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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

ALEXANDRA Y. AIKHENVALD



The Manambu Language of East Sepik, Papua New Guinea

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The Manambu Language of East Sepik, Papua New Guinea

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Preface

This is a grammar of Manambu, a language of the Ndu family, which is, in terms of numbers of speakers, the largest language family of the Sepik area of New Guinea. Manambu is spoken by about 2,500 people in five villages—three of which, Avatip, Malu, and Yambon, are sufficiently big to appear on most maps of Papua New Guinea. I started studying the language in 1995, as part of my work on classifiers, genders, and noun classes. I was interested in learning a language with shape-based genders. Alan Rumsey was teaching a field methods course at the ANU, with Pauline Agnes Luma Laki as a consultant. I came along to the course, and then carried on working with Pauline for more than ten years afterwards—this is how my voyage of discovery started. I have since worked with several dozen speakers of Manambu, mostly in Avatip. Pauline Agnes Luma Laki and myself are currently engaged in preparing a comprehensive dictionary of the language.

This grammar contains an analysis of the Manambu language, starting from a brief characterization of the language and its speakers, then going on to phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse organization, and semantics. The analysis is cast in terms of a cumulative typological framework of linguistic analysis—which employs ‘the fundamental theoretical concepts that underlie all work in language description and change’ (Dixon 1997: 128) and in terms of which significant typological generalizations are postulated; this has come to be called ‘basic linguistic theory’. I have avoided employing any transient formalisms. This grammar is part of genuine documentation of the Manambu language in its varied facets.

Every chapter of the grammar includes a presentation of the facts of the language interwoven with arguments for their analysis within a typological framework. No attempt has been made to separate pure ‘description’ from theoretical interpretation—which would not be a productive task. A typological perspective for each phenomenon is crucial for the analysis given here.

Detailed exemplification is provided for every grammatical point. Most examples come from texts, and a few from spontaneous—or carefully directed—conversation. An additional objective was to convey as much of the Manambu culture as possible through using naturally occurring examples. I avoid using elicited sentences; elicitation was limited to lexicon and to paradigms.

English glosses are kept as close as possible to the glosses and explanations offered by my consultants. Readers should be warned against trying to draw conclusions concerning Manambu grammar and semantics from study of the translations.

Examples, tables, diagrams, figures, charts, and footnotes are numbered separately within each chapter. Footnotes are also numbered separately for each chapter. The orthography used in the examples from languages other than Manambu, and language names, follows that of the sources (unless indicated otherwise).

This grammar can be used as a sourcebook for further typological studies, and as a model for further grammars of languages of the Ndu and of other families of the New Guinea area. It is far from being the last word on Manambu—the grammar is intended to provide a sound systematic foundation for further studies, reanalyses, and reinterpretations.

It is my hope that this book will encourage linguists to go out into the field and document languages threatened by extinction (before it is too late to do so). Nothing can compare with the intellectual excitement of working out the grammatical system of a previously undescribed language.

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I never planned to work on a Papuan language—until I decided I needed to know more about shape-based genders for my work on classifiers, genders, and noun classes. I am grateful to Alan Rumsey for introducing me to Pauline Agnes Luma Laki in 1995. Pauline adopted me as her younger sister, and has since been my closest collaborator. My warmest thanks go to her.

This grammar would not have been written without the self-sacrificing help, and wonderful linguistic insights, of Jacklyn Yuamali Benji Ala—whom Pauline lovingly called ‘angel without wings’ (*pəp tə-ma:r-na angel*). She spent hours helping me with transcriptions, translations, explanations, and at the same time cooking, cleaning, looking after her children, and telling the most wonderful and sophisticated stories. Her help and dedication could never be sufficiently acknowledged.

I owe an eternal debt of gratitude to my Manambu friends and family. I am grateful to James Səsu Laki, Joel Yuakalu Luma, David Yagenmas Takendu, Leo Luma Yambwi, John Sepaywus, Jamis Katalu Angi Balangawi, Kəmbwiyat, and Kulanawi Yuakaw, for sharing their insights and histories with me. Paul Kat Badaybæg and John Sepaywus were my main teachers of the Manambu history and lore. Catie Teketa:y, Jennie Kudapa:kw, Lowai, the late Wimali Yabukwi, Gemaj, Yuawalup, Maguniway, Yipawal, Sawsepali, Tagwatak, Gaiawalimæg, Walinum, Ester Yuaya:b, and Ńatabi did not just tell stories and sing women’s songs to me—they shared their warmth and friendship, and made me feel part of the village.

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Organization and Cross-references

This grammar has been written as an integrated whole. To understand what follows one needs to have digested what precedes. Chapter 1 provides a quick overview of the main points of the Manambu grammar. Later chapters deal with a particular grammatical topic each.

Chapter 3 discusses the ways in which grammatical relations are expressed. This chapter is basic for understanding the rest of the grammar. Chapter 2 contains a detailed discussion of phonology; it is not necessary to read to understand the rest of the grammar. Chapter 4 gives an overview of all the word classes, and Chapter 11 concentrates on the organization of verbal morphology, giving a preview of Chapters 12–17. Chapters 18 and 19 deal with complex clauses. Chapter 20 draws together the structure of clausal constituents, clauses, and sentences, and discusses the principles and functions of constituent order and of order of grammatical words within each constituent. Issues in semantics are addressed in Chapter 21. Those interested in cultural background and historical and comparative problems are advised to focus on Chapters 1 and 22.

Examples are numbered separately for each chapter. Examples from texts at the end of the grammar are referred to with the letter T followed by the number of the text and the sentence (that is, T2.40 refers to sentence 40 of Text 2).

All the examples and texts are supplied with an interlinear morpheme gloss, and then translated into English. Homophonous morphemes are differentiated by their glosses. The symbol ‘+’ is used to indicate fused morphemes, e.g. *taba-* is glossed as ‘hand+LK’, its underlying form being *ta:b* ‘hand’ (with the long vowel shortened when the linker is added) and *-a-* ‘linker’. Portmanteau morphemes are glossed with ‘:’, for instance, *mæy* ‘come:IMPV’. All grammatical morphemes are glossed in small caps while lexical morphemes are in lower case. Pronominal prefixes are shown as 1sg, 3pl, in lower case. For polysemous morphemes, different translations in glosses correspond to different meanings.

Cross-references are of two kinds:

- Those preceded by § refer to chapter and section number: for instance, §11.1 refers to section 1 of Chapter 11;
- Those beginning with a number refer to examples in the grammar: for instance, 11.1 refers to example 1 in Chapter 11.

Abbreviations and Conventions

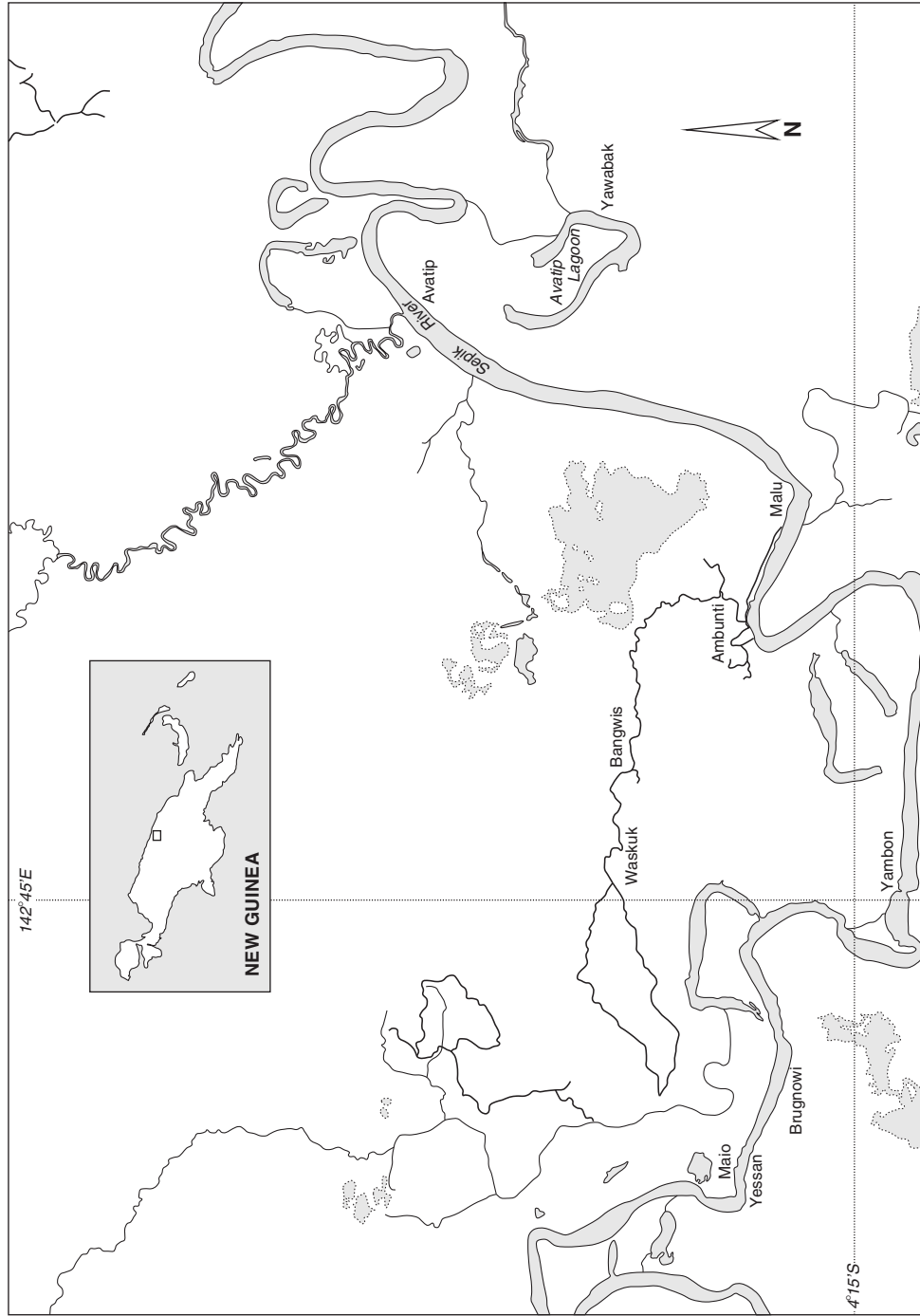
Here and passim ‘-’ stands for any morpheme boundary, that is, a boundary between a root and an affix, or between two roots. The symbol ‘=’ indicates a boundary between a root and a clitic, or an affix and a clitic, or two clitics (see Chapter 2). The symbol ‘ˈ’ indicates a primary stress, and ‘ˋ’ a secondary stress (obligatory on enclitics). Stress is marked on each example in Chapter 2 (‘Phonology’) and in other chapters only if relevant to the discussion.

Manambu has a certain amount of variation between allophones (discussed in Chapter 2). Many variants depend on the age of the speaker. Examples reflect the recurrent individual variants which also appear in the Vocabulary at the end of the grammar (e.g. *kamma:gw*, *kamma*: ‘food’, *numa*, *nəma* ‘big’). Examples throughout the grammar are given in their phonological representation. Conventions of transcription are addressed in Chapter 2. Loans and code-switches from Tok Pisin and English are italicized in each example throughout the grammar (in Chapter 22, Tok Pisin words are italicized and English words are underlined).

Abbreviations

A	transitive subject	COMPL.VB	completive generic verb
ACC	accusative	COND	conditional
ACT.FOC	action focus	CONF	confirmation marker
ADDR	addressee	CONN	connective
ADJ	adjective	COP	copula
ADV	adverb	COTEMP	cotemporaneous
ALL	allative	CP	complex predicate
ANAPH	anaphoric	CS	copula subject
APPR	apprehensive	CURR.REL	current relevance
APPROX	approximative	CUST	customary
ASS	associative plural	DAT	dative
AUG	augmentative	DEM	demonstrative
AUX	auxiliary	DEM.PROX.ADDR	demonstrative referring to object close to addressee
BAS	basic cross-referencing	DEP	dependent
CA	common argument	DER	derivation
CAUS	causative	DES	desiderative
CC	copula complement	DIR	directional
CLIM	climatic	DIR.SP.REP	direct speech report
COLL	collective		
COM	comitative		
COMPAR	comparative		
COMPL	completive aspect		
COMPL.DS	completive different subject		
COMPL.SS	completive same subject		

DIST	distal	P	past
DS	different subject	p	person
du	dual	pl, PL	plural
E	English	POSS	possessive
EMPH	emphatic	PRED	predicative marker
EP	epenthetic	PRES	present
EXPR	expressive	PROH	prohibitive
fem, FEM	feminine	PROH.EXTRA	extra strong prohibitive
FOC	focus	PROH.GEN	general prohibitive
FOC.M	focus marker	PROH.STR	strong prohibitive
FR	frustrative	PROX	proximal
FUT	future	PUNCT	punctual
HAB	habitual	PURP	purposeive
IMM.SEQ	immediate sequence	PURP.DS	different subject purposeive
IMPV	imperative	PURP.SS	same subject purposeive
INCOMPL	incomplete	REACT.TOP	reactivated topic
IND.SP.REP	indirect speech report	REC	reciprocal
INSTR	instrument	RED	reduplication
INT	intensive	REP	repetition
INTERJ	interjection	REP.SEQ	repeated sequencing
INTO	intonation	S	intransitive subject
IRR	irrealis	SEQ	sequencing
itr	intransitive	sg	singular
LENGTH	expressive lengthening	SS	same subject
LK	linker	SUBJ	subject
LOC	locative		cross-referencing
MANIP	manipulative	SUBJ.NP	subject non-past cross-referencing
masc	masculine	SUBST	substitutive case
MOM	momentaneous	SUP.VB	support verb
NAT	natural phenomena	TERM	terminative
NEG	negative	TP	Tok Pisin
NEG.SUB	subordinate negator	tr	transitive
NOM	nominal cross-referencing	TRANS	transitivizer
NOM.ACT	action nominalization	TRANSP	transportative
NP	noun phrase	UNF	unfulfilled
O	object	VB	verb
OBJ	object case	VOC	vocative
OBL	oblique marker	VT	versatile tense
OPT	optative		
ORD	ordinal		



MAP 1. Location of Manambu villages

Introduction: The Language and its Speakers

Manambu belongs to the Ndu language family, and is spoken by about 2,500 people in five villages: Avatip, Yawabak, Malu, Apa:n, and Yambon (Yuanab) in East Sepik Province, Ambunti district. About 200–400 speakers live in the cities of Port Moresby, Wewak, Lae, and Madang; a few people live in Kokopo and Mount Hagen.

I.1 LINGUISTIC TYPE

Manambu is synthetic, with elements of fusion, and predominantly suffixing. The imperative marker *a-* is the only fully productive prefix (§13.2.1), while the causative-manipulative prefix *kay-* occurs with a limited number of verbs (§16.2.1). The infix *-ka-* marks intensive forms of non-agreeing adjectives (§4.3).

Manambu has twenty consonants and nine vowels. There is a series of simple voiced and voiceless bilabial, apico-dental, and dorso-velar stops (just like in other Ndu languages). Voiced and voiceless bilabial and dorso-velar stops also have a labialized counterpart. All the voiced stops and the voiced fricative *j* are prenasalized in word-initial, intervocalic, and word-final positions. Vowel length is contrastive. Long vowels *a:* and *æ:* are a recent innovation: older speakers still pronounce these as sequences of identical short vowels interrupted by a glottal stop. Syllable structure is (C)(C)V(C). Stress is movable and contrastive. Long vowels tend to be stressed (Chapter 2).

