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RODNEY NEEDHAM

PRESCRIPTION AND VARIATION IN REMBONG, WESTERN FLORES

To the Revd. Fr. J. A. J. Verheijen, S.V.D.,
in admiration

I

The linguistic region of Rembong, in western Flores, attracts present attention on a number of grounds. The greater part of it, to the west, falls within the administrative district of Manggarai, and the eastern part falls within that of Ngada (see Map 1). The area covered by the various Rembong dialects (Map 2) has long been recognized for its linguistic variety. Meerburg was told that the Manggarai spoken in "Potta" (Pota) and "Rioem" (Riung) differed from that spoken in central and western Manggarai (Meerburg 1891:465). Much later, Gonda distinguished three groups of Manggarai dialects – eastern, central, and western – and of the first he wrote: "The Eastern in particular contains many different dialects, which diverge considerably among themselves and are more or less influenced by the neighbouring Badjawa". He acknowledged that lexical divergencies were to be found in central Manggarai also, but stated that they were of lesser extent (in Burger 1946:17).

The variety of the eastern dialects has had a special implication for the comparative study of modes of social classification in western Flores. In an early analysis (1966) I examined the ethnographic sources then available and arrived at the conclusion that, in the main, the Manggarai relationship terminology exhibited the structure of symmetric prescriptive alliance. The subsequent publication of Verheijen's dictionary of Manggarai (1967; 1970) permitted a new and more detailed analysis of Manggarai social classification (Needham 1980), and one that gave a more exact delineation to local variations. A major determination was that there were two main forms of classification to be distinguished: these were those prevailing in central Manggarai and in western Manggarai, and the terminologies differed from each other not only lexically but also structurally. It emerged that the consolidated form on which the initial analysis of Manggarai society had been based was more nearly in

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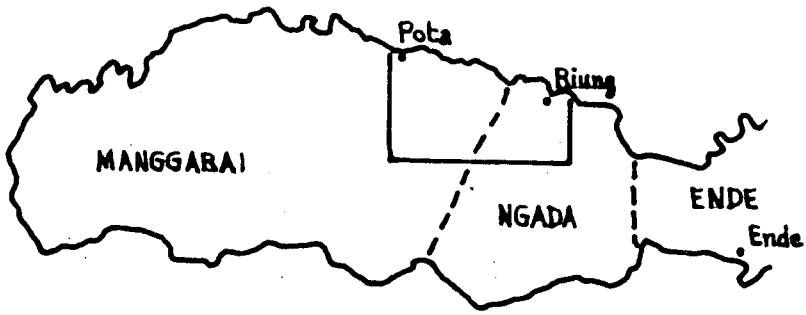
agreement with that of central Manggarai; correspondingly, also, it was found that this classification was indeed preponderantly symmetric with an asymmetric component (Needham 1980:74).

However, this survey did not cover the entire territory known as Manggarai: "Terms are not reported for eastern Manggarai, bordering on Ngadha country; this area, with a population of 40,000, is perhaps likely to contain further terminological diversity" (Needham 1980:55). Whether this would signal a structural diversity as well had to be left an open question, though it was an obvious possibility, since, despite a fair continuity in the terminology of Ngada (Ngadha) as compared with Manggarai, the Ngada form of classification is non-prescriptive (Barnes 1972:85). There is certainly a boundary of more or less abrupt change to be traced, therefore, a kind of fault-line between prescriptive to the west and non-prescriptive to the east. The increased linguistic diversity reported in eastern Manggarai could be taken as intimating the approaches to the postulated boundary.



Map 1. Western Flores.

This issue has latterly been much advanced by yet another linguistic contribution on the part of Verheijen: *Bahasa Rembong di Flores Barat* (1977-78). This work contains an ample list of relationship terms, and the main Rembong terminology (excluding, that is, certain dialectal forms that are to be discussed below) permits the social classification in this linguistic region to be determined as that of symmetric prescriptive alliance. This finding has already been incorporated in a survey of the transformation of prescriptive systems in eastern Indonesia (Needham 1984), in which it plays an important part. The Rembong system is merely characterized, however, by means of a simple formula (S S S), and the empirical grounds for positing this particular form of social classification are not demonstrated. The intentions behind the present paper are to proffer an analysis of the terms published by Verheijen, and thus justify the formula, and then to explore further the region of classificatory variation in this part of Flores.

