

CHAPTER TWO THE AMUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

ABSTRACT

This chapter gives a general overview of the Amung and the land they presently occupy. The environmental factors which affect their existence are as the Amung are placed into the context of New Guinea island and Irian Jaya. A section on general ethnography of the Amung describes social structure, subsistence and economics and relates the Amung to their neighbors, the Dani, Damal and Ekari (Kapauku). The last section covers a history of their migrations which were undertaken for religious and political reasons.

2.1 AMUNG IDENTITY

The Amung and the Damal are basically one language group separated by the Sudirman mountains which run east and west across the center of Irian Jaya. Each group has a population of approximately 6,000. They have been separated from one another long enough to have developed different dialects, but their social structure and culture in general are very much alike. My usage regarding the use of the name "Amung" for the people south of the range and "Damal" for those in the north is in agreement with the protestant Christian missionaries who lived with the Damal for many years (Gibbons and Ellenberger pers. comm.) and what the people themselves have told me. The Dutch Catholic priests have referred to both north and south groups as *Amungme* while others (eg. Silzer, 1991) refer to both groups as Damal. The "me" which appears in much of the previous literature means man. My informants prefer to leave off the "me" unless specifically referring to Amung men,

and to use the word *Amung-in* for describing the women. "In" is the suffix which means woman. I have collected three translations for their name. (1) *Amung* or *Hamung*, means "original people", (2) "people beside the mountain", or (3) "the proven way, or the right way from the ancestors."

Amung, in some Dutch literature, were described as Uhunduni. It has since been discovered that this is not a name that they recognize or use for themselves. It has, however been retained for use in description of their language by linguists Ellenberger and Larson (Silzer, 1991). It is a Papuan language of Trans-New Guinea Phylum, Wissel Lakes-Kemandoga Stock and an Uhunduni Family-Level Isolate (Wurm-Hattori).

2.2 LOCATION OF THE AMUNG

The original dwelling places of the Amung (as far back as any of them remember and history records) were seventeen valleys on the southern slopes of the Sudirman Mountain Range (see Figure 1.2). Jeva Valley is the western-most valley, and borders Moni and Ekari territory. Halama and Bela are the eastern-most valleys, and border Dani and Nduga territory. The Dani live to the northeast of the Amung and to the southeast live the Nduga and Asmat. To the south and southwest of the Amung, are the Mimikan people (See Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

A latitude range of 4-5° south of the equator and a longitude between 136°45' and 138° describes the Amung area. Before the Amung were relocated by the Dutch Government and priests of the Catholic Church their territory extended south into the transition zone between the lower montane and foothills area which bordered the land

of Nafaripi, Wanaripi, and Timika groups of the Mimikan people. Amung people now extend into the lowland plains area as a result of negotiations between the Dutch and the Nafaripi /Kamoro in 1959 and negotiations between the Indonesians and the Timika/Kamoro in 1980 and subsequent years. Amung land is now within the Indonesian administrative district (*kabupaten*) of Fakfak.

In the traditional land division system, each major subdivision of Amung is based on the use of a river/valley system. Thus, the seventeen valleys, which were the original habitat of the Amung, form the basis of identity for seventeen groups of people. Amung travelers passing through my research site in Tsinga always introduced themselves by identifying which valley they were from, then, their Christian name and their Amung-kal "patrilineage" and clan names. They also identified themselves with Nemang Kawi or the glacier mountains. They say, "we are the people of the great white mountains". These are the majestic glacier capped mountains, also referred to as the Carstensch. In all highland Amung areas, the only means of travel, other than helicopters, is by footpath. One exception is the mission airstrip in Jila several valleys east of Tsinga.

Searching for good maps of the Amung territory was no small task. I purchased some detailed aerial photographs of the area made during WW2 from the Dutch topography center. Though Indonesian and Australian teams have been working on producing new topographic, geological and geophysical maps, these maps are not yet available. No attempt has been made to produce a detailed vegetation map of Irian Jaya. Part of this can be attributed to the difficulty of traversing the terrain to do on-

the-ground surveying. Other problems in map availability are probably either related to security or lack of interest or money to invest in such a project. Freeport undoubtedly has detailed areal photographs but they will not release them.

2.2.1 Geological Perspective

To better understand the environment of the Amung, it is important to realize that their mountains are the southern portion of two colliding continental plates which are causing the central mountains to rise. Their land is on what Petocz (1984:20) refers to as the stable southern platform and is a sedimentary-metamorphic complex. It was part of Gondwanaland and once had a paleo-latitude far below its present location near the equator. New Guinea began to appear above the sea at about 35° south latitude around 40 million years ago (Axelrod & Raven, 1982). The lowering and rising of the sea level during the glacial and interglacial periods of the Pleistocene along with continuous activity in the mobile belt which characterizes the contact zone of the two colliding lithospheric plates has continued to promote the great biological diversity of New Guinea. The island's biogeographic history which includes various degrees of land contact with the islands to the west and Australia helps to explain why New Guinea is such a curious and rich mixture of Australian and Asian biotic elements (Petocz, 1984).

The Amung area is rich in mineral deposits - especially gold, iron, copper and silver. This is because molten rock was pushed up from deep below the surface of the earth through faults in the limestone deposits that had been created by the wrenching process of the uplift. After these igneous rocks were deposited,

mineralized liquids dissolved part of the rock and replaced them with iron, copper, silver, and gold which are of relatively high percentages in the ore of the Sudirman Mountains (Wilson 1981).

Alluvium covers most of the southern Stable Shelf except for the higher regions where shallow shelf limestones of an earlier age crop out in the folded mountainous hilly regions formed as structural responses and adjustments to the re-emergent Mobile Belt that began in the Pliocene. Irian Jaya soils are characterized by a scarcity of highly weathered profiles possibly due to erosion, youth, and instability of most landforms (O'Farrell, 1984). Many soils are formed in only slightly weathered parent material and are similar to soils of humid temperate areas. A few areas of the Amung territory exhibit the characteristic which O'Farrell refers to as "gleying", or grey and blue mottling due to poor drainage. Other areas have thick, dark organic topsoils. According to Petocz' soils map (1984:26), the Amung area falls within at least three major soil groups: podzols, latosols & lateritics, and alluvium & bog soils. The podzolic soils are at the higher elevations and are developed on acidic parent rock of the southern cordillera. The latosols and lateritics are sub-divided into many soil types developed on many different materials. Highland bogs tend to be acidic with deep layers of raw organic matter.

