CHAPTER 1

AFFIRMATIONS OF SELF

1.1. Introduction

The dynamics of identity and the practice of anthropology constitute the dominant themes of this thesis. The cultural resilience of some major Yam Island values in the face of significant and intensive socio-political change is explored, and the ways in which this particular group of Torres Strait Island people both experience their lives and represent this experience to an outsider, viz. an anthropologist, are described. The manner in which Yam Island people articulate their contemporary relations to particular moments in their past, both in terms of action and belief, is documented. Via the twists and turns of participant-observation, a certain view of Yam Island society was unveiled. The representations Yam Island people made of themselves to me (and less so about how the anthropologist presented herself to them) are the driving force within this thesis. The processes by which they gradually yet continually attempted to enculturate me are reflected in the themes of this thesis, which provide us with a window through which we may gaze at a specific and unique Yam Island identity.

I attempt to shed light on the ways in which Yam Island people resident on Yam during 1980 - 1991 defined themselves and their social boundaries. Obviously, for Yam Islanders resident in other places in Australia their expressions of identity differ somewhat from those expressed on Yam Island itself during my extended fieldwork between 1980-1982, and periodic visits since.
Identity, and in particular ethnic identity (i.e. ethnicity) generally became topics for investigation by sociologists and anthropologists during the 1960s and 1970s, although in Australia Stanner was already addressing the issue in the late 1950s (Stanner 1958). The theme of Aboriginal identity (as opposed to Torres Strait Islander identity) has constituted a common thread within Australian writing since at least the 1960s, and its occurrence has peaked in different ways in both the 1970s and then later during the 1980s. These peaks relate to the various phases and diverse approaches to the topic, which have ranged from anthropological discussions concerned with how Aboriginal people define themselves as Aboriginal, to a focus on oral histories, family histories, social histories and narratives which really began to emerge in the 1980s (Barwick 1964, 1982; Reay 1964; Tonkinson 1970; Tugby 1973; Berndt 1977; Beckett 1988; Berndt and Berndt 1987; Sansom 1980; 1988; Tonkinson 1990; Ariss 1988). The focus is now on the ascribed and self-defined constructions of Aboriginality (see Beckett 1988; Cowlishaw 1988; Jacobs 1986, 1988; Sansom 1988 Tonkinson 1990). Within the work of anthropologists who have specifically focussed on the Torres Strait, both Beckett (1987a, 1987b) and Fitzpatrick (1980a) have been concerned with identity. Language as a marker of Islander identity was also central to the work of Cromwell (1980, 1982) in Townsville1. In the recent theses on material culture concerning mainland Torres Strait Islanders, tombstone openings (Lui 1988) and the manufacture of baskets (Sandilands 1989) have also been described as some of the ways in which Islanders express and affirm their identity.

1. One of the most important means by which any group expresses its cultural identity is through language; it provides communication between members of the same group, and serves to indicate who belongs to the group and who are the outsiders (Fishman 1985; Giles 1977; Spoonley 1988: 50-51). While it does not actually generate ethnic boundaries it serves a critical role as cultural marker by displaying the values of the group.
As for many new developments which have occurred in anthropology over the last three decades, the impetus for change came from the increasing numbers of newly independent countries in Asia and Africa in the 1950s and 1960s (Spoonley 1988: 40), and the social movements which swept through the Western world during the 1960s and 1970s. In Britain the specific impetus came when vast numbers of West Indians immigrated during the 1950s, thereby leading to increased research on 'cultural pluralism 'at home' in the metropolis' (Lewis 1985: 374). Throughout the Western world social scientists had to find new ways in which to analyse changing intergroup relations, and through ideologies such as feminism, civil rights and black rights, people sought to 'create a more positive, liberating identity ' (Spoonley 1988: 40; Howard 1990). This allowed the subjective component of ethnicity to be treated seriously in stark contrast to the 'culture of poverty' school of thought as exemplified in the work of Oscar Lewis during the 1960s (Lewis 1985: 375). Epstein (1978: 14) has classified ethnic or cultural categories as being comprised of both external ('objective') definitions and self or 'subjective' definitions.

Ethnicity, i.e. the establishment and maintenance of a cultural identity through the processes of ethnogenesis, generally occurs after groups have been transformed into minority groups (see Jones and Hill-Burnett 1982; Morris 1988). It is in their reactions to the oppressive conditions which prevail in their lives, that groups of people express this type of cultural identity. During this process culture may be recreated and tradition redefined in response to new and changed conditions. This cultural identity may be ascribed or self-defined (Barth 1969: 10) through utilisation of a number of shared covert and overt symbolic cultural elements. While these symbolic elements, such as language, shared ancestry, beliefs, diet, dress and shared experience, need to be agreed upon by members of the cultural group, they are not always obvious or accessible to out-group members (Barth 1969; Morris 1988; Spoonley 1988; Barwick 1985).
According to Barth (1969: 17) a useful way of looking at cultural identity is also to consider it a status. Generally, this status is comprised of the constellation of roles and statuses associated with cultural identity which shape social interaction (and 'social personalities') and which are given pre-eminence in a group's or individual's association with others who are not members of the same cultural group.

The degree to which members of a group feel a sense of shared cultural identity may differ along a number of dimensions. There is no more division or cohesion among ethnic groups than there is within any other social grouping (Spoonley 1988: 44). For example, members within the same community may be more committed or less committed than others, and some people may express their identity in different ways. This is particularly true also for members of the group living elsewhere (cf. Epstein 1978: xiii). For example, it is common for migrant populations to be culturally conservative compared to their cultural cousins at home. Smolicz (1984: 133) has noted that with European minority groups in Australia for example, conservatism and in particular ideological conservatism, acts 'as a bulwark against ideological assimilation and as a boost to ethnic identity'.

Identity requires group bonding and practices or beliefs to symbolise in-group similarities with each other and their differences from outsiders. That is, people identify themselves and in so doing identify others, or vice versa (Epstein 1978: xii, 11, 14; Jordan 1986: 9). That is, a cultural Self is posited in relation to a cultural Other. What is more, there also have to be salient reasons for people to identify with one another. These reasons include the promotion of a positive sense of well-being, or the social and economic necessity to pull together as one group (Spoonley 1988: 42). In situations in which communities have experienced the long term effects of colonisation, their identity typically provides them with models of their society which help integrate their conceptions of their past society with their present in much the same
way that this has been achieved on Yam Island. The past, as it were, functions as a
type of 'currency' (Jordan 1988: 115). In New Zealand for example, increasing
urbanisation after World War II meant that the Maori needed to draw upon their past
so as to create a 'synthesis...that would allow [them] to remain Maori while
participating in a Pakeha [white] world' (Sinclair 1990: 224).

As the constitution of any identity is multifaceted, it needs to be appraised as
possessing a 'processual character' without absolute permanence (Arens 1978: 218).
Ethnic identification in all societies is founded on (a) overt symbols of dress, language
and lifestyle, and (b) a community ethos (Barth 1969: 14). The social meaning given to
a 'set of acts', however limited, is what constitutes identity (Blom 1969: 74). While
the 'acts' and symbols must necessarily change over time (see again Barth 1969: 14),
this does not negate a people's identity. As Sivert has argued

the notion of 'ethnic boundary' does not involve the assumption of
identical idioms being transferred from time immemorial. Rather, the
boundary implies the constancy of a set of idioms communicating
minimal contrast between segments of a population.

(Sivert 1969: 105; my italics)

As such, the construction of a cultural check-list of specific characteristics or activities,
which are presumed to remain constant over generations only serves to cloud the issue of
self-identification. The critical means by which to identify ethnic groups is to
recognise the elements group members themselves regard as significant, rather than
through the imposition of so-called 'objective differences' which outsiders may
perceive as 'diagnostic' of group membership (Barth 1969: 15). Nevertheless, the
components of identity which the majority society imposes on its minority cultural
groups in the nation-state, all serve to impinge on a group's self-concepts and sense.
identity. In the case of Aboriginal Australians, Jordan (1985) has demonstrated that in many instances Aboriginal people do not classify themselves as being 'Aboriginal' for two reasons. The first is that they use their own positively valued and self-attributed locality-based or language-based identifiers; thus one group may classify as 'Kuku Nganjara' as opposed to being 'Aborigines'. The second reason for some Aboriginal people not identifying as ' Aboriginal' is related to the negative value associated with being 'Aboriginal' in mainstream Australian society (cf. Beckett 1988). This clearly demonstrates Eidheim's (1969) proposition concerning ethnic boundaries, viz. that people do not identify with a category if it undermines their interests to do so.

Nevertheless, a particular identity such as that defined by the nation-state may be ascribed and constitutes the contemporary backdrop against which both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are attempting to construct more positive identities (Beckett 1988; Jordan 1988; Ariss 1988; Cowlishaw 1988).

Both in Oceanic and Aboriginal Australian societies, the kinship connection (actual or putative) constitutes the foundation of cultural identity (Linnekin and Poyer 1990). In Aboriginal Australia, Barwick (1985), Tonkinson (1990) and Sansom (1980, 1988: 157-158) have demonstrated that common ancestry in addition to 'allegiance to family and community' (Barwick 1985: 186) is the basis of identity. Shared experiences and genealogical connections have always taken precedence in Aboriginal societies over the ascribed Anglo and Celtic Australian 'blood' definitions of Aboriginality. This is also true for the Torres Strait.

In a general sense while some components of identity may be exposed to outsiders, yet other elements may not be made explicit, as it is the bonds of identity which provide the group sense of self and group boundaries. By exposing everything about one's identity, the strength of that identity may be diminished (Spoonley 1988: 43). Identity may also be invisible in that outsiders may simply not see what makes a group a unique
cultural group (Spoonley 1988: 43). The finer points of self-identification are meaningless to outsiders, and will not be expressed, as it is their expression and associated meanings, serious or humourous, which begs response. Basso's (1979) collection of 'whiteman' stories parodying the forms of interaction in which Anglo-Americans break social norms in their interactions with Apache, and in so doing undermine Apache notions of self and identification, are unique in that this type of information is rarely exposed to outsiders, or the Other.

Identity is not static, and 'tradition', or the perceived behaviour and constituent norms and values of the past, are also not unchanging. Tradition is continually being reinterpreted and adjusted to meet the contemporary ideology and needs of a community and its individuals. Anderson (1984: 76) has referred to this as the 'editing' of history. In the 1950s Stanner (1958) differentiated between 'implicit tradition' and 'explicit tradition'. While the outward or explicit manifestations of a society are more likely to change in response to altered conditions, the implicit or ideological dimensions of a society are far more resilient, and it is these which continue to provide the basis for the maintenance of both individual and group identity within contexts of socio-cultural change (Stanner 1958; Berndt 1977).

1.2. The Yam Island Self

Yam Island today is not the same as it was 90 years ago, let alone 3000 years ago. While Yam Island people acknowledge the enormous changes that have occurred within the Torres Strait since at least the 1860s, they nevertheless experience a continuity and affinity with the past. There is a continuum of association, belonging and heritage from the distant and near past into the 1980s and 1990s. This thesis concerns itself with what people have retained, reworked or reinterpreted and their associated meanings and value. Also of concern are the ways in which these meanings
are incorporated into everyday behaviour, as well as how they are reproduced and reinterpreted in response to changing circumstances. My central focus is on the ways in which these connections with the distant and not so distant past are effectively maintained and communicated through various techniques and practices which include story-telling, praise, reminiscence, haranguing, joking, dance, reprimand, fishing, gardening, hunting, yarning, song, the visiting of some sites and the avoidance of others. The rich texture of Yam Island culture is located and expressed in such practices.

While full cognisance is taken of the political realities of Yam Island people as members of the 'Poor World' or 'Fourth World', it would do them a great disservice to view and to represent these people as behaving only in response to external factors. Many significant initiatives for change and action come from within the community itself. An essential dynamic of Yam Island life can be located in the persistent ideological tension between attributed traditionalism and aspired modernism. It is precisely because of this traditional vs. modern dynamic that I have concentrated on detailing the ways in which Yam Island people draw upon their past and their present. The manner in which they choose to represent their present and past, as a continuous multilinear and multilateral association of ideas and events, forms the crux of this thesis. While there is a certain ambivalence in people's reluctance to be denigrated by some as old fashioned or traditionalist, people do draw their essential strength, confidence, feelings of belonging and well-being from the past, and from their identity as Yam or Tudu people. This ambivalent or contradictory attitude toward the past or anything customary or old, hinges on a concern about what outsiders think: that is, do they approve or disapprove? This ambivalence can best be understood within the context of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The institutionalisation of Torres Strait Islanders on reserves, under church and government control (see Chapters 4 and 5) is especially significant in having produced contradictory notions of self and community.
Some practices and beliefs which I regard as the private preserve and cultural property of Island people in general, and thus not open to investigation and analysis by inquisitive and often critical outsiders, have been excluded from this thesis as a mark of respect for the privacy of Yam Island people (see Section 1.3). Also, largely for ethical reasons, some of the negative aspects of life on Yam Island have been deliberately underemphasised. This stance was adopted not to sanitise or idealise the society, but as a means of presenting and emphasising Yam Islanders' positive affirmations of identity.  

Further, Black Australians in general, along with other minority groups, do not normally receive positive media coverage. Few in the electronic or print media clamour to portray the strength and knowledge members of minority groups possess. When non-anthropologist outsiders glimpse Aboriginal or Islander communities they publicly bemoan a 'loss of culture'. They do not look at how it is that people continue to live within the midst of such problems namely, what it is that sustains them and how they continue to survive as a people.

This thesis represents an attempt to look past (yet not disregard) the stark social problems affecting this former government reserve into the arena of what people hold dear. Many of the social problems facing Torres Strait Islanders are currently being addressed by Islanders themselves, at both the individual and, more gradually, at the formal institutional levels, although not all of the policies have been successful.

Researchers concerned with applying their research skills in a manner beneficial to

2. I have purposefully used the term identity in this thesis more frequently than ethnicity, in order to place primary emphasis on the collective, positive sense of self (albeit drawn from positive feelings based on cultural bonds). My preference for the term identity also relates to an attempt to counteract the majority culture's presumption that minority groups have ethnicity and majority groups have identity. Furthermore, along a similar political line, Torres Strait Islander Australians do not take lightly to being classified along with more recent immigrants as ethnic groups. They see their respective position as differing from those of immigrant ethnic groups, particularly with reference to the latter having very recently settled in Australia from other nation states. Politically and culturally, this is an important point and in itself constitutes a very clear statement about identity.
communities with specific social problems may obtain the relevant material from the appropriate Islander people and organisations.

It could be argued that by omitting certain material from this thesis, intellectual and analytical problems may arise. However, the denied opportunity of formally discussing both the pragmatic and theoretical implications of this material is compensated for by the fact that more of the history of Yam Island, as the people themselves have asked it to be recorded, appears as a significant and integral part of this thesis.

1.3. The Anthropological Self: Method and Ethics

The ebb and flow of my professional and personal association with Yam Island people began on an initially shaky footing in January 1980. Prior to this I had successfully applied for and received a grant from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies to carry out anthropological fieldwork in the Torres Strait. As part of a doctoral research project, I had initially planned to work on Mabuiag Island. However, when I became aware of the work Judith Fitzpatrick was undertaking there, and on the advice of Jeremy Beckett, I chose to research an island in the Central group. Yam Island community was not chosen for any particular reason over Warraber, Masig or Puruma: it merely happened to be the first community to which I wrote requesting permission to visit.

The Yam Island Community Council approved my request to meet with them, and in January 1980 I left Townsville for the Torres Strait. Fortuitously I flew to Yam from

3. In 1990 renamed the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (or A.I.A.T.S.I.S).
Thursday Island in the company of the then Deputy Chairman of the Yam Island Council, Mr Getano Lui (Snr). He was alarmed at my travelling to Yam as I had not received a telegram sent the day before, advising it was an inappropriate time to visit as two people had recently died and a wedding was to take place in the next few days. It was therefore a busy time on the island, and not a time conducive to attending to the needs of a novice anthropologist, nor indeed to those of any outsider.

Arrangements were made for me to stay in a disused school building. While I had money to purchase food from the store, through lack of foresight I had neglected to bring cooking gear. The burden of providing me with food for the week was shouldered by Mrs Bethalia Lui, and for that I remain grateful. Three adolescents home on school holidays, were given the responsibility of showing me around the community, and keeping a watchful eye on me.

During this six day visit I was fortunate to see a wedding, a house opening and most of the associated celebrations. Small children and high school students spent a lot of time talking to me, tricking me and detailing language names for a selection of shells, fish and beetles. I met with the Chairman, Mr Getano Lui (Jnr), and his father (the Deputy Chairman), to describe why I wished to carry out fieldwork. I explained that I hoped to understand and describe Yam Island life. As part of this process I would be looking at the activities of men, women and children. In addition, I explained that I wanted to understand the history of Yam Island: what, why and when changes had occurred and the effects which these had on Yam Island people's lives.

In 1980 Yam Island was a Reserve and a certain amount of anxiety was expressed by the entrenched Queensland National Party Government, through the Council, that I could instigate 'trouble' on the island. I reassured the Councillors that my primary objective was to document Yam Island culture and society as opposed to documenting specifically
the human and political deprivation associated with institutionalisation under the
Torres Strait Islanders' Act (1979). The effects on Islanders of living on a reserve under
such a political regime, could not however, be ignored. The Chairman and Deputy
Chairman of the Council agreed to my return in March for an extended field trip.

Just prior to leaving Townsville, after having prepared for a 12 - 18 month field trip, I
received a telegram from the Yam Island Council, giving approval for only 4 weeks stay
on the island. I left for the Torres Strait hoping that this period would be extended.

In March 1980 I arranged an interview between myself and the Manager of the
Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement (D.A.I.A., currently
known as the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) on
Thursday Island, and another with John Scott of the Commonwealth Department of
Aboriginal Affairs (or D.A.A., superseded in 1990 by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Commission, A.T.S.I.C.). The Manager of D.A.I.A, Bill Harris, was reserved,
emphasised there was no available accommodation on Yam Island, and clearly
indicated his distrust of anthropologists. He added that Yam Island people did not
like visitors very much, and that they probably feared they would have to be 'on their
best behaviour ' for 18 months. He said they would not like the idea of being 'under a
microscope', and that there were some things they would like to keep private.

Interestingly, the 'double-speak' of government was being used in this instance by a
representative of a government department appearing to defend the rights to privacy of
Torres Strait Island people. Of course the D.A.I.A. had a long-standing policy of
keeping outsiders away from Aboriginal and Islander reserves in Queensland, thereby
controlling the flow of information about the actual conditions prevailing on these
reserves. It could never be honestly said that the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Island people had ever been a prime and central concern of the Queensland Government.
Thus while the rhetoric of the Manager sounded noble, there was little doubt that his main concern was with protecting his Department, as opposed to protecting Yam Island people against the scrutiny of an outsider.

John Scott and other staff of the D.A.A. were extremely helpful both in terms of practical advice about transport, finances, freight, water, cooking and lighting equipment, and also in giving an overview of current policy initiatives and programmes in the Torres Strait.

My first extended field trip (13 months) began on the 17th March 1980. For the first week or so, amidst a hefty dose of self-doubt, my husband and I established our home and began the process of acclimatising ourselves to the general ebb and flow of the community. Younger people were the first to approach, check us out, visit socially and to take me fishing.

In a formal meeting with the Chairman and his father the following week, we established that I had complied with the perceived legal requirements of the Torres Strait Islanders' Act (1979). The Chairman clearly stipulated what areas of life on Yam I was not to address publicly. I was placed under probation for one month, at which time the Council would decide whether or not I would be permitted to stay for 12 months. I arranged to carry out a household survey of the community, and the Chairman advised that at the forthcoming Public Meeting he would explain to the people what I was doing on the island. He had a list of households and their heads compiled for me, and for the next few weeks I undertook my first formal interviews. The work snowballed from there and at the end of the probationary period permission was granted for us to extend our stay on Yam Island.

The Community Council's awareness of and sensitivity to the political nature and
ramifications of allowing a resident anthropologist into the centre of their lives, expressed itself early on in the project. By placing the writer under probation for one month, generally avoiding me and appearing disinterested in the project, the Council's actions reinforced the need for me to be as non-intrusive as possible in the community. The insistence by the Chairman that certain aspects of Yam Island society not emerge in my writing has been adhered to as much as is humanly possible, given that those aspects could not but help come under my scrutiny. In such a way the generalised Yam Island self was more carefully presented and controlled by powerful community members.

There was no sole individual upon whom I relied for information and knowledge. Numerous people have played and continue to play instrumental roles in my acquisition of a certain level of understanding of the Yam Island way. This partial but broadly based view of Yam Island society is based on the nature of my involvement with members of different age, gender, status groups and factions on the island. From the younger women and men with whom I socialised in playing cards, yarning, going fishing, picnicking, drinking and dancing I learned via example, gossip, censure and instruction what were acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Structured interviews were not conducted with this group of young unmarried people, and only one such interview was conducted with younger married people.

Likewise, children were never formally interviewed. They regularly came to my tent to yarn, play, ask questions, or just generally to satisfy their overall inquisitiveness about Keith or myself, our respective work, backgrounds and family, world politics, and our own cultural traditions. The free flow of information between us was rarely solicited, and these young members of the community instructed us on the names of things, their perceptions and fears of the supernatural realm, elementary fishing, good bush foods, children's games, kinship connectedness and gossip. To our mutual delights,
they often deliberately, but in good fun, tricked us about a whole range of things.

