesia
m.	male
m.s.	male speaking
NTT	East Nusa Tenggara province
o.s.	online source
S	son
S.	Sikkanese (Sara Sikka)
S. (T.‘A.)	Sikkanese (Tana ‘Ai dialect) (Sara Tana ‘Ai)
Z	sister

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TRANSLITERATION

Lamaholot contains six vowels, ‘i é e a o u’; written ‘i e ə a o u’ in the International Phonetic alphabet (IPA) (Arndt 1937:4, Fernandez 1977:19, 1983:4, 23, Keraf 1978:29; Graham 1991:xv). The schwa is, however, problematic, and I will choose a different transliteration of Lamaholot and Indonesian in this thesis.

I use the letter ‘é’ to correspond to the French ‘é’ (as in *bébé*), and a simple ‘e’ to denote the French ‘e’ (as in *le*). A schwa will be used to denote a guttural sound, which in some other literature is also rendered as ‘ or ‘q’. Citations from the work of others will often follow the same pattern of transliteration, and terms cited in Lamaholot will usually be rendered in the form that is common in Palué.

The realization of final nasals varies between Lamaholot speakers and between the different dialects of Lamaholot (cf. Arndt 1937:4-5). The dialect in Palué is more nasalized than some of the dialects further east in East Flores. Many loanwords from Indonesian drop the nasal consonant in Lamaholot, but less frequently so if they are borrowed from Larantuka Malay (Graham 1991:xvii).

The letter ‘c’ is pronounced ‘ch’ and the letter ‘u’ is pronounced ‘ou’, both in Lamaholot and in Indonesian. The letter ‘a’ is pronounced as in the French *papa*, and the letter ‘r’ makes a rolling sound as in some Scandinavian languages. The letter ‘h’ is always pronounced, even at the beginning of words.

Foreign words will be written in italics, usually followed by an English translation. If the context requires further clarification, the language in question will be specified.

Photo 1. Detail of painted wall map of Wulanggitang. (Sub-district office, Boru.)

Photo 2. Painted wall map of Wulanggitang. (Sub-district office, Boru.)

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

This thesis considers the notions of kin and family among Lamaholot-speakers on the island of Flores in Eastern Indonesia. It also examines the social structure, in particular in relation to kinship. Focus is placed on a group of Lamaholot-speakers in a boundary area between two administrative regencies (B.I. *kabupatén*): the East Flores regency and the Sikka regency. Lamaholot are found in the East Flores regency. Most recorded data show that Lamaholot and Sikka have patrilineal descent groups, with the exception of the Sikka close to the boundary with East Flores, called Ata Tana ʻAi. Ata Tana ʻAi have matrilineal descent groups. For a long time unverified reports indicated that the Lamaholot-speakers in this boundary area also had matrilineal descent groups. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not these reports were true.[1] If they proved to be correct, another question to be considered was whether or not the Lamaholot in question practiced asymmetric marriage alliance, similar to Lamaholot-speakers elsewhere. Among Sikka asymmetric marriage alliance is also practiced, but among Ata Tana ʻAi the practice is not an explicit one.

Theoretical Background

The current study builds on a long tradition of anthropological research in Eastern Indonesia. During the time of Dutch influence and occupation (1860/1914-1945 [Owen 2005:135, 306]), the archipelago which we now refer to as ‘Indonesia’ received much academic attention from the Dutch Leiden School. Two of the most influential scholars of the Leiden School were J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong and his student F.A.E. van Wouden.

[1] I am very grateful to my supervisor Professor R.H. Barnes for having drawn my attention to this research potential.

J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong (1977[1935]:168) described the Malay Archipelago as a 'field of ethnological study' (*ethnologish studieveld*) and proposed that all societies within it shared a core set of structural features, for instance a notion of complementary categories and symbolic diarchy (idem 168-9, 172). Descent and alliance were also emphasized, and the work of van Wouden was centred specifically on asymmetric marriage alliance, or circulating connubium, as he termed it. Asymmetric marriage alliance (aka general exchange) requires a minimum of three groups (descent groups or other) between which marriage is contracted unidirectionally in a circular pattern, typically seeing the movement of women from wife-giving groups to wife-taking groups.[2] In his doctoral thesis, van Wouden (1968[1935]:16) claimed that asymmetric marriage alliance was necessarily structured on a principle of double unilineal descent, rather than (as most data now show) patrilineal descent.

Unfortunately the Dutch regulations at the time of these studies prevented anthropologists from doing fieldwork before they had finished a doctoral thesis based only on library research (R.H. Barnes 1985:93). As a consequence, the conclusions of J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong and van Wouden were based on second-hand data, and when they later arrived in the field they discovered that their theories were not entirely in accordance with the ethnological facts. Some of the purported structural features of the societies in the 'field of ethnological study' are, in fact, better suited to describe Eastern Indonesia and highland Sumatra than the Malay archipelago as a whole. There is, nonetheless, a high degree of variation within Eastern Indonesia and highland Sumatra as well. Kodi of west Sumba, for example, do not practice alliance at all (van Wouden 1977[1956]:218-19) whereas Tanebar-Evav in the Kei Islands have multiple modes of alliance working in parallel, some of which do not entail marriage (Barraud 1979). Ngada on central Flores, furthermore, do not have unilineal descent groups (Arndt 1954:167).

[2] Cf. symmetric marriage alliance (aka direct exchange), where marriage is contracted directly between two groups.

The so-called 'traits list' of J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong has, therefore, been much debated, and reworked a number of times (see P.E. de Josselin de Jong 1984).

Van Wouden's proposition that asymmetric marriage alliance should necessarily be coupled with double unilineal descent has as yet not been supported by any ethnographic evidence from any society in the world, but Lio on central Flores have been shown to combine double unilineal descent with a practice of *symmetric* marriage alliance (cf. Sugishima 1994:147), which should keep us alert of the possibility that van Wouden was not entirely wrong.[3]

Fox (1996:150 n.1) has argued that the idea of unilineal descent groups might not be entirely suited for describing societies in Eastern Indonesia and even avoids using the term 'descent' altogether, to "avoid special reliance on criteria of genealogical reckoning". Even so, there are some societies in Eastern Indonesia that do claim that they have descent groups which are defined through one of the parents; for example, Lamaholot of East Flores and the Solor Archipelago, who define descent groups on the basis of blood relations through the paternal line, which is also substantiated by their genealogies (e.g. R.H. Barnes pers. comm.; Dietrich 1997:80). Graham (1991) even reports that the notion of blood is at the very centre of the social structure among the Lamaholot in Lewoléma, East Flores.

The Sikka in eastern Flores have two different definitions of descent groups: in the western part of the Sikka regency the descent groups are patrilineal, while in the east part of the regency (Tana 'Ai), the descent groups are matrilineal. A similar pattern is found among Atoni and Belu (Tetum) on Timor, where the political communities show gradations from "purely patrilineal and patrilocal to chiefly matrilineal and matrilocal" (Schulte Nordholt 1971:116):

[3] Note that neither agnation nor actual descent groups are necessarily related to asymmetric alliance (Needham 1964:237).

> When we discover that the *ume* [house], as part of a clan, may be patrilineal as well as matrilineal, the question as to the line of descent becomes of secondary importance. Both patrilineal and matrilineal forms of descent are found in the Atoni area – both fit in with the system.
>
> Schulte Nordholt 1971:131[4]

This data more or less illustrates Fox's point about descent groups in Eastern Indonesia. Fox chooses to follow a more historicizing approach to the study of culture in Southeast Asia, along with for instance Blust (e.g. 1980).

Fox's own research focuses on, among other things, the use of a botanic idiom for describing kin relations in Eastern Indonesia (e.g. Arndt 1933:58; Fox 1971; Fox 1988:331; Onvlee 1973:58; Zerner and Volkman 1988:294-5, 324 n.9). On Rote, for instance, the MB is termed 'trunk' whereas the ZC is termed 'plant'; this correspondence between humans and plants (or between the human lifecycle and the natural/agricultural cycle) is also evident in the Rotinese word for 'blood', which refers to all inner plant saps (Fox 1971). The botanic idiom is also found among Lamaholot, where the preferred woman in marriage is called the man's 'squash seed, bean seedling', likening her to a seed that stems from the ancestral/source clan; by marrying this woman, the groom returns the seed to its source, thereby closing a minimal three-line alliance cycle in the system of asymmetric marriage alliance (Graham 1990:126, 135, 139, 170).

Evidently kinship and alliance are closely intertwined in Eastern Indonesia and expressed through different levels of abstraction while at the same time remaining tied to qualities that have to do with human life and with nature; qualities that appear to be central in many ways in local livelihood and conceptions of life and cosmology. Understanding the local concepts of kinship and alliance, therefore, opens up for an understanding of cultural values and practices that pertain to a number of different spheres of life.

[4] "By taking as our point of departure the *ume* as a locally defined group of kin, all further grouping will branch out into two different directions: the territorial and the genealogical one … [T]he territorial and genealogical principles coincide in the *ume*" (Schulte Nordholt 1971:132-3).

Lamaholot

Lamaholot live on the island of Flores and on the islands of the Solor Archipelago (Solor, Adonara, and Lembata) in the East Nusa Tenggara province (NTT) of Eastern Indonesia.[5] NTT is characterized by a short rainy season from November to April, and a hot dry season from May to October (Duggan 1989:31). The amount of rainfall depends on local conditions such as the presence of mountains; some areas can receive as much as 1,500 mm/year whereas others will receive as little as 750 mm/year (Barlow and Gondowarsito 1989:20; Duggan 1989:31).

Flores and the Solor Archipelago are located 8˚-9˚ south of the equator and are part of the Lesser Sunda Islands (Cribb 2000:5; o.s. 6). They belong to the volcanically active inner arc of the Tertiary Sunda Mountain System and are indeed volcanic in origin (R.H. Barnes 1996:6; Duggan 1989:33).

Flores measures approximately 13,540 km² and is divided into eight regencies (B.I. *kabupatén*): West Manggarai, Manggarai, East Manggarai, Ngada, Nagékéo, Énde, Sikka, and East Flores (Map of Provinsi NTT; o.s. 3). These regencies correspond roughly to the distribution of the major language groups on Flores: Manggarai, Ngada, Énde, Lio, Sikka, and Lamaholot (Asher, Moseley and Darkes 2007:148; Lewis 1988b:7; Wurm and Hattori 1981: Map 40). All of the languages on Flores are Austronesian and belong to the Central Malayo-Polynesian group (R.H. Barnes 1996:33; Blust 1980:23; o.s. 4; o.s. 5). Lamaholot is largely confined to the East Flores regency which comprises the islands of Solor and Adonara, thus covering an area of 1,813 km² in total (Cribb 2000:3). Lamaholot is also the main language on the island of Lembata, which is a separate regency measuring 1,292 km² (ibid.). Kédang is

[5] Indonesia has three administrative levels below the state level: province, regency, and sub-district. The smallest administrative unit is the village (B.I. *désa*) which consists of one or more smaller settlements, or hamlets (B.I. *kampung*). The term *désa* comes from Sanskrit and refers to a governmentally recognized village.

spoken in the northwestern part of Lembata. Kédang and Sikka are closely related to Lamaholot, both linguistically and culturally (Keraf 1978:Lampiran VI; Lewis 1988b:7).[6]

In 2009-2010, the East Flores regency and the Lembata regency were estimated to have a joint population of approximately 350,000 people, the majority of which would have been Lamaholot-speakers (o.s. 1; o.s. 2). Lamaholot consists of at least 35 mutually intelligible dialects (R.H. Barnes 1996:3; Keraf 1978: Lampiran VI). One additional dialect, sometimes referred to as 'Alor language', is spoken in small coastal enclaves on northern Pantar and on western Alor; two islands east of Lembata (R.H. Barnes 1996:3). The remainder of the languages on Pantar and Alor belong to the Papuan/non-Austronesian language family (Asher, Moseley and Darkes 2007:148; Wurm and Hattori 1981: Map 40).

According to R.H. Barnes (1991, cited in Graham 1991:296) the name 'Lamaholot' is a fairly recent denomination for the speakers of Lamaholot and mainly used in academic writing. Whatever might be the case, the Javanese epos of *Deśawarnana* (*Nāgarakṛtāgama*) from 1365 refers to the region as 'Solot' (Prapañca 1995:33; Vatter 1932:23) and the first Europeans who arrived in this area referred to the population and to the language area as 'Solot', or 'Zolot' ('Solor' and 'Solorese' later became commonplace) (R.H. Barnes 1972:91; 1977:209). According to Arndt (1937: foreword, 5), the Lamaholot on Solor used the autonym 'Holo' ('to be joined', 'to be united' [Keraf 1978:7]) which, he argues, is identical to the names 'Solor' and 'Solot', if one takes into account the specific sound changes in Lamaholot grammar. Arndt (ibid.) also suggests that 'Holo' has the alternative meaning 'man; human'.[7] In some parts of East Flores, the autonym 'Ata Kiwan' ('mountain people') is still

[6] Sikka consists of three sub-groups with slightly different dialects: Ata Krowé/Iwand (central Sikkanese), Sikka Natar (coastal Sikkanese), and Ata Tana 'Ai (Lewis 1988b:9-10; Vatter 1932:12).

[7] 'Holo' has a number of forms and uses, the majority of which seem to convey a sense of collection, or unity, and the sticking together of different parts (e.g. Graham 1991:23-5 n.7). At my fieldsite in East Flores, I noticed that the word appeared in the name of a children's game which has been popular for generations. The game is called *holo(t)* and it is played by two opponent teams. One team stands inside a circle that has been drawn on the ground with a stick or with ashes; the second team guards the boundary of this circle and tries to prevent the opponents from escaping from the ring. If anyone manages to escape, the outer team must try to prevent them from returning to the ring. Once all of the members of the inner team have successfully escaped from – and re-

common but seems to have carried negative connotations during colonial times, as it implied a sense of 'backwardness' (Graham 1991:24-5 n.7).

In the period before the Dutch 'pacification' of Flores in 1913, most of the inland areas had had little or no contact with Europeans (Kennedy 1955:258; Lewis 1988b:11). It appears that the Dutch only began making irregular patrols in the mountains in westernmost East Flores in the 1930s (Kondi 1955[?], cited in Lewis 1988b:11). Regular 'patrols' (3-4 times a year) by Catholic missionaries did not occur in this area until 1974 (Lewis 1988b:11). The Christian mission was to a large extent responsible for 'encouraging' the inland populations to leave their mountain settlements and to re-settle in more accessible sites (from the mission's point of view) (Graham 1991:14). According to a few local nuns in East Flores, the mission stations at the time were strategically placed so as to prevent further contact between the 'heathen' uplands and the Christian lowland settlements.[8]

The first Christian mission on Flores and in the Solor Archipelago was the Dominican mission, introduced by the Portuguese in the 16th century (R. Barnes 1989:4; R.H. Barnes 1972:91; Graham 1991:13; Lewis 1988b:9). The subsequent Franciscan mission was but marginal whereas the Dutch Jesuit mission became important in the mid-19th century (R. Barnes 1989:127-8; R.H. Barnes 1972:91; pers. comm.). Both Flores and the islands of the Solor Archipelago are now predominantly Roman-Catholic (Cribb 2000:49; Fox 1980a:241-2; Graham 1991:13; Lewis 1988b:9). Islam is found mainly along the coasts where the settlements have experienced a long history of trade with, among others, Javanese Muslims even before the arrival of the Europeans (R.H. Barnes 1977:219; 1987:209, 225; 1995:497-8;

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entered – the circle, the game is over and the two teams swap places. Every time I participated in this game, the team inside the circle shouted "*holo(t)*" at the end of the game.

[8] All of the nuns and priests that I have met in East Flores do not interpret the forced adoption of Christianity primarily as a 'conversion'; rather, they agree that traditional belief (*adat*) and "religion" (B.I. *agama*) are simply different expressions of the same belief. For this reason, some priests can also perform ritual, and both priests and nuns may adhere to the food prohibitions of their specific descent groups.

Dietrich 1984:318-19). The sultanate of Ternate in the Moluccas in particular appears to have influenced local culture (de Roever 2002).

The social organization of Lamaholot is based on patrilineal descent groups and asymmetric marriage alliance between descent groups. Social stratification has been reported and in the past slavery was not uncommon (Arndt 1940:97; 1951:184, 197; Kennedy 1955:209; Seegeler 1931, cited in R.H. Barnes 1972:94; Vatter 1932:70).[9] Most accounts indicate that Lamaholot have a tradition of village-based settlement, yet there are some local claims that people originally lived in the gardens [fields] (Seegeler 1931, cited in R.H. Barnes 1972:94; Vatter 1932:208). A dispersed pattern of habitation in this area could be found in the Sikkanese area of Tana ‘Ai until the 1980s (Lewis 1988b:11). Lamaholot villages today are often a collection of two or more hamlets, sometimes located at some distance from each other. Gardens are located at the outskirts of the village or the separate hamlets.

In the inland areas swidden agriculture is the main mode of subsistence and food production is often restricted by seasonality, although some villages, such as Konga in East Flores, do practice irrigation (R.H. Barnes 1972:92; 1996:150; pers. comm.; Graham 1991:14). Although fishing plays an important part in subsistence along the coasts, few villages make their living primarily from large-scale fishing; one exception is Lamalera on Lembata (cf. R.H. Barnes 1974, 1996). Some coastal villages used to depend on trade and manufacture of trade goods; for instance, textiles and simple agricultural tools (Graham 1991:14).[10]

The ethnographers

[9] According to Kohl (1998:105), village communities are stratified in so far that certain clan groups possess a particular social and jural status.

[10] The Éndenese of central Flores were part of inter-island trading networks, in which Timorese, Butonese, Buginese, and Makassarese also participated (van Lynden 1851:324-25, cited in Graham 1991:14).

There is a rich record of the culture and language of Lamaholot, and although the records are in overall agreement they show a high degree of local variation which leaves room for further contributions to be made.

Flores and the Solor Archipelago first appear in the Javanese epos of *Deśawarnana* (*Nāgarakṛtāgama*) from 1365, in which 'Solot' is named as a colony of the Madjapahit kingdom (Prapañca 1995:33; Vatter 1932:23). Trading contacts with peoples in the Indonesian archipelago have left few or no records of this region. Portuguese traders mention Flores in records dating to 1511, 1513 and 1518 (Vatter 1932:24), and in 1515 the first Portuguese ships arrived in the Solor Archipelago (R. Barnes 1989:4).[11] The Solor-Alor archipelago also figures in the diary of the Italian noble Antonio de Pigafetta, who passed through the area in 1522 onboard Magellan's sole remaining ship, *Victoria* (Vatter 1932:24). Later evidence shows a Dutch presence on Solor from 1613 (R.H. Barnes 1996:31; Kohl 1998:27; Dietrich 1997:6-7; Vatter 1932:23). The Dutch took up the Portuguese search for the 'Spice Islands' (the Moluccas in Eastern Indonesia), but unlike other traders the Dutch set up fortified ports in the Indonesian archipelago to establish a monopoly on the trade in cloves and nutmeg (Owen 2005:xviii, 19, 123). In 1914, the Indonesian archipelago became a Dutch colony under the name the 'Netherlands Indies' (idem xviii). The colony was divided into residencies which were assigned both Dutch administrators and local administrators, or officers who reported to Dutch superiors (Cribb 2000:123-4; Owen 2005:123). Governmental officials and various travelers from the 16th century onwards have left behind a rich account of Lamaholot, as have the Christian missions in this area (see above).

The museum ethnologist Ernst Vatter (1932) was the first to compile an anthropological account of Lamaholot, after having being assigned to Flores and the Solor Archipelago to make a collection for the Ethnological Museum in Frankfurt. Vatter documents all of the

[11] 'Flores' is Portuguese for 'flower'; the island allegedly earned this name from the abundance of flowers in the northeastern cape, named 'Cabo de Flores' by the Portuguese (B.I. 'Tanjung Bunga') (Oele 1995:5; Vatter 1932:13).

Lamaholot-speaking areas except for the region west of Lewotobi in East Flores, which he was unable to reach due to heavy flooding (1932:154).

Extensive records of Lamaholot language and culture have been made by the SVD priest and anthropologist Paul Arndt. He compiled a grammar of Lamaholot language (1937), wrote about the ritual division of Lamaholot into the two hostile parties of 'Demon' and 'Padzi' (1938), and made a comparative study of Lamaholot social organization (1940) and traditional belief (1951) in East Flores, Solor, and Adonara. The only regions of the Lamaholot-speaking area that are not included in Arndt's studies are Lembata and the region west of Lewotobi in East Flores (cf. Vatter, above). Arndt has also produced accounts of the Sikka in eastern Flores (e.g. 1932, 1933a) and of Ngada of central Flores (e.g. 1933b, 1954), and has compiled a dictionary of the Lionese language of central Flores (1933c).

Two articles on Lamaholot were written by the Dutch colonial officer ('Controleur') Cornelis Ouwehand, when he was stationed in Larantuka, the capital of East Flores, in the mid-20th century. These articles look at landownership in East Flores (1950) and at agricultural co-operation on Adonara (1951), respectively. Ouwehand was later moved to Sumba, and eventually turned to the study of Japanese culture.

Between December 1949 and February 1950, the anthropologist Raymond Kennedy travelled across Flores on his tour around Indonesia, and his fieldnotes (edited by Harold Conklin) are the only available documentation of the Lamaholot in the region west of Lewotobi in East Flores. On the border between the Sikka regency and the East Flores regency (in the village of Boru) Kennedy was told that some of the Lamaholot communities in the area did not have patrilineal descent groups, but matrilineal groups (Kennedy 1955:256). Regrettably, Kennedy passed away before he could pursue this lead (R.H. Barnes 1977:135). More recent reports, however, appeared to substantiate the claims of matrilineality (or at least matriarchy; B.I. *matriarkat*) in this area (R.H. Barnes, pers. comm.; Kohl 1998:105;

Rappoport, pers. comm.) but no study was made of the communities in question. The only social study from this part of East Flores concerns the Sikkanese-speakers (Tana ‘Ai dialect) in the border village of Héwa (Lewis, pers. comm.).

Few foreign accounts were made of Lamaholot in the period 1952-76 (but see the M.J.H. Wertenbroek collection in the KITLV archive in Leiden, 1951-1954), but it is possible that local clergymen, scholars, and government officials have left behind documentation from this time, in which case the data might be stored in local parish archives and in the library of Ledaléro in the Sikka regency (although I have as yet not come across anything of particular significance).

The next major study of Lamaholot after Vatter and Arndt has been made by the anthropologist R.H. Barnes, who initially began his research among Kédang on Lembata (1974) but who has since been active in most of the Lamaholot-speaking areas (e.g. East Flores [1977]; Lembata [1995]; Solor [1996]; Adonara [2004]). The work by R.H. Barnes is some of the best-informed material, since it takes into account a number of early sources not yet available in English. R.H. Barnes has in addition translated a few texts on Lamaholot by foreign scholars into English; for instance, a study of murder ritual on Adonara by the Indonesian law Ph.D. Karolus Kopong Medan (2002).[12]

Two other anthropologists who have also contributed to the study of Lamaholot are Penelope Graham (e.g. 1991) and Karl-Heinz Kohl (e.g. 1998). Graham has focused on symbolism and social structure in the hamlets of Lewoléma, East Flores, with a particular emphasis on the local notion of ‘blood’. Kohl, meanwhile, has looked at religion and ritual in Bélogili, East Flores, highlighting the role of the Rice Maiden (*tonu wujo*). The anthropologist Nancy Lutz has completed studies of the relationship between language and ideology on Adonara (e.g. 1986, 1998).

[12] Several local students in NTT are (or have been) embarked on governmentally supported projects to document Lamaholot culture, but so far their results are only available in Indonesian.

In the last few decades there have also been many significant contributions to the study of Lamaholot by scholars from a range of different disciplines. One of them is Ruth Barnes (e.g. 1989), wife of R.H. Barnes, who has documented the *ikat* textile tradition of Lamalera, Lembata, and tried to link it to the wider network of trade in Indian *patola* textiles in Asia and Egypt. Ruth Barnes has also published a book on Ernst Vatter (2004). The historian Stefan Dietrich (e.g. 1989, 1997), on the other hand, has devoted his work to the town of Larantuka and to its particular dialect of Malay; Larantuka Malay is also the focus of the work of the Indonesian linguist F. Monteiro (e.g. 1975). Two other Indonesian linguists, Gregorius Keraf (1978) and I.Y. Fernandez (e.g. 1983-4), have recorded the Lamaholot dialect of Lamalera, Lembata (Keraf) and attempted to reconstruct the Flores proto-language from the historical relationship between current languages on Flores (Fernandez). The linguist Karl-Heinz Pampus has, in addition, published two dictionaries on the Lamaholot dialect of Lewoléma, East Flores (1999, 2001).

A Question of Boundaries

In the 1920s, the Dutch began a process of replacing the local rajadoms on Flores with administrative regencies (B.I. *kabupatén*); smaller rajadoms were merged into larger ones which were increasingly bureaucratized. This process was completed in 1962.[13] Lamaholot had six (or seven) local rajadoms since at least the 16th century (Lewis 1988b:7; van Dijk 1925:34, cited in Graham 1991:14; Hägerdal, pers.comm.). Five of these were located in the Solor Archipelago were jointly known as the 'five shores' (*watan léma*): Adonara, Terong, Lamahala, Lamakera, and Lohayong (Arndt 1938:45-9; R.H. Barnes 1972:94; Beckering 1911:172, cited in Graham 1991:8) and subscribed largely to Islam, mainly due to trade with

[13] The East Flores sub-district of Wulanggitang, in which this fieldwork was conducted, was established in 1963.

Javanese Muslims; Solor had also been claimed as a dependency by the Sultan of Ternate from at least the 16th century (R.H. Barnes 1977:219). The principality of Labala on Lembata, is sometimes also included among the 'five shores' (Hägerdal, pers. comm.).

In the 20th century, the Dutch partially consolidated some of the 'five shores' under the rajadom of Larantuka in present-day East Flores (van Dijk 1925-34:34, cited in R.H. Barnes 1972:94 and Graham 1991:14). The raja of Larantuka had come to gain importance due to contact and trade with the Portuguese (Lewis 1988b:7, 9). This rajadom was referred to as *kakan lewo pulo* since it was divided into ten (*pulo*) districts (*kakan*) (R.H. Barnes 1972:91; Graham 1991:8; Lewis 1988b:9; van Dijk 1925:34, cited in R.H. Barnes 1972:94 and Graham 1991:14). The *kakan* have been described as vassal states (Heynen 1876:79, cited in Graham 1991:8) and corresponded more or less to ten regions that were said to be the home of the segment of the Lamaholot population called Demon (Graham 1991:8); the other segment, Padji, lived in the Solor Archipelago.[14]

Demon and Padji are two mythical figures which are described as rival populations or rival brothers; this is a widespread theme in Indonesia (Arndt 1938:3, 10, 24). The myths of Demon and Padji carry political, religious, and mythical meaning and vary a great deal in detail. Arndt (1938:37-42) believes that there are indications that 'Demon' and 'Padji' might originate in Hindu belief, claiming that at least *Rigveda* speaks of an opposition between Hindus and a population called Parni (Pangi).[15] Among Lamaholot, the Padji element has been suggested to result from immigration of outsiders to the Solor archipelago (de Roever 2002).

The religious conversion in the rajadom of Larantuka prior to the European Christian missions was mainly the result of trade with Javanese Muslims (R.H. Barnes 1977:219).

[14] 'Padji' is Dutch spelling; in German the name is spelled 'Padzi' (cf. Arndt 1938).
[15] In some myths, Demon and Padji are associated with the brothers Igo and Énga (Arndt 1938:42-7), who also figure in myths outside of the Lamaholot-speaking area (see Chapter Two). One myth of Igo and Énga claims that the 'ten districts' of the rajadom of Larantuka were established by Igo who, allegedly, became raja a few generations after the first raja, Sira Demon (see Chapter Two) (cf. Arndt 1938:46).

The official boundary between the East Flores regency and the Sikka regency was drawn by the Dutch in 1904, but the boundary remained an issue for dispute between the raja of Larantuka and the Sikkanese raja (Graham 1991:14; Koloniaal Verslag van 1875 2:26-7; Lewis 1988b:13). The official boundary runs between the villages of Hokéng in East Flores and Hikong in the Sikka regency, roughly separating the Lamaholot-speaking population from the Sikkanese-speaking population. Both the raja of Larantuka and the Sikkanese raja laid claims to the land between the Dutch border and the coastal trading settlement of Gəliting east of Mauméré, the present-day capital of the Sikka regency. This area encompassed the Sikkanese region of Tana ‘Ai. There are some among the Lamaholot in the border area still hold that the population of Tana ‘Ai (Ata Tana ‘Ai) originally grouped together with Lamaholot and still use Lamaholot ritual language in ritual.[16] The common understanding among today’s Lamaholot in the border area is that Tana ‘Ai initially belonged to the raja of Larantuka but that the Sikkanese raja received this region as part of bridewealth sometime in the early-20th century; allegedly, it was this event that led the Dutch to move the ‘original’ border from Waiara (just outside Gəliting) to its current location between Hokéng and Hikong.

The official account of the historical events in question begins with the rising power of the rajadom of Sikka Natar, which had come to rule over the Sikkanese and large areas of Lio further west. This owed much to a sanctioned arrangement by the Dutch under the policy of ‘self-rule’ (*zelfbestuur*) (Lewis 1988b:13), but to dilute the growing power of Sikka Natar the Dutch soon recognized three subaltern rajadoms as well: Paga, Nita, and Kangae (ibid.; Arndt 1933a:107; Cribb 2000:98). The rajadom of Kangae included the area of Tana ‘Ai and was claimed both by the Sikkanese and the raja of Larantuka (see above) (ibid.). Kangae effectively served as a buffer between Tana ‘Ai and direct rule by the Sikkanese raja during the first quarter of the 20th century, but did not survive its first raja (Lewis 1988b:14). In the

[16] I have not yet been able to verify this claim. While I was invited to attend the ritual of *gren mahé* in Kringa in November 2010, I could unfortunately not attend due to a bout of malaria.

years 1900-2 a war raged between Kangae and Sikka Natar (Lewis and Pareira Mandalangi 2008:297), and in September 1902 the raja of Larantuka visited Kangae together with a large retinue to collect overdue taxes and receive proof of homage from some of the mountain villages (Koloniaal Verslag van 1903:103-4). The head of Kangae was forced to pay ten elephants' tusks to the raja of Larantuka and recognize him as his superior (Lewis and Pareira Mandalangi 2008:251; Verslag einer reis 1874). This is how Kangae (and thus Tana 'Ai) at least nominally became part of the rajadom of Larantuka, although only for a short while.

Sikka

The central Sikkanese (Ata Krowé/Iwand) and coastal Sikkanese (Sikka Natar) all have patrilineal descent groups and practice asymmetric marriage alliance between descent groups (Lewis 1988b:10; Nunheim 1982:39-40).[17] Most marriages are coupled with prestations (notably bridewealth) and counterprestations (Arndt 1933a:29-35; Lewis 1988b:10, 210-11; Nunheim 1982:39); only a few marriages (called *léma lepo*; 'to climb up into', 'enter, the house') do not require bridewealth, but on the other hand entail that both the husband and children are taken into the wife's group (Lewis 2010:147). It appears that bridewealth is a more recent introduction, dating to the instalment of the first rajas (see below) (idem 146-9).

According to the traveller ten Kate (1894:20), Sikka used to have three social classes: nobles, free men, and slaves, but Arndt (1933a:22-3, 89-90) could only confirm that of slaves and of a second, undifferentiated social class (Nunheim 1982:43). Lewis (1996:166-7) adds the *ratu* ('secular ruler; raja') and his kin, whom descended from more recent marriages between immigrant men and autochthonous women, thereby granting them power to rule (Lewis 2010:147).

[17] The Sikkanese settlement on the south coast is fairly recent, dating back to the establishment of mission stations and coconut plantations by the Church in the early 1900s and the subsequent establishment of schools (Sejarah Gereja Katolik 1974:1161, cited in Lewis 1988b:11). The plantation (and schools) required labour, which led some of the central Sikkanese and Ata Tana 'Ai to settle there (Lewis 1988b:11).

The patrilineal descent groups (*lepo*) of Sikka are the smallest normative, economical, and political units and are strictly exogamous (Nunheim 1982:38-9). Residence is patrilocal (now neolocal), but a man should live in the house of his parents-in-law for approximately one year after marriage (with bridewealth) (idem 39). Each *lepo* is headed by a *moang*, which is a general term meaning 'noble man' or 'elder' (idem 38).[18] In the past, the *lepo* were localized in the village and separated by walls, with a source house (*lepo rhamut*) at the centre of each village quarter (idem 39). The source houses are not lived in anymore (ibid.).

Spiritual, social, political, and legal authority lie with the Lord of the Land (or the Source of the Earth [Lewis 1996:171]), known as *tanapuang* (*tana*, 'land'; *puang*, 'source, origin') (Nunheim 1982:26, 35-6). He is also the guardian of morals, and is believed to have healing powers (idem 26). The *tanapuang* is the highest representative of the '*tanapuang*-ship', which is divided between the *tanapuang*, the *lepo*, and the 'council of seven', or the 'seven stones' (*watu pitu*), which consists of delegates from the *lepo* with most power and influence (idem 26, 41). The official representative of the *tanapuang* used to be a war leader and is responsible for maintaining order; the duties of the *tanapuang* are executed by an altogether different man (idem 36-7). These three positions are generally held by heads of *lepo* and normally inherited by a son (idem 26, 36-7).

Land is divided into several categories, such as fields, grasslands, and holy forest; the holy forest may only be entered by chosen families to make offerings (idem 31-2). The spirits of the dead are believed to live in caves (idem 32), unlike the belief among the Sikkanese close to the border with the East Flores regency; Ata Tana 'Ai.

Ata Tana 'Ai have matrilineal descent groups and after marriage a man stays with his wife and becomes part of her clan but not of her house ('lineage'), since houses are defined by shared maternal blood (Arndt 1933a:45; Lewis 1988b:10, 37, 188). Marriage records and

[18] According to Arndt (1933a:88), it was sometimes possible to appoint the office of head of *lepo* to the oldest woman in the *lepo* if no male relatives were available, but this woman would then always be represented by someone else (presumably a man).

genealogies show a small preference for marriages that follow a pattern of asymmetric alliance between houses of different clans, but this practice is not explicitly elaborated. While Ata Tana ‘Ai do not consider alliance to be insignificant, the act of marriage is more concerned with giving clan allies to a woman’s FZ and their daughters (Lewis 1988b:202, 223, 300-1, 345 n.2). Marriage here entails the movement of men between clans and features neither bridewealth (Arndt 1933a:35; Lewis 1988b:208, 210) nor groomwealth (cf. Spiro 1975:114), although Arndt (1933a:35) says that in many places an earring or a piece of garment can be given on this occasion.

Lewis (2010:145) points out that the central and coastal Sikkanese marriage option of *léma lepo*, without bridewealth, has the same results on the group affiliation of a couple’s offspring as marriage in Tana ‘Ai; that is, the children belong to the maternal group. Based on comparative analysis and statements by the Sikkanese themselves he suggests that the social systems of the central and coastal Sikkanese were in fact originally very much like that of Tana ‘Ai (idem 145-6). The reason why the social system eventually changed among the central and coastal Sikkanese, Lewis believes, is the arrival of elephant’s tusks in the area and the sovereignty of the ‘stranger-kings’ it symbolized, i.e. rajas, descending from a marriage between immigrant men and an autochthonous women (see above) (idem 145-9). (See also Chapters Three and Four, and Conclusion, on the meaning and function of tusks.)

Tana ‘Ai is currently divided into seven traditional ceremonial domains (*tana*) (see below), among which Tana Wai Brama is the largest and most important (Lewis 1988b:4-5, 32-4, 37). There are also a small number of more recent ceremonial domains (idem 32-6). A ceremonial domain is centred on a stone and wood altar (*mahé*) in the forest, where certain ceremonies that are central to the domain are performed (idem 95, 354).[19] Each domain is

[19] The *mahé* is also present among central and coastal Sikkanese; Arndt (1932:190-6) describes the *mahé* as an ‘outdoors’ sacrificial stone (as opposed to the sacrificial stone that is kept inside the house, or the sacrificial pole, *et cetera*). The number of stones in the *mahé* and the shape and spatial orientation of the stones vary between different areas (idem 190-6).

divided into garden land and forest land (idem 17, 23). Forest land is considered sacred space and is associated with the deity, *Nian Tana Lero Wulan*; it is also the home of the semidivine ancestral spirits (*guna déwa*) (cf. above) (idem 23, 258, 271).[20] Garden land is forest land which has been turned into domestic space with the sanction of these ancestral spirits (idem 23).

Each domain is headed by a Source of the Domain (*tana pu'an*) who, together with the ritual specialists of the domain (*ina ama*), is responsible for performing the rituals that link the land to the ancestors and thereby legitimize people's right to the land (idem 18). Because only men are believed to be able to control ritual they are vested with full ceremonial authority (idem 18-9). Political and economic authority lies in the control of the access to the land, which in turn lies in the hands of the houses (*lepo woga*) (idem 17-9). The term 'great house' (*lepo sopé* or *lepo gèté* [idem 171]) can denote a physical structure, but in Tana 'Ai the 'house' should primarily be understood as part of a localized segment of a clan (*sukun*) (idem 141, 171).[21] While clans are named and tend to be endogamous, the houses are unnamed and strictly exogamous (idem 188).

The Source of the Domain belongs to the source clan (*pu'an*), which is said to have founded the domain (idem 18). He is, however, not the head of the source clan (ibid.). Clans are headed by the oldest woman of the clan's source house, known as *ina ama* (idem 129). Clan segments are headed by a woman known as *du'a luka* and houses by a woman called *du'a luka* or *bi'an luka* (idem 18, 127). Political and economic authority, therefore, clearly lie in the hands of women (idem 17).[22]

[20] Among the Lamaholot in Lewoléma, *guna déwa* are seen as spirit agents or forms of agency which can be co-opted to support humans by summoning them and promising suitable rewards in return (Graham 1991:42, 97).
[21] Unlike houses in many other societies in Eastern Indonesia (for instance, Rindi on Sumba [Forth 1981:37]), the physical house in Tana 'Ai is not divided into male and female spheres (Lewis 1988b:158).
[22] Among the Tetum of Timor, Hicks (1976:56) says that "[i]n the home wives are definitely the masters", but in this context, the house is primarily seen as a sacred temple, and here the 'sacred' happens to be associated with the 'female' (idem 29, 56, 65).

As mentioned above, access to land is gained through membership in the houses, which is reckoned through female lines, going back to the woman who founded the house, called *ina puda*, 'ancestral mother', or 'founding/original mother' (idem 18, 210). [23] [24]

Households consist of single families who live in temporary houses in the gardens which are scattered throughout the communities (idem 11).[25] The term *mobo* refers both to the residential group and to its home and garden, and it is this garden-working group which is the basic economic unit in Tana 'Ai (idem 144).[26]

Lewis (1988b:33-6) list the following domains as ceremonial domains in Tana 'Ai: Tana Wai Brama, Tana Uru, Tana Darat, Tana Natar-rita (Natarleba), Tana Wérang, Tana Kringa (Tana Watuténa), Tana Ojang (Tana Muhang), Tana Warut-Watudirang, and Tana Boruk (Wodong-Kokang). All but the last two domains are also recognized as traditional domains; an additional traditional domain, Tana Tubau, has now become absorbed in Tana Wai Brama.)

We see from this list that Tana Darat and Tana Natar-rita are recognized as traditional domains even though they might not be independent ceremonial domains (idem 32-3). Tana Warut-Watudirang, the westernmost ceremonial domain, furthermore, is generally considered to be part of central Sikka rather than Tana 'Ai. Tana Boruk to the east, on the other hand, is located in the East Flores regency and corresponds more or less to the sub-district of Wulanggitang; only the village of Héwa (Lewis pers. comm.) and possibly also the neighbouring village of Ojang Detung (hamlet Kokang) in Wulanggitang consist of Sikkanese speakers (dialect of Tana 'Ai). According to Lewis (1988b:36) there is considerable evidence

[23] Since the marriage proscription in Tana 'Ai applies to people who are of "one blood and flesh" (Lewis 1988b:189), this seems to imply that blood is not the sole defining criterion of the house as a discrete group.
[24] Lewis (1988b:24) proposes that forest and garden should be interpreted as being opposed as sacred:profane, not as sacred:secular; this is because Tana 'Ai never had an indigenous raja and, therefore, did not develop a government, hence the 'profane' did not become associated with the 'secular and secular power did not become associated exclusively with men (idem 15).
[25] The scattered residential pattern in Tana 'Ai is said to be due to a practical concern with protecting the food resources from animal predation (idem 144).
[26] Things have now begun to change and it is predominantly in Tana Wai Brama (the most traditional of the domains, bordering on East Flores) that the traditional customs are still followed (Lewis 1988b:32-3, 37).

that the village of Boru in Wulanggitang used to participate in the ceremonial system of Tana ‘Ai (there is still a clan named Boruk in southern Tana ‘Ai), and many of the villages in Wulanggitang were claimed to be matrilineal in 1949 (Kennedy 1955:256): Unu, Palueh, Lewalalang, Sukutukang, Riangwulu, Kédang, Bawalatang, Duang, Tabana, and Watubuku. Today, these hamlets are officially known by their village names: Unu is hamlet Puka Uno (abandoned, now part of village Koba Soma); Palueh is hamlet Palué, village Nilék Nohéng; Lewalalang is hamlet Lewolalang (abandoned, now part of village Koba Soma); Sukutukang is hamlet Sukutukan, village Pulu Léra; Kédang is village Boru-Kédang; Duang is hamlet Duang, village Nawokoté; Watubuku is hamlet Watu Buku, village Wai Ula. It is possible that Riangwulu, Bawalatang, and Tabana are hamlets that are included in one of the above villages.[27]

Tana Ojang/Muhang is the northernmost ceremonial domain of Tana ‘Ai, stretching to the north coast and bordering on East Flores. Tana Ojang/Muhang consists mainly of Lamaholot-speakers and due to the close cultural relations with Lamaholot Lewis (1988b:36) believes that it might not officially belong to Tana ‘Ai. In fact, there appears to have been no Ata Tana ‘Ai on the north cost before 1923, when the first school was established in the village of Pruda for the children of Sikkanese workers on the coconut plantations who had come there in the 1900s (idem 11). Even so, Tana Ojang/Muhang is generally spoken of as part of Tana ‘Ai and is frequently included in its histories. The population in Tana Ojang/Muhang call themselves ‘Muhang’ and refer to their domain as Tana ‘Ai Muhang, or simply Tana Muhang. The only meaning of ‘Muhang’ that I have found is the central Sikkanese noun of *muhang*, or *nuhang*, ‘island’ (Pareira Mandalangi and Lewis 1998:142).[28] While the population of Tana Ojang/Muhang claim to be Lamaholot they do not consider themselves as part of the division

[27] The following villages are also located in, or adjacent to, Tana Boruk: Pador, Kuma Ébang (hamlet Riang), Riang Baring, Lewo Uran, and Lewo Awan. Further east we find the village of Lewotobi, which has already been documented to have patrilineal descent groups (e.g. Vatter 1932:149).

[28] *Muhang, nuhang*: “People from Énde [central Flores] who left home to make their way in life and islanders who passed by” (Pareira Mandalangi and Lewis 1998:142; cf. Echols and Shadily 1989:342, 350).

between Demon and Padji; the only name that they can put on their specific branch of Lamaholot is 'Muhang'. (Some of the Lamaholot-speakers in Tana Boruk also assert that they are neither Demon nor Padji, but say that they are also not Muhang. No name for this particular branch of Lamaholot could be given instead.)[29]

Tana Kringa also borders on East Flores, located south of Tana Ojang/Muhang. At least the villages of Hikong and Boganatar (with separate hamlet Kringa) appear to show certain cultural similarities with Tana Ojang/Muhang and Tana Boruk (see Chapter Three).[30] The cultural, linguistic, and historical relations between these domains have not yet been documented, nor has the relation between these domains and the rest of Tana 'Ai and Lamaholot. The current study seems to indicate that the three domains in question share a number of cultural traits that are neither common in Tana 'Ai nor among Lamaholot.

Fieldsite

The fieldwork for this study was carried out in the hamlet of Palué (village Nilék Nohéng) in East Flores. Nilék Nohéng is one of ten officially recognized villages in the Wulanggitang sub-district of East Flores. (Until the early 21st century, Wulanggitang also comprised the sub-districts of Titéhéna and Ilé Bura, now located east of Wulanggitang.) I will speak of the fieldsite as 'Palué' since official village names were often given (or imposed) by bureaucrats in the 1960s as a means to suppress old fashioned particularisms.

[29] Lewis (1988b:36) lists the following villages in Tana Ojang/Muhang, but does not specify if he believes all of them to have a Lamaholot-speaking population: Wailamun-Hinga, Lemomada-Blolo, Lewomadalere, Bokang, Klatang, Kajowaing, and Lewomudat. From the accounts of Kakak Léwar (see below), the villages populated by Muhang in Tana Ojang/Muhang seem to be Timu Tawa (hamlets [Eko] Bubuk, Eko [Riang], Dungan), Ojang, and Lewo Mada (hamlets Bokang, Hénga, Tana Déwa, Muda Jebak). The villages Tana Baé and Wai Lamung (including separate hamlet Kabal) may not consist of Lamaholot-speakers. Matias Léwar (see below), on the other hand, lists the following hamlets as being part of the Muhang territory: Ojang, Bokang, Tanabae, Eko, Dunga, and Kringa in the present-day Sikka regency; Lewolalang, village Boru Kédang (hamlets Baowolor, Bolawolor, Gengar, Daraloeng), Boru Klobong, Palué (village Nilék Nohéng) in the East Flores regency; and a number of additional hamlets. Note that the Lamaholot in Palué, Boru Klobong (Boru?), Boru-Kédang, and Lewolalang are all defined as being Muhang. The hamlet of Eko mentioned is presumably [Eko] Bubuk, which used to be known as "Eko" only; this hamlet is older than the hamlet of Eko [Riang], which is the hamlet nowadays referred to as "Eko".

[30] The other villages in Tana Kringa are Nebé, Natargahar, Natarmudé, Watuténa, Wairmitak, Blawuk, I'an 'Lo'en, Buhé, Bangko'or, Ogolidi, and Napunmalin (Lewis 1988b:35).

Palué is situated close to the summit of Ilé Wulanggitang, approximately 1,000m above sea level (o.s. 7). The hamlet was granted official village status in 1978 after a road had been built to the neighbouring hamlet of Sukutukan (village Pulu Léra). The roadwork was carried out entirely by the inhabitants in Palué, to avoid forced displacement as a consequence of new regency policies (see Chapter Two).

Sukutukan lies close to the road between Larantuka and Mauméré, the regency capitals of East Flores and Sikka.[31] On the other side of the road lies the parish capital of Hokéng, which was built up entirely around the mission. Hokéng still has an active sisters' convent, which runs a mixed-sex lower secondary school (SMP). Local priests also run a recognized boy's seminary. The capital of the sub-district, Boru, is located approximately 1km west of Hokéng, close to the border with the Sikka regency. The adjacent village, Boru-Kédang, was the second candidate for this fieldwork as a number of people in Boru told me that both Palué and Boru-Kédang recognized "mother right" (B.I. *hak ibu*).[32] I paid a visit to both villages and eventually chose to do my fieldwork in Palué, partly due to personal preference, partly to the information that surfaced during my initial visits to the village.

Palué currently has 116 houses and in 2008 the total population was estimated at 533 individuals, although only 485 people were living in the village at the time (*Renstra Pastoral Stasi Plue 2008-2010,* 2008:5).[33] [34] Palué is surrounded by several springs and there is a river within an hour's walking distance. Owing to a national project that was carried out in the

[31] Both towns lie at a distance of approximately 40-50km from Sukutukan.
[32] The name 'Kédang' indicates a gathering, or a coming-together, of hamlets (this seems to be the hamlets of Baowolor, Bolawolor, Gengar, Daraloeng). There does not seem to be any connection between Boru-Kédang and the Kédang of Lembata, although both Boru-Kédang and Boru have seen a great deal of immigration from Lembata lately.
[33] The population data falls within the lower range of what has been reported for other Lamaholot hamlets and villages (R.H. Barnes 1996:92; Graham 1991:18).
[34] Thirteen boys and girls were enrolled in lower secondary schools elsewhere in eastern Flores (most of them in Hokéng), 7 in upper secondary schools (most of them in Mauméré), and 3 at universities in Flores, Timor, and Java (*Renstra Pastoral Stasi Plue 2008-2010*, 2008:5). Ten men were travelling or working outside the village; Papua, Kalimantan (Borneo), and Malaysia are popular work destinations. Fifteen women were also travelling or working outside the village; many young women are recruited to work as housemaids in Malaysia or Singapore, or in Hong Kong if they have good work record and at least some knowledge of English.

1980s the village now receives water from a spring in Tana Ojang/Muhang through a system of pipes. This water is collected in a central tank and distributed to a number of smaller tanks and public taps that are spread over six wards, or mutual assistance associations (B.I. *rukun tetangga* [RT]). Private water taps inside the homes are on the agenda of the local village administration, and a new national project is currently dealing with the issue of drainage.

In 2008-9, Palué acquired a power station that provides more than half of the houses with electricity during c.2 hours every evening, but breakdowns are common and the equipment is often too expensive to repair or replace. Some households have private generators that can run for about one hour on ½ litre of gasoline, which is enough to charge a mobile phone or to watch a show on TV. (Most of the young adults now have a mobile phone, but the reception is still limited to certain spots in and around the village; at least two households have a TV.) The plan is to give all houses public electricity, and to set up lampposts along all of the walkways; two lampposts have already been put up on trial.