II

Rembong is a former *dalu,* a territorial and linguistic unit of Manggarai also described as a "feudal territory"; a modern equivalent is "municipality" (Verheijen 1967:65 s.v.). The number of speakers of the language of this territory may number about 5,000. The language extends outside Manggarai, though no clear-cut boundaries can be drawn, and the total of those who speak it is perhaps 10,000. The language itself is "significantly different from Manggarai and Ngadha", and Verheijen describes it as a "new language" (1977, 1:v, vi). Nevertheless, the language of "Rembong (central Riung)" is said to belong to the Manggarai grouping (1:iv). A total of 13 dialects are distinguished (1:vii), and are represented in the dictionary, but the map at the back of vol. 1 (reproduced here as Map 2) delineates five. These are: 1. the dialect-group Rembong-Waru-Kia; 2. Térong; 3. Wangka; 4. Wué; 5. "? Namut dialect, ? language". This last dialect is set apart by distinctive shading, but the area is still included within the boundary of Rembong. No separate relationship terms are reported from this district, so it can be left out of account in the analysis that follows.

There is almost no ethnographic information about Rembong institutions apart from what can be gleaned incidentally from certain entries in the dictionary. It appears that there are clans, variously designated as *bansa, biza, mawa,* and *sepiq* (3:74 s.v. *suku*). The first term, actually *bangsa* (cf. 1:7 s.v.), is Indonesian; *biza* is translated as "suku, clan" (1:13), i.e. the Indonesian *suku,* tribe, tribal division, group, and the English "clan"; *mawa* is translated as "descent" (*turunan,* Ind.) "in the male line" (1:84); *sepiq* is "a bunch (bananas)" or "small part [cell?](of beehive)", and also "descent, *suku,* clan" (1:158). There is in addition, though not as denoting a clan, the familiar word *waqu* (*wa'u* in Verheijen 1967:730; cf. Needham 1980:72-3), meaning here also to descend, descent, or to fall (1:188). The different designations are perhaps further indications of the diversity that is to be found in the relationship terminologies. The essential, however, is that here, as in Manggarai, there are clans and that descent is reckoned patrilineally. That these descent groups may be linked by regular intermarriage, as in Manggarai generally, is hinted at by the common word *tungku,* meaning "to join (string), to connect" and also "crosswise marriage" (*kawin silang,* Ind.) (1:184), the standard term elsewhere in western Flores for an affinal alliance (cf. Needham 1966:152; 1980:67).

The relationship terms are compendiously listed by Verheijen under genealogical specifications in alphabetical order (1978, 3:99-101). In many instances he also indicates what are the terms for a given genealogical locus as used by a person of the same sex as the specification (ss) or by a person of the opposite sex (os); in other instances he supplies the complementary or converse specification. A number of the terms are followed by alternatives in different dialects; e.g. Wng (Wangka), W

(Wué). There is however a source of uncertainty, for in six instances a term is followed by "Rmb", which is not in the list of abbreviations for dialects (1:vii). It appears to stand for "Rembong", but in that event it is not clear from what standard form it is distinguished. For example, the term for DH is given as *wotéq* or *koaq*, but also as "*tagoq* Rmb, Wng, W" (3:99). If *tagoq* is a "Rembong" alternative, what then are *woteq* and *koaq* if not the standard Rembong terms to which *tagoq* is a dialectal equivalent? This apparent uncertainty affects only six out of the 93 specifications listed, however, and it does not evidently impair a consistent analysis.