All structured and non-structured interviews were conducted amongst the mature adult population, often in the presence of younger members of the community. Topics of investigation included the traditions of the past, personal and family histories, recollections (particularly about growing up), the composition and meaning of songs, language, fishing and gardening, politics, kinship, genealogies, marriage, stories and sites of significance.

My husband looked after the domestic side of our living arrangements. As such, without an obvious 'job' he occupied a difficult position for a young man in the eyes of Island people. He was, however, able to mix with both young and married men. In so doing Keith gave me an invaluable insight into the world of men, a world to which I would not normally have been privy. Every eight weeks we took turns to bring supplies from Thursday Island (T.I.). It was on these short trips to T.I. that I began to associate with Yam Island people resident on T.I., meet with personnel involved in health and other issues, and to systematically go through the records for Births, Deaths and Marriages at the Courthouse.

Just as the world of Yam Island was at first strange and unfamiliar, so too did Keith and I present a different and unfamiliar example of the Anglo and Celtic Australian world. While our respective gender roles presented a challenge, our opting to live and work in a tent represented a new twist in local perceptions of white people. It was stated on more than one occasion that initially Yam Island people felt embarrassment at our living in a tent, because it was unlike white people not to demand a house with all modern conveniences. Many stereotypes on both sides gradually fell away as friendships were formed.
During my second major field trip from June to November 1982, the general background and understanding I had been developing since 1980 was brought into sharper focus and further consolidated by two major events. The first was that in the interim I had been divorced, and so returned to the island alone. As such I was a woman in a socially ambiguous position and this sometimes made it difficult in both self-definition and in general social definition, in respect to deciding what were the appropriate behaviours for myself. Nevertheless, I was gradually redefined from being a wuman (a married female) to being a gel (single female). This involved a number of changes in the way I was seen and expected to behave, and it also meant I spent much more time during this field trip with my new peers of young, unmarried people.

As an unmarried woman, I located my work tent in the yard of a widowed, classificatory mother, Mrs Luisa Samuel. Her brothers (my classificatory mother's brothers or wadhwam) built me a small, highly functional kitchen from scrap wood and corrugated iron. I was able to work from my tent and cook when I wished, thereby keeping to my own work and leisure schedules without imposing them on a local household. As such I was self-sufficient except of course in the social and emotional senses. Most nights I slept in Mrs Samuel's household along with another older, single woman. This was a mutually satisfying arrangement, in that we met each evening to provide companionship to each other, and then dispersed to our respective households early each morning.

The second event was related to these domestic and sleeping arrangements in that the sister of Mrs Samuel, had recently passed away, leaving a husband and a number of children, including two very young boys. Every evening for a couple of months our household members joined those of the deceased's household. This close involvement in the mourning process of someone I also had loved, gave me a deeper human insight into Yam Island society, an insight that would have been difficult to achieve had I not been
included in the evening domesticity of these two households.

In addition to the two major field trips, I have travelled back to Yam for short periods of a few weeks, on four separate occasions. One of these trips was to attend the funeral of a close classificatory father in 1981, and another was for his tombstone opening some years later. In late 1986 to early 1987 I holidayed for three weeks, and in 1988 I flew in on business for one day only. Above and beyond these 'flying visits', contacts have been maintained with some Yam Island people through letters, telephone and by meeting up with people in Cairns and Townsville. This has involved the acceptance of invitations to engagements, weddings, funerals and tombstone openings held in the mainland cities, as well as meeting up with Yam Islanders briefly visiting Cairns or Townsville. Yam Island personal and public news, as well as news about myself, continues to be exchanged along the Yam Island grapevine.

From the beginning of my association with Yam Island people to the present, their instruction to me about the fundamentals of their life has been processual. The fieldwork itself was at times something of a comedy of errors. My hosts' full-bodied laughter or quiet and not so quiet reprimands at my numerous mistakes, served as constant reminders of the boundaries between the two groups we represented in the microcosm of Yam Island. These sanctions did not generally take the form of personal denigration, but were more typically expressions of their perceptions of outsiders, in this case a Celtic-Australian woman, being incompetent in a number of social and biological spheres. Through my initial inability to know and enact 'common sense', and Yam Islanders reactions of incredulity and sometimes embarrassment at my mistakes, and glowing praise for my achievements and progress, the business of getting to know the cultural system of common sense (see Geertz 1983: 73-93) was gradually learned. This generalised ethos of life within which the seemingly more esoteric dimensions of culture such as world view, cosmology or the kinship system are firmly grounded in a
diffuse sense of appropriate behaviour ('common sense'), is what I as an anthropologist and student of Yam Island society have tried to apprehend. Without 'common sense' one cannot differentiate between appropriate vs. inappropriate action, or confidently engage in appropriate action, and one has little chance of being able to understand action and others' responses to it. In this thesis I go some way toward demonstrating this cultural system by looking at the more formally discussed and more overt components of Yam Island 'common sense' as they particularly relate to environmental and social knowledge, particularly in the ways social connections are expressed in dance and in death ritual.

The people of Yam Island have played an active role in indirectly channelling the course which this thesis has taken. Initially, their general stance on the project was one of distance and caution. Gradually over time, there was an increasing sense of ease with myself and my research, and the emerging request for me to tell their stories, and to fit them into the larger historical and political picture. The desires for a particular project to be forthcoming differed within the community, both between the various family groups and also specific interest groups, such as the Community Council. This is one of the major reasons for my including people's names in the thesis as direct acknowledgement of their particular knowledge, skills and assistance in my work. Even though within the bulk of the thesis I do make broad general statements about 'Yam Island' or 'Yam Island people', where possible I attempt to give individuals a voice, albeit a limited one. This is part of the process of minimising the deindividuation or depersonalisation of members of the community and in so doing recognising individuals in their own right. Nevertheless, I have been selective about who has been given a voice, and where in the thesis they have been able to 'speak.' I have excluded personal names in instances in which their inclusion may cause either embarrassment, or result in community disapproval.
I originally entered the field as a feminist anthropologist inspired to describe the totality of Yam Island society, and subject to rigorous analysis, the socio-political status of women and men vis-à-vis one another. However, after two field trips, and during eleven years of continued friendship and association with Island people, I decided to approach Yam Island society in another way. The ethics of focusing on power and status relationships between the sexes, and analysing them ad absurdum, worried me for several years. Eventually, I rejected such theoretical abstraction in which the pursuit of theory for theory's sake overtakes a recognition of people as knowing subjects and actors.

The position of personal, professional and political isolation during and subsequent to fieldwork has become increasingly difficult for anthropologists to maintain and justify in the last three decades. This has resulted in what Geertz (1988: 71-72) has called a crisis of confidence and authority amongst contemporary anthropologists. Most obviously the historical and social moments of decolonisation and the political empowerment of people in the Third and Fourth Worlds, their increasing literacy levels and subsequent realisation of the power of the written word, continue to have a marked effects on the setting of parameters within which anthropology may be practised. Waves of impact continue to affect current anthropological practice, as angry accusations are made against the kinds of representations anthropologists and other outsiders have made about indigenous people's lives and social systems.

Although I am constrained by the academic requirements of submitting an original and scholarly PhD thesis, I have kept abstraction to a minimum.

The change in topic and focus as a direct consequence of human interaction is de rigueur for social anthropologists. Indeed, as Geertz (1988) has so cogently argued, the change of topic or mode of producing a written work based on fieldwork, results from the inherent tension in converting the anthropologist's experience in another society, into
an authorial work which is accorded credibility by its predominantly academic
readership: the conversion of the 'Being There' of fieldwork to the 'Being Here' of the
academic written work. Or at another level, it involves dealing with the fundamental
differences between 'Facing the Other' and 'facing the page' (Geertz 1988: 10), and I
might add, 'Facing the Other' again.

1.4. Ethnography and Description

The pioneering work of such theorists as Hymes et al (Hymes 1969), Asad et al (Asad
1973), Reiter et al (Reiter 1975), Ardener et al (Ardener 1975), Rosaldo and Lamphere
(1974), Rohrlich-Leavitt (1976), Wallerstein (1976), Frank (1976), Bourdieu (1972) and
Geertz (1973) signalled a fundamental change in direction in anthropology away from
the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and the French neo-Marxists. One of the outcomes of
incorporating Critical Theory, Feminist Anthropology, Political Economy and
Hermeneutics into the discipline has been the development of the interpretive
paradigm, which continues to affect our understandings of the anthropological method,
ranging from the ways in which we conceptualise our research to the manner in which
we practise both in the field and in the academy.

Among the major issues that anthropologists are increasingly addressing and
attempting to apply to their own work, and in particular the types of issues with
which I myself have been dealing for the last 11 years, are the following:

(a) The populations amongst whom social anthropologists continue typically to
conduct research, are in essence, socially and politically vulnerable. Given that we
have continued to work in such settings, we need to think through clearly and address
such fundamental issues such as: what consequences our research may have on a group or
society; what are their rights to prevent, curtail or even define our research; likewise,
what are their rights to insist upon the non-disclosure of particular information; what accountability do we as researchers and human beings have to the group and to individuals within the group; what is the nature and importance of reciprocity between ourselves and the host population, and how may this express itself in the end products (lectures, ethnographies, theses, articles, films, documentation and papers) of our research?

(b) If such 'end products' ensure that the integrity and dignity of the host population is preserved, this then forces us to deal with the hallowed notions of 'scientific objectivity' and 'truth'. Final research products which keep these issues in mind, may then be regarded as documents which have been ethically proofread, and thus the processes by which a text has been constructed become a significant issue. The processes by which people's yarns, stories and histories are elicited, recorded, transcribed, translated and presented constitute very real methodological, literary and political issues with which every researcher deals. Practitioners of the dialogic branch of the interpretive paradigm (Dwyer 1982; Fabian 1983; Marcus and Cushman 1982; Boon 1982) focus primarily on the processes involved in the social construction of knowledge. While hermeneutically inspired anthropology was initially concerned with experience and the translation of such experience in the construction of an ethnography, the new ethnographers specifically consider the construction of the fieldwork experience itself, and the transliteration and translation of that experience into textual form.

(c) As meaning emerges and is understood via the symbols employed to convey a message, and the context within which the images occur, anthropological accounts of other people's lives may be seen not as absolute, scientific documents, but as partial and particular views of another society. In such a way, the ethnography becomes not only a reflection of the society studied, but also of the anthropologist herself or himself.
In reference to (a) above, as early as 1972, Meggitt urged that we suspend our pre-ordained monistic models in giving one aspect of society pre-eminence, and instead begin listening to what the members of these societies are telling us about their respective social systems.

The conclusion I draw here, if only indirectly, is that, if we were to pay equal attention to all that the people tell us about their society and culture, we might sooner reach better answers to our questions.

(Meggitt 1987: 115)

Thus he maintains that without attending to the exegeses of the populations under study, we end up with inadequate understandings. Ironically, Meggitt (1987) uses such information as a way to draw a particular model of one Aboriginal Australian community, an elaborated model in which the members of that community would have great trouble in recognising themselves. In such a way the anthropologist's elaborated model takes precedence over the people's own descriptions and models.

I would suggest that we listen more attentively and acutely to the schema people themselves use, as a guide not only to understanding their society, but as a guide to constructing our final representations of their society. Rather than using this schema as a sort of colourful backdrop to the final production, these local analyses should theoretically form the crux of the final anthropological descriptions and analysis.

1.5. Participant-Observation as Process

The two most significant tools or research techniques used by an anthropologist in participant-observation are 'paying attention' (Sutton 1978: xvii) and 'subjective soaking', in which the anthropologist immerses herself or himself into the processes
and contexts of fieldwork (Ellen 1984: 77). It is this amalgam of a general plus a specific concentration on everything, that may lead to confusion on the part of community hosts as well as on the part of the remainder of the non-anthropological world, as to what the anthropologist is actually doing. The broad sweep of the brush and the fine pencilling in of detail are both used as the predominant means by which we complete our sketches of a society. What is more it is at some point, or number of points during participant-observation that Other and Self momentarily merge for the fieldworker, and often for some members of the studied community.

Generally at the close of the standard 12-18 months fieldwork, anthropologists have begun to learn to speak and express themselves appropriately within the context in which they are working. While at many stages our development mirrors that of a small child in the society in which we are working, at yet other times we experience accelerated learning and achievement well in excess of that of a small child. This is no doubt due to our having been through the same stages of socialisation during our own early life within our own societies, and to the practised skills that we have developed as anthropologists to 'acquire' culture in the processes of participant-observation. These factors, in association with the contradictions of our both retarded and accelerated learning, help to confuse the situation for the hosts among whom we work. Beals (1970) has described with good humour his having been cast in the role of a child, or of an idiot, during the preliminary stages of his fieldwork. Like a child the anthropologist needs to be told what is appropriate in order to understand the norms and values of society. However, because of the general power differential between the anthropologist and the researched, members of the host community do not always inform the anthropologist when she or he has broken a norm. This is especially in the

4. It is interesting to compare the stages of socialisation an anthropologist undergoes with those seemingly universal stages of socialisation, and with child-development in particular.
case of breaking folkways: people assume we know we have 'misbehaved', or else the infraction is regarded as minor enough for them not to attend to it immediately. Often our hosts assume we realise our mistake, or on the other hand they may believe that there is little point in their telling us how we should behave.

In this latter instance, there is an unspoken assumption of our possession of a super-intelligence, fed by our observed and remarked upon ability to quickly absorb culturally relevant details. This local, non-satirical exaggeration of the capabilities of the fieldworker is a general one, and it is beautifully described by Srinivas in reference to his Indian experience when he mentions the 'superlative' way in which a man of stature continually showed him off to others and 'spoke in a grand idiom so that things appeared much more impressive than they really were' (Srinivas 1976: 90). Srinivas also aptly described a moment in which he was applauded for the simple transferral of a message, by a man who 'went into a panegyric about my intelligence and thoughtfulness' (1976: 91).

While we may attribute this false reading of our presumed intellectual capabilities to people's unfamiliarity with the systematic techniques anthropologists use to make sense of other societies, in their structure, form, content and process, it may also be just as readily married to another equally important factor. Torres Strait Islanders, as in the instance of my own work, are rarely exposed to non-Islanders who express interest in the everyday realities of their lives and all that this entails. An additional compounding factor may well be that this presumption of super-intelligence (or of idiocy in yet other circumstances) is related to people's political and economic powerlessness and their 'looking-glass selves' (Cooley 1902).

By this I am suggesting that because of the historical forces at work in the Torres Strait since at least the 1860s, by which Islanders have been gradually transformed into a
disenfranchised bloc of people (see Chapter 4), there is a notion periodically expressed by themselves, that simply anyone could understand their society. At one level Yam Island people obviously do not believe this at all (see Chapters 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8), however there are moments when the view held by the dominant society of Anglo and Celtic Australia takes root. This view, which has been absorbed through the processes of political, economic and ideological colonisation and domination, is that firstly there is not much to understand about Yam Island society because it has all been lost, or secondly what is left of Yam Island culture is rudimentary. Within this thesis I demonstrate that both these statements or attitudes are grossly inaccurate, while at the same time symptomatic of the disjunctive self found in colonial and post-colonial societies.

The practice and expectations of this fieldwork technique are inherent in the name itself, which highlights the dual requirements of the ethnographer: to practise in the two very diverse groups of 'host' community and academic community. This requires the anthropologist to constantly shift focus and practice between the roles of observer and participant, and as observed participant by members of the host community. While this may occur in a relatively fluid manner within the fieldwork context, after the initial difficulties have been faced or overcome, the transition to observer outside the fieldwork milieu is characteristically a difficult one to make and to sustain, particularly when community members continue to observe and monitor one's actions, albeit in an informal and oftentimes scarcely noticeable way. Just as the boundaries between observer and participant, self and other are blurred and mutable, so too is the distinction between 'doing fieldwork' and 'returning home'. For both the observed-observing community and the observed-observing anthropologist, the fieldwork experience does not conclude when the anthropologist returns to her or his own society: it merely moves into another stage in which both the past (fieldwork itself) and the future (the academic and non-academic reactions to the resultant
ethnography) impinge on and inform the present. I would extend Geertz's classification of fieldwork for an anthropologist to that for the community within which she is studying also, in that for both sets of people fieldwork 'is a question of living a multiplex life: sailing at once in several seas' (Geertz 1988: 77).

It is as individuals themselves that anthropologists deal with the observer-participant, insider-outsider, self-other conflict as it occurs during the fieldwork experience (see Peacock 1987: 58; Friedman-Hansen 1976: 125) and as both individuals and members of an academic community during the post-fieldwork stage. Likewise, within the studied community, people may deal with the conflicts of insider-outsider in their relationships with the anthropologist at both an individual level, at a broader level as a community, or as members of lobby groups. The requirement of producing an academically acceptable piece of work and analysis, often sits in direct contradiction to the requirements the host community have for the researcher as a short-term participant in their lives. In recent years, there has been an increasing demand from members of researched communities that ethnographers take note and care of their interests both in the process of doing fieldwork, in the process of writing up their research, and in their availability to act as advocates when the need arise (see Rynkiewich & Spradley 1976). With increased sovereignty throughout the world, previously colonised peoples have begun to demand more from anthropologists so that 'the moral context within which the ethnographical act takes place' has been transformed (Geertz 1988: 132).

While the fundamental tenet of participant-observation is to participate in the real world and in so doing, take note or observe, there is nevertheless an inherent element of the laboratory approach to it. At a crude level of assessment, one could argue that the ethnographer is equivalent to the laboratory researcher, concealed behind a one-way
In practice however, the boundaries between the observer and the observed, between observation and practice, are more fluid and more mutable. As the name of the method implies, these boundaries blend into one another, and as such, at any one point in time, the host population and even the researcher may be unaware of the formal observation component being carried out in a given activity.

It is precisely for this reason that the anthropologist should take care in producing her or his final document. Because of this blurring of boundaries and increasing acceptance of the anthropologist by the host community, many behaviours regarded as culturally private (as opposed to personally private), are enacted in the public domain of the village arena. At least on the level of ideology, human beings within the same cultural group generally adhere to regulations about what constitutes fair play, and assume that visitors will do the same. While members of Yam Island society were at times nonplussed by my witnessing certain events or 'backstage behaviour' (Friedman-Hansen 1976) such as disputes, there was nevertheless an unspoken presumption that I would not have the bad taste to write about them, thereby thrusting these events on to the national and international stage for strangers with no association with the island to read about and make comment. For instance, the ways in which Yam Island people present themselves in a village context, a situation over which they have a measure of control, is a vastly different one from that in which an anthropologist converts that action into data, and presents it to the outside world. I have not been willing in this research to convert the private lives of Yam Island citizens into public data.

When a community agrees to let an anthropologist live in their midst and scrutinise them, they neither consciously nor intentionally sign over their personal autonomy and

5. Geertz (1988) also makes a very brief passing comment on this 'laboratory' component of fieldwork
human rights: they do not give the anthropologist carte blanche to do and publish what she or he will. Because of the initial difficulties of explaining what anthropology is to people who have not previously been hosts to an anthropologist, the onus lies firmly with the anthropologist to ensure that the trust of the community is not misplaced or abused.

While there is communication and shared experience (dialogue) between the researcher and the researched, this does not suggest political equivalence. On the contrary, even though the situations of observer and observed are reflected upon, by both groups, a synthesis of the mutual experience undertaken by the researcher results in the written form of ethnography. At this point, perhaps more so than at others, the power of the ethnographer to represent a community to the outside world as she so desires clearly becomes apparent. There should be no need here to elaborate on the authority and power of the written word, or the perceived infallibility of 'expert' opinion.

The researched community’s experience of the research, both in terms of action and text, is also reflected upon and discussed at multiple levels. Like that of the researcher, individual commentaries on the period of association with the anthropologist and the way she or he carried out work within their community, is also subject to reinterpretation. While people have the power to withdraw their friendship, or to refuse future access to their community, in most cases the damage sustained by them through irresponsible reporting is difficult to redress and may last for several decades. As print and electronic media take on a life of their own, trying to counterbalance an insensitive representation of their society is almost impossible for people to achieve. As Cowlishaw (1989: 15) has stated: "Some voices are stifled or reduced to silence, marginalised or appropriated and misinterpreted. Others become authoritative".
This thesis is a descriptive ethnography in which particular facets of people's experience have been selected, organised and presented. I use this technique as a means of sketching a non-commissioned portrait as it were of Yam Island people, a portrait in which I hope Yam Island people can glimpse a recognisable reflection of themselves. They will also be able to see a reflection of my own experience, through the manner in which I have portrayed their society and represented myself as ethnographer, or in other words, how I have reinterpreted the experience.

One can only interpret what one sees in terms of one's own experience......Fundamentally, in his account of a..........people the anthropologist is not only describing their social life as accurately as he can but is expressing himself also. In this sense his account must express moral judgement,...and what comes out of a study will to this extent at least depend on what the individual brings to it.

(Evans-Pritchard 1972: 84)

This thesis and the fieldwork upon which it was based are essentially my construction. I acknowledge the prime role I played in facilitating, filtering and processing information, yet maintain that while a Yam Islander would approach the subject in a different way than myself, the story would nevertheless be comparable to the one told here. In fact this thesis is more like a photographic negative; while the full bodied colour of Yam Island society is implicit in the image presented herein, it has yet to be fully translated and developed as such.

The photographic analogy for describing the connection between an ethnography and the society which it claims to represent has been used from time to time within anthropology (see Peacock 1987; Rabinow 1982). Indeed Geertz (1988: 64) has said that it was Evans-Pritchard's 'enormous capacity to construct visualizable representations of cultural phenomena - anthropological transparencies', which was his particular and
outstanding contribution to anthropology. A photograph snaps a mere millisecond in
the life of a person, and freezes it in static form. In this freezing of action, the
movement can be seen but not captured as it continues to occur. Nevertheless, the
photograph shows substantially more than this encapsulation of a tiny slice of time
and action. Our reading of what may happen after and what probably happened
before the photograph was taken is contingent on our knowledge of the context within
which the photograph was taken. As with any photograph it is the action of the
photographer which is critical. The exposure, the equipment used, the type of film,
the lighting conditions, the technique, development and the time factor all effect the
resultant photograph.