Open classes are nouns and verbs. Nominal categories include case, three numbers, and two genders in the singular. Grammatical relations are expressed with verbal cross-referencing and with nominal case marking. Manambu has nine case forms, more than any other Ndu language. The subject case is formally unmarked. The same form marks locative and a definite and fully involved object. Another form expresses direction and instrument. The dative case marks beneficiary and maleficiary, and also has an aversive meaning, ‘for fear of’. The terminative case means ‘on the very edge of’, and ‘up until’. Two cases mark ‘means of transportation’. The substitutive case means ‘instead of’. The comitative case meaning ‘together with’ is a major device for coordinating noun phrases. Its additional meanings are locative ‘along (e.g. a road)’ and temporal ‘while’. Case markers may attach to verbal roots: the objective-locative case marks completive aspect, dative case marks purpose, instrumental case derives deverbal adverbs, and substitutive case marks dependent clauses meaning ‘instead of doing something’.

Verbal categories include personal cross-referencing fused with tense, aspect, mood (imperative-permissive, and irrealis), and modalities (optative, purposive, desiderative, and two frustratives). The subject (A/S) is always cross-referenced on the verb. A second argument—direct object, beneficiary, location, time, manner, or instrument—can be cross-referenced if it is more topical than the subject. A copula complement, a speech report, and a comitative constituent are never cross-referenced. Members of word classes other than verbs take

cross-referencing enclitics when they occupy the predicate slot (Chapters 3–4). This is unlike most other Ndu languages which cross-reference only the subject.

A small closed class of agreeing adjectives has three members, ‘big’, ‘small’, and ‘fine’; these agree in gender and number with the head noun. About sixteen non-agreeing adjectives—which cover semantic types such as value, dimension, colour, and age—share a number of properties with nouns. Adverbs and time words are semi-closed classes which share a few properties with nouns. Word class-changing derivations are limited.

A striking property of Manambu is its gender system. Two genders, masculine and feminine, are assigned to nouns according to their referents’ sex and also shape and size. That is, a large house is masculine, and a small house feminine. Genders are covert in the sense that, rather than being marked on the noun itself, they appear on the agreeing modifiers, verbs, and adverbial demonstratives, and in possessive constructions. The feminine gender is both formally and functionally unmarked (Chapter 5).

Three numbers—singular, dual, and plural—are marked on the agreeing modifiers, verbs, and in possessive constructions. Plural and dual are marked on most kinship terms and on a few nouns with a human referent. Associative non-singular (X and his/her associates) is restricted to just personal names (Chapter 6). The choice between five types of possessive construction depends on the type of possessive relationship, of possessee, and of possessor (Chapter 8).

The system of demonstratives is unusually intricate. Three demonstrative roots, *kə-* ‘proximate demonstrative: near speaker’, *wa-* ‘proximate demonstrative: near addressee’, and *a-* ‘distal demonstrative’, are used in nominal demonstratives, in manner adverbial demonstratives, and in reactivated topic demonstratives. Nominal demonstratives express either spatio-temporal deixis or ‘current relevance’. The latter are derived from the former with the suffix *-na-* ‘current relevance’, indicating that the object of pointing is being talked about, or is of immediate or ongoing importance to the speakers. Spatio-temporal demonstratives distinguish gender and number, and may also distinguish either three additional degrees of distance, or five directions. ‘Current relevance’ demonstratives distinguish five directions, and two additional degrees of distance, but no number or gender. Reactivated topic demonstratives refer predominantly to an S/O constituent (Chapter 10).

Negation is marked differently depending on aspect, tense, mood, and modality. Non-habitual negative indicative clauses have no person marking. All dependent clauses are negated differently from main clauses. Three prohibitives differ in their illocutionary force.

Manambu has a productive system of verbal compounds (they can be alternatively analysed as one-word serial verbs: Chapter 15). They express manner, aspectual and sequential meanings, and function as valency-changing devices. Many are lexicalized and have idiomatic meanings.

Verbs divide into several subclasses depending on whether they can occur with directional markers, and which directional markers they occur with. INHERENTLY DIRECTIONAL VERBS include the six basic verbs *war-* ‘go upwards’, *da-* ‘go downwards’, *vəki-* ‘go across (away from the speaker)’, *vəra-* ‘go across (towards speaker)’, *wula-* ‘enter, come in, come in a direction from the Sepik River’, and *waku-* ‘go out (including motion in direction away from the Sepik River)’. These do not take any further directional specifications. Their roots are the base for directional markers on other verbs, and on demonstratives. INTRINSICALLY DIRECTIONAL VERBS include four roots which must take directional suffixes, each of which corresponds to an inherently directional verb. The majority of verbs are OPTIONALLY DIRECTIONAL. They combine with bound forms consisting of *sə-* followed by a directional marker. Copula verbs,

the general motion verbs *yi-* ‘go’ and *ya-* ‘come’, and ingestive and stative verbs do not combine with any directionals. Directionals also have a valency-increasing effect. Directionals on verbs and on demonstratives have similar origins, but display subtle differences in their semantics (Chapter 16).

Manambu has a semi-productive causative-manipulative prefix *kay-* which causativizes a limited set of intransitive verbs. When applied to transitive verbs, it indicates a special physical effort and the intensity of action. There is no passive. Instead, Manambu employs transitivity-neutralizing constructions which involve clause chaining, and are ambiguous as to their status as biclausal or as monoclausal. A reciprocal marker *awarwa* has an associative meaning ‘together with’. Reflexive meanings are expressed with a variety of means none of which involves a verbal derivation (§16.2).

Ten polyfunctional verbs can each be used as an auxiliary or as a support verb, and also as a copula verb (Table 4.1, and Chapter 17). Auxiliary verb constructions express aspectual, positional, and modal meanings. There are also a variety of idiomatic complex predicates. Body part constructions—expressing emotional, mental, and physical states—are a special subtype thereof.

Clause linking in Manambu is achieved through a variety of means. The major strategy is clause chaining via medial dependent clauses. In most cases this involves switch-reference (that is, marking of dependent clauses may be sensitive to whether their subject (A/S) is the same as that of the following clause or not). The tense and extent of action expressed in a medial clause is determined by its relationship to the action of a subsequent dependent clause or a main clause. There are also causal clauses, and ‘unlikely condition’ clauses. Other clause-linking devices include juxtaposition of a dependent clause and a main clause (this is a preferred manner of indicating conditional meanings); clause linking via a case marker ‘instead’ and a suffix ‘like’, and clause linking involving connectives.

Relative clauses are similar to main clauses in most properties; they are negated like dependent clauses. Speech reports—direct, indirect, and ‘semi-direct’—are highly frequent. They express a wide variety of meanings, including desire, fear, and reason. Manambu has no complement clauses as a special clause type; instead, medial and other dependent clauses are co-opted as complementation strategies (Chapters 18 and 19).

Constituent order in Manambu tends to be verb final. It is often motivated by discourse pragmatics. Word order within constituents depends on their type. For instance, quantifiers can precede the noun head or follow it depending on the referent’s topicality. Chapter 20 offers a comprehensive analysis of the principles of ordering words and constituents, and also of the structure of constituents, and of clauses. An argument, or the predicate, can occur in a highlighting focus construction. A focused constituent appears marked as a non-verbal predicate head with the appropriate person markers, and the rest of the clause remains as it was. Highlighting focus constructions may appear biclausal. A focused noun phrase has the makings of a full verbless clause, since it contains the non-verbal cross-referencing markers. However, it is not a full clause because it cannot be negated separately. Highlighting focus constructions are an instance of grammar-in-the-making, similar to transitivity-neutralizing constructions involving clause chaining (§19.9 and §20.3).

Manambu has a highly elaborate verbal and nominal lexicon. Typologically unusual semantic groups of verbs cover eating, drinking, and chewing, perception, and speech. Highly specific terms coexist with highly generalized ones. A general noun *ma:gw* ‘whatever, whatchamacallit’ and a general verb *məgi-* ‘do whatever’ are an option, if one cannot think of the right term, or prefers to be non-specific. In the Manambu tradition, knowledge—tantamount to monetary

riches—is viewed in terms of lexicon, especially the totemic names (which are nouns). The issue of name ownership acquires particular importance at name debates (*saki*). Multiple ‘names’—each belonging to a different clan—result in multiple synonymy. The totemic names are used as address terms, as an integral part of Manambu speech etiquette, where the traditional patterns coexist with newly acquired Western imports.

In terms of the etymological make-up of its lexicon and grammar, Manambu is a central member of the Ndu family. There are a number of loans from other languages of the area, mostly Western Iatmul. Similarities between Manambu and the neighbouring Kwoma are contact induced. All the speakers of Manambu are proficient in Tok Pisin and many also in English, and code-switching is pervasive. Signs of incipient language obsolescence look ominous—however, a strong opposition to language loss gives room to hope that the language will live.

1.2 THE MANAMBU: THE PRESENT AND THE PAST

The Manambu occupy five villages in the Ambunti District in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea (see Map). They live mostly on the Sepik River (Manambu *ñab*, cf. Kwoma *nabagey*¹), and more precisely, on its section between the Hunstein Mountain range and the Washkuk Hills. Avatip is the major village in terms of population, of physical size, of ceremonial significance, and of military exploits. We return to this in §1.2.2 and §1.4.

The Manambu and the neighbouring Kwoma have been fortunate, in terms of attracting high-quality anthropological research. Useful and highly informative accounts of the Manambu culture in Newton (1971), Bragge (1990), and especially Harrison (1983, 1985a–b, 1987, 1990a–b, 1993) contain anthropological analysis and innumerable insights into the cultural and cognitive patterns of Manambu ritual and everyday life over the years. This is why this and the following sections are limited to a very brief sketch of cultural background, with just the information necessary for understanding the grammar which follows.

1.2.1 Environment and subsistence

The Sepik River is the centrepiece of the Manambu environment. It is also the major point of reference in spatial orientation: positions of objects and locations of territories are conceptualized in terms of their position with respect to this river (see Chapters 10 and 16 for the marking of spatial orientation on demonstratives and on verbs). Greetings (§21.5.1–4) are also centred around the direction in which the river flows. Trying to understand the Manambu language without having the river near at hand is an almost insurmountable task. The Sepik River is the largest river system in Papua New Guinea (with a catchment of 77,700 square kilometres). It varies in its width between three or four metres and 700 metres, and frequently shifts its course. Mudbanks appear where the river curves, lined with wild sugarcane and reed. The inland terrain is full of swampy forest with sago palm—an important food source—in its understorey. The average rainfall in the Sepik area is over 1,500 mm (250 in the Ambunti District: see Ryan

¹ The origin of the Manambu name for the Sepik River requires further investigation. It is somewhat similar to one of the names for the Sepik River in Kwoma, *nabagey* (Bowden 1997: 139), which, according to Bowden, ‘derives from the Mayo language; it is the name speakers of the Maio-Yessan dialect of Mayo at Yesan and Maio villages give the Sepik’. The name for ‘Sepik River’ in Western Iatmul is *avisak* (Gerd Jendraschek, p.c.). The general term for ‘river’ in Ambulas is *kaabélé*, and is related to the Manambu name *kabəl* ‘Screw River’.

1972: 1033). A sharp division of seasons affects the patterns of newly introduced agriculture (also see Harrison 1990a: 12–16).

The dry season, called *ñakamali* in Manambu, lasts from May until about September; then the river is usually low, and the fish supply variable. The wet season, *kwayugw* (this could be a frozen plural form: see §6.1), spans October to April; during this time the river rises and may flood the villages. Then some people move to temporary dwellings on higher ground. Cemeteries tend to be located on higher ground because of the floods. The Sepik River carries floating tree trunks and becomes really dangerous, fast flowing, and swollen. There is no shortage of fish, and mosquitoes are highly active.

The lifestyle of the Manambu can be characterized as sedentary hunting and also gathering, with some agriculture. Traditional subsistence involved fishing (done by women), occasional hunting (by men), and exploitation of the sago palm (also see Lewis 1923). Sago (a powdery starch made from the processed pith of the sago palm *Metroxylon sagu*) is the most important food and the source of starch (the various ways in which sago can be prepared include raw sago, fried sago pancakes, baked sago, sago pudding, and ‘sago starch’, consisting of sago powder mixed with boiling water). Sago production is a joint work of men and of women, and is arduous. People living along the Sepik River tend to acquire up to one-third of their sago supplies in exchange for fish and tobacco from ‘dry-land’ people (Allen et al. 2002: 51).

Small gardens are made on levee banks parallel to rivers; the food which comes from gardening includes sweet potatoes, yams, taro, perennial bananas, and nowadays also squashes, pumpkins, cucumbers, papaya, snake beans, and tomatoes, alongside spinach-like leafy vegetables. Coconut is an important food product, used in cooking. Further fruit and vegetables include corn, sugarcane, watermelon, breadfruit, and the ever-present betelnut, which still plays an important role in rituals.

Growing tobacco goes back a long way (see Behrmann 1922: 192–3, on its importance in Malu, and also Zöller 1891: 184–5). This is one of the cash crops, which now also include peanuts, coffee, cocoa, and vanilla. Crops in gardens tend to be planted once before fallowing, between May and July (see Allen et al. 2002: 51, for further data on the agricultural system of the Ambunti area in the East Sepik Province).

Yam gardens are planted in the beginning of the dry season, and harvested at the beginning of the wet season. Cultivation, harvesting, and consumption of yams is regulated by complex ceremonies which survive until nowadays. An elaborate ‘first-fruits’ ceremony involves the whole village, and is performed by initiated men. If a woman sees—let alone tastes—the yams prior to the ceremony, her life is believed to be in danger. In the 1980s, each village used to hold ‘an especially complex version’ of the yam ceremony, ‘which inducts novices into the second of three male initiatory grades’ (Harrison 1990a: 15). It appears that such ceremonies are hardly ever held nowadays. Gardening is shared by all: men clear the garden sites and fence them, and women are responsible for the weeding. Everyone in the village is involved in the planting process.

Villagers keep chickens and ducks, and occasionally a pet cassowary. Nowadays, the number of pigs kept is limited by newly introduced religious restrictions: many Manambu belong to the Seventh Day Adventist Church and do not consume pork and fish without scales (such as the eel), or chew betelnut. Fishing is mostly done in lagoons surrounding the villages; this is the women’s job. Dried fish is exchanged for goods (and nowadays also sold for money) at a market in the town of Maprik.

European tools available nowadays include metal axes and bush knives, and store-bought fish-hooks and fishnets (see Hatanaka and Bragge 1973–4, on the spread of steel axes in the Sepik area after the establishment of a government station at Ambunti in 1924; also see

Townsend 1968: 99–101). Some people own shotguns. Traditional bows and arrows are the matter of the past, as are stone axes. Nevertheless, some people still keep and treasure them. Dress patterns are European. But grass skirts and traditional male ornaments are worn on ceremonial occasions—such as the name debate and the yam ceremony.

We now turn to the locations, and the internal structure of the villages.

1.2.2 The Manambu villages

The Manambu are river people; they contrast themselves to jungle-dwellers, or ‘dry-land’ people (see §1.4). The major Manambu settlements are spread along the banks of the Sepik River. The Sepik River, however, is prone to changing its course. As a result, a whole village may have to relocate. This has happened several times in recent history and who knows how many times before.