Palué consists of an upper level and a lower level due to the fall of the land; the upper level is the oldest. The road from Sukutukan enters the village through the lower level and a gateway that used to mark the entrance to the village was taken down during the public roadwork of 2009. There were plans to rebuild the gate in 2011, provided that enough funds could be raised.[35]

The first clan that settled in Palué is said to be its origin clan, or source clan; this is clan Danga (see Chapter Three). The head of the source clan is known as the Lord of the Land (*tana alat(eng)*), who holds traditional rights to govern the land even though he does not own it. All ritual that concern the land must be sanctioned by the Lord of the Land, who sometimes also performs or at least participates in the ritual himself. Today, the duties of the Lord of the Land are mainly ritual, but in the past they were also of a socio-political nature (cf. Arndt

[35] I was never told whether or not the upper level had an entrance gate before the lower level was built.

1940:155, 1951:141; Vatter 1932:104). The position of Lord of the Land alternates between the two clan segments Danga Latuk and Danga Dotong, although it is sometimes possible to pass on the office to a son.

When the administrative office of head of village (B.I. *kepala désa*) was established in Palué in the mid-20th century it was held by the Lord of the Land or by another member of clan Danga; this position also alternated between the two clan segments. The current Lord of the Land (Martén Danga Latuk) was the last head of village to belong to the source clan; in the elections of 2008, the office was appointed to Kakak Léwar (although for four years rather than the usual five or six). The successful appointment of a head of village who does not belong to the origin clan is seen as a significant step towards greater democratization. (The Lord of the Land and his predecessor were, nonetheless, required to ritually give their permission to Kakak Léwar to enter the elections and to accept the office when appointed.) One of Kakak Léwar's rivaling candidates in the elections, however (the school headmaster, belonging to clan Danga), has now started an (at times violent) feud with Kakak Léwar. In the past, the head of village usually had a special assistant to help him fulfill his duties, although additional assistance could be offered by anyone who wished to help. Allegedly, village disputes were often settled with the fists rather than through discussion. Today, the village administration follows a national pattern, where at least a secretary and a herald are appointed to assist the head of village. Each of the mutual assistance wards also has a separate head that answers directly to the head of village.

The agenda of the local administration focuses mainly on local issues and development, but it is also connected with projects on the level of the sub-district, regency, and province, as well as with some projects on a national level. Official meetings are accommodated in the village office or in the house of the head of village, and it is the responsibility of the wife of the head of village to organize the provision of refreshments or meals for the participants. She

also manages the village finances for purchasing food and material necessities for the inhabitants. The degree of influence held by the wife of the head of village in the past is unclear.

Methodology

The fieldwork for this study has relied primarily on participant observation. Unstructured interviews were eventually also given prominence, as they proved to emerge easily from everyday conversation; structured interviews were less informative and were often experienced as being restricting by the interviewees.

Part of the fieldwork consisted in collecting local relationship terminologies and in consulting birth and marriage records in the parish archives. As no extensive genealogies surfaced, it might be the case that genealogies are not considered to be central at my fieldsite, but whether or not this has always been the case I do not know (cf. R.H. Barnes 1996:61, on Lamalera, Lembata).

Photography and video/audio recordings were much encouraged by my informants, and much of the digital data have in fact been recorded by the informants themselves. These data range from simple family settings to village meetings and garden ritual.

All work has been conducted in the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, and in the local dialect of Lamaholot, as none of my informants speaks English. The language used for discussing particular topics with bilingual informants depended on my level of knowledge of the two languages, Bahasa Indonesia being the stronger. However, when Indonesian terms are given in this text it is sometimes also because these were the expressions that I more commonly heard my informants use.

I had originally planned to stay two years in the field, but due to recurrent episodes of malaria I was only able spend a total of 14 months on Flores. The last few months I was forced to make my homebase at the sisters' convent in Hokéng in order to be able to conclude the study. During this time I tried to visit Palué nearly every day, and even when in hospital I remained in daily contact with my informants through telephone calls and text messages.

In addition to fieldwork, I have consulted printed material and online material from libraries in Oxford, Jakarta, and Ledaléro, Flores. This material ranges from Portuguese and Dutch records, to anthropological studies written mainly in German, English, and French. The local records are written in Indonesian, Lamaholot, and Sikkanese, and for the reading of the materials in the latter two languages I have received assistance with translation.

Informants

Due to a request for anonymity by some of my informants I have decided to replace all actual names with fictional names, except for the clan names. The name 'Viktoria Wato', for instance, retains the clan name, 'Wato', but replaces the given name with the fictional name 'Viktoria'. Some of the fictional names that I use are Indonesian relationship terms: *adé* ('younger sibling'), *bapa* ('father'), *ibu* ('mother'), *kakak* ('elder sibling'), *néné* ('grandparent'), and *ohm* ('uncle').

Only Néné Paji will be referred to by his actual name, 'Paji', which is neither his clan name nor his Christian given name but his traditional 'family' or 'village' name (see Chapter Four).[36] Any attempt to conceal the true identity of Néné Paji would be in vain since he has earned a reputation throughout the East Flores regency for his exceptional knowledge of

[36] Whether or not the name 'Paji' is related to the name of the segment of the Lamaholot population called 'Padji', or 'Padzi', is unknown. Some of the older informants in Palué claim that the segments 'Demon' and 'Padji' are locally known as 'Demong' and 'Pagong'. However, according to Arndt (1938:3), in the myths where Demon and Padji are known as 'Pati' and 'Beda', Paji sometimes receive the epithet 'Beda', whereas Demon receives that of 'Pagong'. The Muhang Matias Léwar (see below) once spoke of 'Demon-Pagong' as the entire population of East Flores (i.e. Demon) and of 'Demon-Padji' as the population of the Solor Archipelago (i.e. Padji).

history and ritual, in particular in relation to boundaries and landownership, and he has on several occasions been consulted by the local administrations in the sub-district and the regency to settle disputes over land. Néné Paji was one of my closest informants.

Two other very close informants were the head of village and his wife, Kakak Léwar and Ibu Danga, in whose house I stayed. Kakak Léwar insisted that I stay in their house for the extent of my fieldwork, partly for my own safety, as the feud between Kakak Léwar and the school headmaster was at times expressed in hostility and violence. It was much owing to these circumstances that I had the opportunity to visit Tana Ojang/Muhang, since Kakak Léwar proved to be a Muhang Lamaholot, born in Tana Ojang/Muhang. I learnt that Palué has very close cultural and social ties with several Muhang hamlets across the administrative border and that there are currently a number of Muhang living in Palué. With the help of Kakak Léwar I was also able to visit three hamlets in Tana Kringa, on the Sikkanese side of the border.

Valuable information was also provided by many of the older men and women in Palué, and a few of the accounts of members of the younger generations have also been useful.

Unfortunately, the feud between Kakak Léwar and the school headmaster made it difficult for me to gain access to all households in Palué. I was advised not to walk around the village on my own, and was often accompanied by a relative of my host family when I left the house. These circumstances have most likely affected the sample of information so far obtained from Palué, and might have resulted in a partial view on, for instance, the feud between Kakak Léwar and the school headmaster. One concrete example of this is my persistent asking if someone would accompany me to visit Néné Danga, who is allegedly the oldest person living in Palué. Her house lies next to that of the head of village, but as she only speaks an older form of Lamaholot I needed an interpreter, but no-one would agree to assist me with an in-depth interview. As a consequence, I only have a few short accounts from Néné Danga.

Conversely, her BS Martén Danga, who currently serves as the Lord of the Land, helped me to compile two histories of the source clan Danga, with the assistance of several of the older men from clan Danga (see Chapter Two).

One Muhang version of the myth of the Rice Maiden was kindly recounted to me by Matias Léwar, a Muhang uncle of the head of village currently living near the village of Wairuno in East Flores (see Chapter One).

Photo 3. Sharing *wua malu* during a garden ritual in Palué.

Photo 4. Feeding the ancestors during a garden ritual in Palué.

Chapter One: Divinity and Ancestors

CHAPTER ONE

Divinity and Ancestors

This chapter examines the traditional belief and how it is expressed in practice. The discussion of ritual and magic is primarily concerned with how such knowledge is acquired and how it can be passed down. The arrival of Catholicism and Islam in this area is only touched upon in relation to the repercussions that they have had on some of the spheres of the traditional belief and practice.

Divinity

Lamaholot share a belief in a Divinity called *Léra Wulan Tana Ékan* (e.g. Arndt 1951:98, 151, 156, 166 etc.; R.H. Barnes 1996:158-159; Vatter 1932:89-91).[37] The Divinity consists of a pair of complementary opposites, which is a recurrent feature in many parts of Eastern Indonesia. *Léra Wulan*, 'sun moon', is the male element associated with the heavens or the upper world; *Tana Ékan*, 'soil earth', is the female element associated with the earth or the lower world (see also R.H. Barnes 1996:161 and Fox 1989:44-7, on recursive complementarity).[38] Usually, only *Léra Wulan* is used to refer to the Divinity as a whole in daily speech. The precedence of *Léra Wulan* in the name of the Divinity implies that the male element and the heavens or upper world are considered by Lamaholot to take precedence over

[37] I use the term 'Divinity' since my informants' concept God or a higher being can refer either to *Léra Wulan Tana Ékan* or to the Christian God, or both. Among the Muslim fraction of the Lamaholot population, *Léra Wulan* can be perceived of as either Allah or the traditional higher deity, or both.

[38] In Tana 'Ai, the deity is called *Nian Tana Lero Wulan* (Lewis 1988b:354), which is identical to *Léra Wulan Tana Ékan* except for the fact that the two main opposites have changed sides. This might imply a greater emphasis on land in the cosmology of Tana 'Ai, which could be evidenced by the presence – and centrality – of the ceremonial domains in Tana 'Ai.

the female element and the earth or the lower world. This uneven relation between 'male' and 'female' is central to many aspects of the current social organization in Palué.

The belief in *Léra Wulan* takes a number of forms across the Lamaholot-speaking area.[39] In Palué, men and women can call upon the Divinity for help or blessings, usually if they want to increase the yield from the garden or correct a younger relative who has not shown them proper respect. (Just as 'male' takes precedence over 'female', higher age takes precedence over youth among Lamaholot.) Personal pleas do not follow a particular pattern of articulation.

After the introduction of Catholicism in this area at the turn of the last century, informants now say that the pleas to *Léra Wulan* have decreased in frequency: *Léra Wulan* has become equated with the Christian God (B.I. *Tuhan Allah*) and prayers to God should not have material ambitions. (The Catholic mission will be discussed in Chapter Two.) Today, belief in the Divinity is centred on the church and on the village where the church building stands. Everyone, save two Protestant women who have married into Palué, now subscribes to Roman-Catholicism.[40] [41]

Priests and laymen alike are, nevertheless, largely agreed upon that traditional belief (B.I. *adat*) and "religion" (B.I. *agama*) are not contradictory. In fact, Church rites, such as first communion (*sambo'*), and Church celebrations, such as Easter (B.I. *Paskah*), can entail elements that are derived from traditional belief and practice.[42] [43] On some occasions,

[39] One account, for instance, has it that *Léra Wulan* appears at birth and asks at what age and in which manner the newborn wants to die (Arndt 1951:33). My informants had not heard of this particular practice, and held that a person's age at death depends on external factors, such as accidents. Everyone is, nonetheless, believed to have a destiny that is known only to God (here: the Christian God).

[40] Two Muslim women who have married into Palué have converted to Catholicism in accordance with the Indonesian marital law that states that any couple that wishes to marry should have the same religion (o.s. 11).

[41] Catholicism is the predominant religion in this area, as is frequently the case in the highlands of Flores. Since this research mainly concerns the highlands I have chosen to focus my initial study on the social conditions among Christian Lamaholot in particular. That is not to say that no benefit could come out of a comparative study with Muslim Lamaholot; on the contrary, but such a study would require more time and space than is currently available.

[42] First communion, for instance, is preceded and followed by reciprocal gift-giving between wife-givers and wife-takers and a communal meal and/or feast (see Chapter Five). The food gifts must be guarded by *ina puken*

however, a few informants have said that certain aspects of traditional belief and practice are, technically speaking, in contradiction with the Catholic faith; for example, the performance of ritual and the belief in spirits (*nitung*). At the same time, these informants also maintain that experience has shown them that traditional belief cannot simply be ignored, lest there be negative consequences. Traditional belief is, therefore, upheld alongside Catholicism, even though there used to be many more rules, or codes of conduct, that needed to be followed in order that nothing 'bad', negative, or unfortunate happened.[44] Nowadays it is largely the rules in relation to ritual that are still observed, and many elders hold that the young generations live "too hurried lives" to pay attention to "the proper way of doing things".[45]

'Earthly divine'

In Chapter Four we will discuss the kin status of *opu laké*, which among some Lamaholot is considered to be akin to an 'earthly divine' (cf. Graham 1991:193) or a god on earth. *Opu laké* are wife-givers from a person's progenitor line (MB line), and the term often refers more specifically to the MB, in particular the genealogical MB. By virtue of belonging to the progenitor line, *opu laké* have bestowed a Z on another man in marriage and thereby made the life of their ZC possible. *Opu laké*, therefore, hold the soul of their ZC in their hands and have the power to both cure and curse their ZC, in the same way that the Divinity holds the fate of all people in its hands. Unlike the Divinity, however, each person has a unique set of *opu laké* owing to different constellations of marriage in the local system of marriage alliance

(see below) until the end of the festivities. At Easter, on the other hand, a candle can be lit for the ancestors by the front door of a house, in addition to the candles that are put on the graves of close kin and friends at the public cemetery. Special 'prayers' are also aimed for the ancestors, or "those who are no more" (see below).

[43] This opinion contradicts Graham's (1991:20) report from Lewoléma, in which elders are said to avoid discussing local tradition as 'religion', due to the (negative) political implications of doing so.

[44] Catholicism appears to have been more tolerant of ritual practice in Indonesia than have Protestantism and Islam (Hägerdal, pers. comm.).

[45] One rule that is still observed concerns putting rice into the barn during the garden ritual of *oru soga(ng)* (see Chapter Two). The rice must first be filled in a small basket (*bako*) before it can be transferred into a larger basket (*blekang*) and put inside the barn. This is because a poor yield will not fill the larger basket, but will at least fill the smaller basket; half-full baskets may not be put inside the barn.

(asymmetric marriage alliance; cf. Chapters Three and Four).The importance of *opu laké* can be seen in the epithet *laké*, 'male', which is to the basic term *opu*, itself used to denote relations of wife-giving and wife-taking: while wife-givers from the progenitor line are known as *opu laké* (male *opu*), all wife-takers are known jointly as *opu biné* (female *opu*), indicating their inferior status in the marriage relation.

The Rice Maiden

The Rice Maiden (*tono wujo*) is an integral aspect of Lamaholot belief (cf. Kohl 1998; Vatter 1932:106) but also appears in other cultural contexts in this region (e.g. Fobia [1984]). Elsewhere in the Lamaholot-speaking area, one or more women can personify the Rice Maiden in certain garden rituals, but it is not clear to me whether or not this practice ever existed in Palué; today the belief is not expressed in this way here.

The myth of the Rice Maiden is at the same time a myth of the origins of the cultivation of rice and maize. The following version of the myth was recounted to me by a Muhang Lamaholot named Matias Léwar; I have chosen to render it here in full, partly due to the importance that the belief holds among my informants, and partly as an illustration of the close association between land and human beings, and therefore also between the agricultural lifecycle and the human lifecycle:[46]

> The history of the origins of rice and maize begins in the hamlet of Lewolalang, or Lewolalat, as it is also called. At this location, a man from clan Léwar emerged from the earth. He is remembered under the name of Soroau, or Muhang. This spot later became the centre of the Muhang territory, and this is where the clan wealth of clan Léwar used to be stored in the ritual house.

[46] The myth exists in several versions and is not confined to Lamaholot only. While the details may vary, the central theme remains the same.

At the beginning, the descendants of Soroau led a nomadic lifestyle, seeking out places that were rich in fruits, tubers, and leaves; they did not yet know of rice and maize. All the foods were eaten raw, as they also did not know how to make fire.

Once upon a time, a very poor family stayed at the location where Soroau had appeared. The husband was named Lango Layu and his wife Osé Inang; they both belonged to clan Léwar. The couple had eight children; seven boys and one girl. The sons were named Subang, Sina, Lado, Jaga, Bala, Wato, and Burak; the daughter was named Bési.

When all the food had run out near their dwelling, the living conditions became even harsher for the poor family. One day, however, a group of men from clan Sogé arrived, led by a strong and sturdy man called Koko Sogé. They said that they came from Éndé-Lio in central Flores, and that they were handing out seeds of rice and maize made from human flesh, to feed the starving people on Flores. The flesh came from a woman in Éndé-Lio named Nogo Gunung əma Hingi, who had sacrificed herself for this purpose.

Unfortunately, there was only one seed left when clan Sogé reached Lango Layu and Osé Inang, and so the poor family could not get a share. Koko Sogé and his followers then suggested that their daughter, Bési, should be sacrificed to create new seeds. This led to a long discussion, in which both parties tried to defend their views. In the end, Bési volunteered to sacrifice herself so that her parents and her brothers and their families could live.

As a sign of appreciation, Bési's family gave her a fine set of clothes and ornaments, but the brothers were not slow to prepare a stone and a knife to slay her. Yet, when the members of clan Sogé said that they would only hold the girl on the stone, while one of her brothers killed Bési, the brothers were dumbstruck. They had not

expected this, and while they had admittedly looked forward to being able to eat they loved their sister very much. But Bési, too, requested that it must be one of her own brothers who took her life. And so the seven brothers were asked, one at time, which of them would hold the knife, but none could bear to slay his own sister. Instead, they turned to wailing and crying because of the burden that had been put on their shoulders.

Finally the youngest brother, Burak, changed his mind. He was a quiet and polite boy, but a strange look came into his eyes when he took the knife and cut the head off Bési. Once Bési was dead, Koko Sogé ordered the seven brothers to cut her body into small pieces, after which Koko Sogé mixed Bési's flesh with the seed from the flesh of Nogo Gunung əma Hingi.

With the new supply of seeds, Koko Sogé and his followers could continue to hand out food for the people on Flores. Within a week of planting, these seeds would yield rice, maize, sorghum, and many other kinds of food.

The spot where Bési was killed became known as Lewo Bélo Bési; this is the origin of the settlement of Lewolalat Soroau, or Lewolalang.

The Muhang Lamaholot express Bési's fate as follows:

Bélo Bési dola paré
Bélo tali dola pota
Bélo téti wato tonu
Dola raé kukun bala
Eking sésa ina ama
Dawin data kakan ari
Sikat lali tana tonu
Taruk lali eka wuji
Pésok riin mata géta
Heba anaan tueng golé

Killing Bési, slaughtering the rice
slaughtering [her] to add seeds
killing [her] atop a sacrificial stone
This slaughter was a strong sacrifice
providing shares to every family
handed out by fellow brothers
planted on fertile land
scattered in (wet) places
giving yield from every seed
multiplying from each sprout

In her dreams, Bési's mother, Osé Inang, could see Bési and hear her talk about how rich the yield had become ever since she had sacrificed her body. From this moment on, Bési should be greeted as Bési Paré əma Hingi. 'Bési', because her given name should come first; 'Paré' (=rice), because her body had transformed into rice (she had become the Rice Maiden, or the Rice Goddess); 'əma Hingi', because it was part of the name Tono Wuyo Nogo Gunung, or Nogo Gunung əma Hingi, who was the first woman to sacrifice her body to become rice. As a tribute to this woman, Bési added part of the name to her own name.

Bési Paré əma Hingi continued to appear in the dreams of her parents and her brothers. She taught them how to manage the gardens and how to perform garden ritual; she also taught them how to build barns in which to store the rice from the gardens. These barns were named *ori tobi soro sina*, 'strong Chinese barn', and *kebang bao aran jawa*, 'large Larantuka barn'; they became the 'mother' barns, or origin barns. The barns were communally owned at this time, and the seeds which were stored in them could only be retrieved through a special ritual when it was time for planting.

The myth of the origins of the cultivation of rice and maize clearly illustrates the conceptual link between humans and agriculture among Lamaholot, and this link is concretely elaborated in various ritual and linguistic parallels between the human lifecycle and the agricultural cycle (cf. Arndt 1933:58; Fox 1971; Fox 1988:331; Graham 1991:135; Onvlee 1973:58; Zerner and Volkman 1988:294-5, 324 n.9) (see also Chapters Two, Four, and Five).

Ancestors

Ancestors are referred to as *ata maté*; 'dead people'. Informants say that all men and women become ancestors upon death, even if they do not have any offspring (they are still the kin of the descendants of other relatives). In other parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area, the souls of the dead are known as *kewoko(t)* (e.g. Arndt 1951:55, 178-9; R.H. Barnes 1996:129; Graham 1991:40; Vatter 1932:88, 131). In Palué, however, *kewoko(t)* is part of the denomination for evil spirits: *nitung kewoko(t)* (see below). Palué nonetheless shares an association between the (souls of the) dead and the sea with other parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area, where *kewoko(t)* are said to live in the sea, sometimes in the shape of fish (or else the sea is the border-land to the realm of the dead) (e.g. Arndt 1951:173, 199; Vatter 1932:55).[47] For this reason, 'the sea' is considered a 'bad' direction. Like many other societies in Indonesia, Lamaholot do not have a system of fixed cardinal points, such as 'north' and 'east', in the local understanding of spatial orientation; Kédang is another good example (cf. R.H. Barnes 1974:78-88, 1966:163-6; Kohl 1996:137). Instead, Lamaholot acknowledge certain cardinal points which are relative to one another and to the observer. In Palué, the cardinal points *lali lau(t)*, '(down) towards the sea', and *éti raé ilé*, '(up) towards the mountain', are the most important directions. (Here, the sea more or less coincides with E-NE and the summit of the

[47] In Lewoléma, *kewoko(t)* also refers to the land of the dead proper (Graham 1991:40).

mountain with W-SW.) The short forms *lau(t)*, 'the sea', and *éti*, 'up', are more commonly used in Palué.

A continued interaction between the living and the dead is essential for the continuation of life among the living (see also Graham 1991:259-60; Lewis 1988b:290, 295). Ancestors are attributed semi-divine powers, and it is possible to direct personal pleas to the ancestors to seek help and blessings. While it is likely that the semi-divine powers of the ancestors originate in the Divinity (cf. Lewis 1988b:271) the relation between the ancestors and the Divinity was not made explicit to me, and the reason behind the semi-divine powers of the ancestors was never explained.[48] Informants hold that people nowadays prefer to turn to the ancestors for concrete aid, following the equation of *Léra Wulan* with the Christian God. Pleas to the ancestors should use the term of address *əma ba ata maté mitabolak*, 'mother and father and dead people (ancestors) and those who are no more', to show them proper respect. (Ancestors take precedence over the living due to their age.) If the ancestors are not treated with respect, they can cast misfortune, illness, or even death upon those who have angered them (or upon their descendants). For this reason the ancestors are not solely seen as offering assistance and protection, but they are also feared.[49]

Since the sex and personal identity of the ancestors appear to be of minor importance outside of ritual contexts (cf. Lewis 1988b:258) the pleas to the ancestors are often not aimed at certain individuals. Some garden rituals, however, do address individual ancestors, such as the dead parents.

[48] R.H. Barnes (1996:161) has remarked that evidence from both daily life and ritual practice confirms that Lamaholot-speakers assimilate the living elders to the ancestors, and the ancestors to divinity. In Tana 'Ai, the ancestors must pass through a number of stages marked by rituals performed by their house and clan before they can become semi-divine *guna déwa*; in return for the rituals, the ancestors will serve as conduits of the powers of the deity, to secure the health and the well-being of the community and the fertility of the gardens (Lewis 1988b:258).

[49] One informant shrugged and sighed: "How do you defend yourself against someone who is not flesh and blood?"

Ritual is a more rigid way of addressing the ancestors and the Divinity, and entails food offerings (see below). Today, only the ancestors are offered food in ritual, but it would logically follow that in the past the Divinity was offered food as well (cf. headhunting, below). During ritual, the ancestors must be offered food before anyone else is allowed to eat, out of respect for their high age.[50] Failure to feed the ancestors will have negative repercussions on the living. Sometimes, an angry ancestor will appear in the dreams of a descendant saying that they are hungry; if so, a ritual is promptly performed to feed the ancestors. If, on the other hand, the ancestors appear in dreams and say that they are cold, a *doko* (traditional rain cover sawn together from long leaves) is put up in the garden during ritual, so as to symbolize a barn where the ancestors can seek shelter. Ordinary people cannot see the ancestors other than in dreams, but some ritual specialists are said to be able to see the ancestors in real life at, for instance, ritual.[51] [52]

Food for the newly dead is put on their graves for a few days following burial (sometimes even weeks).[53] Alternatively, the household of the deceased can set aside a plate for the newly dead every time they eat in the house. If the newly dead are not offered food, they are said to cause a loud racket at home (see also Chapter Five). It is said that the newly dead must be fed separately for a short while because their souls have not yet entered the land

[50] Some elders still sprinkle a bit of drink or food onto the floor to the ancestors every time they eat, to show their respect (*bau lolon* [Pampus 2001:16, 87]).
[51] In Palué, only Néné Paji has the ability to see the ancestors in real life. He claims to have met a spirit in the forest once, and that this spirit 'opened his eyes' (literally "removed his eyelids") so that he could see the world as it really is. The same spirit helped him to make a fortune, which he then invested in the welfare of his children.
[52] Graham (1991:258) says that the ancestors who reside in *kewoko(t)* are still present among the living but invisible to their senses; places like *kewoko(t)* are not so much spatially removed as they are perceptually distant.
[53] I have seen candlenut and betel nut (*wua malu*; see below) still being put on graves years after burial; one grave also had an old toothbrush on it.

of the dead (perhaps they have not yet have become ancestors that can be fed through ritual) (see Chapter Five).[54]

Snakes

Ancestors and spirits sometimes manifest themselves as snakes: very large snakes are always ancestors or spirits; smaller snakes might just be ordinary snakes.[55] The largest snakes are not always easy to spot, as they coil up to resemble tree trunks or large boulders in the forest. Some people who have seen snakes that are ancestors will later dream of the ancestors in human form, often as an old man or, less frequently, as an old woman.

When people encounter large snakes they should immediately perform a ritual or present a small (food) offering, in case it is an ancestor. If they do not have an appropriate gift, they can return later with a ritual specialist who will perform the ritual. Ritual specialists always carry with them small items for performing ritual, in case they encounter a snake that is an ancestor. Since the ritual specialists address the ancestors aloud when the ancestors are in the shape of snakes this gives a general impression that ritual specialists are able to talk to snakes.

Large snakes that are ancestors sometimes block springs and water cisterns to attract the attention of the living. They do this if they have not been fed for a long time, to show that they are hungry. No-one explained to me if the snakes that are found near water courses are also the guardians of the water, but during the project of drawing pipes to Palué from a new spring in the forest in the 1980s people say that several snakes watched over the work. In effect, small snakes that are sometimes coiled up on top of rice baskets in the barns are

[54] This concords with the belief in other Lamaholot-speaking areas, where the soul is said to linger in the village for four days before it enters the land of the dead, and that it will only remain in the land of the dead after eight days (Arndt 1951:37; Graham 1991:247, 254).

[55] Arndt (1951:69) says that snakes are the embodiment of the Rice Maiden, *kewoko(t)*, *nitung*, and of other spiritual or (semi-)divine beings.

explicitly said to be ancestors who guard the yield, whereas small snakes that rest on top of clan treasures (*sobok*) (see below) are said to be ancestors guarding these treasures. Given that water, garden yield, and clan treasures are all central to Lamaholot life and livelihood, as they are associated with benign and life-giving qualities, it would not be totally improbable to think that snakes that are ancestors can guard water as well.

Snakes that are ancestors may not be killed, but rather motioned away gently; they are, nonetheless, bound to return soon. Snakes that are ancestors do not harm people if people do not harm them.

Ritual

Unlike personal pleas to the ancestors and the Divinity, ritual is a structured manner in which to address the Divinity and the ancestors and entails food offerings and other offerings. My informants always spoke of ritual as *adat*, 'traditional custom', but this term can also apply to other activities that are concerned with the interaction with the ancestors, the Divinity, and spirits; for instance, magic, medicine, song, and dance. The word appears to the same in Indonesian and Lamaholot, sometimes dropping the final 't' in Lamaholot: *ada'* (Pampus 2001:270).

People say that ritual knowledge is inherited both through paternal lines and through maternal lines, similar to the way in which, for example, facial traits are inherited. Those who do not have the 'right' descent cannot be taught to perform ritual; the knowledge must already be inside them. However, having the 'right' descent is not enough to become a ritual specialist; ritual knowledge is often only a latent trait which manifests itself in a few individuals only. The manifest trait sometimes skips a generation or two, and it is never manifested in women. People who have an inherited 'predisposition' to perform ritual must

first receive practical training from experienced ritual specialists by observing and assisting them in ritual before they can perform ritual themselves.

Because ritual knowledge always remains a latent trait in women, it is only men who can perform ritual (but women nonetheless participate and handle items and food stuff that are to be used in the ritual). If someone (man or woman) attempts to perform a ritual without having had the proper training, or, without having the 'right' descent, the consequences could be fatal.[56] Ritual specialists who are brothers or otherwise closely biologically related should not perform ritual as long as the older relative is alive or, at least, as long as he is an active ritual specialist. That would be a sign of disrespect and could have fatal repercussions on the younger relative.

My informants believe that it is the delicate and risky nature of addressing the ancestors and the Divinity in ritual which this is the reason why only men should perform ritual (which might seem somewhat contradictory, since ritual, unlike personal pleas, follows a set of rules and, therefore, would appear to pose a lower risk of angering the ancestors). Another reason why women cannot perform ritual is that ritual necessitates the knowledge of ritual language which is inherited in the same way as the knowledge of ritual is inherited, only manifesting itself in a few people, excluding women. Not all ritual specialists have full command of the ritual language. Fluency in ritual language is the rarest skill to have and must come purely from within; it cannot be taught or excelled in through training.[57] Those who are fluent in

[56] The head of village of the nearby village of Konga apparently decided to perform a ritual even though he was not qualified to do so: on the first occasion he suffered misfortune; on the second he died in an accident. Interestingly, I was offered to perform a ritual on more than one occasion, under the guidance and supervision of experienced ritual specialists; I do not know if this would have been seen as posing any danger for me, given that I do not meet any of the above criteria (but perhaps that was the plan!). I did not actually perform a ritual in the end, but I did participate actively in two rituals in which other non-specialists (men of the 'right' descent) were also asked to participate.

[57] In Tana 'Ai, too, ritual specialists apparently reach a sudden insight, or understanding, of ritual (Lewis 1988a:257). In Palué, one informant who is fluent in ritual language said that the words seem to flow out of his mouth "like water" when he speaks in ritual language, totally out of his control and from a source unknown to him. In eastern Sumba, however, the knowledge of ritual terminology and procedures is chiefly acquired through observation of established [ritual] speakers, although the knowledge can also be passed on from F to S, or from senior to junior agnates (Forth 1988:132). (In Tana 'Ai the ritual knowledge is passed on to a

ritual language are known as *wewa bélen*; 'great mouth'.[58] Fluency in ritual language grants the ritual specialist a broader knowledge of ritual, myth, and history, since such information is recorded in the ritual language. Ritual language differs markedly from daily language and is virtually unintelligible to a non-specialist. The structure is based on coupled sentences that convey same, similar, or complementary meanings, using synonyms or conceptually coupled words; for instance, 'mother' and 'father' (cf. Fox 1988).[59] [60]

In theory, all ritual specialists can perform all types of ritual; for instance, garden ritual, cooling ritual, ritual to ask for the rains to come and for the rains to stop, ritual to re-plant the soul in the body, cleansing ritual, prediction, and lifecycle ritual.[61] Specific ritual specialists can, nonetheless, be asked to perform certain rituals with which they are more familiar. Rituals that are rarely performed are sometimes only performed by a *wewa bélen* (cf. the joint *kleja* between Kanada and Palué); it is also possible for two or more ritual specialists to perform a ritual together. Aspiring ritual specialists frequently participate in large rituals to practice their skills.

Ritual can be performed for the benefit of an individual, a community, a certain place, an object, a family or household, or the members of a certain clan or clan segment. If a ritual is aimed at a clan or clan segment it should be performed by the head of clan or clan segment

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classificatory ZS [Lewis 1988a:256]). Among Wewewa (Weyéwa) of western Sumba, a newborn child can be named after a relative who is gifted in ritual speech, so as to encourage the transfer of this skill to the child (Renard-Clamagirand 1988:102); I have heard of one such case in Palué.

[58] Palué used to have four *wewa bélen*, but now only three remain; one of them is Néné Paji. Most villages have at least one *wewa bélen*, but in the neighbouring village of Koba Soma (hamlet Kanada) the last *wewa bélen* recently passed away; for this reason, the joint garden ritual of *kleja* between Kanada and Palué (see Chapter Two) was partly performed by Néné Paji.

[59] Men and women without ritual training nonetheless know a few words or expressions in the ritual language which they have learnt from relatives or friends who are ritual specialists.

[60] The Kodinese of western Sumba claim that ritual language cannot really be translated into Indonesian, since the couplets are phrased in a language "whose real meanings are hidden deep inside" (Hoskins 1988:31). I have heard similar statements in Palué: ritual language is considered "impossible" to translate into Indonesian, and it took me considerable time and effort to persuade my informants to translate the names of the different rituals for me. Most rituals have two words in their name, and while most of these words belong to the daily language, the meaning of the compound in the context of ritual is said to go beyond the lexical meaning of these words.

[61] Ritual specialists emphasize that ritual does not guarantee a desired outcome, such as a successful harvest or protection from danger. Rather, by performing the ritual, the desired outcome is made *more likely*. One reason that the young generations are beginning to lose faith in the efficacy of ritual, the ritual specialists say, is that they expect a ritual to always have a certain outcome.

unless he is unqualified to do so. Every clan and clan segment, furthermore, has its own manner in which to perform some of the rituals, in particular the garden rituals. Some clans and clan segments also hold exclusive rights to rituals that are tied to their clan history; for instance, the ritual of *réso talé*, 'pulling the vines', in which a (male) member of clan Tukan or clan Werang pulls the vines of a certain tree to ask for rain. (Clans will be discussed in Chapter Three.)[62] [63]

Rituals that concern the land must be sanctioned by (and sometimes also performed by) the Lord of the Land (*tana alat(eng)*), who is the head of the source, or origin, clan (here: clan Danga) (see Introduction). (Sometimes the Lord of the Land can delegate this duty to another male member of the origin clan.) The Lord of the Land holds traditional rights to govern the land (although he does not own it) and used to be vested with political duties as well (cf. Vatter 1932:104).[64] Rituals that are sanctioned by the Lord of the Land must start and conclude in the home of the Lord of the Land, called *lango bélen*, 'great house', where all participants must share *wua malu*, 'areca nut and betel nut'.[65] *Wua malu* are two slightly narcotic substances, which are distributed from a small basket (*ahi*) to all the participants in a ritual (both men and women), starting with the ancestors. Those who do not want to chew the *wua malu* simply touch the basket with their fingers. By sharing *wua malu*, all participants in

[62] One informant compared the different manners in which clans and clan segments perform ritual to the different manifestations of the belief in God in, for instance, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism.
[63] In 2008, a child of the right descent pulled the vines of this tree while playing. Some informants say that this caused the rain to immediately begin to pour down; others hold that the child caused the rains to arrive *late* that year and that this had to be amended by ritual specialists. (A different account has it that the rains were late that year because an elderly man in Sukutukan had engaged in sexual activities with a goat.)
[64] The position of Lord of the Land is inherited by virtue of descent, although not necessarily by a son or a grandson; informants say that any man within the origin clan who is deemed to be the most suited for the position will be appointed Lord of the Land.
[65] In other parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area, *lango bélen* refers to each of the clans' special clan houses (Arndt 1940:96; R.H. Barnes 1996:62; Kohl 1998:113). On Lembata, *lango béla* is the name of the clan divisions (R.H. Barnes 1996:62).

the ritual become of "one heart" and the substances thus symbolize (social) unity.[66] Dropping the *wua malu* during ritual is considered to be a very 'bad' sign.

The ritual specialists who perform large or communal garden rituals are called *ilu alat(eng)*, 'lord of the saliva'.[67] Saliva (*ilu*) plays a crucial part in most, or all, large garden rituals and usually figures in the shape of actual spitting. Sometimes, male and female relatives of the garden owner(s) (provided that they are of the same clan) must contribute with saliva in addition to the saliva that *ilu alat(eng)* contributes. Informants say that saliva "has a special meaning" but never explicitly stated that saliva has the cooling effects (see below) that Graham (1991:49) reports from Lewoléma.[68]

Ilu alat(eng) must stand in the relation *opu laké* (wife-giver from the progenitor line) to the (male) owner of the garden. Sometimes, *ilu alat(eng)* can delegate his duties to a son or a brother (elder or younger), called *ba'a(ng) lima*, 'shouldering the hands [duties?]'. It is also possible to delegate the duties to another man, as long as that man does not stand in the relation 'sister' (*biné*) to him (*biné* refers to people who stand in a wife-taking relation to *ego* (cf. *opu biné*, above) since the requirement of the role of *ilu alat(eng*) is that he stands in the relation wife-giver (here: *opu laké*) to the garden owner). If the *ilu alat(eng)* of a specific garden passes away a successor must be named at the communal ritual of *géré lewo* (see Chapter Two).

Ilu alat(eng) is assisted by a woman, known as *ina puken*, 'source/origin mother'. She is either one of his clan sisters or his wife, provided that he has already paid full bridewealth for her. (All *ina puken* I met in Palué were the wives of the *ilu alat(eng)* in question.) *Ina puken*

[66] In the first step of the marriage process, the *wua malu* is explicitly said to be the grandchildren of the parents-in-law and is carried in a sling like a baby (see Chapter Five).
[67] It is possible that *ilu alat(eng)* features in other rituals as well (cf. burial ritual in Lewoléma [Graham 1991: 245, 255]).
[68] Graham (1991:279) has speculated that saliva might be a medium through which the power of life is transmitted between the ancestral dead and the living. She also points out that the rituals of the agricultural cycle parallel the rites of life for human beings, and that the performance of garden ritual might therefore be considered crucial in the continued transmission of the power of life from the ancestors to the living (idem 282).

only prepares the *wua malu* that is to be used in the garden ritual, but she does not actively participate in the ritual. Her presence is, nevertheless, required in order for the garden to become fertile, and it is possible that there is an association between *ina puken* and the Rice Maiden (*tono wujo*). (The Rice Maiden figures in female personification(s) in certain garden rituals elsewhere in the Lamaholot-speaking area [cf. Kohl 1998; Vatter 1932:106].)[69] This association was, however, never articulated by my informants.

Ina puken is also responsible for guarding the food gifts that are presented at lifecycle rituals, including the Christian rite of first communion (see Chapter Five).

Any food offerings that are presented to the ancestors during garden ritual must always be placed in front of the barn or on the footpath that leads to the front of the barn. (The same rule also applies to ritual that is performed somewhere within the village; offerings must be presented in front of a house or at the entrance of the village.) This is because the ancestors are said to arrive from the front, and if the food offerings are placed elsewhere they will not find them.

Cooked rice is often sufficient food offering, but it may be coupled with cooked leaves or vegetables. The food is sprinkled onto the ground or onto a bamboo platform (B.I. *balé*) by the ritual specialist(s), male and female garden owners or relatives of the garden owner(s), and *ina puken*. Outside the context of garden ritual, food offerings can be sprinkled on the object for which the ritual is made; for instance, on a motorcycle.

Salt and water are also sprinkled as offerings during ritual. Some informants claim that the use of salt and water in combination has been adopted by the Church from traditional belief (at, for instance, baptism), but since salt and water also figure together in Catholic ritual in Europe the influence might have been in the other direction.[70] Arak (*moké*) sometimes replaces water in ritual, and some rituals feature both water and arak. The nature

[69] Graham (1991:96) says that the Rice Maiden is sometimes represented by a small pig in garden rituals in Lewoléma; this pig is her *wungun* (see Chapter Three).
[70] I never got a priest's view on this matter.

and quantity of the offerings that are made at ritual vary according to the type of ritual (it may also depend on the available funds), but everyone agrees that at least *wua malu* must be offered in any ritual. Sometimes traditional cigarettes (*bako*) are offered as well, although they are now usually replaced by purchased cigarettes (B.I. *rokok*). Both cigarettes and *wua malu* fill an important social function outside the context of ritual, as they are always offered to guests who come to the house or garden; men are offered cigarettes, women (and sometimes also children and elderly men) are offered *wua malu*. Cooling rituals (*lo'i gəlaté*) must in addition include a local leaf, called *liténg* ([*Mallotus ricinifolius*?] [Pampus 2001:140]). This is the "companion" of young coconut (*ka'ha*) which is sometimes also used in cooling ritual and which is believed to have cooling effects.[71] Together they are known as *liténg kabur*.[72]

Coolness' (*lo'i*, or *gəlaté*) among Lamaholot is equated with 'safety' whereas 'heat' (*pelaté*), or 'heated', is equated with 'danger' (cf. Graham 1991:33-6). This is a widespread equation across the Lamaholot-speaking area and is also central in Tana 'Ai (Lewis 1988b: 163, 258-260) and in other parts of this region (e.g. Schulte Nordholt 1971, on cooling rituals for headhunters in Timor).[73] [74] Lamaholot cooling rituals are meant to safeguard people and relieve them from troubles. Cooling rituals are performed whenever a new structure is built or taken apart and nowadays also before a motor vehicle or any other type of motor is used for the first time.[75] I only know of one exception where heat is not associated with danger in

[71] In Tana 'Ai, coolness is explicitly linked with fertility (Lewis 1988b:290)).
[72] The term *kabur* is most likely the Sikkanese word *kabor*, 'coconut' (Arndt 1937:17). In Indonesian, *kabur* means 'vague', 'clouded (vision)', and so on (Echols and Shadily 1989:251). Pampus (2001:358) translates *kabur* in Indonesian to *bawo milan* in Lamaholot, but I have not heard this term in Palué.
[73] In Tana 'Ai, heat is associated with danger and things that are wild, whereas coolness is associated with safety and things that are used for domestic purposes (Lewis 1988b:163, 258). Heat is, in addition, associated with masculinity, while coolness is associated with femininity (idem 163). The same holds true among the Ema of Timor (Renard-Clamagirand 1982:269) but not among the Lamaholot in Lewoléma, who do not associate heat with a specific gender but see heat as a quality which any man or woman can be born with or assume later in life (Graham 1991:34).
[74] Beck (1969:562) associates heating with impurity in South India.
[75] In Lewoléma, cooling rituals are performed to cool things which have become heated (Graham 1991:34, 36). In Tana 'Ai, however, boys are believed to be born 'hot' and must thus be circumcised in a cooling ritual

Palué. During the garden ritual of *oru soga(ng)* (see Chapter Two), clan segment Danga Dotong appoints a man as *bao bako* [?] who may only drink hot water that day; if he drinks cold water before returning home in the evening the Rice Maiden will not turn up and, therefore, the yield will be poor.[76]

The fact that only 'white' coconut (*tapo bura*) may be used in cooling ritual, not 'red' coconut (*tapo mé'a*), could suggest that there is a colour association between white:cool:safety and red:hot:danger, recalling the association between colour and heat in South India (cf. Beck 1969:553-72).

Pigs (*wawé*) are believed to have cool blood and pig sacrifice features in a number of rituals, for instance cooling ritual, some garden rituals, and rituals concerning rain and water. The ears of the pig must be clipped before the animal is killed (the head is usually cut off in a sawing motion) and the pig must be consumed on the same day.[77] Conversely, goats (*witi*) are believed to have hot blood and are, therefore, not normally used in sacrifice except for in communal garden rituals and rituals for very large gardens. These rituals, however, entail both sacrifice of pig and goat (see Chapter Two).[78] In the context of marriage ritual, goats are presented as gifts from the groom's parents to the bride's parents in three of the different stages of the marriage process (see Chapter Five). These goats must be consumed at some point (although not at once); they may not be left to die from old age or illness. The goats are male as a symbol of the groom's virility. A rooster is also presented together with each of the

(*gareng 'lamen*) so as to render them 'cool' and 'safe' for their future wives (Lewis 1988b: 259, 261, 342 XIII n.6) (see Chapter Five).

[76] In Lewoléma, ritual heating occurs at the firing of swiddens and also used to occur during warfare (but, nowadays, during soccer matches instead) (Graham 1991:33-4).

[77] In Tana 'Ai, pigs carry great symbolic value and domestic pigs are thought to belong to the living whereas wild pigs belong to the ancestors (Lewis 1988b:340 n.6). Domestic pigs live in the cool spheres of the field and garden alongside the living, whereas wild pigs live in the hot forests alongside the spirits (idem 23, 340 n.6). Clipping the ears of the domestic pigs to mark ownership is likened to the circumcision of boys at the ritual of *gareng 'lamen*, and the hunting and trapping of wild pigs requires an offering known as 'pig's bridewealth' (*wawi bélis*) (idem 260, 341 n.6).

[78] Dogs (*aho*) are also believed to have hot blood, but Lamaholot do not sacrifice dogs in ritual. In Tana 'Ai, certain rituals to ask for rain do feature dog sacrifice, even though dogs are similarly believed to have hot blood here.

goats, similarly symbolizing the groom's virility. Unlike the goats, however, the roosters may be eaten straight away.

Marriage is the only ritual in which the sex of the animal seems to be clearly specified (i.e. male); in other rituals, either male or female animals can be used (I have seen young female animals used in a number of important rituals).[79] [80]

All sacrifice of pig and goat (in particular that of goat) is carried out by four men known as *koto(ng)*, *kélén*, *hurit*, and *maré*.[81] Each of the men shoulders a ritual role that is found throughout the Lamaholot-speaking area, although they did not originally exist on Lembata (and Kédang do not have them) (e.g. Arndt 1940:101-2; R.H. Barnes 1974:98; Ouwehand 1950:56-8; Vatter 1932:81-3).

Koto(ng), 'head', refers to the man who holds the head of the sacrificial animal; *kélén*, 'tail', is the man who holds the animal's feet. Lamaholot generally assign the position of *koto(ng)* to the Lord of the Land and that of *kélen* to the head of village who, in the past, was also a war leader (Arndt 1940:102; Ouwehand 1950:58). The Lord of the Land is closely associated with the land and the ritual community and with internal affairs, whereas the head of village (by virtue of being a war leader) would have been more closely associated with external affairs. In Palué, both the Lord of the Land and the head of village were originally members of the origin clan, Danga, and sometimes the same person could hold both offices at once (although sometimes the offices were divided between the two clan segments Danga Dotong and Danga Latuk). Today, the head of village comes from a different clan altogether.

[79] Some informants claim that (blood) sacrifice originally meant the sacrifice of a human child. This practice was, allegedly, only abandoned with the arrival of Catholicism at which time children became substituted with "bought children" (i.e. animals). According to Arndt (1951:198-9), the earth is alive, and when it is hungry it drinks the blood from sacrificed animals or (in the past) also blood from the people who have died in war; this made her fertile. In Palué, some other informants conversely say that the sacrifice of children has Christian origins, going back to Abraham who was ordered by God to sacrifice his second son, Isaac. In any case, ritual sacrifice is deeply embedded in Lamaholot culture and plays a significant part in the continuation of life and society (cf. Kohl 1996:133-46). Hägerdal (per. comm.), however, notes that both human sacrifice and headhunting (see below) are difficult to substantiate from (Western colonial) sources.

[80] Marriage is notably also one of few rituals in which the animal(s) in question are not killed; the same applies to other life-cycle rituals (see Chapter Five).

[81] *Koto(ng)* also appears as *koton* or *kotén*, *maré* as *maran* or *marang*, and *hurit* as *hurint*.

The role of *koto(ng)*, nonetheless, lies with clan segment Danga Dotong and that of *kélén* with Danga Latuk (to which the present Lord of the Land belongs).

A third man, *maré*, 'ritual prayer' (Pampus 2001:149), must recite ceremonial prayers before the sacrificial animal is killed. (I have not actually heard *maré* utter prayers aloud; instead I have seen him sprinkle unhusked rice onto the sacrificial animal, which could be seen as a different expression of prayer.) The animal is killed by *hurit*, using a short sword; Pampus (2001:89, 175, 227), in fact, relates the name *hurit* to *nurit*, 'weaving sword' (but not to *suri'*, 'shop weapon').[82] *Hurit* severs the head of the animal and, ideally, the head should detach at once (but I have only actually seen this happen in the communal garden ritual of *kleja* [see Chapter Two], and even then only in the context of goat sacrifice, not pig sacrifice). The blade of *hurit's* short sword may, furthermore, not touch the ground; if it does, the "wound" in the ground must be ritually healed so as to save *hurit* from danger. This ritual is called *lébut tana uman*, 'closing the hole', and features the use of *épo* (saliva mixed with red string [or a cigarette box wrapping, a piece of cement sack, or dirt] which is thrown onto the ground).[83] *Épo* is always used when a 'bad' sign occurs (for instance, sneezing during baptism or birth ritual).

When the sacrificial animal has been killed, *hurit* takes out its liver and examines it to be able to infer how much rain is to come in the following year. If the liver is 'clean' there will be much rain and the yield from the garden will be big, but if the liver is covered in unusual growths the rain will be sparse and the yield will be poor. The animal's bladder also gives an indication of the amount of rain to come, judging from the amount of liquid in it.

Some rituals feature the sacrifice of chicken (*manuk*), which are also believed to have cool blood. It is, however, more common to use eggs (*telu manuk*) in ritual instead. (These

[82] Arndt (1937) relates *hurit* to *surit*, 'weaving sword'.