The glaciers of the Carstenz Pyramid have been retreating, but in 1972 had an area of 6.9 square kilometers of ice (Allison & Peterson, 1976). The south facing slopes which are the home of the Amung are steep and some nearly vertical. They have numerous waterfalls pouring down hundreds of meters from spectacular hanging

valleys perched high on the mountain walls. Rock slides and land slips are abundant and together with the sharp spires and pointed ridges attest to the geologically youthful age of the range.

2.2.2 Climate

Temperature in Amung Valleys is mostly dependent on elevation, but the altitude and alignment of mountain ranges effect wind patterns and precipitation in any single area. Seasons at the lower elevations are characterized by differences in rainfall, not temperature, and are influenced by the southeast trade winds which blow from about mid-April to September. In the higher valleys the weather conditions are more dependent upon the immediate topography (Brookfield & Hart, 1971; Haantjens et al., 1967). Brookfield and Hart (1966, 1971) give a mean annual rainfall of between 3,500 mm and 4,999 mm for most of the Amung area, but areas receive 5,000 mm and more. Unofficial rainfall records for the Upper Wa Valley, for example, revealed a rainfall of more than 5,000 mm per year for the years 1968-1980 (Cook fieldnotes).

Daytime temperature in the lowlands ranges from 29°- 32° C and in the highlands it is usually 5-10 degrees cooler. There is no appreciable annual fluctuation. Daylight hours are nearly constant throughout the year (about 12 hours) due to the equatorial location. Relative humidity is high and constant ranging between 75-80% with lowland areas at the high end of the scale. Cumulus cloud cover nearly always increases towards the middle of the day. This, in addition to the steep slope and

ruggedness of the terrain makes it very difficult to develop air transportation in the Amung area.

2.2.3 Major environmental zones of the Amung

The Amung now live and forage in five major environmental zones: alpine, upper montane, lower montane, foothills and low mountains, and lowland plains. Traditionally there were no Amung in the lowland plains zone. The following is a chart of environmental zones now utilized by the Amung.

Table 2.1 Amung environmental zones

Zone	Elevation	Major Characteristics
Alpine	4000 m and above	low shrubs, grasslands, heaths, tundra, snow, icefields
Upper Montane	3000 m to 4000 m	tree fern (<u>Cyathea</u> spp.), savannahs, bogs, grasslands, coniferous forest on lower area, shrubs (<u>Coprosma</u> , <u>Rapanea</u> , and <u>Saurauia</u> shrubs) in subalpine area
Lower Montane	1000 m to 3000 m	<u>Castonopsis</u> in mixed forest, , <u>Nothofagus</u> spp. (Antarctic Beech) forests, coniferous forests which include <u>Podocarpus</u> , <u>Dacrycarpus</u> , <u>Dacrydium</u> , <u>Papuacedrus</u> , and <u>Casuarina oligodon</u>
Foothills & low mountains	100 m to 1000 m	soils more shallow than lowland rainforest and plains area but better drained than lowland rainforest, canopy lower and more closed than lowland rainforest, extremely high biodiversity <u>Aruacaria</u> , <u>Agathis</u> , and dipterocarps (<u>Anisoperta</u> , <u>Vatica</u> , and <u>Hopea</u> , etc.) <u>Casuarina papuana</u>
Lowland Rainforest/plains	0 m to 100 m	rich in species, important timbers, buttressed and stilt-root trees,

(Adapted from Petocz ,1984, Paijmans, 1976 and & personal observations)

The transitions between habitats and plant communities are usually gradual and vary considerably with local conditions. Hope et al. (1976) have identified 23 plant communities from the upper montane forests through the highest elevations of the alpine zones. Many plant communities remain to be described and studied.

2.2.4 Biogeography

The flora of New Guinea, and the Amung, is related to that of both Asia and Australia. For example many dipterocarps common to Borneo have filtered down from the Himalayas to their southernmost extent on the slopes of New Guinea. There are however 124 endemic plant genera in Irian Jaya. The fauna is a mixture of animals from the Oriental and Australian zoogeographic regions. The number of endemic genera in Irian Jaya is 7. These branch out into 93 endemic species. The total of endemic and introduced mammalian species in Irian Jaya is 154 (Petocz & de Fretes, 1983). Petocz (1984:39) argues that because of its remaining diversity, Irian Jaya is the most important province in Indonesia for conservation of genetic resources.

Flora and fauna in the Amung Valleys

The forests of the Amung Valleys lie within the tropical rainforest belt and similar to other tropical rainforest areas contain an amazing floristic diversity. It is expected that the estimated number of plant species for the whole island will exceed 16,000 when future taxonomic studies are complete (Petocz, 1984). The dipterocarps are not as common as in other parts of Indonesia, but the Nothofagus (Antarctic beech) forests and gymnosperm forests provide valuable timber.

The casuarinas (Casuarina equisetifolia, C. papuana and C. nodiflora) are employed both to increase soil fertility and as wood crops in shelter belts between gardens and in highland areas under rotational agriculture. Pandanus is a wide spread genus very common in all types of forest up to 3,050 m. There are many uses both for the fruits and the leaves. Some pandanus fruits are edible while others are used for their leaves and bark which produce weaving and floor materials as well as cigarette wrappers. Three of the typical but very interesting plants of the high rainforest are the pitcher plants (Nepenthes) and the glowing fungi (Mycena) growing up from the forest floor, and the giant ant house plants (Myrmecodia brassil). The pitcher plants are common on nitrogen poor soils. They attract and digest ants that fall into enzymes at the bottom of the pitcher. The physiology of the Mycena fungi, its glowing performance in perfect darkness and its purpose are unknown. The ant house plants are epiphytes which have bulbous bases honeycombed with ant galleries. Many other plants are used by the Amung for a variety of things. These will be covered in Chapter Four.

