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PART A: WRITTEN RECORDS & ORAL TRADITIONS

CHAPTER 2

TRADITIONAL MUA

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This paper synthesises the existing historical evidence to provide an overview of the traditional people of Mua – their origins, population, social and totemic clan organisation, major settlements, daily activities, collective psychology and relations with their neighbours – in the hope that such a synthesis will be useful for the people of Mua and possibly serve as a basis for future ethnographic and archaeological research. □ *Torres Strait, Italgai, Mualgal, Torres Strait history, Mua (Banks Island)*.

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The traditional people of Mua (Banks Island), although their precise origins are uncertain, belonged to the Western Island group by reason of their language, totemic clan and kinship systems, core social values, cultural response to the environment, ritual and mythology. They were semi-sedentary fisherpeople and gardeners, connected with neighbouring islands through marriage, ceremony, warfare and myth, and as participants in complex networks of exchange.

Johannes & MacFarlane (1991: 180) doubted the history of the Mualgal could ever be satisfactorily reconstructed. Despite its size, there is a dearth of ethnographic documentation about the social organisation, pre-Christian beliefs and daily lives of the Mualgal before they entered the European colonial orbit – and comparatively little since. Mua's surrounding waters were not surveyed by 19th century naval vessels and there is no record of visits made by British or French sailors. The most valuable observations were made by Barbara Thompson, who lived for five years with the neighbouring Kaurareg; these were recorded by Brierly and MacGillivray of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* in 1849 (MacGillivray, 1852; Moore, 1978).¹ Glimpses of life on Mua before the arrival of the first Christian missionaries can also be found in Chester (1871), Dumont D'Urville (1870), Gill (1876) and Jardine (1866) but the richest source of ethnological data comes from incidental detail in traditional stories collected by the 1898 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits (Haddon, 1904a) and later by Lawrence (1994), Lawrie (1970), Ohshima

(1983) and Teske (1991). A.C. Haddon, leader of the expedition, considered that these stories could be viewed as 'trustworthy ethnographical documents,' subject always to careful analysis (Haddon, 1908: 1).

This chapter attempts to synthesise the above material in order to provide a broad overview of the traditional people of Mua – their origins, population, social and clan organisation, major settlements, daily activities, collective psychology and relations with their neighbours – in the hope that such a synthesis will be useful for the people of Mua and possibly serve as a basis for future ethnographic and archaeological research. (see fig. 2 in Manas et al. 'Introduction to Gelam's Homeland' chapter 1, this volume for a map of Mua).

MUA AS A TYPICAL WESTERN ISLAND

Geophysically and socially, Mua appears to have been a typical western Torres Strait island, part of the land bridge which once linked the two mainlands of New Guinea and Australia. Like its neighbours, it has relatively infertile soil, granite ridges, sparse vegetation, swamps and mangrove growth. Mua is dominated by Baudhar (Mt Augustus), the highest point in Torres Strait. The Pacific Islanders called it 'Mua Peak' which in their pidgin sounded like 'more pigs' and they would joke about the aptness of the name at a time when wild pigs roamed its flanks. Kek, the Yam Star, 'rises at daybreak at the

beginning of the south-east season immediately over the hill called Baudar in Moa. It disappears at daybreak in the middle of the north-west monsoon' (Haddon et al., 1912: 223).

From Haddon's classification of the Mualgal with the Kaurareg, we may deduce that Mualgal and Kaurareg society and culture were similar, if not largely identical. They shared language, stories, clans and general lifeways, they traded and intermarried. Thus, despite the dearth of published information, the researcher can nevertheless attempt to reconstruct traditional Mua immediately prior to colonisation by drawing on similarities to other Western Islanders with whom the Mualgal had connections. How closely that reconstruction resembles pre-contact Mua can only be speculative.

ORIGINS OF THE MUAN PEOPLE

Ethnologically, Haddon (1935: 64-65) considered the Muans to be a sub-group of the Kaurareg from the south-west islands, being closely allied through trade and marriage. Mua, he writes, was 'the most northerly of that group of islands which the [Kaurareg] inhabit' (Haddon, 1935: 64). This judgment was based on a close reading of the historical and ethnographic evidence, including the 1849 observations of Barbara Thompson. Moore (1978: 311-312) concurred, noting that the Kaurareg 'definitely considered themselves to be of the same stock and culture' as the people from Mua and the Central Islands, but, at least by the mid-19th century, 'a group distinct and separate from all others.'

One view, based on social anthropological research by Landtman (1917, 1927), Laade (1968) and Lawrence (1994), is that the Hiamu people were ancestors of the Kaurareg. Originally from Iama (Turtlebacked Island), they were the first settlers on Daru after it emerged from the silt of the Fly River but were driven from Daru to the southern islands of Torres Strait. According to Revd Seriba Sagigi of Mabayag, there were people living on Mua at the time of the original Hiamu southern migrations from New Guinea, possibly in the late 1700s. He told Laade (1968: 149-152) that 'Polynesian' (i.e., lighter-skinned) men came to New Guinea's southern coasts, married and settled there.² Some went to Mabayag and took wives from Mua, as well as from the central and top Western Islands. Jimmy Luffman told Laade (1968: 147-148) that one of those six light-skinned men was Wanaia, whose two Muan wives, Amegu and Gamadh, 'brought black skin

to Mabayag.'³ However, recent archaeological research on Mua indicates that people were living in the village of Totalai from sometime between 1500-1300 to about 1000 years ago (Ash & David, chapter 10, this volume), indicating that the oral traditions of Hiamu ancestry probably relate to subsequent migrations.

According to Barbara Thompson, there were two 'tribes' dwelling on Mua in the 1840s, the Mualgal proper (hill people from the eastern side) and the Mua-it or Italgal (rock oyster or coastal people from the western side), whose name derives from *it* (rock oyster) (Moore, 1978: 211). The Italgal-Mualgal distinction was made by their neighbours: the Kaurareg were allies and friends of the Italgal but enemies of the Mualgal (Moore, 1978: 174, 211). There is a possible discrepancy, however, between two of Brierly's notes: in one the Kaurareg are said to have been most intimately connected with the Italgal; in another they are said to prefer the Mualgal to the Italgal (Moore, 1978: 301, 211).⁴ All of these peoples spoke the same language, but the Italgal had 'more of a list off the tongue,' which I assume means that the differences were slight and purely phonetic. Thompson's comments about the people of Mua appear to be almost entirely limited to the Italgal, whom she observed at first hand.

How different the two Muan 'tribes' really were, whether the Italgal/Mualgal difference was a moiety distinction, or their names were merely reference terms derived from their separate residence patterns, or whether they were originally different peoples, is unlikely ever to be known. We can only speculate as to whether all the Muans and Kaurareg had common ancestors who moved to Mua and became differentiated from the Kaurareg over an extended period of time; or whether the Italgal were originally Kaurareg and invaded a Mualgal population, who fled to the interior, and the intertwined history of marriage, exchange and alliances between the Muans and Kaurareg elided earlier differences between the two people. There is a tantalising hint in a story told by Haddon (1935: 60-61), following Landtman (1917: 159), which relates how Sesere from Mabayag killed all the warriors of Mabayag, Badu and Mua, leaving only the old men, young boys and women. The men from It, identified by Landtman as Green Island (Ilap or Ilapnab),⁵ then migrated to those islands, taking the women as wives. However, given the long history of Melanesian presence in the Strait, the Muans of today almost certainly also have

ancestors of Melanesian marine specialists from the north who came to Mua during a period of time too remote to have been recorded by oral tradition.

APPEARANCE AND HEALTH

Although almost nothing has been recorded directly about the appearance, demeanour and dress of the pre-contact Muans, we may assume that they generally resembled their closest neighbours. Brierly observed that the Kaurareg men went naked, except for a belt, whereas women dressed in a knee-length *zazi* (leaf petticoat), which covered their thighs and which they removed during the mourning period. The *zazi* could be made from teased banana-trunk fibre or grass (Lawrie, 1970: 27). The men wore their hair long and this was greatly admired, whereas the women wore their hair closely cropped. Gazimali, an Italgal woman of the 1840s, possibly one of Wanaia's daughters, was said to be lighter-skinned than the Kaurareg (Moore, 1978: 121, 171) but this was exceptional. Indeed, if all the Muans were noticeably lighter-skinned than their neighbours, this would undoubtedly have been noted by Europeans, given the ideological freight borne by gradations of skin colour at the time; moreover, in another account the Muan wives of Wanaia are said to have brought black skin to Mabuyag.

Brierly's observations were echoed by Captain Denham of H.M.S. *Herald* who spent a week at the end of September 1860 anchored off Kirriiri (Hammond Island), trading with the Kaurareg. He describes the men as having 'good proportions and an average stature, of five-feet nine [175cm]' and a 'well formed head with an agreeable intelligent face.' They wore a 'skewer' through their septum and 'plugs of wood' through their ear lobes. Their hair was 'coaxed into ringlets' and they were 'remarkably cheerful,' despite what Denham, in the language of the time, called their 'primitiveness and destitute condition' (David, 1995: 410-411).

Revd J.J.E. Done, who arrived in Torres Strait in 1915, makes special and uncharacteristic mention of a physical trait linking Muans with their Goemulgal neighbours:

The people of Moa, Badu and to some extent Mabuiag appear somewhat akin to the mainlander, but their large mouths with thick protruding under lips are specially theirs, not being seen to anything like the same extent elsewhere in the Strait. As a comment on this peculiarity, it might be mentioned that a deaf and dumb man on Saibai, who converses only by

signs and refers to people by some characteristic through his lack of speech, invariably indicates a Moa, Badu or Mabuiag man by pulling out his lower lip with his fingers (Done, 1987: 35).

The cultural practice throughout the strait of rearing only the strongest children meant that the youthful population was generally healthy. However, the Islanders suffered from endemic illnesses, generally supposed to be the result of sorcery. Early visitors to the Western Islands found the people suffering from 'catarrh, cough, weak eyes, consumption or some form of lung disease, elephantiasis, boils, ulcerated sores' and malaria (Haddon, 1890a: 306-307).

Boils on various parts of the body, even on the head, are prevalent, especially during the rainy season, when the food is of a poorer description than at other times. Children are most subject to them, and I have more than once seen them so covered with offensive sores as to be rendered most disgusting objects (MacGillivray, 1852, II: 31).

Pain and heat were relieved by cutting the skin with a sharp instrument in order to draw pain; other ailments were treated with a variety of plant remedies. Cures for illnesses believed to be caused by sorcery were effected through the intervention of magic men and their incantations.

BANDS, CLANS AND MOIETIES

Muan society appears to have been organised on the basis of extended family groups. These were grouped together in hereditary totemic clans, which were then further grouped into two moieties.

BANDS. The Muans lived in semi-sedentary bands (extended family groups) of around 25 people, headed by men with their single or several wives, children and dependent kinfolk, generally with other clan members close by. The bands resided in many small settlements but, we are told, 'the people did not live in them all the time' and many of the names are now forgotten. These villages were located on territory recognised as belonging to a particular patrilineal totemic clan and the clans themselves were grouped into two divisions or moieties. Whereas certain men and women lived apart for at least part of the year, such as the celebrated sorcerer Apus at Damu Pad, or Im, who lived by himself between Baua and Totalai, or the old blind woman, Raramai, at Palga, or Yellub from Palga who ate all day but never shared his food, or the particularly

unsociable Wami on Mua Pad (Mua Peak or Mt Augustus), this was not the norm. It was virtually impossible for women to live alone without the protection afforded by an extended family or larger kin group (Lawrie, 1970: 29, 33, 41, 42).

Like their neighbours the people of Mua depended on seasonal gathering and horticulture, hunting and fishing.⁶ Sometimes they abandoned their homes ‘for weeks on end – when, for example, they went to their garden lands, or hunted, or, perhaps, merely wanted a change of scene’ (Lawrie, 1970: 41). In what seems to have been part of the routine of life, the village of Gisan was entirely deserted after everyone went as a group to their gardens near Narasaldan; but the decision to go was not announced in advance. Probably the old men tasked with watching the heavens for propitious signs announced that, according to the stellar calendar, the time for

gardening had come and everyone joined the exodus. They returned after completing their work (Lawrie, 1970: 44). A man who watched for nature’s signs was called a *zugubaumæbaig* (star gazer); one of them, Wasaga Billy, who was taught by his Kaurareg father how to observe the weather, stars and tides, passed his knowledge on to his kinsmen on Mua (see Manas et al. ‘An interview with Fr John Manas’ chapter 7, this volume). Intermarriage with the Kaurareg meant that some families tended gardens on both Mua and Muralag (Prince of Wales Island) and Thompson told Brierly that in such cases ‘it was usually necessary to look after both the wife’s and the husband’s land, which would probably be in different places’ (Moore, 1978: 264). This was also true for Mabuyag and Badu: Iwau of Mabuyag, for example, held land at Mua, which his son, Tom Nabua, had handed over to a male cousin to keep for him (Wilkin, 1904a: 290).



