# The Converted War Canoe: Cannibal Raiders, Missionaries and *Pax Britannica* on Dobu Island, Papua New Guinea

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***Abstract:*** This article examines an historic event of peacemaking: the moment in which warfare was given up by the Dobu Islanders of Papua New Guinea. I provide a larger context of the event by combining the detailed historical sources with local memories and ethnographic detail from my fieldwork over 20 years. This lets me compare three notions of peace: the systemic view of the colonial authority, the spiritual perspective of the missionaries, and the temporal and superficial peace of Dobu Islanders. Framed by newly emerging power relations, the event reminds us that peace is a complex concept that needs more theorizing.

**Keywords:** colonial history, Papua New Guinea, Methodist mission, peace, war canoe, Dobu Island

***Résumé :*** Cet article s'intéresse à un événement historique de pacification : le moment où les habitants de l'île de Dobu, en Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée ont abandonné la guerre. Je présente le contexte élargi de l'événement en combinant les sources historiques détaillées avec des souvenirs recueillis localement et des détails ethnographiques tirés de mes vingt ans de travail de terrain. Cela me permet de comparer trois concepts de paix : la vision systémique des autorités coloniales, la perspective spirituelle des missionnaires et la paix temporelle et superficielle des insulaires de Dobu. Encadré par des relations de pouvoir récentes, l'événement nous rappelle que la paix est un concept complexe qui exige davantage de réflexion théorique.

**Mots-clés :** histoire coloniale, Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée, missions méthodistes, paix, canot de guerre, île de Dobu

## Introduction

This article describes and analyzes a historic event that has become a trope for "the end of warfare" in Papua New Guinea: the 1891 conversion of a war canoe (*epoi*) into a peace canoe (Christianity canoe: *waga tapwalolo*) on Dobu Island.[1] According to the accounts of the first missionaries, this conversion initiated the successful establishment of *Pax Britannica* in the belligerent Massim region. A current Methodist website uses the story of this conversion to demonstrate the power of God, but the descendants of the canoe builders tell a different version based on local notions of magic and pollution. By discussing the different notions of peace that were driving the dynamics of this event, I show that peace may refer to various ideals and may be packaged in various metaphors for different purposes. The cultural construct of peace needs more attention, beginning with a clarification of our paradigms. What, exactly, are we striving for? Is it the end of warfare, internal peace of mind or only a moment of rest in an ocean of conflict?

Warfare in the Massim region refers to small raiding parties that ambush another village at night, burning houses, looting, killing and, sometimes, taking captives. This type of warfare was common in early contact times, but there were also particularly unwelcome raids against trade posts. Pax Britannica, in spite of its Latin meaning, only stopped the raids; it did not create a truly peaceful society in Dobu as the missionaries failed to bring the promised individual peace of mind. To Dobu Islanders, this failure was disappointing but ultimately not surprising, since their word for peace refers to a calm sea, a state that is desirable and admirable and yet superficial, temporary and potentially treacherous. This model, based on a different concept of personhood (Kuehling 2005), stands in contrast with the Methodist version and its idealized, rhetorically crafted peace through God.

We often seem to take the meaning of peace for granted, but when sociologist Milton Rinehart discussed the notion of peace in his graduate course, he was surprised that the students disagreed on the meaning of the term. They were divided between three concepts: the "absence of war," the idea of "justice" and a peaceful state of mind, of "being one with God" (Rinehart 1995). Almost two decades later, the meaning of peace continues to be unpacked and our discourse on "longing for peace" remains grounded in a fuzzy notion. Many of Rinehart's students agreed to the construction of peace as the absence, or management, of conflict (e.g., Kenneth Boulding, Gray Cox 1986, Johan Galtung 1981) that situates peace "outside the individual or his or her relationship to others and society" (383). Obviously, the structural-functionalist paradigm is still lingering, in which "peace is more the product of social systems (i.e., institutions) than of interactional patterns or subjective states" (383). To achieve peace or justice at the very least, structural changes need to be implemented. North American mainstream media use the terms *peace* and *justice* in this sense but, in a hegemonic context, the implementation of peace is obviously problematic. Can peace be forced upon others?

A second group of students regarded peace in a more encompassing and individual way, as "peace of mind" or spiritual peace (386). In this view, peace begins inside the individual and exists in interactional, subjective relationships (e.g., Peck 1987). Peace-building, in this view, is a process that fosters mutual respect and understanding, creating states of harmony, tranquility and oneness (Rinehart 1995:386). Bruce Bonta, for example, defines peacefulness as

> a condition of human society characterized by a relatively high degree of interpersonal harmony; little if any physical violence among adults, between children and adults and between the sexes; workable strategies for resolving conflicts and averting violence; a commitment to avoiding violence (such as warfare) with other peoples; and, strategies for raising children to adopt and continue these nonviolent ways. [Bonta 1996:405]

In a similar vein, Gray Cox (1986) argues that a solely negative definition of peace does not provide visions for more harmony and calls for a more positive, action-based peace-building through better understanding and communication. The proponents of this construction of peace have faith in the human capacity to live in harmony with others and the environment, assuming that some societies are equipped with sharper social tools to eliminate conflict, based on interpersonal interactions. They argue that mediation and meditation, holistic strategies to resolve conflict, are present in numerous political and religious practices and continuously employed in negotiating conflict. This individual-based concept of peace leaves open questions, too. Is there a measuring scale for states of peace? What conditions and ideologies promote the success of peacemaking, and can such a process be communicated across societies or even implemented by outsiders? Galtung's call for "a very fluid, very flexible approach to peace" (1981:196), while certainly valid, did not, as yet, result in more peaceful relations. Neither, after all these years, is there a wealth of literature on different concepts of peace.

In the peacemaking event discussed here, both these constructions of peace—ideologically wrapped in colonial justice (structural, pessimistic, based on fear) and God's power (individual, optimistic, based on faith)—combined to end cannibal raiding and to assist in the establishment of colonial control. As I will demonstrate, they unknowingly encountered a third, Dobuan construction of peace as a surface phenomenon (social, based on magic). Did a more peaceful society emerge from this muddle of intentions, visions and instructions, unreflected by the whites and misunderstood by the islanders? By combining different types of data, historical texts from missionary sources and field notes, I provide a well-documented example for the different notions of peace used as strategies by the various parties. This leads me to argue that peace is a fluid concept that requires more scholarly attention, especially in regard to variety in its construction. The example also shows how power relations are interlinked with peacemaking negotiations, and how mutual misunderstandings can lead to unexpected outcomes.

Studying peace can lead to romanticizing and stereotyping and I am deeply sceptical of Bonta's category of "peaceful societies" (1996) and his argument that conflict and violence are not part of human nature.[2] The event that I analyze here concerns a situation where violence (cannibal raiding) was caused by a complex tangle of masculinity, lack of protein, revenge and power relations within Dobu society. The actual offshore enemy was not involved in the peacemaking in this interaction between key players on the island; however, it effectively ended cannibal raids led by Dobu warriors.

Peace, like war, is a product of politics. Bruce Knauft has emphasized that practices of tribal warfare in Melanesia were linked, in complex ways, with "larger political and regional patterns of social control and resistance," as well as "indigenous political systems"

(1990:292). The Dobu version of Pax Britannica, I argue, was possible because it concerned the hostile relationships only with those on distant shores. On the island itself, the end of raiding did not conflict with micro-level politics, as former warriors proudly wore British police badges and all islanders appreciated the new safety from enemy attack.

