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We Are One Flesh: Unity and Migration of the Yabio

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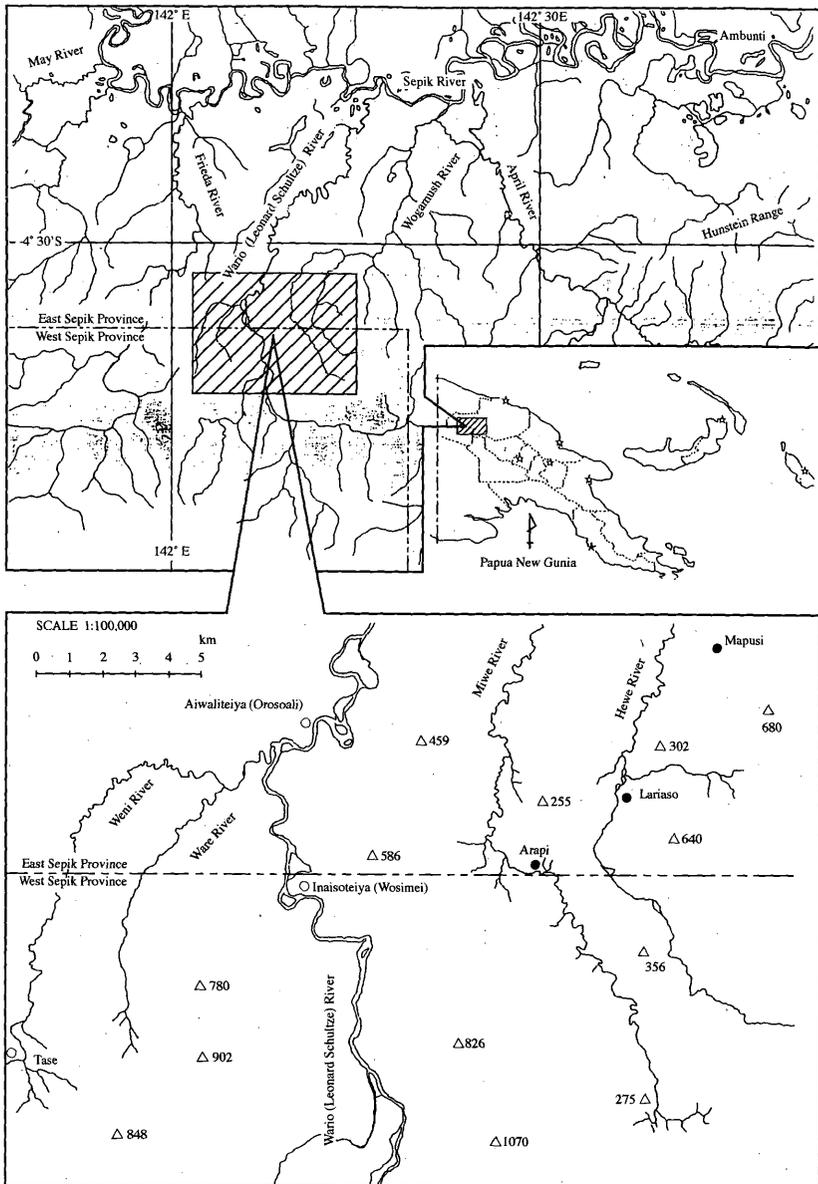
1. Introduction

I spent the first night at Lariaso, a Yabio village, speaking in Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin English) with young male villagers assembled in the house provided for me. "How do you say family in your language?" Hesitatingly, one of them answered, "*To wai ele*." "Who are your *to wai ele*?" They did not understand my question. They discussed matters in their own language for a while. One of them said, "*me efaleauni mail*." And another man began to answer to me. "Sago grubs, betel nuts, dogs, pigs, bamboos..." "What is the meaning of *me efaleauni mail*?" "Your descent group emblem (the natural emblems of descent groups are called *pisin* in Tok Pisin). Each family has its own emblem such as betel nuts, dogs, possums, sago grubs, bamboos, pigs, pandanus, hornbills, turtles, white cockatoos..." "What does *to wai ele* mean?" "A pair of brothers, just like one family." "*To wai ele* means family, doesn't it?" "It means one man. *Idai paulo*, all of us are united. All the villagers are one family. All of us speak a common language." Confused by their response, I said, "But it is you who said that *to wai ele* means family. There are some families in this village." They grew excited. Ignoring me, they began to talk with the people in the house next door. The neighbors spoke loudly, and shouted out *idai paulo* again and again.

This is just a common anthropological episode of miscommunication with villagers. This anthropologist, however, wants to make this experience during field research worth telling.

My command of the Yabio language remains poor, and I still use Tok Pisin as the main means of communication with the Yabio. But I believe I can decipher the meaning of Yabio words noted above. *To wai ele* [human being (s)-one-suf. (to make an adjective of a noun)] means "a group of close people," but does not especially indicate a family, nor a descent group. *Me efaleauni mali* [your (sing.)-descent group emblems-call] means "tell me your descent group emblems." *Idai paulo* [we (incl.)-all] means "all of us are unified" or "we are one flesh."