An ethnography can be viewed as a photographic portrait, from which we can gain an
understanding of the photographic subject, and an inkling as to the past and the future
of the subject. Likewise, the mirror analogy has also been used to describe and analyse
the technique of ethnography (Ruby 1982) and the essential role of the ethnographer.
The things we as anthropologists focus on are typically the aspects of social action
which are most different from our own society. By inverting the ethnographic picture,
by looking at its mirror image, we may be able to 'develop' a fairly accurate image of
the society of the anthropologist. Fundamental aspects of the society from which the
anthropologist comes may be easily read into any ethnography, through looking at
what the anthropologist focuses her or his attention on within the ethnography.

My aim in this thesis is not to explain Yam Island society. To do so would require an
absolute understanding of Yam, which is an intellectual, emotional, temporal and
physical impossibility. While I could not hope to understand Yam Island society fully,
through the processes of participant-observation I have come to understand a number of
its aspects, and as such I have been able to make sense of a significant proportion of
social action. As the hermeneuticists have argued, understanding is the interpretive
act which precedes explanation. It is a stance from which the ethnographer knows that
she or he cannot explain everything (Howard 1982; Bleicher 1982).

The fine sieving of experience through the filters of observation, involvement,
dialogue, library and archival research, and interpretation, has led me to a partial
understanding of Yam Island society as it was in the 1980s. Within the library and
archival component of my research I have drawn upon general anthropological
literature as well as upon the literature which relates specifically to the Torres Strait.

1.6. Research in the Torres Strait

In contrast to the substantial body of anthropological data amassed for the Eastern and
Western Islands of the Torres Strait, very little material has been published to date
concerning the social and cultural particularities of the islands of the Central region.
In general, because of a dearth of comprehensive written material for these islands, a
crude perception of their inhabitants as 'lacking real Torres Strait culture' prevails
among some quarters in both the administrative and academic worlds. My research
represents the first detailed anthropological research carried out on one Central
Island. This thesis represents a baseline from which many questions will be generated
and explored. It locates one more island in the chequered socio-historical experience of
Torres Strait Island societies, and serves to remind us as 'outsiders' of the myriad
communities in Torres Strait whose experiences are yet to be publicly acknowledged and
heard by Anglo and Celtic Australians. People on the islands of Masig, Puruma and
Warraber still have many stories to tell, and while I have recorded only some of these,
I have an ongoing research interest in building up a more comprehensive profile and

6. Short term investigations were conducted on Masig and Yam by Hatake and
Ohshima, a musicologist and human geographer respectively (Torres Strait Island
understanding of the Central Islands as a whole.

General data for the Torres Strait are found in a number of diverse written sources. Records and accounts range from the logs of explorers and surveying voyagers (Bligh 1789; Bligh in Lee 1920; Brockett 1836; Cook 1969; Dumont D'Urville 1987; Flinders 1966a, 1966b, 1966c; Hilder 1980; Jack 1921a, 1921b; Jukes 1847a, 1847b; King 1827a, 1827b; MacGillivray 1852a, 1852b; Melville 1848; Miklouho-Maclay 1982; Moresby 1876; Stokes 1969a, 1969b; Sweatman in Allen and Corris 1977; Tobin 1792; Wilson 1835), and the official letters, reminiscences, detailed manuscripts and reports of missionaries (Chalmers 1887; Chalmers, Bruce and W.H. MacFarlane in Haddon 1888-1898; Done 1987, 1990; Gill 1874, 1876; Hunt 1899; L.M.S. 1877, 1879; S. MacFarlane 1874, 1888; Murray n.d., 1874, 1876; White 1917, 1924) and government officials (see Q.S.A. entries in the Reference List). In terms of research material as such, there is a burgeoning literature from studies in anthropology, sociology, history, geography, linguistics, economics, material culture, and the physical sciences.

In 1888 and 1898 A. C. Haddon undertook intensive fieldwork in the Torres Strait. While his initial work focused on marine biology, in his Cambridge Anthropological Expedition (April to November 1898) he was concerned with the documentation and reconstruction of Torres Strait Islander cultures and societies, with a major emphasis on the Western and Eastern Islands of Mabuiag and Mer. The team of researchers included

7. In 1990 as a lecturer at the Cairns Campus of James Cook University, I introduced a second-year anthropology subject, Torres Strait Island Societies, in which students were required to complete an applied research project in the form of an annotated bibliography for a specific island. I deliberately steered them toward completing bibliographies for the much ignored Central Islands. Three students selected the islands of Warraber, Puruma and Masig, and were able to draw extensively upon my own research materials relating to these islands. In 1991 these bibliographies will be forwarded to the respective island councils, to the Islander Co-ordinating Council, and to the A.I.A.T.S.I.S.
Haddon, W. McDougall (psychology), C. S. Myers (psychology and music), S. H. Ray (language), W. H. Rivers (psychology and genealogical work), C. G. Seligman (health and disease) and H. Wilkin (photography). The material which emerged from the team's work is intensive (Haddon 1888-1929, 1890a, 1890b, 1894, 1901, 1904, 1906, 1908, 1912, 1928, 1935; Haddon and Rivers 1904; Myers 1899; Ray 1907; Ray and Haddon 1893, 1897; Rivers 1901a, 1901b, 1904, 1924; Seligman 1904a, 1904b), and details about where, on what and how they worked, plus the impact of the expedition on anthropology as a whole, have been addressed by a number of writers (Beckett 1963, 1987b; Bolger 1977; Fitzpatrick-Nietschmann 1980a; Gathercole 1976; Quiggin 1942; Stocking 1983; Urry 1982).


In the last 30 years or so, major anthropological research has been carried out on the

8. Haddon returned briefly to the Torres Strait in September 1914 when en route to Papua New Guinea.

9. I have excluded from this discussion the Japanese team of researchers (Hatake, Hashimoto, Kitaoji, Ohshima and Yabuuchi) who surveyed the islands in 1977 in that the team was predominantly comprised of human geographers.
islands of Saibai, Badu and Mer by Beckett (1961a, 1961b, 1961c, 1963, 1972, 1978a,
Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick-Nietschmann 1980a, 1980b, 1981), on Yam by Fuary (1984,
1985a, 1985b, In Press a-d, 1989) and most recently on Badu by Maegawa (In Progress).

Materials not confined within a specific discipline base which relate to a range of
contemporary issues and concerns such as politics, health, education, land rights,
traditions, language, local histories and autobiographies have been produced by a vast
number of Islander and non-Islander writers which includes Aragu (1980), Aragu et al

Another body of literature comprised of fictional works has played and continues to
play a significant role in the formation of perceptions and images of both the past and
present lifeways of Torres Strait Islanders. For both Islanders and non-Islanders, the
boundaries between fiction and reality in a text are not always clearly delineated, and
this blurring of the boundary between novel and document means that the novel also
exerts a powerful influence on notions of culture and history. In particular Idriess' 1933
novel Drums of Mer and Barrett's 1940s adventure story The Secret of Coconut Island are
demonstrative of this phenomenon, as they skilfully weave (especially in the case of
Idriess) local Islander names of actual individuals, beliefs, behaviours and places, as
well as historically documented events into their fictionalised romances and
adventures.

The power of the written word need not be further elaborated on here, however for a
work to be published, to concern the Torres Strait, and to be readily available, means that for Torres Strait Islanders it may attain a certain authority, above and beyond the authority a novel may have in Anglo and Celtic Australian society. On more than one occasion when delving into the past on Yam Island, a small number of individuals referred me to Idriess (1933). The fact that Kebisu and others are named, that the novel in many ways speaks to Yam Islanders' knowledge of their past, and that all this is interwoven into a coherent story in which people are accurately located in place and time, gives Drums of Mer an orthodoxy and authority unmatched by any other novel. The role Idriess' novel may have played in Yam Islanders' reinterpretations of their past since the 1930s will be the focus of further work upon which this thesis is based.

1.7. Synopsis of Chapter Contents

Within Chapter 1, the major themes and rationale for the thesis are presented alongside an overview of the major literature which has informed my approach in this thesis, not only in terms of material relating specifically to the Torres Strait, but also to the interpretive paradigm, and my own tacking backwards and forwards between the theoreticism of hermeneutics and its mundane grounding in the everyday lives of Yam Island people. The major theories on identity and their application to Australia, the practice of fieldwork, converting the experience to 'hard data', and publishing the 'results' are discussed. The processes and implications of both ethnography and participant-observation are described and addressed. In particular the issue is raised of how we as anthropologists perceive ourselves and others within the dichotomous constraints of subject-object or subject-subject, and how this in turn affects the fieldwork as well as the production of texts. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of the major topics covered in each chapter.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide the reader with essential background to Yam Island by
locating it as one of many islands in both its physical and social contexts. Information relating specifically to the major moments of historical, political, economic and social change for the Torres Strait as a region has been excluded. Many scholars of the Torres Strait have all tabled essentially similar documents and materials, and each has interpreted this same material within their respective theoretical and disciplinary frameworks. The reader is referred to the work of these authors.

As the prime aim of this thesis is to focus on the Central Islands, and in particular the islands of Yam and Tudu, yet another broad evaluation of the 'history of contact' for the region as a whole would serve to dilute my concentration on a specific sub-region. Consequently substantial documentary materials are specifically related to Yam Island people's stories, recollections and experiences of their past (Chapters 3 and 4). The inclusion of this material provides a more general context within which Yam Islanders' perceptions of their past can be understood. Both these chapters are concerned with belief and practice, especially with Yam Island people's perceptions of what life was like prior to colonisation, and what life was like at the frontiers of colonialism. Together they provide the backdrop to Yam Islanders' perceptions of their present conditions.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 I describe in detail the ways in which Yam Island people live today, by particularly focusing on social and economic conditions, kinship and social interactions, the strategies used for handling death, mourning and the accompanying social obligations, the events which are celebrated, and the trips people make away from their island home. In the concluding chapter a specific discussion is presented of the processes by which all of these social moments and behaviours are held together by the value of what is perceived as constituting the Yam Island way of doing things. The values and symbols employed in the creation of a specific Yam Island identity are explored in detail, and the ways in which this identity provides a framework within
which Yam Islanders act within their specific socio-cultural universe is discussed. The author argues that Yam Islanders not only see themselves as Islanders *per se*, but recognise themselves as being unique, in much the same way they regard themselves as people of the 1980s or 1990s, who are nevertheless strongly contained within the traditions of the past. In such a way the boundaries of time and island are diffuse and blend into each other when occasion demands unity or the practise of tradition. It is this tacking between the past and the present, and between Yam Island, the rest of Torres Strait and the mainland which provides Yam Island people with the dynamic of their identity.
CHAPTER 2

THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The Brothers [Gebar] is a miserable mass of rocks and stones with a few trees on the lee side of it. We saw a few inhabitants. Cap and Turtle [Yam] Islands lie south-east of it; they are of tolerable height but equally barren.

(Bligh quoted in Lee 1920: 190)

2.1. Geography of the Torres Strait Region

The Torres Strait spans 150 km from the tip of Cape York Peninsula on mainland Australia to the lowland shores of Papua. An area of some 8000 km² is encompassed within the boundaries of Bramble, Anchor and East Cays in the northeast, Turu Cay to the west, and Moimi and Kaumag islands in the north. This hazardous waterway with its myriad of channels is dotted with a stepping stone configuration of volcanic islands, continental granitic islands, reefs, sand and mud cays (see Map 1). Perhaps no more than 25 of the 200 islands, of varying size and geomorphology, were consistently inhabited during pre-contact times (Beckett 1963: 6). However, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of the islands were exploited in various ways as an integral part of the Islanders' subsistence and ritual lives, in such a way as the Yam Island experience illustrates (see Chapters 3-8).

The warm, turquoise waters of the Torres Strait are characteristically shallow, reaching an average depth of 13 m. The Strait's reputation as being one of the most hazardous seaways in the world can be explained not only by its island and reef strewn shallow waters, but also by the fact that the Pacific and Indian Oceans, extended by
Map 1. Geomorphological Zones of the Torres Strait
the Arafura and Coral Seas, as well as the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria, all converge on the Strait (Jennings 1978: 183). Due to variations in temperature, salinity and rhythms of these different waters, erratic tidal patterns, forceful currents and marked differences in sea levels are common, particularly in Endeavour Strait between Cape York and the nearby islands (Barham and Harris 1983: 531-533; Jennings 1972: 31; Moore 1979: 16). The waters of the Torres Strait, and more specifically those of Endeavour Strait, have had a marked effect on the distribution of sand sediments to the south-west of the region in the Gulf of Carpentaria (Coventry et al 1980: 386).

Yam Island is more affected by the Coral Sea tides than is Thursday Island. Neap tides are classically associated with the first and last quarters of the moon, and thus involve little tidal movement. However, because water races through the notorious channels of Torres Strait, water levels can be substantially higher on one side of the Torres Strait than another (Ian Dight pers. comm. 1988). Likewise, while spring tides are again typically associated with the new and full moons (and involve strong currents), a glance at the tide tables shows the occurrence of some spring tides at Thursday Island on the first and last quarters (Ian Dight pers. comm. 1988). While the tides are mostly diurnal, with some exceptions, the semi-diurnal regime of the Coral Sea in the east and the diurnal regime of the Arafura Sea in the west make tidal behaviour in the region very complex (Easton 1970: 55-56,168; Barham and Harris 1983: 531-532; Nietschmann 1989: 67-71). At particular tidal phases the currents in the Torres Strait run exceedingly fast, sometimes as much as 4 m per second, but at other phases they cancel each other out and remain still for many hours (Jennings 1978: 183). This has an obvious and significant effect on Islanders' timing and use of the marine environment, both in terms of travel and also in subsistence fishing and hunting. Nietschmann (1989) has discussed this in some detail for Mabuiag Island. My understanding of tides is not sufficiently advanced to enable me to competently graft this information on to the specificities of tidal behaviour around Yam Island.
2.1.1. Palaeogeography and Geomorphology

It has been estimated by Doutch (1972) that the Torres Strait formed a land bridge between Papua New Guinea and the tip of Australia from the Triassic Period (225 million years ago) until the Pleistocene Epoch (beginning about 1.8 million years ago), and that the development of the waterway of Torres Strait was unlikely to have occurred until at least between 500,000 and 100,000 years ago during the middle to late Pleistocene. This waterway was shallow enough to have been uncovered repeatedly during several stages when low sea levels occurred (Coventry et al. 1980: 396).

There is no direct and universally agreed upon evidence for the timing of the most recent drowning of the Strait (or indeed for the drowning of other major late Pleistocene land bridges), however estimations have been made for the date of this phenomenon from the systematic analysis of global glacio-eustatic curves (Coventry et al. 1980). The evidence so far suggests that the first sea channels in the Torres Strait area were probably created sometime between 6,500 and 8,500 years ago (Barham and Harris 1983; Jennings 1972: 29).

Jennings (1972: 37) argues that by at least 4,000 to 5,000 years ago the Torres Strait looked very much as it does today, for at this point the eustatic sea level had returned to within a couple of metres of the present sea level. What we are certain of is that the Strait was well and truly drowned by 4,000 years ago at the very least. Presumably human occupation of some of the Torres Strait islands had occurred some time prior to this and occupation of much of the land bridge had occurred perhaps throughout the period after people first arrived in Sahul or 'Greater Australia' (John Campbell pers. comm. 1991).

As such at different phases the strait has formed both a 'bridge and a barrier' (Walker...
1972) between the continent of Australia and its northern outlier, the mainland of Papua New Guinea. Consequently, sharp discontinuities are not represented on either side of the strait, either in geomorphological terms, or along faunal, floral, climatic or even cultural dimensions (see Chapter 3). In relation to fauna, Barham and Harris argue that the effect of the Torres Strait waterway 'has been to attenuate faunal diversity northward...and southward...rather than to create a sharp faunal boundary between Papua and the Cape York Peninsula' (1983: 537).

The Torres Strait forms a part of the Sahulian (northern Australian / Papua New Guinean) continental shelf, which emerges as the alluvial lowlands of the Fly-Digoel delta of Papua. All of the high Western islands, stretching from Muralag (Prince of Wales Island) in the south to Dauan in the north, were formed during the Carboniferous period (Barham In Press), with Mabaduan Hill in Papua representing its most northerly extension. Like a spine stretching from Cape York to Papua, all of these Western islands constitute the steep rocky outcrops of the submerged northern end of the Great Dividing Range of north-eastern Australia (see Map 1).

A belt of extensive platform reefs and coral cays is located in the central region of Torres Strait. To the east, and north of the Great Barrier Reef, are the Pleistocene volcanic islands and in the northwest are a number of low, flat muddy islands, representing the build up of sediment on reef-limestone and clay surfaces (Barham In Press). These topographically distinct formations, which occur in four broad transverse belts (Jennings 1972), are classified into the following geomorphological groups of islands: Western, Central, Eastern and Top Western. It should be noted at this point that the classification of islands by topography alone does not mesh exactly with the administrative, regional identification of the islands. For instance, while Yam Island is culturally and regionally classified as a Central island, it is a Western island in terms of geomorphology. In the following brief discussion I diverge from Haddon's
(1935) original classification of the islands by differentiating between the Top Western and Western islands, and in excluding the Papuan island of Daru.

During the late 1980s concern was raised as to the implications of the Greenhouse Effect on the islands. The predicted global warming of the earth and associated higher sea-levels has led to some consideration of the possible effects on the low-lying islands, in particular those in the north and central regions of the Strait.

Central Islands

The Central region of Torres Strait is comprised of a belt of large platform reefs and coral cays. It contains numerous characteristically small, low and flat coral sandbank islands, formed as a result of wind and tide action on submerged coral reefs (Barham In Press). The cays lie between the meridians of $90^\circ 30'$ and $10^\circ 15'$ S latitude, and $142^\circ 49'$ and $143^\circ 30'$ E (see Map 1 and Appendix 1a), and include the islands of Warraber (Sue Island), Puruma (Coconut Island), Tudu (Warrior Island), Dhamudh (Dalrymple Island), Zegey (Dungeness Island), Sasi (Long Island), Masig and Kedal (Yorke Islands), of which only Warraber, Puruma and Masig are permanently inhabited. All of these Central islands have dry soil and little surface water. Sasi and Zegey differ from the coral sand cays in that they are predominantly swampy mud cays. Both these mud islands and their 'home reefs' are regularly used by Yam Island people. Zegey's swamps are both salt and freshwater (Harris 1977: 439; Jennings 1972: 33), and the island itself is fairly heavily colonised by a variety of mangrove species. In 1872 Bligh described Zegey as having thick wood and mangroves (quoted in Lee 1920: 188). The island is also almost fully encircled by a fringing reef (see Map 3).

Tudu is a typical example of the characteristically small, low, flat, coral sandbanks described above. The island measures 1.6 km by 0.75 km, and the highest it rises above
sea level is 4.6 m. Currently it sports saline marshy land with little surface water or shade, although Bligh (quoted in Lee 1920: 185) referred to it as 'a small woody spot', when he visited in 1794. When Haddon visited in 1888 he described it as a rather bare island except for reasonably large trees growing on its northern end (1935: 27-28). No doubt in the interim between Bligh's visit and that of Haddon, Tudu's vegetation like that of the neighbouring islands of Zegey and Sasi had been severely depleted due to the impact of ships' crews cutting firewood, as well as the bêche-de-mer fishery's requirement for wood to use in processing the trepang. One such station was established on Tudu in the 1860s. Dumont D'Urville described Tudu in 1840 as

scarcely a mile in length. The reef surrounding it and exposed at low tide greatly increases its extent from north to south. It is a bank of sand hardly above water level, and from the northern point on which there is a clump of trees, the rest of this very poor soil is saline, marshy, and covered with grass and scrub which give almost no shade.

( Dumont D'Urville 1987: 549; see also Haddon 1935: 27)

Tudu is surrounded by a wide fringing reef, separated by a channel from the extensive Warrior Reefs (see Map 3), and numerous small detached reefs stretching from Bara in the south almost to Bobo (Bristol Island) in the north-east (Barham and Harris 1983: 531). The legend of Naga as told by the Kiwai of lowland Papua accounts for the formation of the numerous channels surrounding Tudu (see Landtman 1917: 318-319). These reefs are visited regularly by Yam Island people today in their exploitation of its abundant marine life (Fuary 1991; see also Chapter 5).

Eastern Islands

The Eastern group of islands lies between the north-eastern extremity of the Great
Barrier Reef and longitude 143° 29' E (see Map 1 and Appendix 1a), and it includes the
shelf-edge volcanic islands of Dauar, Waier and Mer (Murray Islands), Erub (Darnley),
Edgor (Nepean), Zabker (Campbell), Ugar (Stephen) and Maizab Kaur (Bramble Cay).
These islands, formed by Pleistocene vulcanism, are typically small, steep sided, very
fertile and surrounded by relatively deep sea channels abounding in fish (Jennings 1972;
Barham In Press; Jukes 1847a: 206). Mer, Darnley, and Stephen islands are inhabited.
Ribbon shaped reefs which constitute the most northerly extension of the Great Barrier
Reef, are located on the shelf-edge to the east of Mer (Coventry et al 1980).