FIG. 1. Possibly a type of ‘totem pole’ from traditional times, a triangle with a dancing headdress, pairs of hands reaching upwards and a dancing *kulap* fixed at four points. The pole is decorated with grass or stripped coconut, c.1921. Source: Revd J.W. Schomberg’s photograph collection in author’s possession.

CLANS. The *buwai* (totemic clan) is the major social unit of both Torres Strait and southwest Papua and means ‘a group of people joined by a common (abstract) bond,’ which includes totemic descent (Eseli, 1998: 14). The totem (*augadh*) or ‘kindred spirit’ (Gela, 1993: 75) is a creature or feature of the surrounding natural world: fish, animals and birds, stars, constellations, winds, plants or rocks, with which the clan members have a special relationship and for which they hold a duty of care (see also Fig. 1).⁷ Members of a clan could not fight one another, nor generally could they intermarry (Haddon & Wilkin, 1904: 302). Mua’s clans were essentially those found throughout the Western Islands. The older people remember the clans but their recollections (insofar as they were recorded by visiting scholars) do not always fully coincide. The earliest investigation was carried out by Haddon and Rivers (1904: 155), who list ten Muan totems – Baidham (Shark), Dhangal (Dugong), Kaigas (Shovel-nosed Ray), Koedal (Crocodile), Kursi (Hammerhead Shark), Tabu (Snake), Thupimul (Stingray), Umai (Dog), Kula (Stone) and Tolupai (a species of Ray) – but thought that the majority of the Kaurareg clans also occurred on Mua. If so, the list would also include Gapu (Suckerfish), Sem (Cassowary), Waru (Green Turtle), Wadh (Blenny) and Ger (Sea Snake).

The team of Japanese social geographers led by Joji Ohshima (1983), who visited Mua in the 1970s, were told that the north-west section, which included the villages of Dabu and Gerain, belonged to the Koedal (Crocodile) clan; further east was the village of Bulbul, home to Usar

and her son, Gelam.⁸ The south-west village was located on Kursi (Hammerhead Shark) clan land; and to the south lay Kaigas (Shovel-nosed Ray) territory and the village of Iki(s). The western village of Adam was located on Thupimul (Stingray) land (Ohshima, 1983: 338-339).

In June 1972 Margaret Lawrie discussed clan organisation with Kubin elders, including Fr Inagie Manas. According to her notes, the four clans (*buwai*) which dominated the island were Tabu (Snake) clan – mentioned by Haddon but not Ohshima – with headquarters at It (southeast); Kursi (Hammerhead Shark) clan with headquarters at Sigan (northeast); Koedal (Crocodile) clan with headquarters at Arkai but with Iki(s) as another centre (southwest); and Dhangal (Dugong) clan with headquarters at Gerain and Totalai (northwest). Lawrie does not mention Kaigas, which both Haddon and Ohshima include among the Muan totems (Lawrie, 1972; see Table 1 for a list of Muan totems).

These are the documented clans but individuals might, as sanctioned by custom, claim a personal totemic affiliation with a subsidiary clan.⁹ For example, Fr Inagie Manas of Totalai and Gerain told Lawrie that, although those villages belong to the Dugong clan, his father's personal *augadh* was Waleku, the Frilled-necked Lizard, which first brought fire to Torres Strait from Mawatta in New Guinea (Lawrie, 1970: 83-84). Lizzie Nawia told Lawrie in 1967 that Waleku ran across Mua during his escape from New Guinea with the stolen coal of fire and the lizard still bears a black scorch mark at its throat. When the Kaurareg were moved from Kiririri to Mua in 1922, they brought other totems, such as Waubin (Hammond Rock) and Woezi (Stonefish) to Mua (Bora Bin Juda, pers. comm., 2005).

Like their neighbours, the Muans made totemic images, large and small, of which few survive. The most famous was a statue, never seen by Europeans, of a huge dog, presumably the emblem of the Umai (Dog) clan. It was reputed to be over 3.5 m high and made out of 100 whole turtle shells. It was hidden in a sealed cave on the eastern side of Mua Peak, above the *kod* (sacred ceremonial ground), the focus of the clan's ritual life. In 1922 an old man living at St Paul's offered to show Revd J.W. Schomberg the location of the *kod* and the statue; but since the schoolteacher, Deaconess Hatton, insisted on joining the party and women were forbidden to enter sacred places, the old man failed to find it. He died not

TABLE 1. Muan totems recorded in the late 19th and 20th century. Sources: Haddon, 1904; Lawrie, 1970.

Totem	English equivalent
Attested	
Baidham	Shark
Dhangal	Dugong
Kaigas	Shovel-nosed Ray
Koedal	Crocodile
Kursi	Hammerhead Shark
Tabu	Snake
Thupimul	Stingray
Umai	Dog
Kula	Stone
Tolupai	a species of Ray
Putative	
Gapu	Suckerfish
Sem	Cassowary
Waru	Green Turtle
Wadh	Blenney
Ger	Sea Snake

long afterwards and the cave has never been found (Schomberg & Schomberg, 2004: 51-52). Neil Schomberg (pers. comm., 2005) made several trips with Gehemat Pedro to caves on Mua Peak and in one they found skulls used by the *zogo le* to conduct their ceremonies; it had been filled in by rolling rocks into it. Either this or another was home to a special kind of 'micro-bat.'

The *kod* at Meth was chosen by Revd Schomberg in September 1928 as the site for a scout camp (Neil Schomberg, pers. comm., 2005; Figs 2–3). It is located on the north-eastern side of Mua about 1km from Mt Augustus, with Meth Hill to the south, close to the shoreline but out of sight of the sea and halfway along a slight inlet behind a screen of mangroves.

About two miles [3km] from the village, a site was chosen, and a splendid site it was too! The Administrator who paid us a visit wanted to know if we specially cleared the place. A nicely sloping, sandy area with short grass, big shady trees, *wangai* trees (wild plums) in bearing, and the whole for three-quarters of the way fringed with the beautiful green of the mangroves. In the centre of the oval were two heaps of *bu* (conch) shells, and we knew that the place must have in the past been connected with old island rites (Schomberg & Schomberg, 2004: 63-65).

Neil Schomberg told me that the soil below an ancient tree that grew on this *kod* was infertile on account of the blood that had seeped into it from hundreds of skulls hung on its branches.

MOIETIES. It appears that Mua, like the other Western Islands, was configured as four main clan areas, corresponding to the major winds/directions, and further grouped into two moieties. The moiety distinction is a structural one, not based on the relative numbers of clan members but apparently on the primary domain of each creature, i.e., whether it belongs primarily to water or land. If Mua followed the same general configuration as Mabuyag, the Crocodile-Snake-Cassowary moiety on the western or lee side of the island was the major moiety (*koei buwai*), whereas the Shark-Dugong-Shovel-nosed Ray moiety on the eastern or windward side was the minor moiety (*moegi buwai*) (Haddon, 1932: 74-75). Some support for this is given by Naiama, the oldest living Muan Islander in the 1920s, who told Revd W.H. MacFarlane that the Crocodile clan was centred on Poid on the western side of Mua and the Shark clan on the eastern side (Haddon, 1935: 64).¹⁰ This is also consistent with the detail that Gizu, who was forbidden to kill other members of his Shovel-nosed Ray clan (Haddon & Wilkin, 1904: 302), helped slaughter the people of Totalai on the northwestern side; and also with the discovery of a stone crocodile on the hill-top of Gerain (David et al. 'Archaeological excavations at Gerain and Urakaraltam' chapter 14, this volume). I cannot say whether the Italgai-Mualgai distinction was isomorphic with the moiety division, although this seems plausible.

In September 2004, Oza Bosun sketched the pre-contact Muan territorial divisions for Bishop Hall-Matthews.¹¹ His map showed the expected four Western Island divisions along the north/south/east/west axes, although he was uncertain where the boundaries met in the centre of the island. From him we learn a more specific delineation of the territories, which essentially conforms to earlier research: the Geraingal occupied the northwest quarter, which included Totalai and Gerain, their eastern boundary lying west of Mua Peak; the Mualgai occupied the northeast quarter, which included Wag and Mua Peak, the southern boundary lying south of Savika Point but not so far as South Point (possibly at Buzain or Long Beach); the Italgai occupied the southeast quarter, the western border lying just east of Kubin; the Ikilgai, whose territory included Poid and Kubin

and whose northern boundary passed close to Dabu, occupied the southwest quarter.

Thus we find at Mua the typical Western Island quadripartite clan territorial structure, arranged according to the four major winds/directions, although each major clan incorporated people belonging to other clans within its acknowledged territory.¹² Matching clan with territory on the basis of recorded sources, however, is problematical. Muan elders told Lawrie in 1972 that Dhangal (Dugong) occupied the northwest; Tabu (Snake) the southeast; Koedal (Crocodile) the southwest; and Kursi (Hammerhead Shark) the northeast. A few years later Ohshima and his team were told that Koedal (Crocodile) occupied the northwest; Kaigas (Shovel-nosed Ray) the southeast; and Kursi (Hammerhead Shark) the southwest (Ohshima, 1983: 338-339).

MUAN SETTLEMENTS

Revd Done (1987: 35-36) reported that once the Muans had 'occupied various small villages, in different parts of the island, their houses being made small and round, right upon the ground, while the numerous tribes were each ruled by a chieftain of sorts.'¹³ Margaret Lawrie (c.1967) was told that these villages, however, 'were not as permanent as villages on other islands. People often left them for weeks and camped out to garden or hunt.' Wilkin's sketch map in Haddon (1935: 22) names the coastal villages, moving east from Totalai, as: Murarath (where the Mabuyag party raided a garden and set in train the events that led to the final massacre), Bulbul, Usar, Ith, Bobuan Kupai, Kubin, Mipa, Zurzur, Waira, Karbai, Dualud, Adam, Dabu, Purbar (Porbar), Boigu and Widui; and inland settlements as Giwain and Gu, a camp situated at the bottom of Womel Pad (Wilkin, 1904b: 318). Boigu and Widui lay on the northern coast in the district of Ith: Boigu, a small sandbeach amongst mangrove swamps, was home to Aukam and her baby son Ti'ai (Haddon, 1904b: 56); Widui was where a group of Mabuyag raiders landed to raid Mua (Wilkin, 1904b: 318). Both the houses and gardens of Ith were burned by Mabuyag warriors during a battle leading up to the final massacre (Wilkin, 1904b: 310): the sturdy Muan houses were thatched with *magadh* (spear-grass) and easily fired. Apart from Mt Augustus or Mua Peak, the highest point in Torres Strait, which rises to almost 400 m, the two highest hills are Womel Pad (possibly Meth Hill) and Damu Pad (possibly Ith Hill). At Tabungnazi on the slopes



FIG. 2. The young men of Mua were trained in the use of spears through games such as *thuguthugusoegul* 'spear target practice.' According to Lawrie (1970: 65) spears were thrown at 'a drifted log, or the trunk of a wild cotton-tree' and the target practice was often accompanied by a chant. In this photo, boys from the first scout camp at St Paul's, September 1928, are practicing spear-throwing (*thuguthugusoegul*) at the trunk of a tree. The cleared area used for the camp was originally the *kod*, located two miles north of the village. Food, utensils and building materials were transported to the site by two boats. The camp lasted about four days and on the last night the scouts prepared a feast for their parents and put on a show and dances. Source: Revd J.W. Schomberg's photograph collection in author's possession.



FIG. 3. The first scout camp held at St Paul's, 1928, on the site of the old *kod* and shaded by the ceremonial tree of skulls. The ti-tree was once used by the men of Wag to hang their skulls during their annual skull ceremony, which was held at the same time as the scout camp, the first week in September. Scouts' shelter to the left, food preparation area to the right. Source: Revd J.W. Schomberg's photograph collection in author's possession.

of a hill in the southern part of the island was a plantation of *thoelu* (bloodwood) used to make spears and dugong harpoons (Wilkin, 1904b: 312).

Contemporary Muans say that there were seven pre-contact villages, although memories do not always coincide and sometimes more than seven are remembered. Lawrie made two visits to Mua in the 1960s and she names the coastal villages which appear in the stories she collected there as: Totalai, Baua, Gerain, Usar, Gud, Meth, Wag, Buzain, Bupu, Arkai, Kubin, Mipa, Zurzur, Adam, Dabu, Purbar; the inland villages as Gisan, Usul Nguki, Buziawar, Gunagan, Uma, Boigu and Palga (Lawrie, 1970: 18). A decade later Oshima (1983: 106) was told that the villages were: Totalai, Purbar, Dabu, Adam, Waga (now Wag), Gerain, Arkai and Bulbul. Teske (1991: 2), who visited Kubin in the late 1980s, was told the villages were Totalai, Gerain, It (Ith), Wag, Sigan (Sagan), Arkai and Iki(s). Teske's map (1991: iv) shows the coastal villages, beginning with Wag and continuing clockwise around the island, as Sigan, Bupu, Arkai, Kubin, Tuta, Karakar Kula, Iki(s), Poid, Dabu, Totalai, Baua and Gerain. Significant inland sites are Buziawar, Gunagan, Koei Koesa and Girl Place. Also mapped are Mua Peak and Ith Hill, Farewell Rock, Dhogai Malu, Tepay, Takamulai and Zangagudan (also called Zangudan; Fr John Manas, pers. comm., to Bruno David April 2007).