I suspect there is no Yabio word equivalent for "family", or "descent group." It is easy to ask the emblems of a descent group to which an informant belongs. I just say, "*me efaleauni mali*." To know one's descent group emblems is to know one's descent group: each descent group has some specific emblems. However, it is not easy to ask directly the name of an informant's descent group. I have no other



Map 1

means than to use Tok Pisin words such as *lain*, *famili*, and *bisnis*. When an informant does not respond to my question regarding his or her descent group, other villagers explain my intention using Yabio words. Even in these explanations, I have not found any specific words meaning a descent group, although I often heard Tok Pisin words, *bisnis* and *famili*.

Some informants hesitate to answer the name of their descent group, though

the proper names of descent groups are daily mentioned. In such a situation they often say, "*idai paulo*" spontaneously, and emphasize the unity of villagers, village solidarity, just like the Lariaso villagers in the episode above. Why do they emphasize the unity of villagers when faced with the fact that a village is composed of descent groups?

By describing the characters of some basic social units, and the migration of the Yabio people, I explore a possible answer to this question.

2. Ethnographic Background

2.1. The Yabio and Their Neighbors

The Yabio are sago-eaters living in the basins of the Wogamush and Wario (Leonard Schultze) Rivers which feed the Sepik. Their land covers an area of about 300 square kilometers straddling the boundary between West Sepik and East Sepik Provinces, Papua New Guinea. As a participant in the "Ethnological Comparative Studies in New Guinea Highlands Fringe Area" research project, I conducted field research in two Yabio villages, Lariaso and Arapi, in East Sepik Province, from August to September, 1986, from July to October, 1988, and from September to December, 1990¹⁾.

Lariaso village is on the right bank of Hewe River, a tributary of Wogamush River, and Arapi on the right bank of Miwe (Sio) River, another tributary of Wogamush. The other village, Tase, was on the bank of the Tase River, a tributary of the Weni River which flows into the Wario. In 1989, however, the residents abandoned the village and constructed a new one on the opposite bank of Inaisoteiya, a deserted hamlet. They moved because of repeated deaths and complaints made by the Paya people insisting that Tase is within their territory. This new village is called Wario after the river that it fronts.

In 1988, the total population living in the Yabio villages, Lariaso, Arapi, and Tase, was 122. Their population density is about 0.4 per square kilometer.

The Yabio face the Sanio on the north and east, the Paya on the west, and the Tauali on the south. Of these ethnic groups, the Sanio alone have been the object of substantial anthropological research [TOWNSEND 1969]. Although the Yabio and the Sanio share many common cultural features, e.g., birth order names, pair kin terms, tambaran cults, menarche celebrations, food taboos, and so on, there are cultural differences as well. For example, each Sanio has an individual slit gong signal, but the Yabio do not have such signals. Emphasizing their group solidarity, the Yabio often say that though the Sanio possess sago palms individually, Yabio sago palms pertain to descent groups. Linguistically, the Yabio recognize that their language is different from Sanio, and is similar to Paya and Tauali. Their observations agree with the results of linguistic studies. Paya and Tauali correspond to Papi and Tuwari respectively in Laycock's language map. Papi belongs to the Papi Family, and Tuwari belongs to the Walio Family together with

Yabio. These two language families compose Leonhard Schultze Sub-Phylum-Level Stock. On the other hand, Sanio falls under the Sanio Family, Sepik Hill Stock [LAYCOCK 1981; DYE, TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND 1968].

2.2. Western Contact

In June, 1961, a patrol officer went up to the headwaters of the Leonard Schultze River with fifteen members of the Police Force. "The area had previously not been visited by the Administration or any other European party" [PATROL REPORT 1961]. On June 25, they arrived at 'WOSWORI' village, and found wrist guards made of pig skin, and a large number of wild ginger leaves used for fighting, in a deserted two-story house. Leaving some gifts in the house, they went up the river and met four men on a raft. Because the four men fled into the bush, the patrol party returned the raft and foodstuffs to 'WOSWORI'.

'WOSWORI' is, I believe, the name of a Yabio descent group, Orosoali. This Patrol Report also refers to another Yabio descent group.

The NAKIAI people, through interpreters, spoke of enemy groups further into the mountains named WOSIWAI (not to be confused with WOSWORI), and another group PUWI. They knew of these people, and had fought with them, and mentioned that one of the reasons for their move to the river from the mountains was that these enemies were killing and eating them [op.cit.].

The hamlet site of Orosoali on the bank of Wario (Leonard Schultze) River is called Aiwaliteiya. About six kilometers up the river was another Yabio hamlet called Inaisoteiya. It was the hamlet of one of the descent groups, Wosimei. I surmise 'WOSIWAI' in this Patrol Report corresponds with Wosimei. Both of these hamlets were abandoned at the end of 1970's, because many residents died in succession.

Though the 1961 report is the only record I have found of a patrol officers' visit to the Yabio people, the Yabio say that about twenty years ago an officer called at Lariaso village and bought war shields. Occasionally patrol officers come to Mapusi, a Sanio village located about five kilometers north of Lariaso, and summon the Yabio to hold village court and to be counted for census purposes.