Peace, however, goes further than war; it concerns the whole society. Our academic fascination with war, from early accounts of "savages" and ecological explanations to more inclusive analyses of the position of warfare within larger political systems, often does not go beyond organized, male warriors and ignores the larger context of gendered violence and fear in everyday life. I agree with Knauft on the problematics of "studying only war when it is peace that is ultimately desired" (1990:292) and that the larger context of practical political systems needs to be taken into consideration. To understand warfare better, Knauft suggests paying close attention to "the articulations between cultural values and political control" (295). Polly Wiessner's recent analysis of Enga warfare is a good example for such a focus (Wiessner and Pupu 2012). A similar approach is instructive for the study of peace. I will now take a closer look at the actions of the missionaries and Dobu Islanders as the last raid was cancelled and Pax Britannica was imposed in July 1892.

## Dobu, the "Savage Heart of the D'Entrecasteaux"

The small, volcanic island of Dobu lies nested between two large, mountainous islands named Fergusson and Normanby that are within sight and, when the tide is right, only an hour of paddling away. The people from these two larger islands resettled Dobu after its volcano erupted, sometime in the vaguely remembered but not yet recorded past. To this day, there are outposts of Dobuan villages on both Normanby and Fergusson, evidence of old relations and past conflicts that led to the splitting of matrilineages and of friendly relations built by intermarriages and other exchange relationships. Dobu Islanders were also involved in fights with people from Fergusson and Normanby. The island was, and in some ways still is, divided into several provinces, of which the area of 'Edugaula became locally famous as headquarters of the Methodist Mission in 1891 (see map in Appendix 1).[3]

This article is based on my ethnographic fieldwork of 18 months on Dobu Island (July 1992–January 1994) and subsequent shorter visits (1997, 2009, 2012), as well as on a wealth of documentation from a variety of historic sources—unpublished journals, letters, word lists and full-fledged dictionaries of Methodists who worked on the island, the monograph of the first missionary, Bible School material, patrol reports from the British colonial administrator, expedition reports and scholarly texts.[4] The reason for this exceptionally rich coverage may be found in Dobu's image of being the "savage heart of the D'Entrecasteaux" (Young 1983:5; 1997:100).[5] The islanders were vilified and exoticized when white explorers, colonial administrators, missionaries and anthropologists used them to fill a "savage slot" (Kuehling 2005). Dobuans were portrayed as "a strong seafaring community of exceptional ferocity, who, as raiders and cannibals said to have drunk the blood of their victims, were the scourge of the coasts of a large area" (Brass 1960:21). The missionary William Bromilow reported that the islanders "were the only natives in south-east Papua who ate human flesh and drank human blood raw! Other tribes looked upon this as degrading, themselves practicing a 'higher' cannibalism" (1929:125). Today's islanders know from hearsay that their forefathers ate human flesh, both as part of a festive ritual dish (*buyo*) and as retaliation in special rituals called *mebu* (Bromilow 1910; Róheim 1954:487). The end of cannibal raiding on Dobu is now a well-known story, popular in church and at school, narrated to tourists and anthropologists. Here, I re-narrate the story to show that peace is a complex, political state that is locally, culturally and circumstantially constructed. Considerations of the actors created peace in this instance, as the advantages of accepting Pax Britannica clearly outshone the aspirations of warrior fame.

Combining the abundant historical sources with fieldwork-based data has enabled me to understand the course of events more deeply. My work benefited from being familiar with the locations, speaking the language fluently and knowing Gaganumole's descendants. Through fieldwork, I have gained first-hand experience with the islanders' stereotypes of white people, and I am confident in saying that the islanders did not differentiate as clearly between the colonial administration and the mission as others would. Many islanders generously shared their memories with me, most recently Mr Papu Pika from Mwemweyala—the place where the event happened. My previous analysis of the Dobu concept of personhood as consisting of a visible outside and a hidden inside (Kuehling 2005) guided me to see peace as a construct tied to fundamental questions about being human. Linguistic analysis confirmed my "gut feeling" that the Dobu term for peace is differently constructed from my own. Drawing from both literature and field notes, I now tell the story of The Converted War Canoe.

## "Putting It Strongly": Preaching for Peace

On Thursday, July 7, 1892, 30-year-old Eleanor Walker, a missionary sister at the Methodist Mission on Dobu Island, wrote in her private journal her version of events that unfolded 13 months after the missionaries' first landing. Although Walker was not an eyewitness to the event that has become a key narrative of conversion and the case study of this article, her version may serve as a point of entry.

> July 7, Thur. There has been a great event today, Gaganumole's new canoe was launched this afternoon and named "Marama"[6] after Mrs. Bromilow. It has been years in preparation but finished just lately. The old chief intended calling it "Enute" the name of a village where his brother was killed, which of course meant that it would be ever in their memory and most likely in that canoe they would go to take revenge, but Mr. Bromilow persuaded him not to give it that name. So he said he would call it "Marama." [Walker 1892–93]

Bromilow himself tells the story in much more detail in his monograph *Twenty Years among Primitive Papuans* (1929). He wrote that one day, while wandering along the footpath, he came across festive cooking in nearby Mwemweyala hamlet. Always eager to learn new words and practices, he "joined the little crowd" (1929:144) and saw some men working on the hull of a canoe. He found out from Gaganumole that the canoe was to become the vessel for a raid to avenge the violent death of Gaganumole's older brother, Kasualibi. The missionary set out to discourage this plan

> by pointing out that these were new times, that it was a mistake to build a new vessel of war, since peace was coming soon to all these islands. One day, when a number were gathered in the neighbourhood of the canoe, I put it strongly: let Dobu set an example to all others; everybody knew how the 'Edugaulans were the greatest warriors of the Group, let them be first in peace as they had been in war; let the canoe have another name! [Bromilow 1929:145]

Instead of Eneute, the name of the enemy's village, some men suggested the canoe should bear Bromilow's nickname, which was Saragigi, referencing his denture (literally, to move teeth, *sara* with fingers, *gigi*), but he may have seen that as too much of a responsibility (or too inappropriate to enter history: imagine a canoe named Denture spreading the good word and distributing food to the needy).[7] He refused the honour: "I do not want my name on the canoe; choose another" (Bromilow 1929:144). A woman stood up and shouted that the canoe should be named Marama, the title of his wife that had been used during his previous term on Fiji. That was a good choice, Bromilow continues in his account, and he and his wife watched with bliss the final steps of completion, contributing "a few gifts, including flags for the launching" (1929:145). The artful carvings and shell decorations showed a "revelation of native taste and skill" (1929:145) as they were carried out with "immense care"; but,

> before the final touches were added, the canoe was secluded in a shed specifically built for it and no woman, not even Marama herself, was allowed to see it. It was explained to me that a woman's touch or as much as a woman's glance would make the canoe so heavy that it would be impossible to paddle it. When I sought to get at the inwardness of this, the only reply given and probably the only possible one, was that such was *bubuna Dobu* (the custom of Dobu). [Bromilow 1929:145]

The completed canoe was "a noble craft of its kind"; Bromilow praised *Marama's* triumph over *Eneute*: "The 'Edugaulans are the Vikings of those seas, and many of their number must have felt that their glory had departed when this splendid canoe was to carry no warriors" (1929:145). At the end of the canoe launch, Bromilow observed a peacemaking gesture: a young man split a green coconut open with one strike and poured its water out into the sea. Gaganumole explained that this was the last step from war to peace, a final message of contempt to Eneute: "We do not mean to fight them. But if these times of peace had not come upon us and we had not become like women, we would have had our revenge. It is all over. We have said we will not fight them" (Bromilow 1929:148; see also Young 1980:95).[8]

Based on these events, Bromilow could now travel the region in the *Marama*, with Gaganumole as a guide, to visit some of the tribes and former enemies (Benjamin 1912:71). Together, they convinced people to give in to the new order and support the mission; they were evidently very successful. The Bromilows lorded over the station in extremely righteous ways, and Lily had "an iron hand covered with a velvet glove" (Walker 1892–93:46). The carpenter also noted that he "offended the Bromilows" repeatedly (Bardsley 1892:24, 25, 37, 78).