For this purpose it is convenient to list the terms first and to consolidate the genealogical specifications after each. Table 1 presents the terms that appear to be standard Rembong (dialect group 1). They are in alphabetical order for ease of reference, and also to avoid any prejudicial arrangement. The specifications, however, are arranged roughly as follows: first minimal specifications, then masculine before feminine, and afterwards those employed by a woman (w.s.). Where a specification is not marked as "(w.s.)" or is not obviously proper to a woman (e.g. HF), it is to be taken as appropriate to either sex. In collating with the previous analyses (Needham 1966; 1980), it may be noted that the glottal stop /'/ in the former is represented by Verheijen for Rembong by /*q*/. Since there are numerous terms and/or specifications that are peculiar to the Wangka and Wué dialects, these will be treated separately. All of the terms are also represented by entries in the dictionary *Kamus Rembong-Indonesia* (vol. 1, 1977) and can be checked against entries in the companion dictionary *Kamus Indonesia-Rembong* (vol. 3, 1978). Ideally they should be compared throughout with the precedent analysis (Needham 1980).

Table 1. Rembong Relationship Terms

1. *anak*	S, D, BC, WZC, ZC (w.s.), HBC
2. *azéq*	yB,FBS, MZS, WyZ, WZH, yZ (w.s.), FBD (w.s.), MZD (w.s.), HyB, HyBW, HW
3. *emaq*	F, FB, FFBS, MZH, HF
4. *emboq*	PP, CC
5. *ené*	M, FW, MZ, FBW
6. *éza*	WB, ZH, SWF, DHF
éza-aké	FZS, MBS, SWF, DHF
7. *ipar*	SWM (w.s.), DHM (w.s.), HZ
8. *kaqé*	eB, FBS, MZS, eBW, WeZ, WZH, eZ (w.s.), FBDe (w.s.), MZD (w.s.), ZH (w.s.), HeB
9. *koaq*	SW, DH
10. *loka*	H
11. *mama*	MB, FZH, WF, HF

12.	*nara*	B (w.s.), FBS (w.s.), MZS (w.s.)
	nara-aké	FZS (w.s.), MBS (w.s.)
13.	*ndaqong*	FZ, MBW, WM, HM
14.	*nggipaq*	WBW, SWM, HZ, BW (w.s.), SWF (w.s.), DHF (w.s.), DHM (w.s.)
15.	*nusi*	PPP, CCC
16.	*tagoq*	SW, DH
17.	*tuqa*	WP, HP
18.	*urang*	ZC, WBC, BC (w.s.), HZC
19.	*weta*	Z, FBD, MZD
	weta-urang	FZD, MBD
20.	*wina*	W
21.	*wotéq*	SW, DH, ZC, HZC

The Rembong terminology of social classification looks, at a glance, quite straightforward, and certain structural features are immediately apparent, even if other features are just as obviously puzzling. Let us scan the individual terms, in the order of the table, and more gradually build up a cumulative case. We need not concentrate equally on each and every term, but on those that are diagnostic or that seem otherwise to call for particular attention. If the procedure turns out nevertheless to be rather detailed, this has an additional justification in the fact that Verheijen's study of the Rembong language was published, in a stencilled format, in only 200 copies (1:iii), so that it may not always be easy for a reader to check the analysis against the source.

1. *anak*. The set of equivalences C = BC = WZC provides a hint, though not a diagnostic, of a lineal classification and of a regular affinal connexion between lines.
2. *azéq*. FBS = MZS is a further indication of a lineal terminology.
3. *emaq*. The lineal character is strengthened by F = FFBS (1:27). There is also another term for this status, *mawa*, FeB, FyB (1:84); it is not assigned to any dialect.
4. *emboq*. It is of incidental interest that this term, construed as PP, is also applied to the crocodile (1:27), a usage familiar from elsewhere in the archipelago.
5. *ené*. Used also as a term of polite address to women (1:27), presumably of the appropriate age.
6. *éza*. The set WB = SWF = DHF = ZH is a positive sign of a two-line (prescriptive) terminology of symmetric alliance. In *éza-aké* the suffix *aké* means "friend, comrade, companion" (1:1).
7. *ipar*. Apparently from Bahasa Indonesia, restricted here to women. The dictionary equates it with *nggipaq* and supplies the gloss "husband's sister, HZ" (1:42). The equivalences accord with symmetric alliance.