According to a patrol report, an officer came to Mapusi and appointed 'Tupio Aiari' to the post of village councillor in 1983 [Patrol Report 1983]. Though a Local Government Council has never been set up and councillors have little authority in this area, Tibiau of Arapi village is recognized as a councillor appointed by the government.

While the Yabio were under the Australian administration, more than ten men were recruited for plantation labor, and sent to Buka, New Britain, and New Ireland. Two of them never returned home, and nothing has been heard of them. Since Independence, no one has had the opportunity to be a wage earner except for four men who worked at the Frieda Copper Company from 1978 to 1981. The

Yabio have restricted access to cash income, though they need clothes, steel axes, torches and other consumer goods.

The Pacific Island Ministries established a mission base at Mapusi about 1980. Following the order of missionaries, the Yabio (as well as the Sanio) have abandoned tambaran cults. The mission base has an airstrip, a school with some residences for teachers, a two-story house for missionaries, a trade store, and an aid post. Though the store stocks just a few commodities, and the school teaching Tok Pisin and arithmetic for three years does not have teachers the year round, Mapusi is a local center for the Yabio.

Owing to the education offered by the mission, most Yabio (except some elderly people) can speak Tok Pisin. Five men, having successfully completed study at the Mapusi school, entered the Bible School at Ambunti. Four of them became pastors and lead the Christian activities in Lariaso and Arapi.

3. Villagers

Table 1 is the population pyramid of Lariaso villagers, and Table 2 is that of Arapi villagers. The symbols composed of capitals and numerals correspond to each resident. The husbands, widowers, and bachelors living in men's houses are identified by the combination of two capital letters and two numbers. 'L' means Lariaso, 'A' Arapi, and 'M' male. Numbers are assigned in order of age. Females and young people are identified by capital letters following numbers: the letter expresses genealogical relationship of these individuals to the males identified. Lariaso and Arapi villages had 49 male and 40 female residents in 1988. The overall- male/female rate is 122.5:100; 115:100 below age 20, 160:100 between ages 20 and 40, and 100:100 above age 40².

The Yabio people have two kinds of dwellings; a married couple's house, *sautoli o sabu* (T.P.: haus marit), and a men's house, *aloaito o sabu* (T.P.: haus boi). Boys move from their parents' houses to men's houses at about age ten. Men's houses do not have any ceremonial functions. Yabio houses, made of bush materials, are not durable. All the houses seen in 1986 had rotted away or been rebuilt by 1990.

The composition and transition of each household in each research period are shown in Tables 3 & 4. In those tables, dotted horizontal lines delineate each residential unit. Sometimes a household shares its dwelling with another. Husbands are shown by bold-faced triangles. An arrow from \triangle or \circ means that he or she left the household by the next research period. An arrow to \triangle or \circ means that he or she joined the household after the previous research period. Longer arrows mean the movement of the entire household to or from another village. The place where one moved to or from is indicated with the arrows. For example, **AM02** means the household of AM02. MH means men's house, and the other words written in capital letters are village names. ' \rightarrow ARAPI-LARIASO' shows the move to LARIASO through ARAPI.

Table 1 Lariaso Population Pyramid, 19880831

Males	Estimated Age	Females
LM01	60 △ ○○	LM07 WM, LM06 WM
LM02, LM03	55 △△ ○	LM01 W
LM04	50 △ ○○	LM09 WM, LM06 Z
LM05, LM06	45 △△ ○○	LM03 W, LM05 W
LM07	40 △	
LM08	35 △ ○	LM07 W
LM09, LM10	30 △△ ○	LM06 W
LM11, LM12	25 △△ ○○	LM08 W, LM09 W
LM13, LM14, LM15	20 △△△ ○○○○	LM08 WZ, LM01 D, LM01 D LM01 WformerHBD (LM04 D)
LM16	15 △	
LM01 S, LM03 S LM05 S, LM03 S, LM06 S	10 △△△△△ ○	LM03 D
LM06 S, LM08 S	05 △△ ○○	LM07 D, LM03 D
	00	
Total Males: 23		Total Females: 18
Total Population: 41		

Tables 5 and 6 show the changes of men's houses. An individual's genealogical relationship to another male resident is shown in parentheses. '→married' means that he left a men's house, and got married. Other symbols are the same as those in Tables 3 and 4. The tables are not divided into individual men's houses, because the residential composition of a men's house fluctuates: it is hard to find co-residency principles. A bachelor easily moves from house to house, and even full brothers often live in separate men's houses. It seems that congenial age-mates enjoy the construction of men's house itself. The number of men's houses changes year by year. In 1986, there were four men's houses in Lariaso, and one in Arapi; in 1988, two in Lariaso, and seven in Arapi; in 1990, five in Lariaso, and four in Arapi.