Within less than four years, the station was well established and visiting Administrator MacGregor was clearly pleased with the success of his institutional intervention in local politics by means of mission stations at the fringe of administrative reach in British New Guinea. He wrote that, in 1895–96, "all was found to

be well there, and the Rev. W. Bromilow had heard of no recent unusual occurrence in the district" (1897:3). Bromilow's simple method of pacification, in his own view, was persuasion and God's help: by talking to Gaganumole, he turned his mind from evil to good. A recent version on a Christian website describes the conversion of the canoe as if the warriors, hearing God's call, had themselves realized that it was immoral to engage in revenge raiding and cannibalism and were glad to receive Bromilow's advice on better purposes for the large canoe (Beacon Media, n.d). The conversion of the war canoe on July 7, 1892, in Dobu is now used as a moralistic device to give young children a sense of God's love.

Between Sister Walker's descriptive report in her private journal, Bromilow's paternalistic prose (for an analysis, see Young 1980:294) and the Dobuan versions of the story, the event had its positive outcome: the end of raids in Dobu. To the missionaries, there was also the benefit of a boat to support their work and reach out to other islands (Young 1980:92) and, in fact, as 'Edugaula's involvement in cannibal raids ended and mission stations spread, the wider region was pacified within the following decade and Methodism thrived (see Young 1977). The event was presented as a "sign of divine grace" (Young 1980:93) in Bromilow's autobiography, as an example of the slow but worthy process of conversion from cruel cannibal raider to reliable helper.

There were many more layers and players that were silent when this story became a well-known chorus in the hymn of conversion. The missionary's peace, an inner state that is displayed in non-violent behaviour, converged well with the colonial administration's interest in pacification as an institutional, structural change in the chain of commands. Gaganumole, on the other hand, agreed to end raiding for reasons that reflect his own sense of peace in a world of magic potency. If Bromilow believed in peace through prayer and MacGregor in peace by structural changes, Gaganumole's perspective was based on a different view, as I argue now by adding field data.

## A Woman's Touch: Peace by Pollution

While Bromilow ascertains that the conversion was based on his words, the descendants of Gaganumole and his contemporaries told me their own versions of the incident. Cannibal raiding, I was told by Papu Pika, was initiated by Gaganumole only a few years before colonialization begun, as a reaction to the great famine that ensued after the volcano on Dobu had erupted (see Macintyre 1983:233 for the story of Gaganumole's youth). When the missionaries arrived, Mwemweyala and Losina were mourning Gaganumole's brother Kasualibi, who had been killed during a raiding expedition to Eneute on the Miadeba side of Normanby Island. The Dobu warriors were ambushed when sneaking up to the enemy's village at night, and Kasualibi was too slow and the Eneute warriors caught him. Two of his affinal relatives, from Gaula and Warauya hamlets, managed to fight the Eneute men and carry Kasualibi's body back to the canoe for proper burial on Dobu.

Grief and social pressure to avenge his brother had driven Gaganumole to begin building a new war canoe (*epoi*). The preparations took years, even before the canoe tree was chosen, because larger yam gardens, several pigs and complex political arrangements were required. Gaganumole met the challenge, invested in his networks and devoted his time and energy to it. When the missionary party arrived, the canoe was almost completed, hidden from all eyes in its shed (*joejoe*) on the beach. Lily Bromilow was adopted into Mwemweyala hamlet as Gaganumole's "sister," so she was aware of the canoe and involved in the women's work for it.

Building a large war canoe, I was told, was a major enterprise, requiring the effort of many workers.[10] The different stages included various meetings in which Gaganumole, the master builder (*tosamwana*), distributed cooked food (*buyo*) and betel chewing ingredients, recruiting the volunteer workers needed for his project. After he announced the specific tree for the canoe (a red cedar, *mwadawa*), the owner of this tree (the *tobwala'upwa*, literally the "person who cuts the skin") and his helpers cut the tree and received gifts for their work. Gaganumole and his helpers stripped the bark (*tagi* or *wagi*) and gauged the future shape before they pulled the partly formed and hollowed log to its beach hut in Mwemweyala. There, in the shade of the hut, the men worked on shaping the canoe body (*tala*) and the cutting of additional sideboards (*bwada'ai*) and splashboards (*lagimo*, *tabuye*, *edueduduna*) from the board-like roots of the *wapata* tree. Gaganumole and his master carvers decided on details of the design of the *lagimo* board (*dayasi*) and the setting and tying up of the splashboards (*a'asi*). The carver of the designs of the *lagimo* splashboard was in charge of its protective magic (*lagimo ana didiga*, *lagimo*, "its fear"), which frightened away evil spirits and their dangerous storms. Magic and paint (*saba*) were a secret affair that took about two days, a period in which women and children were not allowed near the canoe. To prevent anyone from spoiling the magic and fresh paint, the canoe was covered with coconut mats. At last, the men lashed the outrigger (*salime*) and platform to the body. The workers always received meals and snacks provided by Gaganumole's wife and his sisters, who organized the cooking by women of both Losina and Mwemweyala hamlets.

At the day of conversion, the work was basically done. Gaganumole only had to announce the name of the new canoe to be written on its prow and stern. The name was to be "Remember Eneute" (*Nua'i'isi Eneute*), referring to the village whose men killed Gaganumole's brother. The naming (*esana sa'u*) was a major public affair followed by a festive meal and, contrary to Bromilow's version, the couple knew very well what was happening. They came to the beach of Mwemweyala where the canoe was lying, ready to be launched after some finishing touches of decoration and lashing. The men halted in their work when the missionaries arrived and politely listened as Bromilow began to enquire about the canoe and begged to have it for his mission instead of using it against Eneute. Gaganumole was not impressed by the proposal as he was considering his need for revenge, his own prestige and his debts to the helpers (which could be met once the canoe was in operation). At the same time, he was scared of the missionary's powers and the risk of punishment by the white men for raiding and killing. So far, he had escaped jail, but the tide had changed as Bromilow now seemed to command not only spiritual but also colonial power.

The reasons why Gaganumole let go of his new war canoe differ among the various Dobuan versions. I most often heard that Marama (Lily Bromilow), who was well informed about local custom because she spent all her time with the women, went ahead and touched the "nose," the *lagimo* splashboard of the new canoe, with her hand. With this act, Lily changed a powerful war canoe into a lame and potentially dangerous "lemon" of a vessel. After Lily polluted the brand-new canoe, Gaganumole burst into tears, "mourning his canoe until his tears were exhausted," and then he sat down and spoke. He said to Bromilow that he could have the canoe. "It is not good any longer; you can use it for yourself." In another version, which I heard less often, both Bromilows happened to be near at the right moment by sheer luck. When the canoe was pushed into the sea for the very first time, it accidentally tilted over and its "nose" touched the sand, causing Gaganumole to give in (or begin to listen to) the missionary's preaching. The canoe was called *Waga Lubi*, after Bromilow's daughter Ruve; all my sources agree on this name. This detail is curious—did Bromilow make up the entire discussion of naming the canoe *Marama* and not *Saragigi*? As a result of donating the canoe to the mission, cannibal raids were over and Gaganumole became a close friend of Bromilow and the captain of *Waga Lubi*. Pika told me Bromilow was very grateful that he had Gaganumole's support, and a short while later Lily Bromilow gave Gaganumole a police uniform shirt. This time, she touched his head while helping him dress and thereby she cunningly polluted the warrior's magic just as she had polluted the canoe.