It may be that particular names are recalled because present-day Muans can still trace an ancestral or story path to them. In 1874, Kerisiano from the Loyalty Islands, the earliest LMS missionary still remembered, attempted to gather the scattered population to live at Totalai, where he built his house, a garden and a church (see Shnukal 'Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume). These people and the few families then at Dabu, were eventually induced to move to Adam, site of the final battle of Mua, which was renamed Poid after the forced removal there of the remaining Kaurareg from Kirriri. Wag became the site of St Paul's Mission for South Sea Islanders; and Arkai merged with Kubin to become the present-day community. Sigan in the low country and Bupu were abandoned, although Bupu remained a gardening site for Wees Nawia and his wife (Teske, 1991: 5). Dabu, directly opposite Badu at the point of shortest passage between the two islands, briefly became a settlement for a small number of related Niue (Savage) Islanders and their Muau wives in the late 19th century and a number of children were born there; they eventually moved to Adam. Gerain, apparently deserted

for many years, was again settled in the 1940s and 1950s by wolfram miners from Saibai and their families. The hill at Gerain was where Gelam used to sit in his bird hide (*urui mudh*) with his bow and arrows and shoot down Torres Strait pigeons (*goeinau*) which came to eat the *kupa* (white apple) fruit (Lowah, 1988: 17).

Wag ('wind') was the name of a village situated on the eastern side of Mua, facing strong, cleansing winds and directly opposite the island of Nagi (Mt Ernest Island). Wag was inhabited in late pre-contact times (Lawrie, 1970: 79) but was apparently abandoned by 1898 and is not included in Wilkin's sketch map (Haddon, 1935: 22). There was formerly some disagreement as to its original ownership: the Namai family claims that Wag belonged to Anu Namai, who gave permission for it to become home to the Ware family group after they left Mabuyag; others say that it belonged to Kanai (Teske, 1991: 1). Oza Bosun insists that Wag belonged to Namai and, at the St Paul's Community centenary celebrations in September 2004, Namai was publicly acknowledged as the traditional owner of Wag and his descendants were honoured for their gift of land (see Table 2 for a synthesis of the above information).

The above list barely indicates the number of formerly named places, many of which are now forgotten. For, like most islands in the strait, the Muau landscape is 'a place that is dense with memory, association and emotion' (Malouf, 2000), a place where past and present converge. Revd J.J.E. Done in 1915, observed that '[...] every portion of land, hill, valley or watercourse has its own appellation, while a great number of the stars with constellations explained according to native ideas, are familiar' (Done, 1987: 37), a theme extended by later scholars:

Each place name has a meaning, records an event and provides tangible testimony of the peoples' history. Place names and the stories associated with them are passed on and added to, generation to generation, and thus maintain the intelligibility of the past and a sense of place that reinforces peoples' attachment to their home island and to Torres Strait (Nietschmann, 1989: 83).

Not only were Muau villages, plantations, fishtraps, streams, tributaries, springs, water holes, lagoons, hills and points named and storied but so too were other salient geophysical features of the landscape (Haddon et al., 1912: 229), their origin often transmitted orally through etiologic (explanatory) tales. Baudhar, the name of the twin

TABLE 2. Early named places on Mua, based on the literature. Sources: David et al. ('Archaeological excavations at Gerain and Urakaraltam' chapter 14, this volume); Haddon (1904a, 1935); Lawrie (1970, 1972); Oshima (1983); Teske (1991).

Villages (coastal)	Adam, Arkai (southern tip of Mua), Baua, Baugain, Bobuan Kupai (Bobu's Navel), Boigu, Bulbul, Bupu, Buzain, Dabu, Dualud, Gerain, Gisan, Giwain, Iki(s), Isumulai (on the western side of the island), Ith, Karbai, Kubin, Meth, Mipa, Mug, Murarath, Purbar (north of Adam), Poid (whose people obtained water at Mug), Sigán, Theoith, Totalai, Tuta, Urakaraltam, Usar, Wag(a), Waira, Widui
Villages (inland)	Boigu, Gu(d) (bottom of Womel Pad), Usul Nguki (centre of Mua, now a well)
Gardens	Gisan (sugarcane plantation), Ith, Narasaldan (for the people of Gisan), Palga (pandanus plantation), Tabungnazi (bloodwood plantation)
Hills – <i>pad</i>	Damu Pad (possibly Ith Hill), Gerain Pad, Gunagan (close to Uma spring), Lady Hill, Meth Hill (also known as Eastern Fort and possibly Womel Pad), Mua Pad (Mt Augustus or Mua Peak), Usau Pad (where Burum lived), Womel Pad (possibly Meth Hill)
Points – <i>gizu, ngur</i>	Gerain Gizu, Karbai Gizu (near Isumulai); Gibbes Head, Bomal Ngur, Zurzur (a point north of Mipa, where <i>markai</i> lived)
Creeks – <i>koesa</i>	Koei Koesa (a tidal creek amongst the mangroves, close to Purbar), Palga Koesa (which flowed through Totalai)
Tributaries – <i>sarka</i>	Tulu Sarka (between Wag and Buzain)
Springs – <i>mayi</i>	Purup (on the seaward slope of a tall hill at the northern end of Mua), Uma (not far from Gunagan)
Reefs – <i>gath</i>	Goemulgau Gath (Mabuyag's Reef)
Lagoons – <i>malu</i>	Dhogai Malu (outside the reef off Bupu)
Stone fish traps – <i>garaz</i>	Located at Mipa, Zangagudan, Bupu, Wag, Gerain and Bulbul but now abandoned. The fish traps were traditionally owned and used by men, e.g., the Gerain trap was owned by the men of Usul Nguki in the centre of Mua, but now apparently it is women and children who gather fish from them (Johannes and MacFarlane, 1991: 180)

boulders at the top of Mt Augustus (Mua Peak), the highest point in Torres Strait, is significant for the traditional Western Island calendar: the appearance above them of Kek, the Yam Star, signaled the beginning of the south-east season and its disappearance at daybreak the middle of the northwest monsoon (Haddon et al., 1912: 223). The peaceful Im, who fished by attaching wooden fish-hooks to his long beard, became the stone named Im; the large boulder at Isumulai, called Karakar Kula, was formerly an *adhiadh* (bush devil) (Lawrie, 1970: 30, 45); *markai* (ghosts) lived at Zurzur, the point north of Mipa; the part of Yawar of Badu, which fell off when the *madhub* (spirit) men lowered him from a rainbow linking Badu with Mua, became a stone at Dadakul (Haddon, 1904b: 37); Thurau Kula (Turao Kula) was where Goba's father was butchered by Badu warriors (Brady et al., 2003; David et al., 2004).

Land was not only named but owned, its possession being governed by 'laws regulating the ownership of every inch of ground.' Barbara Thompson outlined some of these laws:

A person has a claim upon the ground where both himself and his parents were born, although situated in different localities. On the death of parents their land is divided among the children, when both sexes share alike, with this exception, that the youngest of the family receives the largest share. Marriage does not affect the permanency of the right of a woman to any landed property which may have come into her possession. Lastly, an old man occasionally so disposes of his property that a favourite child may obtain a larger proportion than he could afterwards claim as his inheritance (MacGillivray, 1852, II: 28).

POPULATION

There is every indication that during the 1840s and 1850s Mua supported a considerable population, befitting its size and the fierce reputation of its warriors. An early report comes from D'Urville (1870, 2: 550), who sailed close to Mabuyag on 11 June 1840 and, seeing numerous columns of smoke, formed the impression that Mua, Badu and Mabuyag were heavily

populated. He commented that, while the people resembled the Tudu (Warrior Island) people, 'they appeared more timid and less accustomed to communicating with European ships.'

There is no suggestion in the early reports from the new settlement at Somerset that the Italgals were any less numerous than the Kauraregs from the Prince of Wales group, Kulkalgals from the Central Islands and Badulgals, all of whom frequently visited the settlement (Jardine, 1865; Kennett in Moore, 1978: 238); and in late 1870 the Somerset Police Magistrate, H.M. Chester, referred to the 'large numbers' of Italgals, Badulgals and Kauraregs who congregated on Kirriri every season 'in readiness to swoop down upon any vessel that may have the misfortune to run aground' (Chester, 1870b). The Italgals were too strong for the Kauraregs to attack, even after a raid on a *kuthai* (yam) garden which contravened all laws of hospitality (Moore, 1978: 162-163).¹⁴ One story relates how three canoes sailed from Mua to Mabuyag, each carrying from 12-14 people, all of whom were murdered by Kuyam; another three canoes joined forces with Badu to mount the final attack; Kuyam killed a number of them 'but they were too many for him' (Lawrie, 1970: 98). Assuming that crew and passengers were male, about 80 fighting men from Mua were mobilised, which suggests a total population of at least 250, consistent with contemporary observations (McFarlane, 1875).

In 1870 the Muans were subject to at least two raids by the Mabuyag Islanders, the second in alliance with the Badulgals (see Shnukal 'The last battle of Mua' chapter 3, this volume). At least 20 Italgals are said to have been killed by the Mabuyag men in the first attack and several women abducted (Chester, 1871) but the total number eventually killed was far more. After this defeat, they abandoned their shore settlements and took refuge in the hilly interior. Chester made numerous attempts to communicate with these once fierce people but found them timid and reluctant to trade.

Living in perpetual dread of their powerful neighbors of Badoo and Marbiack they are compelled to be constantly shifting their camps, which they take great care to conceal on the side to seaward; so that I passed and repassed several without any idea of their vicinity. The men complained piteously of the Gamaleega [Mabuyag Islanders] and bewailed the destruction of their tribe which was, they said, no longer able to contend with its numerous enemies, but if the whites would

only assist them they would soon be revenged for all they had suffered. They argued that we ought to help them against the Badoo men particularly, who had so often killed white men while the Italeega had always been friendly, and, no doubt, should it ever be necessary to punish the Mulgrave islanders for future outrages it might easily be done with the assistance of these people, who are familiar with their country and camping grounds. I had no means of estimating their number owing to their distribution in several camps, but they cannot be very numerous. They appeared to have few canoes and being afraid to venture out on the reefs are mainly dependent for subsistence on the roots and fruits furnished by the island. They have a few small groves of cocoa-nut trees and their island appears to be the southern limit of this useful tree in these waters' (Chester, 1871).

There is no suggestion, however, that, despite their wariness of outsiders, the Muan population had been culled by as much as would have been needed to reduce the population from an estimated 250 in 1875 to the 50 or so observed in the late 1890s (Douglas, 1900: 34; McFarlane, 1875; Parry-Okeden, 1897). We must seek elsewhere for the reasons for the rapid depopulation. Soon after the pearlrush began in 1870, rich pearling grounds close to Mua attracted pearling vessels manned chiefly by Pacific Islanders, who raided Mua for women and food. Writing at the beginning of the devastating measles epidemic of 1875, Revd Samuel McFarlane, the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary, claimed that about half the population of Mua had 'been removed by the pearl shellers and by disease' during the past few years but that still left about 250 people (McFarlane, 1875).¹⁵ This figure may, of course, be an exaggeration designed to reassure McFarlane's superiors: having placed two missionaries there in 1872, McFarlane could hardly admit to his superiors in England that he had wasted scarce resources on a sparsely inhabited island. In 1876, after the measles epidemic, the estimated population was about 170.

In 1871 H.M. Chester reported that he had managed to contact the remnant population, which was living in fear of its neighbours in the interior of the island. The following year two Christian missionaries were placed on Mua and this signified the beginning of the incorporation of the Muans into the British colonial orbit (see Shnukal 'Historical Mua' chapter 3, this volume). By the late 19th century, when local officials began to take some interest in Mua, its formerly

large population had dwindled to such an extent and had been so completely erased from most recorded history that Singe (1989: 169) could claim (incorrectly) that Mua was uninhabited at the time of the establishment of the Church of England mission for Pacific Islanders, later to become St Paul's community.

Using various sources, each fallible and difficult to interpret, I have compiled a list of Muans attested as being born prior to 1870 (see Table 3). It is by no means comprehensive.