Table 2 Arapi Population Pyramid, 19880831

Males	Estimated Age	Females
	55 ○	AM02 FBD
AM01, AM02	△△ ○	AM02 FBDHBW
AM03, AM04	△△ ○	AM01 W
AM05, AM06	△△ ○○	AM02 W, AM03 W
AM07	△ ○	AM04 W
AM08, AM09, AM10 AM11	△△△△ ○○	AM06 W, AM05 W
AM12, AM13, AM14	△△△ ○	AM07 W
AM15, AM16, AM17 AM18, AM19	△△△△△ ○○○	AM01 ZD, AM03 FBD, AM01 ZD
AM20, AM21, AM22	△△△ ○	AM02 D
AM06 S	△ ○○○	AM02 D, AM05 D, AM06 D
AM02 S, AM05 S AM07 S	△△△ ○○○○○○	AM04 D, AM04 D, AM06 D AM04 D, AM02 D, AM05 D
	00	
Total Males: 26		Total Females: 22
Total Population: 48		

Divorce is quite rare. The only case I recorded is that of LM01, who divorced his former wife because she was barren. Polygamy is also rare. In Lariaso and Arapi, no one has two or more wives. The only Yabio man who has two wives lives in Sanali, a Paya village adjacent to the Frieda airstrip.

The residents in a married couple's house usually consist of a nuclear family, excepting sons above ten years of age, and other co-residents. Co-residents are mostly widows and unmarried girls who have lost their father or mother. In Tables 3 and 4, there are only two male co-residents; a boy, LM01 WformerHBS in 1986, whose father, LM04, lived in a men's house, and LM02 who was a co-resident of LM08 in 1990. The latter case is quite exceptional. In principle, boys over ten and single men (whether bachelors or widowers) do not live in a married couple's house. In 1986, LM02 had his own house in Arapi, and lived with his two daughters. It

Table 3 Transition of Residents in Houses for Married Couples, Lariaso

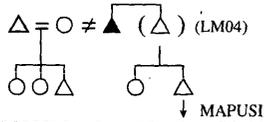
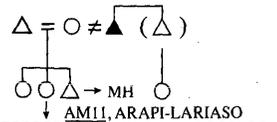
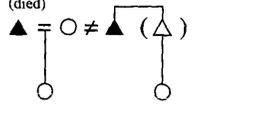
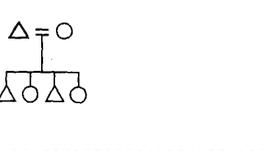
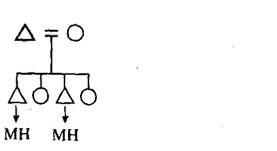
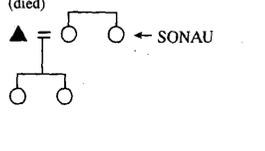
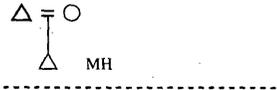
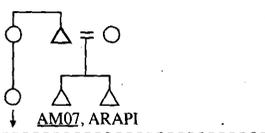
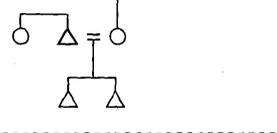
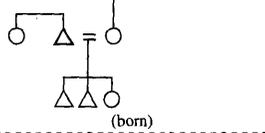
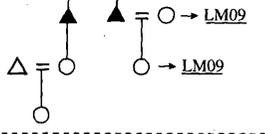
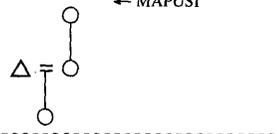
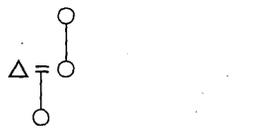
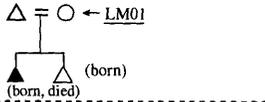
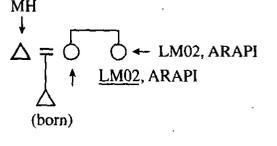
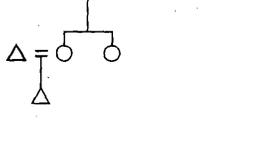
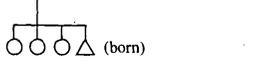
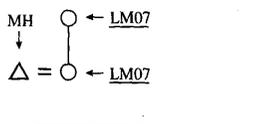
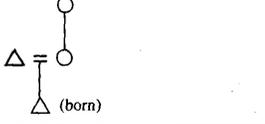
19860930	19880831	19901031
<p>LM01(LM05 MB)</p>  <p>(LM04)</p> <p>MAPUSI</p>	 <p>MH</p> <p>AMLI, ARAPI-LARIASO</p>	<p>(died)</p>  <p>(died)</p>
<p>LM03(LM05 MB)</p> 	 <p>MH MH</p>	<p>(died)</p>  <p>SONAU</p>
<p>LM05</p> 	 <p>MH</p>	
<p>LM06</p>  <p>AM07, ARAPI</p>	<p>SONAU →</p> 	 <p>(born)</p>
<p>LM07</p>  <p>LM09</p>	 <p>MAPUSI</p>	 <p>(born)</p>
<p>AM11(LM07 FBS)</p>	<p>ARAPI →</p>	<p>↓ MH, ARAPI</p>  <p>LM01</p> <p>(born, died)</p>
<p>LM08</p>	<p>MH ↓</p>  <p>(born)</p> <p>LM02, ARAPI</p> <p>LM02, ARAPI</p>	<p>MH →</p>  <p>LMO2</p>
<p>AM04</p>	<p>ARAPI →</p>	 <p>(born)</p>
<p>LM09</p>	<p>MH ↓</p>  <p>LM07</p> <p>LM07</p>	 <p>(born)</p>