## Peace and Power: Befriending the Missionary

A closer look at Gaganumole's person and some speculations about his aspirations may help to further flesh out the event of peacemaking. In the light of the Dobu versions, it is unlikely that any vision of peace was on Gaganumole's mind when he agreed to donate the canoe. He was devastated because the magic of his canoe was destroyed and he must also have been very angry; yet he only cried and keened. The course of events demonstrates his laudable self-control and strong ambition to maintain (or regain) a position of status under the new system of power that had imposed itself upon the islanders. I was told many times that he abandoned his plans for revenge because nobody wanted to take the risk of losing a new canoe or being sent to "gaol," and the missionary party's expanding sphere of influence made it impossible to practise all the necessary rituals in secret, to hide from colonial authorities and, certainly, to raid without being reported. To Gaganumole, the differences between colonial administration and mission must have remained enigmatic, but he knew that they were at least allies because he had witnessed (from the distance) Bromilow's arrival on June 13, 1891, which was "indeed an attack in force" (Bromilow 1929:61). Young describes the invasion of

> at least four ships containing, in addition to the 73 members of the missionary party, several resident magistrates, local village constables and interpreters, as well as the Administrator himself, Sir William MacGregor, together with his armed entourage. The Dobuans, one can well imagine, were suitably awed. [Young 1997:101]

The islanders must have been livid that their customary land rights were being violated so shamelessly. They had experiences with violent whites when, only a few years before, a blackbirding ship (named *Hopeful*) had abducted several islanders and killed those who tried to escape (Mackay 1999:5). Of those, only one or two had returned from plantation work in Queensland (Bromilow 1929:79). Usually, and even more so after this incident, foreigners who landed on their shores were not welcome. Dobu Island "was a closed preserve and trespassers would be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law, which was very rigorous indeed" (Bromilow 1929:71). While the missionaries settled down, they were closely observed and the islanders acknowl-

edged that they displayed extraordinary strength, evidenced by their sheer survival on the notoriously haunted land that they were given (a place formerly used to ritually wash skulls), as well as in the immediate neighbourhood of people who used harmful magic on a regular basis. "Underneath the surface of native life there is a constant silent war, a small circle of close kindred alone placing trust in each other. Treacherous poisoning is a common enough custom" (Fortune 1932:137).[11]

Gaganumole's pre-colonial prestige as a *tonidoe* (war leader) had already been slightly damaged by Pax Britannica when Bromilow arrived. At a previous visit, Gaganumole had been warned by Administrator MacGregor and "given authoritatively to understand that head-hunting must be no longer regarded by him as the sport of kings" (Bromilow 1929:115); but, since he had not changed his ways, he was wanted by the government, who repeatedly but unsuccessfully tried to arrest him because Gaganumole fled and hid when a boat approached. From the prestigious role of war leader, Gaganumole had been reduced to a runaway and outcast, at least legally, and obviously tried to repair his status by befriending the missionary. The carpenter of the mission, George Bardsley, described a scene of encounter within the first month in his typewritten journal:

> The old chief is a picture. His frizzy head surmounted by a straw hat. His body covered with a jacket of print in many colours, check pants but only reaching to his legs which from the hip downwards are naked. In his hand is his constant companion, a lime bottle or Carafe, the cork of which is drawn out by a boar's tusk. A wooden pat or knife, with which he lifts the lime to his lips occupies the other hand. As I write he looks wonderingly at me and exclaims, "Oo. a!" signifying the astonishment he must express at seeing me write. [1892:12][12]

Bromilow writes that within the first few days, Gaganumole came as a messenger, a role that fell into his responsibilities as war leader, to talk to the missionary. He wore the same outfit, as presumably this was his uniform to meet Bromilow on similar textile grounds and symbolic eye level:

> He was wearing a white hat of the conventional, civilized brand, though very much the worse to wear—picked up from some trader—a highly coloured check shirt and the customary T-shaped waist garment. But more remarkable than his appearance was the fact that, in spite of it, he made an impressive and manly figure, a fine specimen of a savage chief. He was accompanied by an interpreter—of a sort—who spoke some pidgin English, more pidgin than English; and, through this medium I was given to understand that he was glad to see us on the island, but did not want any more white people here. [Bromilow 1929:116]

Rather than humbly thanking him for the privilege, Bromilow responded in a royal fashion by granting Gaganumole full pardon for his past crimes, a power that had been bestowed upon him by MacGregor. Once Gaganumole understood, "he appeared not to believe the news" (Bromilow 1929:116), probably trying to figure out the new chain of command and realizing that this white man was going to become a major player in local politics. In a way, Bromilow had announced to him that he spared his life, a strong message for a warrior in a society where reciprocity for life and death is expected. There are many stories that Gaganumole and his men nevertheless were initially trying to kill the missionaries. Thune has published a typical story (frequently retold in Methodist sermons) that explains why the warriors did not succeed[13]:

> Gaganumole, Kedoukeda and Gabeiyani went down to the beach to fight him [Bromilow]. But they couldn't do it. Dr. Bromilow prayed and they became friendly with one another. At night the Dobu and Bwaiyowa [also spelled Bwaiowa, a coastline on Fergusson across the Dobu Straits] people gathered and wanted to kill him. But Dr. Bromilow turned the radio on. It was "speaking" while they were sleeping. The government representatives and Dr. Bromilow were fast asleep. Only the voice of the radio was to be heard. But the people said, "Let's return to our homes. There is a big crowd of people there and they are all talking." They said, "Perhaps he is sleeping but there is a crowd of people talking in there." [Thune 1981:3–4; see also Bromilow 1929:72]

In contrast to this version, Papu Pika told me recently that Gaganumole was actually protecting the Bromilows as exchange partners since they had come (so Papu said) from Ware Island and brought *kula* necklaces (*bagi*). In turn, Gaganumole presented a pair of valued shell ornaments (*mwali*) to the missionary (Bromilow 1929:129) and circulated the message that Bromilow was under his protection to his other *kula* partners in the exchange region. By adopting Lily Bromilow into his clan (Bromilow 1929:126–127), Gaganumole constructed the peace of matriliny around them both for their protection and his own profit—Lily's children would belong to Mwemweyala, and as maternal uncle, he was in a position of power over them.[14] According to Papu, it was Gaganumole's protection through *kula*

peace (see Fortune 1932:129) that made the mission possible.