The ‘mighty and formidable Avatip’ colourfully described by Townsend (1968: 135–6) was located on the main river. Its subsequent location is described by Newton (1971: 64) as follows:

From east to west, the largest village of the Manambu was formerly Avatəp, inland on a large lagoon. This no longer exists. After World War II the Avatəp people moved to their site at Yentshanggei, on the Sepik, which, even more recently, has overflowed to a new offshoot a few miles east, Labunggei. A former offshoot, Yau‘mbok, founded before 1914 by refugees from a German punitive expedition,² remains on the eastern shore of the lagoon.

In the late 1970s, when Simon Harrison conducted his fieldwork, Avatip was located at Lapanggai and Yentschanggai. The areas of Lapanggai and Yentschanggai have since then been flooded, and the whole village gradually relocated back to the banks of the Sepik River (see Map). Plate 1 shows the site of Yentschanggai—now completely flooded. Hence the differentiation between the modern *kula-təp* (new-village) and the previous site, referred to as *a-d-a-wula təp* (DEM.DIST-masc.sg-LK-INLAND village) ‘that big village located inland’. Yawabak still remains where it was when Newton saw it, on a lake.

The Malu village was, according to Newton (1971: 64), ‘formerly on the lower slopes of a ridge on the south bank of the river, and was near the camp of the Berlin expedition of 1910–1912 . . . it has moved to the north bank since 1945. A little further upriver is Apa:n, a hamlet of Malu. Further still is Kamandjau, founded since 1945, a hamlet of the next big village Yambun.’ Malu and Apa:n are located exactly where Newton places them (also see Harrison 1990a: 16–17). Kamajau is claimed to be an offshoot of Malu (also see Harrison 1990a: 16–17), and is now scarcely populated.

According to Bowden (1997: xx), the Malu village moved across to where it is now after the establishment of the Ambunti patrol post in 1924, and the suppression of traditional warfare in the area by the Australian government. Prior to that, all river villages adjacent to the Washkuk Hills were located on the south side of the Sepik, as a precautionary measure against surprise attacks by the Kwoma, since the Kwoma—‘dry-land people’—did not use canoes and could not cross the Sepik without the help of river people.

The Yambon village is called Yuanab [Yuana:^mb] in Manambu. The name Yambon which appears on official maps is said to be an abbreviation of *Yabujədu* [Yambunjendu], the name of the site of the village at the time of early European contact. Yambon/Yuanab also moved to the north bank (after the *Yabujədu* site was bombed by Allied air forces in the Second World War; see Newton 1971: 64).

² But see §1.4 for a different account of this by Harrison (1990a: 25–6); further information is in Claas (2007).

Avatip is the largest of the villages (population over 1,000 people); Malu (with Apa:n) is the second largest (over 600), and Yuanab is the third largest (about 400 people). The estimated population of Yawabak is about 350. (These approximate figures were supplied by Joel Yuakalu Luma; government census figures for 1978 are given in Harrison 1990a; more recent official census figures, for 2000, have not been available to me.)

Each of the three communities has a strong sense of separate identity, and tends to be endogamous. Avatip is the largest, and ritually and traditionally the most important one. Malu and Yuanab are said to have been founded about seven/eight generations ago as offshoots of Avatip—this explains why Malu story tellers consistently say ‘we are really (from) Avatip’ (also cited by Bragge 1990: 38). Yawabak is a very recent offshoot of Avatip, and those from Yawabak call themselves ‘real Avatip’ (*Avatip tru*). As Harrison (1990a: 17; 1993: 29–30) pointed out, Avatip ‘was militarily the most powerful river-village known to the Manambu, and has a kind of metropolitan status among them’.³

Overt warfare between the Manambu people is traditionally forbidden (Harrison 1993: 30). There is, however, a certain amount of rivalry between people from Avatip and those from Malu, accompanied by land disputes to do with access to fishing lagoons and sago palms. The existing differences between Avatip and Malu are mostly lexical (see §2.6.1). Harrison (1990a: 17) reports occasional political feuds between Malu and Yuanab, and their political alliances with Avatip rather than with each other (despite their geographic proximity). Newton (1971: 65) mentions that ‘as well as their ancestral home, Malu was regarded by the Yambun [Yuanab] as their religious centre, and much of their ceremonial was carried out there, especially initiation’.

The Manambu variety spoken at Yuanab is phonologically divergent from both Malu and Avatip. People from Yuanab are sometimes looked upon as outsiders by those from Avatip, and from Malu. Some ‘accuse’ them of being Iatmulized; others point out that they are not ‘true Manambu’ because of the fact that many Gala had escaped from the Manambu and the Kwoma, and had settled in Yuanab (§1.4.1). The Yuanab variety is likely to have absorbed substrata from languages other than Manambu, and the Yuanab people may in fact have shifted to Manambu within the past 180 years or so (see §1.5 and Bragge 1990).

The Yuanab people were more receptive to early missionary and anthropological work than those from Malu and Avatip. When Robin and Marva Farnsworth (SIL) started their activities in the early 1960s, they were allowed to stay in Yuanab rather than in any other village (see §1.7). This explains why, in their ‘Organized phonology data’ (c.1981), Yuanab (that is, Yambon) is given as ‘major village’. (Note, however, that their major collaborator, Ken Nayau, comes from Avatip.) According to the Farnsworths, the anthropologist Douglas Newton also spent most of his time in Yuanab (disrupting their missionizing activities). His account of the Manambu mythology, initiation practices, and history combines information from Yuanab and from Avatip. Harrison’s fieldwork was conducted mostly in Avatip, as was mine.

Nowadays, additional cultural differences between the villages are created by their different Christian affiliations. People at Yawabak are overwhelmingly Seventh Day Adventists (SDA),

³ This ‘metropolitan’ status of Avatip is reflected in the transparent etymology of its name: *Ap-a-təp* (bone-LK-village) ‘main village’. According to Bowden (1997: xx), the name of Malu ‘comes from the mountain on the south side of the Sepik at the base of which it was located before European contact’ (also see Bragge 1990: 38). *Yaw-a-bak* (yaw.tree-LK-field) is ‘field of trees called yaw’ (the explanation of this is *yaw-adəka tə-da-l-a tamiy-al* (yaw.tree-ONLY stand-3plSUBJ.VT-3fem.sGBAS.VT-LK area-3fem.sGNOM) ‘it is an area where only yaw trees stand’. The etymology of Yuanab is unclear; the name of *Apa:n* may be linked to *apa:n, apan* ‘old masculine’.

those in Yuanab are Presbyterians, and those in Malu are mostly Catholic. Avatip is home to at least five Christian denominations: Catholics, Methodists (Wesleyans), Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), Presbyterians, and Apostolic ('One way') Church. In day-to-day life, the major split amounts to a binary division between those 'who sit in church' on Saturday (as do the SDAs) or on Sunday (as do all the rest).

Avatip, Malu, and Yawabak still have ceremonial houses which serve as men's clubs and where rituals are performed (see §1.3). Yuanab has none of these—this is said to be due to the missionaries' efforts. We now turn to the internal structure of the villages and houses within them.

1.2.3 Dwelling patterns: the structure of villages

Within the villages, the Manambu live in traditional houses shared by several households (called *tənəb*, lit. fireplace). The houses belonging to the same patrilineal clan cluster together in 'enclaves' (*yarəg*). The organization of enclaves was described by Harrison (1990a: 29) for the 'old' Avatip; it remains essentially the same.

Towards the back of each enclave are located the houses (*wi*), and in front of them, close to the river shore, stand small ceremonial houses (*sa:y*) for the clan's uninitiated men and boys, or the subclan's larger ceremonial house, *kara:b*. Traditionally, *kara:b* (also known as *haus tambaran* in Tok Pisin) used to be located in front of *sa:y*. In the modern-day Avatip each enclave has just one ceremonial house.

A ceremonial men's house has been—and continues to be—the centre of men's social life, and of men's rituals, including initiation, and mortuary feasts. The enclave, and all the ceremonial houses, bear the names of a totemic ancestor of the clan they belong to.

Ceremonial houses in Avatip, Malu, and Yuanab were described by Newton (1971: 65–6); also see Behrmann (1950–1: 323) and Harrison (1990a). Behrmann (1950–1: 323) reports that, at the time of his expedition in 1912–13, Avatip had two ceremonial houses. These ceremonial houses followed the middle Sepik pattern: they used to be 'two-storey buildings with pitched rooves and a triangular gable at either end and, like those of the Iatmul, were considered female'. The houses were smaller than those of the middle Sepik; in Malu they were little larger than dwelling houses. Nowadays, ceremonial houses are even smaller than dwelling houses. Unlike dwelling houses, they are not on stilts.

The 'old' Avatip (that is, the village site as it used to be before the last move) used to have ten ceremonial houses. Only some of them made their way to the new villages. John Sepaywus gave the following reason for not building new large ceremonial men's houses in the 'new' village: 'there are no ceremonial-house makers' (*kara:b kur-du ma*: (man's.house make-man NEG): see §19.2.3). This does not necessarily imply lack of able-bodied men, their reluctance to do the job, or shortage of appropriate wood. I suspect that the reason is deeper than that.

McCarthy (1963: 51) praised the Sepik ceremonial houses as 'monuments to their art and building ability', 'probably the best in New Guinea'. In his words, 'these men's houses took a long time to build not because of any lack of energy on the part of the river people, but because of a shortage of essential material. The great posts had to be wet with the blood of an enemy before they could be placed on the ground.' And efforts by the colonial administration to stop these traditional practices were not always successful. Recounting his first experience in Avatip in 1930, McCarthy (1963: 51–2) reports:

The sternness of the Government did not stop the building programme. The Sepik was content to wait. I noticed at Avatip that two post holes remained unfilled while the other eighteen posts were upright. Two heads were needed to ‘blood’ the remaining posts and the delay continued for several months. Then one day I noticed that the two posts were in place. The village had a festive air as the building was got under way—and soon completed. A swift raid on the timid unfortunates of the interior had been carefully planned and carried out. There had been no reports of a killing but the river people controlled the channels to the lake country inside and so evidence was impossible to get.

Had the evidence been possible to obtain, the District Officer G. W. L. Townsend would have personally punished the offenders—this is how he succeeded in stopping head-hunting practices. We return to this in §1.4.2.

The ‘new’ Avatip has a number of ceremonial houses, which are perhaps not as impressive architecturally as the ones described by Behrmann (1922), Newton (1971: 64–80), and Harrison (1990a). But their spiritual and ceremonial value remains—and this is what counts in Manambu culture. Plate 2 illustrates a large ceremonial house at Avatip in 1912 (from Behrmann 1950–1: 323). Plate 3 illustrates a ceremonial house (*Warman-kara:b*, belonging to Nabal and Maliau clans) in modern Avatip, where a name debate took place on 8 October 2004. In front of the ceremonial house there is a ceremonial mound (*təpwi*) (see Harrison 1990a: 91) on which the listeners-participants are sitting. (Women and children are out of earshot.)

Avatip has two paths which connect the enclaves: a path located closer to the river for the use of initiated men (*du-a-ya:b* man-LK-path, ‘men’s path’), and a path further away from the river for the rest (*takwa-ya:b* woman+LK-path, ‘women’s path’). I was told that this used to be a way of protecting women from attackers arriving by canoe.

Nowadays, men (initiated or not) use the ‘men’s path’, while the ‘women’s path’ is for everybody; occasionally, women would walk on the men’s path. Older women would avoid walking on the men’s path and passing through ceremonial houses. There is no men’s path and women’s path in Malu, Yawabak, and Yambon. In Malu, this can be explained by the geography of the place: houses occupy a narrow stretch of land, and there is really no space for two roads. The absence of the two roads in Yawabak and Yambon is perhaps due to the higher impact of Christianity there.

The modern village has at least three markets which serve as centrepieces for the village-wide gossip network, and where betelnut, fruit, and vegetables are sold. Stores in the village are owned by the locals, and sell basic ‘Western’ (*wali*) goods such as sugar, flour, soap, and pencils. These stores are purely functional, and do not have a role of ‘social clubs’. People have a strong preference for shopping in stores owned by members of their own clan.

The spaces between houses and the villages themselves are kept clean—with grass being cut or even mowed, and every bit of rubbish swept away. This is said to be done ‘for fear of snakes’. But many confess that the major reason is a fear of *sangguma* (euphemistically called *təp-a ja:p* ‘village-LK thing’), a powerful magic for which the Sepik peoples are especially notorious (see Ryan 1972: 29–30, and Bowden 1987). This is something one does not discuss out loud—but which is often blamed as the source of many types of misfortune.

1.2.4 Houses and their structure

The houses—placed high on stilts—face the river (see Plate 4). Unused utensils are kept underneath the house, together with chickens, ducks, and dogs (if there are any). The inside

of the house is highly structured (also see Harrison 1990a: 31–2). A household tends to consist of classificatory brothers and their families (including elderly dependants). The family of a genealogically senior brother occupies the part closer to the front of the house (*taga-wi*). The most junior brother's family is at the back of the house (*baga-wi*).

According to Harrison (1990a: 31), houses used to be much bigger than they are nowadays, and all the men of a lineage would live in one house (a clan would consist of two lineages). I have not encountered a house with more than four households in it. There is, however, space for privacy: each person, or each couple, has their own sleeping mat and a (usually store-bought) mosquito net.

Traditionally, the central space of the house used to be reserved for adult men, while sides of a house were women's and children's areas. Each wife used to have (and still has) a cooking space by a side-wall. It is not considered appropriate for a man to eat squatting together with his wife and children.

When a woman menstruates, she must avoid the central part of the house, and may not use the front door. She has to stay in her area by the wall, and go in and out of the house through a hatch in the wall. The expression for female menstruation is *mala-wia:m rə-na* (side+LK-house+LK+LOC sit-ACT.FOC+3fem.sgBAS.VT) 'she sits at the side of the house'. A woman is not supposed to sit in front of the front post of the house facing the front door.

As we will see in §1.3, clans are patrilineal. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. The few men who live in their wives' villages (this is known as uxorilocal residence) are looked upon as funny exceptions. The structure of the village, and of the living space within each house, used to reflect the major principles of social organization—kinship and ritual seniority (Harrison 1990a: 32 ff.).

An aside is in order. The dwelling patterns described here hold only for those Manambu who live in the villages. City-dwellers follow the patterns of mainstream New Guinea life (see Gewertz and Errington 1999; and also Gewertz 1983). The Manambu proudly acknowledge that there are no Manambu 'squatters' in any city in Papua New Guinea—all the Manambu who live in diaspora have jobs, and none live in urban slums. (This is in contrast to the Iatmul who form large 'squatter' communities in major cities, including Wewak.)

The outmigration of the Manambu creates a substantial diaspora in urban centres. Gewertz and Errington (1999) report cases where urbanized people sever their links with their 'backward' grass-roots families. In other cases, representatives of the diaspora maintain close links with their 'home' in the villages. Many refer to their native villages as 'home', even if they have spent most of their lives in Port Moresby. The urban Manambu offer material support to their families—not infrequently paying school fees, providing medicine, and also material goods such as radios, batteries, and even solar panels. Since the urban Manambu speak mostly Tok Pisin and English, their participation in village life results in an increase of Tok Pisin and English in the villagers' lives.

