



## The Myth of Mother Marge

### Self-Sacrifice in Papuan Mythology (Papua New Guinea)

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**Abstract.** – The article presents 12 variants of a Papuan myth of self-sacrifice: Mother Marge dwells alone without village in the forest. Troubled by creatures from the earth to get fresh water, she receives two eggs by a bird. Two boys appear from the eggs, and she adopts them. Later on, the boys kill the creatures and guarantee her the access to fresh water. Because the boys are alone in the forest, she decides to sacrifice herself by killing through the boys. Wives for the boys and a whole village arise from the dismembered body of mother Marge. The myth is presented in all variants at hand and the text is divided into phases and episodes to facilitate comparison and gain a deeper understanding of the myth. A short reverence is made to the Hainuwele myth and the *dema* concept, which should be understood as freely wanted or demanded death to create not only useful plants but also living beings and a population. [*Papua New Guinea, myths, Hainuwele myth, dema concept, mythology, self-sacrifice*]

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### Introduction

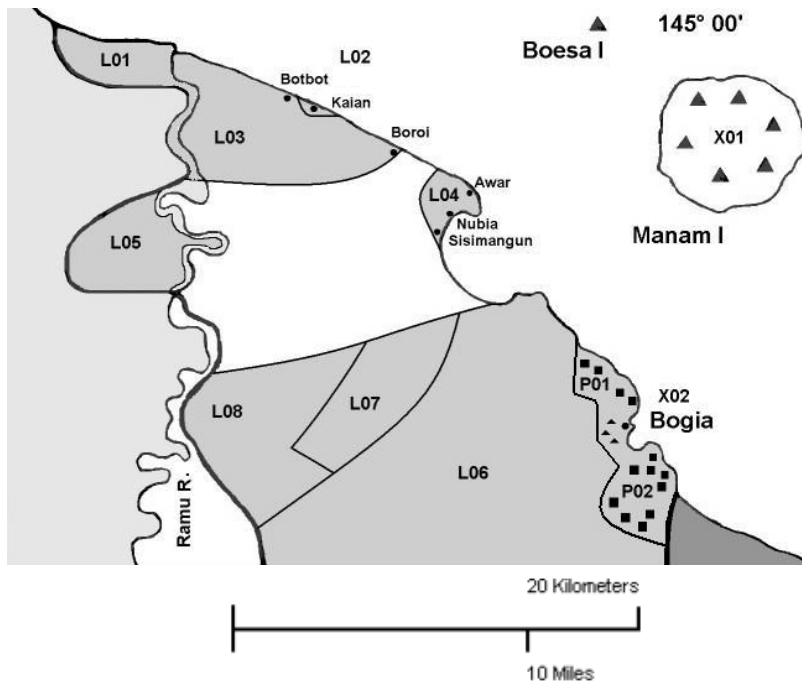
With the present publication<sup>1</sup> of “The Myth of Mother Marge,” its author intends to illustrate how necessary it is to document variants of a narration in

the same village as well as in surrounding villages in order to get to know the local variations and to learn about their distribution. The Mother Marge myth is an outstanding example for that. The antagonists of Marge are insects or ants from the earth, short-sized, young men from a bamboo, or young men from a village. Their weapons are bows, arrows, and spears. Marge is helped by two sons from two bird's eggs she has raised and is ultimately killed on her demand by the younger of these two brothers. In the final analysis the author tries to show how these mythical acts are interlinked.

The 12 variants are from the following villages and languages:

Nos. 1–4	Kaian Village	Kaian language	L02
Nos. 5–7	Botbot Village	Gamei language	L03
No. 8	Boroi Village	Gamei language	L03
Nos. 9–10	Awar Village	Awar language	L04
No. 11	Sisimangum Village	Awar language	L04
No. 12	Awar Village	Awar language	L04

1 The aim of this publication is to present “The Myth of Mother Marge” with all available variants. The myth was first collected by Georg Höltker SVD, who did fieldwork in Papua New Guinea from 1936 to 1939, but the text remained unpublished (see also Z'graggen 2011: 257–268). The 12 variants are from the central northeastern coast of New Guinea (Papua New Guinea or PNG) in the South Pacific. All the variants have their origin in the area around Bogia, i.e., in the western half of the Madang Province and were tape-recorded from 1972 to 1987. Variant 12 was independently tape-recorded in 1972 by N. Angst-Umbricht. The Marge myth was first published in Zgraggen (1995) under numbers 1 and 2.



Ruboni Stock	Toricelli Languages	Austronesian Languages
<b>Ottilian Family</b>		<b>Wewak Group</b>
L01 Watam	P01 Monumbo	X01 Manam
L02 Kaian	P02 Lilau	X02 Sepa
L03 Gamei		
L04 Awar		
L05 Bosman		
<b>Misegian Family</b>		
L06 Mikarew		
L07 Sepen		
L08 Giri		

**Map:** Drawn by E. Lehner and based on Z'graggen (1973).

For a linguistic overview of the area, the reader is referred to Z'graggen (1973 and 1975) – where the “0” preceding the numbers 1–9 is omitted – and Wurm and Hattori (1981). The three languages Kaian, Gamei<sup>2</sup>, and Awar belong to the Ramu Language Group and are non-Austronesian or Papuan lan-

guages. Oral history has them moving down from the headwaters of the Ramu River. From the lower course of the Ramu River, they moved southeast up the western hills of the Adelbert Range.

Kaian and Botbot villages are mentioned sporadically in publications. The two villages are only a few miles apart, separated by a creek and a few miles from the sea-shore. Boroï Village is located at the eastern end of the Gamei Language Area at both sides of the Boroï Lagoon.

The culture of the three Awar-speaking villages is described in some detail by Höltker in 1964 and reprinted in 1975. The scholar is referred to either of these publications. Höltker refers to the area as Nubia, the smallest of the three villages and the nearby plantation. The narrations are unpublished. The myth

2 Little has been published about the culture of the Kaian and Gamei Language Areas. It is also a gap in Georg Höltker's studies, although he had published materials from the areas to the east and to the west of these two languages. Leo Meiser SVD published some short articles on the Kaean culture (1955, 1958, 1959, 1963) (the official spelling is Kaian). Meiser is difficult to understand, because he indiscriminately mixes his findings with his interpretation of facts, sometimes ending in fiction, which makes it hard to publish his Kaian manuscript (see for instance Variant 1).

which inspired the title of this article on Marge is included in the present publication under Variant 12.

The villages under consideration are located a few miles from the seashore. The villagers built gardens, washed sago in the many swamps, went hunting in the forests, fished with spears and fishnets, and built fish traps. The area is flat. They were headhunters before the arrival of the Europeans.

The present study approaches their traditional worldviews as expressed by their descendants in their myths, even at a time when social and cultural change was bringing many transformations. The comparisons, which the broader base of the variants of one single myth renders possible, could help us to appreciate just how deeply rooted their forebears' achievements in independent thinking were. These remain to this very day an important often underestimated local resource. In an earlier study I have tried to show the potential of this material by analysing the circle of variants describing the myth of Daria, the bringer of culture (Z'graggen 2011). I refer to this study also for my approach of conserving the entity of the source text while, however, easing our approach to the contents by introducing subtitles and by grouping the events into phases.

In order to render comparison easier, the myth of Marge is divided up by the present writer into phases:

- **Background (0)**, or introductory statement, with some information on where the narration starts from;
- **Phase (A)**, how Marge finds two children and how the two remove the troublemakers annoying Marge;
- **Phase (B)**, the killing of Marge by her younger son in response to her insisting upon it, and
- **End (E)**, the result of the killing – the clearing in the forest becomes a village.

In some of the variants, episodes can be isolated within a phase or in addition to it, while some elements of action might be found to be shifted from one episode or even phase to another, when comparing the different variants. For a description of dividing up a narrative into “Phase,” “Episode,” and “Element” the reader is referred to Z'graggen (2011, Appendix 4).

## The Contents

- (0) An old woman, named Marge, lives alone in the forest. How she became or where she came from, is not said.

- (A) When she collects water from a well, small creatures crawl out of the earth to pierce her water container or young men come from nearby and spoil her water container or harm her. The woman is unable to collect a sufficient supply of water, but she stays alive.

The woman expresses no desire to resolve her misery. However, a bird becomes aware of the trouble and puts two eggs either into the branches of a tree or on some sago waste. Marge finds the eggs and takes them home, intending to cook them with sago. But, instead, she puts them under an earthenware pot and forgets them.

Instead of two birds, two boys hatch from the eggs waiting for the woman to lift up the earthenware pot – they instantly call her mother. The woman is taken by surprise, but she loves the two baby boys right away: she is so happy not to be alone anymore and accepts them as her children.

The baby boys have yet to grow up, which is natural; however, their urge to grow up quickly is quite unusual. Whenever the woman is going to collect water at the well, she is annoyed, even attacked by small creatures; she has to be helped.

An ambush is prepared to subdue those creatures or young men causing trouble at the water well. Marge's two boys succeed in killing those troublemakers, and the evil is removed.

- (B) The mother takes the initiative and wants her two beloved children to dwell in a village with many people. To accomplish that, she demands her own killing by her own children. Reluctantly, the younger child delivers the fatal blow.

As requested by the mother, a site in the forest is cleared and the pieces of mother's flesh are placed on the stumps remaining of the trees, while her blood is being thrown around on the clearing. The young men were instructed to put her head and stomach by their sleeping bags.

- (E) Overnight, a large village comes into existence, men, women, children, with pigs, dogs, and chickens. The head and the stomach of the mother transform into young women, a wife for each of the two boys; a village population comes thus into existence.

In the following, the myth of Marge is presented in the 12 variants found in the Tok Pidgin Texts (TPT), tape-recordings collected by the author from 1964 to 1991, as well as in unpublished materials

of the late Georg Höltker. By comparing the variants, the elements, necessary for an extended understanding of the narrations, become evident sometimes in marginal events. Variants 8 and 12 differ in important details. A variant will provide new information, omit information, or have the same information phrased differently. For instance, when the mother finds the two children, or when the two children discover the village early in the morning, the scholar will discover the context of the details. Valuable information for most variants is given in the "Question and Answer Format," that is, where the informant is questioned and gives an answer.

The storytellers are grown-up men. The titles are taken from peculiarities in the text; subtitles are added to divide the text and to assist in making comparisons.

The line after the title gives the document number (DOC), the village name (VIL), the language name (LANG) with number, the date of collection (DATE), and the informant's name (INF).

## Variants from Kaian Village

### Variant 1: I Want Many People in a Village

(DOC: 2A1R01A7<sup>3</sup>; VIL: Kaian; LANG: Kaian L02; DATE: 1976; INF: Councillor)

#### (0) Background

Q: Do you know the story of the woman who found two eggs?

A: There is her story.

Q: Will you tell it?

A: Yes, her story is as follows.

This is the story of the woman Weakaupior. The woman Weakaupior (Iakopio) used to walk around, looking for special kinds of leaves to collect and to make a skirt for clothing.

#### (A) The Two Eggs of the Bird

One day, Weakaupior watched a bird, a bird with the same name as her own. This bird had laid two eggs in the leaves of a sago palm. The woman found and took them with her. Lifting up an earthenware pot, she put the two eggs right underneath to keep them safely. After that, Weakaupior worked the leaves, making a skirt for herself, and laid the new skirt in the sun to dry.

Then the time arrived to draw water and to boil and eat the two bird's eggs. The woman Weakaupior also in-

tended to prepare and eat sago for a meal. Weakaupior left [to collect water], and nasty insects called *manskanar* appeared from under the ground, piercing many tiny holes in her water container, which she had made of palm leaves. The water leaked out. She looked at it and thought: "That is surely not enough to cook with!" She could cook no sago and had no meal. Every time Weakaupior set out to collect water, the same thing happened.

#### Two Baby Boys

One day, Weakaupior could take back with her a little bit of water. She put the pot on the fire. Then she remembered the bird's eggs and went to turn over the earthenware pot with which she had covered the two eggs. She turned the pot over and, to her surprise, she looked at two nice baby boys there. Weakaupior was delighted and said: "Oh, that's great! I love you so much. Until now, I have lived alone. But now, two nice children have appeared. They are my beloved children." The two eggs had transformed into two human babies, and they were healthy, good-looking boys. Weakaupior took them, cared for them; and they grew up. The name of the elder brother was Banigarum, he had hatched first, and Masagarum was the name of the younger one who had hatched second.

#### Getting the Boys Ready for the Ambush<sup>4</sup>)

Once the two children had grown up, the mother made arrows and bows for them to use in fighting. The two children fought with the insects coming out from under the earth and won over them, finished them all off.

The mother said: "Oh that is well done, very well. They always troubled me. Then I got children and my children took revenge and killed them."

#### (B) Mother Demands Her Own Killing

The two children had grown up, and Weakaupior had worrying thoughts: "What shall I do now? Only the two boys exist, surely not enough to form a village. But I want many, very many people to live in a village." She asked the two lads: "Will you do it? Will one of you kill me?" But her children wouldn't consider such a deed. The elder brother said to the younger: "You do it! You kill her!" But the younger brother rejected that, saying: "No! I have pity for mother. You kill her!" And the elder one replied: "No! I have pity for mother." For some time the two argued with each other over who should kill mother. Finally, the younger brother killed their mother.

#### Head and Stomach of Mother

While the mother was still alive, she had told her children: "After you have killed me, one of you will take my head and the other one my stomach. Each one of you puts his part right next to the aperture of the sleeping bag, when

3 Revised edition with "Q" and "A" included, see Z'graggen (1995: 8–11).

4 The episode of getting ready for the ambush and killing the insects was added by the storyteller, when asked about it.

he goes in to sleep.” The two brothers obeyed the words of the mother.

After the younger brother had killed their mother, they cut her body into very small pieces and drained her blood into a bamboo tube. When this was done, one of the brothers took her head, the other one her stomach, and each one put his part right next to the opening of his sleeping bag. They did exactly as the mother had told them.