The mammalian fauna of Amung valleys includes elements of the pre-Pleistocene era as well as some introduced forms (Ziegler, 1982). They fall into six orders, two of which are affiliated with the Australian Zoogeographic Region and the others are more related to the Oriental Region. One of the most interesting examples is the Long-beaked Echidna (Zaglossus bruijini) of the high mountains. The cuscus (Phalanger spp) and marsupial mice, and other animals will be discussed later in a section describing hunting and kuscus classification in Tsinga (Chapter Eight).

The bird population is extremely rich in Amung territory and originates from both the Australian and Oriental Regions. The birds of paradise (family Paradisaeidae), crowned pigeons (Goura spp), and the cassowary birds (Casuaris) are the most spectacular.

Reptiles and amphibians in the Amung highlands area are for the most part harmless. There are numerous skinks and nocturnal geckos and dozens of species of frogs. In the foothills area one encounters what the people call the four-legged-snake which the Irianese people claim is deadly. Moving on down to the lowlands' relocation areas, there are poisonous snakes such as the death adder (Acanthopsis antarcticus) and taipan (Oxyuranus scutellatus). A beautiful green tree python (Chondropython viridis) also makes its home in the lowland rainforest.

There are no fish in the Amung streams because of the slope and force of the water rushing down to the ocean. Another reason that the highlands are not accessible to fish is that smaller streams are not continuous, they disappear and appear here and there depending on available sink holes and rainfall. The Amung do not utilize freshwater shrimp which some outsiders report are in the small mountain-top lakes. They say there is no food in the lakes worth making a special trip for. The fact that there are no Amung settlements near the high lakes makes their assessment believable.

Insects in Irian Jaya are primarily Oriental in origin. They have been described (Petocz, 1984: 48) as having prolific speciation and unlimited research potential. The beetles, butterflies and moths are the most profuse and spectacular. However, there is

more than meets the eye regarding insects in the Amung world. A later section in Chapter Nine will provide information on some of the Tsinga Amung uses of insects.

2.3 THE LORENTZ RESERVE

The proposed Lorentz National Reserve stretches from the high equatorial glaciers, Nemang Kawi to the Amung, to the Arafura sea and covers an area of approximately 2,150,000 ha. Most of it is on traditional Amung land, but includes an area to the south which is on Mimikan and Asmat land. About 4,500 Amung people will live within the boundaries of the park. It is the largest and most diverse protected area in Indonesia. However, its boundaries are still in the process of negotiation. Petroleum companies have leased more than half of the reserved lands and about 45% of Freeport's mining concession lies within the boundaries of the park. Because of this conflict the government has decided to exempt another 589,750 ha of the original area "for the benefit of the national economic situation." This reduces the total area now a part of the park to 1,560,250 ha. The park is no longer a candidate for a World Nature Reserve, but is officially a National Park. This may actually be for the best in the long run because Indonesia has policy in place to regulate national parks, but no policy for regulating areas designated as World Nature Reserves.

2.4 GENERAL ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

2.4.1 Layout of an Amung neighborhood

The terrain and the requirements of shifting cultivation restrict the size of the local group. Prior to Christianisation, the Amung say that they had an even more dispersed settlement pattern than the present arrangement. An Amung neighborhood

complex seldom exceeds one hundred persons and often numbers less. It is in this local group where important matters such as land tenure, gardening activities, war, ceremonies, and festivities are decided, though sometimes due to outside intervention, participation extends to valley-wide decisions and other activities. A group of men from one "patriline" will construct a men's house and surround it with the houses of their wives, mothers, and unmarried sisters. I will call this a compound. The men's house is usually on higher ground than the houses of the women. In larger neighborhood complexes there may be as many as ten such compounds. In other less populated areas, a single family may dwell in a house that is also used as a guest house for weary travelers.

Since conversion to Christianity, the neighborhood complex has become the center of Protestant Christian Church activities such as Sunday services, Monday night prayer meetings and Wednesday Women's Bible Study. One neighborhood, central to others, is chosen to be the gathering point for Friday activities which include worship services, "market", public announcements and discussion of any problems within the valley or outside the valley. Public meetings and communication between neighborhood complexes were the most important aspect of the Friday get togethers. The fact that they chose a particular day and included prayer in their meetings is the result of Christian influence.

All neighborhoods include pigs and dogs. Dogs are fed sweet potatoes and are free to sleep among the people in the house. Both women's and men's houses allow dogs to come and go freely. Pigs are more restricted. The women's homes are built

with one side fenced off for pigs. This makes it easy to feed the pigs and keep them warm and dry at night. Pigs add to the warmth of the house and cut down the amount of fire wood needed to keep people warm through the night. Ploeg (pers. comm., 1995) reports that he and Denise O'Brien did field work among the Dani people who have a life style similar to the Amung. O'Brien's area (Karubaga) was at a high cool elevation and the pigs were kept in the women's houses as among the Amung. Ploeg's area (Bokondini) was lower and the pigs slept in separate shelters. Amung pigs come into the homes in the late afternoon when it begins to rain and are sent out to forage after their early morning meal of raw sweet potatoes.

2.4.2 Amung means of subsistence

The Amung employ a variety of food-getting technologies in order to fulfil their daily needs. The method most heavily relied on, is cultivation of sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*) in a rotating or shifting land-use system. Taro, both *Colocasia* sp. and *Xanthosoma* sp., is the second most important source of energy. *Xanthosoma* is usually grown in permanent house garden areas while *Colocasia* is found in higher areas which are subject to rotation. Third in importance in the diet is an extremely diverse selection of greens. These have many sources. They are grown in intensively cultivated areas near homes, in shifting cultivation areas, along river banks, and harvested from the forest. Foraging, trapping and hunting in secondary and old forest brings in a wide variety of birds and other animals and fruits and vegetables. Building materials and firewood also come from the forest. The foraging and farming strategies

and the wide variety of foods in the Amung diet will be described in the chapters five through ten which relate to Tsinga Amung resource management.