8. *kaqé*. The equivalences are those of a lineal classification.
9. *koaq*. SW = DH; consistent with symmetric alliance. The term is glossed as "small child, young" and is reported as equivalent to *wotéq* and *tagoq*, translated as *anak mantu* (Ind.), son-in-law, daughter-in-law (1:57).
11. *mama*. The equivalences are a positive sign of symmetric alliance. The specification FZH is supplied by the dictionary (1:81). Cf. *mama*, MB, in Lamba-Léda Tenggara (Verheijen 1967:308), a Manggarai territory bordering southwestern Rembong.
12. *nara*. The equivalences are characteristic of a lineal classification, but *nara-aké* (FZS, MBS) calls for particular explanation. The dictionary states that this term is also used by a woman in addressing a man of the same age, "(her sweetheart or husband)" (1:99). It is crucial in the analysis of Manggarai society (Needham 1966:12); cf. *weta*.
13. *ndaqong*. The equivalences confirm symmetric alliance.
14. *nggipaq*. The equivalence WBW = SWM (cf. 1:110) is consistent with symmetric alliance, which is confirmed also by the w.s. specifications.
16. *tagoq*. The term appears redundant to *koaq* but is significant analytically as confirming the equivalence SW = DH, consistent with the structure of symmetric alliance. The dictionary states that it is equivalent to *wotéq* (1:169).
18. *urang*. The equivalence ZC = WBC (cf. 1:185) confirms the diagnosis of symmetric alliance.
19. *weta*. The equivalences are those of a lineal classification, but *weta-urang* (MBD, FZD) calls for particular explanation. The dictionary states that *weta* is also used as a term of address by a man to a woman of the same age, "(his sweetheart or wife)" (1:193).
21. *wotéq*. The term appears redundant, under the specifications SW and DH, to *koaq* and to *tagoq*; but the dictionary supplies ZC, yielding the equivalences SW = ZD and DH = ZS (1:196), which are diagnostic of symmetric alliance.

With these brief considerations the terminology can readily be construed as a prescriptive classification of symmetric alliance, as in Figure 1. Viewed systematically, it exhibits a clear structure, but there are certain formal features that call for attention. The two superior genealogical levels are entirely consistent with the simplest model of symmetric alliance, but the level of reference is slightly complicated by the distinction Z ≠ WBW. According to the formal principles of the matrix, the single term *weta* could serve for the affinal status as well, but there is nothing in the evidence to explain the separate term *nggipaq*. In the affinal line also there is a slight departure from entire simplicity. Whereas it is characteristic of prescriptive terminologies that purely affinal terms are not distinguished from those for cross-relatives, in this

A m.	← b f.	a f.	→ B m.
emboq, FF	*emboq*, FM	*emboq*, MM	*emboq*, MF
emaq, F, FB, MZH	*ené*, M, MZ, FBW	*ndaqong*, FZ, MBW, WM	*mama*, MB, FZH, WF
kaqé, eB, FBSe, MZSe, WZH *azéq*, yB, FBSy, MZSy, WZH	*weta-urang*, FZD, MBD	*weta*, Z, FBD, MZD *nggipaq*, WBW, SWM	*éza*, WB, ZH, SWF, DHF *éza-aké*, FZS, MBS, SWF, DHF
anak, S, BS, WZS	*urang*, ZD, WBD *wotéq*, SW, ZD	*anak*, D, BD, WZD	*urang*, ZS, WBS *wotéq*, DH, ZS
emboq, SS	*emboq*, DD	*emboq*, SD	*emboq*, DS

Fig. 1. Rembong categories of descent and alliance.