[83] Strings usually feature in rituals that are concerned with rain, and each of the colours red, white, and black carries different meanings Black string can be used to ask for (black) rain clouds, while white string is used to ask for white clouds (i.e. no rain). The meaning of red string was not clearly stated, or even inferred; it seems to carry a number of meanings.

eggs *must* come from (village) hens, not from the store or from junglefowl.) Eggs feature in many types of ritual and are referred to as *mié bura*, 'white candlenut', in the context of ritual. Informants explain that this is because candlenut is a very important element in ritual, although I have never personally seen candlenut being used in ritual or heard anyone speak of it in a ritual context. Outside the context of ritual, chicken and eggs are central (and essential) components in the relation between wife-givers (*opu lakéˀ*) and wife-takers (*opu binéˀ*), since they are prescribed gifts from the wife-takers to the wife-givers (see Chapter Four).

Song, dance, ritual house, and clan treasures

Many garden rituals are accompanied by ritual song and dance. The singers and dancers need not be ritual specialists; in fact, some songs and dances are performed exclusively by women. The singing often takes place during planting or while performing other practical tasks, although sometimes the singers simply dance around in circles. Men only seem to partake in dances if women also participate. The dancers normally wear ritual attire (which some women also wear during singing and the performance of practical tasks). Some of the songs and dances are accompanied by music, and the main instrument nowadays is the harmonica, which is played by women. In the past, women would have played on bamboo pan flutes (*suling*) and beaten the rhythm on simple bamboo drums (or, later, on plastic bowls or such), or with rattles (for instance, two spoons stuck in a glass bottle). Men sometimes strike bronze gongs during certain rituals, but in more relaxed settings they usually play the guitar or the *juˀk* (a type of ukulele).

Some communal ritual and rituals that concern a specific clan or clan segment are performed in the ritual house (*buˀa(ng*)), which today is located on the mountain slopes

above Palué.[84] [85] This place is known as the *lewo*, '(ritual place of the) ritual community' (see Chapter Two). The ritual house was originally located close to where the church stands, next to a gathering of stones that were believed to hold special powers; some even say that the stones were *nuba*, 'holy stones'. Sometime in or around the 1970s, a Polish priest is said to have thrown the stones over in an attempt to end, what he called, "devil worship". Scarred by this incident, the people in Palué moved the ritual house to a more hidden location in the forest, which became the new *lewo* of this community.

In some respects, the house of the Lord of the Land (*lango bélen*) is also considered to be a ritual house, and the house is a gathering point at the start and end of rituals that concern the land.

Clans and clan segments can choose to store their clan treasures (*sobok*) in the ritual house at the *lewo*, but it is more common that the head of the clan or clan segment stores these treasures in his own house. The clan treasures, nonetheless, belong to the whole clan or clan segment (e.g. Arndt 1940:237; Graham 1991:92, 97).[86] Clan treasures usually include one or more elephants' tusks (*bala*), pebbles that are believed to hold special powers, cloth, and other items that have been passed down through generations. Tusks formerly played an important part in deciding a person's clan membership, but later became more or less a symbol of marriage (in the shape of bridewealth) (see Chapters Three and Four). Today, many of the tusks have been sold or stolen due to their high economic value, as opposed to their social value.

If a clan member becomes seriously ill, he or she can ask the head of clan or clan segment for permission to keep the clan treasures in his or her house for a short time, as this

[84] Each clan and clan segment has a private section for sleeping and cooking in the ritual house, and there are currently plans to rebuild the ritual house with actual compartments for each of the clans and clan segments. Men who have married into Palué are grouped together with their wife's clan or clan segment.
[85] Elsewhere in the Lamaholot-speaking area, the ritual house is known as *korké*, *koker*, *koké*, or *kokar* (Arndt 1951:76; Vatter 1932:92). The house can be coupled with a second building, *balé* or *bala*, which can also stand on its own (Arndt 1951:154; Vatter 1932:179).
[86] There are few people in Palué who have the means to acquire any personal wealth.

is believed to help cure the illness. Clan members can also obtain permission to store the clan treasures in their private barn, so as to help increase the season's yield (see below). If the clan treasures are kept in the barn, the garden in question must receive ritual every year, with a sacrifice of both pig and goat each time (see also Chapter Two). As this presents a great cost for a single household, it is not so common to store the clan wealth in the barn.[87]

Magic

Men and women can increase the yield from their garden by means other than ritual, namely through "magic" (their word). This "magic", however, does not refer to what people in daily speech mean by magic ("[white] magic" and "black magic"; see below). Rather, this "magic" consists of special knowledge that is passed down from a parent to one of the children when the parent is about to die. Unlike the knowledge of ritual this knowledge is not physically inherited but must be orally conveyed, and for this reason many siblings quarrel among themselves as to who is to house a dying parent in their home. The "magic" in question does not require that the child has had any previous teaching of magic, and the knowledge does not make the child a practitioner of magic in the everyday meaning of the word.

"(White) magic" (B.I. *magic (putih)*) is also used for increasing the yield from the garden. (White) magic, in addition, has the power to cure illness, protect someone from danger, re-plant the soul in the body, gather prey during a hunt, ensure a great catch when fishing, and so on. It is more common to refer to (white) magic as "medicine" (B.I. *obat*), and the practitioners of medicine are known as *molang*. "Black magic" (their expression), occasionally also known as *black magic hitam* (*hitam*=black), is more or less the opposite of

[87] In Tana 'Ai, one of the chants of the second stage of the mortuary ceremony explicitly identifies the ancestors as the 'people of the ivory and gongs' (i.e. the ceremonial wealth) and describes the return of the ancestors to the gardens as a vehicle of cooling, or fertility (Lewis 1988b:290, 295). The return of the ancestors to the gardens thus brings fertility, which is transformed into bountiful harvests and life for their descendants; "[t]hus the living and the dead must cooperate to ensure the survival and well-being of the social group" (idem 290).

(white) magic, or medicine. Black magic has the power to decrease the yield from someone's garden, cause illness and misfortune, kill, remove a soul from the body, and cause madness, to mention just a few. It is also through black magic that love potions are made. Love potions and other kinds of potion are usually bought (sometimes even ordered) from practitioners of black magic, who rarely use these potions themselves. Sometimes, black magic is also referred to as "bad medicine" (B.I. *obat hitam*, or *obat buruk*), and the practitioners of black magic are called *nak'a(ng)* (cf. *meneka* [Arndt 1951:184, 187, 189]).[88]

Both men and women can practice (white) magic and black magic, but women tend to dominate the field of black magic. Some of my informants hold that (white) magic and black magic are actually forms of ritual, since magic often entails seeking the assistance of the ancestors (and maybe also of the Divinity) (cf. Arndt 1951:184). It is for this reason, perhaps, that female *molang* seem hesitant to practice medicine even though they have received the proper training, as there will be negative repercussions for the practitioner of magic (or for his or her descendants) if the ancestors are angered.

The knowledge of (white magic), or medicine, is normally passed on from a parent to a child, usually the eldest child, regardless of its gender (cf. Arndt 1951:184). The knowledge is transmitted orally, and no special descent is required. If a student chooses a different teacher, he or she typically seeks out a teacher of the opposite sex, in which case the payment can be settled through sexual favours at the end of the period of study.

As to black magic, the accounts of the transmission of the knowledge of black magic vary. Some informants have maintained that black magic is orally taught, and that no special descent is required, but on other occasions the same informants claim that particular *nak'a(ng)* have literally "fed" their knowledge to their children, through the food. Some of

[88] Arndt (1951: 187) reports that the *molang* in Witi Hama, Adonara, have two kinds of 'magic': one that can poison and kill, and one that can "make alive". He also distinguishes between three types of *molang*: those who see the *meneka*, those who ask for rain, and those who heal the sick (idem 188).

these informants have equated this practice with the manner in which ritual knowledge is inherited through male and female lines of descent.

The study of medicine takes about a year to complete; that of black magic sometimes less. Students of medicine are, in theory, required to go through a process of purification at the end of their period of study so as to reduce the risks of later turning to black magic. The main difference between medicine and black magic appear to lie in the nature of the practitioners' intentions and not so much in the nature of their practice; both *molang* and *nak'a(ng)* have, for instance, acquired specialized knowledge of plants and herbs in the forest, which they can use either to heal or to cause mischief.[89] Students of black magic seem to spend more time in the forest than students of medicine, often on their own, and many *nak'a(ng*) settle on the fringes of the forest, fairly secluded from the rest of the settlement.

The forest is said to be the home, or hideout, of headhunters, who seem to be associated with *nak'a(ng)* (but unlike *nak'a(ng)* headhunters allegedly operate in gangs). Arndt (1938:8-9, 25-26, 48-9, 53) has reported that it was *Léra Wulan's* demands for human skulls to fill the barns of the Divinity that resulted in the occasional headhunting among Lamaholot in the past.[90] [91] Today, headhunting is primarily understood as an economic enterprise through which a man can earn as much as ten times the early income from his garden work: there is a general belief that human heads are essential in the foundation of large structures, such as bridges and large public buildings.[92] [93] Claimed headhunters constantly make their presence

[89] Most people nonetheless have a basic knowledge of plants and herbs without having studied magic.
[90] R.H. Barnes (1996:161) has looked at the Lamaholot concept of Divinity with reference to Fox's (1989:44-7) discussion of recursive complementarity, and remarks that the pattern of representing the Divinity implies that the positive aspects of *Léra Wulan*, such as life-giving and fortifying, are intimately tied to its 'negative' aspects, such as witchcraft, headhunting, and corpse eating.
[91] A few informants have spoken of a hut in the forest near Palué, in which the walls were covered with human skulls, but whether or not anyone has actually seen it remains unclear. R.H. Barnes (1993:149) mentions that the missionary Bernardus Bode noted that the Lamaholot in Lamalera, Lembata, kept the skulls of their ancestors on shelves at the back of their boat sheds when they did not use them in ceremonies, and that offerings were made to these skulls when going to sea and when returning from fishing.
[92] R.H. Barnes (1993) has written an excellent article on construction sacrifice, kidnapping and rumours of head-hunting on Flores, examining the extent to which these activities actually occurred, and the role that the European mission and colonization played in creating such rumours.

known in the gardens and at the outskirts of Palué, and informants say that local headhunters tend to return to their natal hamlet to light candles on their parents' graves, so as to "ask for *Léra Wulan's* assistance in an imminent hunt".[94]

There are indeed certain similarities between magic and ritual, which would support the claims that magic is actually only a form of ritual. Like ritual, for instance, magic follows a set of rules and can turn to the ancestors and the Divinity for assistance, and an older practitioner of magic who is closely related to (but not necessarily a biological relative), or married to, another practitioner of magic should be given precedence in the practice of magic.[95] Practitioners of magic also keep potent items, such as pebbles and antique statuettes, in their home. Some of these items have been inherited, while others have been procured; to some extent, this recalls the clan treasures and the powers attributed to the clan treasures.

Unlike ritual, however, the knowledge of magic is not inherited, and it is available for both men and women to practice. Magic, in addition, does not have any tie or connection to Christianity, but black magic frequently includes Islamic spells, which are uttered in Arabic. The 'bad' effects of such spells can only be counteracted if one understands their content; for this reason, Christian *molang* cannot help people who have fallen victim to such spells, since they do not speak Arabic. (Muslim *molang*, however, *can* help such victims.)[96]

The practitioners of magic are, furthermore, shape-shifters (*kébé*). *Molang* can take the shape of, for instance, deer, so as to lure a herd of deer closer to a group of hunters.[97]

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[93] This practice is also known from, for instance, Burma (now Myanmar) (Harvey 1925).

[94] It is believed that heads that are included in structures should not be local, for if a relative of the victim enters such a building or sets foot on such a bridge, it will collapse. Young girls and boys seem to be preferred victims, and fair skin appears to be favoured over dark skin.

[95] This might be another reason why many female *molang* are hesitant to practice their skills, as they have often been trained by their husband.

[96] Hägerdal (pers. comm.) comments that it is often asserted in modern Indonesia that white magic comes from God and black magic from the devil: Muslim elements, such as Qur'anic notes on paper slips, are used for white magic rather than black magic. The latter is only the case in Palué if the *molang* in question is Muslim and tries to cure a victim who has fallen victim to a Muslim black magic spell.

[97] This method of hunting must be used moderately, however, showing proper respect for nature, and expressing due gratitude for the prey that will help to sustain the hunters' families.

Nak'a(ng) usually take the shape of a bird, but if they wish to lessen the yield from someone's garden, they take the shape of a wild boar, so as to be able eat as much of the seeds or the crops as possible.[98]

Four kinds of bird are said to act as the cohorts of *nak'a(ng*); all of these birds are black or grey in colour.[99] Black monkeys and black cats are, in addition, believed to collaborate with *nak'a(ng)*. All of these animals (in particular the birds) herald illness, death, danger, or misfortune if they are seen or heard, as this means that their master is not far away. 'Bad' spirits (*nitung kewoko(t)*) can also take the shape of the birds that collaborate with *nak'a(ng)*, so to be able to approach the house of people who have ill deeds on their conscience. The mere presence of *nitung kewoko(t)* causes the person's soul to exit the body which makes him or her fall ill (see Chapter Four).[100]

The close association between birds, *nak'a(ng)*, and 'bad' spirits might explain why I have never seen or heard of anyone who keeps a bird as a pet in Palué.[101] Pets are otherwise seen as protecting their masters from harm and evil, including the ill intentions of *nak'a(ng)* and *nitung kewoko(t)*, and people are generally happy to keep a large number of different pets at home.[102]

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[98] Incidentally, there is also one type of true wild boar that is considered to be 'bad', but there seems to be no direct association between these boars and the shape-shifting *nak'a(ng)*.

[99] Three of the birds are owls (*ko'*, *pudut* and *méwa olak*) whereas the fourth is the raven (*kan'g*).

[100] *Nitung kewoko(t)* usually live in or near specific landmarks in the forest, such as very large trees or boulders; these places are said to be 'bad' places and are generally avoided. Anyone who walks past a 'bad' place can be followed home by an invisible spirit and will soon fall ill. If a person dreams of an old man or woman shortly after returning home from the forest this is a sure sign that a spirit has followed them home. Another type of spirit, *a'mek'ong*, only poses a danger for people who have cursed or spoken badly of someone else (in particular of a spouse or an elder sibling).

[101] The notion that the soul is a bird seems to be absent in Palué (cf. R.H. Barnes 1974:169). Arndt (1951:207) says that birds are the hens of *kewoko(t)*, and that, similarly, snakes are the dogs of *kewoko(t)* (monkeys, on the other hand, are part human (half-human)).

[102] While livestock (pig and goat) and chickens often become like pets to the children, every household has at least one proper pet as well. The most popular pet is the dog but cats are also common, and some people have taken care of wild animals that have been found when the animal was still very young (e.g. monkeys, civet rats). One informant says that female dogs offer the best protection against harm and evil, but the reason why this is so was never explained to me.

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It is clear that the continued relation between the living and the ancestors, and that between the living, the ancestors, and the Divinity, is considered crucial for life in Palué. This belief is expressed both in myth and in practice through a number of different rituals, among which the garden rituals seem to be to most elaborate. This points to the centrality of the gardens in the life and livelihood of the people in Palué. The ancestors, the Divinity, and the garden yield are also central elements in the different forms of magic. While the knowledge of ritual depends wholly on gender, biological inheritance, and clan membership, the knowledge of magic can be taught to anyone, regardless of gender, biological descent, and clan membership.

Photo 5. The barn (*ori*) of one of the gardens in Palué.

Photo 6. Basket filled with rice that has been separated from the stems.

Chapter Two: Gardens and Settlement

CHAPTER TWO

Gardens and Settlement

This chapter looks at the changing loci of habitation in this part of East Flores; from habitation in gardens to habitation in permanent settlements. The access to land, house, and barn is also discussed, as is the agricultural work and some of the rituals associated with these activities.

Changing Loci of Habitation

The predecessors of today's population in Palué lived and worked entirely in gardens, which were dispersed throughout a ritual community.[103] This data corresponds with evidence from Tana 'Ai (Lewis 1988b:11) and to claims made on Lembata (Seegeler 1931, cited in R.H. Barnes 1972:94; Vatter 1932:208). At times the households of the community would convene at a special place, called *lewo*, '(ritual place of the) ritual community' (cf. Graham 1991:12), so as to perform certain rituals together. This is where the ritual house was located (see Chapter One) (cf. Vatter 1932:93), alongside a collection of houses to house the participants in the rituals. In this area, at least, the *lewo* does not appear to have been permanently

[103] Like Lewis (e.g. 1988b), I choose to speak of agricultural land as 'gardens' rather than 'fields', even though 'fields' appears to be the more common term in the literature on Lamaholot. The term 'garden' seems to be more appropriate in the local context, where gardens play a central role in daily life and even used to be the locus of habitation.

inhabited. Temporary settlements are usually referred to as *rian(g)*, and these were often subsidiary settlements to the *lewo* (cf. Graham 1991:12). [104]

The introduction of Catholicism in this particular area began sometime in the late 19th century, with missionaries and priests walking between the separate gardens to spread the Christian teaching. They would often time their visits with when people convened in the house (now: barn) for food and rest. (One of the best-remembered front figures of the Christian mission was "Ba Guru"; a local priest from the nearby hamlet of Lewolaga who was still alive in the early 1970s.) Latin was initially used in the Christian mission, but it was replaced with Lamaholot in the early- to mid-20th century. (One informant in her forties remembers that her grandmother could only sing hymns in Latin.) Today, Indonesian has become the official Church language.

In the late 19th century, school teachers also began to visit the gardens to teach the children mathematics, reading, and writing; some of the teachers were also priests and missionaries. Teaching was mainly conducted in Indonesian, but during the different occupations Dutch and Japanese were also part of the curriculum. (Indonesia was a Dutch colony in the early 20th century, but experienced a short period of Japanese occupation before declaring its independence in 1945.) At the beginning the teachers would simply seat themselves in the house and begin to talk, hoping to entice the children to come and listen. Not all parents, however, were happy to see their children leave their duties and, consequently, many children were prohibited from attending these classes. Gradually, most of the children with a "good head" were allowed to study, but one child in every household (typically the youngest child) was given the responsibility to "guard the *wua malu*", meaning that they were given responsibility to maintain the garden for the next generation. This somewhat recalls a Kédangese tradition, in which the elder son is said to "go out" of the

[104] *Lewo* still exists as a concept in Palué, and refers both to a region, a settlement, and a locus for communal ritual. The expression *lewo tana* (*tana* 'land') denotes a ritual community and its ritual domain (cf. Graham 1991:58, 113). In daily speech, *lewo tana* often conveys the meaning 'homeland'.

house whereas the younger son remains to "guard the door" (cf. R.H. Barnes 1974:67). In neither the case of Palué nor Kédang, however, did this mean that the younger sibling was automatically to inherit the house; usually the eldest son inherited the house (see also Chapter Three).

The first church building was erected in the temporary settlement of today's Palué sometime in the first half of the 20th century. As a result of the physical church, the Lamaholot who had already been baptized began to convene at the settlement every Sunday to attend mass. They usually left the gardens on the Saturday evening and returned the next morning. (Only a few people maintained that God was present everywhere and that they, therefore, could choose to pray in the garden or in the forest instead.) Due to the location of the church building, the temporary settlement became the physical focus of both new and old beliefs and ritual activity, resulting in that the settlement became frequented on a more regular basis than before. [105]

Eventually, school classes were also moved to the temporary settlement. To begin with, classes were held outdoors; the first school building was only built around the 1940s. It was with this relocation of school classes to the settlement that the practical conflict between garden habitation and the activities in the settlement became truly palpable: children were now forced to walk back and forth to the settlement every day, spending as much as three hours or more on walking. Once they returned home in the afternoon, they were compelled to resume their duties in the house and garden. For some children, this pattern of life carried on until the 1980s, at which time there were still a few families living in the gardens.[106]

[105] The present church is a brick-and-cement building, designed and paid for by an American priest at the parish of Hokéng. It replaced a bamboo church, which now houses the local pre-school.

[106] In 1920, a school was established by the church in Boganatar (Tana Kringa), close to Hikong by the border with East Flores (Sejarah Katolik 1974:1161, cited in Lewis 1988b:11). Lewis (1988b:11), however, says that it was the establishment of the central Sikkanese Catholic primary school in Hila Natar (near the border to Tana Wérang and Tana Wai Brama) in 1953 that provided the first continuous and most direct contacts with the outside world for many of the people in this area. From late 1940s-1960, the Church served as the primary outside influence in Tana 'Ai, since the region was not subject to the Dutch taxation policies on copra that were

Alongside Catholicism and the building of the church in the settlement, the physical location of the school and the social push for formal education were two of the driving forces in the creation of a new focus on the settlement, as opposed to the gardens. While weekly and monthly markets were also occasions for people to gather, markets did not last for more than a day and did not carry any spiritual connotations. (The tradition of markets dates back to at least the early-20th century in this area. The market place closest to today's Palué was originally located near the now-abandoned hamlet of Lewolalang, but was later moved to the village of Konga; today the market is based in the sub-district capital of Boru.)

The location of today's settlement in Palué is of a relatively recent date. According to myth, the settlement was founded by the origin clan, Danga (see below). The community, however, traces its roots to one or more older settlements nearby, all of which have now been abandoned (for instance, hamlet Lewolalang).[107] Today's Palué took the shape of a hamlet in or around 1964, but was only granted official village status by the government in 1978, when a road had been built to the neighbouring hamlet of Sukutukan.[108] Governmentally recognized villages are referred to by the Sanskrit word *désa*, whereas hamlets are commonly known as *kampung*; a *désa* can comprise one or more *kampung*. Official village names were often given (or imposed on) the *désa* by bureaucrats from the 1960s onwards as a means to suppress old-fashioned particularisms. Palué received the village name Nilék Nohéng, but most people still know it only by the hamlet name, Palué.

In the 1980s, Palué was reached by a governmental decree declaring that all (married) men must have a proper house of their own in the village and that no-one was allowed to live in the gardens anymore. Allegedly, physical punishment faced the men who refused (or

administered by the raja of Mauméré; the subaltern rajadom of Kangae had buffered Tana 'Ai from direct rule by the Sikkanese raja in the early stages of the 20th century (idem 14).

[107] Lewolalang plays a central role in the Muhang version of the myth of the Rice Maiden (*tono wujo*) and the origins of the cultivation of rice and maize (see Chapter One).

[108] The roadwork was conducted in full by the inhabitants of Palué as a reaction against the forced displacement that faced the hamlets which lacked a proper road that connected them to the rest of the regency.

failed) to meet these standards, yet some families continued to secretly live in the gardens for almost a decade more. Today, only some of the eldest people still reside in the gardens permanently.

The Gardens

All land within the ritual community is vested in the Lord of the Land, who governs it for the people (see Chapter One). According to the present Lord of the Land in Palué, the first Lord of the Land never allotted special patches of land to the clans that later came to settle there; instead, the clans were free to open their gardens wherever they wished.[109] Land is, therefore, not clan-owned but is at the disposal of the individual households of Palué. (In fact, the land cannot be owned in the literal sense of the word; if anything, it is the other way around.) Only gardens that are managed jointly by two households (usually a large garden managed by two brothers) would in the past have been at the disposal of both households; whether or not this is still so I am not certain.

Patches of land that are available for garden work are called *néwa*. Every household disposes of about 2-3 *néwa* but, in theory, any man or woman can have access to an unlimited number of *néwa*. Sons typically receive a *néwa* from their father upon marriage, or when the first child is born (whichever comes first). If the father does not have a *néwa* to spare, another man from the paternal clan or clan segment can provide the son with a *néwa* instead. Sometimes a couple also receives *néwa* from the wife's father or one of his clan brothers, but this usually occurs only if the husband is not local or not very well-off (cf. Arndt 1940:145-6). *Néwa* from the wife's side is in general given as a gift to the couple; it is not the wife who

[109] Among Lamaholot elsewhere, there are sometimes no restrictions on who can open a garden and where (e.g. Arndt 1940:235-6), but sometimes there are (e.g. Arndt 1940:106; Graham 1991:92-3). Vatter (1932:105) says that each year one piece of land becomes Holy Land, but I have not heard of this practice in Palué.

inherits it. It is, nevertheless, also possible for women to inherit and dispose of land in Palué, and people generally agree that land and belongings should be divided equally among all children, male and female.[110] Yet, in practice it is often the sons who inherit everything, and preference seems to be given to the eldest son. One elderly man justified this by saying that possessions that pass on to a daughter will be "lost" if she marries out of the village and that her garden cannot be worked. For this reason, sons are seen as being "stronger" than their sisters in matters of inheritance.

Not all *néwa* are inherited or given as gifts; some *néwa* have also been purchased (by men or women). Any *néwa* that remain unused will be asked for, or even stolen.

Gardens (*ma(ng)*) are rectangular and originally measured 1-2 hectares. The smaller households and the new social conditions in today's village-based settlement have, however, meant that the average garden is now normally ca. ½ hectare. Larger gardens require the joint efforts of two or more households (usually related) and are often too expensive and time-consuming to be lucrative

The gardens surround the village at a distance of about 15 minutes to three hours walk away. There is a patchwork of footpaths that leads from the village to the different gardens. Few of the gardens are flat since they are set on mountain slopes and this causes much erosion of the topsoil. In addition to the problem of topsoil erosion the cool climate on top of the mountain allows for only one harvest a year, which is just enough to sustain the inhabitants of Palué. The gardens are left fallow every 3-5 years to let the soil recover. During this time, the garden work is moved to another *néwa*.[111] Considering that the

[110] There are currently a few widows who work their own gardens, not the gardens of their sons.
[111] One informant claims that everyone in the village must give their consent before a new garden is opened, but I have never seen this done in practice.

demographic pressure is still fairly low, the system of swidden agriculture remains ecologically sustainable in Palué.[112]

New gardens are cleared with the help of fire; chainsaws are prohibited since the loud noise is believed to scare away the Rice Maiden (*tono wujo*) (see Chapter One). All trees in the *néwa* are cut and left to dry for 4-5 months so that they will later burn easily. The trees at the boundaries of the new garden are sometimes cut down straight away to prevent the fire from spreading into a neighbouring garden or *néwa*; boundaries between adjacent gardens or *néwa* may also not be marked by burning. All new gardens are burnt twice and manually cleared before the boundaries are permanently marked. The permanent boundary markers consist of two sets of poles: *du'éng* and *nedong*. *Du'éng* are placed horizontally onto the ground, whereas *nedong* are stuck into the ground vertically.[113] The horizontal boundary markers can be removed and even broken when the garden is left fallow, but the vertical boundary markers may never be moved or intentionally damaged, and when an old garden is cleared anew the vertical poles may not be touched by fire.

Boundaries are seen as dividers in Palué ("that which divides us; you and me") and must always be respected; breaching a garden boundary is compared to molesting a neighbour's wife. In the past, disputes over land would have led to war; nowadays, such disputes are forbidden.[114] Some of the gardens actually lack physical boundaries, but the owners nevertheless claim to know the exact extent of the *néwa* that is at their disposal.[115]

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[112] I often discussed matters of global warming and environmental deterioration with Kakak Léwar, since the news on the radio at the time was reporting the issues of the G20 meeting in Copenhagen. He seemed fairly well versed in the matter and showed an interest in what resolutions the meeting would yield. One day I asked what effects of global warming and environmental deterioration that the people in Palué were experiencing, and to my great surprise Kakak Léwar replied "none". In his belief, the local climate and natural conditions are controlled entirely by the ancestors (and implicitly also by *Léra Wulan*, it seems). This is why ritual, personal pleas, and magic are so important; the living are in effect creating their own living conditions with the help of the dead (and ultimately with the help of Divinity.) The issues of the G20 meeting concern the rest of the world, not Palué, according to Kakak Léwar.

[113] *Duen* also means 'border, boundary' in the Sikkanese dialect of Tana 'Ai (Lewis 1988b:352).

[114] Arndt (1951:140-1) says that land that is at the disposal of a clan is normally marked off by natural boundaries, such as brooks, mountains, and crevasses; sometimes the boundaries are marked by stones [stone walls?] or poles. Boundaries are called "Husband and Wife as Boundary Markers" (*noan* or *sadi lake ina péro*);

The staple foods in Palué are rice (*paré*) and maize (*wata'*).[116] Domesticated cassava (*uwé*) only reached Palué in the 1980s, after it had been introduced by the Dutch in the early-20th century, and has become very popular. The governmental push for a greater variety of crops throughout the latter half of the 20th century has meant that cash crops, such as coconut, mango, papaya, avocado, banana, and candle nut, have also made their way into the gardens.[117] Some gardens are dedicated only to cash crops and tended separately alongside a main garden. While the cool climate in Palué is ill-suited for growing coffee, tea, cacao, and vanilla, these crops can be grown in Sukutukan, at the foot of the mountain. Beans are rarely, if ever, grown in Palué.

Rice is planted in parallel rows across the garden, and these rows are separated by thin strips of maize and cash crops. People have recently begun to build wooden barrages (*blepéng*) alongside these strips to check erosion and encourage the formation of terraces. As *blepéng* were not originally part of the gardens, many elders often have disputes with members of the younger generations over the proper way to manage a garden.[118]

Large gardens must be opened with the ritual of *wélu' tana mé'ang*, 'throwing the red soil'. If someone opens a large garden, a conceptual division is made between a smaller section of the garden (*lapa(ng)*) and a larger section (*du'éng bélen*). The yield from the larger section may not be eaten until the communal ritual of *wu'u(ng) wata'*, 'new maize', has been performed (see below). If a household opens a large garden, they are said to "have plans" for

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this means that the boundary is like two people who are married, and if someone abuses the wife of another man he will be avenged by war (and so the abuse of someone else's land will also be avenged by war) (idem 141). In Palué, I was told that stone walls were only built by the Dutch, not by the local people, and the impression that I got was that people find the thought of stone walls almost horrifying.

[115] Lewis (1988b:41) says that the layout of the gardens in the landscape in Tana 'Ai functions as a mnemonic for remembering the ancestors, and that this sometimes help to solve disputes over land.

[116] In the past, rice used to be cooked together with crushed maize, but this habit has recently been abandoned here, even though it is still strong on, for instance, Solor.

[117] In the late 1960s to early 1970s, new strains of high-yielding rice and industrially-manufactured chemical inputs were widely introduced in the Indonesian lowlands, which greatly increased the possible food production (Li 1999:xiii). The uplands also saw a number of economic, political, and social changes, to which the populations had to adapt (idem xiv).

[118] In Tana 'Ai, *blepeng* is also used to denote the wooden barrages that check erosion in the gardens, but here it also refers to ritual boundaries within the gardens (Lewis 1988b:351).

the garden, since large gardens require much work and effort. In return, large gardens can yield a large food surplus. During the lifetime of large gardens, however, the household may not seek out wild tubers from the forest even if they suffer from food shortage during the rainy season. One young woman was said to have begun to vomit violently after having broken this rule.

February is often the wettest and windiest month of the rainy season when many people are forced to seek out additional foods from the forest; this includes wild tubers, forest fruits (e.g. rambutan, durian), and wild game (small deer, wild pig, junglefowl, monkey, large gecko). The river holds an abundance of fish and shrimp, but snakes and insects are normally not eaten even though they are abundant; the only exception is a species of caterpillar (*moda*) that is eaten as a delicacy at *wu'u(ng) wata'* (see below).[119] Unlike wild tubers, wild fruits and meat from the forest and river is allowed for consumption by households that have opened a large garden. Hunting and fishing are, however, too time-consuming to be carried out on a regular basis. While most households keep chickens and small livestock, such as pigs or goats, these animals are mainly intended to be used in ritual and are rarely used for private consumption.[120] [121] (Chickens and eggs are also essential in the relation between wife-givers and wife-takers [see Chapter Four].)

The house

Houses (*lango*) belong to the household (cf. Graham 1991:93) and are built with the help of close relatives, but whether or not houses have always been owned by the household in this

[119] One informant claims that people did not eat fish in the past, but gave no reason for why this would have been so. It is possible that there used to be an explicit association between fish and the souls of the dead (*kewoko(t)*) in Palué, similar to the association elsewhere in the Lamaholot-speaking area (e.g. Arndt 1951:51, 55, 173, 198; Graham 1991:256).

[120] In 2009, the price of a small pig was about 250,000 Indonesian Rupiah, which corresponded to what the average farmer could earn in 3-4 weeks, at best.

[121] Some households also keep ducks and during my time in the field two cows were brought to the village in an attempt to develop animal husbandry. Unlike the lowland villages, Palué has neither buffalos nor horses.

area is unclear.[122] (Like land, property is not actually 'owned', but merely looked after for the next generation.) Following the governmental decree that all (married) men must have a house of their own in the village it is usually one of the sons who gets to inherit the house, often the eldest son. The case of Ibu Danga is an exception: Ibu Danga is the eldest daughter (and also the eldest child) and got to inherit the house from her father after she had married, but presumably only because her husband, Kakak Léwar, was not local. Ibu Danga initially lived in the house with her father, MB, MBW, yZ, yZH, and a few other younger brothers and sisters; their mother had already passed away. After Ibu Danga married Kakak Léwar, he, too, moved into the house, and by the time their first child had been born (now deceased) all other family members had moved out.

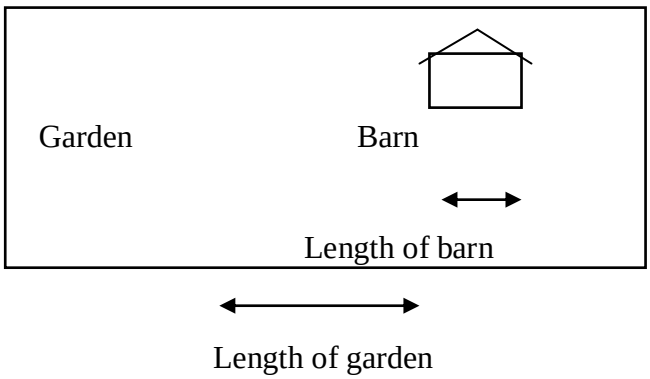
Barns are either inherited along with a garden or built anew in a newly opened garden. Neither houses nor barns are named, but the house of the Lord of the Land is referred to as *lango bélen*, 'great house'; this is the locus of assembly for participants in all ritual that concerns the land (see Chapter One). The houses of clan heads and heads of clan segments do not have special designations but are, nevertheless, clearly associated with the individual clans and clan segments. Certain rituals that pertain to specific clans or clan segments must be performed in these houses.[123]

The structure of the traditional house now only lives on in the structure of the barn (*ori*), which is located in the garden. In the village, traditional houses have been replaced by more modern houses. Barns (and previously also houses) are built around wooden posts that support a hip- or gable-shaped roof made from bundles of blady grass. Barns usually require renovation after 10 years and roofs need replacement every 3-5 years. The structure of the barn is rectangular and held together with plant fibres only. Free-standing bamboo walls

[122] Kennedy (1955:264) reports that ordinary dwellings in East Flores are owned either by the family or by the lineage.
[123] In other parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area, all clan houses are referred to as *lango bélen* (Arndt 1940:96; R.H. Barnes 1996:62; Kohl 1998:113).

enclose a square or rectangular compartment with an elevated bamboo floor (Vatter [1932:68-9, 132, 148-9] gives several detailed descriptions and drawings of such houses in East Flores). Today, the enclosed compartment is very small and serves as a granary (*do'ong*) for storing rice and maize. Some clans have a small cooking area underneath the granary, whereas clans must cook next to the granary. In front of the barn there is one or more bamboo platforms (B.I. *balé*) for eating and resting. (In the past, the household would have slept together on the same *balé* inside the house.)[124]

The barn may be built anywhere in the garden as long as it follows the alignment of the garden:



Unlike barns, modern houses in the village are not elevated from the ground, unless they are built on cement platforms. Wood and brick are now more common building materials than bamboo, and nails are often used to keep the structure together. Blady grass is, in addition, giving way to roofs of corrugated iron.[125] Inside the house, free-standing walls

[124] Special sleeping houses for boys and girls did not exist in Palué (but see Arndt 1951: 98-99, 154; Kennedy 1955:202, 269).

[125] Many houses also have a small lawn with flower pots, fruit trees (e.g. mango, coconut) and spices (e.g. bird's eye chilli) as a result of a governmental initiative tied to the piping projects that have brought tapped water into the villages. In 2010, I participated in the finalization of the first piping project in Kanada, where I learnt about the current agenda for encouraging people to tend lawns and private spice gardens outside the house.

divide the house into different compartments for sleeping, cooking and eating, and receiving guests. The central pole inside the house may not run all the way to the ceiling in an unbroken line, but must be divided into two, with one part standing slightly to one side, resting on an interior wall. If this is not done, it is believed that the house will eventually collapse. (I have not heard if the same rule also applies to the barn.)[126] Furthermore, the house skeleton may not form part of the door frame, but must leave a gap of about 30cm to allow wind to enter and sweep away illness from the house.[127] For this reason, a house must have two doors, one at the front and one at the back (the wind enters through the front and exits through the back); the doors may, in addition, not face each other directly.

If bamboo or wood is used to construct a house, the material must follow special rules of alignment; this rule also applies when building a barn or constructing an item of furniture or an animal pen. If the material is placed vertically, the root side must point downwards, as, for instance, in a wall. If the material is placed horizontally, however, the tip side must face left, as seen from the front; as, for instance, in a house skeleton. Pieces of wood or bamboo that are joined together must always be placed so that root side meets tip side. When looking at a house the root side, therefore, always faces either downwards or left on all sides of the house (and vice versa for the tip side). This concept of unidirectional and irreversible orientation in space recurs in, for instance, the practice of marriage alliance and in the kin relations that result from marriage (see Chapter Four).

Building a large construction, such as a house, barn, tent, bamboo platform (B.I. *balé*), or bridge, requires that a cooling ritual (*lo'i gəlaté*) is performed before the work begins, so as to safeguard the structure. If such a structure is later to be dismantled, the ritual must be repeated before the work begins. In the case of houses and barns, a second cooling ritual must

[126] The 'mother pole' mentioned by Vatter (1932:68) was not mentioned in Palué. Notably, the 'mother pole' should be stronger and higher than any of the other poles. There is also no association between, for instance, the right house post and the ancestors in Palué, as has been reported in Kédang (R.H. Barnes 1974:75).
[127] A gap is also left between the window frames and the house skeleton but in this case the rule does not seem to apply, as the practice is found throughout Indonesia, even in modern houses in the cities.

be performed once the roof has been put in place (at which time the structure is considered to be finished); if not, it is not considered safe to move into the house. If a household experiences ill fortune in a house they can request for one or more cleansing rituals to be performed. Such rituals are typically less elaborate than the initial cooling rituals. All rituals that are done for houses and barns concern all structures that are considered to be part of the same compound; for instance, bathrooms and free-standing kitchens.

Sometimes, the ill fortune experienced in a house is said to be due to the house alignment. Houses that face the sea, *lali lau(t)*, are commonly held to experience ill fortune since the sea is considered to be a 'bad' direction associated with the dead (see Chapter One). As a result, several houses that face the sea due to the grid pattern of the modern village have been physically realigned in the last few decades. Beds are also not placed so that the head points towards the sea, but all other directions are permitted. (The dead should, in addition, always be buried with their feet pointing towards the sea [see also Chapters Four and Five].)

Household

The households in this area were originally very large, as couples would have as many as ten children. According to current accounts, men shared a house with their wife, parents, unmarried siblings, and unmarried children, and sometimes also their married siblings and married children. There is no mention of slaves in Palué nowadays, even though slavery was once common among Lamaholot (cf. Seegeler 1931, cited in R.H. Barnes 1972:94).[128] Men and boys are said to have been responsible for the garden work, whereas women and girls were responsible for weaving (in the house) (cf. Vatter 1932:152). Girls inherited some of their mother's weaving equipment once they became adult, but the rest they had to make

[128] In another account from East Flores, adoptive children and slaves, if any, were part of the household (Arndt 1940:97); Vatter (1932:70) also includes a man's clan brothers and clan sisters (for instance, his unmarried cousins or married cousins who have not yet been able to build a house of their own), as well as clan orphans, called 'house slaves' (*keruna*).

themselves. (Ibu Danga once told me that she or one of her younger sisters was supposed to have inherited their mother's weaving equipment, but that this equipment was "lost" when the mother passed away before any of the girls had mastered the skill of weaving [the equipment literally disappeared, probably taken by someone else].)[129] The handing down of weaving equipment has now disappeared in Palué, since weaving is here not a profitable enterprise (see below). While informants do not mention if tools and weapons were also passed down from father to son it is not unlikely that items that were associated with male activities were inherited in this way.

The current accounts seem to imply that households have always been focused on a patrilineal descent group, but the veracity of this picture is debatable since this area has experienced a number of major social shifts in the last century, resulting in, among other things, a social focus on patrilineal descent groups (see Chapter Three). Today, the household is indeed focused on a patrilineal group and the average household is much smaller than it used to be, largely owing to modern contraceptives and local healthcare initiatives to limit the number of children born to each couple. Most couples nowadays have less than five children. It is also rare that the grandparents share the same house as their children; usually, they have a house of their own or live permanently in the gardens. Sometimes a couple's unmarried siblings and adult children (married or unmarried) can live together with the couple, but this is often temporary. Relatives on the wife's side are as likely to stay in the couple's house as relatives on the husband's side.

Each household is headed by a head of household, or head of family (B.I. *kepala keluarga*), who is typically the husband, or the father.[130] In 2008, Palué only had 116 houses

[129] I only know that Ibu Danga has actually inherited a rice measuring scoop from her mother.
[130] In the past, the head of household might have been the oldest man or perhaps the oldest woman (cf. Arndt 1933a:88; Kennedy 1955:164, 210; Lewis 1988b:18, 127, 129). In other parts of East Flores, the head of house is succeeded by a younger brother or by the eldest son (Arndt 1940:97).

but 132 heads of household; this means that 16 couples or families were sharing the house of a relative but that each nuclear household retained its own head of household.

Today, at least, the sexual division of space inside the house only really becomes visible when guests come to visit. Unless the guests are close relatives or friends, they are received by the men of the house in the sitting room, at the front of the house. This applies equally to male, female, and children guests. Meanwhile, the women and children of the household withdraw to the back of the house (sometimes to the kitchen, which is located at the back or even behind the house); this is where the household normally eats and where close relatives and friends are received. The women will only leave the back of the house to serve meals or refreshments for the men and the guests in the sitting room.[131] Some informants say that in the past women and children always used to have their meals at the back and that only men would eat in the sitting room, but today men, women, and children share much the same spaces (and duties) within the house.[132] Men and women also work side by side in the gardens, and the children often join their parents after school hours or during lunch breaks.

Apart from school teachers and village officials, everyone in Palué works the gardens every day except Sundays, or at least Sunday morning when they attend mass. In addition to private garden work, all adults are members of one or more work teams that rotate between the gardens of the participants. Most work teams are kin-based, and can feature anything from five to thirty people. No compensation is given for the work other than lunch and refreshments in the garden. Special work teams can also be hired by the day if need be, and these participants will receive a monetary compensation. Hired work teams do not consist of close relatives and are normally only offered light refreshments in the garden. On the whole, only school teachers and village officials can afford to hire special work teams.

[131] Male guests are offered cigarettes (B.I. *rokok*) while women and old men are offered *wua malu*, 'areca nut and betel nut' (see Chapter One). At meal-times, guests should be invited to share the meal; if not, coffee, tea, or hot milk should be offered, along with cakes, if there are any.
[132] Elsewhere in East Flores, the father and sons would eat first, followed by the mother and daughters (Arndt 1940:25).

Lunch and refreshments in the garden are prepared by the wife of the garden owner, or by a close female relative. Men do not help with the cooking in the barn, even though they sometimes cook at home.

The only clearly gender-specific activity that I have come across in today's Palué is weaving. However, due to the time-consuming process (it sometimes takes months to finish a single sarong) and the ready availability of cheap, machine-woven textiles at the local market in Boru, weaving has been declining for quite some time. A strong contributing factor to the near-disappearance of weaving in Palué is the poor demand on local motifs, both within the village and outside. The younger generations prefer representative images and geometrical figures, above the straight lines (or "dead motifs") on textiles from Palué.[133] My informants estimate that only about ten elderly women in Palué have mastered the skill of weaving, but in some other areas commercial weaving is thriving. Instead of commercial weaving, the women in Palué occasionally produce leaf baskets which they sell at the weekly market in Boru, alongside most of the cash crops from their gardens (see below).

The agricultural year

Ideally, each of the different stages of the agricultural year should be coupled with one or more garden rituals so as to ensure a good yield. In practice, however, not everyone has the time, or means, to perform all of these rituals every year. None of the more common garden rituals seem to feature the Rice Maiden (*tono wujo*) in Palué; she can elsewhere be personified by one or more women in some garden ceremonies (cf. Kohl 1998; Vatter 1932:106) (see Chapter One). The Rice Maiden, nonetheless, remains an integral aspect of the agricultural activity and it is believed that it is she who brings the yield to the gardens.

[133] Informants say that the different patterns in Palué are free for everyone to use, which differs from Ruth Barnes' (1989:74-5) reports from Lamalera, Lembata, where the weaving patterns belong to specific clans.

Rituals for individual gardens are arranged by the owner of the garden in collaboration with one or more ritual specialists. Conversely, rituals that involve all of the gardens are arranged by the head of village in collaboration with one or more ritual specialists. (This, at least, is how communal ritual is arranged today.)

In April or May, the garden owners need to decide whether or not to open a new garden; a handful of new gardens are opened each year. If a new garden is to be opened, the owners of all of the gardens and *néwa* that border on the planned garden gather to draw the ritual boundaries (*nedong*) of the new garden. This procedure is simply called *nedong* and marks the onset of a new agricultural year, the first stage of which is called *tiné*, 'clearing a new garden'. On the first day of clearing the new garden, one tree is cut down to mark the opening of a new garden; this is called *bélo bulung*, 'cutting a mark'. The tree must fall at the first stroke and may not be removed from the garden unless the garden is large, in which case special rules apply (see below). On the following day, the rest of the trees are cut and left to dry until August or September.

If the new garden is large, the owner is said to have "special plans" for it (see above); the ritual of *wélu' tana mé'ang*, 'throwing red soil', must be performed before a large garden is burnt. If this ritual is done, the owner of the garden is allowed to bring back some of the bark from the felled tree to his house while his male relatives go to the forest to hunt. They then gather to cook and eat the meat together.[134] The women must stay at home that day, and may neither bathe, dig, nor make any loud noises, only relax and cook for themselves and for the children. The men in question are not allowed to eat any of the food that has been cooked by the women on this day.[135]

New gardens are burnt in August or September, marking the second stage of the agricultural year; *holo'*, 'detached' (not to confuse with *holo*, see Introduction). The fire must

[134] All accounts I have heard state the owner of the garden as being male.
[135] Boys are allowed to finish off any leftovers from the men's food, even though they did not participate in the hunt.

be started with the help of a bamboo torch. Unburnt roots and grasses are cleared from the gardens in September, during the third stage of the agricultural year, *buko*, 'cutting'. After a second burning all the remaining grasses are cleared away in the fourth stage of the agricultural year; *lewung*, [?]. The garden is now ready for planting.

Before planting begins, everyone in the village should gather at the ritual house at the *lewo* to perform the communal ritual of *géré lewo*, 'entering the ritual place of the ritual community'. In practice, however, *géré lewo* is only done every 4-5 years. The non-ritual specialists will stay at the ritual house from late evening to noontime the following day, while the ritual specialists enter the *lewo* alone to plant a sacred stone (*nuba*) and a pole of *danga* wood in the ground and dance around them.[136] Allegedly, there is a collection of *nuba* at the *lewo*, which bears witness of previous rituals having been performed there and substantiates the belief that the rituals of the community have been passed down through the hands of several generations. When the ritual specialists return to the ritual house, the *lewo* may not be entered again until it is time to perform a new *géré lewo*, and people are effectively kept at bay through rumours claiming that the *lewo* is an eerie and dangerous place where the landscape keeps changing and where spirits try to lure intruders away from their own world.

The non-ritual specialists who have meanwhile remained in the ritual house have busied themselves with cooking, eating, and relaxing, but are not allowed to fall asleep until the ritual is concluded on the following day. It is the responsibility of *ilu alat(eng)* and *ina puken* to ensure that everyone stays awake; on this occasion, both the *ilu alat(eng)* and the *ina puken* must belong to the clan segment Danga Latuk.

In the morning, a goat is sacrificed outside the ritual house; the clans and clan segments take turns bringing a goat and tying it to the ritual house overnight. *Hurit*, who kills the goat and examines its bladder (see Chapter One), is here known as *wuling geto*, 'broken neck'.

[136] This theme also appears in other communal garden rituals (see below).

There is also a pig sacrifice, but the pig may not be killed by *wuling geto*; it must be killed by a man who does not come from the village so that all the participants in *géré lewo* can eat from the meat. This man is referred to as *nara* [?]. The blood from the sacrificial pig is then sprinkled onto the musical instruments (*alu*) of the women, and its head is taken to all of the planned new gardens to sprinkle blood on the spot where the first rice will be sown. Some informants say that the individual households must also make a private ritual with pig sacrifice in each of their gardens after this, and that large gardens require a sacrifice of both pig and goat (see also *kleja*, below).[137]

Planting marks the fifth stage of the agricultural year, *pahan(g)*, 'putting inside; planting', and begins in October. The planting should always be preceded by a ritual, simply called *pahan(g)*, but due to constraints on funds and time only the larger and more productive gardens receive this ritual nowadays. Exceptions are, however, made if there are signs to indicate otherwise: in the case of the garden of Felix Danga, eggs from junglefowl were found when the garden was cleared off grasses, which is considered to be a 'bad' sign. No ritual was performed before the planting finished, but when Felix Danga showed no signs of recovering from a sudden motorbike accident the ritual was finally done and the very same week he began to recover.

Another 'bad' sign that requires ritual is dreaming of a deceased parent who comes to the garden saying that he or she is hungry; encountering a large snake in the garden is also a 'bad' sign, as is being stung by a scorpion during planting, sneezing during the first planting, or rainfall during the first planting. If the garden owner decides to perform the ritual once the planting is over, he or she may do so as long as the barn has not yet been built (and vice versa).