### (E) The Larger Portion of Blood Falls on the Forests

Mother also had said to them: “Pretend to pour out the blood over the forests, but in fact you will throw my blood towards the coast.” The two children pretended to throw the blood over the forests, but in fact they wanted to throw the larger portion towards the coast. And as it happened, the larger portion of the blood fell over the forests and only a bit of blood, left at the bottom of the bamboo tube, was thrown towards the coast. For this very reason, we at the coast are not many, but the people in the forests are many.

Night arrived. One of the children put the head and the other the stomach of their mother at the opening of his bag. They retired to sleep, each in his sleeping bag.

At dawn the next day, children, women, pigs, dogs, roosters, and various other creatures had originated and formed a village. The two brothers had a look around. The head and stomach of mother had each turned into a fine woman; each woman was the wife for one of the children.

The two children watched what had happened during the night and said: “Oh that is what mother talked about to us. We obeyed her words; and she made this great village exist.” And two fine women existed.

Now a large village with many people existed, and that is the story of it.

### Questions

Q: What are the names of the two children?

A: The names are Banigarum and Masagarum.

Q: The elder?

A: Banigarum.

Q: The younger?

A: Masagarum.

Q: There were two eggs. Why is one of the boys elder and the other younger?

A: Because one hatched first, the other later.

Q: These insects piercing the container, what are they?

A: They are creatures in the earth: we name them *manskanar* (*manskan*). They use to pierce *limbum*<sup>5</sup> containers. They always come up.

Q: Father L. Meiser writes differently. Men are in the earth and come up. Do you have a story of men in the earth?

A: No, not men. Creatures: these use to pierce holes into a *limbum* container for water.

<sup>5</sup> *Limbum* is a generic Neo-Melanesian term for hardwood palms.

Q: Father Meiser writes that the Tambaran<sup>6</sup> caused these wicked *manskanar* men to come up.

A: What, Taunawari?<sup>7</sup>

Q: Yes.

A: Taunawari is the great *masalai*<sup>8</sup> of the village.

Q: Is Taunawari another story?

A: Yes, Taunawari has another story.

Q: Who made the arrows for them?

A: This mother, whom they [afterwards] killed, made arrows for them and bows and everything for a fight.

Q: And the two fought?

A: The two fought with the creatures, won and finished them.

Mother said to them: “Oh, great! They used to harm me. Now I have children, they revenged me and killed these things.” – I have left this little piece out. You talked about that, now I have told you. I am not a Big Man, I am a young man.

### Variant 2: Marge and Her Two Children

(DOC: 2A1R3A0<sup>9</sup>; VIL: Kaian; LANG: Kaian L02; DATE: 1986; INF: Tufaik Beny)

### (0) Background

The Word of God was not yet known by the [ancestors].<sup>10</sup> Earlier, the fathers, the ancestors, told the story; this story brought us forth, all the villages, women, men, children, dogs, pigs. I want to tell now this story. This story is named Viakaupior.

Q: What is Viakaupior?

A: That is a bird, the eggs of that bird; it had two, and there was an old woman.

Q: The name of this woman?

A: The name of the old woman is Savuat. Only in the story I tell the name of the old woman. I am not allowed to tell it and everyone hears the name, the name belongs only to me.

Q: Is it a secret for you?

A: It is kept a secret for me.

Q: It cannot go out into the village?

A: No. It can't go out to everyone: it belongs only to me.

<sup>6</sup> *Tambaran* is the spirit of a musical instrument, e.g., the bamboo flute. It was discovered by the women and kept secret from the men by the women. The women gave the *Tambaran* to the men or the men got it by force. Women and uninitiated children were not to see the *Tambaran* under the penalty of death.

<sup>7</sup> *Taunawari* or *Taunabari* is the great spirit of Kaian Village, existing under a leaf at the beach or in the water near the shore. He used to be a war god. Currently he is believed to assist other activities. No life cycle was given.

<sup>8</sup> *Masalai* = spirit.

<sup>9</sup> Revised edition see Z'graggen (1995: 1–8). “Q” and “A” are included.

<sup>10</sup> This means the Bible was not known yet.

### (A) The Two Eggs of the Bird

This old woman went and cut off purpur shrubs for a skirt. She cut and cut, and then she felt hungry and went to collect leaves of tulip trees and she found the young of a bird, two eggs were in the nest. A bird had nested in the leaves of that kind of the wild *limbum* tree and was sitting on the eggs. When the old woman approached, the bird, disturbed, got up, and flew away from her. The old woman watched that and said: "Oh, that's great! I'll take the eggs, cook sago with them, and I will have a meal."

The old woman brought the two eggs to her dwelling place and put them under an earthenware pot. After that, she wanted to collect water to boil the eggs and cook sago for a meal. When she filled up water, a kind of creature crawled up from under the earth, we call them *manskanar*.

Q: What are the *manskanar*?

A: They are a kind of *pinatang*,<sup>11</sup> they bite and cause pain; we call them *manskanar*.

Q: Do they have many legs?

A: They are with many legs; they are not of a large but of a small size, yellow a bit.

Q: Black?

A: Black a bit. We call them *manskan*.

These creatures punctured her container and the water leaked out. She scolded them and they left, but the water had already leaked out. For this reason she could not cook the two eggs of the bird and she left them lying under a pot. She just sat down. With that little bit of water she cooked sago or bananas, supped, and slept.

### Two Baby Boys

That went on for a long time; for how many months, I don't know. One day the woman went again to draw fresh water and could collect only a little bit of water. But this time, she remembered the two eggs and said to herself: "Never mind, I'll have a look at the two bird eggs under the pot. I'll cook them with sago and have a meal. I suppose the two things of mine are there yet."

The old woman lifted up the pot and to her surprise she looked at two nice baby boys. She watched the children and was very happy with them. She thought: "Hey, that is great indeed! I thought it was just bird eggs. But that is very good; two good children for me. I live alone. Now two good children have appeared. That's great!" The old woman accepted the two children as her own and reared them. The two children grew up young men.

### Preparations for the Ambush

Mother sent the children to get bamboo lengths. The two boys walked into the forest and cut down a kind of bamboo with knots near to each other. They took its leaves and showed them to mother. But mother rejected them, saying: "Not this kind, another one!" The two children went

back and cut the leaves of a bamboo with knots far apart. They brought those leaves and showed them to mother. "Yes!" mother confirmed, "That's the kind! Cut down that bamboo!" The two children cut down and brought home this bamboo. Mother split the bamboo and carved two bows for them.

Then mother sent the children to get spines of leaves from the sago palm – from these same leaves the women make their skirts. The two children<sup>12</sup> sharpened the spines, making arrows to practice in shooting. In play, the children shot at lizards and at birds, and grew to become young men. Then they were grown-ups.

Mother sent them to get things from that wild palm tree. But they were irritated and brought the leaves of an ordinary palm tree. But later they brought the leaves of the right palm tree. Mother looked at it and: "That's it," she said, "cut down this tree and bring it!" They brought the timber, and mother carved two big bows and sharpened arrows.

Again the old mother requested: "Go and cut down a *garamut*<sup>13</sup> tree. With this timber we carve signal drums or make the posts for a house." The two boys went to get leaves of that tree, but they were still too young and didn't know the right tree yet. They brought leaves and showed them to mother. But mother rejected them saying: "No, not this kind!" The boys brought leaves from another tree and showed them to mother. Again mother rejected them saying: "Not this kind!" But then they brought the leaves of the true *garamut* tree. Mother requested: "Go and cut down that tree and bring the timber! I will carve that thing and form it like a shield to fight with." The children brought that timber and mother made shields to protect them while fighting.

Mother had made the shields and again she requested: "You two go and get and bring that thing." It was a thing to make magic water and to strengthen the body of the children for their fight. The two children got and brought this thing. Mother boiled water and washed up their skin. After that was done, mother said: "That's it! Everything I have told you. That's the law for a fight. Whenever you are ready like that, you will finish the enemy."<sup>14</sup>

### The Two Children Kill the Creatures of the Earth

After that, mother said: "You go now and stand guard at this water. Always when I draw water, these wicked creatures come up and sting me. You both will stand ready at this well." The two children went there, concealed themselves and stood watch. Their mother took the *limbum* container. Whenever mother went down to get water, those creatures of the earth came and punctured her container. The creatures appeared again to puncture the water container of the mother. But this time a fight erupted. The two children appeared, shot down all the *manskanar*,

<sup>12</sup> This is at variance with the other variants. The two boys get the material, and mother makes the tool.

<sup>13</sup> *Garamut* = slit drum of fiber wood.

<sup>14</sup> Thus mother taught her sons the school of fighting, no matter how tiny the children's enemies were.

<sup>11</sup> *Pinatang* = insect, ant.

those creatures from the earth, and finished them all. After the victory, the children were happy and performed the dance of the fight.

### (B) Mother Requests Her Own Killing

The two children danced and danced, but then mother said: “You are only two, you have won a great victory over those creatures, the *manskanar*. But that is not enough yet. I want you to kill me!” The children were taken by surprise and also by fear. They both felt compassion for their mother and asked: “Why should we kill you?”

Mother said to them: “Go and cut down the trees in an area as large and wide as the size of a garden. Build a fire and burn the litter. Then you two come and kill me.” They both refused and said: “Why that?” They did not want to kill mother. But mother insisted: “Kill me! If you kill me, you will see something appear!”

The two boys went to clear a site in the forest as large as the size of a garden. They burned the litter and cleaned the site, leaving only the stumps of the fallen trees.

### The Younger Brother Kills Mother

Then the elder brother said to the younger: “You kill her!” The names of the brothers are Maigaron and Matagaron. But the younger brother replied: “No, you kill her!” Both brothers were worried about mother and disputed which one should kill her. But then, the younger brother said: “Never mind, I kill her!” And the younger brother killed their mother.

After the younger brother had killed their mother, they cut up her flesh and bones into small pieces. Mother had told them to do so. Mother had said to them: “Kill me and cut me up into small pieces; the flesh and bones slice into small pieces. Place a piece at each stump of the trees you have cut down. One of you takes my stomach and puts it at the opening of [his] sleeping bag, and the other one my head.”

The brothers sliced their mother into small pieces and put a piece on each stump of the trees they had cut down. In doing that, they obeyed the advice of their mother. One took her stomach and the other one her head and each put it at the opening of his sleeping bag. That kind of bag was the mosquito net of the old time.

### The Larger Portions of Blood Fall on the Forests

The two children followed exactly the instructions mother had given them. Pieces of flesh and bones they put on each stump of the trees. The blood they poured into a bamboo tube. Mother had said to them: “The blood you must pour into a bamboo tube and pretend to throw it over the forests, but in fact you must throw it towards the coast. The larger portion has to fall down on the coast and the smaller one on the forests.” But a bamboo tube has its own way. They pretended first to throw blood over the forests, but the larger portion would have to fall on the coast. As it happened, the larger portion poured out over the forests and only a bit fell on the coast. For this rea-

son, the people at the coast are not many, but in the forests they are many.

### (E) The Village

After they had put the pieces of flesh and bones on each tree stump, one of the brothers took the head, put it into a *limbum* bag and placed that at the opening of his sleeping bag, and the other one took the stomach. After that, they retired to sleep. Dawn came. People, roosters, dogs, pigs, everything for a village appeared. Children cried, men and women talked; the site had become populated.

The two children wanted to come out of their sleeping bags. A woman was ready at the opening of each of the bags, one for each one of the brothers, and cooking food for them. The brothers slipped out of the sleeping bag and thought: “Oh, mother has told us about that. Only we two existed. She felt sorry for us. She told us to do that to have this place populated. Oh, good mother! You gave us a great talk. We obeyed your words and our place became a large village.” Thus far the story goes.

### Variant 3: The Story of Viakaupior

(DOC: 2A1R04A0; VIL: Kaian; LANG: Kaian L02; DATE: 1986; INF: Mavem Rudolf)

### (0) Background

I want to tell the story of Viakaupior.

Q: Is Viakaupior the name of this woman?

A: There is a name for this woman. But the name of this story is Viakaupior.

Q: What is Viakaupior?

A: We name this bird Viakaup and *pior* means the egg in our vernacular. The mother, [the owner] of these two eggs of Viakaup is named Saboat.

Q: Who is Saboat?

A: It is the woman who took the two eggs of the bird Viakaupior. We name this bird Viakaup. The two eggs are Viakaupior. This story is called by the name of this bird.

### (A) The Two Bird Eggs

This woman walked around, cutting purpur shrubs and collecting them to make a skirt. Then she felt very hungry. She left the collected purpur; she did not take them with her, left them on a heap and went into the forest to find tulip leaves. She would take them to her place, cook them with sago, and have a good meal.

The woman noticed the bird Viakaupior who had built its nest in the leaves of a wild *limbum* tree and had laid two eggs. The bird noticed the woman, flew up, and rushed away. The woman thought: “Ah, a bird has flown away from the leaves of this *limbum* tree. I'll go there and find its eggs.” She went there, pulled down the branches,

and saw two eggs there. She took them and thought: "Oh, I will cook them with my sago and tulip leaves, and I will have a meal." The woman took the eggs, but she did not eat them, did not cook sago and eat. She lifted up her earthenware pot, put the bird's eggs underneath, and covered them with the pot.

Then the woman intended to collect water, come back, cook the two bird's eggs, and have a meal. She wanted to fill up water and creatures came up and spoiled this *limbum* container. The water leaked out and she could take back to her place only a little bit of water. She only roasted sago on the fire and ate that. She did not boil the water and eat.

The woman slept. In the morning she went again to fill up water. Again these creatures appeared and spoiled her *limbum* container. She brought back only a little bit of water and wanted to boil and eat the two bird's eggs. But the two eggs remained inside the earthenware pot. – So, the woman did.

## Two Baby Boys

Later, maybe five weeks had passed, she remembered the [two eggs] and said: "Ah, that thing of mine is still [under the pot] and already for a very long time." She went to draw water again. The creatures spoiled her *limbum* container again, and she could take back only a little bit of water. She said to herself: "Never mind, I will cook with this little bit of water."