Pig husbandry plays a prominent role in the life of the Amung. Pigs are well cared for and still are important to economics and ritual. Other exchange items will be discussed in section 3.2.6 of this chapter. Pork is not a daily food and could hardly be considered a basic source of protein for the people. The presence of hunting dogs has made it difficult for outsiders to introduce chickens and rabbits to the Amung. In many neighborhoods the freedom of the dogs is still favored over the introduction of new protein sources.

2.4.3 Belief system

The pre-Christian belief system of the Amung incorporated respect for and appeasement of spirits of the earth and the ancestors. The first outside religion to reach the Amung was Dutch Catholicism which was brought by Father Kammerer in 1952 (Peters, 1957) and continued by Fathers Coenen, Peters and Jorna. Most of the evangelism by the Dutch took place by educating the Amung and sending them back to their villages to teach their own people. After the Dutch tried to relocate people to the coast (more about this in history section below), the Protestant missionaries north of the range began to send evangelists from the Damal (northern half of same language group). Thus it has come to be that the Amung have educated some of their own people to be their local pastors and hold fast to the Christian faith. This is not the Christian faith as we know it in North America, but one overlaying the

basically animistic concept of reality - and one that seems to serve the people well for the time being.

The people structure their lives around church activities more than we do in our own "Christian" society. Although, I argue that the Amung have their own "science", they did not come through the Western "age of science" as we did where religion was separated from empirical science. When they were "converted", they directly replaced many of the old beliefs and related activities that they gave up with Christian ceremony and activity. That is not to say that they gave up everything. Many of the animistic roots remain, but they do not give structure to peoples' lives as they did in times past.

2.4.4 Division of labor

The foraging and horticultural subsistence tasks of the Amung have been traditionally divided into men's, women's, girls', and boys' duties. The initial clearing of forest or fallow is primarily a man's task. Men are in charge of the burning process when preparing a field for planting. They build fences around the villages, build homes, and cut firewood. The men, in a pattern typical of other Highlands New Guinea agricultural systems, are usually in charge of the planting and harvest of nut pandanus (*kweng*), red fruit pandanus (*betam*), Colocasia (*mo*), sugar cane (*elo*) and banana (*kelo*). A group of men will sometimes work together on neighborhood projects such as fencing the church yard or clearing a field for the school children's activities.

On the whole, women plant, weed, harvest, and cook most of the family's food. They are in charge of caring for the pigs and this requires herding them into their quarters, building fires for them and feeding them in the evening. Women care for their children as well as give intensive care to baby pigs. These baby pigs follow the women around like puppies. The burden of caring for children is shared by older children, especially girls, and older people who remain in the villages during the daytime. Boys learn to hunt at a very early age and accompany their fathers to clear land, cut firewood and hunt by the time they are about eight years old. A constant pastime of the boys is using rocks to try to kill birds to eat. They also learn to set traps for forest mammals. The girls work with their mothers in the gardens - mostly caring for younger children, but when a mother needs to nurse a baby and take a break - the older daughter, niece, or younger sister will take over the digging stick.

2.4.5 Political organization and leadership

The Amung are organized into loosely connected confederations which group into alliances. I prefer to reverse the two terms so that alliance is the smaller more closely related group, but since Ploeg, O'Brien and Larson (1988, 1969, 1986) use this terminology, I will follow their lead. The Amung have two types of alliances. One is based on territorial proximity, and the other rises to meet particular situations. The later dissipates when the problems are solved. An example of this is given by Ellenberger (pers. comm.) who has found such alliances in the Aroa Valley, two valleys west of Tsinga. In Aroa Nagoma, the Ja Kung-Janempa linked "patrilineages" join with the people from Aroa Ni, who are in the Beanal-Mentegau linked

"patrilineages". However, even stronger ties pull the Aroa Nagoma towards Hoes Valley, seven valleys to the East and Aroa Ni people to their alliance with people in Boma and Jeva valleys.

There are two exogamous "patrilineal" moieties in the Amung society: Momp and Magai. Momp is thought of as the female half of society and Magai, the male half, although, of course, there are male and female members in both moieties. There are many lineage groups in each moiety. Each lineage has at least one preferred marriage link from the opposite moiety. The linked lineages are expressions of preferential marriage ties which establish strong links between groups. Generally marriage is the most important socio-economic part of Amung life. It ties together groups from different valleys and most exchanges of pigs and money centers around the bride price. A marriage not only involves the brothers and fathers of the women being exchanged with the brothers and parents of the groom, but also includes most close neighbors and kinfolk who either help pay for the bride or receive payment from the "purchasers". This process is not as callous towards women as the phrasing in English makes it sound. A more detailed description will be given of Tsinga Amung bridal exchange in the next chapter.

The general term for an Amung leader is "*me-ki*" which means "Big Man". When the Amung talk about leadership they say, "*We are all ambitious and we don't like being told what to do by other people.*" This follows the concept of "Big Man" as a person with little more power than the majority of other people. Cultural qualities which natural leaders have are (1) the ability to counsel people and solve problems,

(2) persuasiveness, (3) generosity i.e. a willingness to share accumulated wealth and use it towards the good of the group, and (4) the ability to attract followers. A good Amung leader is a man who knows how to balance his generosity and his concern for the group with his individual interests. This could be described as seeking a balance between the materially and culturally important aspects of life. The optimum outcome of this results in prestige for himself as well as benefits for the group. A good leader has the ability to trade shrewdly, invest wisely, breed pigs successfully, and the ability to acquire a wife who is a good gardener, mother and pig caretaker.