Table 4 Transition of Residents in Houses for Married Couples, Arapi

19860930	19880831	19880831	19901031
<p>LM02</p> <p>● = △ → AM02 ↓ MH, LARIASO ○ → LM08, LARIASO ↓ LM08, LARIASO LM02 FBS △ = ○ ↓</p>			
		→ SANALI	
<p>AM01</p> <p>TASE ← ○ = △</p>			
			<p>○ = △ → AM02 ↑ ○ = △</p>
<p>AM02</p> <p>△ = ○ ↓</p>			
		<p>AM03 ↓ ○ = △ = ○ = △ ↓ AM01 LM02 (born)</p>	
			<p>○ = △ → AM02 ↑ ○ = △ = ○ = △ ↓</p>
<p>AM03 FZDH</p> <p>△ = ○ ↓</p>			
		→ TASE	
<p>AM03</p> <p>↑ ↑ ○ = △ = ○ = △ ↓ AM02</p>			
			<p>↑ ↑ ○ = △ = ○ = △ ↓ SONAU</p>
<p>AM06(AM03 B)</p> <p>△ = ○ ↓</p>			
<p>AM04(AM05 ZH)SONAU →</p>			→ LARIASO
<p>AM05</p> <p>△ = ○ ↓</p>			
<p>AM07</p> <p>△ = ○ ↓</p>			
<p>AM09</p>			<p>△ = ○ ↑ ↑ MH ○ (born) SONAU</p>

Table 5 Transition of Residents in Men's Houses, Lariaso

19860930	19880831	19901031
ARAPI→	LM02	→LM08
LM04 (LM01 WformerHB)	LM04	LM04
LM09 B→SONAU		
LM08 (LM05 WformerHS)	→married	
LM09 (LM13 FBS)	→married	
LM10 (LM03 S)	LM10	LM10
LM11 (LM04 BS)	LM11	LM11
LM12 (LM09 B)	LM12	LM12
LM13 (LM05 WS)	LM13	LM13
LM14 (LM05 WS)	LM14	LM14
LM15 (LM03 S)	LM15	LM15
LM16 (LM04 S)	LM16	LM16
	LM01→	LM17 (LM01 S)
	LM03→	LM18 (LM03 S)
	LM05→	LM19 (LM05 S)
	LM03→	LM20 (LM03 S)

Table 6 Transition of Residents in Men's Houses, Arapi

19860930	19880831	19901031
AM07 (AM03 MBS, LM07 FBS)	→married	
AM08 (AM03 B)	AM08	AM08
AM09 (AM07 FMFSS)	AM09	→married
AM10 (AM02 FBDS)	AM10	(died)
AM11 (AM07 B)	AM11	→married, (→LARIASO)
AM12 (AM05 B)	AM12	AM12
AM13 (AM02 FBDS)	AM13	AM13
AM14 (LM02 ZS)	AM14	AM14
AM15 (AM03 WFS)	AM15	AM15
AM16 (---)	AM16	AM16
AM17 (LM04 ZHZZ)	AM17	AM17
AM18 (LM02 ZS)	AM18	AM18
AM19 (AM01 ZS)	AM19	AM19
AM20 (AM03 WFS)	AM20	AM20
AM21 (AM01 ZS)	AM21	AM21
AM22 (LM02 ZS)	AM22	AM22

was a transitional settlement pattern after the death of his wife. In 1987, his first daughter got married, and moved to LM08's house. His second daughter became a co-resident of this house. LM02 moved to Lariaso at the same time, but stayed in a men's house. Later he became a co-resident of LM08's house. The fact that his

second daughter is disabled and needs an attendant brought about this exceptional case. After giving birth, his first daughter could not take care of her younger sister. Then, LM02 had to look after his second daughter. In 1989, AM04, his wife, and his children left Arapi, and were established in LM08's house. LM08 is not a close relative of AM04 or his wife, but his house was large enough to accommodate another nuclear family. Then an incident occurred among these co-residents.

LM08 W got sick, and went to the hospital in Ambunti accompanied by her husband and son. While they were absent, AM04 went hunting at night. After enjoy chatting, LM02 went home to sleep, where his second daughter, and AM04 W and her children were sleeping. Finding him enter the house while her husband was absent, AM04 W was upset, and fled to LM09's house. Next morning, AM04 W accused LM02 of approaching a married woman in secret. Later, Lariaso and Arapi villagers discussed this matter. Their decision, that LM02 should compensate AM04 W with K6, indicates the importance the Yabio attach to the principle that widowers and bachelors cannot live in a married couple's house.