She put the pot ready on the fire and poured in that little bit of water. Then she walked to the pot to lift it up and take the two bird's eggs. She lifted up the pot and she saw two good children, two male children. The woman thought: "Ah, that's very good! Two good children for me. I believed the two bird's eggs are in the pot and I wanted to eat them. Now two good things are inside the pot." The woman was very happy, because she had no children and lived alone. She took the two children and did not cook nor eat sago. But she took the children, looked after them like her own children, and the two grew up.

## The Weapons

Mother sent the two children away, saying: "Go and cut bamboo lengths. Bring them, and I'll make bows for you." They cut some wild growing bamboo with knots not far apart, brought the leaves to their mother and showed them to her. Mother said: "Not this one, another one with knots far apart." The brothers went back and brought back leaves from a bamboo with knots farther apart. Mother was satisfied and told them to cut down this kind of bamboo. The two cut down this kind of bamboo and brought them to mother. Mother sliced the bamboo into lengths.

Then mother sent them again to get canes. The brothers went into the forest and took leaves of any kind of cane. Mother was not satisfied with that and said: "Not this kind; go back!" The brothers went back and brought the leaves of the true cane. Mother had a look at the leaves and said: "That's it. Go and cut this kind!" They brought it, and [mother] broke up the cane, split it and tightened a bow for them.

Then mother sent them to get spines of the purpur plant. They did so, and mother carved them to arrows. In practice, the two brothers shot at birds and small lizards. And they grew up.

Then mother said: "Cut that *limbum* tree, not the one to form containers, another one." The brothers brought the leaves, but mother scolded them saying: "Not this kind!" The brothers went and got other leaves. Again mother said: "Not this kind." They went again and brought really these leaves and showed them to mother. Mother said: "That's it! Go, cut it down and bring it!" And so the two did and mother made spears for them.

Then mother sent them again saying: "Go and cut down a *garamut* tree." The two went again, searched for the right tree and brought any kinds of leaves. Mother had a look and scolded them: "These are not leaves of the *garamut* tree." They set off again and returned with the leaves of the *garamut* tree and showed them to mother. Mother said: "All right, cut down this tree, that's the one." They returned, cut down this tree and brought it. Mother carved the timber making shields for them.

Again mother said to them: "Go and get these things to heat (*hatim*) the spears." The brothers got vines, chips of wood, and kinds of things. They showed it to mother. Mother said: "Not this stuff! I didn't talk about that!" The two returned, looked around for these things, found and brought them back. Mother had a look and said: "That's it!" Mother took it, boiled water, and washed (*boinim*) them with it to strengthen them for the fight. She also washed the spears, rubbed their spears, saying: "Take heat for the fight, and heat<sup>15</sup> the skin for the fight to come."

After that the [mother] said: "Tomorrow, I'll go to fill up water and you will stand ready at the edge of the water hole where I always fill up water."

Next morning the two went to the water hole and stood watch. Their mother took the *limbum* container and walked down to collect water from this well. The [brothers] had everything ready for the fight and were ready at the well with spear and shield. Their mother went down and these things came up again to shoot at mother. Their mother screamed: "Hey." Shouting the names of the two children, she said: "Hey, Maingarom and Matagarom, all the evil things shoot at me!" The brothers rushed up, finished all the evil creatures, killed them, and they died.

After that, they returned to their place. Mother made all the things as to heat the power of fighting, and they began to dance.

## (B) The Killing of Mother

Later on, the mother thought: "What shall I do for the two children so that this place turns into a large village? Only the two live here and that's not good."

Mother sent the two children, saying to them: "Go and clear a site as for a long and large garden." The two obeyed and cut down the trees for a large garden, the size

15 "Heat" (TP: *hatim*) means to apply magic. See also above "*boinim*."

of a large village. The site was very long and wide. They chopped off branches and vines and let them dry up in the sun. The sun was shining strong and dried the leaves, the branches, and vines, and they set fire to it and the fire consumed the litter. After that, the site was cleared.

Then they returned and said to mother: "The site for a garden is cleared." Mother said: "All right, you must kill me. Kill me and slice me, slice all my flesh, my bones, everything of me. You must slice me into small, very small pieces and place them on each tree stump you have cut down. Provide every tree stump in the garden site you have cleared with a piece. My blood put into a [bamboo barrel]. Put my head and stomach into *limbum* containers and place them at the opening of your sleeping bags. My blood you will take and act as if you want to throw it into the forest, but pretend only. In fact, you will pour it out towards the coast."

The two pretended to throw the blood into the forest. But as it happened with such a bamboo barrel, the larger portion of her blood poured into the forest and only a bit from the bottom of the bamboo fell towards the coast. For this very reason many villages with many people dwell in the forests. We are only a bit of her blood, so we are not many, we, the people of the coast.

After this talk, mother requested them: "All right, kill me!" The two brothers felt sorry for mother and said: "Ha, what shall we do? You are our mother; we are also afraid of touching your skin and killing you." Mother replied: "No, you kill me! You kill me and you shall see. I have told you everything. Kill me and do what I have told you!"

The two brothers debated. The elder brother said to his younger brother: "Maingaron, you kill her!" But the younger brother said: "Matagaron, you kill her!" They argued with each other, but then the younger brother killed their mother and she died.

Younger brother had killed her and they cut flesh and bones into small pieces and put them on top of every tree stump. They obeyed their mother. They provided every stump with a piece. They filled the blood into a bamboo barrel, put stomach and head into a *limbum* container, and placed them at the aperture of their sleeping bags. They took the blood in the bamboo barrel and pretended to throw it into the forest. And the larger portion of the blood fell into the forest and only a bit towards the coast.

### (E) The Village

After that, they retired to sleep. It was night and time to sleep. The two brothers slept and a village became. When it began to get light, children, men, women, roosters, dogs, pigs everything of a village came into existence. Two good-looking young women were squatting at the apertures of their bags, preparing food, and waiting for the two to come out from the sleeping bag.

It was light. The two brothers woke up and said: "Hey, the roosters, children weep, people talk and have built fires. Earlier it was not like that; we lived only with mother. Really mother has talked about these things, and these things have come."

They came out of the sleeping bags and had a look around. They each noticed a young, beautiful woman at the aperture of each of their bags. They said: "That thing has happened; mother has talked to us about that."

Mother made the village to become and now we are. Thus far her story goes; it's the story of Viakaupior.

### Questions

Q: Did this story happen in Kaian?

A: It is a story of Kaian.

Q: Kaian and Botbot?

A: Botbot shares this story with us.

Q: And Mikarew, Bosmun [Bosman], Awar, Gamei?

A: No.

Q: The village Kaian came from this story and what other village?

A: Yes, only Kaian has this story. Some other villages may have it, I don't know. But Kaian has it, and I know this story. We use to say, Viakaupior has brought forth the village.

Q: First, there was only this woman?

A: Yes, only this woman.

Q: How did she originate?

A: How this woman came, her origin, we don't know.

Q: She was alone?

A: Yes. Later she found the eggs of the bird and brought forth the village. Earlier, their ancestral fathers used to say that. Presently, the kids don't know that we have become from this story and also Botbot Village. We, the Kaian, became from this.

Q: They poured much blood over the forests?

A: Yes. Much blood went into the forests. The forests, they came by that. It made the villages.

Q: All the forests came from this story?

A: Yes, all the forest [-villages] came from this.

Q: And Boroi Village, Bosmun, Sanai, Madang area?

A: They all came from this. All the villages in the Sanai area in the true forests became from this. And also Madang [Town].

Q: And did the white man come from this?

A: Yes, also the white man.

Q: Why has the white man a white skin?

A: I am not clear on that. This story, they say it brought forth the village, only her blood brought forth the village.

Q: Where did this woman dwell, here at Kaian?

A: This woman?

Q: Yes.

A: The woman, she is just a story.

Q: Didn't she select a village?

A: She did not select a place. It's just a story. This place where she did that, this place is. Also the hole of these creatures is.

Q: And where?

A: In the forest near Botbot [Village], across over there.

Q: Far away?

A: Far away.

Her story and the hole [of these creatures] are there. The

creatures pierced her water container. In the time of a big war, in the former times of the ancestral fathers, they boiled water and made lots of *marila*<sup>16</sup>, the kind to heat the spears for the fight. They used to go to the hole [of these creatures], where this woman used to go to collect water and where the two children went and shot [them]. They used to go there and get the things, the *marila*, in this area. They took it with vines and wood, also filled up water there, came and washed the spears, the warriors. The warriors would go to fight with that.

#### Variant 4: The Woman Weakaupior

(DOC: 2A1R05B2; VIL: Kaian; LANG: Kaian L02; DATE: 1976; INF: Damay Peter)

##### (0) Background

Her story is so. She cut purpur shrubs. This woman, her name is Weakaupior. She cut purpur shrubs to make a skirt to dress. It is also a *tumbuna* (ancestral) story.

##### (A) The Two Bird Eggs

This woman, Weakaupior by name, set out to cut purpur shrubs to make a skirt to wear. Cutting purpur shrubs she walked around. In former times we had no skirts and trousers to wear, so the women used grass skirts and the men loincloth.

While she was cutting shrubs, she met a bird. That bird was also of the lineage Weakaup. The bird had laid two eggs on the leaves of a sago palm. The woman noticed the two eggs, took them, and brought them home to her place. She lifted up a pot and put the two bird's eggs underneath. Then she began to work on her new skirt and put it in the sun to dry. After that, she went to collect water to boil the two eggs of the bird, boil sago pulp, and eat. She filled up water and some wicked creatures came up and pierced her water container again. The water trickled down. Only a little bit of water she could carry home. She cooked sago, and ate, and stayed.

Another time she went again to fill up water. Again, the creatures came up to pierce her water container and all the water leaked out. She had a look. There was no water.

##### Two Good Children

Another time she could collect just a little bit of water and she carried that home. She placed the pot on the fire and got that little bit of water she had collected. Then she went up to lift up the pot with which she had covered the two eggs. She lifted up the pot and saw two good children. They were boys. She took these two boys, poured out the bit of water, and screamed: "Eh, very good indeed! I love them truly. I have lived alone and now two good children

have appeared. The two have left [the form] of a bird and become humans. Two great boys!" The woman took the two children, cared for them, and they grew up.<sup>17</sup>

##### (B) Mother Requests Her Killing

The two children had grown up. Mother had her thoughts: "What shall I do? Only the two exist. I want this place to become large."

She said to the two children: "One of you has to kill me!" The two children felt sorry for her and argued with each other. The elder brother said to the younger: "You kill her!" But the younger brother rejected that, saying: "No, I feel sorry for mother! You kill her!" The elder brother replied: "No, I feel sympathy for mother." The two children disputed among themselves which one of them should kill mother. But then the younger brother killed their mother.

Before the younger brother killed their mother, she had instructed them: "After you have killed me, one of you takes my head and one my stomach and each one puts his part near the opening of his sleeping bag. Later, when you go into the sleeping bag, then put them near the aperture."

The two brothers followed the instructions of mother. They cut her flesh into small pieces and poured her blood into a bamboo barrel. One took the head, the other one the stomach of their mother, and each put his part near the opening of his sleeping bag. Before mother died, she had instructed them to do so.

The two had killed her, taken her blood, and filled a bamboo barrel with it. She deceived them in saying they should aim the blood at the forest, but should throw the larger portion towards the coast. But as it is with a bamboo barrel, if you throw out [its contents], then it is gone. The two pretended to throw the blood towards the forest, but in fact wanted to throw it towards the coast. The large portion of the blood fell towards the forest and only a bit of blood at the bottom they threw towards the coast. For this reason we, we at the coast, are not many, but they in the forests are many.

After [the two brothers] had done everything as mother had instructed them, they went into their sleeping bags to sleep. It was night and they slept. One had placed the head of mother at the mouth of the sleeping bag, the other one the stomach.

##### (E) The Village

Daylight approached. Roosters crowed, and children, women, pigs, dogs, chickens, kind of things had appeared – a village had come. The two brothers woke up and had a look. Two good-looking women, one from the head and one from the stomach had appeared. The two women became the wives of the two brothers.

The brothers watched that and said: "Ah, mother has talked to us about that. We did as she has told us and this place became a large village." Its story goes this far.

<sup>16</sup> *Marila* = magic, magic stuff.

<sup>17</sup> Note that the killing of the creatures is omitted.

## Questions

Q: What are the names of the two brothers?

A: The name of the elder brother is Maringgaron, the name of the younger Matanggaron.

Q: Why an elder and a younger brother?

A: One hatched first, the other later.

Q: The creatures, what are they?

A: They are creatures in the earth. We name them *manskan*. These creatures use to pierce *limbum* containers.

Q: Were men in the earth?

A: Not men, they were creatures. They use to drill holes into *limbum* containers for water.

Q: What is the name of this bird?

A: Weakaup.

## Variants from Botbot L03

### Variant 5: The Woman Wekof

(DOC: 2A1R06C9; VIL: Botbot; LANG: L03 Gamei; DATE: 1987; INF: Bandom)

#### (0) Background

Q: The Tambaran house?

A: Yes. I start to talk now.<sup>18</sup> It was not a kind of human. We don't know for nothing, the Big One made that.

Q: What is the name?

A: [Her] name is Wekof. Wekof is us. Earlier, we existed. The place had no village; the big sea took us. When we noticed a bit of fresh water, we went and collected some. That was far away, not nearby. We brought home a bit of fresh water and drank it right away.

Q: Ground was, water was, and what else?

A: The water was in a hole, a little hole. They collected a bit of water and waited. A bit of water came, they took it, put the *limbum*, took the water with the shell. So they did.

#### (A) The Two Bird Eggs

Then a bird appeared and stayed in a small thing like a wild areca palm. The bird built a nest, laid two eggs, and remained on the palm. The woman walked around, noticed the two eggs, and said to herself: "Ah, a kind of thing." The bird got up and flew away. The woman Wekof collected the eggs and placed them in a shell and pushed them inside a cooking pot – it was a large pot. She turned the cooking pot with the bottom upwards and pushed the two eggs inside.

The two eggs broke open. Not birds, two male human children hatched. The name of the elder one is Masagaro and the younger one Umigaro.