2.4.6 Amung economics

The Amung, to some extent, resemble the "Kapauku" or "Me" ¹ (Ekari) people as described by Pospisil (1963) in regards to a being a "wealth oriented society". Their prestige is not so much through heritage, bravery in warfare or knowledge and achievements in religious ceremonialism, but through accumulation and redistribution of capital. The wealth, in 1994, is in the form of traditional shells, pigs, women, and the Indonesian Rupia. A little income trickles in to the people through the few Amung employed by Freeport Indonesia or the Indonesian Government and artifacts sold to the mining company employees. Offerings taken in the churches contribute to the welfare of the local pastors and to the purchase of materials or building facilities.

¹ The name they told me that they prefer is Ekari or Ekagi. "Me", as in Amung language means men or sometimes generally, people. Some outsiders insist on calling them only by "Me", but this is confusing in the context of several groups of people because other groups of this language stock also use the word "me" to describe themselves. For example the Ekari say "We are Ekari-me, they are Amung-me." Some of the Amung have asked me to be "politically correct" and say Amung men and Amung women (Amung-me and Amung-in) rather than just use the masculine suffix.

2.4.7 Conflict

The most common Amung way of coping with conflict is withdrawal - or hiving off. One party and as many followers as he can muster will move away from the situation. In the past, squabbles were also dealt with through war. Reasons for Amung conflict do not usually involve land - unless it is related to another language speaking group trying to establish themselves on what Amung consider to be theirs. Intragroup conflicts are almost always related to women and pig problems. Women run off with other men or young girls run off before they are paid for. The people do not blame only the women. The male partner is accused equally in a case where there was mutual agreement in the rendezvous. He faces the anger of both his own "patrilineage" and the offended "patrilineage's anger. This is because his own "patrilineage" will now be obligated to defend him, at least to some extent. If the woman is married, it is her husband's group they must deal with. If the woman is not married, it is her father's "patrilineage" they have to worry about. Stolen pigs also cause an uproar and, to a lesser degree, pigs which destroy other people's gardens cause arguments. Sometimes a payment is demanded by the offended party and if enough people agree that this is fair the offender must pay the fine.

2.4.8 Land tenure

Land is the source of life and an extremely important economic asset for the Amung. In response to confrontation with outside encroachment, the Amung say *"Our life and wealth comes only from the land. The land enables us to care for our children, our plants, and our pigs and everything else that we care about."* The

economic gains from work invested in land are basically the property of the individual tillers of the gardens. The rights to direct use of a particular piece of land, in many respects, belong to one man and his family (his wife/wives and children). Each "patrilineage" has its own area within which individuals have land use rights. These rights are passed on from father to son. Land is not purchased or sold under the traditional tenure system. This system is still valid in the mountains, but not in the Timika transmigration area where traditional rights hold no power over "development for the good of the nation." Unfortunately, the future picture for the Amung remaining in the mountains is not very rosy. The traditional value of generosity is accepted by outsiders as they urge the Amung to give generously of their land. However, the balancing element - reciprocity, is honored only with token gifts of little lasting value. Outsiders dealing with the Amung must open their minds to the ethics of fair exchange and to the rights of the Irianese people. This will form a solid basis for the valuable Irianese participation in the development of Indonesia.

2.5 GENERAL HISTORY

When the Gibbons, missionaries in Beoga just north of the range, first came into the Damal area, they heard accounts of how the Dani had gradually taken over the land of the Damal in the nearby Ilaga Valley by about the turn of the century (Gibbons 1981). The Dani during trips to trade for Beoga salt found the flatlands of the Damals living in Ilaga to be more fertile than their own in the North Baliem. Many groups of Dani began to take up residence in the Ilaga Valley.

As the population in the Ilaga Valley grew, so did the conflict. The war that rose out of this clash of two cultures and increase of population was called the Taganit War, named after its aggressive Dani leader, Taganit. Although, the Damal and Amung do not usually cite land as a cause for war, there was undoubtedly migration along with the conflict. The Taganit war was still in progress when the Gibbons entered the area during the 1950's. The Damal people reported that they had been avoiding conflict as much as they could by either fusing with the Dani or moving to the Beoga or across the mountain range to the south. Gibbons' (1981:112) also relates early oral history as having a tale of 20 men who went *op* (rodent) hunting south of the mountains and never returned. This would have placed them in the area where the Amung are now.

Larson (1986:21) has documented a series of 17 valley-wide wars in Ilaga (occupied by both Damal and Dani) during the period from about 1911 until 1961. This was accompanied by a rapid rise in the Dani population and the relative stability of the Damal population. During the fourteenth war (1955-1957) most of the communities in the down-valley alliance were driven from the valley. Larson (1986:351) writes that it was not until this Fourteenth War that Taganit emerged as a leader without rivals in the valley. Based on this information, I would have to eliminate Taganit as the main cause of migration of Amung into the southland because Amung oral history and land use history seem to place occupation of Tsinga at an earlier date. However, with as many wars going on in the valleys north of Tsinga as Larson has

documented, growing Dani populations and the resulting conflict over land were undoubtedly a major cause of migration into the Amung valleys.

How long the Amung have been in their present territory is not known, but Father Van Nunen (pers. comm., 1992) who worked among the northwestern neighbors of the Amung (Moni) , reports that his cohorts related stories of their early encounters with the Amung in the early 1950's. At that time some people talked of the Kugapa, a group of Moni who migrated before the turn of the century into the area where the Amung are presently located. The Moni found the Amung and most decided to retreat to west of the Jeva Valley. There is some inter-marriage between Moni and Amung especially in the western boundary area. On the eastern boundary area there is more intergroup marriage with the Dani people.

The stories about their origin recall a place called "Pengema" or "Me-Pingama". One version says this place is in the Baliem Valley (Dani territory) and another places it near the source of the Mamberamo river in Bela Valley (Amung area). It would, however be logical if they came from the Hamung (Amung) Valley because people are usually classified according to the geographical area from which they come. To my knowledge there are no versions of the origin story that specify Hamung Valley as the point of origin. However, because of the way people refer Amung from other places, I find it to be a logical source. For example, people passing through Tsinga who come from the Jila Valley are called *Jila-me* or *Jila-in* which means men or women from Jila.