Whatever the reason, Bromilow's party survived and within the first month the administrator, visiting on his return trip from a patrol, was pleased about the islanders' cooperation with the missionary party: "the natives, though rendering many strange suspicions with regard to the ultimate objects of their settlement there, were friendly and rendering good help to the missionaries in the work of building" (MacGregor 1893:565).[15] The first Sunday service, with music, choir and posters, attracted a curious crowd who heard the translator's threat that those who misbehaved would be locked up in jail (Bromilow 1929:73).[16]

The material wealth of the station, his obvious power over his staff and authority within the *dimdim* system, and his fast growing competence in the language and manners of Dobu provided William Bromilow with plenty of social capital, which he further upgraded with Victorian arrogance and Christian self-righteousness (see Young 1977, 1980), assuming a role of the *über*-leader by dominating the man he believed was the highest chief, Gaganumole.[17] The latter, in contrast, constructed the relationship as fraternal (within the *kanagala* clan), marked by equality, reciprocity and respect (see also Young 1977:153). Far from assuming an inferior role, Gaganumole clearly aligned himself with the new power structures so successfully that he later became the government chief of the district: "Truly, it is a far cry from champion headhunter to guardian of the Pax Britannica" (Bromilow 1929:124). Missionary and policeman became friends, debating and giving advice to each other, thereby trying to figure out each other's powers. "Gaganumole suggested to me that I should go out with my gun on a Sunday morning and shoot, by way of making examples of them, a few of the natives who were working instead of coming to church" (Bromilow 1929:117). Although he never converted, Gaganumole became a culture hero, a "brother" to the stranger-hero Bromilow (see Young 1997).[18]

The battlefield ideology and colonial arrogance, motivations and aspirations of the missionaries have found scholarly attention (see Douglas 2001; Eves 1996; Langmore 1989; Reed 1997; Young 1980). Michael Young called the canoe metaphor "a master stroke," both to convince the donors back home in Australia of the beneficial changes from war to peace that were accomplished with their funds and to design colourful sermons (1980:92, 94). The image of peace was instrumental to the narratives of the mission: as a trope for saved souls and proof of beneficial mission work. Individual peace, conversion from within, was supposedly achieved by replacing the institution of raiding with colonial rule, facilitated by the mission; by removing the means for violence (the canoe), potential conflict was avoided. Peace, in its negative definition (absence of physical violence), was achieved by a combination of colonial power and missionary surveillance, which in the view of Dobu Islanders appeared as only one, *dimdim* (westerners) rule.

While we do not know how Gaganumole felt when he released the canoe, whether he was faithful (finding inner peace), fearful (of a jail sentence) or devastated (because his canoe was spoiled), it is likely that the latter emotion caused his tears and surrender. His concept of peace, built on *kula* hospitality, the effectiveness of magic and existence of witches, is essential for an understanding of his role in the donation of his canoe to the missionary. Gaganumole knew powerful magic to manipulate others and did not need the raids for his personal fame. He could be convinced to abandon the war canoe only because he believed in magic and that a woman's touch has polluting powers. To understand his mindset better, I will try to outline the beliefs that made Gaganumole vulnerable to Lily Bromilow's destructive act.

## Peace in the Light of Magic: A Different Construction

The Dobu concept of peace has integrated notions of magical retribution (Kuehling 2005:220; see Róheim 1946). Most deadly illnesses and accidents are explained post hoc as the results of local conflicts and the politics of magical revenge, and village gossip routinely draws connections between bodily harm, envy and anger. Such practices are based on the belief that individuals inflict pain on others as revenge for social misconduct and thus have the practical effect of fear-driven attempts to be a "good person," helping to maintain social control in Dobu, where the authority of elders is limited and leadership is based on merit alone.

Most of the ethnographic literature has classified the fear of being killed by witchcraft or sorcery as "paranoia," a psychological condition. I have argued elsewhere that, in the light of the panoptic capacities attributed to witches, sorcerers, spirits and other beings, the fear of being caught doing wrong is realistic and not clinical (Kuehling 2005; see Stephen 1987 for definitions and discussions of the specific Melanesian view on magic). The existence of powerful beings that can enforce ethical rules informs the Dobu notion of peace as a desirable surface phenomenon; the vulnerability of persons to magical retribution cements their understanding of peace as a volatile and temporary state.[19]

Bromilow reported from the early days of the mission station that "women and the sorcerers were active in opposing the reception of the teachers [in various places on the island]" (1929:75). He caught the "danger-

ous undercurrent of feeling" that his presence caused but somehow managed to repel all magical attacks. Twenty-seven of his staff members, mostly Polynesians, suffered untimely deaths, however, that were credited to Dobu magic by the islanders. On Dobu, this complex belief system is based on the general assumption that every woman is a witch (*welabana*) and has received particular knowledge in her early childhood when she was swallowed by her mother and passed out again from "underneath her skirt" (*agalaunega*). Women always deny being witches, however, and it is an unforgivable insult to call a woman a witch (*awa welabana*), but this belief probably caused Gaganumole to tell Bromilow that "as for women understanding it [Methodism], the only way would be to beat it in with a mallet" (1929:116). The missionaries observed that the older women were most opposed to their work (Billing 1930:72; Tinney 1892–1902:24; Douglas 2001:51). Today, senior women are still believed to be the most powerful witches, greedy for human flesh and almost omnipotent in their state of *welabana*. They reproduce by magically swallowing a young girl and thereby transmitting "everything" (see Lithgow 1975). As other Massim researchers have noted, the witch is in many ways the antithesis of the ideal female gender role: destructive instead of nurturing, uncontrolled instead of disciplined in her emotions, immoral instead of moral (see, e.g., Kuehling 2005:116–142; Lepowsky 1994:204, 273; Macintyre 1995:39).

The political power of women based on the general fear of witchcraft has certainly not waned with Christianity. In Vanatinai (Sudest) (Lepowsky 1991) and neighbouring Molima (Chowning 1987:174), witches reportedly increased after colonial contact. In Dobu, every woman is still suspected to be a witch. To "show respect to God," people make attempts to give up sorcery, burn the notebooks containing spells and involve themselves in church activities. They fail to realize, however, that they continue to operate within the same parameters of belief, perpetuating the fear of witches and sorcerers by praying to be spared by them. Macintyre (1995:42) reports that on Tubetube there was only one man, who was also an atheist, who did not believe in witchcraft. People's accounts of "real" encounters with witches always mention the changed features of the witch in contrast to her normal face: the eyes become big and round, the nose grows much longer, the ears become large and the tongue hangs out of the mouth. All the witnesses who spoke to me about these matters reported their terrible fear; they described a feeling of coldness inside the body, a contraction of the stomach and cold sweat.

Sorcery, in contrast, is secret knowledge that is often attributed to men and passed on as a precious gift (Kuehling 2005). *Nabwasuwa*, the general term for sorcery, refers more specifically to the sorcery of magical killing, known by very few people (but see Fortune 1932). Only three senior men, all my guardians and key informants, claimed success in killing witches by using *nabwasuwa*. There seems to be a range of techniques, such as symbolic killing by thrusting a knife into a banana stem after certain preparations and entrapment of a victim through contact with a bespelled object. As in most parts of Melanesia, personal leavings are vulnerable to sorcery. *Tabu*, the magical protection of property, such as fruit trees, is widely practised on Dobu and is a more commonly known method of inflicting sickness or death. Most men and women know only a few different spells and could only confirm that those on Fortune's list (1932:144) are likely *tabu* that might indeed be practised by some people. Common *tabu* are boils (*lalawa*), sores (*bonu*), skin diseases (*sipoma*), tooth loss and fevers. Each *tabu* spell has its counter-spell (*loulasa*), which enables its owner to remove an affliction from a thief once he or she has given an apologetic *ta'ona* gift and begged for pardon. As boils, sores, skin disease, tooth loss and fevers are commonplace occurrences on Dobu, they appear as evidence that sorcery is still thriving. During my fieldwork, I heard of no actual cases of killing by sorcery but many accounts of seduction of minds and afflicting with sickness. The people who died were secretly speculated to be murdered by witches, by women who were treated disrespectfully and took their revenge. My data do not support Fortune's view that the hamlet was considered a safe place (1932:137), which led Young to infer that "the Dobuan can feel comparatively secure in the bosom of his *susu*, which forms his residential base" (1971:134). Safety or peace of mind derives from "good conduct," especially through obedience and hard work, but it can never be complete as people know very well there are always tensions, usually constructed as envy or anger within the family or hamlet, that materialize as sickness and death.