<sup>18</sup> The informant is asked for the Tambaran house, the house of Sendam in Botbot, but then he tells the Marge myth.

## Getting Ready for the Ambush

Wekof said to the two: "Go and get this thing!" The two cut down a wild areca palm and brought it home. Wekof carved bows and arrows for them. She<sup>19</sup> got midribs of sago leaves and cut them into arrows. The brothers shot at things in practice and grew up in the care of their mother Wekof. The two had grown up young men. Mother had reared them and made also arrows and other things for them.<sup>20</sup>

#### (B) Mother Requests Her Own Killing

Mother had her worries about them. They had no chickens, no people, no pigs, and no dogs to live with them.

Mother said to them: "You two kill me!" The two brothers replied: "We can't kill you. You reared us; you are our mother, why should we kill you?" The elder brother said to the younger: "You, younger brother, kill her!" Younger brother returned: "No, you, elder brother, you kill her!" The brothers argued with each other, while mother was insisting on her request. Then the younger brother killed their old mother.

Mother had requested them: "You kill me and slice me in pieces. Cut down the trees and place a piece of flesh at each stump of the trees you have cut down. Do it like that. Then, you take my head, and you, the younger one, my stomach. Put that near your sleeping bag." – Earlier, the ancestors had no sleeping bags [that is, mosquito nets of the European kind], they had bags to sleep in. – Mother had demanded: "You elder brother, take my head and place it at the head of your sleeping bag. You will crawl into your sleeping bag and leave my head there. Before daybreak something will appear." That's what mother had said to the two children.

#### (E) The Village

The brothers were sleeping. Near daybreak, roosters crowed, dogs barked, pigs grunted. The brothers woke up and were terrified. They turned around and opened the sleeping bags. Two nice and clean women were squatting at the aperture of the sleeping bags.

The brothers went out of the sleeping bag and each one met with a woman. They had their thoughts, looked around, and said: "Oh mother has thought of this and has told us to do that." And we said: "Never mind. But mother did that, and the people came."

The head of the mother had turned into a woman at the sleeping bag of the elder brother; the stomach of the mother also turned into a woman at the sleeping bag of the younger brother. The brothers, each took a woman, and each one had a wife.

The two had placed all the flesh at the stumps and roots of the trees; all those pieces turned into humans.

<sup>19</sup> *Em* is neutral and singular (= it). In other variants the two boys go and get the material.

<sup>20</sup> Note: The episode of removing the troublemakers is omitted and thus the teaching of how to fight.

That place is, has shells, shreds of earthenware pots. That village was big and we are.

### Variant 6: The Origin of Man

(DOC: 2A1R02A7; VIL: Botbot; LANG: Gamei L03; DATE: 1976; INF: Kainban)

#### (0) Background

This is another story of how we, the human beings, came. It is a story about a woman; her name is Taubat. She swept the place and lived alone.

In the beginning, we did not exist. There was no village, no man, no woman, no pig, no dog, and no rooster. Only the woman Taubat existed and she went to fill up fresh water at the pond Tupurkau in our forest and she brought back water to cook and eat.

#### (A) The Men Hiding in the Bamboo

One day the woman Taubat set out again to fill up fresh water. Some men were hiding in a strong bamboo right at the lowest section. It was a large root and the men dwelled in it. When Taubat arrived at the pond, the men rushed out to beat her. The beaten woman fell on the ground at the edge of the pond unconscious. After a while she regained consciousness, filled up water, returned to her place, cooked, and ate.

#### The Two Boys from the Eggs of the Bird

On some other day, Taubat intended to fill up with fresh water again. But then she noticed a small, black bird; it had built its nest in the leaves of a black palm tree and put two eggs in it. When Taubat came near the nest, the bird got up, and flew away. Two eggs were there. The woman saw the two eggs, took them, and went to fill up water.

The woman returned to her dwelling place. She did not cook the eggs, instead she lifted up an earthenware pot and put the two eggs underneath. She forgot all about the two eggs for a long time.

One day she remembered and intended to take, boil, and eat the eggs. Taubat lifted up the pot. The two eggs had broken up – two boys had originated. The two boys were not born from a woman, the two came from eggs.

Seeing the two boys, Taubat thought: "Ah, that thing of mine has become good, very good; it became man." Taubat did not do any harm to the boys; she took them and cared for the two boys who had originated from the bird's eggs.

#### Getting Ready for the Ambush

The two boys had grown up to the age of school children. Then, she sliced bamboo pieces and planed bows and cut arrows for the bows. In play, the two children shot with their bows at kinds of small things and grew up further.

The two boys had grown further, Taubat made spears for them. Taubat told them to cut a *limbum* tree. After that she made spears for them. Also [they] cut pieces of bamboo, and [she] joined them to the tops of the spears.

Next, she told them to cut down a *garamut* tree. The two boys did so and Taubat cut shields for them to protect them in their fight. She carved signs and painted the shields with sap of trees. After that, they put decorative shrubs on the two shields with feathers of the cassowary and the bird of paradise.

Later, their mother said: "All right, you will return their fighting. Always, when I want to fill up water, they come and fight with me." The two replied: "All right, mother! That's great!" And further mother said: "Always when I fill up water, I don't get clean water, always dirty, muddy water I get. It's not a good water I take and give you to drink. A village, Wadagam by name, always comes from the bamboo to fight." The two children assured their mother: "We will kill them all!"

She got tree leaves, ginger, and boiled hot water. The two children washed themselves with that stuff which mother had prepared for them. The two ate to strengthen their muscles.

After that, mother announced the day for the fight, saying: "The day after tomorrow we go fight with them, kill this place."

Their mother got the ornaments ready, string bags with *gam*<sup>21</sup> shells, got *kumul*<sup>22</sup> feathers, and had the spears ready. They were in the dwelling place and prepared a meal. Next day, they would go and fight with this place.

In the evening hours, she instructed the two children: "You two will follow me; I'll go ahead of you. Don't get in view of them, keep out of sight, and hide yourselves, but watch them. When I go near the pond, those men will come from the bottom of the bamboo. The bamboos will be crackling like a burning fire. The men will come to beat me, and you kill them all."

#### The Killing of the Men from the Bamboo

Carrying her *limbum* container, [mother] went ahead to fill up water. The two children were in hiding, and mother passed by them, went ahead of them, and arrived at the pond. The two heard the bamboos crackling and said: "They want to kill our mother now."

They came to attack their mother and the two brothers appeared. The elder brother threw his spear calling his name. Their names are, Megaram, the younger brother, and Masagaram, the elder one of the two. The two brothers killed them all, cut off their heads and brought them to their place and performed the dance of killing man. After the dance, they prepared a feast to celebrate the killing. They had eaten and lived there in peace.

21 *Gam* = mussel.

22 *Kumul* = bird of paradise.

**(B) Mother Requests Her Own Killing**

After some time, mother talked to her children again, saying: “Clear [a large site as] for a big garden.” The two brothers cleared an area as large as the size of a village. They cut down the trees, set fire, and burned all the litter. After they had cleaned the garden, they went to their mother and said: “Mother, the garden is made!”

All right, mother said to the two children: “You two will kill me – kill me!” The two children replied: “Why should we kill you? You are our mother! If we kill you, who will provide us with food?” Mother replied: “Nevertheless, kill me first!” They argued with each other. But then, the younger brother took a club and hit the neck of their mother. Mother died.

Mother had told them: “After you have killed me, cut the flesh into small pieces, and collect every bit of bone. Put the stomach in one *limbum* container and my head in another one and put them aside. Place them well at another spot. All the small pieces of flesh you put on the stumps of the trees you have cut down. Put a piece on each one of the stumps of the fallen trees until all the pieces are put out. Provide all the stumps with a piece of my flesh. Don’t miss out on one single piece.” The two children did so and they also placed the bones. After that, one brother took the head and the other one the stomach.

Night arrived and they felt very sorry for their mother. They went to sleep and covered up the openings of the sleeping bags. One took with him the head of the mother and put it at the opening of the sleeping bag, the other one the stomach.

At that time, no man existed in this place, except the two children and their mother. The two had killed their mother, cleared a site as large as a garden and put the pieces of flesh and bones at the stumps of trees, and they went to sleep.

**(E) The Village**

Dawn came. They heard roosters crowing, pigs grunting, dogs barking, children crying, men and women talking. The two brothers woke up and listened carefully and they thought: “What’s that? Probably mother wanted to make it like that and for that reason she told us to kill her.”

The two wanted to open their sleeping bags and each saw a woman sitting at the mouth of his sleeping bag. The two thought: “That’s it, what mother has talked about. That’s what mother wanted to make and that is why she told us [to act like that].”

They got out of their sleeping bags. One of them married one woman, the other one married the other woman sitting by his sleeping bag. The two saw many men, women, children, pigs, roosters, and everything of a village. The two looked around and thought: “That is it why mother told us to kill her, slice her flesh into pieces, and put each piece on the stumps of trees we had cut down.”

Now man had come and exists. Now we exist. The place where we dwelled is Rangtugun. This one woman made us to originate.

**Questions**

Q: This woman Taubat?

A: Taubat.

Q: How did she come?

A: I don’t know. She was some sort of a *masalai*. She was alone and brought forth (*kamapim*) the two boys. The two boys are named: Miagarum and Masagar.

**Variant 7: The Story of Viakaup**

(DOC: 2A1R09D6; VIL: Botbot; LANG: Gamei L03; DATE: 19-04-87; INF: Mandom Romanus)

**(0) Background**

The name of the grass field is Kandumuni and the big stone is called Mauraik. The people dwelling there were not tall, they were short.

**(A) The Pigmy Men in the Bamboo**

Long ago, a woman dwelled at Angur near a true village. She lived there on her own and used to go to fill up fresh water. But she would not succeed in collecting fresh water. Pigmy men lived in a bamboo and rushed out with a crackling noise: pang, pung, pang, it sounded. The woman wanted to get fresh water, but the men from the bamboo shot and shot *gorgor*<sup>23</sup> spears at her until she fell down unconscious. The name of that woman was Viakaup.<sup>24</sup>

The woman could scoop up only a little bit fresh water with mud and returned to Angur, her dwelling place. That happened every day the woman set out to collect water.

**The Bird’s Eggs**

One day, she returned again to collect water. A bird, a small one that lives in the wild areca palms, had laid eggs. The woman noticed the eggs and said: “Oh, great bird!” She had a look, took its eggs, and returned home. She got a pot and pushed the eggs into the pot to hide them.

The pigmy men continued to trouble her when she was collecting water to cook and drink.

**Two Boys Hatch from the Eggs**

Then the bird’s eggs broke open and two true human children were there.<sup>25</sup> The children said: “Mother, go! We will follow you and hide.”

The pigmy men, called *mansgan*, will come when the woman filled up water at the water hole. And truly, the pigmy men in the bamboo grabbed for their *gorgor* spears and were ready.

<sup>23</sup> *Gorgor* = ginger.

<sup>24</sup> Marge is called Viakaup.

<sup>25</sup> An episode of the Bosmun (L05) carrying a large stone to the Ramu River is unexpectedly inserted. It is without meaning in this context and left out.

The unfortunate woman came and leaned down to collect water from the hole. The *mansgan*, the pigmy men, broke out of the bamboo, jumping down with crackling noise, pang, pang, pang, and threw their *gorgor* spears at the poor woman. The poor woman sank down at the hole, she was unconscious.

### Ambush

The two boys, the children of Viakaup, arrived and shot down the pigmy men, killing them all.

Mother filled up water and returned to her dwelling place. Her two children said: "Until now, you walked around, and these enemies attacked you. Now we have killed all of them."

Mother had said to the two boys: "Go and get leaves of that thing!" The two got that thing and [mother] made arrows and bows for them. [She] took bamboo pieces and sharpened carefully the tops. – That was for the enemies. – The two boys got strong and had become men.

### (B) Mother Requests Her Own Killing

Mother said: "You two brothers, I feel so sorry for you two. There are no women and no men. You have to clear a site as for a garden near this place." The two brothers cut down the trees, burned them, leaving only the stumps of the trees.

After that, mother asked: "Who of you is smart enough to kill me, you or you?" The elder brother said: "You, younger brother, you kill her!" But the younger replied: "You kill her!" Mother said: "You can't argue like that. Who of you is smart enough to kill me?" Now, one of them was smarter and said: "All right, I will kill her."

Mother said: "Now I tell you what to do. Listen carefully! Kill me, slice me into small pieces, and put a piece of my flesh on each tree stump. After that, the elder brother takes my head and puts it near the eye [opening] of his sleeping bag, and the younger puts my stomach near the opening of his sleeping bag. After that you go to sleep." – In the old time, they slept in sleeping bags rather than in mosquito nets of today. – She said to the younger brother: "You take my stomach and place it near the eye [opening] of your sleeping bag. Then go to sleep."

The elder brother was reluctant and so [the younger brother] killed their mother. They cut her body into small pieces and put a piece on each tree stump. They obeyed their mother. The elder brother took the head and the younger the stomach of their mother and each put it at the opening of his sleeping bag. And then they went to sleep.

### (E) The Village

In the night, the two brothers were asleep. Near daybreak, pigs grunted, roosters crowed, men shouted. Many more people had become from the flesh of their mother. Earlier, only the two brothers existed.

The brothers listened to the noise and thought: "What kind of people are talking and shouting? Whose pigs? Pigs grunt, roosters crow, and we don't know them."

Then one of the brothers lifted up the sleeping bag and saw a good, clean woman sitting there. He said: "Oh, mother has talked to us about that." Well, they kissed each other. The other brother also opened his sleeping bag and looked at a pretty woman. He watched the woman and said no word. He thought: "Mother has made that for us."

The head and stomach of their mother had transformed into a woman and each of the two brothers married one of the women. The pieces of flesh they had put on the stumps of trees, transformed into roosters, pigs, and many humans. The cement [see Questions below] of these people is there.

### Questions

Q: Where is the cement?

A: The cement of shells and pieces of earthenware pots are still there where those people lived.

Q: Where?

A: In my area. This road leads up to them.

Q: Tell more.

A: It goes thus far; a village was.

Q: Man came?

A: Man came.