The word *pingama* means place of origin or "where we came from." If this is taken literally, the whole argument above may be useless, because the Amung probably have various versions of *pingama* depending on their own life histories and the time depth of the stories linking them to other places. An argument for tying Amung origins to the Dani side of the territory rather than the Moni or Ekari sides is that the Amung and the Dani have the only two moiety kinship systems in Irian Jaya (Ellenberger, pers. comm. 1987).

First contact with the Amung by outsiders was probably made by A.F.R. Wollaston, a noted mountain climber who also tried to reach the Carstenz Peak in 1911 (Wollaston, 1914). Though he progressed further than his predecessor Lorentz who had attempted a more western route, Wollaston also failed to reach the top. The Amung may have made early travels which placed them in contact with other outsiders in the coastal areas, but no records of such travel exist. According to relocated Timika informants, the Amung frequented the lowland foothills for hunting and from time to time planted fruit trees, taro and bananas in the area. They say some of the old trees are still alive.

This amount of knowledge of the lowlands environment is an interesting aspect of the Amung culture. Weiner (1991:1) introduces people of the southern edge of central New Guinea Highlands as a group of people who are feared by the "true" Highlanders to the north and this limits the contacts between the groups. Fear of sorcery and cannibalism by southern peoples were noted among the Gumine by Hughes (1977) and Huli by Sillitoe (1979:26). These fears limited the travels between

north and south. But for the Amung, it is the people to the northeast (the Dani) who are feared the most regarding their sorcery. Casual discussions, events involving perceived Dani sorcery and interviews with affected people led me to this conclusion.

The Dutch Catholic Missions established early schools in the Amung areas. First, a few Amung were attracted to the coastal mission at Kokanao and the mountain lake missions for the Ekari and Moni people at Enarotali and Kugapa. They were trained and led the Dutch Priests back to their homelands in the Amung valleys. These Priests first entered the valleys in 1952. It seems that they made several treks to the highlands to supervise the local men who were acting as pastors to their own people and teaching the children in school. In 1957 two priests, Father Victorien Peters and Father Jorna were stationed in Amung land. They had more schools than teachers.

The problems with the remote mountain schools and communication with the coast were perplexing. The trek was long and dangerous and people from the coast were not eager to be isolated in the mountains. This, plus the fact that labor was needed in the coastal rubber plantations, prompted the Dutch to encourage the highland Amung to move to the coastal areas. Moses Kilangin, Amung school teacher, was instrumental in many changes that occurred in Tsinga Valley. His role will be discussed later in the Tsinga Valley history (Chapter Three).

The people who chose school, employment, and the Dutch Catholic religion made a major decision in 1960. These Amung from Noemba and Tsinga and a few other Amung valleys were moved to Belakmakama, Agimuka and Kiliarama, villages

in the foothills/lowlands area, in 1960. About half of the population chose to remain in the highlands. Others came back after they tried life in the lowlands and experienced too much illness (mainly malaria). The land for the new settlements had been sold to the Dutch and the Amung by the Fakafuku group of the Nafaripi people. This is a sub-group of Mimikan people.

The people who remained in the highlands were once more without schools, but they were not without a Western religion. The Protestant missionaries from the Christian and Missions Alliance (Ellenbergers, Gibbons, and Larsons) began to send trained Damal ministers into the Amung area and some Amung youth went to protestant Bible schools north of the mountain range.

At the same time some of the Amung were migrating to the coast in 1960, a mining exploration trek into the highlands was underway. Geologists were finally able to follow a dream which had started to grow when geologist Jean Jacques Dozy discovered the copper and gold mountain called *Jelsegel-Ongopsegel* on Amung land in 1936²

In 1962 Indonesia requested help from the UN to demand that the Dutch release the colony of West New Guinea to them. The political situation in Southeast Asia was such that it was to the advantage of the United States to assist Indonesia with their request. It was granted with one exception. The new government would provide an "Act of Free Choice" to the West Papuans after seven years. Thus in 1969

²This name comes from Angel's WWF report. My data records this as Jelsenogopsel or Jeltenogoptel, depending on whose accent I recorded. They say this is a birds name which has a flame on it's feathers the color of gold and copper.

the Irianese "voted" on whether or not they would become a part of Indonesia. For the details of this political change refer to Lagerberg (1979). Prior to the "Act of Free Choice" Freeport signed a contract to lease part of the Wa Valley and the mountains to the immediate north for the purpose of mining and exporting copper and gold from the land of the Amung. This contract was made possible when Suharto established a more open policy toward international corporations in Indonesia than his predecessor, Sukarno, had maintained

As soon as Freeport began to construct their townsite, Tembapura (Copper City), many Irianese people came to camp near the townsite to look for work. Freeport and the Government made a plan to relocate these people to the lowlands. The least willing to leave were the Amung who had originally occupied the valley and said they wanted to remain in the domain of their ancestors. Though others left, the Amung would not leave until 1986 when the company helped them move all of their belongings to Timika and gave them new houses and land in the lowland area. Those who would not move so far into the lowlands opted to settle at an old village called Banti. The whole village of Wa was destroyed at that time and Freeport expanded its infrastructure into the area. (See Cook, 1988 for details on these migrations)

For the reasons given above, the Amung, a highland group, have expanded into the lowlands. The area which only had a few roadside stands to sell bananas and a few homes in 1977, has now become the city of Timika. Some of the Amung in the Timika area migrated there from old Dutch settlements in the 1970s and 1980s. Others were refugees from villages destroyed near the mining town. Many Amung

living in Timika would like to return to the mountains, if only the mountain villages had good schools. This kind of relocation, however, is not approved by the government³.

The following chapter describes in more detail the physical attributes of a specific Amung watershed, Tsinga Valley and also provides more information on social aspects of the people within this area. Information on social organization including the arrangement of local neighborhood complexes, economics, belief systems, leadership and conflict is included. Also in the next chapter, the Tsinga Amung are placed within the context of other Mountain Papuans as described elsewhere by Heider (1970,1979), Pospisil (1978,1972) , Feil (1987), Ellenberger (1962a and 1962b), Ploeg (1988) O'Brien and Ploeg (1964).