SOCIAL LIFE AND ITS FOUNDATIONS

Reciprocal exchange in all its guises was the basis of traditional Islander society and the creator of social capital. Traditional stories often refer to the overwhelming imperative of establishing and fostering harmonious relations with others on the same island and beyond through the sharing of food, food-gathering techniques, culturally significant artefacts and ceremony and ecological knowledge (Lawrie, 1970). Lawrie's collection contains many moral tales, whose primary function is to transmit a socially sanctioned code of conduct, particularly normative behaviour towards kinfolk, sorcerers, and the powerful supernatural beings who inhabit each island. Deliberate or inadvertent transgression of the social code – failure to share food, stealing food or laziness – almost invariably ends in death. When men returned from hunting trips, which might last for several days, they shared out the meat and fish they obtained. Similarly, if individuals found a new type of food and nurtured it, such as lazy Wami of Mua Pad who discovered a banana sucker washed up by the tide, they were expected to share this new plants with others. The sharing of food is paralleled by the sharing of information.

Much has been made of Islander society as shame-based, rather than guilt-based. That is, overt social sanction rather than internalised guilt is the chief mechanism of social control. The Sigan villagers of Mua cruelly put to death an old blind woman but, because their deed was not discovered, they were not punished (Lawrie, 1970: 41-42). The moral tales contain two instances of revenge killing, in which Muan mothers punish the murderers (close family members) of their children by burning them to death. Since women did not carry knives or spears, burning was one of the few ways open to them to avenge those deaths. Individual men and women could also

approach sorcerers to right a wrong done to a family member or work malevolent magic on their behalf.

SUSTENANCE, SAFETY AND THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR.

Mua's lack of abundance when compared with the fertile Eastern Islands is explained today as due to Gelam's gathering up the best soil and foodstuffs and taking them with him to Mer. This relative scarcity meant that the Muans were 'always busy, either working in their gardens, clearing, digging, weeding and planting, or fishing or hunting' (Lawrie, 1970: 33). Daily tasks were divided along gender lines: men sailed or poled out to nearby reefs in their canoes to spear fish, like the two kinds of *bila* (parrot fish) found in different fishing places on Mua, *kibim* (black spinefoot) and *parsa* (golden-lined spinefoot), with their pronged spears, or used a fibre line; whereas women fished by line from the shore. Each of the men from the village of Usul Nguki in the centre of Mua had his own stone fishtrap on the reef at Gerain. He would visit his trap at low tide and gather the trapped fish, all of which belonged to him (Lawrie, 1970: 43). The men from the village of Gu at the bottom of Womel Pad also owned fishtraps at a nearby reef (Wilkin, 1904b: 318). Only men hunted dugong, turtle and crayfish or shot *goeinau* (Torres Strait pigeon) and other birds. The Muan men who specialised in hunting dugong built a *neth* (dugong house or platform)¹⁶ over the shallows where the dugong grazed and waited for hours to harpoon their prey (Tennant, 1959: 187). Others, like Gelam of Bulbul or Sik of Bua, specialised as bird hunters, erecting an *urui mudh* (bird ambush) near the springs or water-holes regularly visited by birds; the hides, made from grass or leafy branches, hid them from view and made the birds easy targets (Lawrie, 1970: 44, 28). One of those small waterholes was near Gerain, which has fresh water all year round, and attracts flocks of *goeinau* (Torres Strait pigeon; Gela, 1993: 33).

Daily life on Mua was dominated by constant fear of attack, generally from sea raiders. 'Men never went far from home without carrying weapons of some kind' (Haddon & Wilkin, 1904: 299); 'every man slept with his weapons beside him, and it was kill or be killed' (Wees Nawia to Tennant, 1959: 192). Mua is a large and hilly island with numerous rockshelters, which provided refuge from attack, and sentinel boulders, where men kept watch for dugong or shoals of fish on

TABLE 3. Muans born before 1870 as attested in various documents. Sources: Diocese of Carpentaria registers of baptisms, marriages and burials; Eseli (1998); fieldwork notebooks from St Paul's, Kubin, Bamaga and Injinoo (1981-2005); Wilkin (1904: 316-18); Laade (1968); Lawrie (1970); MacGillivray (1852 II: 7); Moore (1979: 121, 226-227, 315); Rivers' genealogical tables in Haddon (1904a); Somerset registers of births, deaths and marriages; war census Adam 1915 (Return of Aboriginals and Halfcaste males between the ages of 18 and 45 resident at Adam. War Census 1915: Civilised male Aboriginals and halfcaste males between the ages 18 and 45. JOL MLC 1791-316. Photocopy of typed sheet, copy in possession of author.). *Two other Muan people mentioned to me were Kabara, said to be the leader of the Italgai, who was murdered by the combined forces of Mabuyag and Badu; and the grandfather (name unknown) of Gawada from Badu, daughter of Wakei and Waiu and mother of Nobi Irad Baira, Taum Tamwoy, Kila Mara, Uiduldam and Marita Gagai.

Name	Other information
<i>Males</i>	
Agai	from Gerain; brother of Abei, Bairid and Gara
Aikaru	son of Bapi; nephew of Gema; husband of Gagime Nakau
Aiwa	killed by Parsau from Mabuyag
Anu Namai	from Totalai; son of Gema; nephew of Bapi, husband of Poid, Gitara and Aidabu
Apus	of Damu Pad; father of Maiti and Kodau; grandfather of Rosie Buia
Arusam	son of Maiti and Aturi; grandson of Apus; husband of Muraridh and Baithie Wari Hammond; ancestor of the Nakau family
Bairid	from Gerain; brother of Abei, Agai and Gara
Bapi	brother of Gema; father of Aikaru
Damu	from Totalai; father of Giwai
Gaizu	brother of Muyam; husband of Paikai; father of Madi and Mary Ann
Gara	from Gerain; mamoose of Mua; brother of Abei, Agai and Bairidh; father of Kaitap
Gema	from Totalai; husband of Athub; father of Anu Namai
Genai	killed by Mabuyag raiders
Giwai	from Totalai; son of Damu; killed by Goba of Mabuyag
Goba	as a child saw his father clubbed and beheaded by Badu raiders; husband of Dub, whom he is said to have murdered
Guria	Italaig; brother of Gazi; wife of Muralag; murdered by Badu raiders
Kanai/Pagai	Italaig; son of Bamar and Pikidan; husband of Nema, Siai
Kulka	husband of Siai; father of Kaki
Madi	son of Gaizu and Pikai; brother of Mary Ann
Magaru	husband of Kamadi from Mua; father of Demudu; son-in-law of Kawasa of Mua
Maiti	son of Apus; father of Arusam; husband of Aturi
Muyam	brother of Gaizu; husband of Kodau; son-in-law of Apus; father of Rosie Buia
Ngoni	from Totalai; clubbed to death by Nawi of Mabuyag
Puru	from Gu; seized by Waipat of Badu during a raid but given to Waipat's brothers-in-law Taur and Bodaua to kill
Sabei	husband of Kausa; father of Inagi
Sibari	from Waga
Tapi	husband of Gerar; killed by Gabai from Mabuyag
Urna	son of Berdur from Badu and Kanasa from Mua; husband of Dadu
Waina	brother of Aga; husband of Nedu, Leah Charlie
Wikar	killed by Mabuyag raiders
Yellub	husband of Aborab; father of Banasa Yellub
<i>Females</i>	
Abei	from Gerain; sister of Agai, Bairidh and Gara
Aborab	wife of Yellub
Aga (Aiaka)	sister of Waina; wife of Sam (Bozi) Savage of Niue; mother of Flora, Lily, Tom Alua, Kausa, Powanga
Amigu	wife of Wanaia from Mabuyag; possibly sister of Gamadh
Aturi	wife of Maiti; mother of Arusam
Daku	wife of Jimmy Savage of Niue; mother of Ioane Manase, Latta Elita Kara, Louisa, Peter Naton and Mary; buried at Badu
Dimur	wife of Pedia/Mam from Mabuyag
Dub	wife of Goba and murdered by him; mother of Genai, Naika Pati, Wagub Merian and Nawari
Gamadh	wife of Wanaia from Mabuyag; possibly sister of Amigu
Gazi	Italaig; sister of Guria; murdered by Badulgal 1849
Gazima	wife of Geia from Muralag
Gazimali	Italaig
Gerar	wife of Tapi; killed by Widai from Mabuyag
Gisu	wife of Mangai from Badu; mother of Gebi, Uwaga, Mau, Wais, Sagaukaz, Mokei, Mokina and Ad
Kabati	Shark clan; wife of Sawi from Mabuyag; mother of Puiui
Kamadi	daughter of Berdur from Badu and Kanasa from Mua; wife of Magaru from Mua

TABLE 3. (Cont.)

<i>Females</i>	
Kauza Mawe	wife of Mam Harry from Mabuyag; mother of Pauna Uruba, Nadap Misi, Willie Mam, Baibai and Mazar
Kawasa	wife of Berdur from Badu; mother of Kamadi, Watipula, Wiwai and Uruna; mother in law of Magaru from Mua
Kodau	daughter of Apus; wife of Muyam and murdered by him; mother of Rosie Buia
Kudi	wife of Manu from Muralag
Kupwasi	wife of Moigub from Badu; mother of Zezeu, Kanai/Gizu, Pogadua/Parama, Simi, Athub, Dalag and Borom
Muguda	wife of Gasera from Mabuyag
Muraridh	first wife of Arusam Nakau
Nagi	Hammerhead Shark clan; wife of Deba from Muralag
Sirir	wife of Migui from Mabuyag; mother of Puni, Dabaru and Gagama
Ublag	wife of Mapia of Mabuyag; mother of Kurubad/Pauna/Boa
Unigadi	wife of Yabur from Mabuyag; mother of Baiberi, Numagu, Ngukis and Nai
Watipula	daughter of Berdur from Badu and Kanasa from Mua; wife of Gadiwa from Muralag
Wiwai	daughter of Berdur from Badu and Kanasa from Mua; wife of Anastasio Anteberos (Johnny Twenty-one) from the Philippines
Yadi	Shovel-nosed Ray clan; wife of Painauda/Wallaby from Muralag; mother of Pud

the reef, for turtle and also for invading canoe parties. The Mualgal kept permanent lookouts close to their settlements to warn the villagers going about their daily tasks (Lawrie, 1970: 19, 45). Neil Schomberg (pers. comm., 2005) visited one of them, a ledge levelled out two-thirds up the north-east side of Meth Hill, where the tree of skulls grew; from there 'you can see all around to Mabuia, Badu and Coconut. From Mua Peak you can even see to New Guinea on a clear day.' A man would stay all day at the lookout and, if a canoe was sighted, he sounded the *bu* (conch) shell. On hearing the sound, people from Wag would immediately abandon their villages and gardens and flee into the bush to hide.¹⁷ Another lookout on the western side was Poid, whose people obtained water at Mug (Lawrie, 1970: 79): this was the place where the men from eastern Wag went to keep watch towards the south-west and north-west for a retaliatory raid from Badu (Lawrie, 1970: 78). Purup is a spring of water 'on the seaward slope of a tall hill at the northern end of Mua.' The boulders there were used as a lookout by the people who lived at the foot of the hill in once heavily-populated Gisan but 'there is no sign of this village today' (Lawrie, 1970: 44). Tennant (1959: 221) was told that, while on watch, the men would cover the walls of the caves and the lee or western side of the rocks with paintings. One painted cave was located over 100ft (30m) up Ith Hill and recently a team of archaeologists documented the rock art at Thurau Kula (Turao Kula), a flat-topped boulder north of Kubin, which served as a lookout (Brady et al., 2003; David et al., 2004).¹⁸

When men sailed out to fish or hunt, they carried a *wap* (harpoon-spear), *amu* (rope)¹⁹ and *gabagaba* (club with circular stone head). When they sailed out to fight they carried the *kubai* (spear thrower, woomera), *kalak* (spear), *dagul* (multi-pronged spear), *malpalau nai* (small club), greased *gabagaba*, *wap* and bows and arrows. The most deadly arrow was the cassowary claw-tipped *kimus*. Warriors also carried an *upi* (bamboo knife) to behead victims. The heads of the slain were severed and brought back as trophies, sometimes in special head carriers made from looped bamboo or strung together with vine (Lawrie, 1970: 6, 19, 25, 32, 39, 46, 58, 62, 63, 71, 74, 75, 90, 93, 94).