Christianity, in the larger region around Dobu, did not pacify the magical violence of daily life; it just made the shores and seas safe for strangers to travel and to engage in commerce (see Kahn 1983). Pax Britannica emerged as a minimal form of peace, marked by the absence of organized physical violence by forces other than the state. Gaganumole, people believe, used sorcery in his job as policeman to threaten and punish, to find hidden objects and to divine the identity of culprits. To this day, most men and women do not jettison their sorcery and witchcraft; consequently, the Pax Britannica did not result in the end of magical violence. Bromilow told his superior, George Brown, that people were indeed questioning his notion of peace: "A child died the other

day and the friends were quite angry because the witches had not heeded the words of the lotu, i.e. the Christian religion Taparoro, and given up smiting the little ones. 'These are times of peace,' said they; 'why should the child die then?'" (Brown 1910:235). This complaint was based on Bromilow's promise of total peace in Jesus, not the islanders' own construction, since an all-encompassing state of harmony was (and is) not part of the Dobu category of peace.

Faith did not stop the children from dying, but fear caused the men to quit battling—their fear of using a slow canoe was likely more intense than their fear of getting caught by police. The islanders had hoped that prayers could cast aside magical spells and sorcery attacks, that witches were repelled by the Bible. Many people still hope they can protect themselves by reading the Bible, and, to this day, people see no alternative than Bible studies and prayer in times when they are frightened by witches or suffer from a disease they believe was caused by a neighbour as an act of retribution.

People also knew from direct observation that being a practising Christian does not guarantee permanent peace of mind. They certainly could feel the sparks that flew at the mission's household, well documented in the diaries of the carpenter (Bardsley 1892:25) and missionary sisters (Tinney 1892–1902:128; Walker 1892–93:46; see also O'Brian 2005). Deaths of missionaries were even better evidence for the imperfection of God's protection. As the islanders are pessimistic about each other's capacity to abstain from gossip and retribution, they expect undercurrents and hidden tensions at any given time. I now outline the wider meaning of the Dobu language term for peace, giving ethnographic flesh to my argument.

## The Calm Sea: A Dobu View of Peace

The Dobu word for "peace," *siwalowa*,[20] refers to the calm sea. The image is of a beautiful early morning on a tropical island, when the sea appears a grey, pearl-shell colour and, with the first beams of sunlight, reflections like mercury dazzle the eye. The shining surface invites canoe travel, and, in a popular story, when the protagonist is asked why he approaches a distant shore, he responds honestly that "the calmness of the sea has attracted me so I just paddled." The metaphor of the calm sea also has a notion of "good conscience" in the sense of "good behaviour" or a "good name." It describes calmness of mind (*nuasiwalowa*), the absence of nagging or overwhelming feelings of anger, envy, guilt and grief, as well as of secret desires for morally inappropriate actions.

Semantically, the term is rich and well documented in Dixon's dictionary (n.d.:168). It was used in the old greeting formula: "*Aemuya siwalowa, matamuya buyo*" (at your feet be the calm sea, at your eye the cooked feasting food). *Siwa* refers to the pouring out of something and is connected with a qualifier in many verbs (see list in Appendix 2). *Lowa* is less clear; in everyday usage it commonly means "in the past," but according to Dixon (n.d.:117–118), it can also refer to "measurement from tip of finger to tip of finger with hands stretched out in line with shoulders," so *siwalowa* literally refers to a smooth surface of a liquid or the friendliness in a person's face and body language. In both cases, one never knows what is under the surface (see Weiner 1984).

The image of the calm sea presents the ideal surface appearance: a sea that is as tidy as newly swept ground,[21] as smooth as a person who is in control of her emotions. The sea, just like the land and the people, obviously consists of more than the surface; indeed, dangers are expected to emerge from the inside, hidden behind a smooth and clean façade. This construction builds on temporality: peace is but a short episode. The quiet calmness of the sea is never permanent as upcoming winds disturb the moment of peace and waves obscure the view down into the ocean and wash some rubbish onto the beaches. In fact, life on a small Pacific island bears a high potential for thunderstorms, cyclones and other natural disasters. Peace of mind, like the calm sea, is only temporarily achievable and conflicts are a natural part of life, just as the change of the seasons, winds and weather. This notion of peace fits into the concept of personhood in Dobu (see Kuehling 2005). Like the calm sea, a person should maintain a smooth and friendly surface, disregarding the feelings "on the inside." Shiny surfaces are regarded as beautiful on persons: the oiled skin of a dancer has received *siwa* with *bunama*-oil, and magic captures the shine of the pearl shell and transfers it onto a *kula* trader for better exchange results.

The Dobu concept of peace differs from the English term as it lacks both the optimistic tone of faith-based peace (inner harmony) and the strategic approach of fear-based restructuring (end of violence). It does not claim totality but leaves room for hidden emotions and silent agendas, as it is regarded as virtuous to hide hard feelings behind a friendly smile (Kuehling 2005). Peace, in Dobu, is multilayered, fluid, incomplete and temporal, vulnerable to magic and other invisible forces. Arguably, it is a window of opportunity rather than a vision of future happiness.

## Conclusions

Pax Britannica, as this peacemaking event demonstrates, was a process that was based on different notions of

peace. Three constructions coexisted in the negotiations that led to the conversion of the war canoe: MacGregor's end of tribal warfare, Bromilow's peace on earth and Gaganumole's smooth surface of interaction with the *dimdims* that promised pardon, power and white men's cargo. The missionary tells a story about male leaders who come to an agreement, while today's Dobu Islanders recall female pollution as the driving force behind the end of cannibal raiding. In the Dobu construction of peace, Pax Britannica created a new layer on the surface (like an oil film, perhaps), probably submerging more conflicts into the magical sphere of punitive practices. This peace has seen many challenges, especially during World War II. More recently, armed pirates are frightening people in the region. Policemen are torturing captives until they admit to their crimes and jails are unsafe places. In everyday life, overt violence has become a matter of "bad conduct" that is supposedly punished by jail sentences, rather than sanctioned as a legitimate form of masculine power. Although domestic violence takes place, individuals are generally very restricted in their opportunities for open confrontation. My Dobu "sister" Kassanta (then in her twenties) made the interesting prognosis that "gossip and witchcraft will never stop." She could be interpreted as stating that "conflict, sickness, pain and death will always be with us." The Dobu concept of person supports this notion of eternal conflict and only temporal, superficial agreement in the construction of a private "inside" (Kuehling 2005). Dobu Islanders see shifts in their ethical principles, as during my most recent visit to Dobu (July 2012), many people agreed that, in the past, witches and sorcerers used to keep the social order in place but they are now more selfish, spiteful and unpredictable.

A well-known hymn ends, "When Jesus comes inside your heart, there is peace, happiness and generosity/love" (*abo Iesu i rugu ategu ena, **siwalowa**, gwausoala, oboboma*; my translation and emphasis). This promise of individual peace still leads most people to prayer as a safety measure against evil forces and malevolent magic. Since people believe to this day that death is generally caused by brutality, old age or magic, peace remains constructed as a surface feature. While the missionaries stopped the male, prestigious, open fighting, they were unable to control the undisclosed, often female, retaliatory killing by magic. Having Jesus in the heart has not, so far, ended violence on Dobu, and many people told me that they may just not yet have worked out how this Bible-based protection actually works. The calm sea is a well-suited metaphor for the relative peace on the surface to the Dobu Islanders who believe that every untimely death is caused by someone well known—a neighbour or relative, a notoriously envious witch or aggravated sorcerer nearby.