[137] One informant holds that large gardens require a sacrifice of a pig and a goat in the first year, plus that of a pig in the following year. The animal must be consumed on the day it is killed, in particular if it is a goat.

Pahang is performed by *ilu alat(eng*) and sometimes also by the garden owner. They are assisted by *ina puken* or by a woman with the status 'mother' (*ina, əma*). *Ilu alat(eng*) makes small holes in the ground with a stick while singing, and *ina puken* follows, putting seeds of rice or maize into the holes and covering the holes. In the past, *ilu alat(eng)* and *ina puken* would sow the entire garden alone, but now they only sow a small patch of the garden; the rest of the work is done by a work team. After sowing, *ilu alat(eng*) chews *wua malu* which has been picked from the garden before it was burnt; he also offers the *wua malu* to everyone with the status 'sister' (*biné*) (men and women alike). After this, the ancestors are ritually fed in the barn, and the participants share a meal together.

All planting follows the same pattern, whether it is done at ritual or not. Men go first and make holes in the ground with a stick, while women follow with baskets of seeds to plant the seeds in the holes and cover the holes. The planting proceeds from side to side across the length of the garden. Sometimes, men help with the sowing, but if they do they carry the basket in the hand rather than hanging it at the side or around the neck in the strap. Only once have I seen a woman help the men make holes in the ground, and she was a very strong, young woman with a masculine manner. Rice is planted by the whole work team, divided onto a male and a female group. Once the rice is planted, the work team pairs up in male-female couples to plant maize. In general, it only takes a day to finish all planting in a garden.

November to January is the wet season. During this time, people are occupied with clearing the wild grasses from the gardens, so as to leave room for the growing crops, and with keeping animals, such as birds, deer, and wild boar, at bay, to prevent them from eating the seeds. This stage is the sixth stage of the agricultural year and is called *guruk*, 'gather'. The point when the first maize sprouts become visible underneath the grasses is called *guruk waha kleméténg* [?]; this is seen as a good sign.

Two important rituals take place during *guruk*: *hawé,* 'saving from misfortune by water', and *mula hekur,* 'planting *hekur*'.[138] At *hawek',* a pole is planted in the garden next to a stone with a small piece of metal on it. The pole may not hit a hidden stone in the ground when it is planted. This spot then becomes known as *mahé(ng) plega(ng),* (more or less) 'planted pole', and the items at *mahé(ng) plega(ng)* may never be dissembled, but must be left to wither or fall down due to natural causes.[139]

At *mula hekur,* the resilient weed *hekur* is planted around the *mahé(ng) plega(ng)* and a pig is killed by a man with the status 'wife-giver' (*ina ama*). The blood from the pig is sprinkled on the items at *mahé(ng) plega(ng)* and on four decorated poles that have been planted in each of the garden's four corners. The latter poles are of the same species of tree (*mérang*) from which the leaves are always taken to put underneath a sacrificial pig at slaughter. At *mula hekur,* the sacrificial pig's lower jaw is also hung on the pole at *mahé(ng) plega(ng)* before slaughter.

In February there is no garden ritual, since no blood may be spilt during this month. February is a feared month during which people used to keep their voices down and observe great precaution in the past. It is also the wettest and windiest month of the wet season, with winds that can make trees fall over.

Harvest only begins once the rains have stopped, usually in April, and this is the seventh stage of the agricultural year; *oru*, '[harvest?]'. (In the past two decades, however, the rains have tended to continue throughout April, which has resulted in many lost harvests.) Rice is harvested manually with the help of small knives, cutting off the stems. The work can take weeks to finish and requires the assistance of a work team. If the garden is to be used yet another year, all grasses are cleared away at the same time as the crops are harvested.

[138] *Hekur* is a medical weed which is believed to be 'everlasting'; I have not yet identified the species.
[139] Compare with the stone and wood altar (*mahé*) in Tana 'Ai (see Introduction).

Harvest must always begin at the lowest end of the garden, and proceed upwards, moving from left to right across the garden; if these rules are not followed, the yield is believed to become small.[140] If the barn is located at one of the far ends of the garden it is, nevertheless, permitted to begin the harvest in the patch of land above the barn, as long as the work proceeds from the barn upwards, leaving no un-worked areas in between the barn and the highest point of the garden. Once this patch of land has been harvested, the work must resume at the lowest point of the garden and continue all the way up until reaching the barn.[141]

Maize and commodity plants are harvested once they have become ripe, and the harvest does not follow any special regulation, nor does it require the help of a work team.

In large gardens, which are conceptually divided into a larger part and a smaller part (*du'éng bélen* and *lapa(ng)*), the harvest in the larger part of the garden must be coupled with the ritual of *oru bula(ng)*, 'harvest mark', on the first day of the harvest. *Ilu alat(eng)* and *ina puken* will then in theory harvest all of the rice (although in practice they are assisted by a work team) and fill the rice in special baskets (*bako blékang*) under complete silence. When the baskets are full, the ancestors are ritually fed in the barn. In the evening, the baskets are put on top of a small bamboo platform in front of the barn (*di nawé*, 'at the door') and left overnight. If, for whatever reason, a portion of the harvested rice is put inside the granary, the work team must say that "chickens did it" (*manuk si'at*) by scraping their feet on the ground so that the rice accidentally flew inside the barn. The next day, the rice baskets are lifted into the granary in a ritual called *oru soga(ng)*, 'lifting the harvest'.[142] A pig is then sacrificed by

[140] During the harvest in Kakak Léwar's garden in 2010, Kakak Léwar insisted on starting at the highest end of the garden since this would be the more practical procedure. He was, however, met with protests but in the end the work team had to bid his will. When Ibu Danga arrived she was horrified to see that the work team moved the wrong way and immediately ordered them to resume the work at the lowest end of the garden.
[141] This particular procedure was done in the harvest of the garden of Piter Werang in 2010.
[142] There are several kinds of rice: red (traditional), black, and white (introduced); round and long. Most households plant one type of rice only, but if two kinds of rice are planted in the same garden, each must be stored separately in the granary.

ilu alat(eng) in the ritual of *bélo tékanét*, 'cut and let us eat', and the head of the pig is divided in two: the right half is given to *hurit*, who may not eat it; the left half is given to someone with the status 'sister' (*biné*) and may be eaten by the garden owner. After this, another relative with the status 'sister' (*biné*) is promised some of the surplus yield from the larger part of the garden.[143] Additional surplus is shared among the garden owner's siblings or sold on the market in Boru. One portion of the harvest is also put aside for planting in the next year.

The rice from the larger part of the garden only becomes available for consumption after the communal ritual of *wu'ung wata'*, 'new maize'. The yield from the smaller part of the garden may be eaten straight away and this part of the garden never requires any ritual. *Wu'ung wata'* may only be performed once barns have been built in all of the new gardens, and ideally before the harvest (either in January or March) although in practice this is not always possible.[144] On the day before *wu'ung wata'* women grind some of the rice from the larger part of the garden to flour (*mélang*); the following morning, the men go to the forest to pick a certain species of caterpillar (*moda*) that lives in bamboo. *Moda* are considered a delicacy and may not be eaten before *wu'ung wata'*. The women then fry these caterpillars along with the rice flour and serve it at a communal meal in the house of the Lord of the Land (*lango bélen*) later that evening. Before this meal, however, each clan and clan segment presents a food offering to the ancestors and gathers in the house of the head of clan or clan segment to share a light meal together. Each of the men and women who have served as *ilu alat(eng)* and *ina puken* during the year's garden rituals will gather in the house of someone with the status 'wife-giver' (*ina ama*).

At the main meal in the evening, the clans and clan segments take turns bringing a pig or a goat for sacrifice. The garden owners who have done *mula hekur* will also bring a small

[143] Food gifts from someone with the status wife-giver/progenitor line (*opu laké*) may only be shared between uterine siblings.
[144] *Wu'ung wata'* is never performed in February since the ritual entails animal sacrifice.

chicken and a machete; the *ilu alat(eng)* of each of these gardens will then cut the head off these chickens with the machetes and let someone with the status 'sister' (*biné*) cook the meat. The meat from all the animals must be consumed the same evening.

If another garden owner plans to open a large garden in the following year he can investigate the feasibility of these plans by cutting the head off yet another chicken, in order to predict the results.[145]

Before eating, an old man hangs a stem of areca nut on a stick and carries it around the house of the Lord of the Land, followed by a crowd shouting "*wolo, géré, géré!*", 'areca nut, enter, enter!', three times. A second old man awaits at the door, where the first man asks if he may enter. If the answer is 'yes', he asks if the second man could open the door and hand him a ladder (which would have made sense when the houses were elevated), which, the second man replies, has already been done; the first man is free to enter. The end of *wu'ung wata'* is the offering of the stem of areca nut to the ancestors on top of a stone that has been put out by *ilu alat(eng*). After this, the rice from the larger part of the garden is sanctioned for consumption.

Similar to the rice from the larger part of a large garden, maize from any garden, large or small, only becomes sanctioned for consumption after the performance of a garden ritual in the individual gardens, called *nahung ata maté(ng)*, 'feeding the ancestors'. The garden owner roasts a pair of corncobs and brings them to a flat stone that he has put out on the pathway in front of the barn; the corncobs are then peeled and cut in half and the upper halves are placed on the stone alongside *wua malu* and cigarettes. After this, the ancestors are ritually fed in the barn, whereupon the maize becomes available for consumption.

During June and July there are no specified garden activities, but in August and September the rice that has been harvested in each of the gardens is separated from the stems

[145] Prediction ritual otherwise involves eggs and is called *pasa'* (place or lift an oath or curse?; Pampus 2001:113, 185).

at the ritual feast of ‘stepping on the rice’ (B.I. *menginjak padi*). This is the eighth stage of the agricultural year: *rikh*, ‘stepping on the rice’, or *pusak*, ‘season for stepping on the rice’. Everyone who has participated in the garden work of a certain garden must be invited to this feast.

In the morning, the baskets of rice are taken out of the granary and spread over a large plastic sheet in front of the barn. The participants then take turns to dance in circles on the rice to the rhythm of local pop songs; this music is played with portable tape recorders and loudspeakers powered by generators that run on gasoline, but loudspeakers were banned from the gardens for a long time as the loud noise was believed to scare away the Rice Maiden (see Chapter One). In the past, one or more on-lookers (typically women) would beat the rhythm on drums while singing.

Once the rice has been separated from the stems the baskets are re-filled with the unhusked rice and put back into the granary. Ideally, this should be done the same day. After this, the seasonally bound stages of the agricultural year have come to an end, but my informants identify two more stages: *biho*, ‘cooking’, and *bu’at*, ‘eating’. ‘Cooking’ and ‘eating’ are the fruits of the agricultural activities and can be enjoyed anytime throughout the year.

Kleja, gére lewo, and gren mahé

Some of my informants have equated the ritual of *géré lewo* with the ritual of *gren mahé* that is performed in Tana ‘Ai (cf. Lewis 1988b:95-101), and there are indeed some striking similarities (see also Chapter Five). According to Lewis (1988b:69, 95), *gren mahé* is the

most important ceremony in Tana ‘Ai, in which of all of the clans within a certain domain participate. Ideally, the ritual should be performed every 4-7 years (ibid 95).[146]

Gren mahé is staged around an altar (*mahé*) of stone and wood in the forest, which marks the ritual centre of the ceremonial domain (idem 354).[147] I have heard people in Tana ‘Ai say that this is an eerie and dangerous place with spirits and other perils lurking, closely recalling the view of the Lamaholot *lewo*.

Lewis (1988b: 86, 171, 308) reports that the ritual of *gren mahé* legitimizes social change, by ‘seeking the source’ and ‘building up the beginning’ [anew] through the (male) ritual specialists (*ina ama*).[148] Since *gren mahé* is staged in the forest it also serves as a mediator between the living and the dead, as the forest is believed to be the realm of the ancestors (idem 23).

A few of my informants in Palué, however, have equated *gren mahé* with the Lamaholot ritual of *kleja*. *Kleja* is (nowadays) an optional garden ritual which is performed at the end of the agricultural year for the benefit of all adjacent new gardens. Overall, however, *kleja* bears more resemblance to *géré lewo* than to *gren mahé*. The greatest difference between *géré lewo* and *kleja* is that *kleja* is staged in a garden and performed over four days (plus the fact that it is optional, at least nowadays).[149]

The first day of *kleja* is called *hoko’ klokat*, ‘picking tree bark’, since the ritual specialists cut the bark from a large tree and bring it to the garden where the ritual is to be performed. There they turn the bark into a storage container for rice, and in the evening the rice from the

[146] I was invited to a *gren mahé* in Kringa (domain Tana Kringa) in 2010 but was unable to attend due to a bout of malaria.
[147] All independent ceremonial domains in Tana ‘Ai are centred on an altar (*mahé*) (see Introduction).
[148] The ritual specialists have been delegated ceremonial authority by the Source of the Domain (the equivalent of the Lamaholot Lord of the Land) and are known as *ina ama*, due to their association with their clan headwoman, who is also called *ina ama* (Lewis 1988b:18, 171, 308).
[149] In 2009, I attended a *kleja* close to the abandoned hamlet of Lewolalang, arranged jointly by Palué and Kanada. (In the dialect of Kanada, the ritual is pronounced *kledja*.) This *kleja* was staged in a large garden that was shared by two brothers from Kanada who belonged to clan Léwar.

barn is separated from the stems through dancing (B.I. *menginjak padi*). The dancing continues until morning if necessary.

The second day of *kleja* is called *bélo alo*, 'cutting the bamboo', because the ritual specialists cut 6-8 large bamboos (*alo polé(ng)*) from a special place in the woods and bring them to the garden during singing. The men are greeted by a group of women who have spent the day collecting firewood and other wood that is to be used in the garden (the wood is called *alo dé'i(ng)*, 'straight bamboo' [Pampus 2001:39]).[150] A dialogue is also held in ritual language between the ritual specialist who has headed the bamboo cutting and another ritual specialist who has been waiting for them in the barn.

In the evening, called *gawé alo*, 'jump (over) the bamboo', the bamboo brought to the garden by the men are used in a ritual game in which the ritual specialists and the women who collected the firewood are to jump across parallel rows of bamboo that are slapped together by pairs of men (and women?), who squat face-to-face.

The third day is called *bélo dulo*, 'cutting the wood', since the ritual specialists cut a small Y-shaped tree from a special place in the woods (different from the first place) and bring to the garden along with two flat stones. The tree and one of the stones are then planted on the spot where the rice was previously separated from the stems, and the second stone is placed flat in front of them. In the evening, called *wadong jago*, the ritual specialists sing and dance around the planted tree and stones together with the women who participated in the bamboo game.[151]

On the last day of *kleja* a goat is killed by *hurit* (here: *wuling geto*), who then examines the liver and bladder (see Chapter One). (This goat has been tied to a bamboo platform in the garden from the start of the ritual.) A different man (a 'stranger', it seems) then kills a pig in

[150] Women also collect wood at *géré lewo*, and this wood must be picked from a particular place in the forest.
[151] *Wadong* could be related to a number of words with very different meanings; for example, father, ax, wing of bird, carry on the hip, flutter, package, lease, pact, wide apart, loosen (Echols and Shadily 1989:52, 260, 281, 403, 458; Pampus 2001:256). I have found no meaning for the word *jago*.

the same spot, after which a pig is sacrificed in each of the individual gardens for which the *kleja* was intended.

There does seem to be a close association between *géré lewo* and *kleja*, both in the way they are performed and in the fact that they are concerned with new gardens. *Gren mahé*, on the face of it, appears to be a slightly different kind of ritual, yet both *géré lewo* and *gren mahé* are performed in secluded places in the forest which strong spiritual associations to them. All three rituals feature the inclusion of a stone and wood altar, and it is possible that there is a deeper relation between them.

Origins of the Settlement

Nilék and Nohéng

According to myth, Nilék and Nohéng were two brothers who lived in the hamlet of Lewolalang, approximately three kilometres north of today's Palué.[152] Nilék was the elder brother, and it was said that he had amazing powers. He married a woman named Hulo from the Muhang hamlet of Eko.[153] Not long afterwards, the two brothers fell out with each other. Nohéng moved to the nearby hamlet of Puka Uno but, as he had taken a liking to Hulo, it did not take long before he had seduced her. When Nilék learnt about this he was furious, and cut off the head of his younger brother. Nilék then forced Hulo to cradle Nohéng's head in her arms, until she could no longer bear the pain and died from the agony of having to do this.

Hulo's brothers soon came to avenge the death of their sister, but Nilék hid behind great fences; the traces of which are allegedly visible along the footpath that leads to the gardens below today's Palué. What Nilék did not know was that Hulo's brothers came

[152] This is the version of the myth of Nilék and Nohéng that was recounted to me by members of clan Danga.
[153] This is presumably [Eko] Bubuk; not the more recent hamlet of Eko [Riang].

armed with the knowledge of how to defeat him. While the greatest of Nilék's powers was that to control fire, his only weakness was water; he had revealed all of this to Hulo who, in all innocence, had told her family when boasting about her husband's special abilities. Hulo's brothers, therefore, now rushed to the fences where Nilék hid, carrying containers filled with water.

At first, Nilék tried to defend himself, but then he decided to flee. He ran to a large tree by the road that now leads up to Palué, and transformed into a large gecko, so that he could hide underneath the tree bark. But Hulo's brothers were not fooled, and swiftly set the tree on fire. Since Nilék was still in the shape of a gecko he could not transform back into human shape inside his hiding place, but was trapped underneath the bark until he (rather ironically) was burnt alive. The remains of his body were never removed from the ashes and given a proper burial.

'Nilék Nohéng' was the official village name given to the hamlet of Palué in 1978. The name refers both to the myth of the two rival brothers and to Palué's kin relation with the neighbouring hamlet of Kanada (village Koba Soma). The history behind this kin relation goes back to the history of hamlet Lewolalang. Myth has it that the predecessors of today's population in Palué originally gathered to perform communal ritual at the *lewo* at Lewolalang; this is consistent with current claims that the original settlement was located north of today's Palué, although the only name I have heard on the settlement in these accounts is 'Lewo Woking'. Some of the accounts, however, hold that the original settlement has been abandoned for generations, but Lewolalang was only forcefully relocated by the regency in 1975, since there was no road connecting Lewolalang to the rest of the regency. The same fate also struck the neighbouring hamlet of Puka Uno, but Palué escaped because the inhabitants joined forces to build a road to Suktukan on their own accord.

The populations of Lewolalang and Puka Uno were moved to a village by the main road which had been especially built for them: village Koba Soma (hamlet Kanada). Part of the population from Lewolalang, however, refused to settle in Kanada, and instead chose to come to Palué. The reason why they chose Palué was that the population in Palué descended from the populations in Lewolalang and Puka Uno; hence, they were already seen as one.

Due to the fact that the populations in Palué and Kanada shared the same origins, the two settlements henceforth became related as eB/yB, and perhaps because Palué was an older settlement than the newly built Kanada it became identified with the eB, Nilék; Kanada became the yB, Nohéng. Another consequence of their shared origins is that the populations in Palué and Kanada may never fight.

It is notable that this eB/yB relation implies (and, indeed, commands) peace, despite its direct association with the rivalry between the brothers Nilék and Nohéng; this differs markedly from the relation between the rival parties of Demon and Padji (see Introduction).

My informants have not been able to translate the names 'Nilék' and 'Nohéng', nor have they been able to trace their roots. The names do not sound as if they are Lamaholot. An Éndénese professor of psychology has commented that the names could come from Bajawa in the Ngada regency of central Flores; I have not yet had the opportunity to investigate this proposition. The Ngada regency has now split into the Ngada regency and the Nagékéo regency, and, incidentally, there is a village named 'Danga' in the Nagékéo regency; 'Danga' is also the name of the source clan in Palué. (Central Flores also re-appears in the origin myths of clan Danga, below.)

Palué

The name 'Palué' supposedly comes from the island of Palué north of the Éndé regency in central Flores. Palué island belongs to the Sikka regency but has its own language, Sara Lu'a

(Vischer 1989:1). The island population calls itself Hata Lu'a ('the people of Lu'a') and is referred to by others as Hata Rua, Ata Pulo, Ata Nusa, Ata Nuha, and Orang Palu'e, the names simply indicating that they are an insular population (ibid.). The Dutch have referred to the island as Palu'e, Paloeweh, Palu, Pulowe, and Palue (ibid.).

Vischer (1989:1) believes that the name 'Palu'e' might be traceable to the Buginese word *palu-palu*, which is the name of a conically shaped headdress. However, a Muhang teacher who claims to have been appointed by the East Flores regency to write a history of Lamaholot, says that 'Palué' is a Buginese word that conveys a meaning of having been left behind. This goes back to a story of a Buginese ship that stopped on the island to load provisions but accidentally left one man behind. Some inhabitants on Palué island confirm that 'Palu'e', or 'Palué', could be an appeal to return: "Palu é!", the final 'é' marking the imperative. Whether or not there is a direct relation between any of these names and the older designation for the hamlet of Palué, 'Plu'é', is unclear.

According to myth, the origin clan in the hamlet of Palué arrived to Flores from Palué island. The story has it that a portion of the insular population was forced to leave the island due to heavy flooding. However, as Palué is very dry island which regularly suffers from water shortage (even in the wet season), the facts behind this statement are debatable.[154] Another possibility that is sometimes stated is that part of the population fled the island due to a volcanic eruption. Palué island does have an active volcano, Rokaténda (Mutu), with the following eruptions recorded prior to the 1970s: 1963-66, 1928, and 1650 (o.s. 10). None of these dates, however, seem plausible for situating the myth in time.

An Éndénese professor of psychology (see above) suggests that part of Palué's population was forced to leave the island as the result of stigmatization, perhaps due to a crime that they had committed. There are two circumstances that could speak in favour of this

[154] In the long dry season, the main source of liquid on Palué island is the juice from the lontar palm (Vischer 1996:179).

hypothesis: one is the alteration of the name 'Dangga' to 'Danga' upon arrival on Flores. According to myth, the population changed their name "so that their descendants would not know from whence they came". (But they did not want to break completely with their past, so they only altered their name slightly.) The second fact is that the members of clan Danga in the hamlet of Palué are prohibited to ever set foot on Palué island, whereas the inhabitants of Palué island are free to visit the hamlet of Palué at wish.[155]

Ibu Danga claims to have met a Dangga girl in the Sikka regency some 20 years ago, and that this girl told a similar story of how the Dangga population had fled from Palué island to Flores. Kakak Léwar also says that he once met with a Dangga man on Palué island during his time at sea; however, since this encounter supposedly took place on the shore opposite to the harbour area, the account seems rather unlikely. I have not myself come across the name Dangga on Palué island, nor have I met anyone who has even heard of the name there (but, notably, I did not visit the part of the island that lies opposite the harbor area). Some of the elders on Palué island suggest that 'Dangga' might be a mispronunciation of one of the names Wangga, Langga, or Léngga, or of the personal name Donggé (a descendant of Igo and Énga [see below]).

Whatever the facts, the myth of clan Danga continues to describe how the now-homeless Dangga population began to walk east across Flores, and that they used the *danga* tree as help. This is what appears to have inspired them to alter their name slightly to 'Danga. Clan Danga led a nomadic lifestyle, and when they reached present-day East Flores they first set up camp close to the present-day village of Konga. But as soon as they had settled in Konga, they saw a bright light on one of the mountains behind them. Wishing to find out from where this wonderful light came they decided to turn back. A second camp was set up at Lewo Wodong, which is located on the present road between Palué and Sukutukan: ever since this

[155] There is one primary school child from the hamlet of Palué who is currently studying on Palué island since one of the parents was born there, but this child does not belong to clan Danga.

camp was abandoned there has been a prohibition on settling in Lewo Wodong. This land may only be used for cultivation.

When clan Danga finally reached the summit of the mountain, they saw that the light was emitted from a (sacred) stone (*nuba*) that stood in the ground. The stone had grown forth from the earth of its own accord, and was radiating the moonlight that was bound in the earth. (Exactly how the moonlight had come to be bound in the earth in the first place the myth does not relate.) Awestruck by this discovery, clan Danga decided to settle permanently near this stone. They named their settlement 'Palué', after their home island. The radiating stone became known as Nuba Wulanggitang, 'sacred stone of the moon sickle', which gave the mountain its present name, Ilé Wulanggitang, 'mountain of the moon sickle'. To this day, Nuba Wulanggitang remains the spiritual centre of the Wulanggitang sub-district, and some rituals can only be performed there. [156]

Members of clan Danga and other informants in the hamlet of Palué acknowledge that the predecessors of clan Danga were not Lamaholot, but the consensus is that clan Danga has now been present in East Flores long enough for them to have "become" Lamaholot. The fact that the origin clan in the hamlet of Palué is said to have come from outside the Lamaholot-speaking area in some ways echoes the power that strangers have had elsewhere in Flores and Timor (cf. R.H. Barnes 2008 and Graham 1996), and illustrates how clan Danga justifies its status and relative position to the other clans in Palué through myth (cf. Malinowski 1926).

Igo and Énga

According to myth, Igo and Énga were two brothers who lived on the island of Palué. [157]

They had different occupations and were married to different women. The brothers also

[156] Contrary to what many people believe, Nuba Wulanggitang is not shaped like a moon sickle, nor does it stand out in any particular way with its size and colour. A smaller, sickle-shaped stone has recently been placed next to Nuba Wulanggitang so as to mislead anyone who might want to remove or destroy the original stone.
[157] The beginning of this myth was told in the same way both on Palué island and in the hamlet of Palué.

had amazing powers. When the people on Palué island became aware of these powers, they were afraid that Igo and Énga might use them to cause them harm. As a consequence, Igo and Énga were driven away from the island together with their wives.

When the two couples arrived on Flores, they decided to walk east across the island, until they could no longer sense the presence of Palué island or risk meeting any of their old relatives. Once they had reached present-day East Flores, the younger brother, Énga, claimed the Solor Archipelago and took the title Jawa Lau'. The elder brother, Igo, claimed the mainland and took the title Jawa Raja.

Not long after they had settled in East Flores, the brothers were asked by the local population to assist them in a war, since they had seen that the brothers possessed amazing powers. The two brothers agreed to help, but when the war had ended, Énga tricked Igo's wife into believing that her husband had been killed, so that he himself could marry her. Igo, of course, was not dead, and eventually he discovered Énga's wrongdoing, but in this particular version of the myth it is not revealed how he punishes Énga and his wife.

Énga's wrongdoing nonetheless marks the onset of a strained relation between the two brothers, which recalls the rivalry between Nilék and Nohéng. And just as in the case of Nilék and Nohéng, the descendants of Igo and Énga are still regarded as 'brothers' who must maintain a peaceful relation. The relatives of Igo and Énga on Palué island are seen as the brothers of the Lamaholot in East Flores and these populations may never wage a war against each other.[158]

The clan segment Danga Latuk claim to be the direct descendants of Igo. Upon arriving on Flores, Danga Latuk say that they were helped in their eastwards travel by a porcupine, who

[158] Neither Igo nor Énga actually left behind any heirs with their first wives, as all of their children died young; the population in East Flores allegedly descends only from the child that resulted from Énga's marriage to Igo's wife.

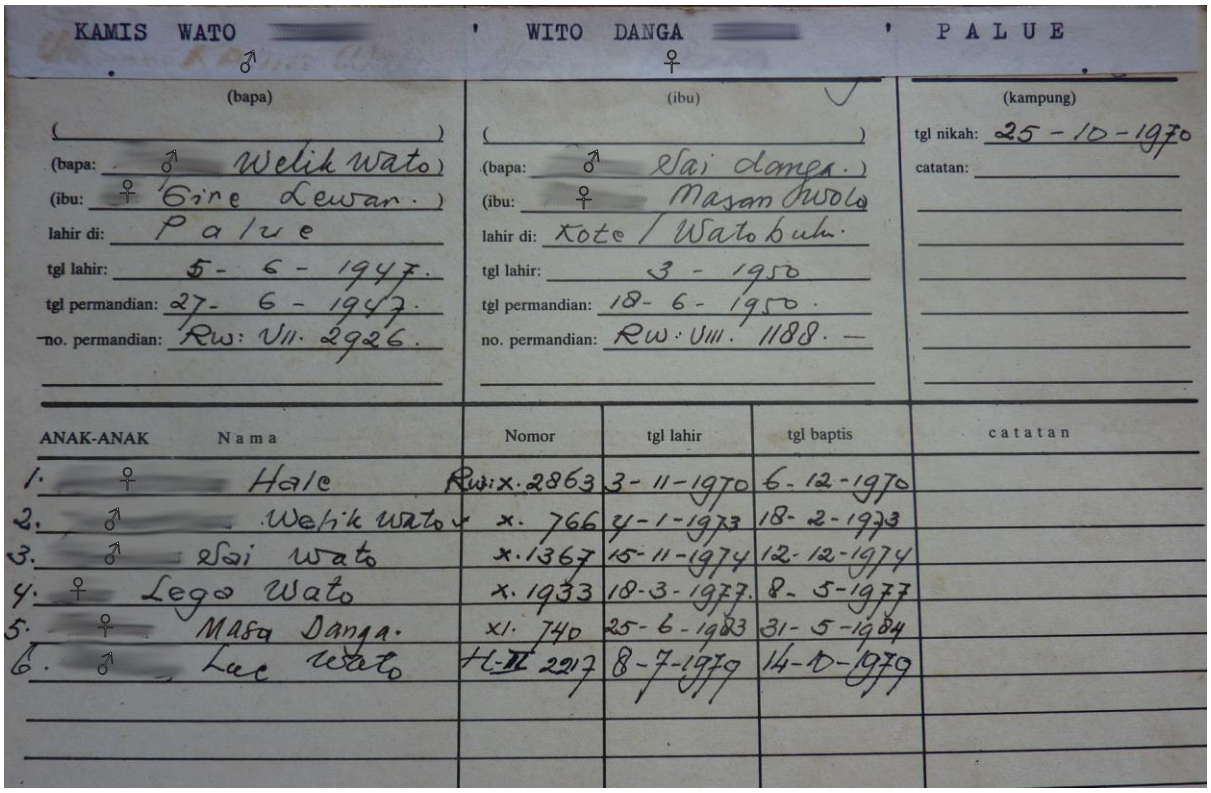
turned them into porcupines, too, so as to be able to lead them along subterranean paths. Eventually, Danga Latuk perceived a bright light on a mountain in today's East Flores, and discovered the radiating stone of Nuba Wulanggitang. According to this myth, clan segment Danga Latuk first settled close to Nuba Wulanggitang and only later moved to Lewo Wodong.

The clan segment Danga Dotong, meanwhile, claim descent from Énga. Unlike Danga Latuk, Danga Dotong claim to have travelled from east to west across Flores, starting in the Solor Archipelago (which was the area claimed by Énga). They were helped on their journey by members of clan Wato (=stone), who led them past large stones that blocked their way. Danga Dotong and Wato seem to have become associated with each other, but to what extent the myth does not say. As clan Wato lived in the vicinity of Lewo Wodong, however, clan segment Danga Dotong soon encountered the descendants of Igo, who were already living there. When the descendants of Igo and the descendants of Énga discovered that they shared a common origin in Palué island they greatly wished to become united again. To mark their reunification and the onset of eternal peace between their descendants, a goat was sacrificed in a garden below today's Palué (see also Chapter Three). This spot became known as Bélo Witi, 'cutting the goat'. The two groups then founded the settlement of Palué together, and since the descendants of Igo had arrived in the area first they were given the privilege to name the new clan. The clan was named Danga.

The two clan segments did not receive the epithets 'Latuk' and 'Dotong' straight away. Initially, Danga Latuk was known as Danga Tana Béto, 'Danga from the Earth', because their journey had taken place partly underneath the earth. Danga Dotong was known as Danga Téna Mao, 'Danga from the Sea' (cf. Pampus 2001:237), presumably because they had arrived from the Solor Archipelago.

*

We can see that the garden was originally the permanent locus of habitation in this area, and that gardens still retain a central place in daily life and belief, even though habitation has since become village-based. The change in residential pattern has largely been due to outer pressures, but the locus of the village was already a centre for ritual activity in this area. The origins of Palué as a permanent settlement are fairly recent and mostly shrouded in myth, most of which show ties to central-east Flores. In the last century, the residential groups have become smaller and centred on the nuclear family.



KAMIS WATO ♂ [redacted] ' WITO DANGA ♀ [redacted] ' PALUE

	(bapa)	(ibu)	(kampung)
	( )	( )	tgl nikah: 25 - 10 - 1970
	(bapa: ♂ Welik Wato)	(bapa: ♂ Sai danga.)	catatan:
	(ibu: ♀ Gire Lewan.)	(ibu: ♀ Masan Wolo	
	lahir di: Palue	lahir di: Kote / Wato Lulu.	
	tgl lahir: 5 - 6 - 1947.	tgl lahir: 3 - 1950	
	tgl permandian: 27 - 6 - 1947.	tgl permandian: 18 - 6 - 1950.	
	no. permandian: Rw: VII. 2926.	no. permandian: Rw: VIII. 1188. —	

ANAK-ANAK	Nama	Nomor	tgl lahir	tgl baptis	catatan
1.	♀ [redacted] Hale	Rw: X. 2863	3 - 11 - 1970	6 - 12 - 1970	
2.	♂ [redacted] Welik Wato	X. 766	4 - 1 - 1973	18 - 2 - 1973	
3.	♂ [redacted] Sai Wato	X. 1367	15 - 11 - 1974	12 - 12 - 1974	
4.	♀ [redacted] Lego Wato	X. 1933	18 - 3 - 1977	8 - 5 - 1977	
5.	♀ [redacted] Masa Danga.	XI. 740	25 - 6 - 1923	31 - 5 - 1984	
6.	♂ [redacted] Luc Wato	H-II 2217	8 - 7 - 1979	14 - 10 - 1979	

Photo 7. Birth and marriage record from Palué, showing a division of children. (Given names are omitted).

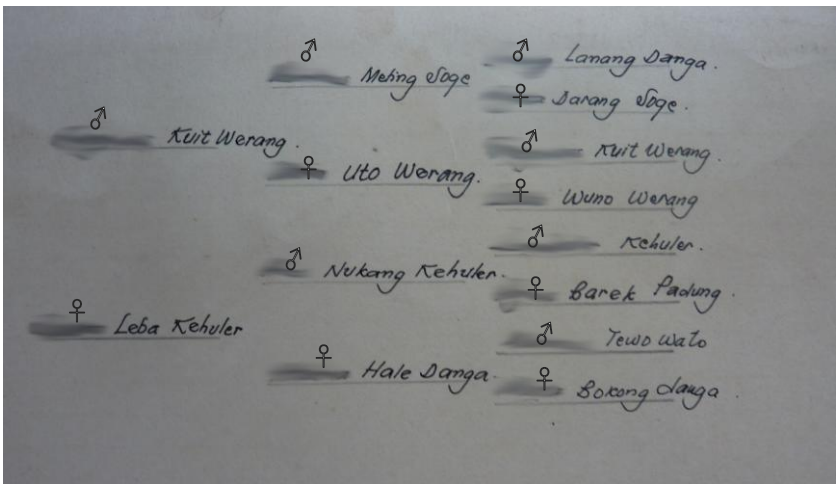


Photo 8. Reverse of birth and marriage record from Palué, showing separate instances of matrilineal succession. (Given names are omitted.)

Chapter Three: Descent Groups

CHAPTER THREE

Descent Groups

This chapter looks at descent groups and the definition of descent groups from the point of view of shared food prohibitions and other social factors. The chapter also discusses the changing role of elephants' tusks in the acquisition of new group members, and considers the practice of marriage alliance and its relation to descent groups and the payment of tusks.

Descent Groups

Descent groups take the shape of clans and clan segments in Palué, and are known jointly as *suku*.[159] [160] Most, or all, descent groups in Palué are segments of larger clans that are spread over several villages, but they are, nonetheless, treated as proper clans in Palué. In general, clan segments are only distinguished by a specific epithet if two or more clan segments cohabit in a village; if not, the segments are referred to by the clan name only.

The term *suku* is widely used in the Lamaholot-speaking area and usually refers only to the clan. There are, however, examples where it is also used to mean 'clan segment' (e.g. Arndt 1940:61, on the villages around Ili Mandiri, East Flores). On Lembata, the descent groups are called *suku lama*, whereas the clan divisions are known as *lango bela*, 'great house' (R.H. Barnes 1996:62); in Bélogili, East Flores, clans are called *ama*, which also means 'father', 'elder male', and '(origin/founding) ancestor' (Kohl 1998:105; Pampus

[159] The term *suku* means 'descent group' in Larantuka Malay, which is a cognate to Indonesian; this meaning is restricted to the East Flores area (R.H. Barnes, pers. comm.). In Indonesian, *suku* means 'ethnic group', 'extended family', 'city quarter', 'one quarter', 'part', 'leg', '(biological) family', 'of the same ethnic group', and 'syllable' (R.H. Barnes 1996:62; Echols and Shadily 1989:531; Kohl 1998:105).

[160] A couple of younger informants suggested that *fam* (B.I. 'family name'; especially in Eastern Indonesia [Echols and Shadily 1989:162]) can also be used to denote a clan in Lamaholot, but this statement was not confirmed by other informants and I have not heard the term *fam* used in any conversation.

2001:4; Vatter 1932:74). Another common term for clan or lineage is *wun*, or *wung* or *wungu* (Arndt 1940:146; Ouwehand 1950:62; Vatter 1932:74, 146, 149, 155, 189). We will return to the meaning of this term below.

Neither clans nor clan segments are localized in the village (but see Arndt 1940:57, 87, 101, 162; Ouwehand 1950:55) and I have not found substantiation for either a current or a past class division in Palué (but see Arndt 1940:5 and 1951:184, 197, on Lamaholot social stratification).[161] In the past, the clans and clan segments used to have both political and economic significance as well, but today their main function lies in defining rights, duties, and obligations for its members (cf. Kohl 1998:121, on clans in Bélogili, East Flores).

Clans and clan segments are headed by a head of clan who, as far as I can tell, is known as *bapa suku* (see also Graham 1991:101, Kohl 1998:113). The term *kelaké*, as reported by Arndt (1940:96; 1951:154) and Ouwehand (1950:58), is not used. The head of clan is always male and is at the same time the head of his household (see Chapter Two). While the position of head of clan can be passed on to a genealogical son (or to another clan member with the status 'son'), the head of clan is chosen mainly for his leadership qualities.[162] The duties of a head of clan are primarily to mediate between clan members and to counsel them, and to keep track of the marriages that are contracted by the members of the clan. The head of clan is also responsible for performing clan rituals, unless he is unqualified to do so; ritual knowledge is not a requirement for becoming a head of clan. There are no political or administrative duties tied to the role, but very often the Lord of the Land is at the same time the head of his clan or clan segment; until recently the Lord of the Land also carried the office of head of village.

Palué has five major clans: Danga, Sogé, Tukan, Wato, and Werang. Clan Danga is the origin clan and is divided into two clan segments: Danga Latuk and Danga Dotong. In the

[161] Hägerdal (pers. comm.) remarks that this statement depends of what kind of class concept is used. In this context I do not equate individual status with class status, but see 'class' as a larger category encompassing a number of people with similar economic, social, and ritual status.

[162] A new head of clan can be appointed while the old head is still alive, but the position can also be assumed once the old head has passed away.

past few decades, a fair number of people with other clan affiliations have married into Palué, the most numerous of which are members of clan Léwar.[163] The population data for Palué in 2008 is shown in **Figure 1**, with detailed breakdowns for each clan:

Clan	Number of households	Number of people
Danga Dotong	25	102
Werang	16	63
Danga Latuk	15	62
Sogé	15	60
Tukan	13	57
Léwar	11	42
Wato	5	24
Other	28	131
Total	128	533

Figure 1. Population data for Palué in 2008. After *table 1* (*Renstra Pastoral Stasi Plue 2008-2010* [2008:6]).

Wato means 'stone', and Danga is the name of a certain species of tree; *danga*.[164] These names derive from myths that relate to the origins of the first settlement in Palué (see Chapter Two). Dotong, as in Danga Dotong, is spelt Datong in *Renstra Pastoral Stasi Plue 2008-2010*, but this spelling does not occur anywhere else, and neither Dotong nor Datong was given a meaning.[165] Pampus (2001:38, 45) says that *doton* means 'to raise up, to praise', and that *daton* means 'the one in authority/command' (from Malay); the final 'g' in 'Dotong' and

[163] Members of clan Léwar claim that their clan is very large on Solor and among the Muhang Lamaholot in Tana Ojang/Muhang; I have, so far, only been able to find indications of strong ties between clan Léwar and Muhang Lamaholot.
[164] I have not yet been able to identify this species; the Indonesian name was not known by my informants.
[165] In the myths of Demon and Padji, 'Datong' is the name of a man from clan Ledo who gave Demon weapons to use in war so as to be able to take heads for *Léra Wulan* (Arndt 1938:8).

'Datong' is in accordance with the more nasalized dialect of Lamaholot in Palué. Latuk, as in Danga Latuk, was also not given a meaning by my informants.[166]

Tukan (literally 'middle') is identified by Pampus (2001:249) as the clan that is entitled to hold the head of an animal at sacrifice (i.e. *koto(ng)* [see Chapter One]). But in Palué it is Danga Dotong that holds the head of a sacrificial animal, not clan Tukan; Danga Latuk holds the animal's feet (i.e. *kélén* [see Chapter One]). The story behind the allocation of the roles *koto(ng)* and *kélén* in Palué is tied to the segmentation of clan Danga. According to myth, clan Danga segmented when it had become too large. At this point, it was decided that one segment (Danga Dotong) was to hold the head of a sacrificial goat, while the other segment (Danga Latuk) was to hold the goat's feet. When the sacrificial goat had been cut in two, each of the two clan segments received a share and were henceforth seen as being separate segments of clan Danga. This act of segmentation, known as *bélo witi,* 'cutting the goat', is not perceived of as an act of alienation between the two clan segments or as resulting from conflict; rather, the segmentation marked the onset of eternal peace between Danga Dotong and Danga Latuk. Since the sacrificial goat is always tied with a rope of native rosella (*wa'o*) around the muzzle and feet, *koto(ng) kélén* are also known as *léin tali*, 'feet and rope', in Palué. This expression is also used to refer to the relation between Danga Dotong and Danga Latuk.

It is possible that the goat at *bélo witi* was killed by a member of clan Werang, since this clan used to be *hurit* in Palué (see Chapter One). The position of *hurit* has now been taken over by Danga Latuk, and according to one account of the myth of segmentation, Danga Latuk was entrusted with the knife that killed the goat at *bélo witi*. Clan Werang now only holds the position of *maré*, which it used to hold together with the position of *hurit*.

[166] *Latu'* is associated with moaning and complaining, which does not seem to be a satisfactory translation (Pampus 2001:131).

I have found no meaning of the name Werang. One of the ceremonial domains of Tana ‘Ai is called Tana Wérang (Lewis 1988b:35), but whether or not there is any relation to clan Wérang is difficult to say. Clan Sogé does have a small clan segment in southwestern Tana ‘Ai (Lewis 1988b:112) and in Tana Ojang/Muhang, where clan Léwar is large. According to Muhang Lamaholot, clan Sogé and clan Léwar share the same mythical origins, and both play a key part in the Muhang version of the myth of the Rice Maiden (*tono wujo*) (see Chapter One).[167] Lewis (1988b:112) has suggested that clan Sogé originates in Éndé in the Éndé regency of central Flores, because ‘Sogé’ is the Sikkanese name on ‘Éndé’. This theory is substantiated by a recorded dispersal of Christian Éndénese to eastern Flores along the southern coast following a war between Christians and Muslims in Éndé in the 17th century (ibid.).[168]

Prohibitions and prescriptions

Each of the clans and clan segments is subject to a number of prohibitions and prescriptions; for instance, in relation to food. The nature of these prohibitions and prescriptions varies between the clans and clan segments and some of the rules apply in everyday life whereas others apply at certain rituals; rules that apply at certain rituals often concern specific individuals only. Many of the rules that apply in daily life appear to have decreased in importance over the last few decades and are not observed by all the members of a clan, in

[167] Together with a number of other clans in eastern Flores (e.g. clan Wato), clan Sogé and clan Léwar are said to originate from the now submerged island of Keroko Puken, which would have been located between Lembata and Pantar; this myth is a common theme on Flores and in the Solor Archipelago and has its roots in historical facts (R.H. Barnes 1996:55, 57; Vatter 1932:9). Most probably, Keroko Puken was split into the islands of Lapan and Baton, located between Lembata and Pantar, by an earthquake or a volcanic eruption (Vatter 1932:9-10). Dietrich (1984:321 n.5) suggests that this occurred sometime before the early 16th century since, by this time, the clans in question had already reached Flores.

[168] Before the Dutch arrived in Flores, Éndé was the seat of an independent muslim raja allied with Islamic sultanates of Bima (Sumbawa) (Lewis 1988b:7). Manggarai and Ngada were, at the very least, under the influence of Islamic sultanates of Bima and Goa (south Sulawesi), whereas the mountain Lionese were divided among many local political domains (ibid.).

particular not among the younger generations; only the rules that are tied to ritual are still strictly observed.

Among the rules that apply in daily life we can mention the prohibition on members of clan Danga to use the *danga* tree as firewood, since this species played an important role in the myth of clan Danga's arrival in Flores (see Chapter Two). As far as I know, this rule is still observed by most of the members of clan Danga. I have only heard of one case where children have adhered to a prohibition from a parent's clan (mother's) that is different from their own clan; I have not been able to establish whether or not this is an isolated case or a normal occurrence.[169]

At the garden ritual of *wu'u(ng) wata'* (see Chapter Two), on the other hand, both the members of Danga Dotong, clan Wato, clan Werang, and clan Tukan are required to cook papaya leaves, or at least to heat the leaves, so as to symbolize cooking, whereas members of Danga Latuk must cook fish; members of clan Léwar must cook deer while members of clan Sogé must cook either fish or deer.

Conversely, at the garden ritual of *oru soga(ng)* (see Chapter Two) only the ritual specialists and *ina puken* must observe a special prohibition. If they are members of clan Danga, they may not have lunch or refreshments in the barn but must eat and drink separately out in the garden; if they are members of clan Léwar, they may have refreshments in the barn but may not eat any rice until they return home in the evening.

Here I wish to return to the terms *wun*, *wung*, or *wungu* which can be used to denote a descent group in certain Lamaholot-speaking areas. We should note that these terms also carry the meaning 'prohibition', 'taboo' (Vatter 1932:74), and 'totem' (in the sense of an

[169] The case in question concerns a woman from clan Tému from the hamlet of Nurabélen, who was found wandering alone in the woods in the early 20th century. She was taken in by members of Danga Dotong, and soon married one of the men. For some reason she became incorporated into her husband's clan but nonetheless continued to observe a prohibition on eating shark, since clan Tému is believed to originate from sharks. Her children continued to follow this prohibition even though they were clan Danga, but the second and third descending generations do not observe the prohibition.

'animal or plant that is forbidden') (Arndt 1940:52). In Lewoléma, the related term *wungun* refers to the specific customs and traditions (*adat*) that belong to a particular clan; for instance, clan specific prohibitions and prescriptions (Graham 1991:95).[170]

Among central and coastal Sikkanese, *wungung*, *wungung kuat*, and *kuat*, all mean '(totem) clan' (Arndt 1933a:22, 31; Pareira Mandalangi and Lewis 1998:217). Elsewhere, Arndt (1933a:60) also says that the correct expression is actually *ku'at-wungung*, not *wungung-ku'at*, and describes the *ku'at* as a group of people who have a special relationship to a certain species of animal or plant and who, due to this relationship, feel that they are connected to each other. In the ritual language of Tana 'Ai, however, the expression *wungun kuat* refers to meat that is distributed among participants in ritual (Lewis 1988b:114).[171] This meat is also known as 'prohibited food', or 'food that is subject to special restrictions', and since the clans have different rules regarding the treatment of food in rituals the expression *wungun kuat* also becomes a reference to, and a synecdoche for, the clan itself (idem 114, 327 n.6).[172] The clans in Tana 'Ai are therefore seen as discrete groups because they do not share the same food prohibitions as any of the other clans, but because the tradition of forbidden foods *is* shared by all clans the clan as a concept is recognized and respected by all (idem 115).[173] [174]

It is possible that the concept of *wun* could be an alternative way of approaching the concept of descent groups in eastern Flores. It might perhaps be able to shed some light on

[170] In Lewoléma, married women usually observe both the *wungung* of their natal clan and that of their husband's clan (Graham 1991:95-6).
[171] Several informants in and near Palué say that Ata Tana 'Ai employ Lamaholot ritual language in their rituals, but I have as yet not been able to confirm whether or not this is true.
[172] "People who observe the same rules in consumption are 'one *wungung kuat*' (*wungung kuat ha*)" (Lewis 1988b 115, 327 n.6).
[173] In daily language the meaning of *kuat* in all Sikkanese dialects is 'people' or 'ethnic group', while that of *wungung* is 'crimson', 'violet', or 'purple'; *wungun* potentially carries negative connotations (Lewis 1988b:327 n.6; Pareira Mandalangi and Lewis 1998:217). (Compare with the Rotinese cross-spectrum colour *momodo*, which is an indigo product used to dye cloth and often associated with bad spirits and things that are considered inauspicious [Fox 1973:350]. Incidentally, the indigo dye is called *tau*, whereas the etymologically unrelated word *taü* means 'to frighten' [idem 350-1] [cf. Turner 1967:286].)
[174] This adds yet another dimension to the definition of the house based on shared "maternal" blood (and flesh).

some of the local notions of sameness, community, and kinship within the descent groups; not, as Arndt does, in terms of ideas of 'totem', but from the point of view of practical action. The people who share the same clan also share the same prescriptions and prohibitions, and the adherence to these rules visibly expresses the unity of the clan in daily life and at central ritual events. In Chapter One, clan specific rituals and the clan members' access to clan treasures illustrated a different form of (visible) clan community, and in Chapter Four, clans will be discussed from the point of view of a notion of shared blood, which lies at the base of the rule of exogamy and plays a part in the practice of asymmetric marriage alliance; these features also reinforce the visibly expressed, practical unity of the descent group.