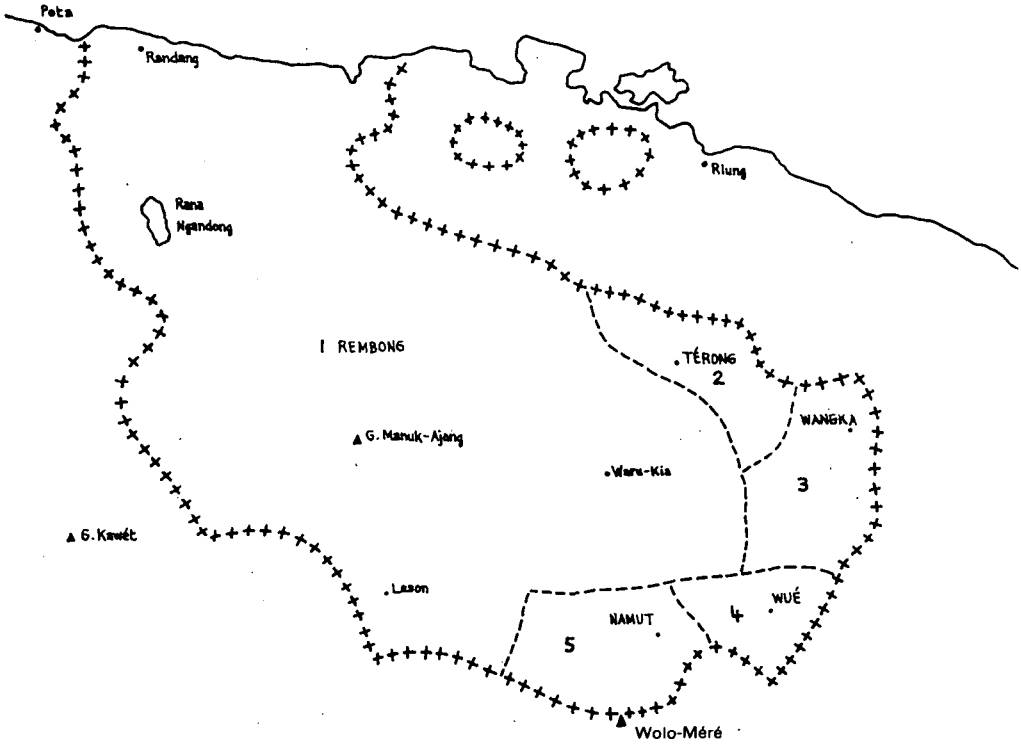
case *éza* denotes a set of affinal specifications while the same term with the suffix *-aké* denotes a set including the bilateral cross-cousin. This is not however a discrepancy from the order of the scheme. The two categories appear to be radically identical, in that each is *éza*; each shares, moreover, two affinal specifications (SWF, DHF) with the other; and neither departs, in the specifications that are not identical, from the principle of symmetric alliance. It is in the first descending level that a distinction and other complications call for special notice. The distinction is that marked by the terms *urang* and *wotéq*. Not that it is an absolute distinction in specifications, for each denotes ZC, but there remain WBD ≠ SW and WBS ≠ DH. There is no structural impairment here, for the specifications are nevertheless perfectly accommodated by the two-line matrix; but the categorical distinction, together with the partial overlap in specifications, is not perfectly simple. It is not to be explained, either, by the separate term *nggipaq* in the level of reference, for the specifications in question relate to *weta* as well. Moreover, as Table 1 shows, there is a complication that is not represented in the matrix, namely that the locations of *wotéq* are denoted in addition by *koaq* (SW, DH) and *tagoq* (SW, DH). There is thus a curious degree of redundancy at these points, and the source does not explain it; all we are told is that the three terms are equivalent one to another. The reason for which the locations are marked as *wotéq* alone in Figure 1 is that the term has the largest range of reported specifications; its scope includes the specifications of *koaq* and of *tagoq*, though this fact by itself does not accord it a functional priority. In any event, in these instances also there is no contradiction to the principle of symmetric alliance, but instead all of the specifications of all three terms serve only to confirm that this is

indeed the structure of the classification. The terminological redundancy, whatever its causes, works in support of the prescriptive relation that articulates the system.

III

There remain to be examined the variations reported from the dialects at the extreme east of the Rembong linguistic area (Map 2).

The only variant term listed from Térong (dialect 2) is *amé,* F, FB, MZH. There is nothing of structural importance in the specifications, though the equivalence FB = MZH is of course consistent with the mode of alliance that orders the standard Rembong terminology. It is of incidental interest, however, that Fischer (presumably on the authority of Verheijen) states that in Manggarai *amé* is a more archaic term than *ema* (1957:17 n. 1). The terms *azé* and *kaé* are merely phonetic variants of *azéq* and *kaqé*; the specifications are the same.