Men and boys generally found the material with which to make their own weapons: they fashioned their 3½-metre-long *thoelu wap* (bloodwood harpoon) from bloodwood 'half way to the tip, to give the force to drive the harpoon, bamboo the rest of the way for balance' (Tennant, 1959: 187; see also Manas et al. 'An interview with Fr John Manas' chapter 7, this volume) and cut down the trees at Tabungnazi for the hard wood to make spears like Puapun's *dagul*, the long, straight, multi-pronged fishing spear (Wilkin, 1904b: 312; Lawrie, 1970: 25). Since only men conventionally used spears, they alone played games like *thuguthugusoegul* (spear target practice; Fig. 2);²⁰ and only men beat the *warup* (drums) and poled and sailed canoes. Men relaxed by smoking local tobacco in long bamboo pipes, the boys keeping the bowl filled and ready (David, 1995: 410-411), making music and dancing (Lawrie, 1970: 20, 26, 27, 29, 30, 54, 63, 65, 89, 112, 115).²¹

Men dominated the public sphere but women ruled the private sphere: a mother's family was more significant than the father's family in her children's upbringing and a husband would often live with his wife's clan (Moore, 1978: 264). Women's behaviour was constrained in public: they were forbidden from entering ceremonial places and, when menstruating or pregnant, from travelling in canoes. Reefs were perceived as an extension of the land, so women could fish from the home reef using a *wali* (line) made from fibres of the aerial roots of *dhani* (wild fig-tree) (Lawrie, 1970: 25); whereas the sea beyond the home reef was a realm to be navigated by men with caution and the help of protective magic. Women were land and shore foragers, collecting edible wild food sometimes from fruit trees to which they held title; they carried the fruit and berries home in baskets woven from rushes, reeds and pandanus (Lawrie, 1970: 36, 63, 66, 92, 122; Ada Ware Tillett and Mana Newie Torenbeek, pers. comm., 2006). Women also were tasked with collecting the material to weave baskets and mats: rushes and reeds for baskets and pandanus for *minalai* 'fine pandanus mats' for sleeping and presenting as welcome tokens to visitors (Lawrie, 1970: 27, 41, 89).²² The best pandanus on Mua grew at Palga, where Aukam had her garden, halfway between Purbar on the western side and Sigam on the eastern side. Even today 'the women of Kubin Village go to Palga when they decide to weave mats' (Lawrie, 1970: 42). Men, women and children foraged among the rocks and in the damp sand of the beaches for crabs, varieties of shellfish found on Mua, such as *akul*, *goba* and *silel*,²³ limpets and hawksbill turtle eggs, which the women cooked on the shore or brought back in baskets, sometimes made in advance and sometimes on the spot. However, many kinds of fish were strictly forbidden to women (not men) on the grounds of causing illness; nursing mothers could not eat the hawksbill turtle and its eggs; and only post-menopausal women could eat Torres Strait pigeon (MacGillivray, 1852, II: 10).

Women had primary care for children, both boys and girls, until the boy reached puberty. Several Western Island stories feature the strong bond between mother and children, particularly the mother-son bond, as in the Muan stories of Aukam and Tiai from Totalai and Murarath and Sik from Baua (Lawrie, 1970: 24-27; 27-29). The Muan story of Gelam teaches, among other moral lessons, that separation from the mother frees a young male to embark on his

destiny.²⁴ Boys and girls played together and amused themselves making *wameyal* (string figures), playing *uthaisoegul* (hide-and-seek) or exchanging gifts with the opposite sex (*moedhaidausagul*) (Lawrie, 1970: 36, 87, 101). But some games were gendered, such as spear practice and killing birds with sling shots, which were restricted to boys. It was a boy's maternal uncle (*awadhe*) rather than his father who educated and advised him. Sometimes through circumstance a family group might consist only of children and their maternal uncle, as when, according to legend, Totalai's only three inhabitants were Aukam, her brother Puapun and Wawa, their mother's brother (Lawrie, 1970: 24). It was generally a maternal male relative who transmitted ecological knowledge through stories and on-the-spot teaching and example, such as desirable times and sites for fishing or hunting, tested techniques for tracking dugong and turtle (e.g., see Manas et al. 'An interview with Fr John Manas' chapter 7, this volume) and instructions on fashioning spears.

Torres Strait traditional ecological knowledge is geographically specific, springing from long association with and close observation of a particular long-inhabited locality. On Mua, for example, people could predict whether the day would be fine or wet by whether Baudhar was clear or surrounded by mist (Angela Newie Torenbeek, pers. comm., 2006); the *bila* (parrotfish) caught at Good Beach is darker than the lighter green-blue *bila* caught on the front reef and each is fished by different family groups (Ada Tillett, pers. comm., 2006). Not only good hunting spots but other places where materials for manufacture can be found are related through stories: children learn that *buwa* (wild yam) grow at Kubin; that the best pandanus for weaving mats is found at Palga (Lawrie, 1970: 39, 41); and that Tabungnazi has the best wood for spears (Wilkin, 1904b: 312). Muans knew where bush honey was most likely to be found and that sugarcane grew at Gisan; they ate the tender mangrove shoots from Giwain when other food was scarce (Wilkin, 1904b: 318); and they knew the qualities of the wood from the local trees: *yatharkub* (cotton tree); *thoelu* (bloodwood), a straight hardwood used for making harpoon shafts; and *upudh*, a soft light wood used to make tool handles (Gela, 1993: 54, 57, 59; Ada Ware Tillett, pers. comm., 2006). Gill (1876: 213) noticed groves of wild cotton trees (*yartharkub*) on Mua in 1872.

Despite Mua's relative infertility, a large variety of seasonal fruits and yams was available:

aubau (noni fruit), *goeoebe* (bellfruit), *kawai* (red wild apple), *kupa* (white apple), *mai*, a red fruit cooked in an earth-oven, *putit* (yellow cherry), a sour stone fruit, *sizoengai*, with its small round black fruit, *uzu* (white island fig), *wanga*, a plum-sized black fruit, *wangai* (island plum) and *yararkakur* (monkeynut), which was eaten raw or roasted over a fire. Particular trees, like the 'tall, heavily laden *kupa* tree' mentioned by Lawrie (1970: 92), were the property of individual women, who alone had the right to pick the fruit. There were at least two species of banana: *kurub*, which 'has always grown at Mua' (Lawrie, 1970: 36); and a new variety, found and nurtured by Wami in whose honour it was named *Wamin ngurbum* (Wamin's banana; Lawrie, 1970: 33-34). At least six different yam varieties were tended: *buwa* (white-fleshed yam), which grew in abundance at Kubin before it became a village; *kuthai* (white yam); *gabau* (pinkish cultivated yam); *mapet* (stringy yam; Lawrie, 1970: 23, 39, 50, 105); *usari* (long, thin, soft white yam; Lowah, 1988: 143), *thapan*, a vine-growing sweet potato (Ada Ware Tillett, pers. comm., 2006).

Although their gardens were not as extensive nor as productive as those of the more settled Eastern Islander horticulturalists, gardening is a constant refrain in Muan traditional stories and contemporary conversations. Both men and women owned gardens and cultivated them and, if the couple came from different islands, they were required to tend their plots on both islands (Lawrie, 1970: 9, 11, 27, 32, 35, 43, 66, 74, 92, 101, 111, 112, 121; Moore, 1978: 264). Muan women took their babies with them to the gardens, hanging them in baskets from a tree while they worked and, when they planted and harvested, they used a wooden digging stick with a pointed end hardened by fire. They generally cooked for their husbands and children but men also cooked food, especially if they had been out fishing, and roasted the fish they had just caught for a quick meal. Muans, like their neighbours, roasted yams and fish over open fires; baked turtle, dugong, fruits, some kinds of fish and *biyu sama* (mangrove seed-pod balls) in the *amai*, the distinctive regional earth oven sealed with leaves and sand; and preserved their *biyu sama* and strings of fresh and cooked fish and turtle meat for leaner times (Lawrie, 1970: 12, 23, 26, 32, 36, 45, 56, 59, 64, 70, 73, 114, 119). These balls of cooked mangrove seed-pod pulp, required extensive preparation. Lawrie (1970: 119) describes in

detail how the Western Island women prepared this staple food:

The embryo seedling of *biyu* were plucked when they turned yellow-green in colour. Each was then nicked lengthwise. When a sufficient number had been treated in this way, they were placed in an earth-oven and cooked for approximately one hour, after which the sand and leaves were removed from the earth-oven, and the *biyu* taken out and allowed to cool. They were then placed in a basket and the basket and its contents steeped in fresh water for three days. At the end of that time the basket was taken from the water and the pulp scraped from each seedling. Finally, the pulp was squeezed with hands (to rid it of excess moisture) and shaped into balls (*sama*) which were stored in dry baskets.

Muans, like all Western Islanders, transported water from springs and wells over land and sea in *kusul* (pairs of coconut shell water containers) which dangled in clusters from the side of the canoe in the sea to keep the water cool, although during certain seasons there might be difficulty in procuring drinkable water. They also carried turtle oil in baler-shells (Lawrie, 1970: 63, 68, 73). Unlike other Western Islanders, however, neither the Italgal nor the Kaurareg carried dried turtle meat with them on long voyages (Moore, 1978: 172).

MAGIC

Everyday life, no less than its ceremonial aspects, were governed by *maidh* (magic), which remains a powerful explanatory force and was in the past as a general rule directed towards the enforcement of group solidarity and survival. Torres Strait Islanders believed in the spiritual power of nature, which could be harnessed by certain individuals trained to the task, and in the power of ancestors, to whom their descendants could appeal in times of uncertainty. Islander society was ruled by a powerful male gerontocracy, clan leaders and other respected older men, who were generally *maidhalgal* (men of magic), living outside 'normal' society for extended periods of time and controlling their communities through fear, with death as the ultimate sanction. They supervised the ceremonies of the *kod* and the initiation of the young men, while also ensuring the fertility of people, plants and animals and success in hunting, warfare and gardening.

A number of Muan stories foreground the role of the *maidhalgal* as men of immense power,

moral guardians and punishers of transgression. They had power over this world and the other: they moved between the natural and supernatural worlds, could have dealings with ghosts, whom they could enlist to punish humans for their transgressions of moral law. They could transform themselves at will into animals and birds, travel by rainbow across the sea, control the actions of men and other creatures and summon ghost helpers. In September 1888 Haddon (Haddon et al. (1904: 338, Plate 16 fig. 1), later to become a prominent figure in British anthropology, procured a dugong charm made of wood and painted red. It was made more powerful by the addition of the leg bones, also painted red, of the sorcerer who had originally carved the charm.

This may have been the same *maidhalaig* from Mua who ‘could cause wind to blow by painting himself black all over and whirling a *wanes*, or small leaf-shaped bull-roarer’ and could also ‘quench the wind’ (Haddon et al., 1904: 352), possibly, even, the famed sorcerer, Apus, who played a significant role in the final battle on Mua, probably in 1870. Apus ensorcelled his fellow Muans and weakened them by making *wauri* (human effigies), rubbing them with magic plants from ‘the depths of the bush’ – the scented plants *mathuwa* (a vine herb) and *kerikeri* (wild ginger), the two mentioned by Lawrie, but possibly also *paiwa* (sandalwood)²⁵ and *thoekar* (island basil) – baking them in an *amai* (earth oven) and leaving them to sway in the wind as a sign of what was to come. The names of famous sorcerers are remembered on every island but are not named in Lawrie’s collection of stories. This was unlikely to have been because their names are forgotten but through deliberate omission. Peter from Mabuyag, who told the story of the last battle on Mua to Rivers in 1898 (Haddon and Wilkin, 1904: 302), mentions Apus and his son, Maiti, as central participants of the narrative.

When travelling, sorcerers kept their magic aids in a *walsi yana*, a shoulder bag made from teased banksia bark fibre (Lawrie, 1970: 117). There are a number of accounts of the methods and plants used by sorcerers. In Wees Nawia’s Muralag story about Zalagi and the *mari* (spirit), the sorcerer first ‘took a long feather and anointed it with the extract of [...] *mathuwa* and *kerikeri*. Then he stuck the quill in the ground and addressed magic words to it. Finally he asked it to procure a ghost who would punish Zalagi for his shameful behaviour’ (Lawrie, 1970: 10). *Mathuwa* was also used as an aid to divination and, when rubbed on the Kuyam *augadh*, replicas of those fashioned

by Kuyam himself, along with the scented leaves of *thoekar*, prepared the Mabuyag men for battle. Muans kept their parents’ skulls in their homes or nearby which at night they could take out, rub with the scented leaves of *mathuwa* and ask for guidance in a dream (Lawrie, 1970: 31, 57). Gelam’s father appeared to him in a dream to tell him how to carve a seaworthy dugong to carry him from Mua to Mer (Bosun, 2001: 15).

Sorcerers like Apus generally lived apart either by themselves or with a small group of men for a period of the year. Aside from this interval of seclusion and their magical powers, they lived like other men, fishing and gardening, marrying and having children, whom they trained to succeed them. In many ways they resemble the shamans of Siberia and North America: in their ability to transform themselves into birds and animals, and to summon the spirits of the dead, and their wearing of totemic masks all strongly suggest that their powers, if not their social function, were akin to those of the shamans.

There was no warrior caste – all males were raised to be warriors and the adolescent males spent a period of time being trained by the magic men; during their apprenticeship the adolescent males were known as *kernge* (Lawrie, 1970: 12). On Mua ‘the boys were initiated into full warrior privileges by three different ceremonies, the first of which consisted in a month’s total isolation during which time they were instructed by one of the older men on the right principles of conduct such as care and protection of parents, respect to elders and unselfishness’ (Schomberg & Schomberg, 1996: 29). As part of their training they were obliged to provide the *maidhalgal* with food at their headquarters, the *kod* (ritual ground). Likened by one man to a ‘high school’ for the young men, the *kod* was surrounded by *bu* (trumpet shells) and hidden from view; it was where they held their ceremonial dances, displayed the skulls gained in battle, put on their fighting gear and ‘obtained magical strength for the battle to come’ (Lawrie, 1970: 19).