Group Membership

Overall, Lamaholot gain membership in patrilineal descent groups, but there are exceptions in practice where certain individuals have entered their mother's group instead (cf. R.H. Barnes 1996:62; Kohl 1998:105, 119; Ouwehand 1950:55; Vatter 1932:73-4). This somewhat mirrors the situation among the Sikka who have patrilineal descent groups (Lewis 2010:142-6).

Among Lamaholot, infants sometimes enter a descent group through birth ritual, by which they gain full rights in that group (e.g. Graham 1991:79; Kohl 1998:119). In Lewoléma, women also become highly involved with their husband's clan after marriage, whereas men have the option to activate residual rights in their mother's clan (the MB clan), which is their progenitor clan (Graham 1991:83). Conversely, in Bélogili people who live and associate themselves with their (maternal) grandfather's clan (the MB clan) are not considered full members of the paternal clan and will not, therefore, receive privileges or assistance with payments of bridewealth (if they are male) (Kohl 1998:119).

In today's Palué, all children become members of their patrilineal clan or clan segment, and in the current practice, at least, there is no need for birth ritual to establish their rights in their natal clan, or vice versa. (A birth ritual is, nonetheless, performed a few days after birth [see Chapter Five].) Bridewealth also plays no part in determining a child's clan membership nowadays; the infant will enter its father's clan regardless of whether the bridewealth has actually been paid. Even the birth records will name the *genitor* as the father even if the child's parents are not officially wedded (for instance, if the child is the result of a temporary romance). In everyday life, furthermore, people in Palué speak of the clans and clan segments as patrilineal descent groups, which does not accord with the information that was given to Kennedy (1955:256) in Boru in 1949. According to Kennedy's data, "Palueh" is one of ten matrilineal communities (or at least communities with matriarchy; B.I. *matriarkat*) in the border area between East Flores and Sikka, and I myself heard similar statements in Boru in 2009 (see also Introduction). The elders in Palué in addition told me that "mother right" (B.I. *hak ibu*) was recognized in the village when I first came to visit. It was mainly based on this information that I chose Palué as my fieldsite.

Interestingly, birth records from Palué dating to before the 1990s do give substance to the proposition that Palué deviates from the common pattern of acquiring membership in descent groups among Lamaholot. The birth and marriage records are stored in the parish office in Hokéng but, unfortunately, only the records pertaining to the current population are available; older records have, allegedly, been thrown away. (A few older entries can nonetheless be found in a communal book recording all births and marriages throughout the parish, but most of this information overlaps with the data that is included in the newer birth records.)[175]

[175] Every household has a separate card which serves both as a marriage record (for official weddings) and as a birth record for children that are born to a couple, wedded or unwedded. (If a child has been born from a temporary romance, the *genitor* and *genetrix* are named as the parents, even if they are married to someone else.) All the records from a certain hamlet (or village) are stored together and placed in alphabetic order in at the parish office in Hokéng, following the *genitor's* second name, which is his traditional 'village name' rather than his clan name, which only serves as a surname (see Chapter Four). Some of the records provide

In the available birth records, some children from Palué lack an entry for their clan name even though the clan names of both of the parents are stated; sometimes a clan name is only given to a few of a set of siblings, regardless of their age and gender. I once asked Kakak Léwar if this meant that the children without a recorded clan name did not belong to any clan at all, but he replied that the priests had simply forgotten to make these entries. In Kakak Léwar's opinion, this information was in any case superfluous, since it was obvious that all children were members of their paternal clan. Yet, in a few other records, one or more of a set of siblings were explicitly stated as being members of their maternal clan, not their paternal clan. In most of these records both of the children's parents had been born in Palué; only a few showed that one of the parents had married into the village. When I showed copies of these records to Kakak Léwar he completely ignored the ones in which both of the parents had been born in Palué, and only looked at those where one of the parents had married into the village: "This might be the custom in that other parent's hamlet", he said, looking visibly annoyed by my questions. I did not push the matter any further at that point, although the questions were to resurface very soon.

At about the same time as I was consulting the parish records in Hokéng, I was asked to take photographs of almost 200 of the inhabitants in Palué, to issue their citizen cards and to complete new registration forms for schools. As I had only recently arrived in the field I saw this as a good opportunity to acquaint myself with some of the people that I was to live with, and so in the evenings I asked Kakak Léwar and Ibu Danga (in whose house I was staying) if they could help me to put a name on every face and provide me with some basic information on the person's household and closest kin and to point out their house on a map of the village. They agreed to help me with this, and to my delight they even knew the full names of several

information on where a couple has been born, who their parents are, and on what date their official wedding stood (if any). The date of birth of each of the couple's children is written next to the child's name, and sometimes there is also a baptismal date. At the back of the record there is a short genealogy in both the male and female lines, going back 2-3 generations. If the full names of a couple's parents or grandparents are not known, only the traditional 'village name' is written, and sometimes also the clan name.

grandparents who had long been dead. However, I soon discovered that Kakak Léwar and Ibu Danga sometimes disagreed on the clan membership of certain people. Ibu Danga, for example, could say that a person was clan Wato and that his or her mother was also clan Wato, whereas the father was clan Danga. Whenever this happened, Kakak Léwar immediately protested, whereupon they would discuss the matter for a few minutes and eventually swap around the clan names of the parents so that the father had the same clan name as the child. (The 'children' in question were usually middle-aged or elderly, and their parents were already dead.)

This is when I first became consciously aware of that Kakak Léwar always equated a person's clan membership with his or her paternal clan. I did remember hearing him express a strong dislike for the system of matrilineal descent in Tana 'Ai at one point, but I had had no reason to suspect that his feelings would influence his discussions of the customs in Palué. Bearing this in mind, I began to mention the observations that I had made in the parish archives to more or less everyone I met in Palué over the next couple of weeks and, much to my surprise, they all came to the same conclusions as Kakak Léwar: missing clan names were simply forgotten as the information was superfluous, and children who belonged to their mother's clan must be following the particular custom in the hamlet of an in-married parent. In fact, many of the older informants were rather unwilling to talk about matters of clan membership when approached from this angle. Suddenly, all talk of "mother right" that had surfaced during my first visits in the village was blamed on my poor understanding of Indonesian at the time. This left me, if possible, in even greater confusion.[176]

One day I finally began to approach a resolution to the question of clan membership when I was having my usual tea with Kakak Léwar. As we were talking, I suddenly learnt that Kakak Léwar had not been born in Palué, but in Tana 'Ai (!). After some further

[176] While my language skills did take a great leap once I had settled in Palué, my understanding of Indonesian was already very good by the time I first arrived in Flores, and during my first visits to Palué I was also accompanied by my fiancé at the time, who speaks English and Indonesian and some Lamaholot.

clarification, it became clear that he came from the hamlet of Bokang (village Lewomada) in Tana Ojang/Muhang and had only moved to Palué when he married Ibu Danga. By that time, Kakak Léwar was already well-acquainted with Palué from feasts and communal rituals; Muhang Lamaholot appear to be culturally very similar to the Lamaholot in Palué, almost to the point of being identical.

Our discussion had centred on a family dispute that had taken place in Kakak Léwar's house in the early 1990s. His father had passed away and the question was raised as to which clan Kakak Léwar and his three brothers and two sisters were to belong. According to Kakak Léwar, local tradition demanded that the siblings were divided between the two parental clans after the death of the father, but whether or not this was tied to issues of bridewealth I am not sure. As far as I am aware, all children had initially been members of their paternal clan. Kakak Léwar, at any rate refused to agree to an division and convinced his siblings to join his protests until the two parental clans agreed to let all of the children follow the paternal clan.

As it happened, a similar story was drawn to my attention only weeks after my discussion with Kakak Léwar, and this time bridewealth was a central feature. Apparently, an elderly man had died in Sukutukan earlier the same week and his relatives in Palué were told that his children were to be divided between the parental clans since full bridewealth had not yet been paid for the mother. (Notably, none of the people involved in this case were Muhang Lamaholot, but had their roots in Sukutukan or in hamlets further east in Wulanggitang.) Before the man had passed away, all of the children had been members of their paternal clan and allegedly none of them were in favour of a division, but unlike Kakak Léwar they did not dare to go against tradition and so the matter was left for the clan elders to settle. Within a year the elders had reached the conclusion that the children were to remain in their paternal clan and that the outstanding bridewealth could be paid with the bridewealth of one of the daughters at a later stage (*lomang ina*; see below).

These two accounts were the beginning of a long narrative that gradually unfolded largely owing to the help of Kakak Léwar and Ibu Danga, but to this day I do not know what made Kakak Léwar change his mind about helping me to answer questions of clan membership in Palué. Perhaps it was my persistent questioning, or maybe it was Ibu Danga who managed to persuade him to speak openly. I only know that from this point onwards, most of the people in Palué aged 30 or above slowly began to open up and tell me the history of bridewealth payments and rules of clan membership in Palué as they knew it. The younger generations apparently know nothing of the earlier history of the village, which seems to suggest that people might have wanted to suppress this particular information. Why they would have wanted to do so is not entirely clear, but a number of different interpretations will be present in the descriptions that follow below.

Dividing children

The current practice of gaining membership in patrilineal clans was only adopted in Palué sometime around the 1940s; apparently from the Lamaholot further east. At about the same time, the practice of paying bridewealth was, allegedly, adopted from the Lamaholot in the present-day sub-district of Titéhéna, which was then a part of the Wulanggitang sub-district. It is possible that the two novel practices travelled to Palué together.

Before the 1940s, the Lamaholot in Palué had a practice of dividing children between the paternal descent group and the maternal descent group, although whether these groups were patrilineal or matrilineal (or both) is difficult to say. Given that residence at that time was matrilocal (uxorilocal) it is possible that the descent groups in question were matrilineal.[177] Drawing on statements by Sikkanese informants and the implications of his comparative

[177] Due to pressure from the local government and from the Church, the current residential pattern in Palué is neolocal; similar developments have also been seen elsewhere in the Lamaholot-speaking area (R.H. Barnes 1996:96). In Tana ‘Ai, residence only turns from matrilocal (uxorilocal) to neolocal upon the birth of the first child (Lewis 1988b:337-8 Chapter IX n.4).

analysis of the Sikkanese and Tana 'Ai social systems, Lewis (2010:145-6) actually suggests that the Sikkanese social system might originally have been similar to the current social system in Tana 'Ai, which would concord well with this hypothesis.

The pattern of matrilocal residence coupled with a practice of dividing children in Palué was also shared by the Muhang Lamaholot in Tana Ojang/Muhang and by the Ata Tana 'Ai in Tana Kringa, where the traditions still live on in places.[178] (I had the opportunity to visit both Tana Ojang/Muhang and Tana Kringa in the company of Kakak Léwar.) The traditions in these three areas appear to differ in detail only; the following account is based on information from Palué but by and large it also holds true for Tana Ojang/Muhang and Tana Kringa:

In the practice of dividing children, siblings were not divided according to their gender; sons, for instance, did not exclusively become members of their paternal descent group and daughters did not exclusively become members of their maternal descent group (aka 'parallel descent'). The opposite was also not true.[179]

The children were, in addition, not necessarily divided according to birth order, even though this did occur at times. If they were, uneven numbers, say, could be allotted to the father and even numbers to the mother, or vice versa (aka 'alternating descent'), yet this was never an explicit rule.[180] In fact, it was not even stated how many children, or how large a proportion of the children, that were to be allotted to each parent; in general an even split

[178] In Tana Kringa, this holds true at least in the villages of Hikong and Boganatar (with separate hamlet Kringa) close to the border with East Flores.

[179] Nimuendajú (1939, cited in Maybury-Lewis 1960:191) believed that he had found a system of parallel descent among the Apinayé of central Brazil, and Maybury-Lewis (1960:198) claimed that the Tapirapé in the same area had a similar system. However, Maybury-Lewis showed that the parallel division of men and women had nothing to do with descent but with a system of ritual feasting. Chinnery (cited in Maybury-Lewis 1960:192) has reported possible cases of parallel descent in New Guinea, but none of these claims have as yet been confirmed. Similarly, the reports by Radcliffe-Brown (1935:38) that there were tribes in East Africa and New Britain which practiced parallel descent have not been confirmed.

[180] Mead (1935:176-7) believed that she had discovered an example of alternating descent among the Mundugumor of New Guinea, but further research convinced Mead that her initial assumption had been wrong.

seems to have been the most favoured but uneven divisions were not uncommon. One account actually has it that the mother *ought* to receive more children than the father.

The only rule that seems to have applied to the division of children was that both of the parents must receive children from the division, no matter how many or how few (or that the mother must receive at least one child). The adding of new members (or "strength" [*kuasa*], as informants put it) to both of the parental descent groups is said to have been the very *raison d'être* of the practice of dividing children.

A special rule also applied to the firstborn child, regardless of whether it was a boy or a girl. In Tana Ojang/Muhang and Tana Kringa the first child always became a member of its maternal descent group, but in Palué I have heard two different accounts: one female informant holds that the first child always entered the maternal descent group, whereas another female informant and an elderly male informant both claim that the first child would have become a member of the paternal descent group. It is not impossible that both accounts are correct, but that they applied to different stages in Palué's history.[181]

Most accounts from Palué state that an even number of children were divided according to agreement between the parents from the second child onwards.[182] (Presumably, this would have been done after it was clear that the couple was not going to have more children. If this was true, only the firstborn would have gained membership in a descent group shortly after birth and its siblings much later. I have, however, as yet not been able to establish whether or not any of the children would have entered their group through birth ritual.) If, on the other hand, the total number of children was uneven (three or more), the lastborn child would become subject to yet another special rule, at least in the case of Palué. Most examples feature a couple with three children, but my informants acknowledge that the rule would also have applied if the couple had more children (uneven number only). As we have seen, the

[181] As Hägerdal (pers. comm.) so rightly remarks, *adat*, 'traditional custom; ritual', is an ideal, although not without deviations and variations, and it continuously changes with new circumstances.
[182] Or, perhaps, according to agreement between the elders of the two parental descent groups.

first child would have entered the paternal descent group, and so the second child would have become a member of the maternal descent group, the third of the paternal group, the fourth of the maternal group, and so forth (i.e. 'alternating descent').

The lastborn, however, would not have been assigned a descent group straight away, but would have assumed a position in-between the two parental groups, called *tobo du'éng tukan*, 'sitting in the middle (marking the boundary)'.[183] This, we might say, was a 'groupless' position, but as far as I can tell it does not seem to have had any negative connotations. Presumably, it would not have been unusual for children to assume such a position in the past. This child would remain 'in-between groups' until he or she reached adulthood and married and had children of his or her own. At this point, one of these grandchildren could enter the clan of the grandparent who stood next in line to receive a child; after this the man or woman who was standing 'in-between groups' could become incorporated into the descent group of the other grandparent.[184] In this way, a couple that had an uneven number of children would still receive an equal number of children to each of their descent groups.

The Muhang account only differs in so far that the mother is said to have received two children out of three and the father only one.[185]

In Palué, the practice of dividing children was coupled with a payment of an elephant's tusk (*bala*) from the wife-takers to the wife-givers. In Indonesian, this payment is termed 'fine' (*denda*), but in Lamaholot it is called *liko(ng) blepéng*. *Liko(ng)* could here carry the meaning 'to look after someone or something' or 'to protect someone or something' (Echols and Shadily 1989:63, 344-5; Pampus 2001:139). In Central Sikkanese, *likong* means

[183] *Du'éng* is the same word as that used for the horizontal boundaries of a garden (see Chapter Two).
[184] Informants seem unsure whether the grandchild in question would have been the firstborn child or one of the subsequent children. One informant suggested that the firstborn child would enter the clan of its father (or mother) and that only the second child or one of the subsequent children would have been given to one of the grandparents' group.
[185] The account that I have heard features two sons and one daughter: the mother would have received a boy and a girl, and the father only a boy. My informants also claim that the father would have been required to pay bridewealth a second time upon receiving this child; however, the use of the term 'bridewealth' in this context is unclear and could possibly be referring to another type of prestation (*liko(ng) blepéng*; see below).

'fishpond (made by damming)' and things which obstruct (Echols and Shadily 1989:546; Pareira Mandalangi and Lewis 1998:119). *Blepéng* is the same word both in Palué and in Tana 'Ai, and refers to the wooden barrages that nowadays separate rows of rice in the gardens so as to check erosion and promote the formation of terraces (see Chapter Two). *Liko(ng) blepéng* could, therefore, be translated as 'defense' or 'protection'.

Notably, the payment of *liko(ng) blepéng* did not equal bridewealth and, indeed, was not necessarily coupled with marriage ritual. (Note that the tusk is also not referred to as 'bridewealth' in Indonesian: *bélis*). Rather, *liko(ng) blepéng* was a means by which a father could gain the rights to a portion of his children and acquire them as members of his descent group. This tusk marked the boundary between the paternal clan and the maternal clan, at the same time as it asserted that both of the parental clans were to receive children from the union.[186] **Note that, if *liko(ng) blepéng* was not paid, all children would have become members of their maternal descent group.** From this we might infer that the overarching rule in Palué was that the mother automatically held the rights to all of a couple's children; this would point to a close relation between Palué and the matrilineal tradition in the rest of Tana 'Ai (and possibly also the rest of Sikka). It is possible that the tradition of dividing children in this area is a variant on the practice of membership in matrilineal descent groups, and that the division of children is not strictly speaking a 'mode of descent' in its own right.

As has already been mentioned, the Sikkanese today have an (less frequently practiced) option of marrying without paying bridewealth, called *léma lepo*, 'to climb up into', 'enter, the house', in which both the husband and children are taken into the wife's group (Lewis 2010:147) (see Introduction). In an earlier account, Arndt (1933a:45-6) also reports that among some of the central Sikkanese the firstborn child used to become a member of its

[186] One informant believes that *liko(ng) blepéng* was a sign of appreciation from the husband to the wife for having given birth to their mutual children and for renouncing her right to a portion of these children so that they could join their paternal descent group instead. This somewhat recalls the common understanding in Palué of bridewealth payment and the additional payment of *air susu mama* (see Chapter Four).

mother's (totem) clan (*ku'at*) even though the mother had already joined her husband's clan after marriage, but in other areas two children were to join the mother's (totem) clan (the choice of children was made after agreement between the two parental clans). It was also possible to present a certain sum of money in place of the children which, indeed, often happened; if so, all of the children would remain in their father's clan (ibid.). Arndt (ibid.) also heard rumours that the men in the area of Ili (not too far from the border with present-day East Flores) must let two children join their mother's clan, and in addition pay seven earrings for the children that remained in his own clan; unless this payment was made, all of the children would join their mother's clan. This bears a striking resemblance to the practice of paying *liko(ng) blepéng* in Palué.

Arndt (1933a:45-6) furthermore gives a description of the practices of clan membership in Tana 'Ai, saying that all of the children of a given couple would have to be divided between the two parental clans upon the death of one of the parents. The mother's clan would always be given a tusk or a gong from the father's clan when this happened, as an acknowledgement that all of the children actually belonged to the mother's clan (ibid.). If the total number of children was uneven, the mother's clan would receive one child more than the father's clan did (ibid.). Again, these accounts show strong similarities with the accounts that I have heard in Palué.

A tradition of dividing children has also been reported from other parts of Indonesia, but it never seems to have been a 'mode of descent' in its own right. On Sumbawa, children were only divided as a result of an interclass marriage (Wilken 1912:211, 213) and, similarly, in south Sumatra, children were only divided following specific types of marriage (Moyer 1984:90-4, on the plurality of marriage forms in south Sumatra). Conversely, in the southern Celebes, children would have been divided if the father failed to pay (full) bridewealth (Wilken 1912:204, 206).

Among the Ema of Timor, a couple may divorce and divide both property and children if the father has only managed to pay 'low brideprice' (as opposed to 'high brideprice'); initially, the children will have been members of their father's 'core house' following the payment of the brideprice (even that of a 'low brideprice') (Clamagirand 1980:143).[187] Among the Lamaholot on Solor, however, the children can only be divided at divorce if full bridewealth has already been paid; if the bridewealth has not yet been paid, all of the children become members of their maternal clan (Arndt 1940:186-7). This rule also applies if the father passes away before bridewealth has been paid (ibid.). The last two examples closely resemble some of the accounts that I have heard in Palué.

All of the above examples furthermore illustrate that the payment of bridewealth can play an important part in determining the clan membership of a couple's children (see also Lewis 2010:133-59, on marriage, sovereignty, and the paths of ivory in Sikka). In the southern Celebes, full siblings only become members of the same clan (the paternal clan) if the bridewealth has been paid; failure to pay bridewealth leads to a division of the children. Similarly, among the Ema of Timor and the Lamaholot on Solor, full siblings will belong to the same clan (the paternal clan) if bridewealth has already been paid. However, should the couple divorce, or if the husband passes away, the children will subsequently be divided between the two parental clans (only applicable to the 'low brideprice' among Ema, though).

Interestingly, in the case of Ema and Lamaholot, failure to pay (full) bridewealth will have the same results as a successful payment of (full) bridewealth: it will place full siblings in the same clan, in this case the maternal clan. This is also what would have happened in Palué if *liko(ng) blepéng* was not paid.

Arndt (1954:52, 54) reports that among Ngada of central Flores, all children would have followed their father if the bridewealth had already been paid (with patrilocal residence), but

[187] It is, however, not stated to which 'core house' the children belong if no payment is made.

that they would have followed their mother if no bridewealth was paid (with matrilocal residence). In hamlets such as Dzéré Buu and Ruto, children became members of their maternal descent group and lived matrilocally if only a small amount of the bridewealth was paid (idem 54). If so, one child could later be given to the father if the child in question agreed to this (ibid.).

The above examples illustrate an important difference between the payment of bridewealth and the tradition in Palué of paying *liko(ng) blepéng*. Bridewealth, in the examples considered, gives the paternal clan the right to *all* children of a given couple, whereas *liko(ng) blepéng* only gives the paternal clan right to *some of* the couple's children. This is not the same as the difference between paying 'low brideprice' and 'high brideprice' among Ema, because in Palué the children were not (originally) divided as a consequence of a divorce or the passing away of the father. Rather, the division of children was here *a direct result* of the payment of *liko(ng) blepéng*. We could speculate that this might indicate that the tusk that was paid as *liko(ng) blepéng* itself played an important part in the acquisition of new group members (cf. Lewis 2010:136-7).

When the tradition of paying bridewealth was allegedly first introduced in Palué sometime around the 1940s, a man was required to pay full bridewealth before he could incorporate all of his children into his descent group (which, by that time, was a clearly patrilineal group). Informants today still explain the meaning of bridewealth payment as a means by which a man can acquire the rights to all of his children (cf. Lewis 2010:136-7). (The Lord of the Land once said jokingly that if men were able to give birth there would be no need for bridewealth.) This, however, is admittedly not true anymore, as all children automatically enter their father's group at birth (see below), but in the 1940s a man who was not able to pay the full bridewealth would lose the rights to all of his children, who would then become members of their maternal descent group instead.

This, we may note, is not what would generally happen in other parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area if there were difficulties paying the full bridewealth. In Tandjung Bunga, East Flores, pigs and goats seem to have been a legitimate substitute for tusks (Vatter 1932:128), and on Solor, Adonara, and parts of East Flores a man could substitute the tusks with a sister, daughter, or other younger female descendant (in East Flores it actually seems possible that any girl from the husband's clan could be an appropriate substitute) (Arndt 1940:9, 126, 135, 182; Kennedy 1955:198). Even though a woman was given instead of tusks she would still remain a member of her paternal clan; it would only be her bridewealth that was actually handed over to the maternal clan as compensation for the wife's/mother's outstanding bridewealth (Kennedy 1955:198).

R.H. Barnes (pers. comm.) has noted that the return of a woman for a wife seems rather anomalous in this region since it reverses the habitual direction of the movement of women in marriage. While the point is indeed valid, it is worth pointing out that the movement of the second woman (if, indeed, this is a movement at all) is not necessarily coupled with marriage, which would call for an alternative analysis of the movement of people, different from, but not unrelated to, the movement of people which occurs at marriage in Tana 'Ai.

In Tana 'Ai there is a tradition of returning a woman (but sometimes a man) as 'father's forelock' to the paternal clan provided that the father has contracted a clan-exogamous marriage (Lewis 1988b:203, 214). This practice is said to return the "paternal" blood to its origin and should take place in the following generation or in two generations' time (idem 203, 206). The woman (or man) who is returned as 'father's forelock' is referred to as *tudi manu*; she (or he) becomes a member of her paternal clan but cannot enter her paternal house ('lineage') since she carries different "maternal" blood (the houses are strictly defined on the basis of shared "maternal" blood) (idem 188, 214, 216). *Tudi manu* should ideally marry a man from her paternal house, but marriage is not a prerequisite (idem 206, 211, 340 n.2). (If

the woman does not marry a man from her paternal house or clan, however, it might be difficult for her to obtain land for sustaining herself and her family and to accumulate ceremonial wealth for her daughters [Lewis 1988b:213].)

If the woman (or man) is already married when the return takes place, one child (often a son) will remain in its natal clan whereas the rest of the children will change clan membership along with their mother (or, alternatively, a child can be returned to the natal clan in the following generation) (idem 206, 208, 212).

Four generations after the return of 'father's forelock' a female descendant of *tudi manu* (but only if it was a woman) must be returned to her maternal clan (idem 214-15). This is known as 'replanting the ancestral mother in the clan of origin' (*mula puda*) and is said to return the "maternal" blood to its origin (idem 214-15). The returned woman can become a member both of her maternal clan and of her maternal origin house since she already carries the same "maternal" blood as the members of this house (idem 214-15, 339 n.15). This woman should ideally marry a man from her maternal house but, again, this is not a requirement (idem 216, 340 n.2).

In Tana 'Ai, the return of 'father's forelock' is reciprocated with ceremonial wealth (*to'o balik*), consisting of, among other things, two tusks and two bronze gongs (Lewis 1988b:176, 210). Ceremonial wealth is also presented when the 'ancestral mother' is 'replanted in the clan of origin', although this time only half of the amount that was given at 'father's forelock' is given (idem 215). Since these movements of people are not necessarily coupled with marriage, *to'o balik* cannot logically equal bridewealth; in fact, Ata Tana 'Ai see *to'o balik* as a 'gift' (idem 210). Bridewealth is only paid if a man marries a woman outside the domain, and if her tradition requires it (idem 116, 210). *To'o balik* should, therefore, not be seen as compensation for a spouse, but as an investment in progeny (idem 210, 388). Lewis (1988b:208) also suggests that the *to'o balik* which is given in return for the *tudi manu* at the

return of 'father's forelock' should be understood as a ransom of sorts for blood which has been alienated from its clan of origin: "[t]hat it is blood being ransomed and not bridewealth being paid is clear, because *to'o balik* must be given to the child-giving clan whether or not she [*tudi manu*] marries into her father's group". This bears striking resemblance to the practice of paying *liko(ng) blepéng* in Palué and could to some degree also characterize the earliest bridewealth payments here (in which the bridewealth mainly influenced the group affinity of the children), as well as the other types of payment of tusks that have existed in Palué over the course of the 20th century (see below).

Another alternative to paying tusks in some parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area is brideservice (*geleka*, or *servis*) (Ouwehand 1950:57; Vatter 1932:152). Brideservice compels the husband to live in the house of his parents-in-law for a certain amount of time after marriage and work for them (Arndt 1940:7, 10, 125, 175, 182; Ouwehand 1950:63; Vatter 1932:128, 152). Brideservice seems to have been the common practice around Lewotobi, East Flores, where it was accompanied by the payment of a tusk; perhaps, as Vatter (1932:152) believes, as a symbolic reference to a previous practice of paying full bridewealth. The area around Lewotobi as well as the island of Solor have experienced a particularly long history of contact with the Portuguese mission, which was working hard to abolish the tradition of paying bridewealth (hence the preference for brideservice) (Ouwehand 1950:70). The influence of the Portuguese in these areas can be seen not only in the preference for brideservice, but also in the word *servis*, which is Portuguese for 'brideservice', and only used in the two areas in question (Ouwehand 1950:63, 70; Vatter 1932:152).

Brideservice would normally end at the birth of the first child, after which the couple would have been free to set up a household of their own (Ouwehand 1950:63). But sometimes the husband would have had to remain tied to his wife's house for up to 7-8 years

after marriage, depending on her social standing (Vatter 1932:152). On Solor, the husband had to stay with his parents-in-law for at least one year after marriage, but was free to return to his parents' house to help with their work, if necessary (Arndt 1940:175-6). On Adonara a man had to stay in his wife's house for approximately 3 months if he was not able to pay full bridewealth at once; if he was unable to pay the bridewealth at all, he had to remain in his wife's house, sometimes for the rest of his life (Arndt 1940:125-6, 135, 137, 182). He was not, however, considered to be a slave, but a child of the house (idem 137).

In yet another case, the man was not allowed to *stay* in his wife's house until a child has been born, and in a further case still, a daughter had to be born to the couple before they were free to leave the house of the wife's parents (idem 7, 19). In the latter example, **the daughter replaced the wife in the maternal group** (or, alternatively, **one of the husband's sisters had to marry into the wife's group**) (ibid.). This would most certainly appear to reverse the usual direction of the movement of women in marriage. However, it could in fact represent a completely different kind of movement, more akin to that which we find in Tana 'Ai following a man's clan-exogamous marriage (i.e. the return of 'father's forelock' and the replanting of the ancestral mother in the clan of origin).

Palué has never had a tradition of brideservice, not even when the residential pattern changed from matrilocal (uxorilocal) to patrilocal (virilocal) and membership in patrilineal clans became more common.[188] From the mid-20th century onwards, however, there was a tradition that the eldest daughter (or, one of her younger sisters) should relinquish her

[188] Among Ngada of central Flores, matrilocal residence and patrilocal residence are the results of different types of marriage: matrilocal marriage (*di'i sa'o*, 'stay in the house') is the more common practice, and does not feature a brideprice; conversely, patrilocal marriage (*pasa*, 'shoot, buy') is rare, and does entail the payment of a brideprice (Djawanai 1983:98). In a matrilocal marriage, the MB has more rights in the children's upbringing than the father and plays an active role in their upbringing (ibid.). The FZ, however, is said to have the same rights in the children as the MB but will not play as big a role in their upbringing as he does, due to the residence pattern (idem 101 n.7).

bridewealth if her father had not yet paid (full) bridewealth to the mother's group.[189] This practice was called *lomang ina*, 'putting in for [or carrying] the mother'.[190]

Lomang ina was the resolution reached in Sukutukan when the father passed away before having paid bridewealth for his wife (see above). Exactly why the children in this particular case had faced a prospect of being divided is not entirely clear in light of what we have seen *á propos* practices of clan membership in Palué; in fact, accounts such as this contradicts the accounts that I have heard, claiming that all children would become members of their maternal descent group if no tusk was paid to this group. This matter thus requires much further investigation. It is possible that the practice of dividing children was later developed out of an existing tradition in Palué, perhaps when the influence of the paternal descent groups began to increase (at the cost of the influence of the maternal descent groups).

The fact that the payment of *liko(ng) blepéng* and bridewealth in Palué have only affected the group membership of children and not of spouses can clearly be seen from the fact that the wife has never changed her group membership upon the payment of either *liko(ng) blepéng* or bridewealth. Elsewhere in the Lamaholot-speaking area, the wife can sometimes be required to enter the husband's clan upon marriage (and/or the payment of bridewealth) (Arndt 1940:14, 179).[191]

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[189] If the couple had no daughters, one or more of the sons could try to save enough money to help the father to pay the outstanding bridewealth, but this was never a requirement.

[190] Among Ngada of central Flores, a related expression, *logo ine* ('the mother's support/back'), carries a completely different meaning: it refers to the customary law of inheritance that traces the rights to inherit through the genealogical line of the mother (Djawanai 1983:18).

[191] To my knowledge, there are only two examples of women who have changed their clan membership at marriage in Palué. One is the woman from clan Tému who was found wandering alone in the woods two generations ago (see above). She was taken into the family of members of clan Danga, and married one of the men. This woman appears to have become assimilated into the clan of her husband/father-in-law, but no explanation was given for why this was done. In a more recent case, the third wife of Néné Paji has become a member of her husband's clan. Her elder sister was Néné Paji's second wife, and one of their clan sisters was his first wife; the first two wives died prematurely. Because all three women were members of the same clan, bridewealth was only paid for the first wife; this is a common practice if more than one wife is taken from the same clan. However, the first two wives did not change their clan membership after marriage. The only attempt I have heard at explaining why the third wife has changed her clan membership is that the wife-givers might have felt that, after three marriages, Néné Paji has forged a very close relationship with them and, therefore, they might have felt that the third wife should "belong" to him. Neither Néné Paji nor his current wife has commented on this.

Alongside *liko(ng) blepéng*, Palué had yet another practice of paying tusks so as to acquire new group members. This payment seems to have been something of a female 'parallel' to the (male) practice of paying *liko(ng) blepéng* since it was only women who could pay a separate tusk to add one new member to their group (often a boy or an adult man). Note that only one new member could be acquired for each tusk paid. This payment was not associated with marriage and might perhaps best be described as a sort of 'adoption'. I have not yet come across a special name for the practice; when my informants speak of adoption they tend to refer to children who have run away from home. In the past it was not uncommon that children were taken up by other families for this or other reasons. Many of these children would at some point become members of the descent group of their adoptive father; I have not heard any accounts that mention the clan of the adoptive mother, which might situate these accounts to post-1940s. If a child is adopted today it will remain a member of its natal clan.[192] [193]

The fact that the payment of tusks by women for acquiring the rights to a new group member was not coupled with marriage seems to substantiate an assumption that tusks were originally only a means for acquiring new group members in Palué (cf. Lewis 2010:136-7). When the practice of bridewealth was eventually adopted here, the tusks were transferred from their original use in *liko(ng) blepéng* and in separate payments for new group members,

[192] In Kédang, children who do not live with their parents become incorporated into the homes of their fathers' relatives, who already stand in the relation 'parent' to them (R.H. Barnes 1974:262).

[193] Adoption and clan membership still remains a matter of some confusion in Palué. In the case of Johannes Tukan, he and his older siblings were adopted by their genealogical MB when their mother died giving birth to Johannes Tukan. No father is mentioned, but presumably he still resides in Palué. (Johannes Tukan and his siblings call their MB and MBW 'father' and 'mother'.) When I first heard about this case, it was recounted to me by Ibu Danga; she said that Johannes Tukan and his siblings had been divided between the parental clans shortly after the mother's death. The older siblings remained in their paternal clan, Tukan, but the infant Johannes became a member of his maternal clan, Danga, which is also the clan of his adoptive father/MB. Less than two weeks after hearing this account, however, I was told by Kakak Léwar that Johannes, in fact, belonged to clan Tukan, just like his older siblings. Puzzled I turned to Ibu Danga, asking her to recount what she had told me previously, but this time she agreed with Kakak Léwar, saying that Johannes was indeed clan Tukan. I then recited her previous account word by word from memory and from my notebook, upon which she shrugged with an uneasy look and said that that was wrong and that, if she had really said that, she must have made a mistake. As on previous occasions, I noticed that the presence of Kakak Léwar seemed to have a great influence on her answer.

to assume the role of bridewealth (*letong*).[194] Tusks are also the main currency for bridewealth throughout the Lamaholot-speaking area (e.g. Arndt 1940:136, Kennedy 1955:150; Vatter 1932:58, 76) and among the Sikkanese (Lewis 2010:133-59).

Today, the tusks continue to figure in bridewealth discussions in Palué even though they are no longer used in every transaction. Tusks are nowadays often replaced by money in the actual payments, if indeed the payment is made at all (see also Kennedy 1955:155, on East Flores).

Once the practice of paying bridewealth had been adopted in Palué, the possibility for women to pay one tusk so as to acquire new group members disappeared. Instead, it became possible for a man other than the father (*genitor*) to acquire the rights to the children of a divorced woman through the payment of one or more tusks, provided that no bridewealth had been paid for her (in which case the children would belong to their maternal clan). The man in question could either choose to marry the divorced woman and acquire the rights to her children through the payment of bridewealth, or he could simply pay one tusk and thereby acquire the rights to her children without having to marry her. The latter payment is termed *denda*, 'fine', in Indonesian (just as the Indonesian name for *liko(ng) blepéng*)) but I have not heard a Lamaholot term for this payment other than *bala*, 'elephant's tusk' (N.B. also 'bridewealth'). Note the similarities with the earlier practice of a woman being able to pay one tusk to acquire new group members. In the case of the men, however, they could now acquire the rights to *all* children of a divorced woman through the payment of one tusk, not simply only one child for each tusk paid.

Informants say that nowadays children can only become members of their maternal clan if "there is no father". By this they mean that the father is unknown or that the fatherhood is unclear; the father might also be living outside the village. (Usually, the father in such cases

[194] In theory, the bridewealth in Palué should consist of at least one tusk.

is a man who has come to work in the village for a short time and simply engaged in a temporary relationship with a local woman.) In the only case of unclear fatherhood that I know of, however, the maternal clan was notably *not* stated as the clan of the child, and I caused a general confusion when I raised this issue. It would appear that no clan can be assigned to this child until a father (*genitor* or not) has been identified and that, if so, the child in question is virtually 'clanless' for the time being.

One female informant also added that a child could follow its mother if the father was deemed unsuitable to take care of it; for instance, due to physical abuse. To my knowledge there are no actual examples of this in Palué, but there were rumours that the unborn Daniel Danga was to belong to his maternal clan, Wato, since his father, Felix Danga, repeatedly abused his mother, Viktoria Wato. (The couple was not married and it is unlikely that they will ever marry.) Apparently, the maternal grandfather, Ohm Wato, declared that, unless Felix Danga could pay as many tusks as the number of times that he had beaten Viktoria Wato, the infant would belong to clan Wato. Felix Danga, not surprisingly, disregarded these words and within a year it seemed clear that Daniel Danga had become a member of his paternal clan, as is the customary practice in Palué nowadays.

Changing group membership

Changing a person's membership in a descent group used to happen more frequently in the past but was always an exception rather than a rule. Informants say that any matters of clan membership should preferably be settled in early childhood, and that the decision ultimately lies in the hands of the clan elders (apparently only men, it seems).[195] Meddling with matters of clan membership alone is believed to be dangerous; it must be done in a calm and ordered way by means of *adat*, 'traditional custom; ritual', hence only clan elders may do it. The

[195] Birth and marriage records and other official documents never change a person's natal group membership nowadays.

individual may have no say in their decision, nor may he or she take the incentive to change clan membership alone. I have, however, heard of a case in Sukutukan where two adult sisters were explicitly asked to which clan they wanted to belong after their parents had died since no bridewealth had been paid for their mother. The sisters did not have the heart to favour one parent over the other, and so the issue was eventually settled by the clan elders who decided that both sisters were to belong to their paternal clan.

In Palué, I know of at least two people who are said to have died as a direct result of having meddled with issues of clan membership. One is Petrus Danga, who along with one sibling belonged to the maternal clan, Danga. Another sibling belonged to the paternal clan, Tukan; I was told that the children had been divided between the clans because the father had left the family. Petrus Danga eventually became the head of clan segment Danga Dotong and was allegedly a good head, although there were always internal disputes as to who ought really to hold this position. When he became older, Petrus Danga suddenly decided to resign from his position and when the matter was brought up among the clan elders it immediately passed onto a younger clan member. That very day Petrus Danga announced that he was no longer clan Danga, but clan Tukan like his father, and he even introduced himself as "Petrus Tukan" when calling his son in Malaysia. (My informants say that the son hung up at once and refused to answer any more of his father's calls.)

The following morning, Petrus Danga went to the gardens together with his youngest son to tap *tuak*, 'palm gin', from the lontar trees (*Palmyra* palm). (Lontar trees grow roughly 30 metres tall, and no equipment is used to climb to the top where the sap is tapped; climbers are helped only by small steps that have been cut into the trunk with a knife.) Petrus Danga was used to tapping *tuak*, but on this particular day he accidentally fell from the tree. While he managed to get up on his own and ask his son to fetch help from the village, he passed away shortly after the son had returned. According to my informants, this was the inevitable result

from Petrus Danga's foolish and irresponsible actions. As a man of *adat*, he would have known the dangers involved in his decision, they say.[196]

The other man who has died from meddling with matters of clan membership in Palué is Erik Danga; a young *ojek* driver (B.I. 'motorcycle taxi') whom I actually met a few times when I had first arrived in the field. Erik Danga had decided to apply to the police academy and therefore requested a copy of his birth certificate from the parish office in Hokéng, as this is a general requirement for official applications. To his surprise, the birth record showed that his father did not belong to clan Danga, but to clan Tukan. Puzzled, Erik Danga asked some of his relatives what this meant, but no-one wanted to speak of the matter and only advised him to let it be. In the end one of his aunts revealed that his father had actually made both Erik Danga's mother and a younger sister of hers pregnant at the same time; the children thus became members of their maternal clan since the father was considered to have failed in fulfilling his responsibilities as a husband (and that he, therefore, did not have a right to the children).

Erik Danga became furious with his father when he learnt this. The same evening he lost control over his motorbike on the (straight) road between Hokéng and Boru and crashed with another motorbike; both drivers died immediately, The accident was attributed to Erik Danga's meddling with his father's clan issues. Some informants, however, have also interpreted the accident as one of the negative repercussion of the wrongdoing of Erik Danga's father; a wrongdoing always strikes back upon the wrongdoer or his or her descendants.

[196] It is possible that Petrus Danga might have attempted to make a last minute amendment of his actions: when his son returned with help, Petrus Danga asked the men who had come to fetch him some cold water from the river. This water is actually not much colder than the water from the taps, but the river is generally held to wash away all that is 'bad' and for this reason often figures in ritual (see Chapters One and Five). Even though the river was much further away from the spot where Petrus Danga was than the village, the men did his bid but when they returned he was unable to swallow any of the water and only minutes later he was dead.

Social Change

We have seen that women in Palué probably began to lose their automatic right to their own children sometime around the 1940s, whereas men began to gain more rights in their own children. This appears to have coincided with the introduction of a practice of membership in patrilineal descent groups and that of bridewealth payment in Palué.

Why the practice of membership in patrilineal descent groups was adopted here at around this time is one of the biggest questions that this research poses. My informants all say that people simply made a conscious change towards a new system, but only a few informants have attempted to offer an explanation as to why this change would have taken place at all.

The most common among these explanations is that it would feel "strange" (B.I. *aneh*) for (full) siblings to belong to different clans, and that the practice of dividing children therefore eventually became considered "wrong" (B.I. *salah*).

While my informants admit that siblings who belong to different clans do not become physically separated (they still live in the same house as their parents and siblings), there are allusions to a differentiation in terms of clan-specific prescriptions, prohibitions, and ritual (i.e. the *wun* discussed above). If one credits such factors a significant role in the definition of the 'descent group' as well as in the definition of 'kinship', the feelings expressed by my informants might begin to make some sense. However, this does not explain why *paternal* descent groups were suddenly favoured over *maternal* descent groups at this time, even though local tradition already put emphasis on maternal descent groups.

It also does not explain why a similar development appear to have begun in Tana Ojang/Muhang only decades later. In Kakak Léwar's natal hamlet, Bokang (village Lewomada), all children nowadays become members of their paternal clan at birth, but further south, in the hamlet of [Eko] Bubuk (village Timu Tawa), children are allegedly still

divided between their parental clans.[197] Muhang also retain matrilocal (uxorilocal) residence pattern and the husband becomes very dependent on his wife's clan after marriage, if not actually a member of it.

Similarly, in Tana Kringa it is said that children are still divided between their parental clans, at least in the villages of Hikong and Boganatar (with separate hamlet Kringa). Whether or not there has also been a transition towards membership in patrilineal descent groups in Tana Kringa I do not yet know.

Lewis's (2010:133-59) conclusions from a comparative analysis of the social systems of Tana 'Ai and Sikka and statements by the Sikkanese themselves suggest that a similar shift has occurred among the central and coastal Sikka as well, but dating back to the instalment of the first rajadom and the introduction of elephant's tusks from Malacca: Sikka might thus have moved from a tradition of matrilineal descent groups (such as is seen in Tana 'Ai today) to a tradition of patrilineal descent groups. The time lag between the changes in Sikka and the changes near the border with today's East Flores would make sense if one considers the seat of the rajadom as the centre of change and the territories furthest away as a periphery.

Some of my informants in Palué say that the practice of dividing children was abandoned because a tradition of membership in patrilineal descent groups had a more "positive" outcome (B.I. *nilai positif*, or *nilai bagus*) on the marriage system of asymmetric marriage alliance, or the "three-way" marriage system (*likat telou*; lit. 'three hearths'). Asymmetric marriage alliance is common among Lamaholot, and according to some informants this system was already practiced in Palué before the tradition of patrilineal descent groups and bridewealth were adopted.[198]

[197] Bokang lies on the north coast of Flores whereas [Eko] Bubuk is located in the mountains, only a few hours' walk from Palué.

[198] Asymmetric marriage alliance can also be seen in Tana 'Ai but is not recognized as such by the people (Lewis 1988b:300). It is possible that asymmetric marriage alliance was initially an implicit feature in Palué as well.

The argument of my informants is that if the children are divided between their parental groups, it is possible that (full) BZ can end up in marriageable positions, following the marriage prescription in asymmetric marriage alliance. At least by today's standards such marriages are seen as incestuous (see Chapter Four). If all the children were to belong to the paternal group, however, this possibility would never arise, hence a "positive" outcome of patrilineal descent mentioned above. (No-one ever mentioned the option of letting all children belong to the maternal group instead.)

Only one informant refuted the possibility that BZ might end up in marriageable positions by saying that a new marriage between the two parental clans would not have become possible until a few generations had passed, exactly so as to avoid this possibility.

Yet another, older, informant disagreed with all of the above, saying that the only thing that mattered in marriage alliance was the fixed relative statuses of wife-giver and wife-taker, not the individual relations (see Chapter Four). Therefore, it would make no difference to the system whether or not siblings belonged to the same clan.[199]

A completely different group of informants in Palué maintain that the practice of "three-way" marriage was preceded by a tradition of "direct" (B.I. *langsung*) marriage here, which one Muhang informant also claims was originally the practice among Muhang. "Direct" marriage appears to be akin to symmetric marriage alliance. According to the informants in Palué, the "three-way" system was only adopted in Palué the mid-20th century, allegedly from "Demong-Pagong" (simply referring to the Lamaholot further east). This timing corresponds well with the estimated introduction of bridewealth payment and membership in patrilineal descent groups here; perhaps all traditions travelled together.

Another possibility is that both symmetric alliance and asymmetric alliance were originally practiced side by side in Palué but in totally separate contexts, recalling the

[199] This man was also very explicit about the fact that marriage has always been contracted between *descent* groups in Palué, not between any other kind of group.

situation in Tanebar-Evav in the Kei Islands (cf. Barraud 1979).[200] Lewis (1988b:200-1) does give two renderings of the relationship terminology in Tana ‘Ai; one based on asymmetric alliance and the other on symmetric alliance, which does not help to point us in one direction or the other.

None of the given explanations in Palué can, however, sufficiently account for the embarrassment that I saw among my informants every time I brought up the issue of dividing children. The fact that the younger generations appear to know nothing at all of this practice suggests to me that people have consciously tried to suppress this particular information and that there might be more sinister reasons for abandoning the older traditions in Palué.

It is clear that the early- to mid-20th century was a time of considerable social change and outer pressure for the Lamaholot in this area. The Christian mission was still underway, and introduced new ideas about belief and religious practice, family and marriage, and residential pattern, to mention just a few (see also Chapters One, Two, Four, and Five). The introduction of formal schooling at around the same time had similar repercussions, and so did various governmental decrees by the Dutch local administration (and eventually also the Japanese and Indonesian local administrations), who largely considered the inlands to be ‘heathen’ and ‘backwards’. The creation of the Dutch colonial state radically changed the life for many of the people in today’s Indonesia (cf. Owen 2005:296-303).

It is very likely that the tradition of dividing children in Palué was seen as ‘contrary’ to the ‘patriarchal’ basis of Christian (and the Japanese) societies and of Lamaholot tradition elsewhere. It actually looks as if though intimidation from the outside has played an important part in the social changes that took place in Palué. Older informants recall how

[200] In Tanebar-Evav, prescriptive asymmetric (marriage) alliance only applies to the eldest son of a noble *rin* (left or right chamber of a house) (Barraud 1979:89, 147, 151). Direct exchange is done between two houses, but in this context marriage is said to be ‘a consequence of the alliance’ rather than a condition for it (idem 150, 176). There is in addition a system of non-marriage symmetric alliance between houses which are related hierarchically as e/y, or as uncle/nephew, and a non-marriage marriage relation between two *rin*/houses, villages, or groups of houses, that recalls asymmetric alliance but which establishes a permanent relation of master/subordinate, or creditor/debtor, between the two parties (idem 180-3).

everyone used to run to hide in the woods every time an airplane flew over the area during the time of the Japanese occupation in 1942-45 (Ricklefs 1981:187-99) and that all the fires were put out so that the smoke would not attract any bombs. Women and girls were, in addition, hidden from Japanese ground soldiers to protect them from being raped.