Knauft's historical analysis (1990) has shown that warfare is a complex issue, but I believe that peace is no less complex and needs more theorizing. Between fear and faith, optimism and pragmatic acceptance, fighting the various forms of violence in their various sites and hoping to help others find more peace, there is room for clarification on what kind of peace we desire and for whom. The word has been used in so many ways that it requires analytical cleansing. Missionary rhetoric was built on the juxtaposition of metaphors when describing "the transition from war to peace, 'darkness' to 'light' and 'ignorance' to 'knowledge'" (Young 1977:133). The idea of a "culture of peacefulness" (Bonta 1996) suggests that some societies live in harmony. Balance, the organic model of human society, apparently still has some currency outside of anthropology. Rather than accepting such absolute categories, we should, I suggest, engage in a deeper theorizing of peace: are we looking at the absence of war, a paradise-like state of trouble-free existence or the mere abolishment of physical violence directed at "outsiders"? Are we searching for peaceful institutions or societies? Can there be peace when violence is in the hands of the state? Or is peace momentary and ephemeral like laughter, as metaphors on Goodenough Island (near Dobu) suggest (Young 1977:130)? Is it like the silver surface of the ocean when the wind tires?

The Dobu notion of peace as the calm sea appeals to me as it builds on fluidity. The peacemaking event presented in this article demonstrates that a peaceful surface does not represent the total situation; peace is a rhetorical tool, an administrative facilitator, an excuse for outside intervention. Certainly, peace is not an innocent concept as it mingles with variables underlying constructions of personhood and forever shifting power dynamics.

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## Notes

1 I would like to acknowledge the help from Papu Pika, Lakatani Aisi, Robert "Gamwakoko," Pastor Jenny Sailon, Gordon and Tim, Alesana H. Meleodi, "Kaibado" and Maleda, Kido, Labenia Ephraim and her sisters, Ruth Kapwalo and many others who provided further comments on Gaganumole. So many of these friends have already passed away, but I thank them anyway, from the bottom of my heart. *Kagutoki sinabwana* and may you all rest in peace! The Australian National University granted funds

for fieldwork in 1997, as part of an Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarship (1994–98), and parts of this article were drafted while enjoying the collegial exchange at what was then called the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies.

2 Based on my fieldwork in Dobu and Woleai (a neighbouring atoll, closely related to Ifaluk), I am confident to argue that Dobu Islanders are as peaceful as Ifaluk islanders of Micronesia (one of Bonta's "peaceful societies"), in spite of the former's representation as throat-cutting individuals (Benedict 1934; Kuehling 2005) and the latter's image as non-violent and tolerant (Bonta 1996:420).

3 Bruny-D'Entrecasteaux named the island Goulvain when he sighted it in 1793, but the local name was maintained by the British (see also Brass 1960; MacGregor 1893:22–23; Brown 1908:465–512; B. Thomson 1889; J. Thomson 1889; and Watson 1941).

4 See Fortune (1932); Thune (1981); and Young (1977, 1980, 1983, 1997); Ph.D. theses by Berde (1974) and Mackay (1999); further analysis of the material without local fieldwork by Eves (1996) and Douglas (1998); and honours theses in history by Syme (1985) and Errington (2006).

5 Missionary diaries mention cannibal raids on the coast of Fergusson just across the Dobu Straits ("Jerry a trader reports a cannibal feast on Boio-Fergusson island—on land opposite mission home" [Fellows 1883–1900, July 29]). Róheim believed that the last raids on Normanby Island happened around 1920, about ten years before his own fieldwork (1954:491). In times of dire famine, endocannibalism was reported in the wider region (see Jenness and Ballantyne 1920:82, also Young 1986 on hunger).

6 *Marama* is a Fijian word meaning "the light." It was used as a title for mission wives by the Methodists. I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing this out.

7 Róheim was told on Normanby Island that Bromilow put an end to the cannibal raids by pulling his denture out and telling his awe-struck audience, "This is what will happen to your teeth if you don't stop eating people" (1954:495).

8 Gender roles on Dobu discouraged women from using spears or playing an active role in fighting, but they are not disempowered or weak, as this statement could suggest.

9 I am here creating my own version, based on the various stories that I was told during my fieldwork on Dobu.

10 Ann Chowning's description of the neighbouring Molima people is recommended for its detail and images (1960); see Campbell 2002 for a fine study of canoe building on Vakuta.

11 While I would dispute the notion of constant war and complete distrust in the past, my fieldwork occurred under different circumstances than Fortune's (see Kuehling 2005), and in this case of a wealthy group of intruders, it is very likely that sorcery and witchcraft against the missionary party were indeed tried. While some group members died of malaria and other diseases, the overall message was that they had come to stay for good and that they seemed able to do so.

12 Missionary sisters, too, were amused:

> The chief's wife was loaded with mourning necklets and large shell ornaments. Being in mourning, she did not court attention but kept herself almost hidden under a large mat, which also served the purpose of an umbrella. The old chief wore a white coat, loin cloth and turban. In many instances a white coat was the sole garment worn. One article of English clothing is sufficient to compose a native's full dress, and the self-satisfaction written on the face of the wearer is well worth seeing, and not to be wondered at when one notices the many admiring looks cast at him from friends and the covetous glances from strangers as the happy possessor of a coat, vest or shirt marches along. [Benjamin 1912:72]

13 Another version mentions that the bright light of Bromilow's lamp discouraged the warriors (Duigu N.d.). Raiding, as mentioned earlier, routinely involved surprise attacks in the darkest hours of the night and the killing of sleeping or sleepy victims. Pitched battles on land were to be avoided. Open fights could occur at sea, where the velocity and agility of a canoe were most important. Of course, the missionaries had no radio in 1891, but they had musical instruments, which may be at the root of this story.

14 Strictly speaking, the Bromilows should not have ended up belonging to the same clan.

15 Undoubtedly, there were many attempts of killing by sorcery and witchcraft, and whenever members of the party died that was seen as a success. Seven out of 42 of the South Seas teachers died of fever within the first 11 months (Fellows 1883–1900:6). Thanks to quinine, however, the endemic malaria did not affect the newcomers as badly as the locals and the missionary party could replenish their ranks.

16 Duigu writes at that time there was only one man from Ware Island, who knew a little Pidgin English and who translated his sermon into the Dobu language. His name was Mata Yan (my translation of "*Tauna tuta nina enaya togibui ebweu Ware enega ena Pigin tupwana i mwalatonina, tauna Bromilow ina loguguya i gibunina ena Dobu enega. Ana esana tai nina Mata Yan*" (n.d.:2). Likewise, carpenter Bardsley mentions only "Matian the interpreter" (1892:23). There is no further mention of the two indented labourers who had returned from their involuntary trip with the *Hopeful* in Bromilow's account (1929:79). These individuals would have known some Pidgin.

17 Gaganumole, at any given time, held only one of three big men's offices: he was responsible for the outside world, be it in fights as war leader (*to'aladoe*) or in regard to exchange partners (as *to' elalasi*). The other two offices were leading the gardening processes (*to giyagiyaweta*) and leading the fishing processes (*to'amudoga*). It was part of Gaganumole's role to communicate with the missionary.