The only exception to the rule that all adult males were fighting men was the *paudagarka* (man of peace), who was ‘exempt from war and the consequences of war’ and could neither be killed nor take any part in fighting. Such men were generally sorcerers and ‘the title was hereditary in certain families’ (Haddon and Wilkin, 1904: 302). Haddon mentions Arusam of Mua, who may have been alive at the time of Haddon’s visit there in

September 1888, as the son of Maiti and grandson of Apus, each of whom was a *paudagarka*.

Namai of Totalai described to Revd Schomberg (Schomberg & Schomberg, 2004: 63-65) the 'skull festival' which took place in the eastern *kod* in early September.²⁶

First of all the grounds would be cleared. Every person had to do his bit. The pace was set by a swinging refrain and woe-betide the person who did not keep in time. There was no room for the slackers and the gentle tap with a *gabagaba* (stone club) gave the lazy one a long, long rest. The skull screen was now built, made 'flash' with coloured paints and decorations, and the skulls – with lower jaws attached – (for these were used for other ceremonies during the year) were hung to be viewed by the whole assembly. The boys and young men were segregated and each member on the assembly bedecked himself in paint. Again woe-betide the careless one who neglected to put on the 'wedding garment,' or the visitor who did not prepare before entering the camp. It was a stern discipline but discipline nevertheless.

DEATH

Traditional stories also tell of omens of death, the treatment of the dead and their passage beyond. Deaths of relatives are often announced by omens. Aukam of Mua has a premonition of her son's death when her digging-stick breaks (Lawrie, 1970: 26); other omens might be the flight of flying-foxes or the call of a particular bird.

The status, age and familial connections of the individual determined the way in which the corpse was handled and its subsequent fate but it was always treated respectfully. There appear to have been two stages in the mortuary rituals, which Haddon (1935: 64) was informed were the same on Mua and Muralag. At death, when the person's *mari* (spirit) left the body, the adult corpse was placed on a *sara* (four-posted funeral bier) built by relatives. The second stage occurred once the flesh had slipped from the bones; then it became necessary to treat the skull and bones in ritual fashion and deposit them in their final resting place. A brief description of Kaurareg graves, which we may suppose were little different from those of the Mualgal, is given by Spry (1876: 207), who with a party of men from the *Challenger* visited Kirriri on 8 September 1874. The party was able to observe

some graves near the beach and was informed about the Kaurareg's

peculiar ceremonies relating to the disposal of their dead. After death it seems the remains are kept with the tribe until decomposition sets in, when the bones are carefully removed, painted red, and wrapped in bark; they are then, with some ceremony, deposited in the grave, which consists of a mound of sand around which a trench is dug. A stout post is fixed upright at each of the four corners, and the sides are usually ornamented with large shells, skulls, and bones of the dugong.

After the first night of death, when the corpse took the form of its totem in life, a man's body was taken on a stretcher made from bamboo poles by his father, son-in-law and male relatives. The corpses of babies and young children were kept in their carrying baskets. Other bodies, possibly of those who died violently, were covered with a mound of stones where they fell, as was the headless corpse of Goba's father, Kuyam's slain body and that of the greedy food thief of Mabuyag, Tawaka, clubbed to death by his Wagedagam kinfolk (Lawrie, 1970: 26, 46, 55, 99, 119, 123).

Aukam wore the bones of her murdered baby, Tiai, around her neck as a memento, 'after having probably rubbed them over with red ochre,' although Haddon (1890b: 191) points out that this custom was not typical of Torres Strait and may have been introduced to Mua from Cape York by the Kaurareg. The skulls of one's parents might be kept close by, either in the house or a nearby cave (Lawrie, 1970: 26, 31, 57). Barbara Thompson told Brierly (Moore, 1978: 203-204) that the Italaig husband of a Kaurareg woman brought her back to Muralag to collect 'some of her father's bones and go out of mourning for him.'

People coated their bodies with mud as a sign of entering the mourning period and women relatives removed their everyday *zazi* (leaf petticoat) and donned a special skirt, called *soger*. 'This consisted of a long fringe, which hangs down in front and behind, being suspended round the neck, and smaller fringes encircling the arms and legs' (Haddon, 1890b: 191).²⁷ The end of mourning was symbolised by the woman again donning her *zazi*.

After death or disappearance, a *tarabau ai* 'death feast' was held, which freed the *mari* (spirit) from the body; only afterwards would the spirit become a *markai* (ghost), after capture by the white *markai* which had pursued it since

death. Lawrie (1970: 74) was told that at Badu and in the Central Islands a death dance was performed once the person was presumed dead. After that he was a ghost and would be killed if he returned to his island. Ghosts were the shades of the departed which, despite precautions, returned to disturb the living and disappeared just before dawn. The first Europeans seen by the terrified Islanders, apparently homeless and with pale skins, were called *markai*. The homeland of the spirits lay beyond the last island to the west, Boigu, or beyond Kibu, the horizon, 'which is regarded as both place and boundary.' Tiai, on learning that he was a ghost, disappeared with his mother into the ground, which opened up to claim them. In the story of Gi from Mabuyag, the *markai* emerge from the ground clad in white. However, some *markai* lived on the islands or made short visits, like the *markai* staying at Purbar or visiting Mipa on Mua. When the *markai* arrived on the beach at Mipa, they first placed the food they had brought with them on the ground and 'immediately a big area of ground [...] became as clean as if it had just been swept: all the grass disappeared, and the fallen leaves and undergrowth as well. Fireflies swarmed, lighting up the air and the trees' (Lawrie, 1970: 26-27, 28, 29, 40, 69, 74, 124).

Wees Nawia of Kirriri, who live most of his life on Mua, explained to Lawrie (1970: 44) that his grandmother from Muralag distinguished four kinds of ghost: *markai*; *mari*, which wore several feathers on its head; *buk*, which made the sound of a shaken seed-pod rattle and was especially to be feared; and *padutu*, which was occasionally seen after sunset while the sky was still red, wore a single feather and had a red stripe across its forehead. Ghosts were usually jealous of humans and almost always pursued them relentlessly to their deaths. Gora of Mua got rid of a *buk*, the most dreaded kind of *markai*, by hurling a burning log at it. Ghosts and the resident *dhogai* (devil women) represented a threat to the living inhabitants, who rarely ventured far from their homes and certainly not after dark, for fear of meeting them.²⁸ One *dhogai* lived at Dhogai Pad, a hill overlooking Bupu; another *dhogai* was killed by the seven blind brothers of Bupu and became a lagoon, Dhogai Malu, just in front of Bupu (Lawrie, 1970: 10-11, 31-32). Harry Captain (1973) relates how, when he was teaching at Poid in 1930, a *dhogai* was believed to come to the people of Poid at night. Her home was in a large rock, which one day he visited with Kaddy Wailu from Mer. There they saw dugongs 'lying all over the place:' after

a successful dugong hunt, the Muan hunters would leave some of the meat there for the *dhogai* to ensure her benevolence. Despite the meat lying everywhere, the island dogs did not go near that place. In addition to the above, Mua was also home to the monstrous supernatural creatures known as *adhiadh* (bush devils), who stole people away (Lawrie, 1970: 9, 28).²⁹

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ISLANDS

Trade, marriage and warfare linked the Mualgal with their immediate neighbours and, indirectly, with the other western and Central Islands and the two mainlands. 'Barbara Thompson's descriptions give the impression of a continual coming and going of canoe parties between Muralag and all adjacent islands, including Nagi, Mua, and Badu' (Moore, 1978: 303-306). The closest and most cordial relations maintained by the Mualgal were with the Kaurareg, whose leader had 'considerable influence both among the Banks and Mulgrave Islanders' (Chester, 1870a). Despite cordial relations, intermarriage and military alliances, however, breaching the laws of hospitality could cause fissures: the Italgal were not welcomed at Muralag for a whole year because of a raid by a group of visiting Italgal on a *kuthai* (yam) garden (Moore, 1978: 162-163).

TRADE. Torres Strait Islanders conducted a dynamic, interlocking, interdependent system of exchange with established trade partners, which incorporated the peoples of the northern and southern mainlands. Mua was a participant in the principal Western Island trade route, one node among many connections running from Muralag to Badu, Mabuyag, Saibai and Mawatta in New Guinea (Moore, 1984: 35). Revd MacFarlane told Haddon (1935: 65) that the Muans used this route to order their canoes, sending their payment of *alup* (bailer) and *bu* (trumpet) shells,³⁰ *wap* (dugong harpoon) and *bag* (mandibles) to Mabuyag first. The trade in dugong harpoons from Mua with Mabuyag and Badu was particularly important but not, it seems, a reason to abstain from continual warfare (Wilkin, 1904b: 317). In return for *alup*, New Guineans sent daggers of cassowary bone, arrows (one variety being *soekoeri*, another being *kimus*, tipped with cassowary bone or claw) and *upi* (beheading knives). The exchange rate for canoes through Tudu was one head for an ordinary canoe and a mandible for a small canoe. Thompson told Brierly that if a Kaurareg man wanted a canoe he would sometimes contact a relative at Mua, or even go 'directly

to Badu to place his order' (Moore, 1978: 303). So necessary were canoes for survival and so valuable were they that they were named and passed on as inheritance among the lower Western Islanders. The canoe, *Waumeran*, in which a party from Mabuyag set out turtle hunting and ended up on Mua, precipitating the final battle there, was so important that its name was remembered a generation later (Wilkin, 1904b: 308).

Lawrence's (1994) survey of the literature on traditional Torres Strait trade routes shows that Mua was a way station for New Guinea canoes travelling from Badu to Muralag or Nagi. Along with Muralag, Mabuyag and Badu, the people of Mua shaped dugong harpoons (*wap*) for northwards trade with New Guinea via Saibai. *Upiyus*, the large bamboo used for making beheading knives, grew on Mua, possibly a long-ago gift from New Guinea visitors, who used to carry their water in bamboo tubes 'and when it was finished they planted the bamboo' (Lawrence, 1994: 412). Bamboo itself, along with bamboo products like the *gagai*, the two-metre length seasoned bamboo bow, smaller bamboo bows for shooting fish and small bamboo knives, were exchanged with islands without bamboo. Although Nagi and lama also made bows, the Muan bows were apparently the most highly prized and expensive (Idriess, 1947: 161).

Not only material culture objects but also ritual, ceremony and hunting techniques were exchanged along the trade routes: Landtman (1917: 361, 1927: 211) recounts how the Hiamu (lama-Daru people) passed dugout canoes and a sacred dance and ceremony to Nagi, Mua, Badu and Mabuyag; and Haddon (1935: 65) how Barat of Mua taught the Western Islanders how to catch turtle with the suckerfish.

MARRIAGE. Traditionally, inter-island marriages took place within fairly narrowly defined groups of islands and rarely across the language barrier between west and east. Marriage conferred rights to land and residence. Despite contemporary claims that patrilocality was the norm, i.e., that women took up residence in their husband's clan territory (which may have followed the theft of women from other islands, a fairly common occurrence), the earliest observations suggested that arrangements were more complex, contingent and pragmatic, i.e., more typically Melanesian. Barbara Thompson, for example, told her rescuers that, after marriage, a Kaurareg man 'generally went to live with his wife's people, but if the couple came from adjacent

islands they might have alternate residence. In any case, it was usually necessary to look after both the wife's and the husband's land, which would probably be in different places' (Moore, 1978: 264).

Individual Kaurareg with Muan family or clan ties periodically camped on Mua and Muans on Muralag. Manu, one of the three Kaurareg leaders, was camping on Mua with his Muan wife, Kudi, in June 1846, when three Europeans from a *bêche-de-mer* boat, *Thomas Lord*, who had gone to Badu to barter, were murdered (MacGillivray, 1852, II: 27; Moore, 1978: 179, 315). Three years later the two brothers of an Italaig women, married to a Muralag man, were staying with her there (MacGillivray, 1852, II: 7; Moore, 1978: 147-148).³¹ A husband's duty towards his wife and family was to care for them, protect them from harm, and provide food for them; if he beat his wife, or did not give her food, he might be killed through the agency of his father-in-law (Lawrie, 1970: 3, 10, 25, 37). A woman was also expected to be faithful to her husband and provide her family with food (Lawrie, 1970: 25). The story of Muyam and Kodau warns of the consequences of both infidelity and revenge. Muyam of Mua jealously killed his unfaithful wife, Kodau, daughter of the famous sorcerer, Apus. Wilkin (1904b: 308-16) recounts the father's revenge, not only upon his son-in-law but on all the people of Mua through the agency of Mabuyag and Badu.