Another anecdote paints the Dutch and their local officials as the subject of fear. Three men from Palué (now deceased, but allegedly related as uncles and grandfathers to some of the current inhabitants) claimed to have been hired by a group of local officials (along with several men from other hamlets) to assist in one of many claimed mass-executions of the local population. Some of the older informants in Palué today recall that an official truck would go from hamlet to hamlet to collect the names of all the people under the pretext of wanting to distribute food for the families whose names were on the list. The truck always returned at dusk, but rather than bringing food the men forced everyone whose name appeared on the list to enter the truck at gunpoint. There they were bound and blindfolded and taken to a secluded place in the woods where a large pit had been dug. The three men from Palué claimed that wooden planks had been laid out along one side of the pit to support the necks of the captives as they were decapitated with machetes (men, women, and children alike). The heads and bodies were then rolled into the pit, which served as a mass-grave. When the three men from Palué eventually returned home, a cleansing ritual was made for them at the entrance of the hamlet before they were allowed to enter; this was to ward off the blood of the victims that stained their hands.[201]

While these accounts are very detailed and, indeed, substantiated by separate claimed observations from a number of different informants in Palué, there appears to be no written accounts of neither the mass-executions nor the rape *et cetera*, which makes it difficult to determine whether any of it actually happened. In an article by R.H. Barnes (1993), he writes

[201] Graham (1991:33) similarly says that in the context of homicide in Lewoléma, a cooling ritual can evoke a benign or neutral state by deflecting the victim's blood.

about construction sacrifice, kidnapping, and head-hunting rumours on Flores, bringing up exactly this kind of rumours and the negative associations that were developed in this area around the European mission and the colonization. There was in effect hardly any actual fighting in the area in the years before the Japanese occupation or during the Revolution 1945-9 (Farram 2003), and so Hägerdal (pers. comm.) suggests that if any of the above events actually happened it is possible that they in fact date to c.1900 or thereabouts, since gross chronological inconsistencies are not unheard of in the region.

Even if the many rumours of death and deceit that circulate in Palué turn out to be fictional, they seem, nonetheless, to have managed to create a very real and tangible wariness of people from the outside (for instance, of people from the local government who come with promises of food). The current population in Palué, furthermore, is visibly making efforts to 'conform' to the norms and practices of Lamaholot elsewhere which, in their words, are the "right" and "correct" (B.I. *benar*) ways of living. How this influence came about and when is difficult to say, but it is noticeably there now and affecting people's views on the past.

*

In the last century there has been a major shift in the composition of descent groups and in the modes in which group membership is acquired in Palué, largely owing to outer influence. The role of tusks in the acquisition of new group members has also been subject to change, and so have the rules concerning the usage and the accessibility of the tusks. Women have gradually lost much of the social and material authority that they once had in this area, whereas men have gained more social prominence. Men, nonetheless, originally held an unusual position in Palué that does not fit easily with data on either Lamaholot or Ata Tana

‘Ai. Another shift in this area might be towards an explicit emphasis on asymmetric marriage alliance, although the details are not entirely clear.

Photo 9. Cake and food gifts (*mapang*) to the wife-takers (*opu biné*).

Photo 10. Chicken cooked for the wife-givers (*opu laké*).

Chapter Four: Reproduction and Alliance

CHAPTER FOUR

Reproduction and Alliance

This chapter looks at the physical and spiritual constitution of a human being, and discusses the definition of descent groups on the basis of shared blood. The chapter also looks at marriage from the point of view of prohibitions and prescriptions on marriage partner. Finally, the system of asymmetric marriage alliance is presented, followed by a list of some of the local relationship terminology.

Reproduction

The concept of "uterine kinship" (B.I. *keluarga kandung*) figures frequently in daily speech in Palué but does not refer to relations through the mother (*genetrix*) only; the father (*genitor*) is also spoken of as "uterine kin". This seems to suggest that the expression "uterine kin" is here used in the meaning "genealogical kin" in a broader sense. A father who is not the *genitor* is not considered to be uterine kin.

Some of the female informants recognize a child as being the product of a woman's fecunding fluid (*ratu(ng)*) (glossed "egg" in Indonesian: *télur*) and a man's (red) blood (*méi (mé'a(ng)*) which meet in the womb during sexual intercourse. ("Red blood" is the normal blood which flows through our veins.)[202] Continued sexual intercourse is considered to be necessary for a foetus to become complete, but no-one specified whether or not this actually

[202] In Lewoléma, *ratu(ng)* denotes the man's semen (or "white blood"); conception is said to occur when semen mixes with the woman's fecundating fluids, *kuma* (another type of "white blood") (Graham 1991:30).

serves to nourish the foetus.[203] It is possible that the current notions of kinship and conception in Palué have been influenced by regency incentives to spread sexual education in the villages (e.g. the idea of the female "egg") and the local shift towards social focus on patrilineal descent groups (i.e. the view that children are the (red) blood of their fathers).

In Lewoléma, it is not "red blood" that is important in the context of kinship and marriage, but "white blood" (*méi bura(ng)*) (Graham 1991:27-33).[204] Both the male and female fecundating fluids are seen as types of "white blood", as is also breast milk, young coconut, and some other (white) substances (idem 29-32).[205] [206] While the concept of "white blood" does exist in Palué, is not mentioned in direct relation to procreation. Instead, "white blood" is here said to be a substance that causes dizziness and confusion if the levels get too high and reach the head. Nevertheless, because my informants in Palué say that "white blood" is particularly dangerous for women who have just given birth, there could still be a tie between "white blood" and reproduction here.

Like the people in Lewoléma, my informants agree that conception only takes place if a couple have "bloods that match" (*méi coco*). In Lewoléma, the couple is said to have either "cold" blood or "hot" blood; if different bloods are mixed, the "heated" blood will have destructive effects on the "cold" blood (and, therefore, also on that person's fertility) (Graham 1991:27, 36; see also Lewis 1988b:290). The categories of "hot" (*pelaté*) and "cold" (*lo'i*, or *gəlaté*) are central to many of the ritual activities in Palué (see Chapter One), yet my informants hold that the categories do not apply to people. If this is true, the expression

[203] Towards the end of a pregnancy the sexual activity should be reduced so that the man's blood "will not stick to the baby's body and make the birth slow and difficult".
[204] "White blood" features not only in ideas of human reproduction in Lewoléma; it also figures in ideas of agricultural productivity: "In Lamaholot the idiom of blood for procreative fluids intersects with botanic metaphors used to represent reproductive processes in people and plants" (Graham 1991:37).
[205] In Lewoléma, "white blood" implies a blood relation, whereas "red blood" does not; killing someone with "white blood" therefore severs a life-giving bond (Graham 1991:33).
[206] In Tana 'Ai, a child is said to carry both "maternal" and "paternal" blood (Lewis 1988b:258). While equal amounts of physical blood from both parents are believed to be present in the child, the "maternal" and "paternal" blood carry different social meanings; "maternal" blood is notably associated with membership in a house ('lineage') (idem 191, 258).

"bloods that match" might in fact not be referring to "hot" blood and "cold" blood here, but no other explanation was given to me instead. There is evidence to suggest that the categories of "hot" and "cold" do play a part in ideas of reproduction in Palué. Heat, for instance, is associated with destructive effects on fertility and pregnant women may not sit on leaf sheets that are used for handling hot pots.[207]

Menstruation also appears to pose a threat to fertility in Palué, perhaps for a similar reason. Menstruation is seen as "dirty (red) blood" (B.I. *darah kotor*) that needs to exit the body of the woman in order for the woman to stay healthy. Both menstruating and pregnant women may work and cook as usual at home, but only pregnant women are allowed to work in the gardens; menstruating women must remain in the barn the whole time lest the fertility of the garden should suffer. (They are, however, allowed to cook in the barn.) It is possible that menstruation is associated with heat and that this threatens the fertility of the garden (cf. Lewis 1988b:290).[208]

A different interpretation could be that menstruating women are seen as posing a danger for fertility since they are not contributing to reproduction even though they could potentially have been doing so; this is also compatible with the fact that pregnant women are allowed to work in the gardens whereas menstruating women are not.

Birth

Until 2009, parturition took place at home or in the house of someone with the status 'parent' or 'MB'. From 2009 onwards, women were no longer allowed to give birth at home, but were required to visit a local polyclinic; after 2010, only proper hospitals are allowed to handle births. (Palué only has a polyclinic; the nearest hospital is in Boru. Difficult births are

[207] There are several prohibitions and prescriptions in relation to pregnancy; pregnant women may not carry baskets with the strap across their belly, or keep clothes for an unborn infant in their own house. As far as I am aware, there are no food prohibitions for pregnant women, and also no food prescriptions. Similarly, menstruating women do not seem to have any prescriptions or prohibitions in relation to food.
[208] In South India, however, only pregnancy is explicitly associated with heat (Beck 1969:562).

redirected to Larantuka and Mauméré.) Several women, nonetheless, continue to give birth secretly at home.

If parturition is to take place at home, the process is supervised by a *molang*, male or female. In the past, a large crowd of relatives would also have attended to help and to support the woman; the husband sometimes supported his wife from behind. Conversely, no relatives may attend the parturition in a hospital or in a polyclinic, not even the husband.[209]

The umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo knife by the *molang* or by the mother.[210] The umbilical cord is not kept, but the placenta is taken to the woods and hung from a special tree (see Chapter Five).[211] The placenta is believed to be the infant's younger sibling, and whenever a baby laughs or cries this is because its younger sibling is teasing it. The placenta, however, does not have a soul, nor is it regarded as a person or a human being.

After parturition, "dirty (red) blood" (B.I. *darah kotor*) is secreted for some time; this blood is likened to the blood at menstruation. Informants say that a new mother ought to secrete much "dirty blood", to cleanse her internally; this prevents her levels of "white blood" from becoming too high.

In the past, a new mother was required to stay on a bamboo bed (B.I. *balé*) with the newborn infant for 2-3 days after parturition. They would have all of their meals on the bed and perform all of their needs there. Only at the end of the period of prohibition would the infant's faeces be cleaned away from the bed. Today, the prohibition only states that mother and child should remain inside the house for 2-3 days, but they need not stay in bed. (Women who give birth in hospital are allowed to return home before this prohibition begins.) Failure

[209] If a woman goes overtime, a local explanation is that the child refuses to come out because it does not want to know its father. If so, the father must be sent away until the baby has been born. This happened when Ibu Danga was due to give birth to Adé Léwar.

[210] In Kédang, the umbilical cord may not be cut with a metal knife since this is believed to seal off the source of life (R.H. Barnes 1974:148, cf. Endicott 1970: 133-4). The Lamaholot of Lewoléma say that siblings who are born from the same mother are of the same umbilical cord and that this closeness between full siblings continues even if the siblings belong to different clans (i.e. even if they are BZ) (Graham 1991:126).

[211] Women who give birth in hospital bring back the placenta in a plastic bag so that it can be hung in the woods later. The placenta should strictly speaking not be buried, although I have heard that this has been done in unusual circumstances even though it is not considered to be right.

to adhere to the prohibition could result in the premature death of the infant. The end of the period of prohibition for mother and infant is marked by a ritual called *wua lodo* (see Chapter Five).

Infants are breastfed for at least one year, and if a new mother initially has difficulties in producing milk she can let another woman breastfeed her baby for a while. This does not seem to create any particular relationship between that other woman and the baby, or between the baby and that other woman's children.

Miscarriages are common in Palué and infant mortality is high; so is the mortality among new mothers. In the last few decades, there have been many regency incentives to spread the use of modern contraceptives in the villages and to introduce family planning. Instead of having a dozen children, most couples now have less than four, but some women still hesitate to use contraceptives for fear of experiencing unwanted side effects or simply because they are too embarrassed to ask for them.[212]

Twins do not hold a special status in Palué, nor are they considered to be either a 'good' sign or a 'bad' sign. I am, however, not sure whether there is a conceptual difference between same-sex twins and opposite-sex twins (cf. Arndt 1940:31, 48, 141, 144); all the twins that I have met are, in fact, same-sex twins.

Twins are believed to have a strong connection; if one twin dies young, the parents may not scold the remaining twin again since this is said to anger his or her "friend" (i.e. the deceased twin).

Twins are said to be the result of, on the one hand, "marriage"; that is, repeated sexual intercourse during pregnancy. On the other hand, it is also believed that having twins is a propensity that is inherited through the male and female lines, just like ritual knowledge is

[212] Sexual activity may be resumed at any point after parturition, and there are many examples of women who have become pregnant again not long after having given birth. Sometimes the woman already has a toddler to look after as well. In Arndt's (1940:41, 139) reports from East Flores and Adonara, sexual intercourse should be halted for at least three months after parturition, but can sometimes be halted for as long as a year.

passed down. In the same way, the propensity to have twins is not manifested in everyone who has the 'right' descent; sometimes it even skips one or two generations (see also Chapter One).

Name

Infants are not named straight after birth (cf. Arndt 1940:29, 44, 140; Vatter 1932:117). Naming usually takes place in connection with the ritual of *wua lodo*, 3-4 days after birth (see Chapter Five). The name is chosen by the parents or by the grandparents. Every child receives a clan designation, which serves as a surname, and two given names: one is the name of a Christian saint, and the other is the name of a (genealogical) grandparent or of an *opu laké* (male or female).[213] The latter name is referred to as the "family name" (B.I. *nama keluarga*), or the "village name" (B.I. *nama kampung*), and is obligatory but should not be used for addressing the person. Persons are addressed either by a kinship term or, less often, by their saint name (which is then often shortened to a nickname).[214]

The relative after whom a child is named can still be alive (but see Arndt 1940:44, 140; R.H. Barnes 1996:74; Vatter 1932:177-8). No special relationship seems to be implied between namesakes of this kind.[215] Names do, however, seem to have a strong connection to the person, and the names of children who have died young may not be used to name subsequent children: there could be something wrong with one or both of these names, or the combination of the names could be wrong, or the child might simply not have liked them.

Children and adolescents who often suffer from illness or other troubles can try to change one of their names (or, less frequently, both given names) to get well. In the accounts that I have heard a name may only be changed once, but there seems to be no express rule as

[213] If one of the grandfathers, for instance, has been married more than once, the name of his previous wife is also eligible.
[214] Some people also have affectionate nicknames, or names that recall an important historical event.
[215] Only in the case of Néné Paji have I heard that his namesake grandson is the most probable heir to his ritual knowledge, precisely because they are namesakes of this kind.

to who is to decide that a name should be changed: one teenage boy, for example, changed his saint's name of his own accord when he became partially lame. Official documents such as birth and marriage records always keep a person's original name(s) (see also Chapter Three).

Soul

Even though the name seems to be very closely tied to the person (cf. Vatter 1932:117) it is not part of the human soul. The human soul is called *tubér manger* and is an essential component for life (but see Arndt 1951:175, 180).[216]

Souls are not reborn, but are unique to every person (cf. Graham 1991:41, 43).[217] My informants did not say specifically that the soul is given by the Divinity (but see Arndt 1951:33, 173) but they acknowledge that everyone has a "fate" (B.I. *nasib*) which is known only to (the Christian) God. There is also a strong connection between the soul and the 'earthly divine' (*opu laké*) (see Chapter One, and below): a person's *opu laké* (in particular the genealogical MB) are said to hold the soul of their ZC in their hands and, therefore, have the power both to cure and to curse them.

One informant made a distinction between '*tubér*' and '*mangér*': *tubér* was said to be the 'soul' and *mangér* was referred to as the 'body'. The distinction between 'soul' and 'body' is substantiated by the fact that the 'soul' can leave the 'body' due to the influence of 'bad' spirits or black magic: the victim will start to feel strange and become ill and if the soul is not restored within days the victim will die (see Chapter One) (cf. Arndt 1951:175, 180).

A soul that leaves the body is restored to the body through a ritual called *mula tubér*, 'planting the soul'. The name itself implies that it is *tubér* only which is seen as the soul and

[216] I did not receive any substantiation that animals also have souls (but see Arndt 1951:69, 197-8, 207, on animals, plants, earth, son, moon, stars, and firmament).
[217] In addition to the soul Graham (1991:41-3) mentions the so-called *guna déwa ike kelawir* which, in Lewoléma, is associated with clan groupings and ancestral origins; when a man dies, his son can absorb his *ike kelawir*.

that it, therefore, must be the component without which life is not possible. *Mangér* does, however, keep the person alive and conscious for a few days without the *tubér*, and no-one ever said that the body was 'empty' without its *tubér*.[218]

To my knowledge, the only person who claims to be able to see a *tubér* that has left the body is Néné Paji, who owes his ability to 'see' to a spirit he once met in the forest (see Chapter One). Néné Paji describes *tubér* as a physical double of the body.

A person's soul is not restricted to (or by) the body; the soul is also closely linked to a person's hair, shadow, footprints, and clothes. People who wish to harm or kill someone can 'steal' one of these features in order to cause illness or premature death. Hair or fabric from clothes is usually taken by someone who knows the victim well, such as a jealous lover. By throwing one of these features into the fire, the victim's life is shortened. The shadow and footprints (actually the dirt on the ground within the footprints) can be taken by anyone who walks right behind a person. By squeezing the shadow, the victim's life is shortened, and by throwing the footprints into a fire the victim is made to feel an internal burning feeling which makes him or her grow thinner until he or she dies. Throwing the footprints into water causes the victim's body to swell until he or she dies.

There seems to be no special name for the souls of the dead in Palué: ancestors are simply referred to as *ata maté*, 'dead people' (see Chapter One). In other parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area, however, the souls of the dead are known as *kewoko(t)*, but in Palué, *kewoko(t)* is part of the denomination for evil spirits, *nitung kewoko(t)*, which can cause the soul of a person to exit the body (see Chapter One). There does, however, seem to be an association between the (souls of the) dead and the sea in Palué, just as among Lamaholot elsewhere, and sleeping with one's head towards the sea is considered to be 'bad'

[218] A person's personality, memories and so forth, are not affected if *tubér* exits the body; apart from feeling ill, the person will not even notice that the *tubér* has left.

(see Chapter One). This latter fact could imply that the soul is seen as residing in the head, and that the head is, therefore, considered to be the seat of life.

Blood Relations and Incest

Genealogies are poorly elaborated in Palué, which is quite atypical of Lamaholot (but see R.H. Barnes 1996:61, on Lamalera, Lembata; Hägerdal [pers. comm.] has also encountered a similar situation throughout the Solor Archipelago). According to my informants, however, people who descend from the same ancestor share the same (red) blood. Because these blood lines are reckoned through the male side only (at least nowadays), the descent groups are patrilineal, hence the descent group (here: clan or clan segment) is defined as a discrete group based on a notion of shared male (red) blood.[219] Whether or not blood played a similar part in tracing blood relations in the past is not clear; only a very few people have seen the system of dividing children through adult eyes, and they seem to know more of its outer forms than of its basic rationales.

Following the current notion of blood relations people who share the same blood may not marry; as a result, clans (and ideally also clan segments) are exogamous.[220] [221] Exogamy among clans or clan segments occurs throughout the Lamaholot-speaking area (cf. Arndt 1940:55, 73, 82, 93, 163-4; R.H. Barnes 1996:62; Ouwehand 1950:62; Vatter 1932:75). Where clan endogamy occurs it is usually an option rather than a rule (Arndt 1940:57, 73, 165, 168; Vatter 1932:166).[222]

[219] The Lamaholot in Larantuka explicitly express the unity of descent groups in terms of shared 'male blood' (B.I. *dara laki-laki/kelaki*) (Dietrich 1997:80).
[220] In practice, the rule of exogamy has now become more relaxed (cf. Arndt 1940:3, 125, 136, 173; Vatter 1932:73-4).
[221] In a discussion of the 'flow of life' Fox (1980d:12) says that the 'flow of life' is synonymous with the transmission of woman's blood (between groups); together with semen, female blood produces a human person.
[222] In Tana 'Ai, only the houses ('lineages') are strictly exogamous (Lewis 1988b:141, 188).

The rule of exogamy defines incest in Palué, although incest is not spoken of in such terms; people who share the same blood are simply said to be "too close" (B.I. *térlalu dékat*) to marry. Close marriages could potentially have negative consequences for the health and prosperity of future offspring. The proscription on close blood in marriage concerns not only the members of the same clan but also the descendants of BZ, who belong to different clans due to the rule of exogamy. Recently, two parallel cousins in Sukutukan who were related on their fathers' side ran away to get married; the couple was referred to as "uterine siblings" and because their fathers were full brothers they belonged to the same clan. Parallel cousins who are related on their mother's side stand conceptually further away from each other than parallel cousins that are related on their fathers' side, largely owing to the fact that they belong to different clans. Some informants even say that it is "difficult to love" (B.I. *sulit kasih sayang*) such cousins (as family) precisely because their fathers belong to different clans. It is, nonetheless, not desirable to marry a parallel cousin related on the mother's side because they are still seen as being "too close" in terms of blood (cf. Arndt 1940:5).

Marriage between parallel cousins is called *hepé' manu'*, 'knife and chicken'. (Opinions differ as to whether this also applies to classificatory parallel cousins.) The expression *hepé' manu'* comes from *hepé' poro fokor manu' toki' mata*, 'the knife spears the throat and the chicken pecks out the eyes'. During my time in the field, one woman's death was attributed to such a marriage.[223]

An old man claimed that there was yet another, similar but less serious offence in Palué, called *ika(ng) manu'*, 'fish and chicken', but exactly what the difference between *hepé' manu'* and *ika(ng) manu'* was he could not say. Kakak Léwar, in either case, disagreed since Muhang use the expression *ika(ng) manu'* to describe the correct relation between brother

[223] *Hepé' manu'* has a literal equivalent in Tana 'Ai, where it reads *tudi manu* in the local Sikkanese dialect. In Tana 'Ai, however, *tudi manu* refers to a woman (married or unmarried) who is formally returned to her paternal clan as 'father's forelock' if the father has entered a clan exogamous marriage (see Chapter Three) (Lewis 1988b:203, 216). An actual chicken and knife are given alongside this woman (idem 340 n.4, 355).

and sister, or, between wife-takers and wife-givers; this is also commonly the case in Palué (see below). A sister (or wife-giver) should present her brother (or wife-taker) with chicken and be reciprocated with fish (or with textiles or some other appropriate gift); in effect, *ika(ng) manu'* refers to the practice of asymmetric marriage alliance.[224]

I have not come across a marriage between actual cross-cousins or between full BZ in Palué, but I was told that Hénd Sogén, from Latu in the sub-district of Titéhéna, is the offspring of such a union.

Cross-cousins are generally considered to be "too close" by blood to be eligible in marriage, even though they belong to different clans. The descendants of BZ usually only become marriageable after three generations, when their blood is deemed to have become sufficiently distant to allow for marriage. On one occasion I even heard it say that there was no longer a blood relation between such people. (The Catholic Church has been a strong impetus in enforcing the three-generation rule.) There are, nonetheless, examples in the past when couples have been strongly discouraged from marrying despite being three generations apart, and some of the older informants recall having heard that as many as seven or nine generations could sometimes be required before the descendants of a brother and sister could marry.

Cross-cousins only become marriageable if the woman belongs to the category *murén laran*, 'right/true road'. This category usually refers to genealogical and classificatory MBD among Lamaholot (cf. Arndt 1940:5; R.H. Barnes 1996:83; Kennedy 1955:56; Vatter 1932:75), but in Palué the genealogical MBD is excluded.[225] One of my oldest informants

[224] Muhang have a saying, *gaté ika(ng) manu'*, 'unite the fish and chicken', which implies that if the 'fish' and 'chicken' are not united they will not live and be healthy, but will die.

[225] If there is a big age difference between a man and his potential spouses it seems that his classificatory and genealogical MMBD can be counted as *murén laran*. Graham (1991:142-3) cites another example, namely a marriage between ZDD and MMB, which is the most direct scenario of *doré méi* (see below).

says that there used to be a prescription on marrying *murén laran* in Palué.[226] If the prescription on marrying *murén laran* was repeated in subsequent generations, the man was said to "follow the blood" (*doré méi*) of an ancestral sister (cf. Graham 1991:125-6, 135-6, 141, 170). After two or more generations, a woman would thus be marrying a man from her own progenitor line, making her offspring natal members of their own source clan; this closed a minimal three-line alliance cycle in the system of asymmetric marriage alliance (see also Graham 1991: 125-6, 135-6, 141, 170).[227]

According to my older informants, the practice of marrying *murén laran* began to disappear in Palué sometime in the mid-20th century and was rarely, if ever, followed after the 1980s. Many old people still remain unmarried since they never found a 'MBD'/'FZS' of the right age whom they could take a liking to.[228] Marriages that went against the prescription could, nevertheless, be made healthy and prosperous by means of ritual (unless the parents or some other relatives separated the couple by force, even if the couple already had children).[229] [230] Another alternative would have been to seek a spouse from a different community with which no kin relation could be traced, and thereby circumvent the prescription on marrying *murén laran*.

Choosing a spouse

[226] For an excellent discussion on the distinction between 'prescription' and 'preference', see Needham (1962:8-12).
[227] In Tana 'Ai, the return of the 'father's forelock' to the paternal clan by presenting a woman known as *tudi manu* (Lewis 1988b:203, 216) in practice mirrors the Lamaholot tradition of *doré méi* (see Chapter Three).
[228] R.H. Barnes (1978:20) has commented that a categorical obligation with regards to the choice of spouse is not the same as a lack of choice: "an individual's freedom of action is greatly restricted only when classification is supplemented by binding jural and institutional arrangements" (idem 25). The category of *murén laran*, for instance, comprises a large number of classificatory MBD, and marriages that are considered to be "too close" (and therefore 'wrong') can be made prosperous by means of ritual.
[229] In Tana 'Ai, incest is defined on the basis of shared blood; in this case, shared "maternal" blood, which (alongside maternal flesh) defines the matrilineal descent groups (Lewis 1988b:189, 191). Marriages that are deemed to be incestuous can often be 'corrected' by retracing the relationship between the spouses via one or more male links (idem 224).
[230] Arndt (1940:5) says that the noble clans used to be free to choose their spouses at wish, but I do not know if any of the clans in Palué used to have a similar privilege.

In the past, it was the parents who would choose a spouse for their children (male and female), following the prescription on marrying *murén laran*. (The marriage process is discussed in Chapter Five.)[231] The parents often discussed the matter together before the choice was made (cf. Kennedy 1955:205; see also p.185): for a daughter, they would choose a diligent man, who could work the gardens; for a son, they chose a skilled weaver, who could make clothes for the family.

Some couples became betrothed in childhood (cf. Vatter 1932:152); if so, the boy would begin to work on his father-in-law's garden straight away, and also assist with various household chores in the house. In a more recent case of early betrothal, a teenage girl moved into the house of her parents-in-law to assist with the household chores; this, however, was only possible after her fiancé had moved to Papua to work for a couple of years. (Unmarried couples are not allowed to sleep under the same roof.)

The children have, nonetheless, always had a certain degree of influence on their parents' choice of spouse. Prior to the 1920s, a man could simply tell his family that he had taken a liking to a certain woman and, if they agreed to the union, they would catch her on the road or in a public space and bring her back to their house.[232] When the woman's family came looking for her the man's parents would present them with a tusk, which does not seem to have been bridewealth, but *liko(ng) blepéng* (see Chapter Three).

After the 1920s, a man who had taken a liking to a certain woman, and who had the consent of his family, could ask a third party to deliver a knife to the woman as a sign of proposal. If the woman accepted his offer, with the consent of her family, she would let the messenger bring a return gift of a basket containing cigarettes. If she did not accept the offer, however, she simply let the messenger return the knife. The messenger does not seem to have

[231] Note, however, that 'marriage' might not originally have entailed a marriage process in Palué, as the current practice appears to have been introduced from the Lamaholot further east (see Chapter Five).
[232] Marriage by capture used to be fairly common among Lamaholot, but was banned by the Dutch (Arndt 1940:9, 130, 133, 177, 185; R.H. Barnes 1996:90-2).

held a special status or to have had any particular relation to either the man or the woman in question; he (or she?) is only spoken of as a "bridge" (B.I. *jembatan*) between the two parties.

Today, the choice of marriage partner is, in theory, free, with love as its central criterion; a marriage without love is not predicted to be successful. Neither the parents nor any other relative ought to interfere with the children's choice of marriage partner, but in practice marriages that are considered to be 'improper', or not good enough, often face much resistance from the family. Only when it becomes evident that the couple will marry at any cost is the family required to leave them in peace. I have heard members of the older generations say that "free love" has created many problems, not least by allowing for marriages that are considered to be inappropriate from the point of view of marriage alliance.

In the past, it was not uncommon that girls married whilst still in their teens, and even today there are a few examples of couples who have become married shortly after finishing secondary school, even though this is admittedly less frequent nowadays. Inter-generational marriages are not prohibited, and a difference in genealogical level does not seem to have any negative implications for the couple's fertility (and so the spouses do not appear to become ritually relocated to a more suitable genealogical level [but see Graham 1991:123, 206]). In the past the husband would in fact often be much older than his wife, but the reverse seems to have been less common. During my time in the field, I only met one couple where the woman was much older than the man; he was her second husband after a divorce.

Divorce is possible in Palué, but not favoured, and despite the Catholic prohibition on re-marriage it is also possible to marry again after a divorce, or after the passing away of a spouse. Sometimes the subsequent marriage even includes a church wedding. While many widows and widowers choose not to re-marry due to a strong emotional tie to the deceased spouse, others re-marry one or even two times. Re-marriage seems to be more common among men than among women, and widowers often marry a yZ or a clan sister of the first

wife (for whom they need not pay any bridewealth). According to my informants, widowers end up marrying a WyZ because of the daily interaction between the two in his garden: unmarried sisters often help their married sisters with garden work and an attraction is likely to arise between the husband and one of the WyZ after the death of the wife (or, in some cases, even before). Widows can choose to marry a HB or a clan brother of their husband, which will often be the case if bridewealth has already been paid. If they do not find a suitable candidate, however, they are free to choose a new husband from a different clan.

In a few cases, a man or a woman has re-married without having divorced their first spouse, or without having become widowed. This is not considered to be polygamy, since the intention is not to have multiple spouses but to clearly mark a break with the first spouse, similar to an official divorce. (Polygamy is, in any case, not permitted.) One example features an elderly woman from Kanada, who left her husband for her HyB, Bapa Léwar, who lived in an adjacent garden at the time. The grief that this caused the first husband eventually killed him. This example is unusual, not only because it features an elderly couple, but more so because the initiative to break the relation in this way was taken by a woman. More frequently you will hear stories of young men who have gone to work in Malaysia, Singapore, Kalimantan (Borneo), or Papua, and who have settled there with a new wife without having ending their marriage in Palué first. Sometimes the wife who has been left behind enters a new relationship but she cannot become officially wedded until her first husband has signed a divorce letter, which most men seem very reluctant to do.

Contraception and infertility

A woman should live with her parents or in the house of a brother until she marries (this nowadays refers to a church wedding). Only after marriage is a couple permitted to live together and work the same garden. In reality, however, most young people engage in

premarital sexual relations and many young women become pregnant before marriage.[233] If the father of the child is the woman's 'boyfriend' he can agree to marry her, but if the man is already married to another woman the child will be raised by the mother and her parents, or by the grandparents alone if the woman is also married or has plans to marry another man.

Adultery is common in Palué, and more so among men than among women, mainly due to the risks of becoming pregnant. There is no formal punishment for adultery, but premarital pregnancies and pregnancies out of wedlock should be amended by ritual as soon as possible. A relatively large number of children in Palué have been born out of wedlock. I have not heard of any intentional abortions or whether there is anyone who actually knows how to perform one.[234]

Modern contraceptives began to appear in Palué in the 1980s, but there are still several women and couples who choose not to use them. Some are afraid of unwanted side effects (e.g. infertility) whereas others are simply too embarrassed to ask for them; others, still, do not know how to use the modern contraceptives. A few women prefer a traditional contraceptive, which they gather in the forest; allegedly, this is a spicy root, but I have not heard its name or even seen it.[235] The root should be chewed and its effects can be so strong that the woman could become infertile for the rest of her life. For this reason, there are also a number of women who do not use any contraception at all, even though they do not wish to become pregnant.

Infertility due to traditional contraception has, in a few cases, been successfully cured by a *molang*; *molang* are also known to handle problems with male infertility (sometimes by making the woman pregnant themselves). A couple might also be unable to conceive if their

[233] Premarital sexual relations are also heavily hinted at in some early travel accounts from NTT (Hägerdal, pers. comm.).
[234] According to Arndt (1940:27), abortion used to be common among unmarried young women in East Flores.
[235] The women made no secret that the root existed, but they seemed afraid I might be tempted to use it if I knew which root they were referring to, as it was common knowledge that I was newly engaged at the time.

bloods do not match (see above) or if an *opu laké* does not approve of their marriage, or has some other kind of disagreement with the couple (cf. Arndt 1940:27).

At the wedding of Lisa Danga, one of her *opu laké* (a genealogical MB, at that) refused to share *wua malu*; this is considered to be a particularly serious mark of disproval. Not surprisingly, Lisa Danga has been unable to conceive ever since. One couple in Sukutukan had a similar problem, they eventually managed to solve it by letting the wife visit the *opu laké* in question to discuss the matter over supper; she cooked for him and asked for his permission to finish the remainder of the food once he has taken his share. This woman became pregnant only four months later, and Lisa Danga has been advised to follow her example.

Childlessness is often enough cause for a divorce, since children are seen as the whole point of marital life. Without children, there are no heirs and successors who can take over the house and garden and watch over the parents when they grow old, or perform ritual for them once they have passed away (cf. Arndt 1940:41). I have only heard of one case where the couple in the end decided to let the wife become pregnant by another man, just so that they would be able to have descendants; this allegedly took place in Sukutukan, but I do not know what relation the *genitor* had to the couple in question.

The marital relation

Spouses usually address each other as 'mother' (*əma*) and 'father' (*bapa*); the given names are only used as terms of reference. A couple can also refer to one another as 'husband' and 'wife', even if they are not yet officially married. In general, any affection between spouses should not be shown in public.[236]

[236] Graham (1991:125), conversely, reports that couples who were reciprocally *murén* in Lewoléma used to be encouraged to use sexual language with each other and engage in physical contact, at least before the Catholic Church restricted such behaviour.

It is the husband who is responsible for sustaining the family, and any earnings from the wife are only seen as complements to the husband's earnings. The wife is, however, responsible for managing the house, including the household funds, which she uses to buy food and commodities and to pay the children's school fees, and so on. Hence, while it is the husband who earns most, or all, of the money in the household, the husband must ask his wife for money if he wants to buy cigarettes or alcohol or other personal items. Very often, the wife will refuse, and arguments over money are actually stated as the strongest reason for domestic violence in Palué. Everyone can name at least one household where the husband has beaten his wife with a stick or with his bare hands; sometimes the children get beaten too.

A wife is not allowed to beat her husband with a stick, only with her hands, or else it is believed that the husband's life will be shortened. The wife, furthermore, does not have the right to leave her husband, despite repeated physical abuse; it is said that it is a husband's right to beat his wife if he is unhappy with her. The wife can, however, ask her relatives for help, and maybe even live in their house for a while, but eventually the problem must be settled at home. (One woman once told me that when a woman marries she is not free anymore: a wife should always follow her husband's bidding, even if she disagrees with him, and she must be prepared to serve food and refreshment for the husband and his guests without having to be asked to do so.)

If one of the spouses eventually decides to leave home, this should be done in a calm and unemotional way, leaving all personal belongings behind. Acting on emotion is believed to result in illness and sometimes death for the spouse in question; my informants can recall more than one serious example of this. If a spouse leaves the house in anger, a ritual must be performed as soon as possible to protect the spouse; this ritual should preferably entail a pig sacrifice.

Marriage Alliance

Marriage among Lamaholot is not so much an individual act as it is a corporate one; this is true even now when the choice of marriage partner has become a more or less individual matter. A marriage still requires two parties: wife-givers and wife-takers, regardless of whether these groups consist of clans or of nuclear families. Wife-givers are seen as having higher status than the wife-takers because they bestow a woman in marriage onto another clan, thereby making reproduction and future life possible for that clan.

To express the uneven relation between wife-givers and wife-takers, the words 'male' and 'female' are added to a basic term, *opu*, in Palué. Pampus (2001:180) equates the term *opu'* with FBS, ZH, or all men who are marriageable to *ego's* clan Z, but I have never encountered the term on its own in Palué. Because men are locally seen as having a higher status than women, the wife-givers become the 'male *opu*' (*opu laké*). The wife-takers, on the other hand, become the 'female *opu*' (*opu biné*). It is these distinctions that carry weight in Palué.

Opu lakéactually refers more specifically to wife-givers of the progenitor line (the MB line) and in particular to men who hold the status MB (with preference for the genealogical MB). The expression *ina ama*, 'mother father', is used when referring to the wife-givers as a whole. Since *opu lakéb*elong to the progenitor line they are considered to be more important than the other types of wife-giver, i.e. simply *ina ama* (see below). When speaking of the relative statuses of wife-givers and wife-takers, the wife-givers are *na'a ama*, 'brother and father' (or simply 'brother') and the wife-takers are *biné*, 'sister'.[237]

Until fairly recently, each clan and clan segment in Palué had a fixed relative status in relation to all of the other clans and clan segments in the settlement, and these statuses were

[237] People are allowed to mock relatives who hold the status 'sister' or who belong to the same age category or to a younger age category, but they may not mock relatives who belong to a higher age category or hold the status 'brother', especially not *opu lakéa*nd the MBW.

upheld by means of asymmetric marriage alliance; locally known as *likat telou*, 'three hearths'. It is within this marriage system that we find the prescription on marrying *murén laran* (see above).

Muhang and a few older informants in Palué hold that a tradition of "two-way marriage" (seemingly symmetric marriage alliance) preceded the practice of "three-way marriage" alliance in this area but, given that no-one has actually seen the "two-way marriage" system in practice, it is almost impossible to confirm whether or not this is true (see also Chapter Three).

Asymmetric marriage alliance requires a minimum of three groups in order to function, and in Palué these groups were clans, as we have seen above. The system makes marriage possible in one direction only; if, for instance, clan A is a wife-giver to clan B, clan B can never reverse the relation by giving a wife to clan A (see also Arndt 1940:5; Kohl 1998:160, 185; Ouwehand 1950:62). Provided that the alliance is upheld by three groups only, a minimal alliance cycle will be closed after three generations.

Today, the relative statuses between the clans and clan segments are no longer respected as the system of asymmetric marriage alliance is not explicitly followed anymore. Members of the older generations, nonetheless, do not approve of marriages that do not respect these relative statuses. The relative statuses of wife-giver and wife-taker have now become more or less restricted to the household and to the closest kin, whereas clans and clan segments can act both as wife-giver and wife-taker to the same clan or clan segment. Clan endogamy has also become more frequent nowadays.

The rights and obligations that are established between wife-givers and wife-takers at marriage are referred to as *gléka(t)*, 'help; support; service' (Pampus 2001:59). On the level of the household, this means that a husband can, for instance, be required to assist in a ritual that is arranged by his wife's clan, or that a wife can request a bowl of rice from her

husband's family to present as a wedding gift for one of her brothers. Small prestations and counterprestations (usually food or money) can also be exchanged if someone comes to visit the house, or helps with garden work.

During feasts and ritual, the gift-giving between wife-givers and wife-takers is expressed on a much larger scale, with more extravagant gifts. It is in these prestations and counterprestations that the rights and obligations established at marriage are most notably expressed on the level of the clan and clan segment.

In its simplest form, wife-givers must present the wife-takers with fish, and wife-takers must reciprocate the wife-givers with chicken. This gives the relation the name *ika(ng) manu'*, 'fish and chicken', which we have already encountered, above. Chicken is a higher status gift than fish. The chicken may be substituted with, or accompanied by, eggs (at least five eggs, in Palué), and the fish can be substituted with, or accompanied by, cake or cloth (a sarong and a shirt or blouse). The wife-givers are not allowed to eat from the fish or the cake, and the wife-takers may not eat from the chicken or the eggs, except for any leftovers that remain once the recipients have returned home. Anyone who breaks this rule will get a rash or suffer from some other malady (cf. Graham 1991:149).[238]

Wife-givers and wife-takers also reciprocate each other with a wrapped bowl containing rice, coffee, sugar, cigarettes, and maybe also additional foodstuffs. This gift is known as *wuling bama* ('stem of ear of maize [or other plant from which bunches grow]? + [?]' [Echols and Shadily 1989:94, 549, 584; Pampus 2001:268]) and may, again, only be consumed by the recipients.

Marriage calls for an additional prestation from the wife-takers to the wife-givers, namely one or more elephant's tusks (*bala*). Tusks only assumed the meaning of 'bridewealth' (*letong*) once a tradition of patrilineal descent groups had been adopted in

[238] Several children have allegedly been taken ill as a result of not having observed these food prohibitions but, in general, children are exempted from these rules until they become old enough to grasp the full meaning and extent of the *ika(ng) manu'* relation.

Palué (see Chapter Three, and below). The counterprestations from the wife-givers for these tusks should be more numerous than on other occasions, and the sarong (*fatak*) that they present among the gifts may not have been sewn together or worn as a garment before. The counterprestations from wife-givers to wife-takers at marriage are known as *ohé*, 'counterprestation at marriage' (Pampus 2001:177) or *walé bala*, 'returning/return for the elephant's tusk (bridewealth)'.

Marriage is not the sole way in which to establish an alliance of the kind *ika(ng) manu'*; the same relation can also be established between settlements that share access to the same watercourse. Water (*wai*) is seen as a source of life, and is considered to be 'female' (*faé(ng)*; also meaning 'wife') (see also Onvlee 1983:150-63, on the marriage of two water courses in Sumba).

During a drought in 2010, one watercourse that originates near Palué was ritually escorted to the villages of Konga, Nobo, and Nurri (hamlet Nurabélen), so as to officially grant these villages access to the water. This event required the presence of the Lord of the Land from Palué, since the watercourse originates on land that has been vested in his persona. The appropriate prestations and counterprestations of an *ika(ng) manu'* relation were exchanged in each of the villages on the day of the ritual.

A similar ritual was performed in Kanada during a drought in 2004, and in 2011, Kanada once more reciprocated Palué with a ritual meal.[239] [240]

Opu laké

The oldest *opu laké* is known as *opu laké pu'én*, or simply *opu pu'én*, 'root/origin MB'. Since *opu laké* belong to a person's maternal clan, they are considered to be "like the mother" (B.I.

[239] Everyone in Palué was invited to this meal, but only two people could actually attend due to transportation costs; the head of village represented the village administration, and the Lord of the Land represented the people.
[240] A similar ritual was also made in the village of Lewolaga in 2000.

seperti mama). *Opu laké* are sometimes also referred to as *lo'i owé(ng)*, 'cool and shady place', conveying a sense of safety and protection (see also Chapter One).

Since the *opu laké* belong to a person's progenitor line, they are believed to hold the soul of their ZC in their hands. On the one hand, *opu laké* watch over their ZC and have the power to cure them from disease; a person's *opu laké* are his or her most important relatives, and all types of ritual concerning this person must be attended by a (male) *opu laké*, even if the *opu laké* in question does not perform the ritual himself.

On the other hand, *opu laké* also have the power to curse their ZC and their descendants if they are angered. This puts *opu laké* in the position of 'earthly divine' (see Chapter One) and makes the *opu laké* one of the most feared relatives. For this reason, *opu laké* are always treated with the utmost respect, even by those who do not otherwise pay much attention to tradition.[241]

The wife of an *opu laké* who is the MB (i.e. the MBW) holds, if possible, an even more feared status than her husband. I was told that this is because she belongs to an altogether different clan; that is, neither a wife-giving clan nor a wife-taking clan in an *ika(ng) manu'* relation. For this reason, the MBW is considered "less close" (B.I. *tidak bégitu dékat*) than other kin, despite her close association with *opu laké*.

Bridewealth

My informants say that the practice of paying bridewealth (*letong*) was adopted in Palué sometime in the 1940s from the present sub-district of Titéhéna, at around the same time as patrilineal descent groups began to replace the tradition of dividing children in Palué (cf. Lewis 2010:133-59) (see Chapter Three).

[241] About 30-40 years ago, a very hot-tempered *opu laké* actually beat a ZC to death with a stick because he felt that the ZC in question had not shown him proper respect.

Bridewealth consists of elephants' tusks (*bala*), but additional prestations are usually given as well (see above).[242] The tusks feature in an alternative name for bridewealth, namely *witi bala*, 'goat and tusk'; goats are important prestations in some of the steps of the marriage process (see Chapter Five). Another name for bridewealth is *weling ǝlat(eng*), 'price, value', which refers to the conceptual value of the woman. (A similar expression also exists in Sikka; *ling wéling* [Lewis 2010:138-9].) When used in ritual language, this expression denotes a relationship or a tie, and is indeed more commonly used in this context than to denote bridewealth in daily language.

Because a marriage is a corporate act, it is the responsibility of the groom's family and close relatives to provide the tusk(s) that will be used in bridewealth. In the past, each of the clans and clan segments had at least one tusk among its clan wealth, which was available for the clan members to use as bridewealth. Nowadays, it may be necessary to purchase the tusk, as the increasing demand for money in the rapidly modernizing society has meant that many tusks have been cut into bracelets and sold in local markets, thereby reducing the number of tusks that are available for bridewealth payments; many foreigners have also brought tusks back home as souvenirs or collector's goods.[243]

Even if a groom cannot obtain a tusk, the bridewealth will still be discussed in terms of tusks, or in the monetary value corresponding to the number and the size of the tusks

[242] Tusks appear to have found their way to Flores ultimately from India prior to contacts with the Europeans, and so did the exclusive *patola* cloth that is sometimes used in marriage prestations (R.H. Barnes 1996:99; Lewis 2010:133-4). Some say that the original gifts at marriage among Lamaholot used to be gongs and mortars for stamping rice (R.H. Barnes 1996:99). Vroklage (1952:143) has commented that the items that feature in marriage prestations in Indonesia (e.g. tusks) very often come from the outside; these items have subsequently gained a special significance within the different societies as objects of prestige and wealth, and have thereby become embedded in the local systems of social organization (cf. Lewis 2010:133-59).

[243] It is, apparently, possible to find tusks for sale at the pawnbrokers in Mauméré: in 2010, a small tusk allegedly cost 7-8 million rupiah, a medium-sized tusk 9-19 million rupiah, and a large tusk more than 20 million rupiah (with the local income at about the same time, the average farmer would earn about 250,000 Indonesian Rupiah in 3-4 weeks, at best).

requested. Today, money has almost entirely come to replace the tusks in actual transactions of bridewealth, but no other substitute is permitted.[244]

Because the bridewealth is meant to move around, from one transaction to another (just as tusks are re-used as bridewealth), the money that is given in place of the tusks as bridewealth should not be used for buying commodities, but should be invested in the bridewealth of a brother or a son.

Wife-takers who cannot afford to pay full bridewealth at marriage can try to pay off the bridewealth bit by bit, but their debts are often left for their children (daughters) or even grandchildren to pay (see also Chapter Three).[245] More often, however, the bridewealth payments never actually take place, but remain a matter of discussion only. This relaxed attitude towards bridewealth payments in Palué has attracted many men from other villages to marry into Palué. (Local men who marry women from other villages, however, must follow the bridewealth practice in their bride's village, even if the couple later settles in Palué.)

At marriage, the wife-takers present the bridewealth to one or more of the bride's *opu lake*, and preference is given to the genealogical MB (see Chapter Five). Most informants say that bridewealth payment is a sign of respect to the people who have looked after the bride since childhood, but some men have been accused of seeing the practice as a mere 'purchase of goods'. The latter view is reinforced by the expression *biné béneno'ong*, 'a woman who has already been sold/bought', which explicitly denotes a woman for whom bridewealth has already been paid.

Once the bridewealth has been paid, a woman is said to "leave" her clan: *waé to'u lodo/pana*, 'one woman walks out'. Women who follow in her footsteps by marrying a man

[244] In Tandjung Bunga, East Flores, however, it appears to have been perfectly legitimate to substitute the tusks with pigs or goats (Vatter 1932:128).
[245] One informant described the payment of bridewealth like this: once the outstanding bridewealth of a woman has been paid, the base of a tree that features the MB as the root and the woman as one of the branches becomes "cleaned" (B.I. *bersih*).

from the same clan are said to "enter" their husband's clan: *waé to'u géré*, 'one woman enters'.

In theory, a groom is not allowed to bring his bride home before the bridewealth has been presented, but in practice this rule is rarely followed nowadays. The rule nonetheless suggests that the couple is not considered to be officially married according to traditional marriage practice until the bridewealth has been paid (see Chapter Five).

A couple may, furthermore, not live in the house where the bridewealth was stored during the marriage process.

Air susu mama

In addition to bridewealth, the wife-takers are also expected to pay a separate sum of money to the bride's parents, called *air susu mama* (B.I. 'mother's milk').[246] The money should be handed over separately at the same time as the bridewealth is presented, and it may not be touched by *opu laké* or by any other wife-giver; the parents alone are meant to benefit from this money. For this reason, the parents often use *air susu mama* to buy medicines and other items for private consumption.[247]

Air susu mama is a much smaller sum than money that is given as bridewealth (if no tusks are presented). Like bridewealth, the money for the parents is also intended as a sign of respect to those who have cared for the bride since childhood.

This payment should not be left for the children to pay, and most wife-takers seem indeed to pay off this sum before the payment of bridewealth takes place. If necessary, however, it is possible for the eldest daughter to assist her father with the payment of *air susu mama*.

[246] I have not heard a specific Lamaholot name for this payment.
[247] The wife-takers say that it is money "for buying *wua malu*", implying items for daily consumption.

Relationship Terminology

The local relationship terminology in Palué has seen many recent additions from other Lamaholot-speaking areas; for instance, *bélaké,* instead of *opu laké*. I have attempted to list only local terms here but, unfortunately, the list remains very fragmentary. Notably, no terms of reference were given for cousins other than the 'MBD' (albeit seemingly only applicable to classificatory relatives). Some of the basic terms further specify relative age or status by adding *bélen,* 'great, big; eldest', and *bosu,* 'youngest; lastborn'.

Terms of reference (m.s.)

- Palué, East Flores

1st ascending generation

ok'a mo'a		grandparents (WH couple)
bélen		old people (m.f.)