The urban Manambu often facilitate the 'brain-drain' out of the villages, by helping gifted youngsters make their way into urban life. On the other hand, they also play a role in perpetuating mortuary rituals; and many of them take ardent interest in language maintenance and culture transmission, and in community-based language programmes. They are thus contributing to language revival, and survival, and the undying prestige and intellectual—and material—value of traditional knowledge. We return to this in §2.6.2.

We now turn to a brief description of major features of social organization, kinship, and totemic name ownership.

TABLE 1.1 Manambu clans and subclans

CLAN GROUP	SUBCLAN
Wulwi-Ñawi	Maliau
	Ñakau
	Nagudəw
	Sarak
	Wankau
	Nawik
Gla:gw	Yimal
	Makəm
	Gabak or Yalakugabak
	Vali:k
	Wapanab
	Wargab
Nabul-Sablap	Nabul
	Sablap

1.3 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, KINSHIP, AND NAME OWNERSHIP

1.3.1 Clan membership, kinship, and mortuary ritual

The Manambu divide into three exogamous clan groups. The largest ones are *Gla:gw* and *Wulwi-Ñawi* which, according to Harrison (1990a: 42–3), account for about 44 per cent and 49 per cent of the population respectively. *Gla:gw* is associated with earth and ‘dark’ things. Members of the *Gla:gw* clan group are said to have darker skin than the *Wulwi-Ñawi*, and are referred to as *gla-səp* ‘dark-skin’. The name *gla:gw* is derived by some from *gla-gu* ‘dark water’; others simply associate it with the root *gəl* ‘dark’ (as mentioned in §6.1, it probably contains a fossilized plural marker *-gw*).

In contrast, the *Wulwi-Ñawi* clan group is associated with light, sun, and moon. Members of this clan group are said to have lighter, reddish skin, and are referred to as *ñiki-səp* ‘red-skin’, a term which is also used to refer to white people—an alternative for white people being *wali-du* ‘east-man’, ‘man from the east’, or *wama-səp* ‘white-skin’. Not surprisingly, the few white people adopted into the Manambu system—e.g. Simon Harrison and myself—belong to the *Wulwi-Ñawi* group. The totems of the *Wulwi-Ñawi* include sun, moon, and stars, and also white birds (such as *sawəŋ* ‘white pelican’). This seems to be common knowledge throughout the region: an Ambunti store owned by a Manambu man from the *Wulwi-Ñawi* group (subclan *Ñakau*) is referred to as a ‘San-mun’ (sun-moon) store.⁴

The third clan group is *Nabul-Sablap*, the middle clan (it is described as *ñəd-əŋ tə-na-d* (middle-LK+LOC stand-ACT.FOC-3masc.sgbAS.VT) ‘stands in the middle’).

A list of subclans of each clan is given in Table 1.1.

⁴ Laurie Bragge (p.c.) points out the similarity between the *Gla:gw* and the Iatmul moiety Niamei, and between *Wulwi-Ñawi* and the Iatmul Niaui. This is corroborated by the existing marriage patterns: Nelma, a Iatmul lady from the Niamei group living in Avatip, has married a man from the Maliau subclan of the *Wulwi-Ñawi* group.

Two additional clans, *Ambasarak* of the Wulwi-Ñawi group and *Kambuli*, of the Gla:gw group, were mentioned by Harrison (1990a: 70–3); they do not appear to be recognized nowadays. The name *Sarambasarak* was said to be a now dispreferred alternative to Sarak. Not every subclan is nowadays represented in each village (Yuanai, an interpreter and carrier for Walter Behrmann mentioned in §1.4.2, is known to be the last representative of the Maliau subclan in the Malu village).

The clan groups used to have specialized hereditary functions. The Gla:gw own the lagoons surrounding Avatip and control fish; they used to own two of the four initiatory rituals in the men's cult promoting the abundance of fish. The most economically important types of fish are their totems. The Wulwi-Ñawi used to own the rituals to do with the growing of yams which are their totems. Nabal-Sablap own the Sepik River and possess the sorcery of making it flood. This is reminiscent of the myth about two brothers who carved the Sepik River making it flow (the elder brother Kwalgudəmi, from Sablap clan, and the younger brother Təwij, from Sarak clan; told by Pauline Yuaneng Luma Laki). Further information on rituals, and associated cosmology, is in Harrison (1990a: 44–52). Most clans have a hereditary ritual 'officer' named *səbuk* [səmbuk] who has major authority in ritual issues, such as totemic name ownership to which we return below.

Clans are strictly exogamous: that is, marrying a member of the same clan group is an absolute taboo. A man can marry several women (not infrequently, sisters). Having more than one wife is a status symbol: only a wealthy man can afford this. Despite the impact of Christianity, polygamy still survives nowadays.

The classificatory kinship system is of Omaha type (Harrison 1993). Consequently, everyone's link to everyone else is defined in terms of the way(s) in which people are related to each other, and in terms of their subclan membership.

Traditional financial exchanges—payments—reinforce and help maintain these links. Each descent group (clan and subclan) possesses hereditary magical and ritual powers, and constitutes a basic political and ritual unit within the society, arranging marriages, debts, and credits (Harrison 1990a: 34–5). Important relationships exist between husbands of female members of the subclan, their sons and daughters, and daughters' husbands. Harrison (1990a: 34–5) calls these 'the subclan's allies'. They contribute to bride wealth payments of the subclan. The closest allies of each subclan are the children of its female members, called 'sister's children' (*gabəra:w*) by the men of the subclan, and 'children' (*ñanugw*) by all the women of their mothers' generation (or any subsequent generation). The general term used by all is *gabəraw-ñanugw*, 'sisters' children'.

When a sister's child dies, his or her mother's agnatic relatives organize a mortuary feast, *Kəkətəp* (lit. eating for last time: §21.1.1). This is planned and carefully organized during the few months after the death has occurred, and involves a wake for several days in the house of the deceased, accompanied by rituals performed in the men's house and in the house where the feast is held, and by singing of mourning songs by older women (also see Harrison 1990a: 35).⁵ The mother's agnatic relatives receive a large mortuary payment which invariably includes shell valuables, and also largish quantities of money.

⁵ After someone has just died, the relatives congregate in the house of the dead person, and weep and sing mourning songs, *gra-kudi*, over the (covered) dead body. This continues until the body is buried the next day. Other relatives come and cook for the mourners. Relatives who were particularly close to the deceased—for instance, a sister of a deceased man, or a mother of a deceased child—wear a piece of black string or wool on their wrists, ankles, and neck for up to a year, as a mark of mourning. A black string is associated with mourning to such an extent that Yuamali called a pot to which she had attached a black string so as not to confuse it with other people's pots 'a pot in mourning' (see example 4.19).

How the money and other valuables are to be divided is often the subject of discussion and also grievances; that is, European-introduced realities also play an important role in traditional ritual. This may also account for the vitality of *Kəkətəp* as opposed to initiation and other ceremonies which are falling into disuse. *Kəkətəp* provides a social glue which nurtures social networks and interactions among the villagers, most importantly inside the village as much as outside it: most Manambu, no matter whether they live in towns or in the villages, insist on having their say—and their share—in mortuary payments. The social importance of *Kəkətəp* helps maintain the basic knowledge of the kinship system, and the outline of the ritual itself.

Mortuary payments terminate the alliance established with sisters' children. Another alliance-related transaction is payment of bride wealth which inaugurates the beginning of an alliance. The payment is smaller than the mortuary payment, and is less socially important. In Harrison's (1990a: 35) words, 'it is not so much wealth that men seek from the marriages of their sisters and daughters; what they want are sons- and brothers-in-law owing them a lifelong debt and allegiance.' The bride price goes to the woman's agnatic relatives, who redistribute it to those members of their subclan who had contributed to their own bride prices. Bride price accounts for a network of mutual debts and obligations between people.

1.3.2 Name ownership and name debates

Monetary wealth and gain are generally perceived as secondary to the subclans' major patrimony: the names of its totemic ancestors, considered to be the source of the magic powers of the subclan. Subclans' totems include animals, plants, ritually important objects, ceremonial houses, shamanic spirits, and supernatural beings. Each subclan owns stretches of land known as *wa:gw* 'totemic area'.

Different positions of the sun during the day are owned as subclans' totems (see Harrison 1990a: 54), and so also are the sectors of the heat haze which surrounds the villages each afternoon. Each subclan owns between 1,000 and 2,000 names; a few names are occasionally shared between subclans.

This gives a total of the maximum of over 25,000 names for all the subclans. Harrison (1990a: 59) estimates the overall number of names as 'some thirty-two thousand . . . a figure compatible with Bateson's estimate that an erudite Iatmul man "carries in his head between ten and twenty thousand names"' (Bateson 1958: 222)⁷. Men nowadays do not have this extent of knowledge.

A child acquires a name within a few months of its birth. The father may name the child himself; otherwise, a senior member of the subclan does it. A patrilineal name is given only once—this is known as the 'main' name (*ap-a-sə* bone-LK-name), in contrast to all other names, *səgliak*. Sisters' children (sons and also daughters: Pauline Yuaneng Luma Laki, p.c.) are expected to name children of their mother's subclans. A 'namer' of a person establishes a particularly strong link with them, and the name comes to 'contain the person's Spirit or life-force'. Harrison (1990a: 60) reports: 'some older and more conservative men were for this reason unwilling to give me their genealogies, for fear that by writing down their names, their life-force might be trapped in my note-books and taken away to Australia when I left.' Sorcery is assumed to act upon the victim through their name. Names are owned and inherited patrilineally, but are also 'loaned' to sisters' children.

Being well versed in totemic names belonging to different clans is valued most of all. In day-to-day life, this knowledge is reflected in the correct and creative use of 'address

terms’—totemic names belonging to the addressee’s father’s, and also mother’s, subclans (*wayəpi*, *way*). By themselves they form a typologically unusual subclass of nouns (see §4.1.2). The totemic names are used in traditional song styles. Their knowledge is pivotal for name debates, *saki*.

Many of the important rituals—such as male initiation involving scarification (described by Newton 1971 and Harrison 1990a: 84–113)—are not practised any longer. One reason for this could be the fact that head hunting, formerly an important way in which a man would prove his manhood, is no longer possible (see §1.4.2 on how the Australian colonial administration put a stop to this custom). The rules for female seclusion accompanying the first menstruation appear to be relaxed. Many people learn about these cultural practices from the existing literature—basically, from Harrison (1990a), a highly valued source. But some taboos are still going strong. So, a woman who has seen bamboo flutes during the mortuary ritual is bound to become blind, it is said. And this is an explanation given for Natabi’s blindness.

The ritual of the name debate, however, lives on, albeit not exactly in the elaborate form documented by Harrison (1990a). A full-scale name debate would last for over 24 hours non-stop, and would start with song cycles connected with the subclan’s origin myths. A description of a full name debate is in Harrison (1990a: 159–67). Nowadays debates tend to be shorter, about 10–12 hours.

A name debate between the Sarak and the Wagau subclans of the Wulwi-Nawi clan group was held on 8 October 2004, at the ceremonial house Warman (itself the property of Maliau and Nabal subclans). The object of dispute was the name *Kiginəbək*; this name and its feminine equivalent *Kiginəbəkəbər* was won by the Wagau clan. The Sarak clan was awarded another name, *Kəgidəmi* and its feminine counterpart *Kəgidəminəbər*, as a ‘compensation’. The debate was opened by the Councillors of Avatip. The whole ceremony was very impressive: each orator would take a bunch of crotons and, swinging himself rhythmically, would present arguments in favour of his subclan’s totemic ownership of the name, starting with genealogies, and finishing with resounding *Kiginəbək wun-adəwun* (Kiginəbək I-1 masc.sg.NOM) ‘I am Kiginəbək’. Particularly spectacular performances—such as those by John Sepaywus, Paul Badaibæg, and Kulanawi Yuakaw—were accompanied by loud cries of appreciation.

The debate ended with what Harrison (1990a: 166) called ‘a purely ceremonial display’—each side sang their song cycles, and women, dressed up in their grass skirts (kept for such occasions only), came up to the men dancing and serving them food.⁶

The end of the ceremonial part was marked with exchange of bunches of croton leaves. After having eaten, the men got together again, in small groups, ‘playing politics’, so as not to offend any of the participants, as John Sepaywus explained to me later (*politics nay-di* (politics play-3plBAS.VT)).

The name debates are now held less frequently than before, perhaps once every two years at most. They attract ‘knowledgeable’ big men from all the Manambu villages. The time chosen for name debates tends not to coincide with the Christmas and New Year period when the village is full of urban Manambu. The villagers make sure there are no ‘tourists’ around and that a name debate is not an ‘attraction’.

A name debate is not just about a name, or the rights to use it. It is about exclusive rights to one’s clan’s totemic areas and history, including genealogies, and, consequently, the group’s identity. The term *saki* ‘name debate ritual’ has a broad meaning, and is better translated as

⁶ Women and children were not allowed to sit together with the men, watching the debate. I was invited to sit with the men, so that I could record and take pictures: as someone explained, a white woman is not the same as a local woman, and she must know what is going on.

‘totemic ritual’. It also appears in *saki-təp*, a term for totemic villages (see §1.5) (and may well be related to the directional *saki-* ‘ACROSS’ (see §16.1), as in *wa-saki-ma:j* (tell-ACROSS-story) ‘traditional story transmitted from one generation to another’ (e.g. Text 2, at the end of this grammar)). Knowing and ‘owning’ a name implies knowledge of one’s ancestors, and one’s connections with them. This has been fully addressed by Harrison (1990a), and I will not go any further.

Important orators—big men—and especially hereditary big men with exceptional ritual knowledge (*səbək*) used to be in charge, and even now tend to occupy positions of power. For instance, John Sepaywus, the *səbək* of the Maliau clan, was for many years a Councillor of Avatip; that is, a major official representing the community on the Ambunti Local Government Council. These people used to have the major say in ritual affairs, and in organizing warfare, and intergroup alliances. It was not until the advent of the Australian administration that the villages acquired their ‘heads’, *luluai* (the government official for the village), and two assistants, *tultuls*. Even then, a big man—rich in knowledge and importance—would tend to be the *luluai*, as was Lumawandem, one of the most respected orators and experts, and the father of Pauline Agnes Yuaneng Luma Laki, Joel Yuakalu Laki, and Leo Yabwi Luma.

We now turn to the ways in which the Manambu used to interact with their neighbours, and to their contact with Europeans. In §1.5, we address the prehistory of the Manambu.

1.4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBOURS AND RECENT HISTORY

1.4.1 Indigenous neighbours and traditional warfare

The Manambu, the ‘river people’, are surrounded by jungle-dwellers who do not live on the river banks and are known to the Manambu as *nəb-ə-du* (dry.land-LK-people).⁷ The latter include a variety of groups, such as the Kwoma, the Kaunga, the Ierikai, and the Garamambu. The Manambu despise the ‘dry-land people’: the reasons given are that they do not use canoes, build houses directly on the ground, and live deep in the forest like animals (see Harrison 1993: 33). They are also wary of their sorcery (also see Bowden 1987). In the past, the dry-land people have been a frequent target of Manambu head-hunting raids. The tactic used against the dry-land people involved surrounding a hamlet at night, and then destroying it at dawn.