Erub is the largest of the volcanic islands, and like all islands in this group, supports
dense tropical vegetation. Although the Eastern islands do not receive significantly
higher rainfall than any of the other islands, the basaltic soils ensure a higher
moisture retention rate, and thus less seasonal variation is apparent in this area of the
Torres Strait (Wace 1972: 204; Vanderwal 1973: 169). Mer is encompassed by a fringing
reef and is dominated by Gelam Hill, an old crater rim rising to 230 m (Jennings 1972: 33;
Finch 1977: 3). The red-brown soil of the north-eastern tableland on Mer is extremely
fertile. In the 1840s Jukes reported that this area was covered in coconut trees (1847a:
132). Gill (1876: 215) visited Mer in 1872 and proclaimed that every kind of tropical
fruit could be found growing there. Even in the 1980s, Yam Island people who had been
to Mer waxed lyrical about the fecundity of the place, emphasising that it is a far
easier place than Yam on which to make a garden.

Top Western Islands

The flat terrigenous mud islands of the Top Western region were formed by the
deposition of alluvium from the Papuan river systems (Jennings 1972: 34) on dead coral
platforms (Barham and Harris 1983: 533). These islands, which support dense
mangrove vegetation, lie just a few kilometres off the Papuan coast, and include Saibai,
Boigu, Moimi, Aubusi and Kaumag (see Map 1 and Appendix 1a). Of these, only the islands of Saibai and Boigu are currently inhabited. They are low, rising a mere two to three metres above present sea level (Barham and Harris 1983: 533), and swampy. Much of the island of Saibai is permanently inundated, with scrub vegetation, Pandanus and grasslands occurring on the higher ground (Harris 1974: 132). Moresby (1876: 133) noted the occurrence of yams, coconuts and other fruits and roots on the northern part of Saibai.

**Western Islands**

Geomorphologically, the Western group of islands includes Yam (Turtle Backed), Gebar (Two Brothers), Mukar (Cap), Dauan (Mt Cornwallis), Mabuiag (Jervis), Badu (Mulgrave), Moa (Banks), Narupay (Horn), Nagi (Mt Ernest), Muralag (Prince of Wales), Muri (Mt Adolphus), Albany Island (Pabaju), Hammond Island (Kiriri), Friday Island (Giyalag), Wednesday Island (Maway), Goode Island (Palilag), Saddle Island (Ulu) and Thursday Island (Wayben). Most of these islands are located within the southern two thirds of the strait (see Map 1 and Appendix 1a) with the notable exception of Dauan, which nestles against the Papuan coast (Jennings 1972: 34). Currently, Yam, Dauan, Mabuiag, Badu, Moa, Horn, Hammond, Prince of Wales and Thursday Island support permanent populations.

These Western islands are relatively large, hilly, weathered, granitic continental landforms supporting bush and scrub flora on their rocky, well drained slopes. Most are fringed with home reefs. While Yam Island is one of the smaller of the Western islands, Muralag is the largest of the islands in the Torres Strait. The highest peak in the strait is Mt Cornwallis on Dauan, rising to 300 m.

Sea depth in the Western region is mostly less than 9 m and at the very maximum, no
more than 18 m. Consequently, as many reefs and sandbanks lie just below the surface of the water, an abundance of marine food resources such as dugong, turtle, gastropods, bivalves, fish and crustacea is sustained (Jennings 1978: 182; Nietschmann 1977: 3). It is in this region of the Torres Strait that the highest concentrations of two very significant marine animals, Dugong dugon (dugong or sea cow) and Chelonia mydas (green turtle), occur (Nietschmann 1977: 3; see also Marsh 1981; Marsh et al 1984).

2.1.2. Location and Physical Description of Yam Island

Yam Island, a tiny island of about 2 km², is situated in the Central administrative and cultural region of Torres Strait (see Maps 1, 2, 3 and 5). It is one of the smaller of the moderately fertile granite islands, and it is located at about latitude 9° 55' S and longitude 142° 46' E. Yam is contained within a fringing reef, with a variety of remnant mangroves extending from the north-western point of Mabiog Payn around to the south-eastern side of the island at Zagwan. A substantial amount of the mangrove ecosystem (along with subsistence groves of coconut and mango trees) was destroyed in 1974 with the construction of a 1000 m long airstrip dissecting the island on a north-west to south-east axis. The two highest points of elevation are 70 m and 65 m.

The bush is strewn with rocks and medium sized boulders, and pumice abounds in places, such as at Waydoro on the western side of the island. The bays have coarse to fine sandy beaches, littered with ridges of dead coral. Masses of this material known locally as thaywa, are found heaped in the lagoons on the western side of the island, broken off the reefs and deposited there by tide and wind action during the rough north-west monsoons.

Fairly heavy bush vegetation with a relatively low canopy is supported in the centre of the island. Some of the larger flora include a species of Acacia (probably A.
aulacocarpa), wild kapok (Bombax ceiba), Indian beach almond (Terminalia catappa), another almond locally known as mipa, found on the inner rocky slopes (probably T. arenicola as opposed to T. melanocarpa), a variety of feral coconut and mango trees, extensive stands of bamboo, a couple of species of Pandanus, a few wongay groves (Manilkara kauki), a species of Eugenia (probably E. subrorbicularis), Gyrocarpus americanus, some cashew trees and a species of fig. 1 Hibiscus plants grow at both the old and present village sites. In the current village such exotic plants as lime, lemon and orange trees, bougainvillea and frangipani are found growing alongside fruit bearing trees of the genera Eugenia and Ficus.

In February 1845, the naturalist-geologist on board the surveying ship the Bramble, put ashore at Yam and described it thus:

On Turtle-backed Island we found a few small groves of cocoa-nut trees ....a little thicket of bamboo; and near the centre of the island, following a little path through a matted wood, rendered impervious by creepers, we came one day on the first symptoms of cultivation.... under some widely-spreading, thick-leaved trees, with gnarled trunks and twisted boughs, were some great blocks of sienite, resting fantastically one upon the other......In all the wood that spread over the island, there did not appear to be a single gum-tree: the trees were widely branched, low and umbrageous, and matted with underwood and creepers.

(Jukes 1847a: 155-7)

1. The origin and antiquity of various plant species found on Yam Island is problematic. For instance in July 1911, Sir William MacGregor visited Yam and spoke of the recent introduction there of a couple of plant species, undertaken by the island leader, Maino. This included the planting of over 3000 coconut trees, the recent introduction of cassava in about 1908, and a type of breadfruit from Papua. MacGregor (Q.S.A PRE/ A530: 25) advocated that the deforestation of the islands by the fisheries be counteracted by planting such pan-Pacific trees as coconuts, she-oaks (Casuarina equistefolia), beach almonds (Terminalia catappa) and the 'Cardwell' tree (Calophyllum inophyllum). Presumably these species were already found on the islands as they are all basically distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific (Paul Stevens pers. comm. 1990). Perhaps Flinders' comment on the abundance of casuarina on Halfway Island in 1802 (in Jack 1921a: 131) may be indicative of the distribution of this species prior to European intervention.
N.B. YAM, WARRABER AND PURUMA SHARE THE ISLAND OF SASI

Map 3. Yam Island Territories

10 km
Gebar (Two Brothers Island) and Mukar (Cap Island) are similar geomorphologically to Yam. They are relatively large, hilly, weathered granite landforms supporting bush and scrub flora on their rocky, but well watered and well drained slopes. These islands have always constituted part of the Yam-Tudu 'backyard' (see Map 3), and in the 1980s regular trips were made from Yam Island to Gebar and Mukar for fishing and gardening, as well as for collecting water during the Dry season (see Chapter 5). Thulutidhayn and Ngazi (or Mourilyan Reef) south of Gebar, Small Reef (south of Mukar), Iki and Awbayn to the north-east of Gebar, and Polin and Tekey to the south-west of Gebar are regularly visited by Yam Island people engaging in marine hunting, collecting and fishing (see Map 3; see also Fuary 1991).

2.2. Climate

The Torres Strait region experiences two major seasonal cycles and two shorter cycles. Three of the recognised seasons are named according to the direction from which the wind blows, and the fourth is named after the mating activity of the green turtle. These seasons are the 'Northwest Monsoon' or 'Wet' season (kuki), the 'Southeast Trades' season (sager), naygay, an extremely hot, dry, two month season from October to December, with mixed weather tending to calmness, and salwal or the time when turtle are mating. Salwal constitutes a recognised short season within naygay. During naygay the wind blows from a north to north-easterly direction (see Table 1; see also Nietschmann 1989: 68, 69).

The 'Wet' season is characterised by thunderstorms and very heavy downpours. After the movement southward of the sub-tropical high pressure belt and the south-easterly trades that accompany it, the 'Wet' begins (Nix and Kalma 1972: 64). Generally in the Torres Strait, marine hunting activity is carried out with more ease during the Wet season than during the Dry (Nietschmann 1977: 3). Due to the shallow depth of the
TABLE 1 Seasonal Divisions in the Torres Strait

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEASONS</th>
<th>FEATURES</th>
<th>SIGNS</th>
<th>MONTHS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KUKI</td>
<td>Last strong winds; Wind swings to S-W.</td>
<td>Wind change; Squalls, high tides.</td>
<td>Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KUYUR KUKI</td>
<td>N-W wind.</td>
<td>Wind change.</td>
<td>Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZEY</td>
<td>Heavy rain; many squalls.</td>
<td>Wind change.</td>
<td>Mar (Dec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGER</td>
<td>N-W wind.</td>
<td>Wind change; birds.</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAYGAY</td>
<td>Dry,cool.</td>
<td>Certain flower; Turtle; star.</td>
<td>Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALWAL</td>
<td>Very hot, dry mixed weather; calm. Water shortages.</td>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Turtle mating.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N-N.E wind.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sept</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sept</td>
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<td>Oct</td>
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<td>Oct-</td>
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<td>Nov</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Torres Strait, tropical cyclones are a rare occurrence in this area, but generally during the month of March erratic weather in the form of violent rain squalls prevails.

Average rainfall for the Torres Strait as a whole is between 1500 mm and 2000 mm. Due to very high evaporation rates, however, this fall is not nearly as substantial as it at first appears (Jennings 1978: 183).

2.2.1. Climate of Yam Island

During the writer's first field trip to Yam Island, the Wet season began in the latter half of December 1980, and continued through to April 1981 (see Table 2). The much awaited Wet was well received, as it alleviated severe water shortages in the community. During the Wet season beautifully fine days occur when the squalls suddenly abate and the sea becomes mirror smooth. Yam Island experiences high water levels during the day tides and low water levels on the evening tides. The wettest month for 1981 was January, with a total rainfall of 505.3 mm. In February only 170 mm was recorded, rising to 243.5 mm of rain in March (see Table 2). It was in March 1981 when rain squalls were prevalent that the maximum amount of surface water on the island was attained: dry creekbeds flowed and wells were filled to the brim. At this seasonal phase, kuyur kuki or the 'last big blow' of the season, low lying areas of the village are inundated with seawater, and seagrass litters the beaches (Table 1).

Toward the end of the 'Wet' the wind direction changes from north-westerly to south, south-westerly (zey), before it settles into blowing from the south-east (or south to south-east). The beginning of the 'Dry' season, sager, which normally begins in April/May and continues through to September/October, is heralded by the appearance of northward bound Rainbow Bee Eaters or birubiru (Merops ornatus). At
Table 2 RAINFALL FOR YAM ISLAND 1980-1981*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MARCH</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>91.0 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRIL</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNE</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JULY</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>5.25 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>11.5 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>65.5 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANUARY</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>505.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>170.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>243.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL RAINFALL 1177.2 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These daily readings were made by Keith Taylor. Unfortunately the recording of rainfall did not begin until toward the end of the 'Wet', on 28th March 1980.

(**) indicates some readings were not taken during this month. Figure represents minimal rainfall. No more than a total of 4 weeks readings were missed over this period, when we were absent from Yam on inter-island visits, or when the gauge was damaged. Nevertheless, while the total rainfall is an underestimate of the annual rainfall, the degree of seasonal variation is clearly apparent.
the end of February 1845 on Yam Island, Jukes (1847a: 157) noted the large numbers of Rainbow Bee Eaters and Torres Strait Pigeons heading north. The southeast trade winds prevail, and the islands experience only a handful of light showers during this season. The availability of water starts to become a problem on Yam Island by as early as June or July. Heavy rains may occur during July, and the season oscillates between being calm and becoming extremely windy, providing the last squalls for many months. In this season (sager) the tides on Yam attain their highest water levels during the evening and their lowest during the day. Continuous stiff breezes producing rough seas are the norm, and water laden with coral larvae is blown into the Strait during these months (Jennings 1978: 183).

Naygay is locally perceived as the driest period of the year, and it begins around the months of September and October. According to Haddon (1904: 348) naygay begins in September. At the onset of this very dry time the wind blows from a north to north-easterly direction, and it is the time when bush gardens should be cleared and burned in preparation for the rains (see Chapter 5).

During the naygay season of 1980, Yam Island people began digging out their bush wells in order to fill urgent water needs, and made water runs in aluminium dinghies to use their traditional well at Gebar. During these couple of months a local species of Acacia (thulup) flowers, and scores of Torres Strait pigeons (Myristicivora spilorrhoa) and the rainbow bee eaters (birubiru) heading south arrive in large numbers. Men and boys using guns hunt the Torres Strait pigeon (geynaw) for a few weeks. The green turtle mate for a period during this time, providing easy prey to local hunters. The start of salwal is marked by the yellow flowering of the kubilgim tree (unidentified sp.).

The micro-climate and seasons provide clear parameters within which Yam Island life is divided and expressed. This does not mean, however, that there are not equally
important calendars in use in the community. The Gregorian calendar, in particular its
application to the Queensland school year, and the Anglican religious calendar play
very significant roles in the daily, weekly, monthly and annual breakdown of
community life. Nevertheless, the seasonal calendar divides the year into broad
phases, each with its particular climatic, faunal and floristic dimensions, within
which traditionally based subsistence activities can be carried out (see Chapter 5).
remarkable for their fairly tall stature and [they] appeared robust; however, they seemed to lead a poverty-stricken life...Fish seemed to be their main source of food; each day we saw their vessels leave the island and make their way north to get the day's meal. Their fishing place was a long distance away [1]........The natives of Tudu Island go round stark naked; their skin is black; their hair is frizzy; their build is slight..... They do a raised tattooing that lines their shoulders with fleshy pads arranged like the fringes of epaulettes. They seemed to us to be gentle and shy and affectionate, but we might have found them tough and fierce if a smaller number had fallen into their hands. Our weapons frightened them quite a bit, and the trouble they had gone to hide their womenfolk is sufficient indication of the extent to which our proximity alarmed them.

(Dumont D'Urville 1987: 549, 550)

Bipo Taym (literally 'before time') is the phrase used by Yam Islanders to refer to the distant past, or the distant era before the present. It typically encapsulates the period before colonialism became a force they had to confront, and it symbolises an epoch of power (both physical and supernatural), and one of perceived local control over the conditions of life. The sites, objects and stories of Yam Island community represent one compartment in their portfolio of custom, and provide important links of continuity between the past and the present.

The following construction of Yam-Tudu societies is based on documents produced by

1. Given that Tudu is located in the midst of a very extensive reef system, it is highly unlikely that the canoes left each day to go fishing. Perhaps the journeys were undertaken for obtaining fresh water, for hunting large marine animals such as dugong and turtle, or for gardening on other islands.
Map 5. Cultural Zones of the Torres Strait
bureaucrats and missionaries involved on the frontiers of expansion in the region, and analyses of the colonial period by anthropologists and historians alike. It also attempts to incorporate contemporary Yam Island people's general, local or collective perceptions about their past, and the nature of their ancestors' interface with the first waves of colonialism.

Torres Strait Islanders are primarily a Melanesian group of people currently living in the 'marine outback' of Australia (Nietschmann 1989: 61) on the islands of the Torres Strait, in communities in the Northern Peninsula Area of Cape York, and in a number of settlements, towns and cities throughout mainland Australia. At the point of intensive and sustained white incursions into the region in the 1860s, there were some marked cultural differences evident between groups of Torres Strait Islanders. Trading networks criss-crossed the Torres Strait, connecting the Islanders with each other, as well as with Cape York Aboriginal people to the south and Papua New Guineans to the north (see Map 4). So critical was the connection with Papua that Beckett (1987b: 26) has claimed that the regional economy was 'underwritten' by the Papuans.

Sandwiched between these two distinct culture areas of Australia and Papua New Guinea, the Torres Strait represents a fascinating region in which cultural continuities between Cape York, Torres Strait and Papua occur. Haddon's numerous works (q.v., see Reference list) took note of these associations, and Walker (1972) has emphasised the role the strait has played as both 'bridge and barrier' between the two mainlands. More recently this region has been described as 'a biogeographical boundary and a cultural filter' (Barham and Harris 1983: 529; see also Chapter 2), and its islands as 'stepping stones in a two-way genetic and cultural traffic' (Beckett 1987b: 25).

Differences in subsistence strategies, language, kin classification and ritual practice have resulted in anthropologists and linguists categorising Islanders into four broad cultural groups: Top Western, Western, Eastern and Central (see Map 5). As already
discussed in Chapter 2, these cultural divisions do not mesh precisely with the
geomorphological divisions of the same names (see Map 1). Unless specifically stated
otherwise, all further references to island groups in this thesis are made on the basis of
broad cultural characteristics as opposed to geomorphological factors.

3.1. Archaeology of the Region

The archaeological picture of the Torres Strait remains sketchy, and much detailed
work needs to be done. The first archaeological surveys of the region were conducted by
Moore in 1971 and 1973 at Muralag, and on Cape York at Red Island Point and Evans
Bay (Moore 1979), as well as by Vanderwal (1973) in 1972. Moore uncovered a small
number of artefacts and charcoal from the sites at Muralag, Red Island Point and Evans
Bay. These sites have been dated at 610 ± 90 B.P., 1120 ± 430 B.P. and 610 ± 80 B.P.
respectively (Moore 1979: 14). Vanderwal excavated a midden on Pulu (off Mabuiag)

In 1980 and 1981 Barham and Harris worked on Moa, Nagi and Saibai. They located
several archaeological sites, including fish traps, art sites, rock shelters and shell
middens. Rowland also excavated midden sites on Moa and Nagi in 1981 (Barham and
Harris 1983: 542). Barham and Harris are continuing their research into the
archaeology and palaeoecology of the Torres Strait, paying particular attention to the
coastal zones and reefs, which would have provided people with an expanded resource
base for the last 6000 years.

Greer began archaeological investigation of the Holocene sites in northern Cape York
in 1984 (Greer pers. comm. 1986; Campbell 1984; Campbell and Gorecki 1989). She has
located a number of archaeological sites and excavated two hearths in a dune system of
Newcastle Bay during the season of 1986 (Greer In Prep., pers. comm. 1991). Summaries
of archaeological research in Cape York Peninsula are provided by Wright (1971),
Coventry et al (1980), Campbell (1984), Campbell and Mardaga-Campbell (1990) and Cole (1990). The current earliest radiocarbon dates for human occupation of Cape York Peninsula are at the order of 32,000 years ago (Morwood 1989: 156), although much older dates can be expected (Campbell and Mardaga-Campbell 1990: 200-206). However, some of the first places occupied by people might well now be underwater and associated with former 'Lake Carpentaria' (Torgersen et al 1983), as well as with what is now the Great Barrier Reef (Coventry et al 1980; Campbell and Mardaga-Campbell 1990; O'Keefe 1988).

Summaries of archaeological research in south-western Papua are more limited, especially as there has been relatively little work to date. However, there are useful reviews of the whole of Papua New Guinea (e.g. Swadling 1989), as well as for example of work in the Bismarck Archipelago of northern Papua New Guinea (Gosden et al 1989). Recent results from northern Papua New Guinea demonstrate that people had reached the region before 40,000 years ago (Groube et al 1986) and that by about 32,000 to 28,000 years ago, if not earlier, people were not only colonising remote islands, but were regularly moving back and forth between distant Melanesian islands (Allen et al 1989). In other words, they had seaworthy watercraft and were probably good navigators. This has potential implications for the first peopling of the Torres Strait region (i.e. it may have been reached by sea via the Gulf of Papua even when Torres Strait itself was dry land) as well as for subsequent contact and movement between the new postglacial islands of the Torres Strait.

Mother-of-pearl shell found in the Yuat Gorge on the highland fringe between the Sepik Basin and the Wahgi Valley of northern Papua New Guinea, has been recently dated at between 2000 and 3000 B.P. (Swadling and Anamiato 1989). Gorecki (pers. comm. 1990) has suggested that the likely source of the shell was the Torres Strait, and that if this were the case, the shell could be indicative of an extensive trade network linking the Torres Strait not only with lowland Papua, but with the northern side of
3.2. Languages of the Region

Ray and Haddon, of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Strait, were the first researchers to combine the numerous word lists and translations of biblical texts from the region which had been compiled under missionary direction. Their analyses were based on their own documentation of vocabularies, as well as the word lists and translations collected and compiled by such people as Jukes, MacGillivray, MacFarlane, Hunt, Savage, MacGregor, Curr and the London Missionary Society teachers. This was problematic in that they did not have access to any material of grammatical construction and syntax in Torres Strait languages, a problem Haddon openly addressed and acknowledged (Ray and Haddon 1893: 523n). In their 1893 and 1897 publications they compared and contrasted the languages of Western and Eastern Torres Strait, those of lowland Papua and the Gudang language spoken at the tip of Cape York (Ray and Haddon 1893, 1897). They divided Torres Strait languages into two blocs: the Meriam language as it was spoken on the islands of Mer, Waier, Dowar, Erub and Ugar; and the Saibai language (Kalaw Lagaw Ya) as spoken on all the other islands of Torres Strait (1893: 464). They acknowledged that dialect differences prevailed between component islands of the Western and Central regions (1893: 465), and they attributed grammatical and lexical similarities in language to the degree of association and interaction between groups of Islanders, Papuans and Cape York peoples (1893: 505; 1897: 123). In the Central Islands, Kalaw Lagaw Ya was spoken with the incorporation of Meriam Mir words (1897: 123; Haddon 1935: 93), and the Mabuiag dialect of Kalaw Lagaw Ya represented a combination of the Saibai dialect with that of Tudu (Laade 1970: 270). This is not surprising given the intermediary position the Central Islanders traditionally occupied in the region both geographically and as trade brokers.
In the past Kalaw Lagaw Ya and Meriam Mir have been regarded as representing a clear cut linguistic barrier between Papuan and Australian language types. However Würm (1972) has argued that Kalaw Lagaw Ya, with its typically non-Australian phonology is an Australian language adopted by speakers of an originally Papuan language. As Meriam Mir belongs to the East Trans-Fly Papuan language bloc, the distinction between Meriam Mir and Kalaw Lagaw Ya on an Australian vs. Papuan dimension is less absolute (Würm 1972).