Parental generation

ba		F, any m. who is older than F
ba bélen		FeB (eldest), MeZH
néné'		FB, MyZH
bosu		FyB (youngest)
əma bélen		FeBW, MeZ (eldest)
tata		FZ
bé		MyZ, FBW
əma		M, any f. who is older than M

mamé		MB
waé		MBW
mamé bélen		MeB (eldest)
(mamé) bosu		MyB (youngest)

Ego's generation

aké, tata		eB
waé', tata		eZ
ari		yB, yZ
na'a		B
biné		Z
murén laran		'MBD' (classificatory only)
[k'laké]		H (archaic), H family (archaic)
[faé(ng)]		W (archaic), W family (archaic)
[k'laké faé(ng)]		HW couple (archaic)
ura		HZ, BW (f.s.)
kéra		WB, ZH
opu biné, ana' opu, biné ana', opu		H family (wife-takers)
ina ama		W family (wife-givers)
opu laké		W family (wife-givers: progenitor line)

Children's generation

ana'		C

ana' wahan(eng)		eC (eldest)
ana' tukan(g)		C (middle)
ana' urin(eng)		yC (youngest)

<u>All descending generations</u>

ana' uher wao kain(g)		all CC

The following equations can be made to show that the terminology has a lineal character:[248]

F=FeB (eldest)		FB≠MB
M=MeZ (eldest)		FZ≠MZ
[Z=FBD?]		Z≠MBD

A prescription for matrilateral marriage is indicated by the following equations:[249]

FeB=MeZH		[MB≠FZH?]
MZ=FBW		[FZH≠WF?]
[MB=WF?]		FZ≠MBW

[248] I have as yet not been able to show either patrilineal equations or matrilineal equations.

[249] The relationship terminologies from Wailolong, East Flores, and Lamalera, Lembata, both indicate asymmetric alliance (R.H. Barnes 1996:87; Kennedy 1955:258). The terminology from Leloba, less than a kilometre from Wailolong, on the other hand, shows symmetric features (Graham 1987:57). Some Lamaholot villages might be developing away from prescribed asymmetric alliance, following one of three possible directions: (a) double descent without prescriptive alliance (after Needham); (b) cognation (after Needham); (c) simple (non-prescriptive) lineal descent (after Hicks on eastern Tetum, Timor) (R.H. Barnes 1977:153-4).

We can compare these terms with the terminologies from Wailolong and Lewoléma, East Flores, and with the terminology from Tana ‘Ai:[250]

Terms of reference (m.s.)

- Wailolong, East Flores (R.H. Barnes 1977:145)

1st ascending generation

neneq (*neneq-moya*)		FF, FM, MF, MM

Parental generation

bapa, ama		F, FB, MZH
ema, ina		M, MZ, FBW, WFZ
bo (*bosu*)		FyBW, MyZ
belake		MB, WF, MBS, SWF, WB, MBSS, SWB, WBS, FZHZH, ZHFZH, FZDH, ZHZH,FZSDH, ZDH
tia		MBW, WM, MBSW, WBW, MBSSW, WBSW
tiu-ipa (or *tiu*)		FZH, ZHF
opu pain (*opu alant*)		FZS, ZH, FZSS, ZS, DH
kaka-nona (*nona*)		FZ, ZHM

Ego’s generation

kaka-arin (*tate kabote*)		see *kaka* and *ade*

[250] Wailolong and Lewoléma as two arbitrary examples of Lamaholot kinship terminology in East Flores: Wailolong is located near Larantuka; Lewloléma lies ca. 15 km from Palué.

kaka		eB, FBSe, MZSe, WZHe, FZ, eZ, FBDe, MZDe, WZe, BWe, BWZe
ade		yB, FBSy, MZSy, WZHy, yZ, FBDy, MZDy, WZy, BWy, BWZy, SW, SWZ
bine		Z, FBD, MZD
mure wana (*mure breun*)		MBD, MBSD, WBD
kawae		W
opu kesin		FZD, ZHZ, FZHZ, ZHFZ, FZSD, ZD

Children's generation

anaq		C, BC, FBSC, MZSC, ZC

Terms of reference (m.s.)

- Lewoléma, East Flores (Graham 1991:180-1, 185)

3rd ascending generation

mojan		

2nd ascending generation

koka'		

1st ascending generation

néné		

(bapa) dadin		grandfather, m. wife-giver of older generation
(ema') dadin		grandmother, spouse of m. wife-giver of older generation

Parental generation

(bapa) belaké		m. of wife-giving line
mama		MB
ema' tia		MBW
(ema') sé'		MZ, FBW
ema'		M
biné		f. of older generation of ego's line
bapa		F
tenga		FB
ipa		SW

Ego's generation

kaka arin		see *kaka* and *adé'*
kaka		eB, WeZ, WeZH
adé'		yB, W, WyZ, WyZH
biné'		Z, parallel cousin, FZSW
*muren wana*n		potential spouse (MBD, D of *belaké* of appropriate generational level)
kewaé		W
kenadu		WB, ZH
kenada		BW, WH
opu kesin'		Z of m. of wife-taking line,

		potential mother-in-law
opu		m. of wife-taking line, ZH
opu ana'		m. of wife-taking line, DH
méi		f. of generation 1-, D of *biné*

Children's generation

ana'		C

2nd descending generation

ana' susu		CC through m. line

3rd descending generation

sésé		

4th descending generation

ésé		

Terms of reference (m.s.)

- Tana 'Ai: asymmetric prescriptive alliance (Lewis 1988b:200-1)

Parental generation

ina		M, MZ

ama		F, FB
mamé		MB, WF, FZH
bé		MBW, WM, FZ

Ego's generation

wué wari		eB/yB, MZS, FBS, MBD, W, WZ, BW, FZS, ZH
'winé		Z, MZD, FBD, FZD
kéra pu		MBS, WB

Children's generation

mé		S, BS, D, BD
pu		ZS, DH, ZD, SW

and

Terms of reference (m.s.)

- Tana 'Ai: symmetric prescriptive alliance (Lewis 1988b:200-1)

Parental generation

ina		M, MZ
ama		F, FB
mamé		MB, FZH, WF
bé		FZ, MBW, WM

Ego's generation

wué wari		eB/yB, MZS, FBS, (W), MBD, FZD, WZ, BW
'winé		Z, MZD, FBD
kéra pu		MBS, FZS, ZH, WB

Children's generation

mé		S, BS, D, BD
pu		ZS, DH, ZD, SW

The present data shows at least that the relationship terminology in Palué lies closer to the relationship terminology of Lamaholot elsewhere than to the terminology in Tana 'Ai. There is, however, at least one term, *bé*, which appears both in Palué and in Tana 'Ai but which is not present in the cited terminologies from Wailolong and Lewoléma. Interestingly, *bé* refers to the MyZ and the FBW in Palué, but to the FZ, MBW, and WM in Tana 'Ai. (Lewis [1988b:200-1], furthermore, gives two renderings of the relationship terminology in Tana 'Ai: one following asymmetric alliance and one following symmetric alliance.) Matrilateral marriage does seem to be indicated in the terminology from Palué (e.g. a specific term for 'MBD', albeit perhaps only the classificatory relatives) and the terms show a lineal character, although whether a patrilineal or matrilineal character remains to be established.

*

It is not clear whether the current notions of relationship by blood in Palué have always been held by the people in this area, or whether they are a more recent introduction. The social relations created through the practice of asymmetric marriage alliance might also not have been a central feature in Palué before the adoption of a tradition of membership in patrilineal descent groups and that of bridewealth payment. The local relationship terminology bears resemblance to the terminologies of the Lamaholot further east, but also shows an interesting relation with the relationship terminology in Tana ‘Ai.

Photo 11. The birth ritual of *wua lodo* performed in Palué.

Photo 12. Handing over *air susu mama* to the bride's parents.

Chapter Five: Human Lifecycle Ritual

CHAPTER FIVE

Human Lifecycle Ritual

This chapter looks at rituals that are related to the human being and to the human lifecycle. Some of these rituals are – or have been – regarded as compulsory, whereas others are only performed if deemed necessary, or if the funds permit.

After Birth

Hapéng boté

My informants say that the first *adat* that takes place in the life of a human being is *hapéng boté,* 'hanging up the placenta', but whether or not this should be regarded as a ritual is open for discussion. Usually the act is done by an elderly woman who places the placenta in a small basket following parturition and brings the basket to the forest, where she hangs it in a special tree.[251] Similar traditions are also found in other cultural contexts in this area.

The placentas of siblings are hung in the same tree in Palué. The fact that some informants claim that there are only three or four areas around the village where placental baskets are normally hung might indicate that the baskets of members of the same clan are hung in trees that stand close to one another (or perhaps even in the same tree).[252] These particular locations have been chosen because they are considered to be 'bad' places and, for this reason, no-one would ever open a garden there. This is important, since the placental

[251] The particular species of tree was not specified to me, but in an account from East Flores, Arndt (1940:28) identifies the tree as *rita* (*Alstonia scholaris* [R.H. Barnes 1996:367]) or (B.I.) *beringin* (*Ficus benjamina* [Pampus 1999:62]).

[252] According to Arndt (1940:28), the umbilical cord is placed in the basket together with the placenta in East Flores. This is also confirmed by data from Lewoléma (Graham 1991:60-1). In Lewoléma, hanging up the placental basket indicates that the child is incorporated into its natal clan, since clan members are imagined as being united as a "tree" (idem 79).

baskets may not be touched by fire, such as when opening a new garden, or else the heat is believed to harm both the placenta and the newborn infant. The placenta is seen as an infant's younger sibling and they retain a strong tie after birth, but the placenta is not regarded as a human being (see also Chapter Four).[253] No harm will come to the infant, however, if the placental basket is simply left to decay, or if it is taken down by animals. While my informants hold that the placenta should not be buried, this does sometimes occur in unusual circumstances. In one report by Arndt (1940:28), burying the placenta is believed to kill the newborn infant.

After the old woman has hung the placental basket in the special tree, she cuts a small branch from the tree and brings it back to the new mother. The branch must detach at once. The new mother will then keep this branch in her bedroom until birth ritual (*wua lodo*) has been performed (see below). After this, the branch is simply put aside and may be left to "disappear" (B.I. *hilang*), but may not be intentionally thrown away. The ritual of *wua lodo* marks the end of a period of prohibition on mother and child.

Wua lodo

For 3-4 days following parturition, a new mother and her newborn infant are not allowed to leave the bed (or, nowadays, the house) (see also Chapter Four). In practice, the length of the period of prohibition varies, from two to five days. The prohibition ends with birth ritual, *wua lodo*, 'bringing out the areca nut', which usually takes place in the home of the new parents, if this is where the couple has been staying after birth (some couples stay with their parents/parents-in-law until *wua lodo* has been performed).

[253] In Lewoléma, new mothers are expected to offer food to the placenta and umbilical cord whenever they and the infant eat; this procedure only stops after birth ritual (Graham 1991:60). This recalls the practice of offering food to the newly dead in the house whenever members of a dead person's household eat (see below), and could imply that the placenta and umbilical cord are regarded as having died (or maybe even as having become associated with the ancestors?) (see also Chapter One).

The ‘areca nut’ in the name of the ritual refers both to the infant (see also Chapter One) and to a basket of *wua malu* (see Chapter One) that used to be kept on the bed alongside mother and infant throughout the period of prohibition; today, this basket can be kept anywhere within the house.

Wua lodo is often done before the garden work begins in the morning. A woman with the status ‘mother’ who is not the *genetrix* takes the baby and the basket of *wua malu* from the bedroom and presents them to one of the child’s *opu laké*. (Alternatively, a man with the status ‘brother’ can stand in for the *opu laké*, since the wife-givers are regarded as ‘brothers’ in relation to the wife-takers, who are the ‘sisters’.)

Opu laké takes a share of the *wua malu* and draws a small ‘x’ on the baby’s forehead with his index finger. The ‘x’ was explained to me in two different ways: according to one informant, the ‘x’ represents the Christian cross and is included in this ritual so as to acknowledge the presence of the Christian God, thereby bridging traditional belief with Catholic faith.

Another informant says that the ‘x’ is a pre-Christian sign, which has always been included in *wua lodo* so as to safeguard the infant and to promote its good health and fortune. The fact that the ‘x’ does not have the spatial layout of the Christian cross (†) could speak in favour of the latter view. Among Ngada of central Flores, the grandparents draw an ‘x’ on an infant’s forehead with the thumb while reciting prayers, for ‘good luck’; this ritual is called *rura emma*, ‘father’s saliva’, because the grandparents lick their thumb to put saliva on it before they draw the ‘x’ (Djawanai 1983:3, 3 n.7).[254] [255] [256]

[254] *Rura*, or *vae rura*, means ‘saliva’ in Ngadanese, and *vae rura* is often associated with semen (of god) (Djawanai 1983: 3, 3 n.7). *Vae* means water, but refers here to the saliva that is used to bless a child (ibid.).
[255] See also the meaning of the Greek cross [+] (“a unity of four-in-one”) on Java and its relation to *monca-pat* (van Ossenbruggen 1983:48-58).
[256] A similar custom has also been reported by Alexandre de Rhodes from 17th century Vietnam [Solange Hertz, *Rhodes of Vietnam*] (Hägerdal, pers. comm.).

If the infant sneezes during *wua lodo* the ritual must be repeated from the beginning, once all that is 'bad' has been cleared away with *épo* (see Chapter One). Once the child has been taken back to the bedroom, the mother and child are free to leave the bed (now: house).[257]

The clothes that mother and child have been wearing during the period of prohibition are taken to the river by a group of women and washed, to clean away all that is 'bad'. While the river features as a medium for cleaning away 'bad' things in a number of rituals, there seems to be a particularly close association between *wua lodo* and washing; one of the most popular gifts at *wua lodo*, for instance, is soap. Néné Paji is familiar with an older birth ritual in Palué, called *ohon lodo*, 'washing [the hair of the wife] with coconut-infused water and bringing out [the wife]'. This ritual appears to be identical with the birth ritual of *ohon kewaé*, 'washing the wife's hair with coconut-infused water', in Lewoléma (Graham 1991:55). (Graham finds the expression 'bathing rite' more appropriate.) At *ohon kewaé*, an infant becomes incorporated into a clan (Graham 1991:79). Some clans in Lewoléma also have additional birth rites, such as *lodon' ana'*, 'the coming down of a child' (or, 'bringing down the child'), which is performed for all firstborn children of clan Liwun (idem 70-1).[258] *Lodon' ana'* is regarded as an initiation into clan membership but also marks the end of a period of prohibition that have affected the new mother, the infant, and also the father; they have, among other things, not been allowed to consume 'cold' foods and drink during this period (idem 56, 72-3, 77).[259]

[257] Women who give birth in hospital may return home before the period of prohibition begins (see Chapter Four).
[258] The birth rite for younger siblings in clan Liwun is called *ohon ana' howar kelapu périk hoi*, 'washing the child with coconut infused water and anointing and affiliating [the infant] with masticated *kelapu* root and other plant materials' (Graham 1991:71).
[259] The same prohibitions also apply to women who personify the Rice Maiden (*tono wujo*) when the harvested rice is taken into barn (Graham 1991:77), once again illustrating the close overlap between the human lifecycle and the agricultural lifecycle among Lamaholot.

My informants hold that all children automatically become members of their patrilineal clan at birth in Palué, and that no special ritual is required for this purpose; they could give no reason for why *wua lodo* is performed, though.[260] It is possible that a different view on the relation between birth ritual and clan membership was held during the time of dividing children in Palué, but there is not data to indicate this at present.

Most children still receive their name at *wua lodo* (see also Chapter Four) (cf. Arndt 1940:29, 44; Kennedy 1955:271; Vatter 1932:117-8). The act of naming is not marked in any particular way, and the names are chosen after informal discussion between the parents or the grandparents.

Baptism

If a couple can afford a Christian baptismal rite (*sérani*), this can be done at any point after *wua lodo*.[261] Some children are baptized years later, others remain un-christened due to financial constraints. Unlike *wua lodo* and *hapéng boté*, baptism is not obligatory. In general, it seems that it is traditional rituals that receive priority above Christian rituals in Palué, if (and when) finances run short.[262]

If a child is to be baptized, the rite requires the presence of an *opu laké* (often an MB) and his wife (MBW) as witnesses in church. First, the child receives a blessing from the priest, using salt and water, and then the priest, the parents, and the two witnesses draw a

[260] In Tana 'Ai, a newborn infant is taken from the mother by another woman and placed briefly on the ground four days after birth to mark the birth of the child, but the meaning of this was only said to 'make the child comfortable in the world' and to ensure that it will become a cooperative and polite adult (Lewis 1988b:259). This procedure is called *lohor mé*, 'to lower the child' (ibid.). Similarly, in Lewoléma, women apparently describe the bathing rite as beneficial for the infant's health, strength, and character (Graham 1991:56).

[261] I was told that *sérani* is a short form of the word *nasérani*, which is supposedly derived from 'Nazareth'. 'Christians' are commonly referred to as *ata sérani*. Pampus (2001:220) identifies the word *sérani* as having Arabic and Malay origins. Hägerdal (pers. comm.) says that the term *sérani* is used to refer to Christians in missionary texts of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

[262] Hägerdal (pers. comm.) has noted that the fact that baptism is not obligatory in Palué is rather astonishing, considering that baptism is usually seen as the single most important Christian sacrament. I do not have a local view in this matter other than the view herein presented. It would seem, however, that local belief surpasses the Catholic faith in importance in Palué and that tradition hence is favoured before Christian elements if a choice is to be made (for financial reasons or other).

small ‘x’ on the child’s forehead with their index fingers. The inclusion of the ‘x’ in this Church rite could indicate that the ‘x’ does, in fact, represent the Christian cross.

If an infant dies or is expected to die before it has been christened, it is possible to baptize the child at home, using water only. In the only case that I know of, a dying infant was christened by a man with the status ‘(elder) brother’ only moments before it died.

Any person who has not been christened should, strictly speaking, not be buried in the public cemetery when they pass away, but in practice this rule is not always observed (see below).

Coming of Age

Sugi biné

Unlike Lamaholot elsewhere, Palué used to have a ritual that marked a girl’s entry into adulthood, thereby indicating that she had become marriageable. This ritual was practiced until the 1970s and was called *sugi biné*, ‘lifting up [the sarong of] the sister’. The ritual was normally performed when the girl had entered puberty (around age 10-15) and took place in the girl’s home. One of her *opu laké* would then literally lift her sarong above her breasts in the dress style of an adult woman. Children and men wore their sarong at the waist (only very young children were naked). In return, the *opu laké* received a tusk from the wife-takers.

As Catholicism spread in this area, it became offensive for girls and young women to show their breasts in public and, similarly, adult women should not display their naked shoulders in public (nor should men show their bare chests). The result was a change in dress code, from wearing only a sarong, to wearing a sarong together with a blouse or a shirt. As a result, the ritual of *sugi biné* lost much of its significance.

Sugi biné has not been performed in Palué since before the 1970s. Today, only a handful of very old women still observe the traditional dress code, the oldest of which, Néné Danga, will not wear a blouse out of respect for the *opu laké* who once performed her *sugi biné*.[263] (The only piece of clothing she agrees to wear apart from her sarong is a pair of short trousers, which her relatives have forced her to wear, "in case her sarong slips down".)[264]

While boys have never had a ritual of coming of age in Palué, Muhang say that all boys used to be circumcised at puberty in a ritual called *gahing klemé(ng)*, 'circumcising young men'. *Gahing klemé(ng)* did exist in Palué as well, but here, it was only performed during special circumstances (see below). In the rest of Tana 'Ai, *gahing klemé(ng)* is known as *gareng 'lamen* and used to be performed on all young boys (Lewis 1988b:259, 261, 342 XIII n.6) (see below). Conversely, there does not seem to have been an equivalent rite for girls in those parts of Tana 'Ai. Either *sugi biné* is a local invention (or perhaps somehow influenced by Lamaholot culture), or it has long since disappeared from the rest of Tana 'Ai and/or Sikka (cf. Lewis 2010:145-6).

First communion

Today, the Church rite of first communion (*sambo'*) has become a new kind of marker of the coming of age in Palué. The rite is performed for all boys and girls aged 10-12 and has become one of the largest Church rituals besides the Easter celebrations, which take place only a few weeks later.

In Palué, first communion is clearly separated into two different spheres: one communal Christian rite which is performed in church, and two individual feasts which take place in the

[263] Néné Danga sometimes ties her sarong at the waist but leaving the breasts bare, yet this is not considered offensive since she is already old.
[264] None of the elders can actually recall ever having seen a sarong slip down. The habit of wearing underwear and short trousers underneath the sarong was also tied to the spread of Catholicism, which pushed for 'decent' clothing.

homes of the children both before and after the church rite. One of the child's *opu laké* (often a MB) is responsible for arranging these feasts, and over a period of 2-3 days before the church rite all close relatives of the child are expected to bring food gifts (*mapang*) to the house (and perhaps also stay for a meal). A single household can bring *mapang* to as many as ten different houses. These food gifts will be guarded by *ina puken* until the end of the festivities, and she is also responsible for keeping track of who has given what, so that the type and amount of gifts from each type of relative are correct and can be reciprocated in the right way.

If the *opu laké* cannot afford to arrange a feast for his ZC, it seems that the *opu laké* can present food gifts to the ZC himself, but this is a less preferred alternative.

After the communal church ritual, the private festivities continue in the homes of each of the children, and large party tents are put up outside their houses. This time, the child's close relatives are expected to bring an envelope with a small sum of money for the child.

Marriage

It has been said of Lamaholot that they do not have large marriage celebrations and that they even lack marriage ceremonies altogether, except for in certain parts of East Flores, Adonara, and Lembata (Arndt 1940:7, 14, 127-30; R.H. Barnes 1996:89; Kennedy 1955:201; Vatter 1932:80). Vatter (1932:80) has only reported marriage celebrations among aristocrats, but Arndt (1940:7, 14) claims that the marriage celebrations in the villages of Ili Mandiri, East Flores, are a more recent practice; initially, it was the delivery of bridewealth that was the real cause for celebration here. Today, the church wedding has often come to symbolize marriage among most Christian Lamaholot but it is, nonetheless, often coupled with a number of traditional ceremonies (cf. R.H. Barnes 1996:89).

Seen in this light, we could ask ourselves how we are to define 'marriage' and 'marriage ritual' among Lamaholot: if we refer to marriage as a single event, equivalent to the church wedding, then, Lamaholot have never had a traditional marriage ritual, at least not in Palué. In Palué, a traditional marriage consists of a long set of consecutive events, among which the church ritual has become deeply embedded. This recalls Hertz's (1960:48) analysis of death as a transition rather than as an instantaneous act.

A traditional marriage in Palué consists of six separate ceremonies in addition to the church wedding; sometimes an eighth step may be required if the bridewealth has not yet been paid. The traditional ceremonies should ideally be performed before the church wedding takes place (be it a week or a year beforehand), but many couples postpone the traditional ceremonies, sometimes even for years. However, given that neither church weddings nor the payment of bridewealth was originally part of the tradition in Palué it is most likely that most or all of the practices around the current traditional marriage steps have been adopted from the Lamaholot further east, who today have very similar practices. This, then, would probably date back to the adoption of patrilineal descent groups, bridewealth payments, and an explicit tradition of asymmetric marriage alliance (see Chapters Three and Four). What the marriage would have looked like before this time, if indeed there was such a concept at all, I do not know; I have not heard a single reference explicitly to earlier marriage practices.

A few of the initial steps of today's traditional marriage process in Palué can be done simultaneously if the families in question are constrained by time and funds. If the families cannot afford a full marriage process they will usually omit the church ritual. It is now also becoming more common to simply live together and not marry at all (whether in church or simply through the traditional ceremonies) (see also Chapter Four).[265]

[265] The omission of the church wedding seems to be more common in the villages than in the town; in the town, it is the church rituals that often receive priority over the traditional ceremonies if there are constraints on time and funds.

The timing of the church wedding is dictated by the local parish, which usually allots one or two months each year to each village for weddings. (In Palué, weddings take place in July and August). Couples that are already cohabiting will sometimes choose to marry in a different parish, where they can be anonymous, as pre-marital unions are not considered to be appropriate in the eyes of the Church. The parish rules are, however, becoming stricter, and nowadays the couples may be required to bring along their birth certificates and their parish ID numbers as well as a written permission from their home parish to marry elsewhere.

Couples that live together before marriage, or that have a child out of wedlock, can be required to attend a three-day course led by a priest before they are allowed to marry in church; this is to educate them in how not to live in sin anymore. Until the couple has completed this course, neither they nor their parents are allowed to partake in church communion.

As to the traditional ceremonies, the first thing that takes place when a couple agrees to marry is to decide on which gifts to give to the different kinds of relative, the most important being the *opu laké*. After this follows four steps of discussion. The different categories of relative will be seated together at separate tables throughout these steps, "so that they will have something to talk about".

Marriage is officially only discussed by men, but women may attend these meetings, and husband and wife often talk the matter through at home before they go to the discussions.

There does not seem to have been special procedures for special types of marriage in the past, such as marriages with people from other hamlets (see Chapter Four).

Bawang biat

The first step of the marriage process is called *bawang biat*, 'presenting the basket with *wua malu* [to the parents]'. On this occasion, the bride's parents (*ina ama*) are expected to invite

the groom's parents (*opu biné*) and relatives with the status 'parent' to their house, to have fish.

The groom's mother brings food gifts (*mapang*) and a rooster for *ina ama*; the rooster symbolizes the groom's virility and points to a fertile marriage. The groom's father brings a bottle of arak sealed with a naked corncob and traditional cigarettes wrapped in lontar palm leaves. He also brings *wua malu*, which he carries like a baby in a sling made from a male black sarong (*lipa*). The *wua malu* are explicitly said to be the grandchildren that will result from the marriage, and they may not be damaged in any way.

In the rather unique case of the *bawang biat* of Viktoria Wato and Felix Danga, *opu biné* presented *ina ama* with a hen rather than a rooster (and a black hen at that; a colour not considered appropriate for such gifts) and *wua malu* that had been mixed with sugar. This was not only a marked sign of disrespect, but also a clear disapproval of the marriage. Not surprisingly, the *opu biné* were thrown out of the house of *ina ama* and the marriage process was halted shortly thereafter. This was not unexpected, however, since the relationship between Viktoria Wato and Felix Danga was troubled with repeated physical abuse on the groom's part; the only reason that the marriage process had been initiated was the unexpected pregnancy of Viktoria Wato.

Na'a ama

In the second step of the marriage process, the bride's brothers (*na'a*; also *ina ama*) invite the groom's parents (*opu biné*) and other relatives with the status *opu biné* to have fish in their house. If the bride and groom already cohabit, the groom must also attend. This step is called *na'a ama*, 'the (bride's) brothers and father', and can be done on the night following *bawang biat* or be postponed until much later. On this occasion, *opu biné* bring the same sets of gifts

as above, but this time the gifts are contributed by all *opu biné* who attend, not only by the groom's parents.

Opu laké

At some point during the early stages of the marriage process, the bride's *opu laké* (here: *ina ama*) are also required to invite the groom's *opu laké* (here: *opu biné*) for a meal in their house. They will then decide on a date for when the bridewealth will be discussed. The parents of the couple may have no say in the decision of this date. This step is simply called *opu laké*, and, as before, *opu biné* bring the same sets of gifts to *ina ama*.

Koda gəto hapéng tuak

The bridewealth (*letong*) is discussed in the fourth step of the marriage process, known as *koda gəto hapéng tuak*, 'agreement to hang up the palm gin'. *Koda gəto* usually takes place long before the church wedding is due. This time, the bride's brothers (*na'a*; also *ina ama*) invite the groom's brothers (*na'a*; also *opu biné*) to have a meal in the house of the bride's parents or her *opu laké*. Both the bride and the groom are required to attend, as are the couple's parents and the groom's *opu laké*.

The bride's *opu laké* rarely, if ever, attend (especially not if they are a genealogical MB) since they are due to receive the bridewealth and may have no say in how much should be given and how it should be distributed among them.[266] The groom's parents are also required to remain silent during the discussion; only the groom's brothers and the bride's parents may agree on the amount that is to be paid to *opu laké*.

On this occasion, *opu biné* bring the same sets of gifts as before, with the addition of one more rooster so that everyone who is present will be able to eat chicken; one rooster is

[266] For this reason it seems rather ironic that *koda gəto* can take place in the house of the bride's *opu laké*!

cooked for *ina ama*, and the other for *opu biné*. *Opu biné* also bring a male goat, which must be consumed by *ina ama* at some point, although not straight away. This goat is referred to as *witi wua malu*, 'the *wua malu* goat', and like the roosters, it symbolizes the groom's virility and points to a fertile marriage. (It is for this reason that the goat may not be left to die of old age or disease, but must be consumed at some point.) *Opu biné* also bring *tuak*, 'palm gin', in a bamboo container sealed with old banana leaves or blady grass. On this occasion, the sling with the *wua malu* can be carried by the groom's father or by one of his *opu laké*.

Nowadays, couples tend to exchange rings after the bridewealth has been agreed upon. According to one informant, this is the point when the couple becomes officially engaged. Another informant, however, says that this is when the couple would have been considered to have become married in the past (although how far back in time this would refer to is not clear). The latter statement is supported by the fact that the *ika(ng) manu* relation between *opu biné* and *ina ama*, in theory, only becomes established once the bridewealth has been agreed upon.

Sigi géré

The fifth step of the marriage process should ideally take place on the night before the church wedding, but in practice it may be done at any point after *koda gəto*. This step is called *sigi géré*, 'bringing the bride's personal adornments (inside)'.[267]

The groom's sisters (*biné*) should gather in the house of the groom's parents (*opu biné*) (together with any other of the groom's relatives who wish to attend) and then proceed to the house of the bride's parents (*ina ama*). They bring the same sets of gifts as at the first marriage step, with the addition of one male goat, and money for the church wedding. *Opu biné* ought also to bring the bridewealth, but if they are unable to pay the full amount straight

[267] In Lewoléma, *sigé* is the name of the ceremony which represents the betrothal (Graham 1991:67).

away this can be settled separately at the end of the marriage process (see below), and this is, indeed, the more common practice.

The groom's sisters also bring all the personal adornments (*sigi*) that the bride will need for her church wedding and for her life as a married woman, including clothes, bracelets, earrings, a comb, hair pins, a knife, scissors, needles, brooches, ointments, and a pair of wedding rings if there is to be a church wedding. All the adornments are carried in a basket (*niru*) in which rice is normally stored, which once more indicates a close relation between the human lifecycle and the agricultural lifecycle. In the basket there is also an envelope with a small sum of money for the bride's parents (B.I. *air susu mama*) (see below).

Kawéng

If a couple is to have a church wedding (*kawéng*), the wedding constitutes the sixth step of the marriage process. The term *kawéng* has its origins in Malay (cf. *kawin*) and ultimately in Farsi (Pampus 2001:98), which seems to indicate that this step was, indeed, not originally part of the traditional marriage process.[268]

Church weddings usually take place in the morning after *sigi*. This time, the couple's parents must act as witnesses; not the *opu laké* and his wife (cf. baptism). *Opu laké* must, nonetheless, grant the parents permission to attend in his place. I was told that the reason that *opu laké* and his wife may not act as witnesses at marriage is that the MBW is deemed unsuitable to carry any kind of a responsibility at a wedding since she comes from a clan that is neither wife-giver nor wife-taker to *ego*. However, in the baptismal rite, the presence of *opu laké* and MBW is required which, rather than pointing at a conceptual difference in the role of MBW in different Church rites, could indicate that marriage is locally seen as being a more important event than baptism. Alternatively, the incorporation of the church wedding

[268] There is no rule as to what to wear at the wedding; the bride, for instance, does not wear a white dress.

into the traditional marriage process has set it apart from baptism, which remains a separate Church rite unrelated to the traditional ceremonies (the naming has already been done at *wua lodo*).

Kusang

In the morning after the church wedding (or, in the morning after *sigi* if the church wedding is omitted), the seventh step of the marriage process takes place in the house of the bride's parents. This step is called *kusang*, 'washing (the hair) with coconut-infused water', and on this occasion the hair of the couple is ritually washed with coconut-infused water. The water has been brought to the house of the bride's parents (*ina ama*) by the groom's sisters (*biné*; also *opu biné*) and the bride's FZD (*biné*; also *opu biné*).[269]

The hair of the bride is washed by the groom's sisters, and the hair of the groom is washed by the bride's FZD. In return, these two sets of *biné* will receive male black sarong (*lipa*); both sets of *biné* receive these gifts even if only one set actually attends *kusang*. If bridewealth has already been paid, this is the end of the traditional marriage process.

Nété witi bala

If bridewealth has not yet been paid, there is an additional, eighth step, called *nété witi bala*, 'bringing the goat and elephant's tusk'. (The name refers explicitly to the bridewealth.) *Opu biné* is then required to bring the same sets of gifts as at *sigi géré*, except for the bride's adornments and the money for the church wedding. The tusk is usually carried in a ceremony to the house of the bride's *opu laké* (here: *ina ama*). This tusk can be brought even if the actual payment will consist of money; if so, *opu biné* can even borrow a tusk simply for display.

[269] *Kusang* is a synonym to *ohon*; in Lewoléma, the equivalent ritual is called *ohon rata'*, which has the same meaning as *kusang* (Graham 1991:151).

If tusks are given as the actual bridewealth, they must be reciprocated with a piece of cloth, which *opu laké* places on the shoulder of the man who carried the tusk, "to wipe away the sweat". *Opu biné* also receive other counterprestations (see Chapter Four).

An alternative name for the eighth step of the marriage process is *soga witi wua malu*, 'bringing the goat and *wua malu* (inside)', which emphasizes the (male) goat that is given as one of the prestations to *ina ama* alongside the bridewealth tusks. In this context, however, one informant used the word *sobok*, 'clan treasures', instead of *bala*, 'tusk'.

Death

If someone dies from natural causes, such as old age, death is talked of as *maté(ng)*. When a person dies, all the relatives are expected to assist in the burial preparations; there seems to be no prohibition or prescription on who is to handle the corpse (but see R.H. Barnes 1974:177, on the customs of other societies in NTT: in Kédang, only wife-takers handle the corpse, whereas Vroklage [1955:2:49, 77] says that among Belu of Timor the wife-givers make most preparations except for removing the flesh).

On the day of death, a dead person is stretched out on a bamboo bed (B.I. *balé*) inside the house; dogs may neither sit nor walk under this bed for four days. A member of the dead person's household grinds some husked rice into flour and places the flour in a covered basket (*sobok*) alongside a measuring scoop. This basket is put next to the head of the corpse on the bed and, at mealtimes, the share of the dead will be taken from this basket and cooked. The oldest member of the household also sprinkles some of the rice flour in the direction of the sea (*lali lau(t)*) and places the pestle that was used for grinding the rice inside a headdress (*lésu*) which is put with its opening pointing towards the sea. The pestle may not be

approached, or moved, for four days. The household of the dead person then prepares a goat or a pig, which is to be slaughtered and consumed on the next day.

According to one informant, the head of clan segment Danga Dotong or that of clan segment Danga Latuk must visit the house of the dead morning, noon, and evening for four days, to eat together with the members of the household. All the relatives of the dead person are also supposed to gather in the house of the dead in the evening for three days, to pray. If the dead person has any unsettled matters in relation to bridewealth, these should be settled before burial, which usually takes place on the following day. If the bridewealth issues are not resolved, the burial ritual must be performed by an *opu laké*, or else there might be negative consequences.

On the first day after death, the pig or goat which was prepared on the previous night is consumed by the household of the dead person. If the animal is slaughtered in the morning it must be killed in front of the house; if it is slaughtered in the evening it must be killed behind the house. Anyone in the household is allowed to cook the meat and the accompanying vegetables, but the rice may only be cooked and served by a woman from the same clan as the dead person. Alternatively, a woman from a wife-giving clan can perform these duties, provided that full bridewealth has already been paid for her. The woman in question will cook rice for the household of the dead person for three days, sitting on top of the *balé* where the dead person was stretched before burial. She is accompanied by her husband or by a clan brother of the dead person, and the couple also sleeps on top of the *balé* where the woman cooks. Neither of them is allowed to bathe or to work in the garden until three days have passed. The members of the dead person's household must only refrain from working in the gardens for 1-2 days, which is the (official) period of mourning.[270]

[270] Arndt (1951:37) reports a period of mourning of eight days; after this, the soul of the dead is believed to remain in the realm of the dead, which it entered on the fourth day after death.

The accounts of the actual burial vary: one account has it that a man from the clan of the dead person (different from the man who slaughters the pig or goat) is chosen to dig the first part of the grave, using a staff. Another account holds that the grave must be opened by the Lord of the Land, or by another man from the origin clan (given that the land has been vested in the Lord of the Land). Whichever man actually digs the first part of the grave, he may not bathe for three days following burial. The rest of the grave is dug by a group of men, using any tool that is available.

The corpse is placed in a wooden coffin by an *opu laké*, who takes great care to put the head down gently. According to one account, *opu laké* then covers the corpse in a cloth or maybe in a *doko* (traditional rain cover). A *doko* is placed on top of the coffin at any rate.[271]

The coffin is then lowered into the grave, and gifts are put on the coffin before the grave is closed (e.g. clothes, male black sarong [*lipa*], flowers). If there are plenty of gifts, some of the gifts can be taken home and divided between the children of the dead person, or between other close relatives. One informant holds that a stone should be placed at the corpse's head, one at its feet, and one somewhere along the middle of the body, "in the way that Jesus was buried". The same informant also claims that a wooden cross should be placed next to the corpse's head.

In the past, the dead used to be buried in the gardens or outside the house (which, until recently, was also located in the garden). There are still a handful of fairly recent graves in the gardens, belonging to people who have died there.[272] Graves were often marked out with a ring of stones, and when these stones eventually dispersed the location of the graves were only remembered by reference to certain signs, such as a tree or a rock. In general, people seem to remember graves that go 2-3 generations back.

[271] Very often, the eyes of the dead will open when this is done, but no-one knows if this is a 'good' sign or a 'bad' sign.
[272] I have not come across the occasional tree burials and platform burials that seem to have been practiced by some Lamaholot (cf. Graham 1991:234, 236).

The dead used to be buried wrapped in a *doko*, perhaps even wearing their own clothes underneath it, but there were no coffins.[273] Infants were still buried wrapped in *doko* in front of the house until the 1980s, but these graves do not seem to have been marked out with stones.[274] Burial outside the house became prohibited in the 1990s due to sanitation and health decrees. Instead, a public cemetery was established in Palué, in an area north of the settlement which already contained a cluster of graves. When this area became a cemetery, no-one was allowed to build new houses beyond or below this point. The land below the cemetery is specifically said to be reserved for the dead, and, incidentally, this area points towards the sea (*lali lau(t)*), which is associated with death and the dead (see Chapter Two).

While only people who have been christened may be buried in the cemetery there are, nonetheless, a few stillborn children who have been buried there without having been christened.

In special circumstances, a household can be given permission to bury a much beloved relative outside the house: I know of only two such graves in Palué, and both are located in the lower part of the village. These graves are covered with a ceramic structure, which is common in town cemeteries but less frequent in the villages. In Palué, the majority of graves in the cemetery are only marked out with a small ring of stones.

After burial, the bed on which the corpse was stretched in the house is cleaned; in the past, it would have been swiped clean with a piece of bamboo, but today it is washed with water poured from a jerrycan (buckets are not allowed). The jerrycan is then placed upside-down in front of the house for three days before it is taken to the river and washed.

On the second day after death, chicken and eggs are cooked for *opu laké* on top of the bed where the corpse was stretched before burial; this is the only time the *opu laké* may eat

[273] One informant, however, says that the deceased would have been wrapped in white cloth.
[274] On Adonara, stillborn children who were buried in front of the house would have a large stone placed on top of the grave, to walk on (Arndt 1951:176). Some of the houses in Palué do have large stones to step on in front of the house, but the stones appear to be unrelated to the infant burials, which are located in one of the corners of the front yard.

any chicken or eggs that have been cooked on top of this bed. The evening of the second day after death is known as *nebo*, 'prayer ceremony for the departed soul' (Pampus 2001:165).

The third day after death is called *lout léga*, 'walking around outdoors'. The woman who has been cooking rice in the house of the dead goes to bathe in the river in the morning, together with the man who has kept her company in the house. They bring the empty jerrycan with them. The couple walks into the river wearing their clothes, so that all that is dirty and 'bad' will be cleaned away; this is called *kusang hebo*, 'bathing in coconut-infused water'. The jerrycan is also washed in the river.

The couple then returns home wearing a sarong only, and carrying their wet clothes in their hands, since they are not allowed to bring any spare clothes. When the couple returns, the prohibition on bathing and working in the gardens ends for all those who have been concerned. The house of the dead is then swept thoroughly, starting at the back, so as to throw out the dust through the front door; this symbolically cleans away all that is 'bad'. If the deceased was a particularly loved member of the household, the house may remain unswept for up to two days. The jerrycan that was used to wash the bed may not be used for pouring water again; instead, it can become a flower pot to put outside the house.

After burial, the relatives of the dead person are expected to light a candle on his or her grave, at least once. The closest relatives usually put a candle on the grave for one or two weeks after burial. Food is also placed on the grave during this time, so as to feed the newly dead while his or her spirit lingers in the village.[275] The head of the Danga clan segment who has been sharing his meals with the household of the dead for the past four days seems to have a special obligation to bring food to the grave, and must ask the deceased for forgiveness when leaving the grave, saying that he is busy; if not, he can expect trouble when

[275] The number of days that the spirit of a newly dead lingers in the village was not specified in Palué, but it seems to be no longer than a week or two. I have, however, seen *wua malu*, cakes, and a toothbrush (!) being put on a grave that was at least a couple of years old.

he comes home. Several informants say that the newly dead can cause much trouble if they are annoyed; this ranges from cups and plates falling down in the kitchen, to failed harvests and an unfavourable climate.

Members of the household of the dead will sometimes sleep on the bed where the dead was stretched for a short period of time after burial. This is so that the deceased can communicate with them through dreams if he or she wishes.

Bad death

Premature death and death from an accident is called *maté(ng) rékét*, 'sudden/accidental death'. This includes deaths that result from falling from a tree, being bitten by an animal, having the soul caught by a 'bad' spirit, having a road accident, or falling victim to black magic. All of these deaths are considered to be 'bad' and will, therefore, receive special treatment. Death from illness, and possibly also death from childbirth, is excluded from bad deaths. Some bad deaths can be avoided if a cooling ritual is performed shortly after something 'bad' has happened.

The corpse of someone who has died a bad death may only be handled by people who are elderly, so as to protect the young from having their lives shortened. If young people, nonetheless, come in close contact with the corpse, they must be ritually cleaned with water, so as to cool them down (see Chapter One).

The corpse of someone who has died a bad death must be stretched on a bed outside the house until burial takes place; it may not be taken indoors. When a father once insisted on bringing the body of his son indoors (Erik Danga [see Chapter Three]) a 'bad' sign immediately occurred in a neighbouring house (Hénd Sogén was bitten by his own dog).

The graves of people who have died a bad death should be dug in the lower part of the cemetery, so that no-one can be buried at their feet. Erik Danga was actually buried in a fairly

central part of the cemetery, but this was only possible after a strong ritual had been made around the grave to protect the other graves from the bad death. All the personal possessions of people who have died a bad death must be taken to the cemetery and left by the grave.

Special Cases

Gét rata

Girls who repeatedly suffer from illness, or who show 'bad' signs during childhood, can be cured through a ritual called *gét rata*, 'cutting the hair'. Some girls have this ritual at the same time as their first communion, but the majority of women will combine *gét rata* with marriage once they have become adult. (The ritual is rarely done on its own due to the costs.) In other Lamaholot-speaking areas, *gét rata* is one of the lifecycle rituals for the firstborn child (Arndt 1940:31; R.H. Barnes 1996:114).

If a girl or a young woman is to have *gét rata*, she may not cut her hair (again) before this ritual is done. (Many girls and young women nonetheless continue to cut their hair in secret in the forest, with the help of a friend. If they do, they may never tell anyone about it.) At *gét rata*, the girl's hair is cut by one of her *opu laké* (also: *ina ama*) in her house.[276]

The girl's parents (*opu biné*) reciprocate the *opu laké* by bringing a large pig and food gifts (*mapang*) to his house, where they will receive cloth and sometimes also other gifts in return. The gifts that are presented to *opu laké* are called *wuling bama* ('stem of ear of maize [or other plant from which bunches grow]? + [?]' [Echols and Shadily 1989:94, 549, 584; Pampus 2001:268]), and the counterprestations are known as *logé biné*, 'dressing the sister' (Pampus 2001:142). The man who carries the *wuling bama* will also receive a special piece

[276] In practice, only a small lock of hair is actually cut off. On Lembata, the hair is completely shaved off, so as to leave no sign of the child's sex (R.H. Barnes 1996:114). Subsequent cuttings promote the strength of the child and leave a lock of hair at a specific location to mark the sex of the child (ibid.). On Adonara, red hair is only cut in conjunction with a feast, since red hair is considered to be special, perhaps even a gift from the dead (Arndt 1940:141).

of cloth, to "dry his sweat", (*hapo léwung*, 'removing + [?]' [Pampus 2001:74]) (cf. the delivery of bridewealth, above).

Gét rata is one of few occasions on which *ina ama* have the lower hand in the *ika(ng) manu'* relation, because they must reciprocate *opu biné* with more gifts than they have themselves received; this can go as far as to include the clothes that *ina ama* are wearing if *opu biné* show even the slightest interest in them.

Gahing klemé(ng)

Boys who repeatedly suffer from illness, or who show 'bad' signs during childhood, can be cured through a ritual called *gahing klemé(ng)*, 'circumcising young men'. This ritual was usually done at puberty (age fifteen and above) but it has not been performed in Palué since the 1970s.

The boy would have been circumcised by one of his *opu laké* (also: *ina ama*), somewhere within the settlement. The parents (*opu biné*) then reciprocated the *opu laké* with a tusk, which is said have been a sign of respect; they brought the tusk to the house of *opu laké* and, in return, *opu biné* received cloth and a piece of land (*néwa*).

While Vatter (1932:27, 49, 86, 122, 126, 196, 208) says that there has never been a special rite to mark puberty in East Flores, Muhang Lamaholot do claim that *gahing klemé(ng)* used to be done for all boys at puberty. In other parts of Tana 'Ai, the ritual of *gareng 'lamen* entails the communal circumcision for boys before they reach puberty, marking their entry into manhood. Unlike *gahing klemé(ng)*, however, *gareng 'lamen* is first and foremost seen as a cooling ritual, to cool the boys before marriage (boys are said to be born 'hot', and could thus harm their future wife during sexual intercourse). *Gareng 'lamen* is also a ritual during which ritual knowledge is passed down from one generation of men to the

next (Lewis 1988b:259, 261, 342 XIII n.6).[277] Both *gahing klemé(ng)* and *gareng 'lamen* once used to be performed in daylight, within the settlement, but since the Church and the local governmental officials were intent on suppressing *gareng 'lamen*, *gren mahé*, and other rituals in Tana 'Ai, *gareng 'lamen* was moved to the forest and came to be performed at night instead (idem 342 n.6).[278]

It is interesting to note that Lewis (1988b:342 n.5) draws a parallel between the flat stone and the tree trunks that are arranged in the forest where *gareng 'lamen* is to be performed, and the stone and wood altar (*mahé*) of a ceremonial domain, where *gren mahé* is performed. In Palué, the ritual of *gahing klemé(ng)* could not be performed in the same year as *géré lewo* (see Chapter Two), and, as we have seen, *géré lewo* also features the arrangement of a stone and wood altar in the forest.[279] Whether or not there are any fundamental structural or conceptual similarities between male circumcision and *géré lewo* or *gren mahé* is difficult to say based only on the current material; the information only seems to point at an association between *géré lewo* and *gren mahé*.

Other events

There used to be a tradition of tooth filing (*pélék ipé*) in Palué, but this was not obligatory, and it seems to have served a purely aesthetic purpose. Tooth filing was more common among women than among men. The process could begin in childhood and continue until

[277] *Gareng* means to entrust someone with something (or to entrust something to someone) or to confide a secret; *'lamen* means 'young man', or can refer to any four-footed male animal (Lewis 1988b:259-60). Male circumcision is, furthermore, explicitly likened to the clipping of the ears of domestic pigs to mark ownership (i.e. the forest animals become 'tamed') (see also Chapter One) (ibid.). During *gareng 'lamen*, the ears of the initiates are actually pierced as well. Among Catholics and others who do not approve of circumcision, only the ears (one ear) are pierced on young boys who have not yet started school, drawing a little bit of blood from the initiate nonetheless (idem 342 n.6). Among Lamaholot, the ears of pigs (and other animals) are cut to mark ownership and the ears of a sacrificial pig are always clipped before sacrifice; Graham (1991:85-6), in addition, does mention that some boys in Lewoléma used to have their ears pierced in the past, but she does not report any indications of circumcision or any other type of ritual aimed specifically at boys or young men.

[278] Lewis (1988b:342 n.6) says that the *gareng 'lamen* he attended in 1979 was apparently the first to be performed in several years.

[279] Some of the younger informants explain this prohibition in terms of the expenses that would have been involved in arranging two large rituals in one year. If they could have postponed one of the rituals, they would gladly have done it.

adulthood, but some women chose to start this process later in life. Some of the older women in Palué today have once had their teeth filed.[280]

Tooth blackening was another tradition that was done for purely aesthetic reasons, and it seems to have been fairly common among both genders. I have not met anyone who has actually gone through this procedure, as the dark teeth of some of the elders only appear to be the result of having chewed exaggerated amounts of *wua malu*.

Both tattooing and scarification seem to have been totally absent in Palué, and none of the elders bear any tattoos or intentional scars on their bodies.[281]

*

Among the lifecycle rituals, there is one exceptional case that deviates from the existing data on Lamaholot and Ata Tana ‘Ai and that is the presence of a ritual of a girl’s coming of age. There is also an optional ritual of male circumcision in Palué which does not appear among other Lamaholot but which is compulsory in Tana ‘Ai. The remaining lifecycle rituals correspond on the whole to the data from other parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area, except for the ritual of the first haircut, which is an optional ritual in Palué and only performed for girls and young women. Birth ritual does not seem to be tied to matters of clan membership in Palué. The current marriage practice might have been adopted from Lamaholot further east.