Q: Did Botbot Village come from this?

A: No, this village I talked about.

Q: Which of the villages became from this story?

A: We call this village Kauksir.

Q: Where did they move to?

A: They left and are in the Bogia area. Their cement is there still. We walk over it. They moved away and we took this site in possession.

Q: Why did they move?

A: Because of the fighting with the spears. That's it.

### Variant from Boroï L03<sup>26</sup>

#### Variant 8: The Story of Viakauburor

(DOC: 2A1R07C9; VIL: Boroï; LANG: Gamei L03; DATE: 1986; INF: Tombai Thomas)

#### (0) Background

Q: Do you know the story of the origin of man? In the beginning there were no men and women on earth?

A: Yes, that. I haven't been born at this time.

<sup>26</sup> Boroï village is located at the eastern end of the Gamei L03 Language Area. Variant 8 was tape-recorded in Boroï 1 located at both sides of the Boroï Lagoon and for this reason it was very difficult to meet storytellers. Boroï 2 is farther up the lagoon or river. This variant diverges in some important details from the other variants, see below conclusions. I regret that I did not collect another variant to confirm the deviation or not. It shows how important it is to collect variants of the same narration. Also variants in fragmented or distorted forms are worth a study.

Q: When man came?

A: The origin of man, we are not clear about that. Our grandfathers, who reared our fathers, they had that. I did not see my grandparents. When my mother was pregnant, my grandparents passed away. My sister was crawling on her knees when my grandparents died. I was in the womb of my mother and so I don't know. My father begot me, that I know.

Q: You have heard only the middle of the story?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know the story of Viakau, the woman Viakau?

A: Viakau, I am full with that.

Q: Are you descended from this?

A: Yes, I know what you ask me for. I have this about Viakau.

Q: Tell the story!

A: Viakau is another story again. The Mandangan story I know. Another one is Mindup, I know this one. Another one still is Badinai. I know more stories. – This is the story of Viakauburor. It is a story of Boroi 1. Viakauburor is a woman; she did the following.

### (A) The Bird's Egg

This woman went into the forest and looked for tulip. This bird, Viakaup, put one egg into the leaves. We use to peel these leaves, take the spines, and beat the mosquitos. It is not a tree, it is like a *limbum* or something else. The bird Viakaup put an egg<sup>27</sup> in the fronds of a *limbum* palm. – Such fronds we use as a fan to ward off mosquito. – The woman went and looked for tulip. The bird noticed the approaching woman and flew away, leaving the egg in the nest. The woman took it. On her way she thought: "What shall I do? Shall I boil and eat the egg or what else should I do?" She thought about it and then said: "Never mind, I'll put it under a large pot." Those large earthenware pots were traded from Bosmun and were used to cook sago.

The woman forgot the egg under the large pot and did her daily work. She worked in her garden, worked sago, kinds of work she did. The egg remained under the pot.

The egg broke up, and two boys were sitting there under the pot. The names of the two boys I can't remember. The two boys moved under the pot. The old woman, Viakauburor, was sweeping the place around her house; all by herself she worked and lived. She heard the noise on the floor and the pot. The two boys tried to lift the pot up to come out from underneath. "What's that," she thought. She was under the house sweeping her place. She said again: "What's that?" She went up the house for a check-up, saying to herself: "What's that? I have nothing in my house."

The old woman went back under her house to sweep her place. Noisily, the two boys tried to lift up the pot and to come out. The old woman heard the noise and said: "What's that? Just now I have checked my house." Then she remembered and thought: "Oh, earlier I have put something there." She went up her house and lifted up the pot. Two young boys she saw squatting under the pot.

The two boys asked: "Mother, where is our mother?" They asked Viakauburor: "Where is our mother?" She replied: "Me, I'm your mother. Your mother, that's me." That is what the old woman Viakauburor said to the two children. The two children asked again: "And our father, where is he?" The old woman Viakauburor replied: "You have no father; you have only a mother. I'm your mother."

The old woman cared for the children and they grew up.

### The Bad People from the Forest

The old woman went to the water hole to get water for cooking. But enemies stood ready near the water hole used for drinking and bathing. There were bad people from the forest and hiding nearby. They were young boys. The old woman had filled up water while the boys were hiding nearby. The woman put the container on her head and was ready to step out of the water hole. The boys rushed by, knocked her down in play. She threw the water away. When she returned, she had only a little bit of water.

After she had returned, the two children asked her: "Hey mother, how is it? You stay away for such a long time and you bring only a little bit of water." Mother replied: "All the *mandangan* shot at me." – The people who troubled her are called *mandagan*. They were bad people, had no village and lived scattered around in the forest. They played the trick on the old woman.

### The Two Children Continue to Grow up

Whenever the old woman Viakauburor went to collect water, the same thing happened again. The two children noticed that and asked: "Mother how is it? Always it is the same when you return." Viakauburor replied: "Ah, you two, sorry! You don't know these men, causing the trouble. They are very many."

The two brothers hid their thoughts; those thoughts were not friendly. They asked their mother, saying: "Mother, show us the right tree so that we can make spears."<sup>28</sup> Mother showed them the right tree and they made shafts for spears. After that they asked: "The head of the spear, with what do we make the head of the spear?" Mother replied: "With bamboo." They asked: "What kind of bamboo?" She replied: "The bamboo we make combs from, has no fuzz. The true bamboo has fuzz and that one is used for the spear." Mother showed them the right bamboo and they made heads and joined them to the shafts. They had the spears ready.

The two brothers asked: "What do you think? Should we guard you and shoot down these men?" Mother replied: "That's great."

The brothers, carrying bundles of spears with them, followed their mother. Near the water hole, they concealed themselves. The old woman stepped down into the hole to get water. While she was filling up water, the *mandagan* men appeared to play and mock this old wom-

27 Only one egg – perhaps an error.

28 In the other variants, the mother tells them to get the things. The boys get the right things, and mother makes the weapons.

an Viakauburor. When the *mandagan* men appeared, the two brothers came in and shot at them. They shot, killed, and cut them, all of them. Some said: "Oh no, we don't fight truly, we only play with the old woman." But the two brothers killed them all.

After the brothers had killed them, they stuffed the bodies into bamboo thickets. They set fire to the bamboo thickets and burned the bodies of the *mandagan*.

Mother filled water into her *limbum* container, brought enough water to her place, cooked much sago, and they all ate completely full. Their stomachs were filled with good food. And the two children said: "That's it."

After some time the brothers said to mother: "Go and try it again. Are there some more people or have we finished all of them?" The old mother walked down to the water hole, filled up water, and returned. She had returned and said: "None is left, you have finished off all of them. You are my good children. I looked after you and you grew up. It's good you finished all the enemies. I'm happy about you."

### (B) Will We Kill Old Mother?

The old woman Viakauburor looked after the two children and they grew up young men. The two were grown up but they had no wives.

The brothers talked about that and asked: "How is it? Will we kill old mother?" The elder brother said: "Oh, sorry! Mother looked after us and we grew up man. Why should we kill her?" His younger brother said: "We kill her and get rid of her and only we two will stay." The elder brother felt sorry for their mother and said: "Never mind!" The younger brother said: "If you don't listen to me, I will finish you too and both of you will be finished." His elder brother said: "Well, we two kill her."

First, the two boys cleared a site for a garden and burned the litter. Then they planted *aibiga*<sup>29</sup>, corn, *kumu*<sup>30</sup>, sugarcanes, and everything. And everything they planted grew well, had leaves.

Then the two boys said to each other: "Now we kill the old mother." All right, they killed the old mother. Her blood they poured into *limbum* containers. With that blood they painted the leaves of the sugarcanes, the leaves of the *aibiga* and *kumu*, all the foodstuffs they painted with the blood of their mother.

Then the boys asked each other: "What will we do with the head and the stomach?"

Q: Didn't mother instruct them?

A: Mother didn't instruct them, the two killed their mother. The two said: "Everything is done, her blood went out."

Q: Where did they put the blood of mother?

A: Yes. They put mother's blood into a *limbum* container and painted the leaves of sugarcanes, *aibiga*, and *kumu* [both greens]. All the stumps of trees the two painted.

<sup>29</sup> *Aibiga* = stringy silverbeet-like vegetable.

<sup>30</sup> *Kumu* = wild sweet potato.

Q: And the flesh of arms, legs, body?

A: The two cut the flesh into little pieces.

The two had cut the flesh and big *binatang* [insects] were sitting on the ground. They were stuck to the stumps (*stik*) of coconut palms and trees, the tops they had cut down. The two put the flesh of the arms, legs, back, and chest on top of all these.

The two had done that and placed stomach and head. They asked each other: "What will we do with that?" Squatting, they talked with each other. The elder one said: "We can't destroy that. I take her head." And the younger one said: "I take her stomach." And they put head and stomach on a *limbum*.

It was night, and they both crawled into the sleeping bag. – In the old days, we had no mosquito net, they slept in sleeping bags. – The elder one put her head at the opening of his sleeping bag and the younger one the stomach. And they both slept and were ignorant on what was going on.

### (E) The Village

The two turned around and listened. Roosters crowed, pigs grunted. Head and stomach turned into two young women, each squatting at a sleeping bag. The boys heard the noise and said: "Hey, we had no roosters, no pigs, we had not what else, yes – no woman. Where are the people coming from, the roosters, the pigs, the dogs, where do they come from?" The boys heard two women giggling, chewing betel nuts, smoking, and gossiping as women do. The two boys asked: "What women are these two?" The boys were yet lying in their sleeping bags and talked to each other.

The younger one said to the elder one: "You go out first!" And the younger one said: "No, I'm afraid. You go out first!" In reply the elder one said: "No, I'm afraid, you go first!" And his younger brother said: "Oh, I'm afraid. You are the elder, you go first. You go out and you have a look at the two women." They argued and argued, and then agreed: "All right, we go out at the same time."

All right, they both opened the sleeping bag and came out. They looked at the two women squatting there. The brothers asked: "How is it? Why have you two come?" The women said: "You both liked us, you loved us, and we appeared. You called for us and we appeared." The two women became the wives of the two brothers.

The two settled down and stayed. The two brothers had wives and they built their own village and settled down.

A kind of sugarcane is red and also its leaves. Also that kind of *kumu* [vegetable] is red in a new garden. Those plants are red because of the blood of the old woman Viakauburor.

Thus far this story goes.

### Questions

Q: Her flesh and all the other things?

A: Her flesh became *binatang* [insects] and other things. Her blood became banana plants, sugarcane, taro, and other things.

- Q: The products of the garden came from her body?  
 A: Yes, that is ancestral story.  
 Q: Did the village come from the two?  
 A: Yes.  
 Q: Did the two get married and had they children?  
 A: The village did not come from this. This story is so.  
 Q: No humans came?  
 A: Yes, no humans became from this story.  
 Q: And the families of these two brothers, where are they now?  
 A: No family came from the two. We don't know where the family could be.  
 Q: And the Boroi villages did not become from that?  
 A: Not from this. Our ancestral story, we have talked about that. Gitain has a family, that's me here. We are this family, the two brothers had no family. The story of Gamei, Kari, Markimtip, and Viakauburor had no family.  
 Q: Did your family become from Kari?  
 A: No, my family became from Gitain.  
 Q: Gitain?  
 A: Yes, the water woman. This of Kari is a *gapai* [spirit] and also Markimtip. This Viakauburor, that is bird and garden.

### Comments

Variant No. 8, Boroi Village, deviates in some important details. The woman works in the garden; there is only one egg; the boys ask who the mother is and who the father; the troublemakers do not live in a village, but are scattered through the forest. The two boys demand to know the right materials to make weapons and mother shows them. The younger brother wants to kill their mother to be alone, but not the elder. The younger threatens to kill his elder brother, if he doesn't agree. They clear a site and plant. They both kill her, fill her blood in *limbum* and paint some plants with it, so they are red.

A note is added because I hesitated to include this variant for the reasons mentioned above. A major difference I would like to point at lies in the function of the mother and the two boys. The mother does her daily tasks in the garden, in the forest, and in the sago swamp, but does not mention the problem of safely getting fresh water. She returns with one egg, puts it under a pot expecting nothing unusual. While sweeping her place, she hears a rattling noise in the house and wonders what it is. After the second time, she remembers the egg, lifts up the pot. The two boys are young but able to question her. Surprising is their question "Who is our mother?" Not who she is, but their mother they want to know. She assures them that she is their mother. No gratitude is expressed that she is not alone anymore and has two children with her. One may wonder what justifies her to identify herself as mother. Essential for such a title is rearing, taking care. In contrast to the other variants the mother remains passive. The two children take the lead, observe, enquire, request her to show them the right tree and bamboo. The bamboo she has to specify. Mother does everything on demand of their children and willingly. The two boys show some weak-

ness. They are unable to lift up the pot covering them, they enquire, that is they don't know. For that they need mother. The passive characteristics of mother and the active of the children are carried through the entire variant, though with some interplaying.

This variant differs from the other variants, why that? Was it changed by an accident of oral history or on purpose? To decide on that, further variants are needed. Is it erroneous? The weakness of mother is prominently expressed. She needs but does not desire help to solve the problem, but accepts help. The supernatural origin of the two boys is heightened in this variant; they are with extraordinary powers.

Moreover, in (B) and (E) some disturbing details are affecting the meaning of the myth. Mother does not convince or even demand them to kill her for the purpose of populating the place. The boys assess to have no wives and they themselves decide to kill mother – one may assume, in order to find wives. On their own, they clear a site in the forest. They argue not who but that they should kill her. Younger brother wants to kill mother, not the elder, stressing his thankfulness for rearing them. The younger one threatens to kill also him. They both kill her. In the end, the two get a wife, but no village is mentioned. The leaves of the garden plants get their colour, which hints at another narrative.

In this case it is worthwhile to see the supernatural endowment and the initiative taken or not taken by an actor.

### Variants from Awar L04<sup>31</sup>

#### Variant 9: The Story of the Old Mother Marge

(DOC: 2A1B08C0, see 2A1R08.C10; VIL: Awar; LANG: Awar L04; DATE: 1972; INF: Ias Tom)<sup>32</sup>

#### (0) Background

The name of this old woman is Marge. She dwelled alone in a small place and used to walk around to collect edible leaves and mushrooms growing on the waste of a sago tree.