A widow and her daughters often live in separate married couple's houses. When a widow remarries, she usually leaves her children except infants. Aged widows tend to frequently change their residences. For example, the residence of AM03 WFBD (living in AM03's house in 1986) was different in every research period. By contrast, young female co-residents tend to be fixed to a household. Household heads do not want to part with young female co-residents, because they will bring bride wealth, and can be exchanged for brides of household heads' single male relatives. While AM03 FBD stayed with her mother, LM03 WZ, in Lariaso for some weeks, AM03 and his brother, AM08, rebuked LM03 WZ for taking her daughter away from them. They insisted that they had charge of this girl, because they had been looking after her since LM03 WZ remarried.

4. Migration

I calculated the number of migrants based on Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6. Table 7 shows that number from 1986 to 1988, and Table 8 from 1988 to 1990. Between 1986 and 1990, the total number of emigrants from Lariaso is 4, and that from Arapi is 16. In the same period, the total number of immigrants to Lariaso is 13, and that to Arapi is 8. Migration between villages occurs frequently and on a large scale.

People emigrate to another village for various social and personal reasons, and it is hard to classify these migrants into discrete categories. Table 9 is a tentative classification of migrants counted in Tables 7 and 8. 'BRIDES' means the movement of a bride to her husband's village. Virilocal residence is normal. AM09 W comes from Sonau, a Sanio village, but her mother, LM04's MZD, is Yabio. Of the other six wives in Arapi, two moved from villages of the Paya people before 1986; AM01 W from a deserted hamlet, and AM06 W from Sanali. AM01 W's father, and AM06 W's mother are Yabio. In Lariaso, three of the seven

Table 7 Migration of Lariaso and Arapi Villagers, 1986-1988

from to	LRS		Arapi		Tase		Sonau		Mapusi		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Lariaso	/	/	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	4
Arapi	0	1	/	/	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	4
Tase	0	0	1	2								
Sonau	1	0	0	0								
Mapusi	1	0	0	0								
Sanali	0	0	2	1								
TOTAL	2	1	4	5								

Table 8 Migration of Lariaso and Arapi Villagers, 1988-1990

from to	LRS		Arapi		Sonau		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Lariaso	/	/	2	5	0	1	2	6
Arapi	0	1	/	/	0	2	0	3
TOTAL	0	1	2	5				

wives came from Sanio villages; LM05 W from Mabua, LM06 W from Sonau, and LM07 W from Mapusi. Among them, LM06 W's mother, LM04's MBD, is Yabio. That is, about 43% of the total wives in 1990 came from villages of neighboring ethnic groups, and two thirds of them are daughters of a Yabio parent.

The migration of a woman after the death of her husband is categorized as 'WIDOWS'. All the three aged widows in this class migrated to live with a close female consanguine, a daughter or a sister. LM07 WM sometimes calls on her son in Mapusi.

The number of migrants under 'NUCLEAR FAMILIES' is the largest in Table 9. A nuclear family is a stable social unit. Divorce is quite rare, and while parents are alive, their infants are never taken care of by another man or woman. AM04, his wife, and his children moved from Sonau to Arapi, and later from Arapi to Lariaso, because of his delicate health. AM11 and his wife removed to his wife's village after the death of their first child.

'COMPANIONS OF A BRIDE' are LM02 (LM08 WF) and LM08 WZ. As noted above, they moved to Lariaso when LM08 W married.

Displeased with the marriage of his younger brother, LM09 B in 'BACHELORS' left Lariaso. Another person in this category, LMOI WHBS (LMO4 S), has been taken care of by a Sanio man and a Yabio woman living in Mapusi. They do not have any children.

Table 9 Categories of Migrants

	Number	Period	Within the Yabio Land	Across Ethnic Group Boundaries
BRIDES	3	'86-'88	LM08 W, LM06 ZD, AM01 Z	
	2	'88-'90	LM01 D	AM09 W
WIDOWS	2	'86-'88		LM06 WM, LM07 WM
	1	'88-'90		LM03 WZ
NUCLEAR FAMILIES	9	'86-'88	AM03 FZDH (+W)	AM04 (+W+D*2), LM02 FBS (+W+S)
	7	'88-'90	AM11 (+W), AM04 (+W+D*3)	
COMPANIONS OF A BRIDE	2	'86-'88	LM02 (LM08 WF), LM08 WZ	
	0	'88-'90		
BACHELORS	2	'86-'88		LM09 B, LM01 WHBS (LM04 S)
	0	'88-'90		
UNMARRIED WOMEN	0	'86-'88		
	1	'88-'90		AM03 FBD

The only person in 'UNMARRIED WOMEN', AM03 FBD, is LM03 WZ's third daughter. When she married again, LM03 WZ took this daughter to Sonau, though her first and second daughters were looked after by AM03. After her second husband died, she migrated to Lariaso to live with her younger sister, LM03 W. But her third daughter moved from Sonau to Arapi to live with her elder sister (LM03 WZ's first daughter had married, and gone to Tase).