[280] In Tana Kringa, tooth filing (*okor niu*) appears to have been a ceremony of adulthood for women over 18 to indicate that they were eligible in marriage.
[281] In Lewoléma, several elders have tattoos on their face and body (Graham 1991:86). Tattooing used to be an outwards sign of maturity in some parts of the Lamaholot-speaking area, and was often considered protective against illness, during childbirth *et cetera*; they also identified the souls of the dead upon arrival in the realm of the dead, and granted them entry (Vatter 1932:49, 122, 126, 128, 140, 187, 196 etc.).

Photo 13. Harvested rice.

Summary and Conclusion

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Palué is situated in the East Flores regency on the island of Flores, Eastern Indonesia. East Flores consists predominantly of Lamaholot-speakers, who traditionally live from shifting cultivation and fishing. In the past, trade and small-scale manufacture were also important. The residence pattern is village-based, but there are local claims to dispersed settlement in the gardens. Residence was traditionally patrilocal (virilocal) but has now become neolocal due to influences from the outside.

In general, Lamaholot gain membership in patrilineal descent groups which are defined on a notion of shared male (i.e. paternal) blood. The descent groups can be either exogamous or endogamous depending on the level of the group (i.e. lineage, clan), the social status of the group, local tradition in the area, and so forth. Social stratification and local rajadoms could still be seen in the early- to mid-20th century.

Marriage traditionally followed a system of asymmetric alliance and was coupled with prestations (notably bridewealth) and counterprestations; today only the prescribed gift-giving is still observed. Bridewealth consists of one or more elephant's tusks or, nowadays, their equivalent value in money. Another alternative to bridewealth in some areas is brideservice. In a few other areas it was also possible to present the bridewealth of the husband's D or yZ or to transfer a younger female relative of his to the wife-givers, but such cases are rare.

Among Lamaholot a wife sometimes changes her group membership at marriage or upon the payment of bridewealth. A woman who is transferred in place of bridewealth or who relinquishes her bridewealth to pay the debt of a male relative does not change her group membership, however. In these cases marriage is also not a prerequisite.

Palué lies close to the border with the Sikka regency, which consists predominantly of Sikkanese-speakers. Like Lamaholot, the central and coastal Sikka traditionally make their living from shifting cultivation and fishing, and likewise trade and small-scale manufacture used to play a key role in subsistence. Local rajadoms and social stratification could be seen until the early- to mid-20th century.

The majority of Sikka live in villages and traditionally had a patrilocal (virilocal) residence pattern but have now become neolocal. These Sikka gain membership in patrilineal descent groups and used to observe a tradition of asymmetric marriage alliance. Marriage is coupled with prestations (notably bridewealth) and counterprestations; as among Lamaholot, the bridewealth includes tusks. There are, however, indications that bridewealth and patrilineal descent groups are a later adoption and that the area originally resembled today's Tana ʻAi.

Tana ʻAi is a region close to the border with the East Flores regency and its small Sikkanese population is called Ata Tana ʻAi. Until recently, Ata Tana ʻAi lived in dispersed gardens, with a matrilocal (uxorilocal) residence pattern. Today, the population lives in hamlets and villages, with a neolocal residence pattern due to outer influences.

Traditionally, subsistence was derived from shifting agriculture, hunting and gathering, and to a lesser degree also from trade. Unlike the Sikkanese-speakers further west, Ata Tana ʻAi have never had an indigenous raja, nor do they seem to have had an equivalent system of social stratification.

Ata Tana ʻAi gain membership in matrilineal descent groups which are defined on the notion of shared "maternal" blood (and flesh). The descent groups can be either exogamous or endogamous depending on the level of the group (i.e. house [ʻlineage'], clan) and on the ranking of the houses within each clan. If a man marries outside of his clan, the wife's house is obliged to return a woman (or, less often, a man) to the husband's clan in the next

generation, and will subsequently receive a second woman in return after four generations' time (but only if a woman was presented in the first place). Marriage should ideally accompany these transfers but is not obligatory. This return and counter-return of people (in particular that of the women) following a man's clan exogamous marriage indirectly produces a pattern consistent with asymmetric (marriage) alliance, although in Tana ʻAi it is not recognized as such.

Marriage among Ata Tana ʻAi is not coupled with bridewealth (or groomwealth) but, notably, the transfers of women (or of a man) following a man's clan exogamous marriage are coupled with prestations of ceremonial wealth, including tusks.

Men never change their group membership at marriage, but the woman (or the man) who is returned to her paternal house and clan in the first transaction following a man's clan exogamous marriage will become a member of her new clan (but not of her new house) whereas the woman who is subsequently returned to her maternal house and clan (if applicable) will become a member of both her new clan and her new house (since she carries the same "maternal" blood).

Tana ʻAi currently consists of nine ceremonial domains, seven of which are recognized as being traditional ceremonial domains. One of the traditional ceremonial domains is located in the East Flores regency; this is Tana Boruk. It seems that Palué is part of Tana Boruk and that the population used to follow some, or all, of the traditions in Tana ʻAi.

The population in Tana Boruk, however, is Lamaholot, not Ata Tana ʻAi. The same holds true for the population in Tana Ojang/Muhang on the Sikkanese side of the border. Over the last century, the Lamaholot in Tana Boruk and Tana Ojang/Muhang have begun to adopt more of the customs of the Lamaholot further east; for instance, a tradition of patrilineal descent groups, the payment of bridewealth, and an explicit tradition of asymmetric marriage alliance. (They already shared the same language as well as some rituals, myths, and beliefs

surrounding for instance the ancestors, Divinity, and so on.) This shift in tradition has been almost complete in Tana Boruk, whereas in Tana Ojang/Muhang it is still underway.

The residence pattern in Palué was originally one of dispersed settlement in the gardens; the permanent settlement of today dates back only to the mid- to late-20th century. At that time, residence was already patrilocal (virilocal) (but is now neolocal), yet it may traditionally have been matrilocal (uxorilocal), consistent with a tradition of acquiring group membership in matrilineal descent groups. There are indications that Palué originally had matrilineal descent groups just like the rest of Tana ‘Ai, for instance the fact that children automatically became members of their mother’s descent group unless active steps were taken by another group (e.g. the father’s descent group) to acquire the rights to them.

Based on the current data, it is impossible to say whether the descent groups in the past took the shape of houses (‘lineages’), clans, or both. The data also do not reveal whether the descent groups in Palué were ranked in the way that houses are ranked within clans in other parts of Tana ‘Ai.

What made Palué distinctly different from most of Tana ‘Ai, however (except, perhaps, for the better part of Tana Boruk and Tana Ojang/Muhang) was the fact that men were able to acquire the rights to some of their children to their own descent group by paying one tusk to the wife’s descent group. The father’s descent group need not necessarily have been a patrilineal descent group; it might have been a matrilineal descent group.

The women in Palué were also able to acquire the rights to people to their own descent group by paying one tusk; usually they would choose a boy or a man. The preference for male members in this practice of ‘adoption’ could be tied to the fact that men were able to acquire the rights to more members for their group by paying a single tusk than women since they gained the rights to at least one child (and usually more) when paying a tusk at marriage. Women could only acquire the rights to one new group member for each tusk paid.

The reason why men were able to acquire the rights to new group members in this way in Palué remains unexplained; at least it has not yet received an absolute and verifiable explanation. Local explanations speak of adding to the "strength" of both parental groups by dividing the children between them, but this does not sufficiently answer the question of why a practice of dividing children was favoured in the first place and why it became regarded as almost a necessity.

Placing the beginnings of the practice of dividing children in time is also difficult. Informants say that this tradition has always existed in Palué (referring to the community as such, not to the permanent settlement) and some of the older informants have indeed seen the system of dividing children in practice (they have themselves been divided). No-one, however, is old enough to know what it looked like before a whole range of social changes took place in the early- to mid-20th century.

The early- to mid-20th century was a time of considerable social change for the predecessors of today's Lamaholot in Palué. As we have mentioned, there appears to have been an adoption of a tradition of patrilineal descent groups and of bridewealth payment, as well as of an explicit tradition of asymmetric marriage alliance. Similar developments might have taken place among the central and coastal Sikka, although at a much earlier stage, and perhaps excluding the tradition of asymmetric marriage alliance which seems to have been in place already. Among Sikka, the impetus for change appears to have been the arrival of strangers and elephant's tusks to the area, and the subsequent marriage between immigrant men and autochthonous women whose offspring became the first rajas. The tusks assumed potency both in the context of marriage and in the relations between the raja and his subjects.

These events do not have a direct parallel in Palué, although it is most likely that the social changes that took place among Sikka would eventually have reached Palué in one way or another, in particular if Palué was included in the ceremonial system of Tana 'Ai and

hence closely tied to the Sikkanese culture. Looking also at local factors at the time of the social change in Palué in the early- to mid-20th century, this was a time when Catholicism first reached the gardens and eventually saw the construction of the first church in the temporary settlement that was to become today's Palué. Latin was introduced as the Church language, and Catholic lifecycle rituals, such as baptism and church weddings, made their way into people's lives alongside Sunday services in the settlement. At the beginning, the Church did not look favourably upon traditional belief, local dress, and close cross-cousin marriage, to mention just a few, and consequently took active steps to abolish these elements.

Alongside the spread of Catholicism there was also an introduction of formal schooling in this area. This, too, began in the gardens; only much later was the first school built in the temporary settlement of today's Palué. Like Catholicism, formal schooling introduced new ideas and new types of knowledge, as well as a new language: Bahasa Indonesia. (Bahasa Indonesia eventually became the official Church language, after having used Lamaholot for a short period.) Dutch and Japanese were also taught in school during the times of occupation: Indonesia was still a Dutch colony in the early 20th century, and experienced a short period of Japanese occupation before the declaration of independence in 1945. The location of the school within the settlement was yet another impetus to gather there, alongside the Church services and the communal ritual at the *lewo*.

In the creation of the colonial state, the Dutch administration executed several decrees concerning family, cultivation, locus and manner of habitation, and so forth, which began to reach today's Palué at around the mid-20th century. (Similar decrees by the Indonesian government have continued to affect the population to this day.) Several cash crops were forcefully introduced in the gardens alongside the staple foods of rice and maize, and because permanent residence in the gardens was banned people were forced to move to the settlement, where the residential houses in addition should meet new standards of construction. The

household, furthermore, should only consist of a nuclear family, not a number of heads of household and all of their families and close kin.

All of these factors have undoubtedly altered much of the traditional way of life in Palué, albeit they might not be ultimately responsible for the introduction of patrilineal descent groups, bridewealth payments, and an explicit tradition of asymmetric marriage alliance. The younger generations in Palué, however, do not know that much of their current way of life has been introduced in the last few decades only. They are also not aware that there used to be a tradition of dividing children in Palué. Not everyone in the older generations is admittedly familiar with these traditions either, but those who do know what the customs in this area used to be like seem almost ashamed of their past, in particular of the tradition of dividing children, which they consistently refer to as having been "wrong".

Why people would react so strongly against the tradition of dividing children in particular, I cannot fully explain. Some informants hold that the tradition was "wrong" because full siblings would feel "strange" if they belonged to different descent groups. This, however, appears to presuppose that the present notion of closeness by blood has always been recognized in this area, yet this notion is closely tied to the tradition of patrilineal descent groups and refers explicitly to the male (i.e. paternal) blood that defines such groups.

Other informants say that dividing children was "wrong" because it allowed for (full) BZ to end up in marriageable positions. This scenario, however, only appears to become possible if a tradition of "three-way" marriage, or asymmetric marriage alliance, is followed. While there used to be a strong adherence to asymmetric marriage alliance in Palué until fairly recently, some of my informants claim that asymmetric alliance was preceded here by a practice of "direct" marriage, probably symmetric marriage alliance. Whatever "direct" marriage really meant, it is not necessarily given that it allowed for (full) BZ to end up in marriageable positions, which undermines the argument of the explanation.

BZ marriages are disapproved of by the current population because it is considered to be "too close", again, with reference to blood. Yet, the current definition of 'close kin' might not have been the same in the past. In order to find other possible explanations, we might want to explore an element in the traditions of Palué which actually remained fairly stable throughout the period of social changes in the last century, namely the acquisition of the rights to new group members through the payment of one or more elephant's tusks. This power of tusks' could have been a driving factor in the presumed social changes that took place among the central and coastal Sikka, and so it seems safe to assume that we are not too far off the target by focusing on the particular social potency of tusks.

As far back as my oldest informants can remember, men have been able to acquire the rights to a portion of their children for their own group by paying one tusk, as mentioned above. (The remaining children automatically became members of their mother's group.) As we have seen, women could also acquire the rights to new group members (often male) by paying one tusk. Women, however, eventually lost this possibility, more or less at the same time as patrilineal descent groups and bridewealth payment were adopted. Once the tradition of paying bridewealth had been established in Palué, only the men retained the possibility to use the tusks so as to acquire the rights to new members for their group, now in the shape of bridewealth. Through the payment of bridewealth a man acquired the rights to all of his children for his own group; this payment did not affect the group membership of his wife. If a man failed to pay the bridewealth, all of his children would become members of their mother's group instead. (By this time this need not necessarily have been a matrilineal descent group.) There are some informants, however, who claim that if a couple divorced or if the husband passed away before the bridewealth had been paid, the children were to be divided between the group of the father and the group of the mother. It is possible that both of

these practices have existed in Palué, but that they belong to different periods in time; the division of children representing a later stage.

Following these new developments it also became possible for a man to acquire the rights to the children of a divorced woman or a widow if no bridewealth had been paid for her (in which case her children would belong to her own group, not to their father's group). The man could choose to marry the woman in question himself and acquire the rights to her children by paying bridewealth or he could simply pay one tusk (which was not bridewealth) and acquire the rights to all of her children without having to marry her. This seems to echo the previous practices here of paying one tusk for acquiring the rights to new group members, in particular the payment made by women since this payment was not tied to marriage.

While it is evident that the tusks had so far retained their power to acquire the rights to new group members in Palué there was, nonetheless, a marked change in *who* could use the tusks for this purpose (i.e. men vs. women); there was also a shift in the power of tusks to acquire the rights to new members when paid by a man. Women no longer had the possibility to use the tusks in this way, whereas men became able to acquire the rights to *all* the children of a certain woman by paying one or more tusks. (The children in question need not have been fathered by him.) One tusk paid by a man had, therefore, come to fill the same function as bridewealth, with the exception that it was not tied to marriage. Women still retained a right to all of her children if no tusk had been paid (bridewealth or not), but eventually this changed too. A man's option to acquire the rights to all of a woman's children by paying one tusk – which was not bridewealth – also disappeared. The only remaining payment that could alter a person's group membership was the payment of bridewealth, which consisted of one or (usually) more tusks. These developments have continued to this day, and today every child becomes a member of its father's clan or clan segment regardless of whether or not bridewealth has been paid.

This chain of events points to a significant – and very recent – change in the way tusks are perceived and practically used in Palué. From having been a medium for acquiring the rights to new group members, tusks have now become a symbol of marriage only, through the payment of bridewealth; and, indeed, the bridewealth need not even be paid in practice anymore. Even if the bridewealth is paid, the tusks are often substituted with money anyhow. The importance of tusks is nonetheless still seen in the fact that tusks always figure in bridewealth discussions whereas money rarely, if ever, is mentioned.

It is possible that bridewealth never assumed the centrality in Palué that it has (had) among Lamaholot elsewhere, maybe due to the particular relation between Palué and the matrilineal Tana ʻAi (and possibly also Sikka elsewhere) and to the local views on the meaning and practical usage of tusks.

The changing meanings and usages of tusks in Palué over the last few decades also seem to point at a substantial change in the traditional position and authority of women in this area, although the relative position of women has admittedly increased due to novel social conditions such as possibilities for education, independent work outside the home and private income, and so forth. I will here focus on the more traditional aspects.

As we have seen, women originally had the ability to acquire the rights to new members for their own group by paying one tusk, and automatically held the rights to all of their own children unless the husband or a woman paid one tusk to acquire the rights to one or more of these children. Furthermore, at least one child was always guaranteed to remain with the mother even if this tusk had been paid, which lends support to the assumption that descent groups in this area were originally matrilineal. In fact, even when the tradition of paying bridewealth was first adopted and descent groups became patrilineal, all children still became members of their mother's group if no bridewealth or separate tusk was paid by the husband or another man. It also seems to have been possible, at some point, to divide the children

between the two parental groups if the couple divorced or if the husband passed away before bridewealth had been paid. By this time, however, women had lost the option of paying a tusk to acquire the rights to new members for their group, as well as the right to keep at least one child in their own group when the husband or another man paid bridewealth or a separate tusk to acquire the rights to the children for their group.

The changes that occurred with regards to the position of women in Palué in effect brought the culture in Palué closer to that of Lamaholot elsewhere. It also accorded more with the traditions and ideas of male authority that we can find in Christianity and in Islam, as well as in the ideologies of the (Christian) Dutch colonial power and the independent (predominantly Muslim) Indonesian state. In fact, many of the older informants in Palué claim to have experienced decades of forceful and, at times, violent attempts at suppressing and replacing local traditions in Palué and vicinity. The alleged persecutions are said to have been carried out both by Dutch and Indonesian administrations and by the Church. It is possible that the current feelings of shame of the past in Palué and the use of the word "wrong" to describe the division of children might root in experiences such as these. Unfortunately, there is not yet enough data to back up this assumption, but based on the accounts of my informants the possibility should not be disregarded. If the assumption proves correct, to some degree at least, the differences in tradition and ideas regarding male and female positions and authority is only a minor element in a much bigger picture, but nonetheless a concrete entry into this particular sphere of inquiry.

If we turn to look at the changing position and authority of men in Palué over the last few decades it is clear that men had a privilege here that men do not normally have in Tana ʻAi: they were able to use tusks so as to acquire the rights to new members for their group. Not only that; they were actually able to acquire the rights to the same number of group members as women or more by paying one tusk (division of children).

This distinguishes Palué from the better part of Tana ‘Ai and seems to point to a slightly different conception of male and female spheres in Palué; alternatively it could show a degree of influence on Palué from the social changes that might have taken place among the central and coastal Sikka.

Generally in Tana ‘Ai men are only responsible for ritual, while women hold authority in social life by virtue of their access to the house and land. In Palué, men seem to have breached this boundary and for some reason gained a degree of concrete influence in non-ritual matters (provided that men have always been responsible for ritual in Palué). That is not to say that men do not implicitly influence the social sphere everywhere in Tana ‘Ai; they do, and quite extensively so. By entering clan exogamous marriages elsewhere in Tana ‘Ai, men contribute to the creation of new houses (‘lineages’) within the clan. (Such marriages are, however, less preferred, and only spurred by a notion of precedence among the ranked houses within the clan, and by a thereto related prohibition on male hypogamy.) It is these clan exogamous marriages that necessitate the return of a woman (or, less often, a man) to the clan of the husband and the subsequent counter-return of a woman to the clan of the wife (if a woman was given in the preceding step). The transfers of these people do not necessitate marriage, but if the women (or the man) in question does marry into the new clan this will create a pattern consistent with asymmetric marriage alliance. (Yet the pattern is not recognized as such in Tana ‘Ai.)

The transfers of the women (or of the man) are coupled with prestations and counterprestations of ceremonial wealth, even if no marriage is contracted. The ceremonial wealth of Ata Tana ‘Ai includes tusks, bronze gongs, ancient spears, and *patola* textiles; these were some of the items that were introduced to Eastern Indonesia through international trade and often figure as bridewealth payments in this region due to the high status that has been attached to such items. The inclusion of tusks in these transactions in Tana ‘Ai again

lends support to the presumption that tusks were initially mainly a medium for acquiring the rights to new group members but not necessarily in conjunction with marriage.

It would be convenient if one could argue that men are able to use foreign items as bridewealth in this area (and thereby also acquire the rights to their children for their own group) due to a closer association between 'men' and the 'outside' than between 'women' and the 'outside'. One reason why men but not women would be able to use such items could be that men tend to have a higher status than women in these societies and would therefore have, for instance, easier access to high status items. If we propose that this was the case in Palué, this could help explain why men were originally able to acquire the rights to more group members than women by paying the same amount of tusk; just one.

Data from Tana 'Ai does seem to suggest that there is a close association between 'men' and the 'outside', but in most parts of Tana 'Ai men *cannot* use ceremonial wealth for acquiring the rights to new group members.[282] Palué (and maybe also Tana Ojang/Muhang) is a notable exception from this rule, and the fact that this possibility even existed in Palué might place the customs in Palué closer to the tradition of Lamaholot elsewhere than to the tradition in Tana 'Ai. It could also mean that Palué with vicinity has been subject to more influence from the changes that possibly took place among the central and coastal Sikka than has the rest of Tana 'Ai. The association between 'men' and the 'outside' in Tana 'Ai might, nonetheless, have been present in Palué as well and could help explain why men were able to use clan wealth so as to acquire new group members here, and why they seem to have been able to acquire more group members than women through equivalent payments.

[282] In Tana 'Ai, men are associated with danger, heat (a negative feature), and the forest. Women are associated with safety, coolness (a positive feature), and the house and garden. The house and garden are areas that have been rendered safe and cool through human activity; they are, in fact, the very centres for human activity. The forest, on the other hand, lies beyond the sphere of human activity, which seems to imply an inside:outside dichotomy in which men indirectly become associated with the 'outside'.

A bigger, and perhaps more significant, question still remains unanswered, namely why *both men and women* were able to use tusks at all for acquiring the rights to new group members in Palué. This question requires much more investigation.

Notably we should point out that tusks have not only served as a means for acquiring the rights to new group members in this area. In Palué, tusks have also featured in lifecycle rituals and in rituals concerned with the human being. Today we can see that tusks have come to serve as bridewealth at marriage, either as an actual payment *or* in discussion only. The payment of bridewealth has furthermore become detached from issues of clan membership, thereby reducing the tusks to a mere symbol of the (act of) marriage. (And, as we have seen, this is a very recent development in Palué since, originally, the payments of tusks were intimately tied to issues of group membership but *not* necessarily tied to the act of marriage, recalling the tradition elsewhere in Tana ‘Ai.)

If we move further back in time, tusks also used to play an important part in two rituals that are no longer performed in Palué. At a girl’s ritual of coming of age one tusk was given to her *opu laké*, who performed this ritual for her. A tusk was also given to a boy’s *opu laké* at his ritual of circumcision, which was, likewise, performed by the boy’s *opu laké*. In the case of circumcision, however, the ritual was only done if illness or other ‘bad’ signs called for it. It is interesting to note that girls have never had a ritual of coming of age in other parts of Tana ‘Ai. Boys, on the other hand, used to be circumcised before reaching puberty in Tana ‘Ai. This ceremony was not performed by an MB or by another wife-giver, but by a group of ritual specialists in a communal ritual for a whole group of boys; no payment of ceremonial wealth was required.

The differences in tradition between Palué and the rest of Tana ‘Ai could indicate that these rituals in Palué are of a more recent date, perhaps even related to the express emphasis that was placed on asymmetric marriage alliance in the early- to mid-20th century. It is, of

course, also perfectly possible that the rituals existed before that, and that someone else filled the role of the *opu laké* in the earlier versions of these rituals. The prestation of tusks at the rituals in question, however, could nonetheless represent a newer practice, which was tied to the increasing emphasis on asymmetric marriage alliance and to the adoption of bridewealth payments in Palué. Whatever might be the case these examples might undermine the assumption that tusks initially only carried the power to acquire the rights to new group members in Palué.

A third ritual in Palué featuring the *opu laké* could however substantiate the assumption that tusks were originally used only as a means for acquiring the rights to group members here. This is the ritual of the first haircut, which among many other Lamaholot is a birth ritual through which children acquire membership in a patrilineal descent group. (Palué has another birth ritual, but today, at least, this ritual is not associated with matters of clan membership, and at present no data suggest that it ever was.) The first haircut is still performed for girls or young women in Palué in case of illness or other 'bad' signs, paralleling the option of circumcision for boys. The ritual is performed by the girl's *opu lake*, but unlike the ritual of a girl's coming of age and the ritual of boy's circumcision the *opu laké* does *not* receive a tusk on this occasion.

Before we conclude our discussion, we might want to return once more to the reason why people in Palué today consider the tradition of dividing children as having been "wrong", and their explanations for why this tradition was abandoned. As we have seen, two of the main explanations are that full siblings would feel "strange" if they belonged to different clans and that a (full) BZ might end up in marriageable positions (but presumably only if asymmetric marriage alliance was followed).

These views seem to imply that even though (full) siblings would have belonged to different descent groups and, therefore, would have had disparate social identities,

obligations, prohibitions that needed to be observed, ritual knowledge and so on (cf. *wun*), they are, by today's standards at least, still regarded as *full* siblings. That, in turn, implies that the people in Palué today have some kind of notion of an immutable biological connection between full siblings, be it in terms of blood, flesh, or any other substance (or essence) within the body. We have seen that the inheritance of ritual knowledge and fluency in ritual language, as well as the position of Lord of the Land and possibly also other key positions in the community, are considered to be inherited biologically. This type of inheritance, however, places emphasis on inheritance through the male line, and might be linked to the adoption of a tradition of patrilineal descent groups in this area.

At the very least, full siblings share a connection to the same mother, by virtue of having been born of the same womb. In Tana 'Ai, this connection *de facto* defines the members of a house ('lineage') as being 'one group'.

Nonetheless, if the population that practiced a tradition of dividing children in Palué did not consider this tradition to be "wrong" or "strange" (since they were evidently doing it), it is possible that current notions of blood ties, uterine ties, and other biological ties in Palué did not exist in the same form in the past. Alternatively, these notions were less important then than they are today. It is notable that neither the highly elaborated notion of blood in Tana 'Ai and that among the Lamaholot of Lewoléma show any prominence in Palué today.

If we turn to look at the issue from another angle, we may want to consider the kind of ties that could have been created through the composition and the activities of different types of social groups. The data from Palué suggests that the composition of the residential group, or the household, did not change even though the children were divided between the two parental groups; the children would still live with their parents and their siblings in the same house. The residential group would, furthermore, still have cooked, eaten, slept, and worked together in the garden and in the house. Hence, the division of children did not entail a

physical separation at home. It is possible that the kind of kinship that was created through the composition and the activities of the household were perceived in the past as being more important for defining close kin (on the level of the residential group) than any type of biological tie. If so, it would make sense it if made little difference whether or not the members of the household actually belonged to the same descent group or not, as full siblings would still be considered to be full siblings even though they belonged to different descent groups.

If we then look at the descent group, it is likely that the kinship within this kind of group would have followed a completely different criterion from the kinship within the residential group. This criterion would have had to do with social identity, obligations, prohibitions that needed to be observed, ritual knowledge, and so on (cf. *wun*). Yet this type of kinship would most probably only have been made explicitly manifest during the performance of ritual; possibly even at the performance of large-scale ritual only, which is done at the *lewo* rather than in the private gardens. The performance of ritual at the *lewo* would physically have separated the residential group from the descent group, provided that the parents and the children belonged to different groups. In addition, it also meant a physical separation of the locus of activity of the residential group from the locus of activity of the descent group (i.e. garden vs. *lewo*).[283]

Given that the people who practiced a division of children did not object to dividing the household in this way at ritual, there does seem to have been a difference in level (or sphere) of kinship between the residential group on the one hand, and the descent group on the other hand. However, because the criteria and practical bases for defining kinship in the two types of group appear to have been quite disparate, they were also not in conflict with each other, *ergo* full siblings could still be considered as full siblings even though they belonged to

[283] Today, minor garden rituals that are performed in the private gardens do not require the presence of the whole clan. They do, however, often call for the presence, or assistance, of household members or other close kin even if they belong to different clans. Whether or not this was also true in the past remains unclear.

different descent groups. A division of children did not disrupt the unity of the residential group nor did it affect the unity of the descent group.

Among the current population in Palué, however, the physical, spiritual, and psychological separation that would be entailed in belonging to different clans could account for the current claims that full siblings would feel "strange" if they belonged to different groups. This brings us back to the above discussion of clan specific social identity, obligations, prohibitions that needed to be observed, ritual knowledge, and so on; seen in this light, it would seem that clan membership actually could play an important part in notions of an immutable tie between full siblings in present-day Palué, which is the complete opposite of what we initially deduced!

That does not necessarily mean that this supposition was wrong: the data still suggest that the criteria and bases for kinship used to differ between the level of the residential group on the one hand, and the level of the descent group on the other hand. Since the social and political importance of clans has decreased in modern-day Palué, while at the same time the importance of the household has increased, it would logically follow that the kinship ties on the level of the household might have become more important among the current population than kinship at the level of the clan.

Unfortunately, the present data are not sufficient to determine with any certainty exactly what type of notions of kinship and group unity that the predecessors of today's population in Palué held. It is also difficult to say whether or not any of these notions can still be seen in Palué today. It is likely that more extensive fieldwork as well as investigations into a wider geographical area will yield more results. The tradition of dividing children may have applied throughout Tana Boruk, and existing data suggest that a similar tradition is still practiced in Tana Ojang/Muhang and in at least parts of Tana Kringa. (It is even possible that the tradition of dividing children in Tana Ojang/Muhang used to be coupled with the payment of a tusk,

since the population is mainly Lamaholot; no data have as yet been obtained from Tana Kringa on this matter.)

The differences in tradition between Tana Ojang/Muhang, Tana Kringa, and Palué (Tana Boruk?) on the one hand, and the rest of Tana ‘Ai on the other hand, could perhaps partly be attributed to the fact that these three ceremonial domains are located in a boundary area between two distinct culture and language groups: Sikka/Ata Tana ‘Ai and Lamaholot. Another factor seems to be that the two cultures appear to have become mixed together here over a long period of time. Indeed, the older traditions in Palué display traits from both sides.

Data from Sikka further west, as well as data from Ngada in central Flores, suggest that similar traditions to the one in Palué existed in this part of Flores as well, but seemingly not to the same extent. Notably, while Arndt (1938) shows that the system of dividing children existed among Sikka in the early 20th century (itself lending support to Lewis’s [2010] proposal that Sikka were originally much like present-day Ata Tana ‘Ai) he does not report a similar system in any of his writings on Lamaholot. The fact that the traditional customs in Palué show similarities with traditions that are found both among Sikka and Ngada of central Flores could indicate that the tradition of dividing children (at the very least) is particular to central-east Flores and that Palué, in that sense, has stronger ties to central Flores than to Lamaholot and the traditions of East Flores. Central-eastern Flores has already showed that it houses a great variety of traditions; the matrilineal Tana ‘Ai being but one of them. A tradition of matrilineal descent groups might in fact have been much more widespread on Flores in the past than it is today.

We may ask ourselves why the question of membership in descent groups and of the acquisition of the rights to new group members was important enough to receive so much attention and see so much elaboration in Palué?

A very simplistic and functionalist approach would say that the most obvious reason could, quite simply, be related to the access to land, on which to cultivate the staple crops, and also to the access to means by which to protect and to increase this yield (i.e. manpower, ritual, and the blessings of the ancestors and the Divinity). We have already seen that both the residential group and the descent group contribute in different ways in accessing these elements. According to local belief and social system, the access to all of these elements can only be gained through membership in both a residential group and a descent group.

Without access to land, food cannot be grown, and without a reliable supply of food, larger groups of people cannot be sustained and so, eventually, the result is death. (The struggle for life is illustrated in, for instance, the myth of *tono wujo*.) In addition, if the yield cannot be maximized, there is no protection against failed harvests or animal predation or other factors that can result in food shortage, and without a maximized yield a large household cannot be fed, nor can all youngsters be reared to adulthood.

It is, therefore, plain that to sustain life you need access to land and manpower, access to the knowledge of ritual, and access to the help and blessings of the ancestors and the Divinity. In fact, the greatest variety in ritual actually seems to be found in garden ritual, where every clan and clan segment has its own particular way of performing the different rituals, which could indicate that the matters that have been of most concern to people in this area have had to do with gardens and cultivation, rather than with house and settlement.

All of this is of course true from a practical point of view, but it would take much further investigation to see what other factors might have been considered important by the predecessors of today's population in Palué. It also remains unclear whether the main concern of descent groups was tied to scarcity of arable land (due to ritual and mythical concerns, soil fertility, settlement pattern, and so forth) or scarcity of manpower to work this land.

We have so far approached the issue from a couple of different angles, and managed to establish the area's relation to the ceremonial system of Tana 'Ai. Matrilineal descent groups seem to once have been fairly widespread in this part of Flores, possibly alongside options of dividing children between the parental groups, although this practice might represent a later development. Social change in central-east Flores on a much larger scale than can be hinted at locally appears to have been a major factor in the course of events that to this day have shaped the social conditions in Palué. Notably, the introduction of elephant's tusks (and seemingly also the instalment of local rajadoms) seem to have affected the individual's relation to the descent groups, both in terms of the individual membership and in the individual's power to acquire the rights to new group members for his or her own group. In this respect, men and women originally appear to have held similar rights in Palué, but eventually only men retained the possibility to wield the power of tusks.

GLOSSARY

adat	traditional custom; ritual
Adonara	island in the East Flores regency
air susu mama (B.I.)	mother's milk; compensation from the wife-takers to the bride's parents
ata maté	ancestors
Ata Tana ‘Ai	Sikkanese population in the Tana ‘Ai region with matrilineal descent groups (houses='lineages')
bala	elephants' tusk; bridewealth
balé (B.I.)	bamboo platform; bed
biné	sister; wife-taking status
blepéng	wooden barrages within the garden
blepéng (S. (T.‘A.))	wooden barrages within the garden; ritual boundaries within the garden
Boru	capital of the Wulanggitang sub-district
doko	traditional rain cover
Demon	see *Demon* and *Padji (Padzi)*
Demon and *Padji (Padzi)*	rival brothers, rival populations; hostile divisions of

	the Lamaholot population
désa (B.I.)	governmentally recognized village
East Flores regency	home of speakers of predominately Lamaholot dialects
éti raé ilé or *éti*	the direction of the summit (here: Ilé Wulanggitang)
gahing klemé(ng)	optional ritual of boys' circumcision
gareng 'lamen (S. (T.'A.))	communal ritual of boys' circumcision
gét rata	optional ritual of girls' first haircut
géré lewo	communal ritual at the *lewo* every 4-5 years at the start of the agricultural year
gren mahé (S. (T.'A.))	communal ritual at the *mahé* every 4-7 years
Hokéng	parish centre in Wulanggitang
hurit	[(weaving) sword]; ritual role of the man who kills a sacrificial animal (goat or pig)
ika(ng) manu'	correct relation between wife-givers and wife-takers
ilu alat(eng)	Lord of the saliva, head of large or communal garden rituals
ina ama	wife-givers
ina puken	source mother, assistant of *ilu alat(eng*) and overseer of food gifts at parties

kabupatén (B.I.)	administrative regency
kampung (B.I.)	hamlet
Kédang	population in the Lembata regency (north-east) with predominately patrilineal descent groups
kélén	tail; ritual role of the man who holds the feet of a sacrificial animal (goat or pig)
kewoko(t) (N.B. not in Palué)	souls of the dead, land of the dead
kleja	optional communal ritual at the end of the agricultural year
kotong	head; ritual role of the man who holds the head of a sacrificial animal (goat or pig)
lali lau(t) or *lau(t)*	the direction of the sea
Lamaholot	population in the East Flores regency with predominately patrilineal descent groups
Larantuka	capital of the East Flores regency
Lembata	island with speakers of Lamaholot dialects and Kédang
Lembata regency	home of speakers of predominately Lamaholot dialects
Léra Wulan Tana Ékan	traditional Divinity
letong	bridewealth

lewo	ritual community, ritual place
liko(ng) blepéng	payment from a husband to his wife to obtain a portion of their communal children
lipa	male black sarong
lo'i gəlaté	cooling ritual
mahé (S.)	stone and wood altar
mapang	food gifts
maré	ritual prayer; ritual role of the man who recites ritual prayers at animal sacrifice (goat or pig)
Mauméré	capital of the Sikka regency
molang	practitioner of medicine ([white] magic)
mula puda (S. (T.'A.))	replanted ancestral mother; return of maternal blood to its house ('lineage') of origin
murén laran (m.s.)	preferred spouse in marriage
na'a	brother; wife-giving status
na'a ama	brothers and father
nak'ang	practitioner of black magic (bad medicine)
néwa	patch of land for agriculture
Nilék	see *Nilék* and *Nohéng*

Nilék Nohéng	official village name of fieldsite
Nilék and *Nohéng*	rival brothers in local myth
nitung (kewoko[t])	(bad) spirit
Nohéng	see *Nilék* and *Nohéng*
nuba	sacred stone
opu	basic term in relations of wife-giving/wife-taking
opu biné	wife-takers
opu laké	wife-givers from the progenitor line (MB line)
Padji (Padzi)	see *Demon* and *Padji (Padzi)*
Palué	hamlet name of fieldsite
Palué island	island north of the Éndé regency belonging to the Sikka regency
Sikka	population in the Sikka regency with predominately patrilineal descent groups
Sikka regency	home of speakers of predominately Sikkanese dialects
sobok	clan treasures
Solor	island in the East Flores regency
sugi biné	ritual of girls' coming of age
suku	clan, clan segment

tana	land, soil
tana (S. (T.‘A.))	ceremonial domain
Tana ‘Ai	easternmost region of the Sikka regency bordering on the East Flores regency
tono wujo	the Rice Maiden
to’o balik (S. (T.‘A.))	(clan owned) ceremonial wealth
tuak	palm gin
tubér mangér	the human soul(s), the human soul and body (?)
tudi manu (S. (T.‘A.))	returned father’s forelock; return of paternal blood to its house (‘lineage’) of origin
witi	goat
wua lodo	birth ritual
wua malu	areca nut and betel nut, essential components of *adat*
Wulanggitang	westernmost sub-district of the East Flores regency bordering on the Sikka regency
wuling geto	(ritual?) role of the man who kills the goat at communal garden ritual (cf. *hurit*)
*wun (*also *wung, wungu, wungun)*	clan, lineage; clan specific customs and traditions; prohibition, taboo; “totem”

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6)

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Accessed on 18 June 2012

7)

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Map of Flores

Accessed on 18 June 2012

8)

Google Earth

Map of Indonesia

Accessed on 6 April 2009

9)

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Map of Flores

Accessed on 8 April 2009

10)

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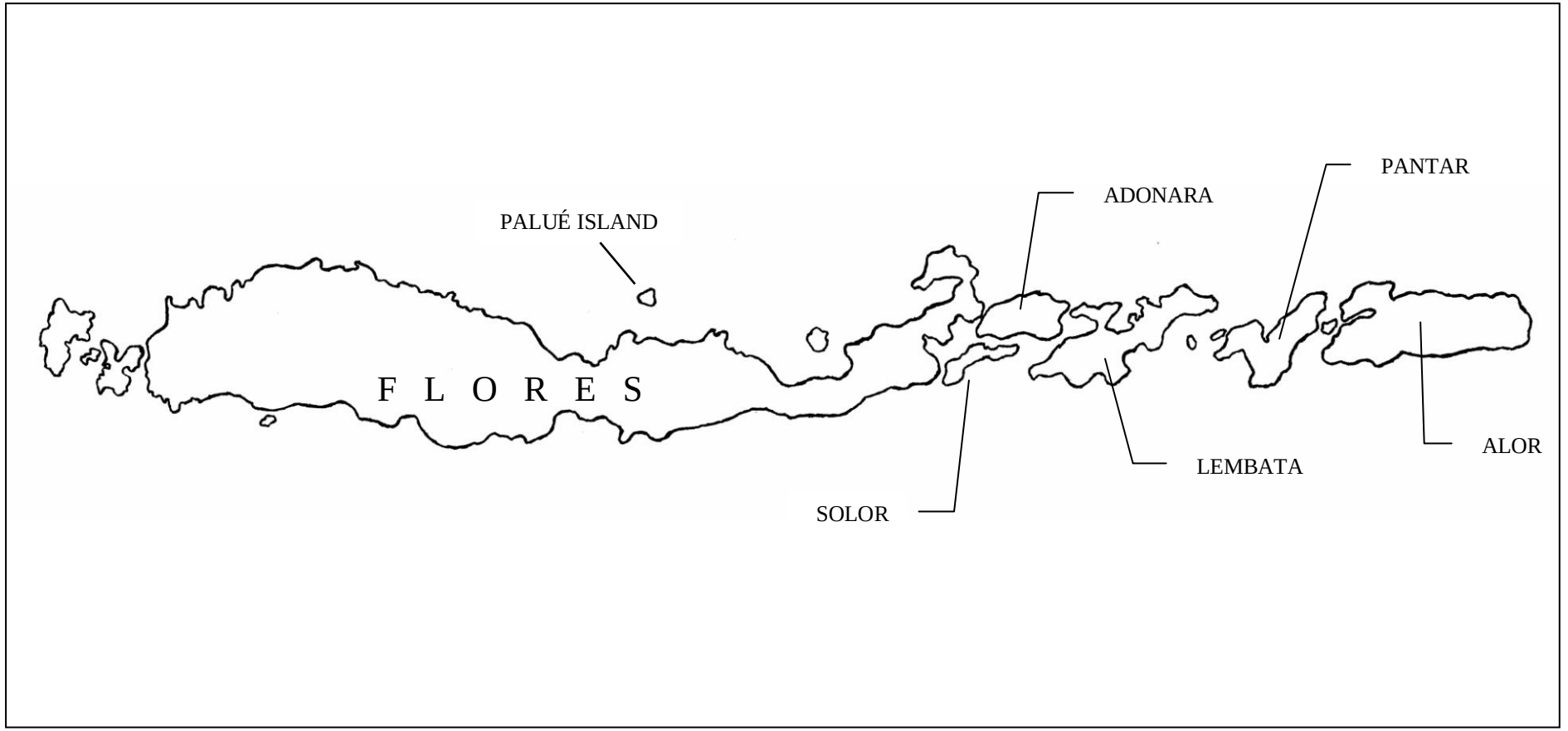
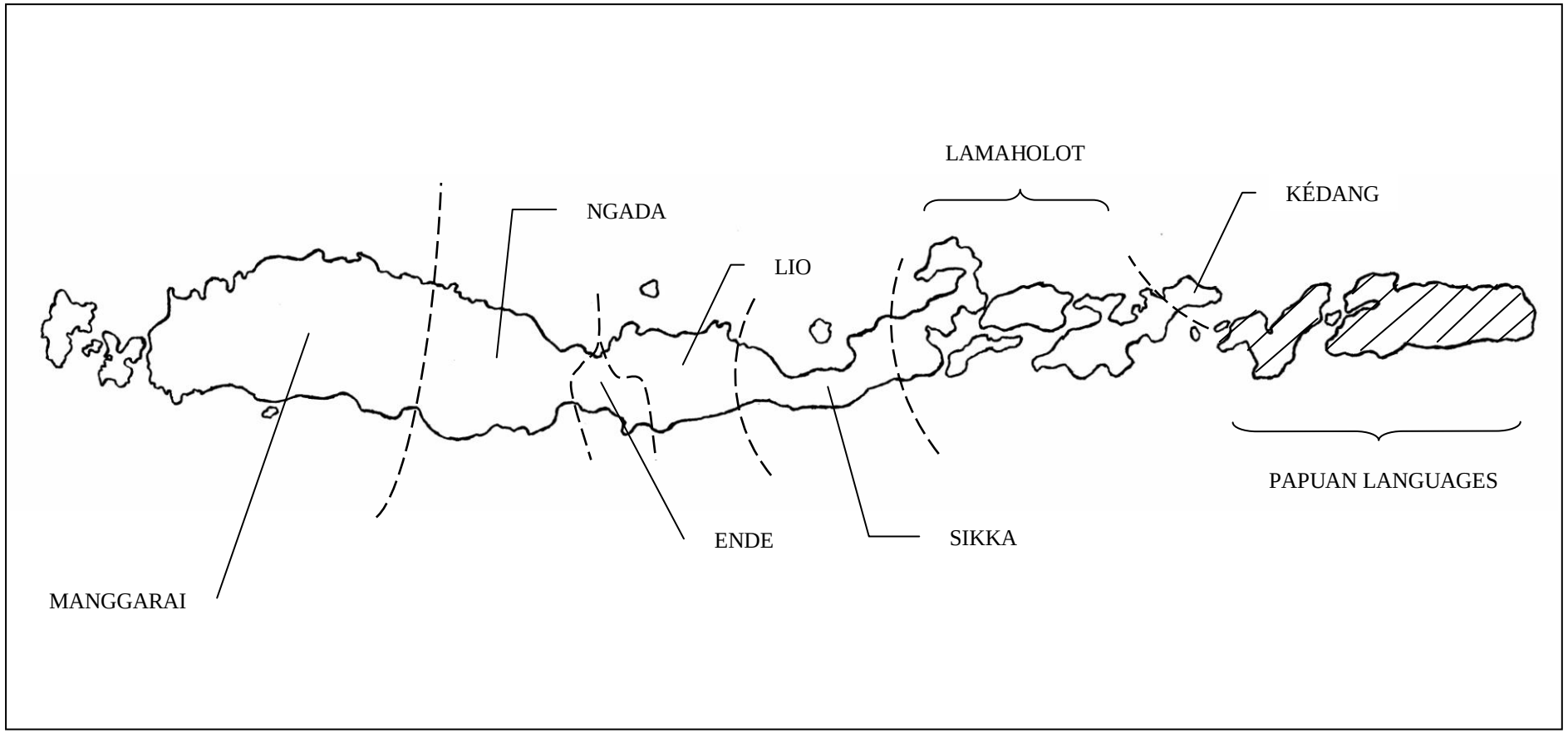
APPENDIX A

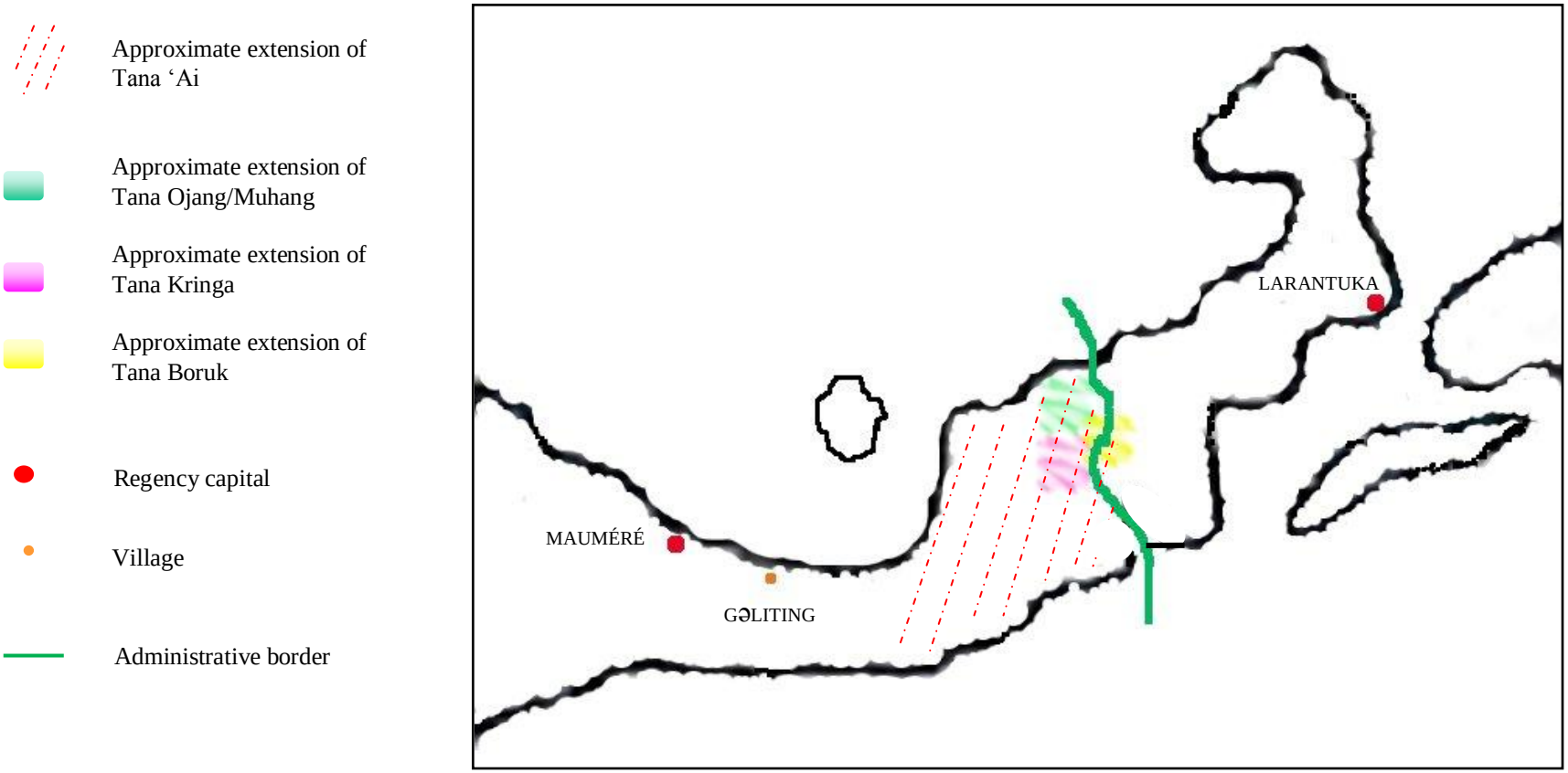
Map 1. Indonesia (o.s. 8)



Map 2. Flores and the Solor-Alor Archipelago



Map 3. Approximate extensions of major language groups (After Moseley, Asher and Darkes 2007:148; Wurm and Hattori 1981: Map 40)



Map 4. Tana ‘Ai

(After Lewis 1988b:34)

Administrative border

Palué

Map 5. East Flores (o.s. 9)