As Roscoe (1996: 662) puts it, ‘the condition of village unity in the Sepik is more a military logic of defence than a symbolic logic of personhood or a structural logic of opposition’. That is, warfare was a matter of necessity, and of survival. Harrison (1993: 33–4) reports how the Avatip people almost decimated the Kaunga (see §1.5.1) some time during the nineteenth century, and, as a result, gained access to well-drained alluvial plains, with extensive stands of sago palm, good hunting territories and good areas for yam planting.

But material gain was never the only motive. Warfare used to be one of the major ritual preoccupations of the men’s cult. Harrison (1993: 80–3) describes the ways in which men were socialized for aggression, being encouraged to stage mock gang-fights among men of different age grades. (Nowadays, ‘men of different age-grades play out their rivalries mainly in football matches’: 81.) Real wars, and head-hunting raids, used to play an important cultural role. A man returning from a successful raid with trophies—enemy heads—would be greeted by his mother’s brother (*awa:y*) in a ceremony similar to *Naven* described by Bateson (1958).

⁷ The term *nəb* is nowadays also used in the meaning of ‘foreign land’, and *nəbədu* is used to mean ‘foreigner’.

Killing an enemy would be celebrated in front of the ceremonial house of the killer's subclan, and accompanied with a dance. The head would be buried under the mound in front of the ceremonial house; or hung from a tree outside the village; after the flesh had decomposed, skulls would be painted and hung in the ceremonial houses (see Harrison 1993: 82, for further details). People with successful homicides attached special tassels to their lime spatulas (used to mix lime with ginger and mustard seeds with betelnut before chewing) indicating the number of people killed. They also were entitled to wear a pubic apron made of flying fox skin (men who had never killed did not wear any pubic covering, and used to bind their foreskins with fibre thread). In ceremonies, people who had committed homicides wore black face-paint. (This is why, in T2.45, Sesawi and Kamkudi, both experienced warriors, paint their faces black.) Killers enjoyed prestige in the community; they were real men who had proved their manliness. The more people they had killed the higher their status: a man who killed the most people would enter the village first (see examples 10.148–9). Women would prefer to marry such fighters—this is why Harrison (1993: 82) suggests that 'to some extent, the competition between men for the status of homicides was, implicitly, competition for women'. And the reason for the homicide was often nothing but a quest for 'status'.

With the advent of Australian colonial administration, head-hunting raids were stopped. When the Second World War started, the Manambu men saw this as an opportunity to earn 'brownie points' as brave homicides by killing newly acquired 'traditional enemies'—the Japanese invaders. These homicides were celebrated with traditional ceremonies (Harrison 1993: 83). And there are still a few villagers who proudly paint their faces black on ceremonial occasions. We return to this in the next section.

The dry-land people often fought back, and the result was a prolonged military conflict. One such instance—documented in oral histories—involves the Gəñap wars (see §21.5.4), fought at the end of the nineteenth century, according to Harrison's (1993: 67) estimate. Another war which features prominently in the folk memory involved the Gala.

The Gala (see §1.5.1) are said to have been aggressive 'dry-land people' who used to be nasty to the Kwoma, to whom the Avatip Manambu were politically allied. According to John Sepaywus, the Gala used to live around the Ambunti mountain (Makəməwi). Sick and tired of the Gala attacks, the Manambu and the Kwoma managed to overpower the Gala who fled to their present location, Swakap. One group of the Manambu, the clan Vali:k, is claimed to have descended from the surviving Gala. This story is recounted in Text 2, at the end of the grammar.⁸ According to Paul Badaybæg, some of the remaining Gala settled in Yuanab.

The exact timing of the Gala war is hard to ascertain. Ross Bowden (p.c.) estimates that it could have happened in the early nineteenth century. Laurie Bragge (p.c.) reports that one of his Kwoma consultants used to 'have a carving mallet which he said belonged to the Nggala and which came from the wreckage of the stockade after the raid'. That is, the war was still fresh in folk memory. However, in Text 2, John Sepaywus says that the number of descendants of the founder of the Vali:k clan (claimed to be the only Gala who had survived the wars) 'has already surpassed two hundred seventy' (T2.65).

Military attacks from the Gala are not entirely a matter of the remote past. My consultants Yuawalup and Lowai (both in their sixties) recall how they used to fear Gala attacks when they were little girls. This is consistent with Newton's (1971: 33) account of Gala raids on

⁸ Other versions of the same story were told by a variety of speakers including Walinum, Paul Badaybæg, Piurkaramb, and appeared in English translation in Harrison (1993: 45); and, in Manambu, English, and Tok Pisin, in Takendu (1977). The Kwoma version of the Gala war is recounted by Bragge (1990: 38). Alternative names for the Gala in Manambu accounts are Səruali-Məgunay and Mukun Kapar. The Kwoma refer to them as Kompom Nggala (Bragge 1990: 38).

their neighbours, including the Iatmul-speaking village of Brugnowi located near Yuanab, where half a dozen people were killed in 1953.⁹ After that, administration officers took control.

There were no doubt more wars, and more peoples became extinct, or were absorbed into Manambu-speaking communities. The existence of multiple substrata may explain why Manambu is so linguistically complex.

Other important traditional enemies of the Manambu used to be their downriver neighbours—the Western Iatmul, or the Ñaula. There are numerous accounts of warfare with the Ñaula (see Harrison 1993: 38–40). Fights used to take place on the river, in canoes. The major military techniques involved ambushes, ‘with a small force of two canoes lying in hiding among the dense stands of reeds and wild sugar-cane along the banks of the Sepik, and coming out to attack a party on their way to the fishing lagoon on some other expedition’.

We can recall, from §1.2.2, that before the Australian government had succeeded in banning the traditional warfare, all river villages adjacent to the Washkuk Hills were located on the south side of the Sepik, as a precautionary measure against surprise attacks by the Kwoma (who could not cross the river, since they were not so proficient in canoes). That is, the Manambu themselves were highly wary of a possible surprise attack from any quarter. This is one of the reasons why the ‘women’s road’ in Avatip is further away from the river than the ‘men’s road’: the men could defend themselves, the women could not.

Despite the traditional enmities, there was—and to some extent still is—a certain amount of cooperation between the Manambu and the Western Iatmul in traditional matters. Harrison (1993: 44) reports that ‘when the last full scale scarification ceremony was held in Avatip in 1936, inducting novices into the first stage of male initiation’, men from Yuanab, Malu, Japandai (Western Iatmul), and Sengo came to help. A long-term contact with the Iatmul involved trading spells and incantations in rituals (see §22.3). The Kwoma of the village of Bangwis are a traditional trade partner of the Avatips, and there used to be a special Kwoma–Manambu pidgin used for trade (Bowden 1997; also see §22.2.3). These partnerships were reflected in traditional patterns of multilingualism, now close to extinction. Only some old people know Kwoma and Western Iatmul—the languages of their erstwhile partners in trade.

Further facets of the traditional warfare, the ceremonial significance of head hunting, and trade patterns of the Manambu and their neighbours are discussed in Harrison (1993). We now turn to the encounters with Europeans, and their consequences.

1.4.2 Relationships with outsiders

The first people from the outside world that the Sepiks had contact with could have been Malay bird of paradise shooters (Ryan 1972: 1034). The first Europeans to ever set foot on the Manambu lands were Germans.

Official German interest in New Guinea began in 1884 and lasted until the First World War. The acquired colony included two distinct areas—the north-eastern portion of the mainland then known as Kaiser Wilhelmsland, and the Bismarck Archipelago. Kaiser Wilhelmsland included the Sepik Basin. Dr Otto Finsch (1839–1917), a German ornithologist and ethnographer, was commissioned by the German New Guinea Company (Neuguinea-Kompanie) to lead an expedition up the north-eastern coast of New Guinea, whereby he discovered the

⁹ These accounts were confirmed by Laurie Bragge and Ulrike Claas (p.c.).

entrance to the Sepik River which he named *Kaiserin Augusta Fluss* in 1885 (Ryan 1972: 404; also Townsend 1968: 75).

The first recorded contact of the Manambu with Europeans took place in 1886, and then again in the second half of 1887, when the members of the New Guinea Company Scientific Expedition under the leadership of Dr Schrader, Mr Hollrung, Mr Schneider, and Mr Hunstein sailed up the Sepik River on board the steamer *Samoa* (Zöller 1891: 367–8; Hahl 1980: 126; and a full account in Claas 2007: 38–40). Zöller (1891: 367) reports that the members of the scientific expedition had stayed in a camp at Malu between 22 August and 7 November. Dr Schrader collected 157 words from Malu and Yambon—this, together with further materials collected from Tsenapian and, apparently, Kwoma, formed the basis for ‘Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss languages’ to which we return in §1.7.

A further notable encounter¹⁰ of the Malu people with Europeans took place during the Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss-Expedition (1912–13), under the direction of District Officer Mining Engineer (Bergassessor) A. Stollé, with Dr Walter Behrmann (1882–1955), later professor of geography at the University of Frankfurt am Main, in charge of the geographical part, and Dr Richard Thurnwald (1869–1954) in charge of the ethnographic research (he continued his work after the outbreak of the First World War until taken prisoner in 1915) (Hahl 1980: 142; Roesicke 1914: 507). The major results are published in Behrmann (1922); this includes a fascinating description of art, customs (including the traditional greeting *kəpəyay*—see §21.5.3), and lifestyle of the Manambu from Malu.

During our visit to Malu, one of Behrmann’s interpreters and carriers, Yuanai (his picture is in Behrmann 1922: 178), excited particular interest among the Manambu of today because he was the last member of the Maliau clan in Malu. The other interpreter, Dangwan, was personally known to the oldest living man in the Manambu community, Duamakwa:y, from Malu (who was old enough to shave when he knew Dangwan: see examples 7.23, 9.33, and 21.7).

A certain aura of mystery surrounds the feats of the expedition: Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe (2006) report that some of the so-called ‘scientific men from European and U.S. museums . . . took to stealing skulls and even whole skeletons’ that ‘river villagers installed in their so-called reception huts or, if overmodeled in clay, in their spirit houses’. There are even rumours that some Germans had ‘commissioned head-hunting and even hunted heads themselves’. In particular, Adolf Roesicke is reported to have accompanied a Korogo (that is, Iatmul) war party against Malu, ‘shot a woman, and brought her head back to the camp to celebrate the kill’ (Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe 2006: 103–4). These claims are difficult to substantiate; it is possible that Roesicke happened to be travelling with the Korogo people when they encountered and beheaded a Malu woman. Another, alternative, version of the event could have been that the Melanesian personnel of the expedition—to whom the name ‘German’ was also applied—had taken, or commissioned the taking of, heads: for them, ‘the foreign military resources had opened up new possibilities’ (Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe 2006: 104).¹¹

The materials published by Behrmann are still valued—despite the fact that the villagers cannot very well read his 1922 book (in German, and in Gothic script), and have to rely on makeshift translations. Leo Kalangas and other men from the Malu village are currently trying

¹⁰ In her exhaustive study, Claas (2007: 38–40) reports a few further instances of contacts with Europeans, including the Hamburger Südsee Expedition which was on the Sepik between 23 May and 6 June 1909 with a stop in Malu, and the German-Dutch border expedition in 1910 during which several ships went past the Manambu area.

¹¹ This is what Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe (2006) call ‘military brokerage’.

to use the information provided by Behrmann (1922), in their territorial disputes with the neighbouring Kwoma. There is no more warfare between the Kwoma and the Manambu; but relationships are still somewhat strained.

As mentioned above (§1.2.2; Newton 1971: 64), the encounter between the Manambu and the German explorers in 1910–12 was not uniformly peaceful. According to Clune (1951: 281) who visited Avatip in 1940, the people from Avatip resented the presence of W. Behrmann ‘charting the river’ and ‘fired arrows at the invader, who responded with machine-gun fire. After the first shock of hearing this strange noise, the head-hunters replied with more arrows. The German, to make sure that they’d depart once and for all, shelled Avatip with pom-pom guns, using solid shells with no fuse, seven inches long and two inches in diameter. After that, the Germans surveyed in peace.’ As a result, the greatest curio in the village was a pom-pom shell, which was shown to Clune by the Malu people.¹²

Between 1886 and 1914, contacts between Sepik River dwellers and Europeans were rather intensive: Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe (2006: 102) report that, in the thirty years between 1886 and 1914, ‘the number of foreign visitors [including all outsiders, that is Melanesian police, carriers etc—A.A.] to the Sepik River was well over a thousand, implying an extensive encounter rate between visitors and villagers’. With the advent of Australian control, this traffic slowed down. By that time, the Avatip people had already acquired a reputation for their hostility towards outsiders. Townsend (1968: 100) reports:

... In 1919, the *Siar* [an Australian vessel—A.A.], mounting a two-pounder gun, had thrown several shells into Avatip village because of its bad reputation and had distributed a number of small Union Jacks to other villages as a mark of friendship. Perhaps Avatip men were naturally hostile, or maybe they resented not getting a flag, but their next visitor, and the only one until we came, was at once stabbed. He was a man named Fritsch, a German recruiter for the Neu Guinea Compagnie who took his launch up the River in early 1921. One of his two crewmen was killed and he and the other wounded but they managed to hide in the engine-room from where he shot several spearmen with a rifle.

In response to that, the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, then administering New Guinea, organized a punitive expedition against the village (see Rowley 1958: 202–3; Harrison 1990a: 25–6). As a result, half a dozen villagers were shot dead, and the villagers abandoned Avatip for many months, living in isolated bush camps in small groups. Some returned to the village and rebuilt it; others settled in Yawabak (on the Walmaw lagoon). It was during this time that the Avatip men were taken as indentured labourers, returning after two years with some knowledge of Tok Pisin and of the new colonial order. One of these was appointed *luluai* (the government official in the village), and two others were appointed *tutul* (*luluai*’s assistants) (see §1.3.2).

The Australian colonial administration was established in what became Ambunti in 1924 (Townsend 1968: 101). This saw the end of traditional head-hunting practices: Townsend, then the District Officer of the Ambunti District, was ‘primarily responsible for the “pacification” of the region, and his several public hangings of men convicted of head-hunting halted warfare almost overnight’ (Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe 2006: 109). The way this was done is described by Townsend himself (1968); for the analysis of the consequences for the Manambu and the Middle Sepik peoples in general, see Harrison (1993) and Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe (2006).

During the Second World War, Avatip men resisted the Japanese as best they could. Towards the end of 1944, a small contingent of Japanese soldiers was stationed in Yentschangai. The

¹² This incident was never mentioned by Behrmann himself; whether it had really happened is impossible to tell.

village was occasionally bombed by the Japanese, with no one hurt (Harrison 1990a: 26; Kukelyabau and Kaplenau, p.c.). Kukelyabau, now in her late sixties, told a heart-breaking story about her whole family fleeing into the bush at the sight of a Japanese war plane (see example 18.33). As pointed out by Harrison (1993: 83), the Japanese were conceptualized as traditional enemies of the Avatip; and a number of invaders were ambushed and killed. As mentioned above, the old men who killed Japanese still paint their faces black and wear the homicide regalia during ceremonies.