³ Assistants from Timika who accompanied me back to their homelands in Tsinga were so impressed with the quality of life that they decided to move their family back to the valley as soon as the school opened in August 1992. However, they were forbidden to do so by the Government officials in Timika.

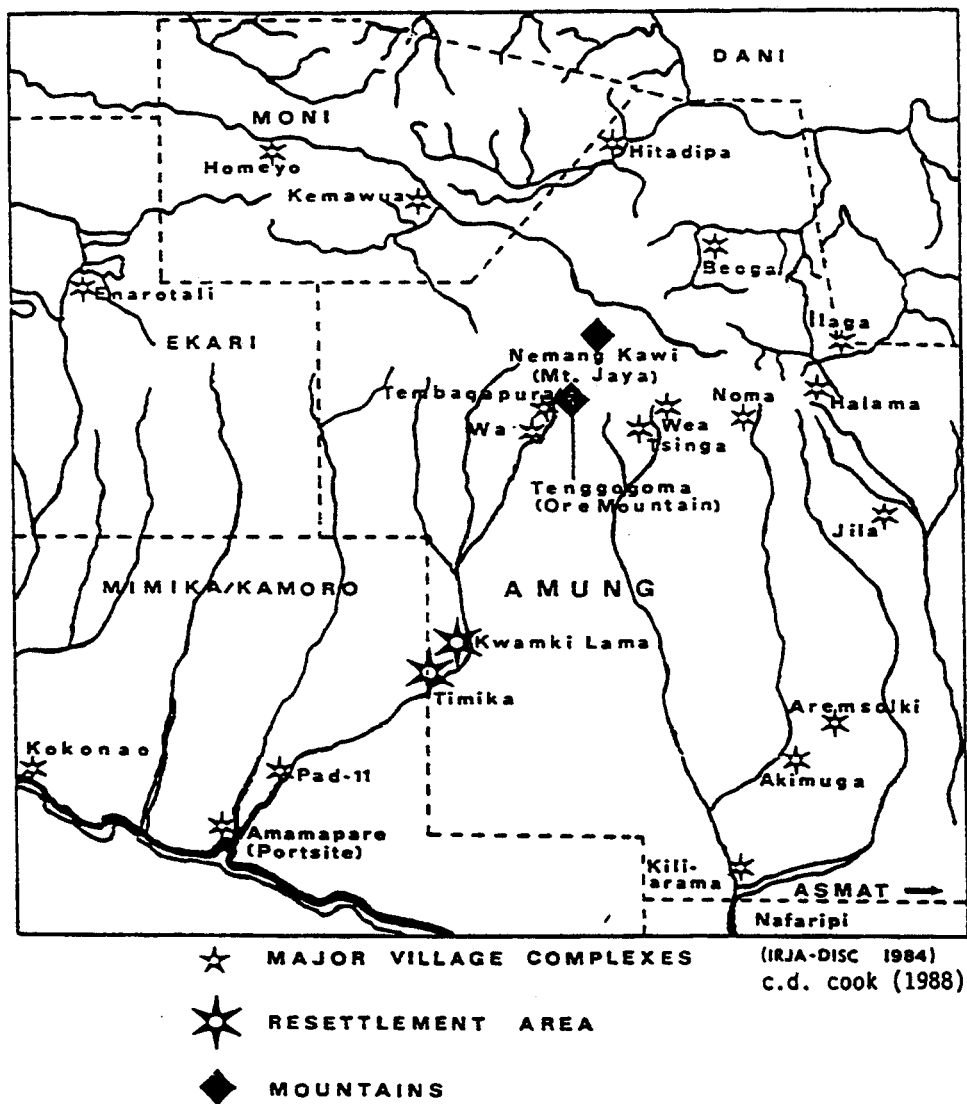


Figure 2.1 Approximate boundaries between the Amung and their neighbors

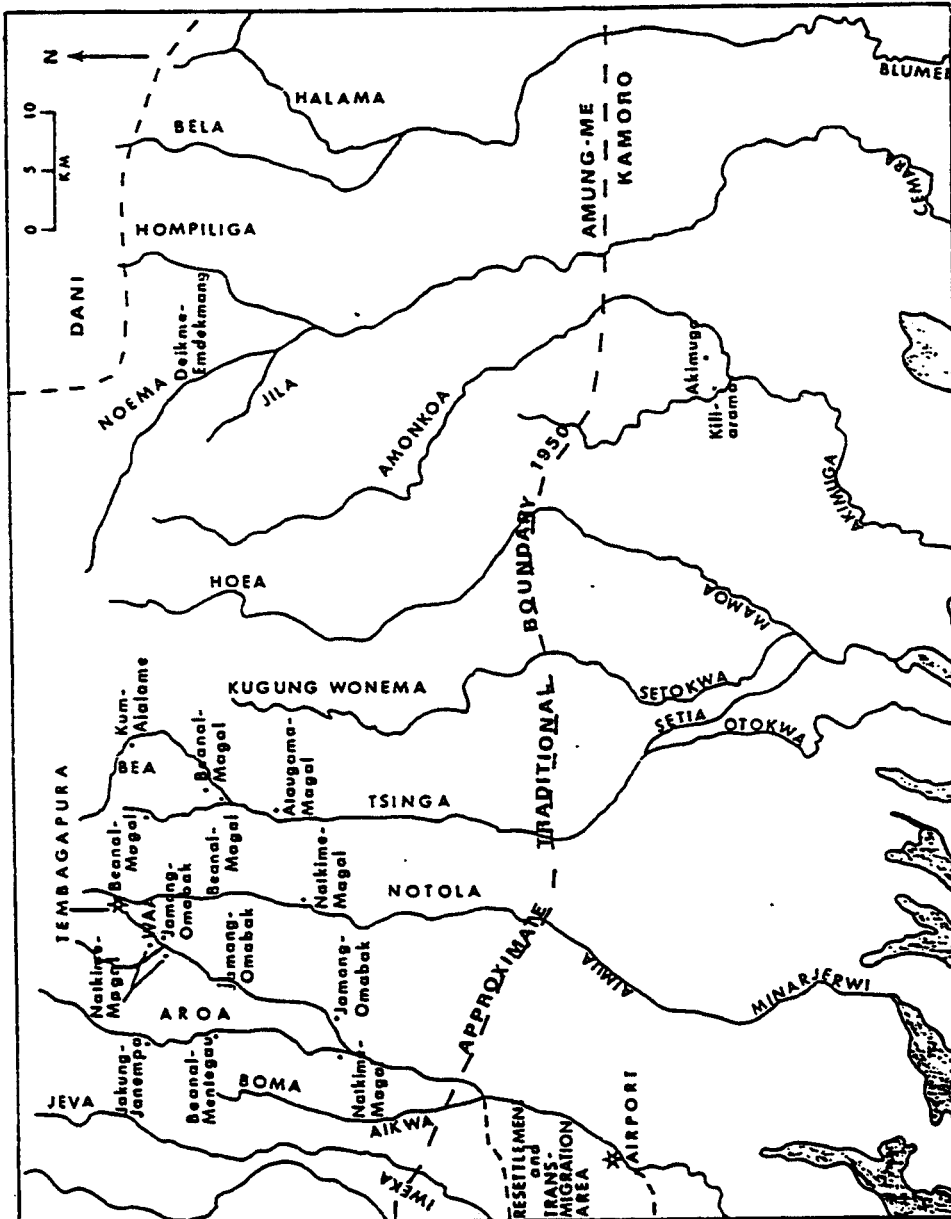