Map 2. Rembong linguistic area and dialects.

The Wangka dialect (3) shows significant variations from the standard terminology, both in terms and in other respects. The terms are listed in Table 2. The pair of terms *azéq* and *kaqé* are applied to FZD "if FZD is

Table 2. Wangka Relationship Terms

anak	WBC, BC (w.s.), ZC (w.s.)
azéq	FZD (w.s.)
bopoq-tuqa	HM
epoq (poq)	PP, CC
iné	M, FW, MZ, FBW
kaqé	FZD (w.s.)
kézaq	FZS, MBS, MZS, WB, SWF, ZH (w.s.)
masa-lawa	MBD
mekas-tuqa	HF
nara	MBS (w.s.), SWF (w.s.)
nggipaq	FZD (w.s.), MBD (w.s.)
tagoq	SW, DH
tuqa (-gaqé)	MBW, WF, WM, HF, HM
urang	MB
weta (-urang)	FZD
wotéq	SW

not BW" (3:101 n. 2). *Masa-lawa* (MBD) is glossed in the dictionary as "fiancée, prospective wife" (1:83). The component *masa,* by itself, means "fiancée" in the Waru-Kia dialect (1:83); otherwise it means "thirst" (*haus, dahaga,* Ind.). There seems to be an odd connexion here with the other component, for *dahaga* also connotes, in the form *dahagi,* "resistance", and in the Térong dialect *lawa* means "enemy" (1:68). It is not evident, however, from the Rembong source how the compound term *masa-lawa* is to be construed. The initial component in *mekas-tuqa* means "old man" (1:89); *tuqa* means "parent-in-law" (1:184). A term of outstanding interest is *urang* (ZC in the standard terminology), which here denotes "mother's brother, MB" (1:185). It is of particular interest also that FZD is separately denoted by *weta (-urang)*; neither the list (3:100) nor the dictionary (1:193 s.v. *weta*) explains the conditions on which *-urang* is or is not suffixed to *weta.* Finally, the only specification of *wotéq* assigned to the Wangka dialect is SW (cf. 1:196).

The distribution of the Wangka terms can be plotted as in Figure 2. The main systematic points of interest, by comparison with the standard Rembong scheme (Figure 1), are the distinction MB ≠ WF and also MBD ≠ FZD. These are not matched by the specifications of *kézaq,* which in the affinal line coherently compose a set of equivalences consistent with symmetric alliance. The specification MZS in the line of reference, however, is inconsistent with these and with what appear to be

m. ←	f.	f. →	m.
epoq, FF	*epoq*, FM	*epoq*, MM	*epoq*, MF
amé, F, FB, MZH	*iné*, M	*tuqa*, MBW, WM	*urang*, MB *tuqa*, WF
kézaq, MZS	*masa-lawa*, MBD *weta (-urang)*, FZD		*kézaq*, FZS, MBS, WB, SWF, ZH
	anak, WBD *tagoq*, SW *wotéq*, SW		*anak*, WBS *tagoq*, DH
epoq, SS	*epoq*, DD	*epoq*, SD	*epoq*, DS

Fig. 2. Wangka categories of descent and alliance.

the principles of classification in this region. The specification is lacking, moreover, from the dictionary entry (1:55 s.v. *kézaq*), which reads: "Wng = *éza*, brother-in-law [*ipar*, Ind.] etc. and *éza-aké*". In the first descending level are further puzzles. The designation of WBC as *anak* (cf. *urang* in the standard classification) assigns what would normally be a term of descent to locations in the affinal line. The specifications of *tagoq* (SW, DH) are straightforward, and they correspond also with the standard classification; but it is noteworthy that the range of *wotéq* is restricted here to SW, a specification which nevertheless makes it redundant to *tagoq*.