Avatip men supported the Australian guerrilla forces; until today, they proudly point out that they had never supported the Japanese as did some Iatmul leaders (see Gewertz 1983: 137). This is not to say that the Iatmul did not suffer horrendously at the hands of the invaders: ninety-six men and one woman were massacred in 1944 by native people from other Sepik villages, following Japanese orders, in the Iatmul village of Timbunke. Convinced that what had happened at Timbunke might happen to them, Avatip men decided to take the offensive. After two days of fasting to appease their ancestors' spirits, each Avatip man took his stone axe, singled out a Japanese soldier, and attacked (Curtain 1978: 21). Kaplenau, who was a young man then, reports that at the end of the Japanese occupation, the Avatip managed to capture their commander and proudly carried him—alive and tied up upside down on a pole like a pig—all the way to Wewak.

Intensive evangelization started in the 1950s when a Catholic church was built in Yentschanggai. The Avatip rebelled against the Catholic influence, and burnt down the church, thus acquiring a bad reputation among the missionaries. We will see, in §1.7 below, that the Summer Institute of Linguistics missionaries worked almost exclusively in Yuanab, known among the Manambu as more 'open' to outside influences. Nowadays, as we saw in §1.2.2 above, most Manambu are Christianized—which does not normally stop them from performing such rituals as the mortuary *Kəkətəp*.

A primary school was established at Yentschanggai in 1961. Since then, most children have acquired some level of education. They may attend secondary school in Ambunti, and many go to Brendi high school in Wewak. The Manambu people are among the most successful New Guineans—many have well-paid jobs as highly ranked army officers, members of the diplomatic corps, policemen, public servants, and teachers (see Harrison 1990a: 28 for further observations).

1.5 LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION AND PREHISTORY

1.5.1 The Ndu language family

The New Guinea region is the most linguistically diverse and complex area in the world, with over 1,000 languages spoken in an area of about 900,000 square kilometres. About 300 to 400 languages spoken there belong to the Austronesian family. Other, non-Austronesian, languages are often referred to as 'Papuan' (see Foley 1986: 1–3; Aikhenvald and Stebbins 2007). The term 'Papuan' is a rough denomination which covers over sixty genetically unrelated language families and a fair number of isolates in the area.

Manambu is a member of the Ndu language family, one of the few well-established Papuan families. In terms of number of speakers, the Ndu family is the largest in the Sepik area. It consists of at least six languages spoken by over 100,000 people along the course of the middle Sepik River and to the north of it (Laycock 1965; Aikhenvald 2004b). Other members of the family are:

1. ABELAM-WOSERA dialect continuum with over 40,000 speakers, in the Maprik District of the East Sepik Province. This includes the following dialects: Maprik, Wingei, Wosera, West Wosera (including Hanga Kundi, Kwasengen, Pukago, Banwingei). Wendel (1993: 1–5) argues that West Wosera is a separate language group. However, this may well be a continuum of dialects, some of which are mutually intelligible (Wilson 1976, 1980; Manabe 1981).
2. BOIKIN (also known as Boiken, Nucum, Yangoru, and Yengoru) is spoken by over 30,000 people in the area of the Yangoru District of the East Sepik Province. Dialects include Yangoru, Kubalia, Central, Nagum, Kunai dialect, Island and Coastal dialects (see a preliminary survey in Freudenburg 1976). Laycock's (1965) work is centred on Kwusaun Boikin, while Freudenburg (1970, 1975, 1979) is based on Yangoru Boikin.
3. IATMUL is a dialect continuum spoken by about 50,000 people in the East Sepik Province, with important minorities in towns such as Wewak and Madang. The four varieties of Iatmul include Western Iatmul (or Nāula), Central Iatmul (Palimbei), Eastern Iatmul (Waliyakwi), and Northern Iatmul (Maligwat). Mutual intelligibility of the dialects varies. A full list of villages is in Jendraschek (forthcoming). (Burui, Maligwat, and Gaikundi, listed as separate Ndu languages on the Ethnologue website, are among the Iatmul dialects.)

A number of varieties used to be grouped under the name of 'Sawos' languages (Laycock 1965: 144; 1973: 27); of these, Sengo, Burui, Kwaruwi Kundi, and also Gaikundi appear to be members of the Iatmul continuum. Koiwat—listed as a separate language in the Ethnologue and spoken in the villages of Koiwat, Kamangau, Seraba, and Paiambit—is lexically close to Boikin; whether or not it is a separate language requires further study. The notion of 'Sawos' is not a linguistic term: it is a Iatmul word used to refer to their trade partners north of the Sepik River. A reliable reappraisal of the languages covered by 'Sawos' is in Staalsen (1975).

4. YELOGU or KAUNGA is reported to have about 200 speakers. It is spoken in two villages, Biananumbu and Ambuken (also see Laycock 1965; 1973: 87, 91). The language is also known by the name of Buwiyamanabu, or Buiamanambu; this is 'a government corruption of the Kaunga name Buwiyamanabu' (see Bowden 1997: xx–xxii, on the precontact history and settlement of the Yelogu people, and their contacts with the Kwoma).
5. GALA, or NGALA, is spoken by about 150 people in Swakap (or Swagup), at a junction of a black-water river running between the Sepik and a point a few miles up the April River. The place was marked under the name of Kara on Behrmann's maps (Newton 1971: 33).¹³ Newton also reports that the place was called Nggala, and was later renamed Swagup after the names employed by its neighbours. Different Gala 'wards' claim different places of origin: one claims to have come from far up the Sepik, and two others claim to have come from the Hunstein mountains, from the south-east. Their presence in the Washkuk Hills is corroborated by Kwoma and Manambu accounts of the Gala wars (see §1.4.1).

A number of innovations are shared by Manambu and Gala (see §22.1). These may be partly accounted for by contacts between Gala and Manambu prior to the Gala wars and their subsequent expulsion from the area of the Washkuk Hills.

A preliminary grouping partly corresponding to the Ndu family was established by Kirschbaum (1922) (who used the term *Tuo* language, after the term for 'man' in Boikin). Linguistic affinity between Abelam and Iatmul was acknowledged by Loukotka (1957: 29).

¹³ The name [^hgala] is phonetically inaccurate inasmuch as the Gala language does not have word-initial prenasalization of velar stops.

The limits of the Ndu family were established by Laycock (1965), who decided to rename the family using the word for ‘man’ in Iatmul and Manambu. However, most of his materials are superficial and contain mistakes (see §22.1, for some examples), due to insufficient time spent with each group, and questionable fieldwork methodology. Consequently, his internal classification and reconstructions require revision (see Aikhenvald forthcoming b; and §22.1).

Other putative genetic affiliations between Ndu and languages of the Sepik area are entirely unsubstantiated (further discussion is in §22.2).

1.5.2 The varieties of Manambu

The varieties of Manambu spoken in Malu, Avatip, and Yuanab show a few differences which do not impede mutual intelligibility. This is no doubt due to the fact that the existing settlements are fairly recent: according to Harrison (1993: 29), Avatip was founded only about ‘six or seven generations ago’. The few differences between the varieties of Avatip (also spoken in Yawabak), Malu (also spoken in Apa:n), and Yuanab are discussed in §22.6.1 where we look at dialect mixing.

The major phonological feature setting the Yuanab variety apart from both Avatip and Malu is the lack of distinction between the lateral and the rhotic. (This feature is also shared with Gala; see above on the possible Gala substratum in Yuanab.)

Apart from a few lexical differences between Malu and Avatip, the Malu variety does not distinguish negative forms of *ya-* ‘come’ and *yə-* ‘go’, while the Avatip variety does: Avatip *ma: yəy* ‘does not/did not come’, *ma: yə* ‘does not/did not go’; Malu *ma: yə* ‘does not/did not come/go’. There is a difference in speech prosody between the two—the general opinion among the language-conscious speakers of the Avatip variety is that those from Malu ‘stretch our language’ (*ñan-a təp-a kudi lagu-dana* (we-LK+fem.sg village-LK language stretch/pull-3plSUBJ.VT+3plBAS.VT) ‘they stretch our village language’, that is, their words sound longer than ours).

The same expression applies to the speakers of Iatmul, or Ñaula—which also correlates with the fact that words in Iatmul are longer than in Manambu because Iatmul retains the word-final vowels which Manambu has lost (see §22.1).

1.5.3 Origins and putative prehistory

According to the Manambu tradition, they originated in the ancestral village called Asiti whose site lies between Avatip and the Western Iatmul village of Japandai. Its offshoots were Maukabu and Garaikwali. In an oral history recorded by Bragge (1990: 38) in the early 1970s, Kwatauwi/Vivigamei reports:

When Asiti overpopulated they made Mogumbo [Maukambu] and Garakoli [Ngarakwali] villages nearby. They stayed there a long time and through many fights, and the waterways silted up and left Asiti, Mogumbo and Garakoli too far inside... [When] Yabsit came and started Avatip... we divided the people to set up Malu and Avatip. Big brother in Avatip, small brother in Malu... all the clans were represented in both places. Malu is the name of the mountain, but the people are Avatips.

Bragge (1990: 49) calculates that the approximate date of establishment of Avatip and Malu could be between 1860 and 1870. This only partly agrees with Harrison’s (1993: 30)

observations that ‘Asiti was abandoned at the end of the eighteenth century or early in the nineteenth’; he estimates dates of founding of Avatip and Malu as ‘some seven generations ago’ (1993a: 17). An old lady in Avatip (who died in the early 1970s) appeared to have been only four generations removed from Asiti.

The story of Yuanab appears to be more intricate. According to some (Harrison 1993: 30), after the foundation of Avatip, some colonists moved upriver and established the village of Malu; others migrated still further upstream and settled there with an autochthonous people to form the village of Yuanab. This is corroborated by oral histories collected by Bragge (1990)—the origin stories collected by him among the Yuanab people ‘tell of the wandering ancestors gathering together’ and acquiring a new language—Manambu—for them to use. Nauwi Sauinambi (a Kwoma man from Bangwis) reports that ‘Yambon [Yuanab] came from up near Swagup and Alakai, some came from Garamambu. They did not paddle canoes’ (Bragge 1990: 37).

This suggests that the Yuanab people originally consisted of a number of groups—not necessarily all speaking one language—‘forced together into a simple village situation by the Manambu threat’ (37). This ‘language shift’ is dated by Bragge (1990: 48) as having occurred in about 1830. Originally, the Yuanab-dwellers were ‘dry-land’ people, only recently ‘converted’ to be river people. This may explain a somewhat aloof attitude of the people of Avatip and Malu to those from Yuanab. And we can recall, from §1.4, that, according to Paul Badaybæg, after the Gala wars some of the Gala people hid in Yuanab: this points towards some kind of Gala substratum in Yuanab. After the end of the Səruali Məgunay—that is, Gala—war (see §1.4), the Malu people are said to have destroyed Yuanab, with only two or three people surviving.

An alternative version is that the Yuanab people abandoned their village and went off to bush camps. The next waves of migration to Yuanab came from a Iatmul (Ñaula) speaking village of Japandai in the early twentieth century (Bragge 1990: 41–6); as a result of arguments between the new arrivals and the Yuanab people, an armed conflict erupted; the Malu people came to help and took the Yuanab people ‘up to their present village site and set them up there’ (41). It may have been at that stage that Yuanab ‘acknowledged its position as a Manambu village’.

The presence of varying substrata is probably what accounts for more pronounced dialectal differences between Yuanab and the rest than between, say, Malu and Avatip.

In the absence of written documents, dating of historical events has to rely on genealogies, and the information obtained can be contradictory. We saw that the dates for the Səruali Məgunay wars vary from early to late nineteenth century. All we can say with assurance is that the major migrations of the Manambu into more or less their present location within the area of Ambunti mountain took place in the nineteenth century.

What do we know about their more remote history? According to the tradition, the three clans of the Manambu came from three mythical ancestral villages, called *saki-təp* (totemic.ritual-village).¹⁴ The totemic ancestors of the Glə:gw lived near the Yentschang-gai/Lapanggai areas. The totemic ancestors of the Wulwi-Ñawi lived in a village far to the east—which, according to some, is the reason why the Wulwi-Ñawi totemically own the eastward areas, including Australia and places the white people come from, as well as the ‘white people’s objects’. The word for ‘east’ is *wali*, also used for ‘white people’. The totemic ancestors of the Nabal-Sablap lived further to the west, in the direction of the sea (and perhaps

¹⁴ Young Manambu men—orators in training—equate the three ancestral villages, Asiti, Maukabu, and Garaikwali—with the three mythical villages from which the three clan groups had originated. This is the way in which ethnohistory-in-the-making is now evolving.

even on the coast). They are the ones who ‘carved’ the Sepik River, whose source remains in their ancestral village (also see Harrison 1990a: 45).

This may imply that, historically, the Manambu could have consisted of at least three groups merged together, one of which used to be located towards the coast. This may also explain a few curious similarities between Manambu and Oceanic languages (see §22.3). But nothing can be stated with full assurance.

Different subclans of the Manambu, and sometimes even the same subclan in different villages, claim different migration routes. The Nagudəu of Avatip say that their ancestors came from far up the Screw River, in the direction of the Abelam; while the Nagudəu of Yuanab describe their ancestral ‘home’ as the south-west shore of Lake Chambri (Newton 1971: 64). This is similar to the ways in which different Gala ‘wards’ claim different places of origin (see §1.5.1). This may well reflect various layers of population mix and perhaps subsequent language shifts and unknown substrata, which may be held responsible for the linguistic complexity of modern Manambu.

The question of an overall proto-home of the Ndu people remains open. There are indications of the migrations of some of the Ndu-speaking peoples (Gala) from the north-east towards the Washkuk Hills. According to Roscoe (1994: 74), ‘it does seem probable that the early Sepik-Ramu population spawned the ancestors of the Ndu-speaking groups now spread across the lands from the Middle Sepik to the northern mountains and that these proto-Ndu arrived first in the Middle Sepik region, quite possibly in what is now the Sawos territory’. However, the exact route of migration is impossible to ascertain, until more archaeological and linguistic studies of the surrounding groups are undertaken.¹⁵ The story about two Manambu brothers carving the Sepik River may suggest the arrival of the Ndu people by water before the recession of the inland sea, rather than on foot. (The Middle Sepik River is thought to be the remnant of a vast inland sea which is believed to have reached its maximum extent between about 5000 and 6500 BC, and was infilled by about 1000 BC: Chappell 2005: 535–6; Paul Roscoe p.c.) Roscoe (1994: 74; p.c.) points out that ‘the balance of evidence suggests that the Ndu presence in the Middle Sepik is ancient rather than recent and that the ancestors of the Abelam and Boiken began moving north many hundreds of years ago’.

That is, the proto-home of at least some Ndu peoples could have been the Middle Sepik area. This requires further study.

1.6 LINGUISTIC SITUATION

Currently, Manambu—called by the speakers ‘village language’ (*təp-a kudi*) or Manambu language (*Mana:bə kudi*)—is the main language of the five villages on the Sepik River. It is used in most homes, especially by older generations (50–80 years of age), and during traditional ceremonies, such as name debates and the mortuary feast (§1.3.1). At present, there are no Manambu monolinguals; just a few old ladies, including Gemaj (see Plate 6) are more comfortable speaking Manambu than Tok Pisin.

Children’s early socialization starts in Tok Pisin (see §22.4). Most parents in the villages speak to their children in Manambu as well as Tok Pisin; however, Tok Pisin is the preferred

¹⁵ Errors in Foley’s (2005a) linguistic data invalidate his conclusions concerning the interrelationships between the languages of the Sepik area (§22.2.1).

means of communication between children of all ages. A few women in Avatip come from other areas of New Guinea, and communicate with their peers, and children, in Tok Pisin. This enhances the frequency of Tok Pisin, and now also of Papua New Guinea English. Most church services are conducted mostly in Tok Pisin, with inserts from Papua New Guinea English, and from Manambu. I attended several SDA church meetings which were mostly in Manambu; later on I was told that this was done ‘for my sake’.