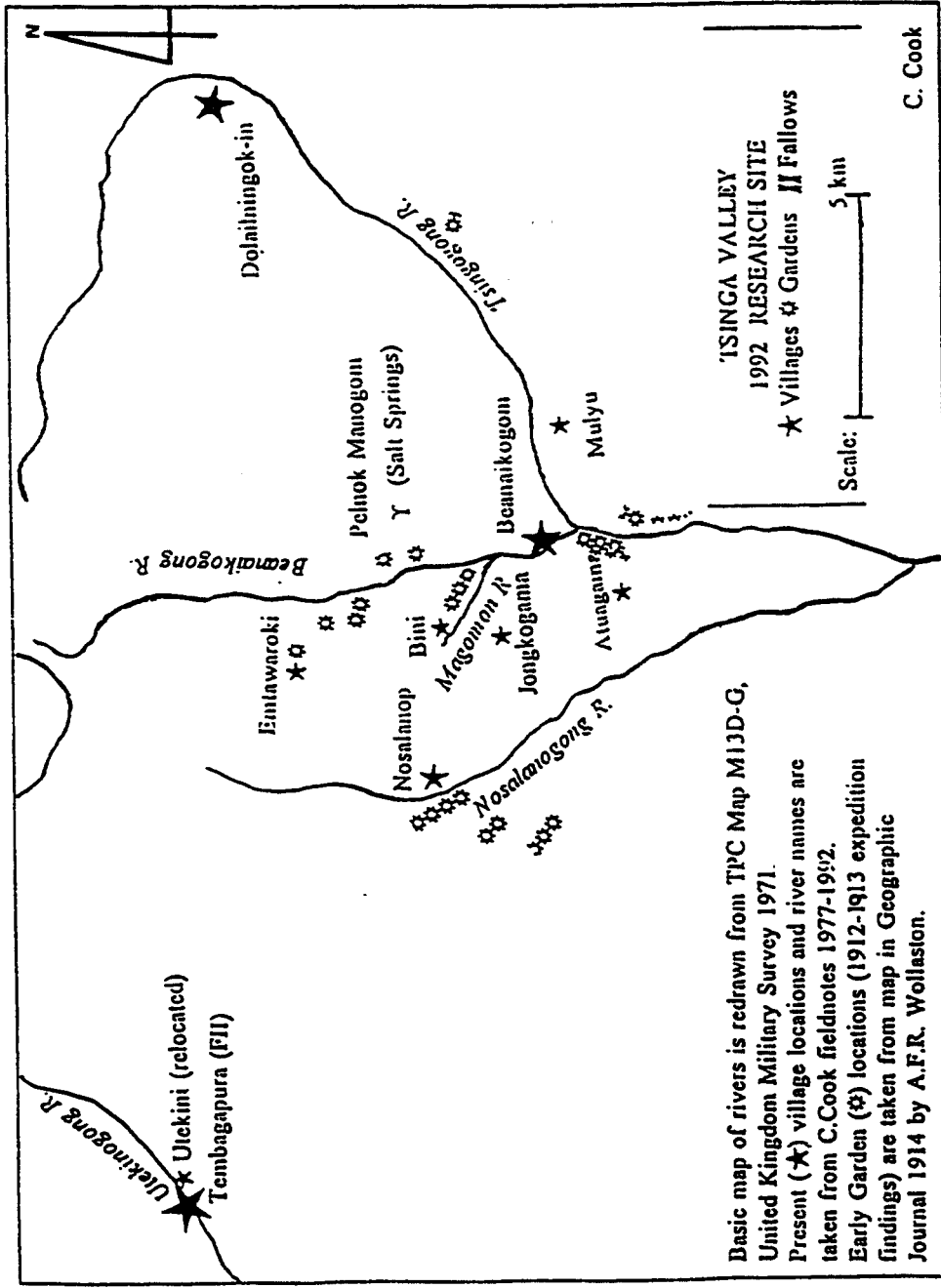


Figure 2.2 The Amung Valleys and linked lineage groups



Basic map of rivers is redrawn from TPC Map M13D-G, United Kingdom Military Survey 1971. Present (★) village locations and river names are taken from C.Cook fieldnotes 1977-1992. Early Garden (⊕) locations (1912-1913 expedition findings) are taken from map in Geographic Journal 1914 by A.F.R. Wollaston.

C. Cook

Figure 3.1 Tsinga Valley