There are four main languages currently spoken in the Torres Strait: Kalaw Lagaw Ya, Meriam Mir, Broken and English. In 1991 there are few speakers of Kalaw Lagaw Ya in the Central Islands, with the majority of them residing on the islands of Warraber and Puruma. Kalaw Lagaw Ya is still spoken regularly on the islands of Saibai, Boigu, Dauan, Mabuiag, Badu and at places on the mainland such as at Bamaga, Cairns and Darwin, and in 1979 Bani estimated there were approximately 1000 speakers of the language (1979: 38). Meriam Mir speakers are largely concentrated on Murray Island, with other speakers located on the mainland, particularly at Townsville and Cairns (see Cromwell 1980; 1982).

Broken, which has been spoken since the 1860s (Mühlhäusler 1979: 46), has become the first language of many Torres Strait Island people. It also serves as a *lingua franca* between Islanders, both on the islands themselves as well as on the mainland. In the 1980s, Broken was more consistently spoken in the Central islands, on Darnley and Stephen islands in the Eastern group, on Badu, Thursday Island, Hammond Island and on the two Moa Island settlements of St. Paul and Kubin. Dialect and tone differences occur largely as a reflection of whether the speakers have historically spoken Meriam Mir or Kalaw Lagaw Ya. This variation in lexicon also differs in terms of frequency of use of component 'language' words.²

Young women, particularly pre-adolescent and adolescent girls have their own semi-secret code language. This language is reminiscent of 'pig-Latin' or 'pig-English' spoken by young Anglo and Celtic Australians in the 1950s and 1960s, however it is constructed differently. Also in contrast to 'pig-Latin', this code on Yam Island is used as a language in which full length conversations are conducted. Young women may resort to this code when wanting to discuss something secret in the company of younger children, or when within earshot of males.

At the time of the writer's extended field research on Yam Island between the years 1980 and 1982, English was used on the islands primarily in business or government transactions with non-Islanders, as well as occasionally in local public events, and often as part of self-effacing joking behaviour between home-coming students who were formally educated on the mainland. It was also sometimes used in the local classroom.

The use of English in the classroom may have altered somewhat in recent years with the placement of predominantly non-Torres Strait Islander teachers employed by the State Department of Education on all populated islands. On Thursday Island, English is spoken more commonly than it is on the outer island communities.

3.3. Brief Overview of Cultural Diversity and Similarity

From as far back as our cultural reconstructions take us, island clusters of the Torres Strait have been independent socio-political entities, as well as interdependent on other such clusters. In one way or another, all the islands of the Torres Strait were in contact with each other (see Map 4). Beckett (1983: 203) states that by the 1840s the islands were connected to each other and to the mainlands of New Guinea and Australia, through the bonds of marriage, exchange networks, ritual affiliations, kinship and conflict. Each regional cluster of islands continues to have specific characteristics which differentiate it from other clusters. As this thesis is concerned
with the Central Islands and specifically with Yam-Tudu, the reader is referred to the extensive anthropological, historical and related material already available for the Western (including South-Western), Top Western and Eastern islands.

Haddon (1890a, 1894, 1904, 1935), Haddon and Rivers (1904), Beckett (1961b, 1961c, 1963, 1972, 1987b), Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick-Nietschmann 1980a, 1980b, 1981), Nietschmann and Nietschmann (1981), Laade (1967, 1969), Nietschmann (1977, 1989), Harris (1977, 1979) and Maegawa (work In Progress) have all written extensively on the Western islands of Badu and Mabuiag. Only the work of Beckett, Fitzpatrick, Haddon, Rivers, Laade and Maegawa is anthropological. For the South-Western islands (see Map 5) the reader is referred in particular to the work of Haddon (1894, 1935), Ray and Haddon (1893), Moore (1979), Jukes (1847a), Singe (1989), Wasaga (1988), Jack (1921a) and King (1827a).

Existing evidence suggests that the Gumulgal of Mabuiag and Badu (see Map 5) were semi-nomadic, deriving their main livelihood from the warm, shallow waters which harbour an abundant supply of dugong and turtle. They practised limited gardening, and like every group in the Torres Strait had their specific roles to play in the inter-island and island-mainlands trade networks. Inter-island feuding was significant, and on Mabuiag leadership was attained through achievement on the battle ground.

At a very simplistic level it may be said that the Kawrareg of Moa, Muralag, Thursday, Wednesday, Friday, Hammond, Horn, Mt Adolphus and Possession islands were semi-nomadic foragers and marine hunters of dugong, turtle and fish. Their role in the exchange networks which linked Cape York, the Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea was critical. Because of their proximity to Cape York many features of their social organisation, economy and material culture were similar to those of their Cape York neighbours.
The population of the Kawrareg has been decimated a number of times within the recent historical time frame, both by attack from other island groups as well as by European punitive expeditions. Unfortunately, because they had the dubious honour of being the first group of Islanders to have experienced sustained contact with Europeans, they also suffered the excesses of Europeans on the frontiers of expansion since 1850 (Moore 1979: 11). Nevertheless, despite the extreme pressures on their population and land (particularly on Muralag), the Kawrareg were not 'wiped out'. Indeed, the descendants of the Muralag people have formed the Muralag Tribal Torres Strait Islander Corporation and in 1990 chose to obtain a political voice in the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council in preference to the Island Co-ordinating Council. This is a clear statement indeed of their close cultural affiliations with Cape York Aboriginal people.

The anthropologists Haddon (1935, 1904), Ray and Haddon (1893), Beckett (1961b, 1961c, 1963, 1972) and Laade (1966, 1970, 1971), in addition to other non-anthropological authors such as Moresby (1876), Bani (1989b), Lawrie (1970, 1983a), Harris (1977), Barham and Harris (1983) and Ober (1988) have documented various aspects of Top Western Island (see Map 5) histories, societies and environment. The people living on Boigu, Saibai and Dauan were essentially sedentary horticulturalists and traders, and leadership was based on fighting ability and strength.


Foraging was not an essential component of the Eastern Islanders' subsistence strategies. Extremely fertile soils and abundant seafoods facilitated the effective practice of
horticulture and fishing on the islands of Erub, Ugar, Zabker, Mer, Waier and Dauar. Unlike their Central neighbours, the Eastern Island people rarely ate uncultivated vegetables such as wild yams and other tubers (Beckett 1972: 315).

On Mer itself, the society was divided into three broad categories (Mabo 1982: 144) of gardeners, traders and sailors, and fishers (Laade 1969: 37). The Malo-Bomai cult (Mabo 1982, 1984; Haddon 1908: 281-313; 1935: 385-386, 389-397) was organised and articulated by hereditary cult officials, who wielded the most authority on Mer (Mabo 1982: 144). Whereas on the Central, Western and Top-Western islands there were war cult rituals and increase rituals, on Mer the Malo-Bomai cult fused the two rituals.

3.3.1. Central Island People

The Kulkalgal [or as Haddon (1935: 37) refers to them in the singular, the Kulkalaig] inhabited or regularly utilised the islands of Nagi, Tudu, Yam, 3 Gebar, Mukar, Warraber, Puruma, Masig, Zegey, Dhamudh, Mawar and Awridh (see Map 3). Within the Central islands there were specific clusters of Kulkalgal, and in this thesis the main emphasis is placed on the Yam-Tudu people.

Prior to British colonisation of the region, some cropping, often on uninhabited Kulkalgal owned islands, was practised. However the poorer soils and less than adequate drainage of these particular islands, which comprise both coral cays and high, continental islands (see Chapter 2), meant that horticulture was never as important a subsistence strategy as it was in either the Top Western or the Eastern islands.

3. The name 'Yam Island' does not refer in any way to yams as incorrectly asserted by Thome (1989: 46) in his popular coverage of the Pacific Basin; it is a derivation of the traditional name, Yama.
Map 6. Documented Canoe Journeys of the Kulkalgal Prior to Intensive Colonisation

1. Jack 1925
2. Haddon 1935; Allen and Corris 1977
The wongay plum (*Manilkara kauki*) is particularly abundant on the coral cays, and in addition to other wild fruits, coconut and the fruit and nuts of the sea-almond, it played a vital role in supplementing seafoods, gathered yams and crops. The storeable qualities of dried wongay (*kaygay wongay*), dried dugong, dried turtle, and the kernels of the sea-almond (*lu*) may well have allowed them to serve as either Wet season or voyage foods. Due to a general scarcity of food during the annual Wet season, the pods of the mangrove species *biyu* (*Bruguiera gymnoriza*) were processed, and its flour was eaten fairly extensively throughout the Torres Strait. With European colonisation of the region, increased horticultural diversity occurred (Harris 1978) following the introduction of such staple crops as corn, cassava and sweet potato (Mareko Maino to Beckett, pers.comm. 1959).

Beckett (1972: 313) documents Kulkalgal canoe journeys as far south as to the Pascoe River, located to the south of Temple Bay on the eastern side of Cape York (see Map 6). A Puruma man told Laade (*Laade* 1969: 39; 1973) they had travelled to Lizard Island near Cooktown to acquire stone to fashion into axes and fighting clubs. It is feasible that the Kulkalgal would not always have travelled to the source of the stone to obtain it, but presumably would have obtained the stone closer to home, from their neighbouring Aboriginal exchange partners. These journeys to Lizard Island constitute the most southerly documented canoe voyages undertaken by Central Island people. Perhaps the house frames and shell mounds noted on the island by Cook (1969: 598) related to these visits.

Haddon noted that the people of Awridh, Dhamudh, Masig and Puruma annually

4. See W. MacFarlane's description of the production process of this orange mangrove pod, in Haddon (PMB MF 959; 1935: 387n). Beckett (1972) and Moore (1979) also refer to its preparation in the Torres Strait and in Cape York. They were similarly processed and eaten by Aboriginal people throughout many regions in Australia (Golson 1971). Anderson (1984: 101) lists it and one other species as being the Wet season staples in the Bloomfield River region on the eastern side of Cape York, as does Chase (Chase and Sutton 1987) for the Nesbit River region. Further to the south, James Morrill (1863) spoke of the Aboriginal people from the Cape Cleveland to Townsville region eating the mangrove.
visited the Sir Charles Hardy Islands off Cape Grenville, and the Forbes Islands just to the north-east of the Pascoe River, during the Dry season when the south-easterlies prevailed (Haddon 1935; see also Stokes 1969b: 256-257; Allen and Corris 1977: 24). According to Haddon (1935: 394) Awridh Islanders visited Quoin Island off the Pascoe River to obtain stone for their axes, that is, some 360 km south-south-east of their home island. Aboriginal people travelled to Uthu, an island near Puruma (see Map 5) to "tell stories" (Maino Kebisu to Beckett 1959, pers.comm).

The next most southerly journey documented in the literature relates to Kulkalgal canoes intercepting some survivors of the wrecked Charles Eaton in 1834 at Boydong Island, between Shelburne and Orford bays (see Map 6). The boat had been wrecked further south in the Sir Charles Hardy Islands. The survivors of the shipwrecked Pandora claimed to have been attacked by 'Indians' armed with bows and arrows in Orford Bay to the north of Cape Grenville (Jack 1921a: 106-107). Undoubtedly, these were Torres Strait Islanders, and probably Kulkalgal.

Torres Strait Islanders acquired large double-outrigger canoes by means of well established exchange networks with lowland Papuans for which human skulls and lower jaws (in addition to a number of other items) are said to have been exchanged. The people of Badu and Moa are reputed to have sent skulls to Tudu, and from here the Papuans traded canoe hulls for the skulls and shell armlets (W. MacFarlane in Haddon PMB MF 959; Haddon 1935: 65, 77, 80; Baxter-Riley 1925: 275). While Tudu Islanders received their canoes from Mawatta, they actually came from villages on the eastern side of the Fly River estuary (1935). Possession of such canoes by an Island population not only meant they were able to launch attacks against non-allied Islanders, or Papuans, but they gave Islanders a greater area of sea across which to range in their subsistence strategies, and by which to establish and maintain ritual, trading and marriage relations with their Islander, Aboriginal and Papuan allies.
3.4. Yam-Tudu

There is a thriving community of the descendants of the Kulkalgal of Yam, Tudu, Gebar, Nagi, Dhamudh and Mawar resident on Yam Island (see Map 2) and some families are closely related to Mabuiag, Saibai, Warraber, Masig, Stephen Island and Papuan people. While individuals living during the 1980s and 1990s have not had first-hand experience with the bipotaym period per se, they have experienced it through their older relatives. They currently express it through recounting or listening to stories, visiting or avoiding sites, and being mindful of objects such as carvings, stone headed clubs and arrangements of stone, shell and bone.

Yam and Tudu people were one and the same group (Mr Missa Samuel pers. comm. 1987; Haddon 1904: 173; 1935: 71, 74, 394; 1894: 13), whose main residential base according to Haddon, was on Tudu. Although Haddon states that they mostly lived on Yam Island because of their gardening (1904: 174), no other evidence corroborates this, and according to the late Mr Missa Samuel (pers. comm. 1987) of Yam Island, only a small number of people had ever lived on Yam Island in comparison to Tudu. By being mainly based on Tudu, their proximity to the prolific Warrior Reefs gave the Kulkalgal particular environmental and political advantages. Moresby (1876: 27) was convinced that the Tudu people were so powerful because they commanded the extensive reef system in central Torres Strait. In addition to some cropping, they were involved in fishing, trading, marine hunting and inter-island feuding. Today, the islands of Tudu, Gebar, Mukar and Zegey still constitute an essential component of the physical, social and historical universe of Yam Island people (see Map 3). These islands are regarded as belonging to Yam Island. Not only are they regularly exploited in subsistence activities, but they occupy an integral place in the past and in the self-constructions of Yam Islanders.

In February 1871 Moresby (1876: 29) noted in passing that there were 44 local Tudu men
PLATE 1. Women, girls and small boy at Tudu, 1888. Note the circular shells, dibidib, around the necks of two women (courtesy of the Haddon Collection, A.I.A.T.S.I.S. N. 2137.12a).
involved in the pearlshell fishery at Tudu. Given that these were able-bodied men, we could expect to more than double this figure to account for children of both sexes, women, and older men. This would mean there would have been at least 100-150 people on the island. In November 1872 the Rev. Gill (1874: 220) estimated the population of Tudu at 250, and commented that they were heavily involved in the fishery. At least 35 of these people were Pacific Islanders and a couple of them were European men.

On the basis of the 1873 L.M.S. estimate of there being over 200 people at Yam and Tudu combined (Beckett 1963: 40; 1972: 312) inhabiting an area of less than 3 km², the population density may be calculated to have been in the order of 66:1 km². This figure however needs to be very carefully evaluated. First, there had been a fishery established on Tudu five years earlier, and the population had been dramatically affected (see Murray 1876: 453). Secondly, even if the figures are essentially reliable for the immediate period prior to intensive European incursions into the area, in that they allow for depopulation, the actual population density would have been lower than 66:1 km², given that a number of islands apart from Yam and Tudu were regularly used by Yam-Tudu people (see Map 3). Semi-sedentism associated with people moving and settling periodically on a number of their local islands in order to exploit seasonal resources, or to engage in ceremonial and social activities, would have meant that a far greater area of land and sea was being exploited than merely the combined area of Yam and Tudu.

3.4.1. Settlements and Housing

Haddon (1904: 173) has stated that at different times of the year the people lived at either Yam or Tudu, and that during the Yam Island headman's trips to Tudu, a 'deputy' officiated in his absence (Haddon 1935: 75). In June 1840, a village of about twelve houses was located on the southern point of Tudu (Dumont D'Urville 1987: 549) and the accompanying surgeon described the houses as 'shady dwellings beneath clumps
PLATE 2. Houses on Tudu, 1888 (courtesy of the Haddon Collection, A.I.A.T.S.I.S. N 2137.9a).
of vegetation and coco-nut groves' (quoted in Jack 1921a: 170). Whether the houses of Tudu were more like those found on Muralag to the south-west than like other Central island houses as claimed by Haddon (1912: 97), remains problematic. Haddon described two forms of housing he saw on Tudu in 1888, some twenty years after the establishment of a fishing station there. Two simpler houses were located on the northern end of the island, and a cluster of more recent South-Sea styled houses were situated on the southern end of Tudu. As it was on the northern end of the island that their main settlement had been traditionally located (Haddon 1935), these two houses (see Plate 2) may have been the traditional Tudu houses. There had also been two settlements on Tudu. Although the northern end of the island was occupied by the Crocodile moiety and the southern village of Kabiolag was inhabited by the cult officials of the Hammerhead Shark moiety (Haddon 1904: 268), one would not automatically expect different housing styles to prevail.

Alternatively, the houses on the northern point may well have been constructed by mainland Aboriginal people involved in the fishery, and perhaps the Tudu houses had always been like those they constructed on Yam Island. For example in 1898 Haddon (1888-1929) described the houses some Yam Islanders had made on Tudu as being 'simple' and like the old houses, although in 1888 one of the crew on his boat noticed houses built on stilts on Yam Island (Haddon 1888-1889 in 1888-1929).

Given that housing differed in the Central islands depending on particular ecological conditions, Bligh's description of housing on Dhamudh, an island similar to Tudu, presents us with an interpretive challenge. The dozen or so houses he saw on Dhamudh in 1792 each had a flat roof, and some were joined. 'They were slightly built and covered with mattings or palm thatch' (Bligh quoted in Lee 1920: 181-182). When the naturalist-geologist on board the surveying ship Bramble put ashore at Yam Island in February 1845, he described the houses as having high walls, gabled roofs and constructed of bamboo with grass and leaf thatching. They were about 3 m long and just
under 2 m wide, and they were located in a grove of bamboo and coconut trees near 'some huge blocks of sienite, on which some large shells were arranged' (Jukes 1847a: 156).

According to contemporary Yam Island accounts, the first settlement site on Yam was at Kemud. Very few people had ever lived on Yam (Mr Missa Samuel pers. comm. 1987) and when Haddon visited the island in 1888 (possibly between August and November), he found a mere handful of men and boys living there.

Near the landing we found a wind screen or 'break wind' under which several people-men, women & children were squatting. Most had come on a visiting expedition from [name unclear]. The actual inhabitants had dwindled down to three men & 2 boys only- all the women were dead or [word unclear] on neighbouring islands. The old men were practically sitting still & waiting for themselves to join the majority...As at Nagheed we got 2 men to shoot with the bow and arrow...Then we left the group listlessly sitting behind their break-wind, one mother [?]ling her fat baby ... [and then?] combing the hair of a child- the rest doing nothing and apparently caring for nothing- for food they had a basket of fruits of 2 kinds pawpaw & a purple plum-like fruit which I tasted but did not care much for. They also had some fried fish. Stuck in the ground was a two pronged fishing spear.

(Haddon 1888-1889 in 1888-1929; see also Quiggin 1942: 84)

The statement is intriguing for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Haddon made this visit during the hot, dry time of the year, then the general listlessness and lethargy may be easily accounted for in terms of weather alone. Secondly, were the men as depressed as Haddon indicates, or were they merely expressing indifference toward him? Thirdly, how would Haddon have approached the question of the whereabouts of the women and girls, and how would the questions have been received and interpreted? Why would his asking the question have been perceived as being any different from other
men with very different agendas making similar enquiries?

The essential problem is one of reading between the lines. If there were only this handful of men, were they in fact remnants of a larger population, or were they men who had always lived on and controlled Yam Island (see Haddon 1935: 85), such as the strong men described later in this chapter? If the men lived there with women and girls, were they saying they had died or gone elsewhere as a means of protecting them? And finally, if the men were in fact chronically depressed, then what were the particular sets of circumstances which had produced such a state of being for them?

The issue of where the more sedentary populations were based at different points in time is problematic. According to a Papuan myth from Mawata, people had lived on Yam before living on Tudu because initially Tudu had been too tiny a sandbank to support a population (1935: 308). When Tudu became a reasonable size people began to live there. Another Papuan myth recounted to Landtman at the turn of the century, attributed Naga of Yam with having made Tudu at the request of Wakea from Masingara. After making a garden on Yam, Naga took all his people to Tudu, leaving two men behind on Yam. Periodically Naga and his people went to Yam to garden (Haddon 1935: 406-408).