There are about 50 Yabio emigrants in the villages of neighboring ethnic groups. They are especially numerous in Sonau and Sanali. In the early 1970's, many Yabio people, mainly the residents of Osolaiyame (now a deserted hamlet near Lariaso) emigrated to Sonau, a Sanio village. Though some have since returned to the Yabio territory, there were ten Yabio emigrants with seven children in Sonau in 1988. Sanali is a Paya village constructed adjacent to the Frieda airstrip. Many Yabio, mainly from Aiwaliteiya, emigrated to this village in about 1980³).

On the other hand, many Tauali people have immigrated to a new Yabio village, Wario. In 1989, Tase was abandoned, and the residents constructed a new village called Wario. In the same period, Maale, a village of the Tauali people, was deserted. Some residents removed to Sumwari on the bank of upper Wario, but about 15 Tauali joined the Wario villagers.

From the viewpoint of migration, we cannot find any solid social units easily labeled "one flesh." A number of people easily move to another village within the ethnic group territory, or across its borders. Even the members of a nuclear family disperse when a mother dies, or when a father dies and a mother remarries.

5. Descent Groups

Some of the ethnic groups in the area between the Central Range and the Sepik River, formed by people coming from different places, remember the historical process of ethnic group formation [YAMADA 1987, 1991; YOSHIDA 1987]. The Yabio do not have this kind of oral history. They only say, "When our ancestors were living in small hamlets, a woman went around giving a name to each hamlet. It is the proper name of descent group. We do not know any events before she came. Not a single descent group has segmented since then"⁴).

Other evidence, however, suggests that this is not the case. Of one particular descent group's name, they say, "Because they always hunted and ate mice in the bush, *ao noafe*, the other people called them Noafeali." In addition, a pair or a small number of descent groups holding a territory in common or neighboring territories makes up an unnamed team. Most descent groups belong to such teams. These facts indicate some historical circumstances concerning the formation of descent groups. But I could not obtain further clarification.

The proper name of a descent group is used to indicate a group of people, for example, "Wosimei and Orosoali fought against the Sanio people." It is also used to suggest a person; "a woman of such and such a descent group has stolen net

bags." On some ceremonial occasions, the names of descent groups are called to share cooked food. In response to my question asking their descent group, most of the Yabio provided the name of their father's descent group. Thus, a descent group is a land holding unit with the patrilineal tendency, or patrilineal *to wai ele*. However, considering the use of descent group territories, this unity of descent group is hard to support.

Despite the patrilineal bias in descent group membership, the Yabio say they can use the territories of any of their ancestors' descent groups. They use the land not only of their father's descent group, but their mother's or some other ancestors' descent groups for gardening and obtaining sago starch. Even the territories of descent groups to which one does not have close genealogical relation are exploited. A man using such a territory says, "All the members of such and such a descent group have died out. Then, I have taken its territory." Some of the Yabio use the Sanio land near their border. They say, "This is the territory of a Sanio descent group. But we have taken it, because its members have gone far away."

When one uses a territory ignoring the members with closer genealogical connection to it, others will gossip, "He has stolen our land." Generally speaking, however, it is advantageous for a person to use the land continuously to ensure one's right. This is why a man usually clears gardens in a number of territories, and builds a hut adjacent to some of his gardens. When he stops using the land, his influence over it wanes. In a sense, the expansion of the right to land is a matter of enthusiasm and diligence rather than succession or inheritance. A man, who emigrated to Sonau about twenty years ago, maintains a garden and a hut in the Yabio territory, and ensures his right as a Yabio. A descent group is a land holding unit, but the people actually using that land is not decided by genealogy alone. I suspect that some informants are reluctant to name their descent groups, because of this discrepancy between the principle of patrilineality and the actual use of descent group territory.

In contrast to the man who emigrated to Sonau, a man who emigrated from Arapi to Sanali in 1985 will probably lose his right to control the resources in the territory of his own descent group. One day, he called at Arapi, and protested strongly that somebody had stolen sago palms from his descent group's territory near Arapi. Arapi villagers did not agree. They unanimously insisted that these sago palms were now theirs, because they had grown the sago palms in the territory following his move to Sanali.

In fact, sago palms grow wild, and need little care except cutting the vines twining around them. And not a resident in Arapi belongs to the same descent group as the man emigrated to Sanali. In terms of Yabio ideology of descent group membership, the emigrant is right. But in terms of the practicality of land use, the villagers united to triumph over the descent group member. They explained to me that now they can use it without his permission, because this man has moved to a village distant from the territory, and does not use it periodically.

The following example also indicates the strength of village solidarity and residential proximity over descent group ideology.

AM05 is a member of Mawiali, and gardens in its territory. Next to his garden, AM07 has a garden. AM07's father and AM05's mother both belong to Wisoali. AM11 is AM07's brother, but he does not have a garden in the territory of Mawiali. AM05 says, "AM07 can use this territory, because he belongs to the same descent group as I. But AM11 cannot use it, because he lives in Lariaso."

For the Yabio, village residential solidarity and land use takes precedence over descent group membership. This is my answer to the question given at the beginning of this paper. But why is the unity of villagers so important?