#### (A) The Trouble of Old Mother Marge

This woman used to go and get some edible leaves and get some mushrooms from the waste of a sago palm. She grabbed her *limbum* container and set out to collect fresh water.

31 The following four variants, Nos. 9–12, are from the Awar-speaking (L04) villages Awar, Nubia, and Sisimangum. Höltker (1964, 1975) provides an ethnographic sketch with a map and calls them the Nubia, which is the smallest of the three villages.

32 This variant was tape-recorded by N. Angst-Umbricht.

## The Nasty Children

When she did that, kids, the age of school children, a long row of kids, went down carrying spears with them. They had pointed short bamboo lengths and some sticks, they had pointed them well, and they were waiting for this woman Marge to come.

The [woman] went down; the poor woman was very old. And the kids, what thoughts did they have to shoot at this woman – kill her? The mothers and fathers of these kids did not know that their children shot at this old woman Marge.

The old woman went down to get fresh water and the children rushed by and shot at her legs, her arms, at her entire body. The woman screamed in pain: “Hey, you can’t shoot at me like that! Why do you shoot at me?” But the kids incited each other, saying: “Go on, go on! Shoot her, shoot her down!” They pierced her *limbum* container and the water leaked. She could take home with her only a little bit of water and a small bundle of edible leaves. She cooked that, ate, and slept. The next morning the same would happen again.

## The Two Bird’s Eggs

This bird, it is named Viaup, it eats sago waste, and this bird laid two eggs on the sago waste.

One day the old woman went again, collected edible leaves, wrapped them up, and was returning. On her return she thought: “I go and have a look at the sago waste and collect some mushrooms.” She went there, harvested some mushrooms, and then she noticed the two eggs of this bird Viaup. She said: “Oh, sorry! Two good bird’s eggs. I take them, boil them, and eat them with sago.” The old woman took the eggs, but she did not eat them, she ate only the edible leaves with the mushrooms from the sago waste. She laid the two bird’s eggs on a shell, went up into the house, lifted up an earthenware pot, and put them underneath.

The old woman Marge, forgot all about the two eggs, probably for one week. The two eggs broke open. Something different hatched, not bird chicks hatched, but two humans, boys, hatched. One was the firstborn and the other one the secondborn. Two human children had hatched and were squatting in the house.

The old woman slept until dawn. In the morning, she went back to get water. She found edible leaves, wrapped them up, and pulled out some mushrooms from the sago waste. The old woman had done that, took her *limbum* container, and went to get water again. And those kids came up again. Every time, the kids came and shot their sharpened bamboo spears at her. – You must know, children have no thoughts. – They truly wanted to shoot her down. In pain, the old woman screamed: “Ah, sorry! Don’t shoot at me! Who sent you to shoot at me?” The kids replied: “We ourselves! We want to kill you!” They shot and shot at her. They broke her *limbum* container, and the water leaked out.

## The Two Baby Boys

The woman was not young; she was very old. She took the little bit of water and went up to her dwelling place. Then she remembered the two bird’s eggs. She made ready the edible leaves and the little bit of water and said: “Oh, today I will cook the two bird’s eggs and eat them with sago.”

She went to open the door of the house, set the ladder, and went up into her house. When she walked into her house, the two children called out: “Mother!” The old woman looked up and asked: “Hey, you two! Where do you come from?” The two children replied: “Don’t you remember that something you left?” The old woman remembered that and said: “I did not put something there; I put two bird’s eggs there.” The two children said: “Mother, we are your children.” The old woman gave a loud cry, felt compassion for them, embraced them, took them down, and from now on cared for them. The names of the children are Areror and Gimnor, the name of the old mother is Marge.

The old mother took the two children down and cared for them. Not in so many days, in three days already, they were strong, in four and five days, the two walked around. Quickly they grew up; they hurried to grow up.

Those other kids truly wanted to kill the old mother. The bird felt sympathy for the old mother and for this reason, it put the two eggs there. The eggs broke up and let the two boys appear. The two boys hurried to grow up to help their mother to ward off those kids.

All right, the two children had grown up.

One day, the old mother wanted to go to get fresh water, edible leaves, and mushrooms, and the two children wanted to go with her. But the old mother warned them saying: “No, you don’t go down. These kids will come, shoot at me, and also shoot at you.” The two boys obeyed their mother and stayed in their place. The old woman went, collected some edible leaves, got some mushrooms from the sago, and went down to get water. Again these kids appeared to beat her. The old mother returned to her place covered with blood – not just a bit. Mother cooked sago, and they ate. That happened every time when the old mother set out to collect water.

## Weapons for the Children

The two children had grown up and they begged their mother: “Mother make a bow for us, and we try to shoot at things.” Mother took a bamboo length, sliced it, and carved bows for her two children. She took the midribs of sago leaves, pointed them, and gave them to the two children. The two shot at kinds of things, and were growing up quickly at the same time.

Then their mother demanded them: “Go and cut down that strong kind of tree named *gai*. The children went and cut down that tree, and mother made arrows for them.

Mother had made arrows and she said: “Go and cut down that tree named *bitbit*.” They cut down that tree and [mother] made two things [shields] to ward off arrows. Mother carved arrows, how many did she make? I think

five bundles of arrows for the first and five for the second child. And for both of them, she carved the arrow of prominence, [that is the spear]; that is a true thing – we name it *gevus*. She carved two such [spears], one for the first and one for the second child.

The two children had grown up; they did not take their time to grow up, they hurried to grow up, in no time they were grown up.

They said to mother: “We will go with you and fight with those children.” “No!”. Mother refused, “first you have to cut down a sago palm.” The two cut down a sago palm, rinsed two parcels of sago, brought them home, and placed them into the house, readying everything.

The old mother prepared everything according to the customs of the ancestors. Mother peeled vines, took ginger; all that was to strengthen the muscles of the two. The two should fight with no doubts and no fear. Their ears should be firmly deaf, they should not be disturbed by anything, but just shoot and shoot down all of them. After mother had made all that, the two children were very strong, their muscles were truly strengthened.

### The Killing of the Wicked Kids

Then the two children fixed the day, saying: “Tomorrow we will follow you, mother!” “That’s great!” Mother exclaimed and she instructed them: “You two don’t go with me. We all will go down, but you will hide there.” And mother showed them where they could hide.

In the night, around 4 o’clock, they got up, and mother hid her two children. The two children concealed their arrows along the path right down to the water, well where old mother Marge used to collect drinking water. They concealed *gevus*, the spear of prominence, right at the edge of the water well. She concealed her first child there, because from there the children would come; she concealed her second child near the water well. In the middle they would fight.

It was 4 o’clock in the night when the two children left to hide themselves. Mother said to them: “Around 8 o’clock I will come. I will come shouting and talking to myself.” “That’s great!” her two children replied.

The two children had concealed themselves and it was 8 o’clock in the morning. Old mother Marge got up, grabbed her water container, and came. She collected edible leaves, while loudly talking to herself so that these kids would hear her voice and come running. She wrapped up the edible leaves that she had collected and put them ready. She walked to the sago palm, pulled out mushrooms, and wrapped them up. Then she grabbed her *limbum* container and walked down to the water well to collect water. While she was walking down, she talked with herself as old folk do.

These kids, they were of the place Bingem, heard her talking and rushed in in large numbers. Shouting: “Aria, aria,” they came, “let’s go down! Let’s go and shoot her! She has gone down.” Running, a large number of kids came, passing by the first child of the mother. They threw their spears at her. Mother scolded them: “Why do you shoot at me? My skin aches all over.” Yelling, the children

shot at the old mother and the poor old woman wept and sobbed bitterly. Then she called out the names of the two, yelling: “Ah, Arero, Gimnor! I’m about to die! How is it?”

The first child, Arero, heard his name and got up. He pulled up his arrows and shot and shot, one after the other. The second child, Gimnor, came from the other side, shooting at the kids. The kids [from Bingem] did not recognize them as their enemies. The brothers tangled with these kids and the other children thought they were of their lot. But the two killed and killed the kids from Bingem, killing them all.

### The Crippled Child

One of the kids had a crippled leg and could not walk properly. It was running around lame and lamenting. The two brothers intended to kill this one also, but the old mother said: “Never mind! Don’t shoot him! He will bring the news to his village.” The elder brother said: “Don’t shoot him.” But the second brother said: “I’ll shoot him down.” Mother would not agree and said: “Let him return to the village, he will report to the villagers.” And so it was. The lame boy brought the news to his village and the two brothers brought the old mother to their dwelling place.

This crippled boy went and brought the news to the village. “Oh, we are ruined,” he reported to mothers and fathers. They asked: “What, you are ruined, how that?” The kid answered: “Always, we went to beat up this old woman.” Fathers and mothers asked: “How did you beat her?” The child replied: “We shot at her with spears, we pointed spears and shot them at her.” Mothers and fathers said: “Why did you do that? That’s a village. Now the men of this village shall rise and finish you.” Fathers and mothers wept in their grief, went, and got the corpses of their children. They wept and sobbed in their grief and buried the slain.

### (B) The Killing of the Mother

The two brothers returned with their old mother to their dwelling place and started to beat the signal drum and dance. – I think until it was about 4 o’clock in the afternoon. – Then old Marge said to them: “You two kill me!” The two replied: “Ah mother, why should we kill you?” Mother said: “Kill me, and you will have many people to live within this dwelling place, and they will sit down with you. If you don’t kill me, not many people will live with you.” The first child felt sorry for their mother. But the second child got up and killed their old mother Marge.

Old mother had instructed them, saying: “Kill me. After that, cut me apart. Take a knife and cut me into small pieces, every part of me. Cut down this site in the forest as if to build a garden. Clear this forest.”

The two children followed the instructions of their old mother. They cut down the trees and cleared a large site in the forest.

Then they killed their old mother Marge and sliced her into small pieces.

Their old mother had also instructed them: “You, the first child, take my head to [your] sleeping bag and you,

the second, my stomach." – At that time our ancestors used to sleep in sleeping bags; it was a large bag, like a mosquito net of today. – Each of the brothers slept in his own sleeping bag. Mother Marge had said to them: "You will take my head and sleep with it at your bag, and the other one takes my stomach and sleeps in his bag".

The two followed the instructions of their old mother. They took the small pieces of flesh and bones and placed them in the site they had cleared in the forest like a garden. They placed every piece on the tree stumps and hung them on branches. The elder child placed her head at his sleeping bag, the younger child her stomach.

The two brothers did that with all the pieces of the body of their mother. At night, around half past 7, the two went into their sleeping bags and slept. They were unconscious and were not aware on what was going on in their dwelling place.

### (E) The People

The two brothers were sleeping. My goodness, many more people appeared in this garden site. The clearing became a village full with women, men, children; each house was full. The big garden site they had cut became a large village.

Earlier, there was no village. Mother Marge lived alone in this place. There was only one house and that house was in the forest. But then, the two children appeared. They shot dead all those kids. Then they killed their mother, cut her body into pieces, and hung (*hangamapim*) them up everywhere. And many people became in this place.

The head of the mother transformed into a fine woman who was ready to marry her first son; also the stomach transformed into a handsome woman, who got married to the second son.

In the night, the two women got up and went down, because very many people had become, making lots of noise. The two women did not sleep with their husbands. Well, the two went down, making noise, bumping at things. They prepared food, cooked, and what else did they do?

Then the two women woke up their husbands, saying: "Ah, wake up!" The two men woke up, saw the women, and heard the noise of many people. They got frightened. The two said: "What women! We haven't seen men and women; only we two dwelled here." One of the two women said: "I'm your wife!" and also the other woman said that.

Now the story comes to an end. The two brothers married the two women. This dwelling place had become a village.

Such is the story of Marge, the old mother.

### Variant 10: A Woman Alone in the Forest

(DOC: 2A1B01F8, see 2A1B01A8; VIL: Awar; LANG: Awar L04; DATE: 17-04-82; INF: Madom Angelus)

### (0) Background

A woman dwelled in the forest, she was alone.

Q: Her name?

A: Her name is Marige.

Q: Was she in your forest?

A: Yes, she was in our forest. She was alone, built a small house for herself, and was.

### (A) The Nasty Children

This woman used to go out and get fresh water for cooking. But always, the young children of another village would come and shoot at her. They shot at her with spears. Blood coursed down her body and she carried to her dwelling that water mixed with her own blood. Marige cooked, ate, and slept. The next morning, she went again to get water, the same would happen again. That happened every day.

### The Bird Viok

A bird laid two eggs in the waste of a sago palm.

Q: What's the name of this bird?

A: This bird is named Viok. It is a small bird, like a pigeon; it eats from the waste of a sago palm.

As usual, Marige went to collect fresh water and then intended to have a look at the sago waste, saying to herself: "I take water and I will have a look at the sago waste." Sago waste is decaying and edible mushrooms grow on it.

Marige arrived to collect mushrooms and she noticed two eggs in the waste. Marige took the two eggs and walked back to her dwelling. She thought about boiling and eating the two eggs. But the two [eggs] gave the thought to the woman, saying: "Don't boil us and eat us. We will help you. Put us into a cooking pot." So the woman did not boil the two eggs, but put them under a cooking pot; it was a very large pot in the house.

The two eggs remained there and hurried to break open to help this woman. Two human children hatched under the pot.

Q: Were they boys?

A: Two boys.

Q: What are the names?

A: The names are: Arero and Gimnor.

Q: Who was the elder?

A: The elder one is named Gimnor and the younger one Arero.

The two boys were under this large cooking pot, and the poor woman went again to get water for cooking. The men came again and shot at her. She returned home with water mixed with blood and cooked.

Then the woman remembered the two eggs that she had put under the cooking pot and said: "Oh, my two meat[s], my two bird's eggs, I have put them under the pot.

I have to get them, cook them with sago, and eat.” She went down, got fresh water, came back, and put it into the kitchen. She went up into the house and assumed there would be two bird’s eggs. She lifted up the pot to take the eggs and she noticed two children, two male children. The two eggs had transformed into children. She noticed the two children and said to herself: “I thought they are bird’s eggs, but they are children; that’s great!”