Lastly we come to the Wué dialect (4). The terms are listed in Table 3. The main points of interest, in a formal sense, are the duplication of

Table 3. Wué Relationship Terms

anak	BC (w.s.)
endé	FZ, MZ, HM
ézaq	MBS, ZH (w.s.)
ipar	FZD (w.s.), BW (w.s.), DHF (w.s.), DHM (w.s.)
masa-lawa	MBD
nara	MBS (w.s.)
nggipaq	HZH
tagoq	SW, DH
tuaq	MBW
urang	MB, HZC
weta-masa	MBD
weta (-urang)	FZD

terms for MBD (*masa-lawa* and *weta-masa*) and the distinction, if only partial or conditional, MBD ≠ FZD effected by *weta (-urang)*. In the first descending level there is no redundancy, but only *tagoq* (SW, DH). The terms can be plotted as in Figure 3. This reveals no more than has

m. ←	f.	f. →	m.
	endé, MZ	*endé*, FZ *tuaq*, MBW	*urang*, MB
	weta-urang, FZD *masa-lawa*, MBD *weta-masa*, MBD		*ézaq*, MBS
	tagoq, SW		*tagoq*, DH

Fig. 3. Wué categories of descent and alliance.

just been stated, and it is insufficient to indicate a structure. Presumably the vacant cells in the matrix are occupied by standard terms.

The Namut dialect (5) is not represented in Verheijen's list or under the relationship terms in the dictionary. Its linguistic status is quite uncertain, and there is no evidence bearing on classification or variants in this area.

IV

The main conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that the standard form of social classification in Rembong is that of symmetric prescriptive alliance.

This presumably applies in the greater part of the area lying within the linguistic boundary, both in Manggarai and in Ngada (Map 1). The finding makes a considerable extension, to the northeast, of the mode of classification previously established for central Manggarai and indeed for the greater part of the district. Actually, the Rembong classification is a more satisfactory representation of the structure, for it is free of the apparent contradictions in the central-Manggarai terms for cross-cousins (Needham 1980:61, 62 table 5; 1984, table). It is still not exempt from puzzling features, as we have seen, and in particular the proliferation of overlapping affinal terms in the first descending genealogical level, but these do not impair the symmetric structure.

Terminologically also there is a high degree of correspondence between Rembong and central Manggarai, but there are some interesting divergencies. The Rembong terms for levels +2 and −2 resemble those

of western Manggarai (cf. Needham 1980:63 table 6), not central. In addition, there are Rembong terms that are distinct from those of central or of western Manggarai: these are *mama* (MB), *ndaqong* (FZ), *nggipaq* (WBW), and *urang* (ZC). This last term is particularly noteworthy, and it is a pity we do not know more about it. It is not a Manggarai word (cf. Verheijen 1967) but makes a sudden appearance in Rembong. In this language it is of crucial importance in that it forms part of the prescribed category *weta-urang* in the standard classification. In the Wangka and Wué dialects it serves as a qualifier to distinguish FZD from MBD; and in addition it is employed independently to designate MB. It appears not to extend further east, either; at any rate it is absent from the reported terminologies of Ngada (Barnes 1972:85) and Endeh (Needham 1968: 315 table 2). In this respect it is a borderline phenomenon, and its curiously converse transposition, from its location (−1) in the standard classification to that in the Wangka and Wué variants (+1), makes it all the more worthy of special investigation.

As for the variations in the eastern dialects, Wangka and Wué, all that the evidence presently available permits us to say is that something interesting is happening. The Wangka distinction FZD ≠ MBD, for example, prompts the inference – however unlikely on other grounds – that an asymmetric principle is intimated. But there are no corresponding indications in levels +1 and −1, and the symmetric specifications of *kézaq* argue decisively against this conjecture. A more plausible interpretation of the distinction is that it may accord with the practice of asymmetric (matrilateral) affinal alliance that is general in the societies of Nusa Tenggara Timur (cf. Needham 1984, secs. III, V), but this too is quite uncertain as a solution. One reason for the uncertainty is the incomplete nature of the terminologies reported from Wangka and Wué, not to mention the total lack of reliable information about affinal alliance in this region. Another reason is that we lack evidence about classification and alliance in the region immediately to the east of the Rembong linguistic area; we have indeed a Ngada terminology, but we have no guarantee that it prevails right up to the Rembong border. All we can say for the present is that the fragmentation into three (possibly four) dialects in the east of the Rembong area, together with the marked variations in social classification, seems to indicate that here is a region of structural transformation.

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