6. Village as a Community

As instructed by patrol officers, the Yabio constructed riverside villages combining small hamlets. Aiwaliteiya and Inaisoteiya were the last hamlets associated with descent groups, Orosoali and Wosimei respectively. The residents of the former hamlet joined Arapi villagers, and those of the latter constructed Tase. While the Yabio were separated into small hamlets, the unity of hamlet residents may have accorded with that of descent group members. But today, the composition of village residents is not closely related to descent group membership.

Table 10 shows the descent groups of the residents in Lariaso and Arapi. F indicates a married man's or a widower's father's descent group, and his mother's is indicated by M. His wife's father's and mother's descent groups are shown by F and M. Dotted lines separate descent groups belonging to the same 'team'. It seems that in each village brothers form the residential core. LM01 and LM03 are a pair of brothers in Lariaso. Arapi has two pairs of brothers as the residential cores; AM01 and AM05, and AM03 and AM06. From the perspective of descent group membership, Arapi is much better integrated than Lariaso. Once LM02 and AM04 emigrated, all married Arapi men had a parent belonging to Wisoali. But Wisoali parentage is not a total unifying force, because AM11 has emigrated to Lariaso.

The men living in Arapi emphasize their unity by saying that they are grandchildren and great-grandchildren of a man called Laifanai. However, there are some male residents who are not descendants of Laifanai. And some of Laifanai's descendants live in Lariaso, Sanali, and Mapusi.

Moreover, the Arapi village site does not correspond to the descent group territories of village residents. Arapi is in the territories of Aiali, Waliali, and Yaosoali, but no Arapi men belong to these descent groups. The father of AM03 and AM06 was a member of Orosoali, which belongs to the same 'team' as Aiali. But these two men joined Arapi villagers after Aiwaliteiya was abandoned. AM04's father's and mother's descent groups belong to the same 'team' as Waliali. But AM04 was an immigrant from Sonau, and moved to Lariaso. He says, "Arapi is my wife's village, and now I live in my village, Lariaso." His wife adds, "Lariaso

Table 10 F's & M's Descent Groups

	LM 01	LM 02	LM 03	LM 04	LM 05	LM 06	LM 07	LM 08	LM 09	AM 01	AM 02	AM 03	AM 04	AM 05	AM 06	AM 07	AM 09	AM 11
Aiiali	M	F					F											
Orosoali					M	M						F			F			
Banofuali					F									M		M		
Larua							M	MM			M			F		MF	M	M
Tamasau				M		M		M										
Mawiali										F			F	F			M	
Noafeali	M		M															
Wisovali							F	F		M	M	M	M	M	M	F	F	F
Numasoali				F	F													
Orisiali		M								F								
Orosonali	F		F				F					M	M					M
Waliali	F		F	M	M			F	F									F
Wopusuali											F	F	F					
Ouali											F	F						
Wosimei															M			
Yaosoali			M	F														
SANIO				FM	F	F	FM											F
PAYA										M					F			

as well as Arapi is my village." Lariaso is in the territories of Orosonali and Waliali. Some Lariaso residents belonging to Waliali complain that Arapi villagers have taken their territory.

Table 11 indicates the places where Arapi villagers stayed overnight between September 14 and 24, 1988. The numbers on the first line correspond to Arapi males. The proper names of places are abbreviated to two capital letters. Underlined letters mean that the Arapi male in question stayed there with his children, and a double underline means that he stayed with his wife and children. Blanks mean that he remained in the village.

The Yabio frequently stay overnight out of their village. Their overnight locations vary, as do the groups that overnight together. A man clears a garden and builds a hut to establish and maintain his right to the territory of his descent group. But he does not use the hut alone, nor only with the people belonging to the same descent group. Friends, often without their wives and children, go together to one of their huts to hunt wild pigs and cassowaries, collect pandanus fruits, and catch fish. This harmonious cooperation of villagers is quite important for the Yabio.

Women pound and wash sago, and men hunt game. This sexual division of labor produces cooperative units cutting across nuclear families in a community. A woman never prepares sago starch alone. A man usually goes hunting together with other men. If a meal is not ready when he comes home in the evening, a husband will scold his wife. It is, however, during the village meetings after holding service on Sundays that men urge women to go to the swamp for preparing sago.

Cooperation among villagers occurs in consumption as well as production. Game is divided in the whole community. Sago and other foods cooked by women are delivered to everyone who needs it. The sharing of food is an unbreakable norm. If there is not enough to be shared, one has to eat the food in secret⁵).

From the perspective of food production and consumption, we can see why villagers consider themselves to be "one flesh." For their living, they have to maintain harmonious relations among the villagers sometimes taking precedence over the descent group membership. In the society without strong leadership, a person who cannot take part in the cooperative relation has no other means than to leave the community. But this unity is not exclusive, because many temporary visitors enjoy hunting and preparing sago starch together.

Notes

- 1) This project was led by Dr. Shuji Yoshida, professor of National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, and financially assisted by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture.
- 2) Concerning the discussion on 'masculinization', cf. TOWNSEND 1969: 73.
- 3) In detail, cf. SAITO 1989: 129-130.

- 4) Concerning the myth of this woman, cf. SAITO 1988.
- 5) The sharing of food is important among the Sanio as well, cf. TOWNEND 1969: 61, 113.

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