The woman took the children, went, and cooked sago. She had cooked sago, went, and gave it to the two children. The two children ate the sago.

The woman cared for them, reared them; they were yet very young. She cooked sago and gave them sago to eat. Mother went to get fresh water and the men appeared and shot at her. She took the water with blood, came, and cooked. Every day, the woman did do that until the two children had grown up.

### The Weapons

The two had grown and asked their mother to sharpen little arrows and make bows for them.

Q: Spears, was that to throw by hand?

A: The two only played with two little spears.

The two did so and grew up. They asked her mother to make little arrows and bows for them to shoot around in play as children do.

The boys had grown up more and they asked mother to make for them larger arrows. Mother sent them to cut down a wild palm tree. They brought the timber, sliced it, and mother made arrows for them to fight with these men. The two children wanted to revenge their mother. Always, when mother went to get fresh water to cook for the two children, those young men would come up and shoot at her. Mother brought back blood and water, cooked, and the three of them supped.

Q: Where did these young men come from?

A: From a village.

Q: The name of the village?

A: From Bigen Village.

Q: Where was Bigen Village located?

A: They dwelled in their village.

Q: Near this woman?

A: Not far away from this woman in the forest.

Q: Did she stay in Awar?

A: Yes, Awar.

Q: Did she dwell alone?

A: Marige lived on her own.

The two children were ready, ready to revenge their mother. Their mother had made arrows ready. The two went and were ready for them.

Mother said to them: “You two go ahead, be ready at the mouth of the two paths, they will come from there.” The two went, one stood up here, the other one there. That was near the water well.

When mother wanted to collect water, they came to

shoot at her. The two came up, closed their path, shot and shot.

### The Child with the Bad Legs

Only one kid, his leg was bad, ran away. The elder brother said to his younger one: “Never mind, let him bring the news to their mothers and fathers.” The kid went to the village and said to his mother and father: “Always, we shot at this woman, when she wanted to collect fresh water. This woman wanted to cook food and she came to this water hole. We used to go there and shoot at her, this miserable woman. She carried water stained with blood back to her dwelling and ate that. But now two young men appeared and shot at us. I alone came back, the two men have shot all the others down.” Mothers and fathers got angry and said: “Why did you go and shoot at her? She lives in her place; she is from a village.”<sup>33</sup>

Mother Marige went with her two sons back up to their place and stayed for some time.

### (B) The Mother’s Demand

Mother herself said to her two children: “Tomorrow or some other time you two will finish me. But first, cut down the trees as for a garden site. When you have done that, all right, finish me, kill me, and cut me into small pieces. One takes my stomach and the other one my head and each one puts it at the opening of his sleeping bag. After that go to sleep.” Further, the mother said: “The entire body, flesh, and legs, you take them and put the pieces on the tree stumps you have cut down for a garden.”

The two children did as mother had told them. They killed their mother and cut her body into pieces. One took the stomach and the other one the head of the mother and each put it at the sleeping bag. After they had put all the flesh with the blood of their mother on the tree stumps, it was night, and the brothers went to sleep. One slept in the house with the stomach and the other one with the head of their mother.

### (E) Wives and Village

In the night the head of mother transformed into a handsome young woman and also the stomach of the mother transformed into a fine looking woman. They were the wives of the two brothers, one for the elder and one for the younger one.

The two brothers slept, woke up, and heard people talking carelessly everywhere. The two turned, listened, and said: “What kind of people has arrived and chatter like that?” The brothers got up, wanted to go down, and they saw only people, a village; humans had become.

Q: Men and women.

A: Men and women together

33 “*Em i stap long ples bilong em, em man bilong ples*” = “She is in her dwelling place, she is a villager.”

Q: Also children?

A: Yes.

The skin [body] of the mother of the two brought forth man and a village. They settled down. The story is finished.

### Questions

Q: They took a woman?

A: Yes. The head turned into a woman, the stomach turned into a woman, and both were the wives of the two.

Q: Which part went to the first brother?

A: The head went to the first brother.

Q: And the stomach?

A: The stomach went to his young brother.

Q: The name of the younger brother?

A: That was Arero, Gimnor, and Arero.

Q: What is the name of the wife of Gimnor?

A: No name. Only the head of mother.

Q: And Gimnor married head or stomach?

A: Gimnor took the stomach of mother.

Q: And Arero?

A: Arero took the head of their mother. The two came from head and stomach: the two changed to women.

Q: And here in Awar, did two lines come? Have you come from this story?

A: Yes.

Q: Which brother do you follow?

A: Gimnor.

Q: Where is Arero?

A: Arero is with us, two brothers.

Q: And you descend from which brother?

A: We, the origin we came from, we don't know that. Only the story we know, and tell the story. We have two families.

Q: The names of the families?

A: The big place here has two families. Here is one family, there the other. Gemboe belongs to another family. These two men stayed in Gemboe.

Q: Gemboe and the other half?

A: The other half, we possess; there is another family at a little settlement.

Q: The name of this family?

A: Barigen will tell this story ...

### Variant 11: Mother Marige

(DOC: 2A1B02F8, see 2A1B02A8; VIL: Sisimangum; LANG: Awar L04; DATE: 18-04-82; INF: Semi Peter)

#### (0) Background

Now I'm telling you the story about two men; the name of their mother is Marige. There was a village; they always came to beat this mother. The name of this village is Bingem. Bingem is the name in the story. Bingem is not a true village.

#### (A) The Nasty Boys

Whenever this woman Marige wanted to fill up fresh water to cook and eat, the men from Bingem came to shoot at her and damage her *limbum* container. – Our ancestors used to get a *limbum* container and fill up fresh water with it. – They beat her, damaged her water container, and her own blood coursed down into the water. That water, mixed with her own blood, she brought to her dwelling, cooked sago, and ate. She had her problem. She had also no child and lived alone in her dwelling. Always, this happened.

#### The Two Eggs

One day, she looked for mushrooms. – Mushrooms grow on the waste of a sago palm. – She noticed two eggs of the bird Viok. Marige had found them, took them, and brought them to her house. She put the two eggs into her house, but then forgot about them. But one day she remembered.

Again, she went to fill up fresh water and again the men came to beat her and damage her water container. She carried back water mixed with her own blood to cook and eat. Then she thought: "Oh, I go and have a look at the two eggs and I will eat them." But the bird's eggs had broken open already and two children were squatting on things in the house watching their mother. Mother saw only the empty egg shells and said: "Hey, the two eggs are not here, only the shells are here!" But then, she looked up and saw two boys sitting there. She thought: "Oh, that's great! Two male children!" Marige looked after the two children, reared them.

#### The Advice of Mother

The two children had grown up young men and mother gave her children a bit of an advice, saying: "To this side, you can go, but to that side, you don't go, there is an enemy there. Always, when I fill up fresh water, they come to beat me. They damage my water container, shoot at me, and my blood is coursing down. I fill up fresh water mixed with blood. I come back, cook, and eat. Please, don't go over there."

The two brothers had grown up and they had the spears and everything ready to fight. Mother made everything ready for them for the fight. [They] had shields and spears ready, and [mother] said to them: "When I go down to fill up fresh water, you listen to my calling. When I call out, this means, the enemy is coming to shoot at me." The two brothers went to hide themselves ready with their spears.

When their mother Marige went down to fill up fresh water, her two children were ready with everything to fight and standing guard. Then these men, the enemy, arrived to fight Marige. She shouted and her two children came up. They fought and fought with the enemy. It was a big fight and the two won over them.

After that, they returned and the two children stayed with their mother.

**(B) Mother Demands Her Killing**

Their mother had a thought and said to the two children: “It’s best if you kill me!” The two children asked: “Why should we kill you?” Mother demanded: “Kill me!” The two boys thought about and believed in the words of their mother. The younger brother asked the elder one: “Do we kill her?” The two [brothers]<sup>34</sup> killed their mother.

Before they killed their mother, they cut down the trees for a large garden. They set fire and burned the litter. After they had killed their mother, they cut her body into small pieces. They threw too her blood inside the garden.

Marige had told them: “My blood, throw it everywhere in the garden [site]. One takes my liver and one takes my heart. Either will be with one of you. My stomach, throw it just near the fire.”

The two brothers obeyed their mother and did exactly as she had told them to do. The two brothers cut her body into pieces, threw her blood around in the garden. They threw the small pieces of her flesh on stumps of trees. The elder brother took her heart and the younger her liver.

**(E) Wives and Village**

It was night, and the two brothers were sleeping. And two young women appeared and were the companions of the two brothers.

While the brothers were asleep, the younger brother moved back and held a thing. Elder brother said: “I think the younger brother is afraid of the soul of mother and is holding fast on me.” And the younger brother also thought: “My elder brother is afraid of the soul of mother and is holding fast on me.”

Dawn came. The brothers looked around, they didn’t see just a few people, they saw many – very many. That was so because of the blood of their mother, whom they had killed and thrown around, had transformed into many humans and animals, pigs, dogs, and others.

Q: Did also pigs and dogs come?

A: Everything came.

Q: And the chickens?

A: The chickens, the birds. I say, all the animals, everything became.

At daybreak, they got up and saw their old mother.<sup>35</sup> She had not died. They said: “Mother is squatting at the ashes of the fire.” They saw their mother, and the story comes to an end.

**Questions**

Q: Where was mother?

A: She was seated near the fireplace.

<sup>34</sup> In most of the other variants only the younger brother kills their mother.

<sup>35</sup> It is only said in the present variant, that mother is alive. This is also found in some variants of other myths with a killed living yet or going away.

Q: Did mother come to life again?

A: Yes. They thought they had killed her. But she was still alive. They saw mother and said: “Oh, sorry mother! We thought we had killed her, but she is alive, she did not die.”

Q: Mother Marige?

A: Yes. Her name is Marige.

Q: The names of the two brothers?

A: Purema the younger, Vueopma the elder.

Q: The names of the two women?

A: We don’t know them. We haven’t got the names of the two women. Mother herself brought forth the wives for the two brothers.

Q: Do you descend from this story?

A: Yes.

Q: Sisimangum?

A: Yes, Sisimangum, Awar, Nubia. We don’t know, maybe we descend from this story, because we know the story.

**Variant 12: Mother, You Have Made a Large Village<sup>36</sup>**

(DOC: 2A1AWA09; VIL: Awar; LANG: Awar L04)

**(0) Background**

In a village lived a woman, Morge by name. She had no husband.

**(A) The Wicked Boys**

One day, she wanted to collect fresh water and cook. Then boys came from a village and shot at her. She was bleeding. The blood dripped into the water. She cooked with the bloody water and ate.

**The Two Eggs**

A man<sup>37</sup> put two eggs on the remains of the sago-rinsing. A spirit woman, Wuem by name, had put these eggs. Morge found the two eggs, took them, and put them in a pot.

Later on, Morge went again to collect fresh water. Again, she was shot at and wounded. She was bleeding. The blood dripped into the water. She cooked the food with blooded water.

**The Two Boys**

Then she wanted to cook the two eggs. But when she wanted to take the two eggs, she found two small boys

<sup>36</sup> Höltker collected this variant 1936–1939 (Höltker n. d.). Only in this variant, a man or a spirit woman places the two eggs, thus part of the marvellous divine action is stripped off.

<sup>37</sup> First a man, then the spirit woman Wuem puts the eggs and not a bird as in the other variants. This may be a misunderstanding in the translation of G. Höltker.

in the pot. They had crawled out of the two eggs. Morge said: "They are my two children."

She wanted a revenge on the boys who ambushed her. She named the one boy Arero and the other Dzimnor. Both grew up.

When Morge intended to draw water again, the two boys said to Morge: "Mother, are we allowed to go with you?" Mother answered them: "No, stay home. They always shoot at me."

### The Weapons

When the boys had grown up more, they asked Morge: "Mother, what kind of spear should we take?" Then mother said: "Oh, there are many betel palms in the forest, get first the leaves!" The two went into the forest and got the leaves of the betel palm named *kewur*<sup>38</sup>. But Morge said: "That is not good! There is another kind, the leaves are larger. Get those leaves." They brought now the leaves of this betel palm *sibak*<sup>39</sup>. Morge said: "That's the right kind; these I meant."

Now Morge gave both a stone axe and sent them into the forest; they should cut down the *sibak* palm and bring it to the village. Morge made lances from the trunk for them. She also made for them two shields from the *bitbit* tree. Then she sent the two to get the fresh leaves from the heart of the sago palm. These leaves Morge made into a fringe which she tied to the back of the shields.<sup>40</sup>

When Morge went again to collect water, again she was ambushed. The water container made from the leaf-stalk went broken, much water mixed with blood was spilled and only a bit of water remained in the container. She cooked food with that and also gave the children to eat.

Then the two said: "If mother goes again to get water tomorrow, then for once we can have a look at who ambushes [her]." The two concealed themselves at both sides of the main path and waited for Morge.

When Morge came and drew water, the boys of another village jumped out of their concealment and shot at Morge. She called: "Children, come quickly, I'm lost!" Then Arero and Dzimnor rushed at the boys, who threw only pieces of bamboo and branches. The two shot dead all of them, except one with a wound. This one they let live so that he could bring the news of the death of the others to the village. The boy ran to the village and reported: "Two men have shot down all the boys; I alone ran away."

Arero and Dzimnor now went home, made a singing, and beat the signal drum. When the people of the village of the slain boys heard the drum, they asked themselves: "Who really lives there and beats the signal drum? Only one old woman lives there and we know her."

### (B) Beat Me Dead

Then Morge said to the two: "Cut down the trees and make a large garden." They did so.

Then Morge asked: "Do you want to make me dead now?" The two asked: "Why that?" Then Morge said: "Beat me dead!" Then the younger brother took a log and beat at his mother. Then the elder brother asked: "What will we then eat? Who will cook food for us?" The younger brother hit Morge at her neck and she died.

Earlier she had said to them: "When you have killed me, then cut me apart! The pieces of my body put at each tree in the garden. Then men will originate, because it is not good that another village comes and kills you."