Yams, bananas and a few other crops were grown on nearby uninhabited islands, and Jukes (1847a: 156, 165) described yams being cultivated on Yam and Dhamudh. Given the nature of tending gardens, it is probable that the Kulkalgal based at Tudu went to Yam for a certain period each year specifically to garden. Apparently, all the stone images associated with ensuring garden fertility were located on Yam Island rather than Tudu (Haddon 1935: 75). I do not have information as to whether there were equivalent images on Gebar, however because of the size of the island and the role it continues to play in Yam Island horticultural endeavours, I would expect that several
PLATE 3. Clam shells placed under *Pandanus* trees as water catchment on Tudu, 1840 (original lithograph by Louis Le Breton; from Dumont D'Urville 1987: facing page 541).
such significant sites and objects were located there.\textsuperscript{5}

Not only did Yam provide garden produce for Tudu people, but it was also their major water supply source, particularly during the Dry season (Mr. Missa Samuel pers. comm. 1987). On Tudu as on other coral cays (see Flinders 1814: 113-114), water was collected in large clam shells strategically placed under Pandanus trees (Plate 3), or from one or two brackish waterholes (Dumont D'Urville 1987: 549; Haddon 1935: 28, 73). To supplement this supply, canoe journeys were regularly made to Yam Island (20 km distant), and water was transported home to Tudu in sealed joints of bamboo, or in coconut shell containers (1935: 75).

At the turn of the century very few families were living permanently on Tudu (Haddon 1935: 75). In the 1870s the Rev. Murray (1876: 452-453) described Tudu as lacking fresh water and supporting only scrubby vegetation. MacGregor maintained that because of sea erosion, the Tudu people eventually moved to Yam, and by implication placed the move at about 1892 (MacGregor Q.S.A. PRE/A530: 9). The Rusia (David) family shifted to Yam first, and then the Kebisu family shifted to be with Kebisu. Kebisu died and was buried on Yam Island about 1885. The village was established at Mabiog Payn (Mabuiag Point) on the north-western point of the island (see Map 6). It would appear that multiple factors influenced the move from Tudu to Yam Island. Yam Islanders attribute the move to a shortage of water, severe depopulation, Kebisu's ailing health, and a perceived curse from the missionary (Mr Missa Samuel pers. comm. 1987; see also Mr Dan Kelly and Mr Mareko Maino to Beckett, pers. comm. 1959; Appendix 7). Kebisu's death and the pressure on Maino from the L.M.S. to adequately provide for a missionary (see Chapter 4) appear to have been the catalysts for the move.

\textsuperscript{5} See this chapter (section 3.4.8) for information relating to the special place Gebar holds for Yam Island people as an explanation for why I have not attempted to elicit such details (see also Appendix 2).
Gebar presumably became the main garden island for Yam Islanders some time after the move of the Kulkalgal from Tudu to Yam Island. Most Gebar people moved to permanent residence on Yam Island during the early 1890s. It had been taken over by Europeans in the marine industries of the late 1860s to 1870s, epidemics had caused serious illness and numerous deaths, and a powerful warrior had killed many of the inhabitants (see Appendices 1 and 2). When Haddon anchored in the lee of Gebar in October 1888, he remarked that all the inhabitants of the island were dead (1888-1889: 63 in 1888-1929; see also Laade 1968: 140). Some people moved to the island from Tudu at the same time that Yam became permanently settled (Mr Dan Kelly to Beckett pers. comm. 1959). By as late as about 1917 or 1918 some people were still living on Gebar, but they had been severely depopulated by dysentery and influenza epidemics (P. Harry snr pers. comm. 1980). After the remaining people moved to Yam Island, Yam Islanders continued to garden on Gebar (see also MacFarlane to Haddon in 1888-1929).

3.4.2. Exchange Networks

Yam-Tudu people played a significant role in inter-island and island-Papuan trade networks (see Map 4), and while they regularly travelled to the Papuan coast, they did not usually sail to the Australian mainland (W. MacFarlane to Haddon in 1888-1929). In March 1893, Sir William MacGregor wrote of the close association between Tudu and Papua New Guinea, and stated that most of the Tudu Islanders' food came from Papua (White 1981). This nicely corroborates contemporary Yam Island observations on the significance of Papuan food: 'We grew on that food' (Mr. Eric Mareko pers. comm. 1982). In his 1911 report, MacGregor spoke of the role played by Tudu people in exchange networks in which goods travelled between Mer, Erub, Tudu and Papua (QSA PRE/A530 1916/ 10468). 6 Included in the Papuan villages connected

6. Lawrence (1989b: 290) argues that island-Papuan trade networks were altered dramatically with the migration of Kiwai speaking Papuans into lowland Papua during the late 1800s; prior to this canoe-shell exchange networks converged at the Fly estuary.
with Tudu were Mawatta, Tureture and Mabaduan (Haddon 1935: 74; Laade 1968: 152, 153; see again Map 4). Maino told MacFarlane (see Appendix 3) that the association between certain Papuan villagers and Tudu began when a Papuan villager travelled to Tudu in a canoe. He was befriended by two brothers, and he had several children with one of their daughters. Eventually, his son from Papua found him on Tudu, and the population grew dramatically. The son returned to Papua and a few days later Tudu canoes followed him there heralding the beginning of the exchange relations.

The largest specimens of cone shell were found on the Warrior Reef and on reefs to the east. Consequently, the finest white shell armlets and circular breast ornaments (dibidib), both important trade items, originated from these two areas in the Torres Strait (Haddon 1904: 294; 1935: 75). Shells, dried fish, turtle meat and other sea products such as turtleshell were taken to Mer from the Central islands of Awridh, Tudu, Yam, Nagi, Masig and Puruma (MacGregor Q.S.A. PRE/A530; Laade 1969: 38-39; Haddon 1912: 139). In June 1844 Jukes noticed many women and men from Tudu, Dhamudh and other islands who had travelled to Erub in several large canoes, and who were living there temporarily (Jukes 1847a: 292-293; Jack 1921a: 181; Sweatman in Allen and Corris 1977: 24).

Turtleshell and wooden masks, in addition to the feathers of the Torres Strait Pigeons and Reef Herons, prized shells and seed rattles were exchanged from Tudu with Yam Islanders and Nagi people. Bamboo grown on the islands of Yam, Nagi and Moa was exchanged in an unworked state, or constructed into bows and then exchanged with other Islanders (Haddon 1890a: 340). Because it was so centrally located, people came to Tudu from both the Eastern and Western groups of islands to trade (Beckett 1978b: 212). Canoes came to Tudu from Mawatta, and from Tudu they were sent along exchange routes to Nagi, Muralag and other islands in the Western Torres Strait (Haddon 1890a: 342; 1935: 65, 350). These canoes were used in inter-island travel, fishing, trading and warfare expeditions (Haddon 1935: 305-307). In 1840 Dumont D'Urville saw about 30
canoes drawn up on the beach at Tudu. Each was carved, and on one canoe, which was over 10m long, an 'old man with a long beard of seaweed' was represented on the prow (Dumont D'Urville 1987: 550; Haddon 1935: 73). In February 1871 Moresby (1876: 29) commented on several large canoes, between 15m and 18m long, drawn up on the beach at Tudu.

Because of Tudu's location and its ownership of several large canoes, the island was able to support a relatively large population (1876: 27), however as already stated it is impossible to estimate population size. Although it was almost waterless, it maintained its position through the advantages of trade and its involvement in endemic warring with the associated taking of heads. Tudu people also commanded fishing, shell-fishing and travel along the extensive Warrior Reefs (Haddon 1935: 75). So impressed was Moresby in 1871 with the tiny size of Tudu and the reputation of its owners, that he referred to Tudu as 'yet the home of one of the most powerful tribes in Torres Straits' (Moresby 1876: 27).

3.4.3. Big Fighting Men

The infamous Kebisu of Tudu and his men were notorious sea raiders and traders, consistently at war or engaged in exchange with other people, and Haddon noted that as all recorded accounts of warfare refer to Tudu and not to Yam, then probably all war parties in fact left from Tudu (Haddon 1935: 75). This is however, an over-simplification as pre-warfare rituals occurred in the kod on Yam, and the Sigay-Mayaw cult on Yam was dedicated to the pursuit of warfare.

While Haddon (1935: 55) states that Yam-Tudu's main enemies were the people of Mabuiag and Erub, and from time to time they raided Awridh (1935: 88), it would be naive to assume that regular shifts in alliances did not occur, not to mention the effects
of different styles of leadership. If this were not the case, how then can we account for
the dozen large canoes from Tudu, Dhamudh and other islands at Erub in June 1845
(Jukes 1847a: 292; Sweatman in Allen and Corris 1977: 24; Jack 1921a: 181)? Haddon's
statement of Tudu feuding with Awridh is similarly problematic, unless it is regarded
as not having constituted the norm over an extended period. Haddon (1935: 85, 88) has
stated that Awridh operated as the centre of trade between the Eastern and Central
islands: in exchange for turtle fat, stone and ochre the Kulkalgal of Awridh obtained
arm-shells from Murray Island people. When the survivors of the shipwrecked
Charles Eaton landed at Masig in 1836, one of the survivors said that the skulls of some
of those shipwrecked with him had been sent to New Guinea, and at Erub it was
claimed that the skulls were preserved on Awridh (Allen and Corris 1977: 16). This
interconnection between the Eastern and Central islands reflects their affiliations
based on their membership in the cults of the brothers Kuka, Malu-Bomai, Seu and
Sigay-Mayaw. Furthermore, these cults may well have been articulated through
Awridh.

Rituals were held before and after warfare expeditions, and the ceremonial eating of
prepared mangrove pods (Bruguiera gymnorhiza) signified the cessation of hostilities
(Haddon 1935: 79, 388). Prior to fighting expeditions, warriors dressed for battle, went
to the kod on Yam to anoint themselves with and dip their arrows in oil contained in a
large clam shell. Another clam shell contained water. Each warrior was required to
split a coconut in half while at the same time intoning serasera bigesera. In so doing
they requested assistance in seeking out the place to where they were going, with the
same ability as a tern (M. Kelly pers. comm. 1982). It was believed that only if a
warrior's coconut split evenly in two would he be successful in the forthcoming battle
(M. Kelly pers. comm. 1982; W. MacFarlane to Haddon in 1888-1929; D. Kelly to
Beckett, pers. comm. 1959). The coconut shell symbolised the human head, and in this
instance the head of an enemy. The coconut flesh was loosened and left in the shell,
and its water placed in a baler shell. The men partook of the water and the coconut.
Tudu men ingested the sweat of powerful warriors and the scrapings of fingernails. The tongue of an enemy warrior was eaten, and prior to embarking on an expedition, they blew through a dried penis in the direction they intended to go (Haddon 1904: 301). Warriors were prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse as a precaution against death or wounding in battle, and Maino explained to Seligman that this was because the bow and arrows of an enemy would smell sex on the warrior, and this would attract the weapons of one's enemies (1904: 271). During the night they danced, and in the morning everyone left the site (Mrs. S. Bann pers. comm. 1986).

Weapons used by the Kulkalgal included powerful bows up to 1.8m in length (e.g. Moresby 1876: 29), three distinct types of arrows, shark-teeth swords, bamboo beheading knives and head carriers, and stone-headed clubs (Haddon 1894: 46-49; 1935: 79-80; 1890a: 340), however by at least 1840, iron had been incorporated into their weaponry (Dumont D'Urville 1987: 549). Currently in the Queensland Museum there are four metal-tipped arrows from Yam Island acquired in 1913 by the teacher Mrs Smallwood (see Haddon 1912: 174, 175; Lawrence 1989b: 425, 644).

Tudu warriors were painted red on their face, torso and upper arms, and the rest of their bodies were painted black (Haddon 1912: 200). According to W. MacFarlane, when a warrior killed his first person in battle he painted his torso with charcoal and his chest red (Haddon 1935: 80). The uniform included a cassowary feather headdress, mai (crescent shell), belt, kadik (arm brace), armlets, anklets, leglets, crossed shoulder-chest belts, and a baler shell groin shield. Each man carried a charm in his mouth, made from a pair of boar's tusks joined at the base and decorated with seeds (Haddon 1904: 329). Inserted at the back of their waist belt were bunches of leaves or cassowary feathers (Haddon 1912: 200). The matted arm case extended from the shoulder to the elbow and from the elbow to the wrist (Tobin in Haddon 1935: 73). These were worn on one arm during battle (1912: 56), and gave the archer protection from the rebounding force of the bowstring. In October 1888 Haddon drew a warrior
(a) Battle head-dress of cassowary feathers worn by Kebisu of Tudu

(b) Maino dressed for a war-dance

PLATE 4. Components of the uniform worn by Tudu warriors (from Haddon 1912: Plates v & vii)
dressed for battle, based on information given him by Maino of Yam-Tudu (Haddon 1912: 359, fig. 202; 1894: 28 fig. 7). During this visit he also acquired Kebisu’s cassowary feather war-headdress and a boar's tusk amulet (see Plate 4). Initially Maino was reluctant to part with them, but he eventually agreed to a deal as long as they were prominently displayed in a large museum. For the headdress Maino received a small mirror, a pocket knife, a blue bead necklace and seven sticks of tobacco. He exchanged the amulet for one pocketknife, two clay pipes and four sticks of tobacco (Haddon 1888-1889 in 1888-1929).

As already stated there had only ever been a tiny number of people living at Yam, and perhaps these people were the fighting men discussed here. All the contemporary references to 'big fighting men', with the exception of Kebisu, deal with men who lived on Yam Island, and the theme of genocide is common to most of the stories.

Meidha

Meidha (Maida) is one of the oldest legendary figures associated with Yam-Tudu. He was a great warrior who launched attacks against the people of Sasi, Warraber, Mukar and Gebar (Haddon 1935: 83, 84; 1904: 100; M. Kelly pers. comm. 1982). According to Papuan legends recorded by Laade (1968: 145, 150), Meidha was the first Yam Islander. He originated from the Binaturi River area, and it was through his travelling to Yam and Tudu that social links were forged between Tudu and Papua.

In October 1928 MacFarlane recorded a story from Maino on Yam Island, which he in turn had heard from his father, Kebisu (W. MacFarlane 1928-1929; see Appendix 3). It concerned Meidha, and the tale explained the close association between particular Papuan villages and the island of Tudu. Meidha was born of a Tudu woman and a Papuan father. In turn he had a daughter (Asigi) by a Tudu woman. Asigi married Yadzebab of Yam Island. Meidha eventually went to Yam Island where he reared his
Meidha is locally perceived to have been exceptionally large and tall: for example, his shin was said to have been the length of a normal man's full leg (M. Kelly pers. comm. 1982). Currently on Yam Island there is some uncertainty as to whether the bones located in an overhang belong to Meidha or to Awsa. Meidha's son-in-law Yadzebab, succeeded him as 'fighting leader' after he died. He was an extremely greedy man and is reputed to have died by choking on a large lump of fat (Appendix 1). Apparently Meidha had expressed anger at his son-in-law having borrowed his turtle spear to take hunting. However, when Yadzebab returned laden with turtle, Meidha prohibited his daughter from telling her husband of his threat. It was after eating the turtle given
him by Yadzebab that Meidha died (Haddon 1904: 100-102).

Yadzebab

Yadzebab or Yaza (Haddon 1935: 83, 84; 1904: 100), is reputed to have killed all the inhabitants of Sasi, at the behest of his father-in-law, Meidha (M. Kelly pers. comm. 1982; Appendix 1), or alternatively to ensure that his wife was kept happy (Haddon 1904: 102, 298; 1935: 83-84) after the death of her father. Yadzebab killed everyone on Mukar and placed their heads on his father-in-law's body. Then he repeated the killings at Sasi and Warraber (see Appendix 1), and during battle Yam Island men called out his name (Haddon 1904: 377). When he died, he was buried near Meidha (1904: 102), and according to the late Mr Maino Kelly (pers. comm. 1982), Yadzebab and his troops are metamorphosed in the stone outcrops at Kama and Badthwan on Yam Island (see Map 2). According to Haddon (1935: 83) the very large bones reputed to be those of Yadzebab were sent to Sydney by a doctor based on Thursday Island.

Kebisu

Kebisu was from Tudu, is believed to have died in 1885 (Haddon 1935: 84), and is buried on Yam Island. He was renowned as an exceptionally strong leader and his fighting ability continues to be legendary across the Torres Strait (see Laade 1968: 149). In 1951, O'Leary wrote of imitations of Kebisu's attacks on ships and islands being performed in dances throughout the islands (1951: 11). He is said to have been so large and strong that it took two or three men to draw the string on his bow (Mr Maino Kelly, pers. comm. 1982; see Appendices 1 and 8). The late Mr Dan Kelly maintained that Kebisu was atypical of Tudu leaders in his aggressiveness (D. Kelly to Beckett pers. comm. 1959). As the people of Tudu and Yam were divided into two moieties, around which the cult
Figure 2 Genealogical diagram illustrating lines of inheritance to the positions of cult officials in the Sigay-Mayaw cult, and in particular Kebisu's clan and moiety membership, and his connection with other Central islands plus Papua.

Isoa (Kebisu) was adopted by Gana who belonged to the same moiety as Kebisu's actual father. Through his actual mother (or through his mother's brothers) Kebisu also inherited the leadership position in the Kodal moiety (after Haddon 1904: 268). Interestingly, Kebisu's children or at least Maino took Kodal and Womer as their totems.

Please Note: It is not absolutely clear whether Irwaw and Amu were brothers or father and son.

Key:  
G = Ger  
K = Kurs  
Ko = Kodal  
W = Womer  
T = Tabu
of Sigay-Mayaw revolved, Kebisu was adopted by Gana (Kurs or Hammerhead Shark) and his wife Gauma (Ger or Sea Snake or eel) as they had no son of the appropriate age to succeed Gana as clan leader, and to become ritual leader of the Kurs moiety in the cult. Before his adoption Kebisu was known as Iosa or Isoa (Haddon 1904: 268). His biological mother was Magina, and her father was one of the cult officials for the Kodal moiety in the Sigay-Mayaw cult. Magina (or Magina's brothers) gave the Kodal-Womer totems to all her children. Because Maid had no children and Guze had a son late in life, by which time Kebisu was an adult, they gave their moiety membership and status as cult officials to their sister's son.

Kebisu's actual father was Gabai, a Kurs man. Thus through his biological and adoptive parents Kebisu was linked to Kodal, Kurs, Ger and Womer clans. His dual and equally strong links to both moieties may have meant a consolidation of his power in the war cult and thus in his community, as well as throughout the region as a whole. As Kebisu's adoptive father died before Kebisu was of age to succeed him, Awani of the Kurs-Waru totems succeeded him. Magina gave Awani a hereditary drum and argued that when Kebisu became an adult he was to be leader (Haddon 1904: 268).

Awasa

Awasa spoke to MacFarlane in 1926, by which time he was estimated to have been about 78 years old (Haddon 1935: 75). He would have been born around 1848 and was therefore a contemporary of Kebisu or possibly younger given that he was a mawa dancer after Kebisu (Haddon 1904: 348). Presumably he was based on Yam Island even though the bulk of the Yam-Tudu people lived at Tudu (see above).

Awasa was a leading Kodal (Crocodile) clan member (W. MacFarlane to Haddon in 1888-1929; Haddon 1935: 75) and was attributed with great power and a propensity to practise malevolent magic. His father Irwaw was also known for his powers of sorcery
PLATE 5. The late Mr Maino Kelly recounting the exploits of the culture hero Awsa, Yam Island, 14 October 1982 (Photograph: M. Fuary).
and he too lived alone (W. MacFarlane to Haddon in 1888-1929). Awsa and Azabu had another brother Guza: all three had different mothers (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929; Haddon 1935: 75).

Figure 3 Limited genealogy showing Awsa's moiety membership, as well as illustrating the patrilineal inheritance of the positions of cult-officials in the Sigay-Mayaw cult (after W. MacFarlane to Haddon in Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959).

Key: Ko = Kodal

If Irwaw was the same man as Iruwa and was the brother of Amu (Kebisu's actual mother's father), then Awsa could well have been Magina's classificatory brother, and therefore Kebisu's maternal uncle. If such were the case, it would help to account for the absence of a major power-play between these two powerful men.

Awsa Ston (on the southern side of Yam Island, on the slope above Ngurnguki) is the
rock shelter in which the fierce Awsa is said to have lived (see Map 2). He also lived at Gawrab and at Paedhelag (or Y-Island) on the northern side of Yam Island. From there he could see toward Tura on the north-east of Yam Island, and if he found anyone there he killed them and put their heads in his cave (Salome Bann pers. comm. 1986).

According to Maino Kelly (pers. comm. 1982), Awsa took over the leadership of Yam Island after Meidha died. However, given that Yadzebab is said to have gone on a killing spree after this event, perhaps Mr Kelly meant Awsa succeeded Yazdebab.

Awsa had three henchmen or ‘runners’: Miak of Gebar, Nani of Yam, and Baluz or ‘Double Zed’ of Yam. All four constantly moved between Yam Island and Gebar and are attributed with having killed most of the people of Gebar (see also Appendix 2). By the time a permanent settlement was established on Yam in the mid-late 1890s, half the island was owned by Baluz (Teske and Lui 1987).

Maino

Maino does not represent a ‘big fighting man’ as such, but is representative of the last of the line of warriors. By the time Maino succeeded his father Kebisu to the position of leadership of Yam-Tudu people, fighting with physical strength against non-allies had been dramatically diminished.

In mid-August 1888, Maino showed Haddon and the Acting Government Resident, Hugh Milman, around the village of Tudu, and organised a dance for them to witness. The following day they gave Maino a tomahawk, 4.5 m of cloth, some tobacco and a few other articles. Maino’s two wives were both from Papua, and he told Haddon he would give two of the items to one of his Papuan mothers-in-law (Haddon 1888: 11 in 1888-1929). His first wife Pawna was from Mawatta, and Amanipa was from the village of Tureture. It appears that he only had children from his marriage to Pawna,
and as they were all girls, he adopted two sons. One of the boys was adopted from Maino's sister, and the other from a Papuan couple.