Barbara Thompson names four Muan (probably Italgai) women married to Kaurareg men, including two of their leaders, Manu and Paikai (MacGillivray, 1852, II: 27; Haddon, 1904a) but there were undoubtedly more. In 1898 Rivers of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition recorded genealogies on Mabuyag, which demonstrate that there was intermarriage between Muan men and women and their neighbours from at least the early 1800s (Haddon, 1904a). Of the 18 pre-contact marriages attested in Laade (1968), Moore (1978) and Haddon (1904a), eight were contracted between Muan (probably Italgai) women and Mabuyag men; five with Muralag men and three with Badu men (see Table 4).³² Only two Muan men married out. These few cases may be an artefact of the data, since Rivers' genealogies, which are the main data source, were collected on Mabuyag not Mua and date back only about five generations. Haddon thought that there was little intermarriage between Mua and Badu but Walter Nona of Badu told me (pers. comm., 2001) that Badu people married to Mua and 'Badu,

Mua and Mabuyag are linked by blood.’ Those Baduans, of course, may have come originally from Mabuyag. One can speculate that a more complete set of Muralag genealogies would be likely to indicate that the majority of Muan out-marriages were with the Kaurareg.

Intermarriage, along with warfare and exchange, created the inter-island alliances (*yabugud*) which undergirded traditional society and proved crucial in the post-contact period in incorporating the Kaurareg who were forcibly removed from Kirriri to Adam in 1922. Intermarriage also paved the way for the incorporation of late 19th century settlers from outside Torres Strait into pre-existing kinship networks, notably the Niue Islanders who settled at Dabu in the mid-1880s collecting shell for James Mills of Nagi and the original Loyalty and Tanna Islanders who, with their Mabuyag wives, in 1905 founded the settlement at Wag which became St Paul’s Mission for Pacific Islanders.

WARFARE. Life on Mua was far from idyllic: as well as the frequent raids for food, women or heads, life was characterised by droughts, hurricanes, crop failures, failure of fish to spawn, insect-borne diseases (some of which, like yaws and possibly dengue fever, may have been endemic), violence and murder. Killing might be done for sport, for revenge, as retribution, out of anger or humiliation or jealousy, and to demonstrate a warrior’s prowess. The weakest members of society were particularly at risk of beheading or capture. Women and children with no husband or extended family to protect them were vulnerable, like the pregnant woman who was refused a place in the canoes fleeing Mua; or like blind Raramai of Palga, grown old and living alone, who was murdered by a group of young Muan men, apparently on a whim (Lawrie, 1970: 38, 41). Most damaging to the society as a whole, however, was endemic inter-island warfare, for, despite ‘their interdependence for many essential and desired trade items, the groups in the western islands seem to have lived their lives with a continual underlying fear of headhunting raids’ (Moore, 1978: 307). During these periodic outbreaks of murder neither women nor children were spared.

There are numerous references in traditional stories to warfare between Mua and neighbouring Badu and Mabuyag, either separately or in alliance. Elderly informants on Mabuyag told Haddon’s Cambridge Expedition team members that their head-hunting expeditions to Mua were so much part of daily routine that they were

‘all same breakfast’ (Wilkin, 1904: 318). Battle alliances were apparently opportunistic, shifting as circumstances dictated: at times the Mualgal joined with Mabuyag but Mabuyag at various times joined with Muralag and Badu against Mua,³³ and tradition also recalls an alliance between Poruma and Mua. According to legend, the Waraber-Poruma people joined with Nagi to fight Mua and the Muans killed almost all the people of Nagi (Lawrie, 1970: 20). On at least one occasion, mainlanders – ‘half Muralag, half Australian’ – joined with Badu and Mabuyag to attack the Muan village of Gu (Wilkin, 1904b: 319). The spoils of victory were not territory, but heads for trade and women for wives. If Haddon’s information was correct (1935: 64), it was the Italgal warriors from the Crocodile moiety on the western side who were engaged in more or less constant warfare with their neighbours, which Moore (1978: 307) speculates may have originated ‘in prehistoric events or ethnic alignments.’ Mua’s main enemies were its Badu neighbours, separated from them by narrow Mua Pass, but Mua and Badu formed an alliance to kill Kuyam of Mabuyag. Badu’s attacks were not limited to raids on Muan territory. After paying a friendly visit of two months to Muralag, a group of Badulgal sailed to Kirriri, where two of their number murdered an old Italaig woman called Gazi, wife of one of their Muralag hosts and mother of six sons, and, returning to Muralag, murdered her brother, Guria, also married to a Kaurareg woman. The siblings had settled among the Kaurareg and the murders were apparently revenge for a supposed slight received by one of the Badulgal from an Italaig a few years previously (MacGillivray, 1852, II: 7; Moore, 1978: 226-227).

We have few Muan stories celebrating their own victories, although traditional stories relate how, despite living under separate clan leadership and in separate villages, the Mualgal united against their enemies. Walter Nona told Steve Foster (pers. comm., 2001) that at one point Mua wiped out Badu but that afterwards ‘Mabuyag came to help and together they wiped out Mua. The district of Argan on Badu was given to the Mabuyag people, because they helped wipe out Mua.’³⁴ This was said to be around the time of Wini,’ i.e., around the mid-19th century.³⁵ In one battle Mua slaughtered a great number of Mabuyag warriors in the shallows of the large bay to the east of Arkai, which is commemorated by the name of Goemulgau Gath (Mabuyag Reef) (Teske, 1991: 2-3).³⁶ The Badu and Mabuyag

TABLE 4. Pre-contact marriages between Mua, Muralag, Badu and Mabuyag. Sources: Laade (1968); Moore (1979); Rivers' genealogical tables in Haddon (1904a).

Name	Sex	Spouse	Spouse's origin
Guria	M	unknown	Muralag
Magaru	M	Kamadi	Badu
Amigu	F	Wanaia	Mabuyag
Dimur	F	Pedia/Mam	Mabuyag
Gamadh	F	Wanaia	Mabuyag
Gazi	F	Paikai	Muralag
Gazima	F	Geia	Muralag
Gisu	F	Mangai	Badu
Kabati	F	Sawi	Mabuyag
Kauza Mawe	F	Mam Harry	Mabuyag
Kawasa	F	Iri	Badu
Kudi	F	Manu	Muralag
Kupwasi	F	Moigub	Badu
Muguda	F	Gasera	Mabuyag
Nagi	F	Deba	Muralag
Sirir	F	Migui	Mabuyag
Ublag	F	Mapia	Mabuyag
Unigadi	F	Yabur	Mabuyag
Yadi	F	Painauda/Wallaby	Muralag

fighting men are said to have led a retaliatory raid on Mua, ambushing a man, whose son, Goba, escaped and hid in a tree (Lawrie, 1970: 46). From there he could only watch as his father was decapitated near the spring at Uma, about 2km from present-day Kubin.³⁷ Wees Nawia told Lawrie (1970: 46) that these events occurred just prior to the arrival of Christianity to Torres Strait and that Goba was about eight years old when he witnessed his father's death. Goba's birth date was not recorded but he was probably born in the mid-1860s.³⁸ If his father had died around 1871, a year before the first missionaries came to Mua, he would indeed have been aged around seven or eight at the time of his father's murder.³⁹

The village of Totalai on Mua's north coast seems to have been a particular target for Mabuyag. During one encounter there, six men, women and children were murdered and their heads taken (Wilkin, 1904: 316).⁴⁰ The killing by Totalai warriors of Waiaba, Bagari and Yati of Mabuyag, some of the party of raiders of the yam gardens near Totalai, broke a truce which had been in place for several years, the time it took for the young boys to grow to manhood. The residents, knowing that they could expect retribution, moved some distance inland to Thoeith,⁴¹ likening the expected retaliatory raid

'to the fire which results from setting alight dead grass which has stood for several years without burning off' (Lawrie, 1970: 121).

The enmity between the peoples of Mua, Mabuyag and Badu reached its climax with the 'massacre of the Muans,' said to have been the last retaliatory killing on Mua before the arrival of Christianity and a symbol of the close of the pre-contact period (see Shnukal 'The last battle of Mua' chapter, this volume). This last battle between Mua and a Mabuyag-Badu alliance, which Haddon (1904c: 277) interprets as a blood feud, 'a private quarrel or wrong [which was] taken up and avenged by the community,' is said to have resulted in the deaths of all the people of Mua (Lawrie, 1970: 122), although the friends and relatives of Badu, who had been given sanctuary there from the battle, presumably returned.

It is difficult at this remove to assess the extent of these cycles of war or the average numbers of casualties and psychosocial wounds inflicted. We do know, however, that the pressure exerted on Muan society altered its organisation and patterns of residence and appears to have marked a psychological change in Muan society, which was apparently unable to renew itself to the same extent as before. By the early 1870s the previously fierce Mualgal had become demoralised and abandoned their coastal settlements. The deaths of their young men removed their best warrior-sailors and potential leaders and left fewer men to mount raids on other islands for heads and women as replacement wives; it meant fewer trips to their home reefs to spear fish and fewer journeys beyond to hunt for turtle and dugong; while the loss of their women and children meant a need to find replacement wives to reconstitute their bands and communities. The burning of their plantations threatened them with starvation and increased the effort which had to be expended on subsistence activities rather than trade wealth accumulation. Living in constant fear of attack from the sea, they fled their coastal villages and gardens to reside in the relative safety of the interior in small family camps on level platforms in the hills under the canopy of 'great leaves which keep out the rain and sun. So dense do they grow that even the reek of the fires can scarcely penetrate them' (Wilkin, 1904b: 312). A certain number of men had to be delegated from other tasks to act as sentinels.

MYTH AND STORY.

Oral testimony of customary exchange across the Torres Strait emphasises a long and continuous history of contact, beginning with the legendary travels of culture heroes and ending with the regular sustained contacts of relatives and exchange partners. To a large extent, the movements of the legendary heroes mirror those daily patterns of intercourse between related village groups and individuals (Lawrence, 1994: 319).

Among the stories relating the numerous battles between the Muans and their neighbours, others celebrate a different kind of connection. Marriage, exchange and warfare forged linkages between Mua and other (mainly western) islands but so too did the intangibles of stories told about the journeys of culture heroes, notably the 'paramount myth' of the murderous cult hero, Kuyam from Mabuyag, but also Naga, Gelam, Waiet, Bia and Ubikubri.

According to one version, Kuyam was the son of an Aboriginal father with magical powers, who married a Mabuyag woman, the daughter of a Kaurareg woman from Muri (Mt Adolphus Island). Kuyam's father crossed first to Nagi and second to Mua, from where he journeyed on to Badu and Mabuyag. At Mua he landed at Pabi, 'walked through Kubin and then went up the west coast as far as Parbar [Purbar], thence across the narrow stretch of intervening water to the island of Badu' and then to Mabuyag (Lawrie, 1970: 88). Kuyam was born on Mabuyag and it was there he died, slain by a combined force of Muan and Badu warriors, and was buried (Haddon, 1904b: 67-83; 110-11). Kuyam fashioned two sacred crescents from turtle shell, his personal *augadh* (magical victory emblems): the larger emblem, Kuthibu, he wore on his chest; the smaller, Giribu, on his back. These he endowed with his own personal power and they became living things, fed with the blood of the small rock cod. During Kuyam's last battle, one *augadh* detached itself from his back and fell into a waterhole. The Muan warriors who killed Kuyam on Pulu then lured the smaller *augadh*, Giribu, from the waterhole and thereby gained some of Kuyam's power. They took it back to Mua and hid it in a hole beneath a big stone to keep it safe. After the missionaries arrived, its hiding place was given the name, Satanan Kupai (Satan's Navel; Lawrie, 1970: 99-101).

Another culture hero whose story incorporates Mua into a network of island relationships was

Naga, head man of Nagi, who protected his people from numerous attacks by the Muans. The two magical pelican feathers he wore in his headband were transformed into canoes whenever he threw them into the sea. 'Naga led his men to Mua many times in the feather canoes' but, as the number of his warriors dwindled, he began to lure men from Mua, Badu, Mabuyag and Muralag to his home island to fight, where he had the advantage (Lawrie, 1970: 19-20). Naga carved masks and gave one mask each to Tudu, Waraber and Mua, reserving one for Nagi. He also gave one *akul* (mangrove mussel) knife each to Muralag, Waraber, Tudu, Iama, Mua, Badu, Mabuyag, Masig, Poruma and Aureed. Naga used the valve of the *akul* as a knife to carve his masks and he gave these knives to the men of these ten islands so they could carve their own masks (Haddon, 1890b: 179, 192).