18 Most recently, in the weekend issue of Port Moresby's *Post Courier* that commemorated Bromilow Day 2008, Bromilow is stated to have "attributed much of the success of the introduction of Christianity on Dobu and the surrounding areas to his friend, Gaganumole, a great warrior, who was known as the chief headhunter" (Weekend Courier 2008).

19 Space is too limited for a discussion of non-human entities and their magical agency, but see Fortune (1932) and Kuehling (2005).

20 An alternative spelling is used in the older literature: *siwaroa*. The letters "l" and "r" are interchangeable; my informants preferred "l."

21 I am reluctant to offer linguistic speculations, but it seems very likely that the verb for sweeping / the noun for coconut broom, *siyayowa*, is an abbreviation of *siwayayoa* (also *siwa'auyayoa*. v.t. of tide rising and washing refuse from beach). See Appendix 2 and Dixon (n.d.:168).

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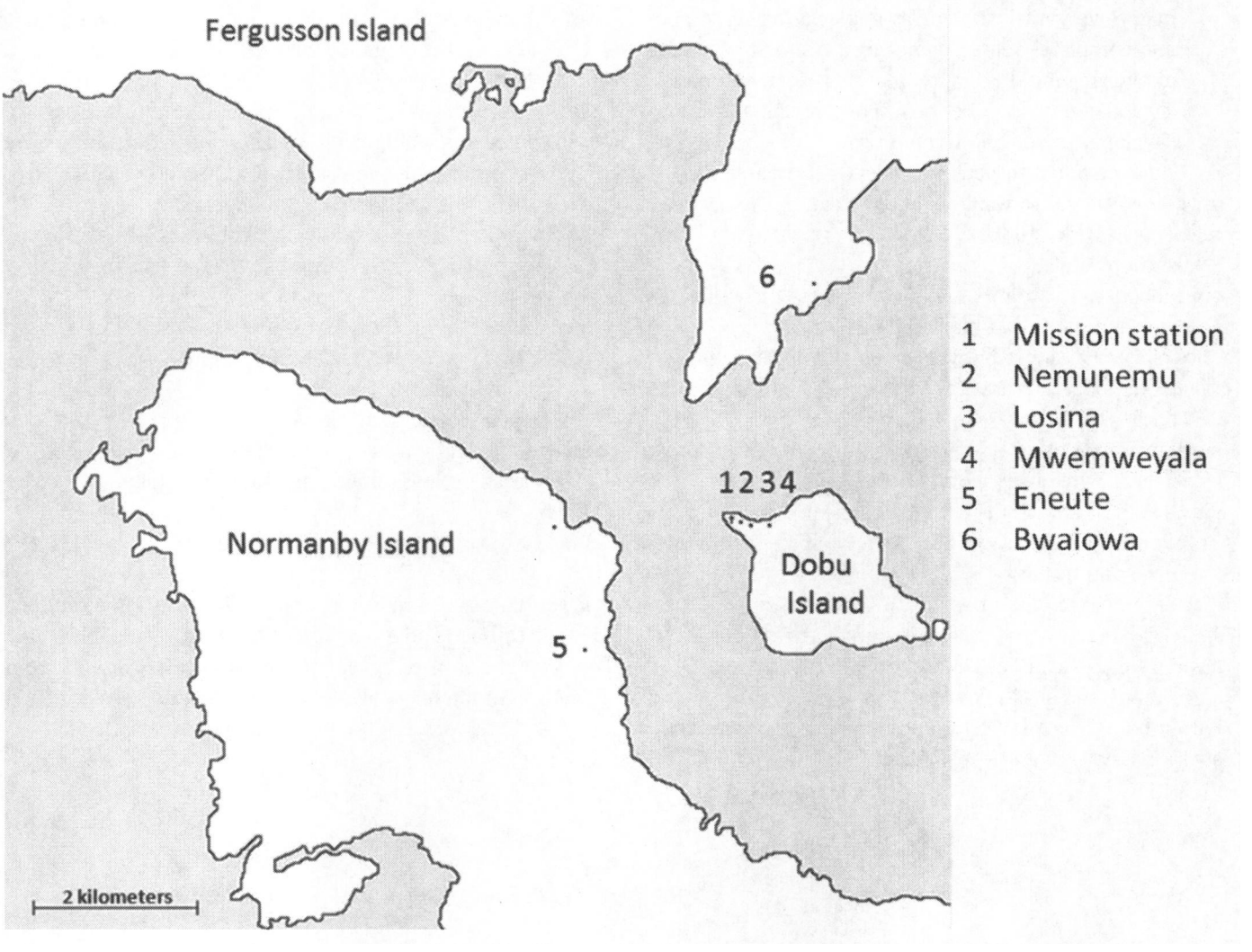
## Appendix 1: Map of the Dobu Area, D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago, Papua New Guinea




Map by Susanne Kuehling, based on Google Maps.

## Appendix 2: Semantics of *Siwa* and *Lowa* (Dixon n.d.: 168, 117–118)

Siwa

siwa. v.t. to pour water or food or artt. out of basket or bag. Siwa yaulei, to pour away; siwa uyosa, to pour and completely cover something. Matasitasiwa, full of overflowing; losiwa, to abound (of population); siwa also means to be fecund of animals, garden. siwalaga, to pour additional water into cooking pot; siwayauyaula, to pour water carelessly about.

siwaeteetete. v.t. to wash right over canoe, of waves.

siwaepwalala. v.i. to turn, of low tide. mwayaga 'i siwaepwalala.

siwaenoenoa. v.t. to mix one person's articles with another's; to mix fluids as in dispensing.

siwa'oya'a. v.t. to break over canoe, of waves; to place food, goods, up from ground or up from house, not on floor.

siwa'auyayoa. v.t. of tide rising and washing refuse from beach. Syn. siwayayoa.

siwaboa. v.i. to have drooping breasts, of unmarried women. adj. siwasiwaboa-. n. any single women with drooping breasts.

siwaboda. v.i. to cease bearing, of animals, syn. pwalaboda. v.t. of tide rising and cutting one off.

siwabu. n. tree, Calophyllum inophyllum. Syn. kwakwamo siwabu'oya.

siwaduba. v.i. of tide rising and receding from half way.

siwae'oya. v.it. to stack food in a mount.

siwaesuya. v.t. to unload from canoe, synn. etalasiwa, talasiwa, esiwaesuya.

siwa'oabu'oabuye. v.t. to place food round person as at sagari ceremonial; to pour water round base or plant.

siwaroa. n. calm sea, calm of mind (also nuasiwaroa). v.i. to become calm, ora i siwaroa, nuana i siwaroa. Syn. for siwaroa, mwade'oa. siwaroa'eda'eda, calm strip at sea lying bet. two rough patches.

siwaroro. v.t. to pour water on plant or obj., siwaroro kweukweu, v.t. to extinguish fire by pouring water on it.

siwaso'oso'o. Syn. siwauyosa. See under siwa.

siwasa'u. v.i. of high tide reaching its mark. 'Ebesiwasa'u, the high tide mark.

siwayayoa. See siwa'auyayoa.

siyayoa. n. and v.t. broom, to sweep. Idiom, used of people eating a meal and leaving nothing.

Lowa

lowa. adv. of time. Day before yesterday. recently. syn laitu.

lowa. n. measurement from tip of finger to tip of finger with hands stretched out in line with shoulders. i.e., height of man. Lowa measurement of fishnet is from hand to hand as above but with hands downstretched at back with net held and taken over the head.