Figure 4 Genealogy for Maino

Key: G = Ger  K = Kurs  Ko = Kodal  W = Womer  T = Tabu

According to Mr E. Mareko (pers. comm. 1982) and Mr Getano Lui (snr) (see Appendix 8), during the late 19th century Maino was 'bodyguard' to the administrator of British New Guinea, William MacGregor from 1888 to 1898 (Joyce 1971). He later lived at Mawatta until he returned to Tudu with his wife (see Mareko Maino to Beckett pers. comm. 1959). He was the leader responsible for initiating the move of his people from Tudu (in addition to one old man from Mukar) to Yam Island. Maino was born in Daru and died on Yam Island in 1939. On the headstone of his grave in the Yam Island cemetery is engraved 'The Last Warrior'.

Haddon and Maino were introduced in 1888 and Haddon often spoke of Maino as a 'dear friend' (see for example Haddon 1901: 171).
At Tut...Haddon first met Maino, the *mamoose* (chief), who became his devoted friend, and invaluable interpreter of ancient customs.

(Quiggin 1942: 84)

After the Cambridge Anthropological team departed the Torres Strait for Borneo in November 1898, Haddon was not to return to the area until September 1914, when as part of an expedition to Papua New Guinea he unexpectedly had a short stay on Badu, and was able to stop off at Yam before heading for Daru (Haddon 1935: 76; 1904: 28; Quiggin 1942: 108-109). There he quickly recorded two sites which Maino was eager for Haddon to record.

3.4.4. Kin Classification, Clans and Totems

Yam-Tudu people differentiated between cross-cousins and parallel cousins (Rivers in Haddon 1904: 139). Originally Tudu had four clans, but at the turn of the 19th century Haddon and Rivers reported finding five major clans at Yam Island (1904: 171). By the time of Haddon’s research, the clans of the Tiger Shark and Cassowary were extinct on both Yam and Tudu islands (Haddon 1904: 155). The totems were predominantly marine species: Crocodile, Eel, Dugong, Hammerhead Shark, Stingray, Turtle, Frigate Bird, Snake and Dog (1904: 155), and on Gebar the main totems were Dugong, Cassowary and a Ray. Individuals took their primary totems from land animals (including estuarine crocodiles) and their secondary totems from sea creatures (Haddon 1935: 56, 58, 59). On occasion men wore carved wooden effigies of their totems around their neck (Haddon 1894: 22), whereas women had their totems tattooed on their lower back (see Haddon 1912: Pl v, figs. 1 and 4), or engraved into their wooden hair combs (1912: 46, fig. 342).

As in the Western islands, patrimoieties were found among the Kulkalgoal (Beckett 1963: 7). There were two moieties with the major totems of *Kodal* (Crocodile) and *Kurs*
(Hammerhead Shark), respectively, with which all the clans were affiliated. The Baydam people were affiliated with Kodal, and the Sam (Cassowary) and Umay (Dog) clans belonged to Kurs (Haddon 1904: 173). This moiety division was reflected in the division of Tudu into two halves and was particularly emphasised in the Sigay-Mayaw cult in which the totems of Crocodile and Hammerhead Shark were represented (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959; Haddon 1904: 161, 174, 268; 1935: 75, 387, 389). They were two of the seven brothers who during the mythological past had journeyed from the eastern side of Cape York through Central and Eastern Torres Strait: Malo settled at Mer, Seu stayed at Masig, Kulka went to Awridh, Pineca went to Nagi and Diberi continued on to Papua (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959; the late Mrs. S. Bann, pers. comm. 1986; Haddon 1904: 64-66, 373-378; 1935: 391-393).

The Sigay-Mayaw cult was related to the Malo-Bomai cult of Mer, the Kulka cult of Nagi and the Seu cult of Masig, and had its headquarters on Yam Island (Haddon 1904: 374; 1935: 75). Together these cults ‘formed one part of a cultural whole’ (1935: 391), which revolved around warfare (1935: 389, 396), and on Yam the Sigay-Mayaw cult eclipsed earlier ritual practices (Haddon 1935: 75).

The cults of the Brethren came to a people who...had totemism, as in Yam...... The new cult replaced among the Yam-Tutu folk the indefinite communal association of a totem with its clan for a definite personal relation with superhuman beings, thus it is no wonder that it became predominant......The cults of the Brethren everywhere provided a synthesis which...had been lacking. All the men could now meet as members of a common brotherhood, which was impossible under the earlier conditions, and a feeling of solidarity and an intense pride in their new cults was engendered.

(Haddon 1935: 397)

It was on Yam that men were initiated into the hero cult (Haddon 1904: 174; 1935: 394),
although a subsidiary site for Sigay was located on Tudu near the kod and a minor
associated rite was enacted there at the 'navel' of Sigay (1904: 377; 1935: 75, 394).
MacFarlane provided information to Haddon that according to an old man from Masig,
there was also a site for Sigay on Masig, however Haddon concluded the man must
have meant Seu. Nevertheless, it would appear from MacFarlane's original
manuscript, that the man had differentiated between the two (W. MacFarlane to
Haddon 1919-1928, PMB MF 959). Irrespective of whether or not it was a site
associated with Sigay or Seu, it was destroyed by a missionary in the 1870s (Haddon
1935: 92).

3.4.5. Kod and Male Initiation

The sites at which headhunting ritual and male initiation were performed are known
as kod and are characteristically indicated by the presence of numerous trumpet shells
(bu) and clam shells. Such places were traditionally the domain of warriors and as
such were sacrosanct (see Haddon 1904: 365). In his discussion of kod in general, Bani
(1987: 79) has referred to these sites functioning traditionally as the 'nerve centre' or
'administration area' of each community.

The kod on Tudu was located in a clump of trees on the northern end of the island
(Haddon 1935: 27-28), and just prior to the onset of each Wet season, young males were
initiated into their respective exogamous clans (Haddon 1935: 394; 1904: 208-212; see
especially 1904: Pl xiii, fig. 2; and Figure 5 this chapter). As initiates (kergne) they
were each handed over to their respective mother's brother, or to their
brothers-in-law, taken to the kod and kept in seclusion for one month (W. MacFarlane
to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959; Haddon 1904: 208, 210, 376). One old man supervised
the total proceedings. During seclusion they were covered in soot every day so that
their skin paled (Haddon 1904: 209), and they were each covered in a 'mat-tent' made
from strips of pandanus leaf sewn together.
Kodal and Baydam initiates

UMAY X

M

UMAY INITIATED MEN'S MAT

L

M

L

L

KODAL INITIATED MEN'S MAT

L

M

L

L

KURS INITIATED MEN'S MAT

L

M

L

L

X KODAL X BAYDAM

UMAY and Sam initiates

KEY:

OO = two stones: the old chief's seat, and the other the initiates' 'killing stone'

= young men being initiated

X = clan fireplaces, attended by young men already initiated

D = drum

M = crocodile mask

L = leafy masks used during the Death dance

FIGURE 5. Diagram illustrating the spatial arrangement of clans, initiated men, and new initiates during the male initiation rites in the Tudu kod (9 m x 12 m), as they occurred prior to the 1840s (after Haddon 1888-1889: 65 in PMB MP 959; 1904: 208-209; Pl. XIII, fig. 2).
Every day they were kept in the 'sacred spot' on Tudu, and after sunset they were taken to a house made especially for them. At no time during their seclusion were they permitted either to speak or to move excessively (Haddon 1904: 210). Just prior to dawn each day, they were taken back to the spot and given instructions on the moral code of their people (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959). One of the main instructions concerned hunting and fishing, and the initiates' responsibilities for ensuring their relatives were kept in food; namely to work hard at fishing, dugong and turtle hunting, and to garden (1904: 210). Seligman reported that young Tudu males were prohibited from eating the fat of either turtle or dugong until they had earned themselves a place as warriors, by first having killed a man (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959; Haddon 1935: 79).

While carrying out their responsibilities to their sisters' sons, the maternal uncles had to abstain from sex with women. If they failed to observe this restriction, it was believed their charges would fail to thrive from the food that the uncles brought to them (Haddon 1904: 271). At the end of the seclusion period, the initiates' bodies were rubbed with coconut oil, and 'girl-medicine' was placed on each boy's abdomen. They were each adorned with a cassowary feather headdress, a belt and armlets. Their nasal septa had a shell inserted, and in order to make their cheeks bulge, two large shells were placed inside their mouths. In addition, a white clam shell was put in each boy's mouth and held between his lips so that a white, round disc showed (1904: 211). When night fell they were brought home to the village. Their uncles and the young men who had been initiated the previous year held up a large mat behind which they were concealed, and they moved to a cleared area in the village. When the mat was lowered the boys were rushed by their mothers and aunts, who along with the boys' fathers, had not seen them for one month (1904: 210).

The boys quietly sat together in pairs and the father of each placed food in front of his son for the boy's mother's brother (the father's wife's brother). Each initiate remained
with his mother's brother for a further three months, whereupon he returned to the village. Joyous feasting marked his being handed back to his father (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959; Haddon 1904: 211).

One of the more important kod on Yam was located at Kadha (see Map 2) and was enclosed by an 11 m$^2$ low bamboo fence. It was believed to contain the metamorphosed forms of the cult heroes Sigay and Mayaw. Detailed information on the ceremonies which occurred at the kod of Sigay-Mayaw on Yam Island was given to the Rev. W. H. MacFarlane by Maino, and this has been analysed and synthesised by Haddon (1935: 383-397; 1904: 154, 373-377). Two sets of awgadhawgarka, or cult officials, were responsible for the kod at Kadha (see Appendix 6), and they generally inherited their positions through the patriline: Dudigab, Gana, Mokan, Mabua, Zabi and Kagu officiated at the Sigay site and Kausu, Amia, Irwaw, Guza, Azabu, Avisa, Sida, Deri and Yabu all inherited their positions of officiants for Mayaw (MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959; Haddon 1935: 385). Male initiation into the cult, pre-war rituals as well as ceremonial dances were held at the site during every Wet season (Haddon 1904: 376; 1935: 385-386).

'Lodges' of the respective kods of Malo, Sigay-Mayaw, Seu and Kulka were located on a number of Eastern and Central islands, and cult members visited the sites at which the 'lodges' associated with their kod were located. The kod at Kadha on Yam Island was the chief site for the Sigay-Mayaw cult, as was the site on Mer for Malo (Haddon 1935: 386). During the middle of the Dry season, members of the Sigay-Mayaw cult went to Mer to obtain garden foods (1935: 386). While there, a decision was made between men from each of the Eastern and Central islands for the date of staging the annual cult ceremonies which were held simultaneously on all the member islands. The ceremonies were timed to coincide with the rising of the kek star in the south-eastern sky, during the change of tides between the Dry and Wet seasons in
KEY:
### = low bamboo fence with trumpet shells on top of each stake
$\text{aaa}$ = line of trumpet shells
___ = cord with human jaw bones attached
\(O\) = stone in which the life force of the totem resided
E = turtleshell effigy of the totem
\(\infty\) = skull resting on a stone

FIGURE 6. Diagram illustrating the spatial arrangements of Kodal and Kurs moieties, related to the Sigay-Mayaw cult in the Yam Island kod (after Haddon PMB MF 959 1898: 254-256; 1904: 373-378; Pl. xxii).
September (1935: 386). This was also the period when the annual death dances and the wongay increase rites were held (1935: 356).

During the days leading up to the annual ceremony, food supplies were amassed and heads were taken (Haddon 1935: 386). On the evening prior to the ceremony, the men of each moiety slept as a group under the direction of their respective leaders. Visitors from other islands were incorporated into the local clans and moieties. At dawn, the participants were awakened and taken in phalanx to the shrine (see Figure 6). Clan members carrying heads had to move in unison, and if a man strayed he was classified as a stranger, caught and beheaded (1935: 386). The men were required to perform a number of feats: to split bamboo in one strike, to husk a coconut in only three moves and to quickly construct a fence of bamboo around the effigies (see again Figure 6). If a person failed in any of these tasks he was decapitated (Mrs Salome Bann pers. comm. 1987).

A wooden frame (sarokag) was constructed for each of the moieties, and a trumpet shell was placed on each of the five arms of the structure (Haddon 1935: 386-387). The skulls the men had taken in battle were attached to the arms with canoe rope. Each moiety competed against the other, however as Sigay was senior to Mayaw, more heads were 'claimed' by him. Fresh coconut leaves were attached to the poles which were painted with red ochre to symbolise blood. The ochre was obtained from the Kulkalgag of Puruma, Awridh or Masig, who exchanged canoes for it with the eastern Cape York people (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929 PMB MF 959).

The cult officials for Sigay, lifted up the turtle shell effigy, placed it on a bed of stones, and then danced and chanted. A similar ritual followed for Mayaw so that the effigies of both cult figures were brought to life and according to Maino, became the totem (Haddon 1904: 384). The 'spirit' of each of these effigies (1935: 362), a clear stone (buya), was then placed in or under them. Each stone was kept in a case made from
large bivalves (akul), decorated with dog and crocodile teeth. One end could be opened so that the stone reflected its light. Maino, Dhoweta and Billy [Bann?] all maintained they had seen the stones from which an exceptionally radiant light shone (1935: 387).

During the following part of the ceremony, men carrying heads and wearing heron feather headdresses (deri) and fresh coconut leaves danced for Mayaw. At its conclusion most of the men retired some distance away from the site, while the buya were cleaned by the cult officials. When this had been done, they all returned to the village.

The next stage of the ritual involved the participants ceremonially consuming a mixture of mangrove flour and turtle oil prepared by and placed at the site by women. This feast however, took place at a specifically prepared area, out of view from the women and children (Haddon 1935: 388). Only warriors were permitted to partake at this stage, however when they finished it was distributed by three nominated men to everybody on the island. The first men to ingest the flour and oil came from the Mayaw moiety, and they partook by order of seniority and authority. Kebisu as leader of the Mayaw moiety ate first (W. MacFarlane to Haddon 1888-1929; Haddon 1935: 388). During this linear feast, the most senior men exhorted the young men to take many heads in battle, so that the kod would be filled. These senior men each carried a basket containing dried genitalia, tongues and so on, concealed under aromatic grasses. These body parts were mixed with sago and given to the boys to increase their strength. The boys were kept ignorant of what they were eating until they finished, and they were not permitted to eat the mangrove flour and oil unless they had first eaten the sago mix (Maino to W. MacFarlane in Haddon 1935: 388).

Feuds and enmities ceased with the ceremonial eating of the flour, and toward evening.

7. It is not absolutely clear whether these were body parts of enemies, or of kin, although I would favor the argument that they belonged to battle victims.
more rituals were performed after which the lights of Sigay and Mayaw were seen to move all over the island. Just before dawn as the tide ebbed, Sigay and Mayaw were believed to return to Kadhaw (Haddon 1935: 388-389). Later in the morning the cult officials put the effigies back in their appropriate places and scoured the island for any bits and pieces which may have fallen off the effigies during their evening movement through the bush. Food was presented to the effigies, and the remaining food was divided up and shared between the male visitors who had to eat it all in one day.

According to the late Mr Maino Kelly (pers. comm. 1982) it was at Kadhaw that the men affiliated with Mayaw would request (in song) that he whisper his commands within the safety of the room-like kod:

```
kod kod kay kod
Sigay yamuyar Sigay
babad muya dawam
yawa dawi dariwam
```

Such was the power of Sigay and Mayaw that cult officials scrubbed their bodies with sand before they could engage in everyday domestic activity (Haddon 1935: 389). When W. H. MacFarlane spoke to Maino at the turn of the century, the site at Kadhaw was still viewed as extremely powerful. Maino told the story of a Papuan crew member of a cutter who had gone to the kod, picked up a trumpet shell and blown it at the site and again on his boat. This sacreligious action was locally perceived to have been instrumental in the wind changing direction, and to have subsequently caused the destruction of the Papuan's boat as it was blown on shore. Maino also told MacFarlane that should soil from the site be carried in a canoe, the canoe would split and sink (W. MacFarlane to Haddon in 1888-1929; Haddon 1935: 389). Another story concerned a dying Kebisu who sent his son Maino to retrieve the stone associated with the two
effigies. Maino had been told to go alone but he took Awsa with him. Neither man could find the stone and Kebisu was furious when he heard Awsa had gone in company with Maino. He maintained the reason they were unable to locate the stone was because the stone had concealed itself from Awsa (W. MacFarlane to Haddon in 1888-1929; Haddon 1935: 387).

By 1898 all that remained at the site were two mounds of trumpet shells approximately 8 m in length, and a smaller collection of shells (Haddon 1898: 254 in 1888-1929). This same kod was disturbed in 1974 with the construction of an airstrip on Yam Island. While one person maintained that the paraphernalia were destroyed by the early missionaries to Yam, another account is that these materials were locally removed and the shells rearranged around a coconut tree. Such rearrangement of shells and stone also occurs today when people garden in the bush, with the shells and stones serving as boundary markers. As recently as June 1989, Lizzie Lui discovered numerous old trumpet shells, each with a hole drilled in them (Lizzie Lui pers. comm. 1989).

In the 1980s and 1990 the kod associated with these two beings is generally referred to as Satana Pleys - literally, Satan's Place. That is, the area is perceived as being associated with non-Christian activity, and by association is considered dangerous, if not evil. People have lost the means of controlling the power which was associated with this site.

Some time in the recent historical past, a large number of skulls were transferred by Yam Islanders to Awridh as a means of protecting them against fire damage on Tudu. In the 1970s a renowned Anglo-Australian diver found the skulls on Awridh, and the tabloid Australasian Post screamed hysterical headlines to its readers. According to local Yam Island opinion expressed in 1980, the skulls are extremely significant and should not have been touched by the diver, let alone publicised in such an unprofessional, racist manner.
3.4.6. Marriage and Female Initiation

Marriage between the people of Tudu, Nagi and the other small Central Islands was common (Haddon 1894: 13), as was marriage with people from the villages on the southern lowlands of Papua New Guinea (see Appendix 3 and Figures 1, 2 and 4). Polygyny was the ideal marriage form, and the levirate operated with widows usually remarrying their husband's actual or classificatory brother. Sister exchange was also common, in fact according to advice given by Maino to Haddon (1901: 90) it constituted the 'usual method of getting a wife.' On marriage it was customary for the man to live with his wife's family (1901: 90; 1904: 212). In the 1980s and 1990s, the residence ideal is patrivirilocal, however in practice there is much more flexibility which is due to the change in residence rules (see Chapters 4 and 6).

A woman's puberty rite was performed in the Central islands. When a girl first began to menstruate on Yam or Tudu she was termed ngaywaki, and she was taken into seclusion in the bush for one month (Haddon 1904: 202). The onset of the menarche was attributed to the moon (transfigured into a man) having illicit sexual intercourse with the girl as she slept (1904: 232). As an initiate (kemge) her skin was blackened with charcoal and she was dressed in a long skirt. While in seclusion the girl could not be seen by her mother, or by any men. Her mother prepared food for her daughter and her attendant, however the young woman only ate the food cooked in the bush by her carers. During this month of seclusion she was attended by her moway (father's sister) and about six other women known as kidugarka. She was beaten by her aunt from time to time, in order to prepare her for marriage (1904: 202). In addition, the initiation camp was regularly visited by married women from the village who danced the saguley. On their return home, these women could not cohabit with their husbands, although they still fetched water for their men and prepared their food (Haddon 1904: 202, 271).
At the end of her seclusion the girl was ceremonially washed in the sea, and dressed in clothing provided by her father's sister. She wore armlets of fig tree fibre, pandanus cross shoulder-chest straps, necklaces of seed, cowrie shell and dog's teeth, a dibidib (circular shell pendant) and two fibre bands on her legs. Around her waist were fastened four (almost ankle length) skirts each made from a specific plant fibre. A pandanus fringe fell over her forehead and a larger fringe covered the front of her body (1904: 202). Her body was rubbed with coconut oil and blackened. Red ochre was rubbed into her hair, and a plug (gub) was inserted into her nasal septum. As evening fell she was taken to her parent's house by her paternal aunt, where she was welcomed. The girl's father then presented her with clothes and ornaments similar to those she was wearing, and she in turn presented these to her father's sister (1904: 202-203).

Girls being initiated at menarche were forbidden to eat turtle caught during the season of salwal, but only while they were menstruating (Seligman in Haddon 1904: 202). They were also prohibited from eating any turtle meat whatsoever whenever they were pregnant or menstruating. This was the only food tabooed to pregnant women on Yam or Tudu (1904: 196).

It was the norm for a young single woman to initiate a sexual relationship with a man, however this practice was eventually curtailed by the missionaries of the London Missionary Society. If a boy (that is, unmarried male) was agreeable to the overtures, he arranged for his sister to set up a meeting between himself and his admirer. If the two were well matched, the girl eventually proposed. Both then went home and told their respective relatives, whereupon the girl's relatives staged a fight against her boyfriend's relatives. If however a young woman approached a boy when he was still under the charge of his maternal uncle (in the final stages of his initiation), a circlet of string was passed to the girl via the boy's sister, and the parents were informed of the match by the boy's maternal uncle. The young man's kin then sponsored a feast and presented valuables to the young woman's family (Haddon 1904: 212). 'Payment' to the
woman's kin continued throughout her child-bearing and child-rearing years. When she conceived and when she gave birth, her husband sponsored a feast and presented gifts to her family. Then as each of her children passed through significant stages in their life cycle, similar prestations occurred (1904: 232).