Most Manambu who live in towns maintain the language as a means of home communication. However, their children tend to be proficient just in English, with little knowledge of Tok Pisin, and even less of Manambu. When these children go back to the village, during school holidays, the amount of English in the villages soars.

That is, the overall degree of intrusion of Tok Pisin and English into village life looks threatening—no wonder many older people complain that the language is doomed and bound to go (this is comparable to the situation in Taiap described by Kulick 1992). We return to the prospects for the survival of the language in §22.6.

Traditional multilingualism now survives mostly in the folk memory. As we saw in §1.4, the Iatmul (*Ńaula*) used to be traditional trade partners of a number of the Manambu clans (see Harrison 1990a: 69–72). These links were based on (a) trade exchange, and (b) shared cultural practices. Within Manambu clans traditional initiation ceremonies and debates (thoroughly described by Harrison 1990a) involved ‘trading’ incantations and spells in the closely related (but far from mutually intelligible) Iatmul. Representatives of older generations—especially men who achieved high degrees of initiation—used to have a very good knowledge of this language. A Iatmul influence is reflected in the special ‘shadowy’ style in traditional songs (see §22.3). Younger people know much less Iatmul.

Further language knowledge involved traditional trade partners. Older people used to know the languages of their neighbours and trade partners, especially Kwoma (also see Bowden 1997: xx). This knowledge is drastically diminished among the younger generation. This gradual disintegration of traditional multilingual patterns, and the increase in knowledge of the main lingua francas—Tok Pisin, and English—is a worrying sign of traditional language endangerment on a global scale (see Aikhenvald 2002b).

Avatip has a primary school (years 1–7), currently with 245 students and 12–13 teachers (a few of them from other communities: for instance, one is an Arapesh). The headmaster, Leo Yabwi Luma, is highly competent and proficient in Manambu language and lore. Most schooling is in Papua New Guinea English together with Tok Pisin. A Manambu vernacular language programme is under way. Manambu alphabetization materials are created by teachers themselves. Plate 5 features Tanina Ala displaying one of the posters relating to a story about ‘mother pig’ used in the Avatip school in 2002–3. The primary school in Yawabak (years 1–3) currently has a vernacular teaching programme; and apparently so does a primary school in Malu.

A major problem for teaching Manambu at school is the existing orthography. The orthography proposed by SIL missionaries was primarily based on the Yuanab variety which distinguishes just one liquid *r* rather than *r* and *l* as in Malu and Avatip (Farnsworth and Farnsworth 1975). The orthography distinguishes all the other consonant phonemes (digraph *ny* is used for the palatal *ɲ*). The orthography distinguishes only four vowels rather than nine (see §2.1.2). The vowels are written as *a* for /a/, *uw* for /u/, *iy* for /i/, and *aa* for either /a:/ or a sequence /aʔa/ (see §2.1.2, on how older speakers pronounce long vowel *a*: as a sequence of identical vowels interrupted by a glottal stop). The symbol *i* is used for ə. People complain that this writing system is bulky—and avoid writing Manambu.

Alternative orthographies have been emerging spontaneously over the years. One exemplar of this is a story by an elder, Daniel Takendu (1977). The writing system is basically phonetic: some automatically prenasalized consonants are written as such (*d* as *nd*, *b* as *mb*, and so on), and some are not; *i* is used for ə, and also for *i*, and a double vowel is used for long *a*. Palatal *ñ* is written as *ny*. Double consonants appear in stressed syllables. Most enclitics and some suffixes are written as independent words.

The way Manambu was written in Takendu's story about the Gala war (1977: 3) is illustrated in 1.1 (the first line of a story about the Gala war). The second line represents the phonological transcription adopted throughout this grammar.

1.1	<i>Anndi</i>	<i>Ambunti</i>	<i>wandanandi</i>	<i>tipaam,</i>	<i>Makimawi</i>
	a-də	Abunti	wa-dana-di	təp-a:m	Makəməwi
	DEM.DIST-pl	Ambunti	say-3plSUBJ.VT-3plBAS.VT	village-LK+LOC	Makemawi-
	<i>annd</i>	<i>sumbuk</i>	<i>si</i>		
	-a:d	səbək	sə		
	3masc.sgNOM	ritual.officer	name		
	'In that village that they call Ambunti, there is Makemawi (Ambunti mountain), (this is the) name of a ritual officer'				

The orthography used in the primary school programme in Avatip (see Plate 5) combines features of Takendu's (1977) with those of Farnsworth and Farnsworth's (1975) proposals (that is, *iy* for *i*, and *uw* for *u*, as in *duw* 'man' rather than *du*). Enclitics are written as separate words. The sequence of a labialized consonant *gw* followed by a schwa ə is marked as *gu*. Prenasalized stops are sometimes written as simple stops (as in *baal* /ba:l/ 'pig'), and other times as sequences with a nasal, as in *kwarimbaam* /kwarba:m/ 'in the jungle' and *giramb* /grab/ 'afternoon'. A sample with a corresponding phonological transcription and gloss is in 1.2 below:

1.2	<i>wun amaay baal awun</i>	<i>wun kwarimbaam</i>	<i>kwakwanaun</i>
	wun aməy ba:l-awun	wun kwarba:m	kwa-kwa-na-wun
	I mother pig-1fem.sgNOM	I bush+LK+LOC	stay-HAB-ACT.FOC-1fem.sgbas.vt
	<i>wun nyanugw aliy tinawun</i>	<i>wun nyi gaan si akis</i>	
	wun ñanugw a:li tə-na-wun	wun ñə ga:n sə akəs	
	I children four have-ACT.FOC-1fem.sgbas.vt	I day night sleep	NEG.HAB
	<i>kwakwanawun</i>		
	kwa-kwa-na-wun		
	stay-HAB-ACT.FOC-1fem.sgbas.vt		
	'I am mother pig, I live in the bush, I have four children, I never sleep day and night'		

Perceived inconsistencies and the unwieldiness of the orthographic conventions suggested by the Farnsworths are a matter of concern for many literate Manambu. There is currently an interest in developing a new, community-based, orthography.

The importance of such orthography approved by a consensus of well-respected Manambu cannot be underestimated: if people start writing their language, this may ultimately diminish the expansion of Tok Pisin into functional domains reserved for Manambu. For the time being, the Manambu language is considered 'difficult to write'.

Throughout this grammar, all the examples are presented in the phonological transcription based on the analysis in Chapter 2.

1.7 WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE MANAMBU LANGUAGE

The first records of the Manambu language by Europeans go back to the second half of 1887, when the members of the New Guinea Company Scientific Expedition under Schrader, Hollrung, Schneider, and Hunstein sailed up the Sepik River on board the steamer *Samoa* (Zöller 1891: 367–8; Hahl 1980: 126). Zöller (1891: 367) reports that the members of the scientific expedition had stayed in a camp at Malu between 22 August and 7 November. Dr Schrader collected ‘68 words from Zenáp-dialects, 26 words of Mangi-dialects spoken to the west from it, 132 words from the Malu dialect, 25 words of the neighbouring Yamboni-dialect [Yambon, or Yuanab, variety], and a further 12 words from a village which lies further down the river “in the grasshills” (Zöller 1891: 367–8). We have no information on the nature of this first contact, or the ways in which the language data were collected. The combined wordlist was published by Zöller (1891: Appendix, item 18), under the heading *Augustafluss* (Sepik River). It is presented in Appendix 1.1. As shown in the Appendix, sixty-seven words and expressions are recognizably Manambu, and are presumably from the Malu dialect.

Seventeen words in the list are identifiable as Western Iatmul. I hypothesize that they belong to what Zöller calls ‘Yamboni-dialect’, and perhaps reflect a dialect of Western Iatmul spoken where Brugnawi is located now (next to Yuanab/Yambon). Six of these are shared between Iatmul and Manambu. Five words are similar to Kwoma: this may have been the language from a Grass Hills village. A further sixty-eight are problematic. Six words are identifiable as Chenapian (note that the materials on Chenapian, published in Laycock and Z'graggen 1975: 744, are extremely limited). What is meant by ‘Mangi-dialect’ remains a mystery.

Zöller’s materials are quoted in Schmidt (1902: 70), under the heading of *Sprachen vom Augustafluss*, that is, *Languages of the Sepik*. He points out the impossibility of making any definite pronouncements based on the limited data available, and notes the presence of repetition in the colour terms *nüggi-nüggi* ‘red’ (*niki-niki* lit. blood-blood) and *laggi-galagi* ‘yellow’ (lit. *laki-ka-laki* ginger-INTENSIVE-ginger, ‘green’); these forms, still in use in Manambu, are discussed in §4.3.3 below.

Behrmann (1922: 178) mentions the greeting *kubiaai* (*kəpəyay*), but does not provide any wordlist. Adolf Roesicke (1914), also a member of the expedition, collected vocabularies, part of which he cites to illustrate the fact that the language spoken ‘from Tāmbunum to Jāmānūm and Tschébandei’ (which is identical with Iatmul) is relatively similar to another language, spoken in ‘Awatib, Mālu and Jambūn’ (that is, Manambu) (508–9). The Manambu part of this illustrative list is given in Appendix 1.1.¹⁶

Malu as a group of languages distinct from Iatmul was recognized by Loukotka (1957: 29–30): ‘Málu. Un petit groupe de langues vers l’ouest. Le *Málu* est parlé dans un village du même nom sur le Sepik [Kluge 1938: 176], le *Tuo* dans un autre village de la même région [Schmidt 1901; 1902], l’*Ambunti* dans un autre village encore et l’*Awatib* aussi dans un village /pour les deux: néant/.’¹⁷

¹⁶ The full vocabulary has not been located so far. Ulrike Claas (p.c.) suggests that it must have been destroyed during the Second World War.

¹⁷ Málu. A small group of languages towards the west. Málu is spoken in a village with the same name on the Sepik River [Kluge 1938: 176], Tuo (is spoken) in another village of the same region [Schmidt 1901; 1902], Ambunti (is spoken) in one other village, and Awatip is also (spoken) in one village /for both: nothing/.

The first missionaries of the Summer Institute of Linguistics to set foot in the Manambu villages were Janet Dodson (later Allen) and Phyllis Walker (later Hurd) (1962–3). They produced a sketch of Manambu phonology (Allen and Hurd 1972) based on the Yuanab variety (also quoted in Pike 1964). Pauline Yuaneng Luma Laki recalls their visit to her house in Avatip in the early 1960s: they were the first white people she had ever seen, and the experience was scary. They were then replaced by Robin and Marva Farnsworth (1963–80),¹⁸ who worked mainly in Yuanab (though their major collaborator, Ken Nayau, is from Avatip). (The first survey wordlist collected by Robin Farnsworth in Yuanab [Yambon] is dated 31 December 1964.)

Robin Farnsworth authored a number of papers (1966, 1975, 1976) on Manambu pronouns and demonstratives, phrases and clauses, and translation problems. Farnsworth and Farnsworth produced a grammar sketch (1966), and ‘Essentials for translation’ (n.d.), as a prerequisite for their translation work, in addition to an orthography proposal (1975) and phonology data (1981?). Marva Farnsworth compiled a number of collections of stories (e.g. 1971, *Nyana maaĵ* ‘our speech’), and a draft wordlist (n.d.), in addition to a few booklets for literacy work and stories (mostly biblical). The Bible, *God diki lapa nyig* (lit. God his banana leaf), was published by the SIL, Ukarumpa, in 1979, and dedicated in 1980. On the request of the Manambu people, a revision of this preliminary translation started in 2001, with the help of Marva and Robin Farnsworth, and their major collaborator Ken Nayau; it is currently being undertaken by several groups of Manambu themselves, including Ken Nayau.

The phonological analysis of Manambu (based on the Yuanab variety) by Farnsworth and Farnsworth (1981?) is similar to that in Allen and Hurd (1972): it postulates three vowel phonemes (*i*, *a*, and *a:*), whose allophones (ə, *i*, and *u*; we will see in §2.1.2 that ə, *u*, and also *æ* are in fact distinct phonemes) depend on the consonantal environment. This over-parsimonious analysis resulted in the creation of a complicated orthography (§1.6). The grammatical analysis is mostly cast in a rather inscrutable tagmemic framework; many of the paradigms are partial.

A sketch grammar of Manambu by Laycock (1965: 120–31) contains some partial pronominal paradigms and is on the whole very shallow. The materials obtained, and the fieldwork methodology, are problematic: the sketch is based on a short span of work with a consultant who worked as a medical assistant at the Ambunti hospital, while ‘a previous informant . . . was dismissed after one morning’s work as unsatisfactory’. Despite the statement that both consultants were from Malu, the wordlist contains a number of Yuanab features, which may be due to dialect mixing. His claim that there are no dialectal differences between Avatip, Malu, and Yuanab [Yambon] is incorrect (see §22.6). The language is said to have three vowels, *a*, ə, and *ʌ*. In his 1991 paper, Laycock postulated the existence of a long vowel *a:* for all the Ndu languages, including Manambu.

Harrison (1990a) and (1993) contain a wealth of lexical items, phrases, and sentences in Manambu, in addition to incisive observations about such aspects of Manambu semantics as the concept of *mawul* ‘insides; location of emotions’ and *kayik* ‘image, shadow’ (§21.4).

¹⁸ I am grateful to René van den Berg for providing me with these dates.

I.8 BASIS FOR THIS STUDY

This reference grammar is based on a corpus of over 1,500 pages of transcribed texts, notes, and conversations, from over fifty speakers, male and female, including three children (during the period between 1995 and 2004). About 95 per cent of the materials come from the speakers in Avatip, and the rest are from Malu and Yawabak. All the texts were transcribed and translated with the assistance of linguistic consultants.

Texts include traditional tales (genre termed *gabu-ma:j*), traditional stories about historical events which are passed on from one generation to another (*wa-saki-ma:j* and *blajaya-ma:j*), life stories, and stories about recent happenings and developments, and various songs (mourning songs *gra-kudi*, and laments about foiled marriages *namay* and *sui*). Three sample texts have been included at the end of the grammar. Other stories will be available as a web-accessible resource in the near future.

The materials were collected during field sessions, and then transcribed and translated. Elicitation was used very sparingly, and as much as possible was through Manambu. It was employed to complete paradigms, and check hypotheses. Speakers were presented with a putative sentence, or a description of a situation in Manambu, rather than asking them to translate a sentence from Tok Pisin or English. Participant observation played a considerable role in discovering the ways in which the language is used. The Manambu—especially the women—are patient and dedicated teachers, always eager to offer corrections and new ways of saying things, providing additional invaluable linguistic information. The linguistic insights of such natural linguistic analysts as Jacklyn Yuamali Benji Ala, Pauline Agnes Yuaneng Luma Laki, Jennie Kudapa:kw, Patricia Yuawalup, Katie Teke-tay, David Takendu, and James Katalu Balangawi helped us unfold the beauty and intricacy of the Manambu language. Throughout this book, I make occasional observations on how Manambu relates to other Ndu languages (based on the few published sources, and the unpublished documents made available to me through the generosity of the SIL at Ukarumpa).