Similarly, Gelam, who took the best fruit and soil from Mua and journeyed from Gerain to Nagi, Iama, Masig, Erub (Darnley Island), before ending his journey at Mer (Bosun, 2001: 16), links all those peoples;⁴² Bormai, the Miriam culture hero, came from mainland New Guinea, travelled in various guises to Boigu, Dauan, Mabuyag, Badu, Mua, Nagi, Iama, Masig, Dauar and Waier before reaching Mer (Haddon, 1908: 61);⁴³ Waiet, another Eastern Island culture hero, traces his journey from the Fly River to Mer and then to Badu, Mua, Nagi and Mabuyag (Haddon, 1928: 129); Bia, an Aboriginal culture hero, who created the spring at Alau, not far from Injinoo, set off to visit the islands north of his home – Muralag, Palilag (Goode Island), Warar (Hawkesbury Island) and Badu, then to Purbar on Mua, and afterwards to Iama and eastern Erub – creating springs with his magic spear (Lawrie, 1970: 49-50). Yet another story links Mua with the small New Guinea village of Buzi, situated directly opposite Boigu. This tells how Ubrikubri of Buzi was killed by a crocodile, also called Ubrikubri, which swam to Buru Reef and then to Mua and Badu where it remained and can still be seen swimming in Mua Pass (Lawrence, 1994: 298, 405-406).

These stories retain their contemporary significance precisely because they symbolically recapitulate, legitimise and strengthen bonds between Mua and its western, eastern, northern and southern neighbours. We cannot now know whether these stories recapitulate the journeyings of actual individuals, who long ago travelled along those routes and established relations with the people, or were created after the fact

to explain longstanding interconnectedness and affinity, or both.

CONCLUSION

Mua was not visited by the naval surveyors of the 1840s, nor apparently by any Queensland government official until 1871 (Chester, 1871). However, despite the dearth of first-hand ethnographic evidence, contemporary European observations, incidental details from traditional stories and more recent scholarly research allow us to make educated guesses about the origins of the Mualgal and the nature of their traditional social organisation, major settlements, daily activities, cultural practices and beliefs, and relations with outsiders in the immediate pre-Christian period. This chapter has attempted a synthesis of currently available material in the hope that it will prove useful for the people of Mua and their descendants, wherever they now reside; and possibly assist future ethnographical and archaeological research.

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- the Dog clan came from Badu and was the daughter of Maidabu.
- 4 Of course, both statements may be true in that the closer the connection the greater the potential for animosity.
- 5 Ilapnab was gazetted as island reserve R77 in *Queensland Government Gazette* 1952, 2: 8 and formed part of the Mua native title claim. The word *ilap* means 'fish bait.'
- 6 Moore (1978: 310-311) hypothesised that '[i]f the Prince of Wales group and Mua were colonised by a pre-Austronesian group from Papua, this might explain the minor part played by horticulture in the economy of the southern islands, as compared with those closer to Papua.'
- 7 *Augadh* could also mean 'a strange object deemed to have mysterious strength and revered as a protector against enemies (Lawrie, 1970: 254). Kuyam's magical emblem (*augadh*), Giribu, seized by the Muans after their murder of the Mabuyag culture hero, Kuyam, and taken back to Mua, was considered to give some protection to the Muans, although it was not as powerful there as on Mabuyag (Haddon et al., 1904: 372).
- 8 Close to Bulbul and Gerain is the hill, Gerain Pad. Lawrie (1972) specifies that Usar first lived at Gerain at a place called Gebalagat; after Gelam's birth, she went to live at Nagu Ubar, near Bulbul. The Murray Islanders remember Gelam's mother's name as Atwere.
- 9 Each Western Islander 'has a chief totem and several subsidiary ones. Certain clans have the same chief totem, while differing in their subsidiary totems' (Landman, 1927: 190).
- 10 This information came from 'Naiama, the oldest living man in Mua' and was relayed to Haddon by Revd MacFarlane. This was probably Namai who was born in the mid-1860s and was a good friend of MacFarlane, who served in Torres Strait from 1917 to 1933.
- 11 Oza Bosun to Bishop Anthony-Hall-Matthews (pers. comm., 2004). I am indebted to Bishop Hall-Matthews for sharing this information.
- 12 These concepts are not linguistically differentiated in the Torres Strait languages.
- 13 He also notes that 'the men who exert the greatest influence in these islands at the present moment, are the lineal descendants of those same chiefs.'
- 14 The place of the final battlefield is identified as Adam and the victims were Italgai. Edwards & Edwards (1997: 6) identify Arkai on the south-western side of Mua as the site of the massacre but this is may be a conflation of two major battles, one which followed a landing on the beach at Arkai (Bruno David, pers. comm., 2006).
- 15 Information about the epidemic, which came from the Pacific via Australian ports, and its effects on the Torres Strait population can be found in Aplin (1875), Mullins (1992), Shnukal (2002).
- 16 This is the Muan dialect pronunciation of the word. In the Top Western Islands it is *nath*.
- 17 Neil Schomberg, pers. comm., 2005.
- 18 The name comes from *thura* (guard, lookout, watch) + possessive suffix *au* (belonging to) + *kula* (rock).
- 19 Tennant (1959: 187) says that Rattler Tom, the elderly bell-ringer at Kubin, called this rope *trei* but I have been unable to trace this word. All other sources give *amu*. Rod Mitchell suggests that it may be a form of the verb *thoeyai* (throw) or even refer to the foreplatform on the

ENDNOTES

- 1 Barbara Thompson came on board the *Rattlesnake* on 16 October 1849, aged about 21. A Scottish woman, she had lived with the Kaurareg from September 1844, after the wreck of the cutter *America* and the deaths of her husband and crew (Bateson, 1972 I: 171). Her story is told by Briery (Moore, 1978) and MacGillivray (1852) and as fiction by Idriess (1947).
- 2 In some accounts these men are specified as 'Maori' but it is difficult to know exactly what is meant by that term in this context.
- 3 Note, however, that the Mabuyag Islanders told Rivers (Haddon, 1904a, table 3) that Gamadh (or Gamodh) from

- canoe bows, where the harpooner stands to throw the harpoon. Many of Tennant's traditional language spellings, including personal and place names, are idiosyncratic.
- 20 Lawrie (1970: 65) writes that 'spears are thrown at a target – a drifted log, or the trunk of a wild cotton-tree,' and the target practice was often accompanied by a chant.
 - 21 Women also danced but separately from the men.
 - 22 Three kinds of pandanus grow on Mua: *bom* grows taller than *buruwa*, has smaller, finer and softer leaves with more spines than *kithal* and the center part is used as a pig food. *Bom* is not suitable for mat weaving but is used in the construction of gates, fences and pigpens. Lawrie (1970: 99) mentions coarse mats made from coconut leaf (*potawaku*), although coconuts were not plentiful on Mua and its neighbouring islands in pre-contact times: Revd W. W. Gill (1876: 201), arriving from the Pacific in 1872, found it 'strange to see the large islands of the Straits without a cocoanut-tree on them.' As the party sailed up the Inner Route, its members planted 50 coconut trees on different islands. This policy was continued under the residency of John Douglas and his departmental successors.
 - 23 These are the varieties mentioned in Lawrie (1970) but other shellfish have been found in excavation sites on Mua: *budi*, *it*, *bu*, *gein*, *mudu* and *kabar* (David et al. 'Archaeological excavations at Gerain and Urakaraltam' chapter, this volume).
 - 24 In some Western Island stories the bond is severed by matricide, as in the case of Kuyam.
 - 25 The botanical name for *paiwa* is *Ocimum canum*, a kind of sweet-smelling sandalwood tree. The bark was used in ritual practices connected with the *kod*, as well as in divination and wind-calling.
 - 26 According to Neil Schomberg (pers. comm., 2005), this was not too long before his brother, Lewis's, birthday on 10 September, which would place it at the beginning of *soewlal* (mating turtle season).
 - 27 According to Rod Mitchell, the correct form is *soegal* 'mourning fringe,' two cross-chest bands worn like a cloak and made of frayed sago leaves, dyed red with a fringe in front and back.
 - 28 The *dhogai* is a Torres Strait variant of the European 'crone' of fairy tales, a powerful mythical female creature with hideous sharp features, long ears, red eyes, heavy breasts and long, skinny arms and legs. They live in stones, caves, hollow trees or underground and can transform themselves into humans, animals, trees, stars and rocks. They are both feared and ridiculed, being cunning, jealous, lustful, usually malevolent, but sometimes kind. Parents would discipline their children by threatening that the *dhogai* would steal them away unless they behaved.
 - 29 The large boulder at Isumulai, called Karakar Kula, was formerly an *adhiadh* (Lawrie, 1970: 45).
 - 30 Refers to both trumpet shell, *Syrinx aruanus*, and triton shell, *Charonia tritonis*.
 - 31 The Italgai origin of the woman and her brother here support Haddon's contention that it was the Italgai from Mua who were constantly feuding with the Badulgal.
 - 32 Mabuyag men stole women from Mua. The Tanna man Kaio Kris, who lived on Mabuyag before the arrival of the missionaries, told his descendants that he had participated in the night-time raiding parties. On one occasion they surrounded the people of Bulbul, 'tied them up and took them to Mabuyag, men women and children.' Even 'after civilization Mabuyag still took women from Mua' (Sam Nako Kris, pers. comm., 2004).
 - 33 The physical proximity of Mua, Badu and Mabuyag is underlined by their inhabitants' common traditional name of Maluiligal, 'the people of the deep water passages' (Ephraim Bani in Gray & Zann, 1988: 13), sometimes also called 'Mid Western Islanders'; others, however, limit that term to the people of Badu and Mabuyag.
 - 34 In Lawrie (1970: 79) the Badu people are said to have rewarded Mabuyag for their help in avenging the death of Pitai by giving them half of their island, 'all the land on Badu north of a line drawn from Kulkai on the east coast to Wam on the west coast.'
 - 35 The little contemporary information about Wini, the 'hero' of Idriess's *The wild White man of Badu*, comes from Barbara Thompson, who met him at Muralag several times (Moore, 1978; MacGillivray, 1852), Jardine (1865) and Chester (1871). He called himself 'Gienow' (possibly *goeinaw* 'Torres Strait pigeon'), was tall, light-haired and pock-marked, middle-aged by the late 1840s, his skin darkened by the sun. He had arrived on Badu c.1840 in a small open boat and been adopted by two Badu brothers, whom he assisted in canoe repairing and all their daily activities (Moore, 1978: 177, 244). He lived by himself on land belonging to the brothers and died in the 1860s (Chester, 1871). Whereas Moore (1978: 9) is scathing about Idriess's account of Wini 'as a ruthless killer who incited the Badulgal to massacre any whites who came within their power,' blaming a misinterpretation by MacGillivray of Barbara Thompson's story, he may be understating Wini's influence and temperament. Moore's description of Wini as 'a mild-mannered, middle-aged man [...] who [was] careful not to provoke any hostility' does not entirely square with his story of having killed his companion on the boat and thrown him overboard (Moore, 1978: 145), nor with Jardine's highly coloured account of the man. He was considered useful and, while not possessing any particular authority, being dependent on the good will of the brothers and clan leaders, was possibly something of a good-luck talisman for the Badu people. Mrs Thompson was told that he was living on Badu 'at the time of the wreck of a vessel of which the crew was murdered by the natives.' He was rumoured to have been involved in the murder of various Europeans and Jardine (1865) was told that the Cape York people held him 'in the greatest dread.' Wini is said to have had three sons by two different unmarried Badu women (Moore, 1978: 177); they were allowed to survive only because they were males and Badu was in need of a constant supply of warriors. Fr Seriba Sagigi told Laade (1964), who discounted the information, that he was a descendant of Wini; Walter Nona speculated that Zawa and Tom Madu might be Wini's children (Steve Foster, pers. comm., 2001). However, in December 1860 MacGillivray (1862: 4) was told by Nagi Islanders that a young woman visiting from Badu 'was a daughter of Wini, who was still living, and was the father of ten other children'; and Jardine had heard from the Cape York Aborigines that he had 'several wives and large families who are pale, my blacks say, like whitemen' (Jardine, 1865).
 - 36 Literally 'Mabuyag shallows,' the traditional name for the Mabuyag people being Goemulgal.
 - 37 In 1967 Kubin village drew its water supply from the spring, Uma (Lawrie, 1970: 45).
 - 38 Goba died in 1949. He and his wife Dub had three documented children, all born at Mua: Naika Pati born c.1889; Jimmy Nawari born c.1891; and Merian (or Maryann) born c.1893. According to Bruno David (pers. comm., 2002), there was another son, Genai Goba.

- 39 There is little official documentation on the early inhabitants of Mua. However, a book of divers' licenses 1915-1958, held in the Thursday Island Court House, records a diver, 'Gob,' possibly Goba, on the *Pelican* in March 1915. He is described briefly as 'black' in colour and 5' 6" (168cm) tall.
- 40 There is a tantalising reference to a pre-contact 'big house,' probably at Totalai, in Wilkin (1904: 316), in which the Muans intended to confine three canoe-loads of stranded Mabuyag visitors before killing them.
- 41 The word *thæith* as a common noun refers to a type of mat.
- 42 In another Eastern Island version Gelam journeyed via Nagi, Waraber and Poruma to Mer (Haddon, 1908: 54). In that version Gelam's mother was Atwere, not Usar.
43. Kitaoji (in Ohshima, 1983: 6) excludes Badu and Mua from Bomai's journey but includes Muralag.