Haddon (1904: 196-197) gave some details of the traditions surrounding delivery. When a woman had given birth, the umbilical cord was cut with a bamboo knife, and the stump of the cord was worn around her neck while the child was still in arms. The cord was said to operate as a charm to prevent the child from crying. If the mother of a child died, the woman's sister took care of the child and she wore the charm. The afterbirth was buried where the child was born, and at an older age he or she was taken to see their birthplace. Just prior to the onset of puberty, the young person was shown her or his cord and then helped to bury it as near as possible to where the afterbirth had been buried many years previously (Haddon 1904: 197).

3.4.7. Increase Rites and First Fruits

A range of rituals were performed on Yam and Tudu islands to ensure the regeneration of plant and animal species. All the rituals and sites associated with garden fertility were located on Yam Island (Haddon 1935: 75). A masked dancer performed the mawa to ensure an abundance of wongay (see Chap. 2), and the rite was associated with a stone figure and other objects (1904: 347-349; 1935: 75). The carved pumice figure of Mudu Kurusa was utilised in garden fertility rites (see Haddon 1935 Pl. II fig. 2; 1904: 347), and a bullroarer as well as a wooden tablet with attachments of human bones and cowrie shells were employed to encourage the productivity of yams, sweet potatoes and turtle (Haddon 1904: 347; 1912: 277). When the yams, fruits and sweet potatoes were ready to eat (1904: 346; 1935: 75), a first fruits ceremony, the garig kap, was performed.

A number of objects and practices assisted hunters in their pursuit of turtle and dugong.
Carvings in stone or wood were ritually anointed and/or attached to the bows of canoes as lures for the prey, and through the employment of magic some images were believed to ensure success at fishing and hunting. Haddon (1894: 37; 1904: 333) described a wooden carving of a turtle he obtained on Tudu in 1888, believed to draw the turtle to the bow of the canoe to which it was attached. On Yam Island the large wiway stone was used in a ceremony to attract sucker-fish which were necessary in the hunting of immature turtle (1904: 335, 363; 1912: 162-166; 1935: 153, 353, 360, 362), and a dugong stone was consulted in association with the hunting of dugong. According to an older Yam Island man, a combination of ingredients which included ginger, basil, and lemon grass was blown by mouth onto the stone. It was reputedly stolen in recent generations from Yam Island and taken to the Papuan village of Mabaduan. Interestingly, Haddon (1935: 361; 1894: 38; Album pl. 345 # 1) mentions his having acquired a stone dugong on Tudu in 1888. Other strategies used in the hunting of dugong involved the performance of imitative dances and divination of the skull of a deceased relative (1894: 38; 1904: 333, 335; 1935: 71, 78, 361).

When a man intended to go out in search of dugong or turtle, he prepared his bamboo tobacco pipe, zub, inhaled a big mouthful and puffed it into the mouth of the grinning skull of his father, which was hanging up in the house, and said: 'This my last tobacco now, I give you smoke, you show me where dugong or turtle he stop.' The smoke coming out from the skull whispered 'Wlf, Wlf.' When at sea, the hunter and his friends, with open ears and every sense alert, would presentely hear, a little to one side, a dugong faintly blowing 'Wlf, Wlf.' Thus the father by means of the creature's breath was leading it by sound to the place where the hunters waited.

(W.H. MacFarlane in Haddon 1935: 78)

At the northern end of Tudu was an increase site related to the hunting of dugong (Haddon 1912: 171; 1935: 73). Dumont D'Urville (1987: 550) wrote of a massive, pyramidal arrangement of dugong and turtle bones in basically the same spot, which he
presumed related to the burial of the dead. It is not absolutely clear whether this is the same as the increase site mentioned by Haddon (1912: 171; 1935: 75), given that in his 1935 volume (1935: 74), he interpreted Dumont D'Urville's reference to this 'mausoleum' as possibly representing the graves of notable marine hunters.

We also noticed tombs, over which were heaped pyramids of skulls and bones of dugong........on the northern part of the island we saw a huge quantity of their remains, forming ossuaries intended as decoration for the sepulchres; using the ribs of these animals they had been able to construct walls one to one and a half metres high by nearly two metres thick. The skulls were piled up sometimes into a pyramid; sometimes they were suspended from the surrounding trees with very big shells.

(Dumont D'Urville 1987: 550)

The catching of the first turtle of the season was traditionally surrounded in celebratory ritual, and on the Central islands of Puruma and Tudu a similar practice occurred although different words were uttered (see Haddon 1888-1929). The ritual was still being carried out on Puruma in the late 1920s. Haddon (1935) reconstructed the procedure as follows: the turtle was dragged on to the beach at Tudu and the water from a green coconut was poured onto its body and into its mouth to the accompaniment of women singing:

Muwar malu i a
belonging to deep water
Kagin pudema
the wind is blowing straight home
Muiar malu i a
Zabaim pudema.

(Haddon 1935: 79)

This particular turtle could not be eaten. Its head had to be removed without causing
damage to the windpipe or vertebrae (otherwise all turtle would be forewarned), and its body was fastened to a pole on the beach (1935: 78-79). Another ceremony lasting two months was performed when the first copulating turtles were caught during the season of naygay (see Chapter 2). A huge Tudu man, Muyere, is attributed with having introduced the ceremony throughout the Torres Strait and into some of the lowland villages of Papua (1935: 230-235).

The performance of increase and weather control rituals (see Haddon 1904: 352; 1935: 75, 352), first fruits ceremonies and the divination of skulls belonging to one's close relatives, gave Yam and Tudu people perceived control over the outcomes of a multitude of events in their lives. Because of the articulation of the 'Cults of the Brethren', Yam-Tudu people were affiliated with other Islanders in the region, and as such their perceptions of control would have extended beyond the boundaries of their particular cluster of islands. Through the correct performance of the rituals a degree of certainty over the vicissitudes of life was attained. However, because of the rapid social change associated with colonisation of the region, and in particular the undermining of religious ritual, neither increase stones, moiety sites, nor other shrines on Yam have been used for some time.

3.4.8. Sites, Objects and Associated Stories and Beliefs

A number of important sites and objects were destroyed in the early days of missionary activity in the Torres Strait (Haddon 1901: 143), while yet other objects were eagerly collected by Europeans. Torres Strait material is found both in Australian and overseas museums. Material specifically provenanced to the Central Islands is located in England, Holland, New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland (see Cooper 1989; Moore 1984).

Nevertheless, on all the Central islands there are still a number of significant places
and artefacts. Some have been carefully looked after, while others have been ignored, neglected or in extreme cases destroyed. For example, objects on Tudu and Yam associated with the Western islands culture hero Kuyam were destroyed by a missionary-teacher (see Haddon 1901: 142-143). While the beliefs about these objects or sites have not been totally lost, often people’s means and support by which to cope with their full meaning and potential power have been diminished. In cases in which there is a stark contrast or conflict with Christianity, the site or object may have been destroyed, or through fear of the site or object, people avoid it.

The contemporary sites of significance on Yam (and other component islands) are associated with burial, head-hunting ritual (kod), increase and malevolent magic (zogo), clan business (awgadh), the arrangement of human remains under overhangs or within caves (sakay), and culture heroes. Almost all the sites are delineated by an arrangement of shell, stone and bone, and the objects are usually carved in pumice, or made of stone and wood as in the case of clubs. Although the rituals associated with some of these are no longer practised, a generalised belief in their efficacy and power still exists. Many are still treated with respect, and while some of them may be openly discussed, visited or even joked about, others are deliberately avoided. The education of younger Yam Island people by the older generation about the cultural significance of these places and associated culture heroes is an on-going process. The stories and the sites provide Yam Island people with a vital link between their past and their present.

Particular sites and objects left behind by culture heroes, in addition to those associated with dogay, are discussed in veiled terms. Some sites may be safely visited, but only by visitors adhering to specific behavioural prescriptions. Burials associated with the distant past (bipo taym), which are located under overhangs, are treated with respect and not disturbed. In the 1920s or 1930s an Anglo-Australian teacher resident on Yam Island urged a young man to remove the bones of the culture hero Awsa from an
overhang and bring them to him. When Maino heard of their removal he was furious and severely reprimanded the teacher. He argued that they were the strength of Yam Island, and that their removal was equivalent to removing Yam Islanders' sustenance. The bones were returned to their proper place, and that evening the young man dreamt of a huge man dressed in a fibre skirt coming to get him (Mr. Missa Samuel pers. comm. 1987).

Culture Heroes

Throughout the Torres Strait there are a multitude of sites of significance associated with the feats of major legendary culture heroes. In Beckett's (1983: 203) words, such places are the 'scenes of mythological and legendary events', and in the majority of cases these sites are represented by natural physical formations and/or artefacts. It was through the actions of legendary characters that the landscape was transformed (but not necessarily created), and humanised, and specific social rules were established. Central to Torres Strait Islander cosmologies 8 were explanations for the order of things, both in terms of social relationships and their familiar physical universe. In 1888 Maino showed Haddon some 'sacred stones' on Tudu and a 'sacred spot' associated with the ultimate warrior Singi, who travelled as far north-east as the Port Moresby area (Haddon 1888-1929). On Yam Island itself some of these culture hero sites or story places are Awsa Ston, Sidhansan, Weyngaban, Awgadhawpudhayzinga, the well at Dhamu and the stones at Kanakan (refer to Map 2).

8. Beckett (1983: 203) is mistaken in his claim that Torres Strait Islanders had no cosmology, which he bases on the argument that they did not have a clearly articulated philosophy concerning the ultimate origins of the world and life. It is common for anthropologists to collapse the two concepts of cosmology and cosmogony, either as a means of using the term 'cosmology' as a gloss for many things including world view, or because in many cases it is theoretically impossible to draw a clear line between cosmology and cosmogony (Maddock 1989: 151-152). Cosmology is a belief system in which people and things are located in relation to the social, natural and supernatural environments (Maddock 1989: 152). Clearly Torres Strait Islanders had their own respective cosmologies.
Sigay and Mayaw

The slabs of stone at Kanakan (or 'Table Stone') are marked with circular depressions and long deep grooves. Maino showed the site to Haddon and his daughter in September 1914 (see Haddon 1935: Pl. I, figs. 1 and 2; Pl. II, fig. 1), and current oral history associates this place with the journey of Sigay and Mayaw from Weyngaban to Kadhaw, and their having feasted at this 'table' of stone (see Map 2; Appendix 4). Presumably, however, stone axe heads for clubs were sharpened and rounded at this place (Haddon 1935: 302), and the manufacture of stone headed clubs may well have contributed to the 'superiority of the Yam-Tutu warriors over those of other islands' (1935: 76). There is also a suggestion that rain making rituals were performed at this site (Teske and Lui 1987).

Awgadhawpudayzinga (see Map 2), near Zagwan indicates the place at which Sigay and Mayaw came ashore on Yam Island. They then made their way from the lagoon of Weyngaban through the mangroves to Kanakan, by gliding in their canoe on a finely woven mat. Lines of stone mark the journey (Appendix 4).

Mokan

The well at Dhamu is a story place associated with the toad fish (mokan) and the Torres Strait Pigeon (geynaw). A version of the story associated with this well, as recounted in 1966 by Assaw Thaiday (nee Bann), may be found in Lawrie (1970: 251-252; see also Appendix 5). Haddon (1935: 75) classified Mokan as one of the awgadhawgarka (leading clansman of the Hammerhead Shark moiety), and presented the following limited genealogical material. According to Mrs. S. Bann (pers. comm. 1986), he was the crew member on Sigay's canoe. Sigay and Mayaw attempted to sink into the ground here, before they tried later at Gabun and finally succeeded at Kadhaw (see Map 2).
In 1980 a Yam Island man commented on the well at Dhamu being a 'story place'. He said that it had never before run dry, until in recent years when a government-funded water team removed a special stone from the well and cemented an area inside the well. The removal of the stone, central to the story of the well, was regarded as being the cause of subsequent problems with the well no longer being as effective. Through this action the associated 'story' had been damaged, and as such the well was no longer as productive as it had been. When Tudu people obtained their water from here, they poured water over the stone to ensure its continued productivity (Teske and Lui 1987).

Sidha

Sidhansan, near Tura on the north-eastern side of Yam Island (see Map 2), marks the place where the legendary Sidha of Papua is said to have stood as he looked out over the Central islands and then stepped over to Darnley (Mrs. L. Samuel pers. comm. 1980; Teske & Lui 1987), leaving a huge footprint in stone. He is attributed with having introduced different subsistence strategies to the islands of Boigu, Saibai, Dauan,

9. In 1933 Con O'Leary mentioned his department cementing the main water supply well on Yam (Reports upon the Operations of Certain Sub-Departments of the Home Secretary's Department. Aboriginal's Department-Information contained in the Report for the Year ended 31st December, 1935 : 18). This may refer to an earlier cementing of the well at Dhamu.
Gebar, Yam, Masig, Dhamudh, Erub and Mer (Haddon 1904: 28-29, 31-32). Skeletal remains in one of the rock shelters at Gawrab (1904: 32; 1935: 77) are reputed to belong to him.

**Mudu Kurusa**

In September 1914 Maino showed Haddon and his daughter a place in the bush at which Mudu Kurusa was represented in a stone carving (1904: 28, 32, 347). She was the woman Yam Island people gave as a wife to Sidha, and her role was to take care of the gardens and ensure good crops (see also Haddon 1935: Pl. II, fig. 2).

**Aka Uzu**

Gebar is an important story place for Yam Island people. It is believed to be the domain of a malevolent female being or dogay, personally referred to as Aka Uzu, who it is said at one stage desired Baluz of Yam Island, and at yet another time is reputed to have detained a shipwrecked Malay on the island for one month (1904: 354; 1935: 76). Her lair is at Bogan Kulap, demarcated by an arrangement of skulls, which is neither generally approached nor disturbed. When Yam Island people go to Gebar they treat the place with the utmost respect. On landing, an older person is supposed to speak language to the dogay, letting her know for what reason they have come to the island. Another prescription is that visitors not complain about the island. For example, if the fish are not biting, one should not complain; if it is difficult to walk through the bush, one should not comment that it is too overgrown. To speak in such a way is said to raise the ire of the dogay, who has the capacity to influence environmental conditions to such an extent that disrespectful or complaining visitors will become lost and disoriented (the late Mrs Dorothy Baluz pers. comm. 1980).

The dogay is said to find Europeans and Japanese particularly distasteful, and there
are numerous accounts of her tricking strangers, by stealing items of their clothing, or by sending sandflies to prevent them from sleeping (see Appendix 2). The telling of these tales not only serves to reinforce the necessity for Yam Island people to behave appropriately on Gebar, but it also serves to highlight the dangers associated with ignorance of the social significance of the island. In another very fundamental way, these tales about the misfortunes which befall ignorant government officials, 'yachties', researchers and others, serve as a type of cultural capital for Yam Island people. Thus, when such people consistently fail either to recognise Yam Islanders' customary ownership of the island, or neglect to obtain the appropriate clearance from the traditional owners to visit and/or conduct research, the customary owners may achieve a sense of satisfaction that the outsiders have received their just rewards for attempting to operate outside local cultural conventions.

Zogo (Increase Sites)

The term zogo is a gloss used to refer to magic or to increase or fertility sites and objects. More correctly adiyu refers to the place at which such magic was practised. Often the objects may represent clan totems or awgadh. One increase object on Yam Island, a large-eyed, blackened stone carving, sits under a wongay tree at Kai Mud near Tura. In front of the figure is a baler shell in which the first fruits of the wongay were previously placed. To one side is a large cluster of trumpet shells. One round stone, some small clam shells, an assortment of spider shells (ithay), very old coconut shell and a lot of aged, very heavy bone material (possibly dugong) lie nearby. This may indeed be the increase site described by Haddon (1904: 347-348, 363). It is currently said by older people on the island that traditionally first fruits and fish were placed in the figure's outstretched hands, as a means of ensuring a good harvest or catch. According to a senior Yam Island woman (Mrs Luisa Samuel, pers. comm. 1982), during the 1920s and 1930s she and her little friends used to play at honouring this zogo. Interestingly, in
1898 Haddon (1898 : 257 in 1888-1929) reported visiting a site comprised of two small heaps of reddened shells, on Yam Island at which small boys played at awgadh or clan business.

Another similar carving is a representation of a clan totem (awgadh). It is a dark reddish stone, which previously sat on some stones under a coconut tree. There was then an arrangement of clam shells, trumpet shells and other items encircling it. All that remained to be seen in 1982 was the carved stone torso of a woman, referred to as Methana. Methana was killed by the legendary Sigay as she sat making a mat. One man informed me that she was brought to Yam from Tudu, and that she is a dog; hence the place name Umaylag (umay = dog, lag = place) where she sat. Many years ago water used to be placed in the clam shell and food was offered, before requests were made of her. At Mangulag (literally the 'place of Ma') there was a stone image of the totem Goze, brought to Yam Island from Tudu (Mr. Missa Samuel pers. comm.).

Gabagab

There are a couple of stone-headed clubs, gabagab, still held on Yam Island. One of these, a star headed club originally belonging to Awda and then passed on to and used by Sibara, is hidden, treated with reserved respect and handled with caution. Maino explained to Haddon (1935: 79) that Kebisu, Yadzebab and Meidha all fought with a four-rayed stone club.

The other club, reputed to have belonged to Kebisu, is readily handled by those having an interest in and family connection to it. It has a stone disc head and light wooden

10. An alternative belief concerning this same club is that it belonged to Meidha who sent his father-in-law Yaza (Yadzebab) to Sasi to kill everyone (M. Kelly pers. comm. 1982; see also Appendix 1).
handle. This club is frequently shown to visitors and the family to whom it belongs view the club as exciting, tangible evidence of their roots and history. A photograph of Maino of Tudu dressed for a war dance (see Plate 6) and carrying a similar club appears in Haddon (1912: Pl v; see also his pp. 35, 52, 55, 56, 59).

3.5. Conclusions

Life changed dramatically for Torres Strait Islanders with the appearance of Europeans in their waters and on their islands. By the time such a strong man as Awsa was born, iron was already known and in demand in the Torres Strait. In the stories I recorded concerning Awsa, iron always featured as a significant element in his weapons (see Appendix 1). Because of the strength and sharpening properties of iron, there may well have been an intensification of exchange (Salisbury 1962) and of warfare which was associated with its acquisition. Iron could be sharpened and used in subsistence activities related to hunting, fishing and gardening, and could also be used to modify old weapons. For instance, Dumont D'Urville (1987: 549) mentioned sharpened iron barbs and axes being used on Tudu in 1840.

Increasingly Islanders also gained access to firearms, and there are documented instances of these arms being used against other Islanders in warfare, as in the case of the Kulkalgal of Puruma using guns in defence against Kebisu in 1872 (Q.S.A. CPS 13C/G1), of having shot old men, women and children on Dugong Islet (some 43km north-east of Somerset), and of being accused of causing a fight at Darnley in which a woman was killed (Q.S.A. CPS 13C/G1).

During the first few decades of intensive contact with outsiders, traditional power bases were dramatically altered, particularly in terms of whether leaders were able to tap into the sources of power held by the new invaders and thus gain access to their
very powerful weapons. No doubt the strength of Kebisu at this time was increased because of the alliance he struck with Eed of Mer during the late 18th or early 19th century, but he was also pragmatic enough to have requested a missionary on his island. While he may have enjoyed both a proliferation and consolidation of power and authority in the mid-1800s with access to iron, increased feuding advantage, and therefore the means by which to control trading relations throughout the region (hence his reputation as fierce and indomitable by the 1860s), Kebisu and his warriors were ultimately no match for the wave of invasion spearheaded by the establishment of the shelling station on his island in 1869.

Later, such a Yam Island leader as Maino adjusted to the altered political climate when the locus of political power and authority shifted even more from the possession of physical strength (might) to the ability to tap into the supernatural realm (religion) of the next wave of invaders, viz. the missionaries and government officials. Even though Kebisu had realised the need to have a missionary on Tudu, Maino clearly adopted strategies to firmly align himself with the invaders and to tap into their sources of power. The arrival of the Christian missionaries and the implementation of the 'Pax Australiana' heralded an end to feuding and undermined the cults (Beckett 1987b: 31). Very early in his career Maino aligned himself with the pearlsheller Capt. Banner and then with Sir William MacGregor, Administrator of British New Guinea. He was instrumental in establishing a permanent population centre on Yam Island. His traditional power base was further reinforced and validated through his alliances and liaison with powerful entrepreneurs, 11 missionaries and government officials.

11. According to Mrs Frances Banner (the great-great-granddaughter of William Banner), Maino avenged the killing of Banner, and some years later he interred Banner's bones with his own father, Kebisu, on Stephen Island. As Kebisu is locally believed to be buried on Yam (see photograph in Teske and Lui 1987: 43; see also Appendices 7 and 8), Frances Banner must be mistaken on this point (Torres News 4/11/1988). Furthermore, it would not make sense for Kebisu to be buried on Stephen Island.
Contemporary Yam Islander perspectives and reflections on *bipo taym* typically focus on the actions of such key local men, and the power which they managed and exerted through correct ritual performance and warfare. As Yam Islanders have become increasingly incorporated into a different economic and moral order, sites of significance have become sufficiently dislocated in both practice and in meaning from the contemporary religious and economic bases, that they now operate as signifiers of the past.

In this chapter I have attempted to reconcile contemporary Yam Islander reflections on the distant past, that time at which British colonialism was just beginning to have an effect, with records about Yam-Tudu society on the proto-colonial frontiers. Because the latter are so diverse and scattered, as much detailed description as possible has been included in order to bring this material on to the stage as it were, for Yam Island people to more readily gaze upon it.