APPENDIX I. I. EARLY DOCUMENTATION OF MANAMBU

This Appendix features two early wordlists of Manambu. Wordlists of Augustafloss language(s) compiled by Zöller (1891: 444–529; item 18) are reproduced in Table A1.1. Manambu words are in bold; words identified as Iatmul words are in italics; * marks words identifiable as Kwoma, and words identifiable as Chenapian are underlined. Words both in bold and in italics are the ones shared by Manambu and Iatmul. The third column contains corresponding words in recent sources on Manambu, Iatmul, Kwoma, and Chenapian. Words which are not in bold or italic, are not underlined, and have no asterisk come from an unidentified source.

Chenapian data are from Laycock and Z'graggen (1975: 744); Iatmul data are from Gerd Jendraschek (p.c).

Table A1.2 contains a sample wordlist of Malu (Málu) collected by A. Roesicke (1914: 509). The remainder of the vocabularies collected by Roesicke (whose existence was mentioned by Roesicke 1914: 508) have not been located and are believed to have been lost.

TABLE A1.1 ‘Sepik language’, or ‘Augustafluss’: from the wordlist of 29 languages from the area of German New Guinea Company and 16 languages from British New Guinea

GERMAN (WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION)	AUGUSTAFLUSS (SEPIK RIVER) ‘LANGUAGE’	COMMENTS
2. ‘Acht (Zahl)’, ‘eight (number)’	Tschelagowuk; <u>Uondenommu</u>	<i>Nommu</i> appears to be a Chenapian form (see 43 below)
3. Ahnenbild/ancestral image	Gaudiguam	
4. Alles, Alle/everything, all	Ambo*	Kwoma <i>abo</i> ; cf. Manambu <i>aba.b</i>
7. Arm/arm	Andip, Nasgob	
8. Armband/armband, bracelet	Au, Nasgub	
9. Asche/ashes	Queihiph*	Kwoma <i>keyihiapa now</i> ‘ash’
10. Auge/eye	Nou; <i>Minni</i> ; Melle ; Jinna	cf. Manambu <i>məl</i> ; the form melle could be either Kwoma (<i>miyi</i>) or Manambu (see §22.3); Iatmul <i>māni</i> ‘eye’
11. Axt (Beil)/adze (hatchet)	Gabugabi; Gu; Kurla	cf. Manambu <i>kul</i> ‘adze, axe’
13. Banane/banana	Lab ; <i>Labu</i>	cf. Manambu <i>lap</i> ; Iatmul <i>lavu</i>
14. Bart/beard	Jegu	
17. Baum/tree	Mondób	
18. Bein (Schenke)/leg(thigh)	Zoo	similar to Manambu <i>man-ta:b</i> ‘legs-arms’
20. Betelnuss/betelnut	Mena	
21. Bett (Lager)/bed (camp)	Magen	
24. Blatt/leaf	Njink	
30. Bogen/bow	Am	
32. Brotfrucht/breadfruit	Kaam	
34. Brust/breast	<i>Munja</i> ; Mu; Mui	Manambu <i>ñəg</i> ‘leaf’
35. Calebasse (Flasche)/gourd (flask)	Jaab; Jabo*; Jabi	Manambu <i>am</i> ‘bow’
36. Canoe (Boot, Schiff)/canoe (boat, ship)	Wal ; Siau	Manambu <i>ka:m</i>
40. Donner/thunder	Tombo ; Tombe	Manambu <i>məñ</i> ; Iatmul <i>muña</i>
43. Drei/three	<i>Kobuck</i> ; <u>Nommu</u> ; Mongul	cf. Kwoma <i>wapa</i> , <i>wiyopu</i> ‘gourd’? Manambu <i>val</i>
44. Du/you (sg)	Men	Manambu <i>təb</i> ‘sky’ (also used to refer to thunder)
46. Ei/egg	Kokóbira apadschu	Manambu <i>mugul</i> ; Iatmul <i>kupuk</i> ; Chenapian <i>nəmu</i> ‘three (Class IV)’
		Manambu <i>məñ</i> ; Iatmul <i>min</i> ‘you masculine’

48. Eins (Zahlwort)/one (numeral)	<u>Uarra</u> ; Nak ; <i>Ketta</i>	Manambu <i>nak</i> 'one'; Iatmul <i>kita</i> 'one'; Chenapian <i>kwarā</i> 'one (class II)', <i>gwara</i> 'one (class V)' cf. Manambu <i>ka p</i> 'ground, earth' cf. Manambu <i>jagu</i> 'yam soup'; <i>bæy</i> 'be tasty'
53. Erde (Staub, Schmutz)/ground (dust, dirt)	Kob	
54. Essen/eat	Djangui ; Bei	
56. Felderschmuck (auf dem Kopfe)/feather ornament (on the head)	Tubbu; Ju jui	
60. Feuer/fire	Üm; Njir; Ji nje; Njie	cf. Manambu <i>yi</i>
62. Finger/finger	Nassimbi; Anna	
63. Fisch/fish	Jara; Bao ; Kami	Manambu <i>kami</i> 'fish'; Iatmul <i>kami</i> 'fish'; Manambu <i>bau</i> 'scaly mudgroper'
64. Fischnetz/fishnet	Jea	
65. Fischepeer/fish spear	Minja	Manambu <i>mij</i> 'forkspear'
71. Frau/woman	<i>Taua</i>	cf. Iatmul <i>takwa</i>
74. Frucht/fruit	Papatap	
75. Fünf/five	Uondo; Taamben	Manambu <i>taba.b</i> 'five'
76. Fuss/foot	Zoejahoa; Agebei	
81. Gelb/yellow	Laggi galaggi	Manambu <i>laki-ka-laki</i> 'green, yellowish'
84. Geschenk/gift	Köbe	
89. Gibt's nicht (Verneinung)/there is none (negation)	Nu	
92. Grille/cricket	Laudai	cf. Manambu <i>laday</i> 'cricket'
93. Gross/big	Tschimbi	
98. Halsband/neck-band	Krisch	
99. Hand/hand	Annier	
102. Haus/house	Ui; Ja	Manambu <i>wi</i> 'house'
104. Heute/today	Pavir	Manambu <i>papər</i> 'a little later'
109. Hobeisen (beliebter Tauschartikel)/plane-iron (favourite object of exchange)	Be tatabaran	
110. Holz/wood	Au	this is likely to be a Chenapian word with 2nd person masc. prefix <i>na(n)-</i>
111. Hören/hear	<u>Namuwinekem</u>	Manambu <i>tapwuk</i> 'rooster'
112. Huhn/rooster	Tabuk	(<i>cont.</i>)

TABLE A1.1 *Continued*

GERMAN (WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION)	AUGUSTAFLUSS (SEPIK RIVER) 'LANGUAGE'	COMMENTS
113. Hund/dog	<i>Uarra</i> ; *Asche	latmul <i>wara</i> ; cf. Kwoma <i>as(a)</i>
119. Ich/I	*Nun	cf. Kwoma <i>no</i> 'we'; Chenapian <i>an</i> 'I'
124. Kakadu/cockatoo	Ueigan; Meem	
131. Kind/child	Jane ; Jemab	
133. Klein/small	Pao	cf. Manambu <i>ñan</i>
134. Knie/knee	Zoewú; Zobar	
136. Kokospalme/coconut palm	Toppan	cf. Manambu <i>təp</i> ; latmul <i>təpma</i> 'coconut'
137. Kokosnuss/coconut	<i>Töbma</i> ; Toppan	cf. Manambu <i>təp</i> ; latmul <i>təpma</i> 'coconut'
140. Kopfhaar/head hair	Tauen abon; Kau	cf. Manambu <i>ka:u</i> 'sharpness, strength'
144. Lachen/laugh	Benau; Banazakken	
151. Löffel/spoon	Uare	cf. Manambu <i>wuit</i> ?
152. Mädchen/girl	<i>Taua</i>	latmul <i>tak-wa</i> 'woman'
159. Messer/knife	Arreb ; Jakass	Manambu <i>arəp</i> 'bush knife'
161. Mond/moon	Uamo; Moábo	
163. Morgen (Gegensatz zu heute)/tomorrow (in opposition to today)	Tschir	Manambu <i>sər</i> , pronounced by older people as <i>sír</i>
165. Mund/mouth	Samoa; Jei; Undi	cf. Manambu <i>kundi</i> 'mouth'
166. Muschel/shell	Udi; Kritsch	
171. Nase/nose	Ussun	
172. Naßhornvogel/hornbill	Mon ama = du heisst/you are called	cf. Manambu <i>aba:li</i> 'nine'. The Manambu word for 'nine' (German <i>neun</i>) may have been mistaken for 'no' (German <i>nein</i>)
173. Nein/no	Uondeharrüs; Ambali	Manambu <i>wa:n</i> 'ear'
178. Ohr/ear	Uen; Uan ; Uabo	
179. Ohring/earring	Gaal; Gallaan	
180. Osten/east	Tschaar	
184. Penis/penis	Mab; Moa; Tschik	
185. Perlen/beads	Wakap; Ambo; Geiteck	Manambu <i>gaytək</i>
186. Pfeife (Flöte)/pipe (flute)	Djabir; Jambkor; Tegemi ; Dangur	Manambu <i>təkəmi</i> 'tree seeds'

187. Pfeil/arrow	Nübbi	Manambu <i>nəbi</i> 'arrow'
189. Plantage/plantation	Amnú	
193. Regen/rain	Mabnessi	
194. Rock (der Frauen)/skirt (for women)	Quar	
195. Rot/red	Bab; Nüggi-nüggi ; Dschui	Manambu <i>nüki-nüki</i> 'red'
197. Ruder (Paddel)/rudder (oar)	Jei; Ungor	
198. Sack/bag	Kojambi ; Uar; Quajembi	Manambu <i>kwasabi</i> 'stringbag'; <i>wa:r</i> 'large stringbag'
199. Sago/sago	<i>Naa</i> ; <i>Naa</i> ; Szaga	Manambu <i>na:gw</i> ; latmul <i>nau</i>
205. Schlafen/sleep	Bassanei	
208. Schlecht/bad	Kuitoga	
211. Schwarz/black	Glarangil	Manambu <i>gla-ka-gəl</i> 'black'
213. Schwein/pig	Mbal ; Hu	Manambu <i>ba:l</i> 'pig'
217. Sechs/six	Tschergagelag; Uonarra; Ambun	Manambu <i>abun</i> 'six'
219. Sehen/see	Wau	Manambu <i>wau</i> 'may I see'
221. Setz dich her!/sit down here!	Arrebana = sich setzen (sit down)	Manambu <i>a rə-bana</i> (then sit-1plSUBJ.VT+3fem.sGBAS.VT) 'Then we sit'
223. Sieben/seven	Uondenüs; Ambiti ; Tschelaweli	Manambu <i>abəti</i> 'seven'
227. Sonne/sun	Jaban; Njie ; Njö ; Njir; Uang	Manambu <i>nə</i> ; latmul <i>nja</i> 'sun'
229. Speer/spear	Djambaang-neidi	
234. Sterne/star	Utiam; Tungüi	
240. Tabak/tobacco	Gagi kiger = rauchen (smoke); Goram	Manambu <i>yaki kə-kə</i> 'I want to smoke'
243. Tanzen/dance	Baang = Tanz	Manabu <i>ba:gw</i> 'dance, ceremony'
244. Taro/taro	Nük; Maei ; Nomsei	Manambu <i>ma:y</i> 'taro'
245. Taube/pigeon	Kewam	
248. Tochter/daughter	Dege niana	Manambu <i>də-kə nian-a</i> (he-OBL+3fem.sg child-3fem.sGNOM) 'it is his daughter'
251. Topf/pot	Nauara	
253. Trinken/drink	Djangui	Manambu <i>jaguy</i> 'yam soup'
254. Trommel/drum	Rambu	Manambu <i>ra:b</i> ; latmul <i>rabu</i> 'slit drum'
255. Tuch (Zeug)/fabric (material)	Bokop; Obo; Zewatambi	Manambu <i>səp-a-tabi</i> (skin-LK-clothes) 'clothes' (<i>p</i> realized as <i>v</i> , <i>s</i> as <i>ts</i>)
256. Vagina/vagina	Hui; Szie	
261. Vier/four	<i>Einak</i> ; Ali ; <u>Hauus</u>	Manambu <i>a:li</i> , latmul <i>aynak</i> ; Chenapian <i>howis</i> 'four (Class II)'

(cont.)

TABLE A1.1 *Continued*

GERMAN (WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION)	AUGUSTAFLUSS (SEPIK RIVER) 'LANGUAGE'	COMMENTS
262. Vogel/bird	Uabbi	Manambu <i>wapi</i>
265. Wade/calf of the leg	Aglip, Zobar	Manambu <i>gu</i> ; Iatmul <i>gu</i> 'water'
269. Wasser/water	Jo; Gu ; Ob	Manambu <i>ya:b</i> 'road'
270. Weg/way	Jamb ; Nangur	
272. Weinen/cry	Ssintoei; Bedjiei	
273. Weiss/white	Adampäg; Wamjauam ; Maimboan	cf. Manambu <i>wamakawam</i>
288. Wurzel/root	Mench	Manambu <i>mæj</i> 'root'
289. Yams/yams	Ye; Babeigi	
290. Zähne/teeth	Deu; Uok ; Big; <i>Nimbi</i>	Manambu <i>wuk</i> 'tooth'; Iatmul <i>nəbi</i> 'tooth'
292. Zahn/ten	Uondo; <i>Tambebelli</i> ; Tambetti	Manambu <i>tabəti</i> ; Iatmul <i>tabavli</i> 'ten'
295. Zuckerrohr/sugar cane	Jo; Meingui	Manambu <i>məyŋwi</i> 'sugar cane'
296. Zunge/tongue	Taueng; <i>Tegát</i>	Iatmul <i>tigat</i> 'tongue'
299. Zwei/two	Bussi ; Vetti ; <i>Virla</i>	Manambu <i>viti</i> , Iatmul <i>vi:hi:k</i> 'two'; Chenapian <i>bisi</i> 'two' (Class III)

TABLE A1.2 Extract from the Mǎlu wordlist (given by Roesicke 1914)

GERMAN/ENGLISH	MǎLU	MODERN MANAMBU	Comments
Fliegender Hund/flying fox	kumbuí	kəbwi	
Vogel/bird	uǎbi	wapi	
Kasuar/cassowary	měntě	məd	Final vowel lost in Modern Manambu has been recorded by Roesicke
Mann/man	t	du	The absence of final vowel in Roesicke's notation is unexplained
Frau/woman	tǎgō	ta:kw	Final vowel lost in Modern Manambu has been recorded by Roesicke
Haar/hair	nǎmpe	nab	
Nase/nose	tǎám	ta:m	
Speer/spear	vǎi	vəy	
Beil/adze	kúol	kul	No such form attested
Schlitztrommel/slit drum	rǎmbu	rab	Final vowel lost in Modern Manambu has been recorded by Roesicke
Tantrommel/drum to dance with	kǎngo	ka:gw	
Bejahung/affirmation	ǎi	ayey	Slightly different
Verneinung/negation	mǎám	ma:n	Slightly different
Stehlen/steal	lugǔ	luku (kur)	<i>luku</i> is part of a complex predicate which can be used on its own as a result of ellipsis
Pflanzen/plant	kǎndi	ka-di	'they plant'