After Morge had died, they cut apart her body. The elder one kept for himself the head, the younger one the stomach. They placed head and stomach beside them in the sleeping bag, when they retired to sleep.

Morge had said to Arero: "Keep for yourself the head of me, but place it always very near to you." She had said to Dzimnor: "Keep for yourself my stomach, but put it beside you in the night."

### (E) People

During the night, men, women, and children originated from the pieces of flesh they had placed at the trees. The two heard the talking of the people outside and asked themselves: "Who is talking outside there? Do they possibly want to ambush us?"

The head and the stomach of Morge transformed into two young girls during the night. Both pairs had intercourse with each other.

In the morning, the elder brother crawled out of his sleeping bag and woke up the younger one. And in a whispering voice he said to him: "Wake up, come out! Mother has said, I should preserve her head and put it beside me. It has transformed into a girl in the night."

When it was getting light, they noted outside many people and the newly originated village. Then they said: "Oh mother, you have made a large village."

The people were seated outside and talked about the ambush to come and said: "Let the other ones come, we are not women." The others did not come again; they did not avenge their children. They were afraid of so many new people.

### Conclusions

The display of twelve versants<sup>41</sup> of the same myth in three neighbouring languages with their structural analysis in phases and episodes allow a more objective comparison and conclusions<sup>42</sup> to be drawn from.

41 For the deviant Variant 8: see the comments there.

42 It should be mentioned that the conclusions are also based on

38 *Kewur* = Areca catechu.

39 *Sibak* = another species of Areca.

40 The original German text says: "Sie sollten die Herzblätter der Sagopalme holen. Diese Herzblätter band Morge gefranzt an die Rückseite des Schildes."

For an easier identification titles are added to the variants, referring to specifics. The storyteller often refers to a title out of his personal understanding. This original title might be changed and refer to a different actor, as in the case mentioned above of the bird providing the eggs.

The variants are divided up into phases and episodes and are marked with titles and subtitles, as in the more extensive study on the myth of Daria, where such an approach at structural subdivision and its tagmemic application has shown to be promising (see Z'graggen 2011).

The present narration is a combination of (1) a myth of the origin of a village with humans and domestic animals, and (2) the presence of a different set of actors who seem to start the principal action by their presence. This can be seen to represent the history of a population immigrating from somewhere or across the sea, symbolised by Marge, who in turn provides her adopted sons with the weapons and the knowledge of fighting.

The village originates due to different types or schemes of action. Among these schemes are the following:

- Scheme 1: Mother talked, we obeyed her; she made a great village.
- Scheme 2: This story has brought us forth.
- Scheme 3: Mother made the village to come and now we are.
- Scheme 4: We had no village. The Big One – this means God – did do that.

Earlier (2011), I proposed to distinguish three areas of a myth:

1. The primary area or source area, in which the population originated, and where the big names and even important elements of the narration are kept secret.
2. The secondary area. The origin may be included and extended over other populations, even including all mankind; details are used for their cultural and social life; names are not secret. A version from the secondary area may reveal details, the version from the source area does not.

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unpublished materials in Z'graggen's archive drafts. The conclusions are based on a series of cases, if only one or two, it is indicated. The areas in which the myth is recorded are the Kaian L02, Gamei L03, and Awar L04 languages. Uncertain is the Language Area Bosmun (L05) in the south. Recordings are kept at the University in Madang. This area is smaller than the one identified for the myth of Daria (see Z'graggen 2011: maps).

3. The tertiary area, where the myth is known only in some fragments. Mythological names may be used as proper names, as, for instance, was the case with my typist Daria Christina, who transcribed the Tok Pidgin versions in Madang.

The structure of the mother Marge myth is dualistic, that is "Phase A" and "Phase B." The origin, "Phase 0," is not mentioned for mother Marge but for her two boys. The supernatural endowment of Marge is seldom explicitly expressed – e.g., when she is called a spirit (*masalai*) –, while it becomes directly apparent for the twin boys by their coming and when their unnatural rate of growth is mentioned. An exception is Variant Nr. 8, from Boro.

The main actors are indeed the woman Marge and the twins. They are not an antagonistic but a complementing pair. Their relationship is one of parental custodianship, the mother looking after her children. That they are taken as male children (sons) is not always explicitly said, since there is no female counterpart. The rearing, the education, and the mutual taking care are the base for the mother and son relationship and not the physical cause of bringing or coming into existence.

The name Marge (Marige, Morge), as used in the Awar language, is chosen as the standard name. Other names are given by storytellers, some refer to the bird, the bird with eggs, some are secret for the owners of the myth but not for others. A secret name is only used where the storyteller tells that name, which is to respect their secrecy. It should be mentioned that names are easily changed by the storyteller, or the actor may change his or her name. Names are extremely important for worship or magic. To lose the name or to own a name no longer, means a complete extinction. That is mentioned in some other narrations.

The names of the two boys or children differ,<sup>43</sup> but not the function of the first and second brother: the second, the younger, kills their mother.

Alongside common features in variants, there are the differences, some just variations, but some affecting or changing the meaning and some rendering a narration meaningless. The last one can be ignored or included in the text for further research. I wish to mention one such a case. The brothers fight with the enemy and one of them is hurt. One kills the mother in revenge for that and yet a population becomes. This changes the meaning dramatically.

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43 Banigaram – Masagarum, Maigaron – Matagaron, Maringaron – Matangaron, Masagaro – Umigaro, Masagaram – Megaram, Areror – Gimnor, Arero – Gimnor, Vuepma – Purema.

The woman represents a population of settlers and gatherers. Marge collects edible leaves or mushrooms, but does not hunt animals. She is living on sago starch, which she cooks. In Variants 9 and 10, the bird places the eggs not in the leaves of a sago palm but into the remains from sago washing (*pipia bilong saksak*), and in Variant 12, the equipment for the rinsing of sago pith is mentioned. She has a house and earthenware pots under which she puts the two eggs. She has also the fire. Time is divided into night and day.

If Marge came from somewhere else, where did she or her people come from? All the informants knew was that they came from somewhere, indicating the sea. Variant 5: "The place [area] had no village, the big sea took us." They had trouble in obtaining water, met with a pygmy-type population living scattered in the forest, while in the Kaian variants, it is a population symbolised by *manskanar*, ants coming out of the earth. Variant 5: "When we noticed a bit of fresh water, we went and collected some. That was far away, not nearby. We brought home a bit of fresh water and drank it right away." In Variant 1 mother says: "They took revenge on the troublemakers."

The immigrated population is in conflict with an unidentified population because of the water well, symbolised by the *manskanar* ants, a pygmy-type population living in bamboo in the forest (Variant 6) or in a village (Variant 7), or young men who cause trouble to mother Marge with toy weapons. They do not intend to kill her, but bother and wound her with the toy weapons or beat her unconscious. In most variants, collecting water is done in an area where sago palms, *limbum* or black palms, or other useful plants like *tulip*, i.e., *Gnetum gnemon* bushes are present. No gardening or hunting is mentioned in Variant 8. The site, the two boys have to clear, is not for a garden, since no planting is mentioned, but the site is for the village to come forth.

Not existing features are: a village for the immigrants with domestic animals, gardens for planting, and an area for hunting.

Preexisting features are: day and night, forest with birds, lizards and wild growing plants, sago palms with waste, mushrooms, *limbum* trees, ginger, bamboo, dwelling place with house, skirt, fire, earthenware pot, *limbum* container, water well.

A number of details are identical in the variants: One old woman, alone in the forest, collects water and meets trouble. One bird with two eggs – it is one egg only in Variant 8 and a human (a male) or a spirit woman places the two eggs in Variant 12. Two boys hatch, one elder, one younger, because one hatches first. The woman is regarded as the mother

of the two boys, though she had not given birth to them. The sons kill the troublemakers.

However, the most conspicuous element common to most of the variants is that the mother demands her sons to kill her – she thus preconceives her own death by asking her sons to become an instrument of her own will (except in Variant 8). The brothers first resist the killing, but then the younger brother kills their mother. The two children have to clear a site in the forest, cut her flesh and bones, distribute the pieces on the stumps of trees in the cleared site, and put her head and stomach at the aperture of their sleeping bags. These two body parts of the mother transform into young women. In the night, a complete village comes into existence with villagers and domesticated animals. The two brothers are surprised, but both remember mother's words and praise her.

Other details differ between the variants in the three languages. In Kaian, the troublemakers are the *manskanar*, some creatures, ants, or centipedes coming out of the earth and damaging only her water container. In Botbot, a few miles west of Kaian Village, young men of short size come from the roots of a bamboo, shoot at her with toy spears from the *gorgor* plant. In Awar and Sisimangum, they are young men coming from a nearby village to harm her, beat her unconscious, so that she is able to take only a little bit of water mixed with her blood to her dwelling. Myth and history seem to intermingle in this passage, beginning right with Variant 1. It may be noteworthy, that the weapons, arrows with bows or spears, shields, and the magic to strengthen the two sons are taught to use in order to overcome the troublemakers remain unchanged. No matter how small these troublemakers are, they need to be defeated in an efficient way, even if the means, the full-fledged arrows, spears, and shields, seem to be disproportionate for the tiny creatures *manskanar*.

Only in the Kaian variants Marge's blood is poured into a bamboo barrel. Unintentionally, most of the blood is spilled over the forests and only a bit, left at the bottom, is thrown to the coast. The conclusion is that villages inland in the forests have many people, not so the coastal villages. An uneven distribution of the humans is explained. But the intended distribution by the mother should be the contrary: more people at the seaside, few people inside the land (see Variants 1–4).

It is also interesting to observe Marge's life pattern as characterized in the myth. She is old, dwells alone, has sago, fire, earthenware pots, and a house, goes around collecting edible leaves or mushrooms, collects material for a new skirt, but has trouble in getting fresh water at the well. Though she is in

trouble, she has no thought of solving this problem before the two sons appear. In PNG narrations, innovations frequently appear or come unexpectedly and to the surprise of the population.<sup>44</sup> In fact, the bird is not just any bird, it is of the same lineage as the woman; it realizes the trouble of the woman and lays two eggs. This is explicitly said in Variant 9. The bird feels sympathy for the woman. The divine care for mankind is expressed in a wonderful way.

It is interesting to observe how Marge changes from a passive woman, accepting things matter-of-factly, into an active person demanding her own death. Let us consider Marge's attitudes and how she changes from one phase to the next.

In "Phase A," the old woman is first passive and lives an otherwise undisturbed life. Yet, the old woman is in trouble because she can't collect sufficient fresh water. Her water container is damaged or she is bodily harmed. She is angered, scolds the *mankanar* or the young men, asks why, but her words have no convincing power. She seems not disposed to look for a solution. But then a bird of the same lineage as Marge becomes aware of the trouble the woman is in and deposes the two eggs that will bring the solution. The woman takes the two eggs home for cooking, not expecting help in dealing with her problem to get fresh water. She puts them under an earthenware pot and forgets to cook them with sago. Then she remembers. Two baby boys hatch from the eggs to the surprise of the woman. They consider the woman as their mother. Mother is happy at not being alone any longer.

Thus, Marge receives unexpected help from the bird. That a bird lays eggs in a nest and flies off when disturbed is natural. Supernatural is the thought and the intention of the bird to help the woman in need; that exceeds the natural power of any bird. Divine intervention is expressed through the action of the bird. That the woman takes the eggs with her to cook them is also natural, but that two boys rather than two birds come forth is supernatural. This comes as a surprise to her.

She immediately takes the initiative with the advent of her two children; she accepts the two children as her own and rears them. She is full of knowledge about useful plants including timber. She asks the children to go and fetch the plant material she describes to them; they get the right materials for the weapons, but she, the woman, makes the weapons for them and she plans their ambush. Her chil-

dren are successful in killing the adversaries, which they celebrate, using even slit gongs, and she praises them.

In "Phase B," Marge develops her initiative further, realises what the children need; that is a village. First, she demands them to clear a site in the forest and then demands her own killing and tells what to do with her body. The clearing of a site in the forest is not for a garden but for a village site. The pieces of flesh of the mother are placed on stumps and not on or in the earth as for planting. The blood is poured into a bamboo container, some thrown over the forests instead of the coastal area. In all, the narration of Marge and her sons describes a surprisingly vivid image of the role of a female actor in creating a human population and a style of living in the community of a village with domesticated animals. Life, therefore, means living together with many – not being alone is emphasized. No additional tools are listed and also no food grown in special gardens.

This cycle considerably widens our knowledge about the high esteem in which populations in northern and northeastern New Guinea held the contributions of mythical women such as Marge and Daria. It should be noted that also male mythological actors, such as Sendam and Ombang, are in the same area. However, the stories on the male actors do not share the most salient factor we have described for the Marge cycle, i.e., Marge insisting on demanding her adopted children to kill her for the good of the coming generations.

### Comparison of the Marge and Namite Myths

Let us examine and compare in some details the Namite<sup>45</sup> myth, mainly known from a region farther east than that of the Marge myth.<sup>46</sup>

45 Following up on a suggestion by Christian Kaufmann. The Namite myth was the first narrative published for the former Kaiser Wilhelmsland by Fr. Vormann SVD in 1910 (1910: 415–417) though in a fragmentary version. Höltker (1965: 77 ff.) published another variant from the same area and again Z'graggen (1995: 12–20). These variants both agree, except in minor details, though recorded some 30 years apart. At first, it might be surprising to find that the myth of Marge is not widespread as, for instance, the myths of Sendam and of Daria and Kamadonga. Nancy C. Lutkehaus (1995: 55 f.) documented the myth under the name "Namte" from Manam Island, the destination of Kamadonga's flight and of Daria's later life. Lutkehaus does not discuss Namite variants on the island nor on the mainland in Monumbo or Mambuan (P01), which would be the source area. The Manam people have quite a wealth of narratives, but they all have the characteristics of the area. One has to go to the islands in the west and to the opposite mainland to encounter the primary area.

44 This is in contrast to the cargo belief after the arrival of the Europeans, that seeks cultural innovation by a combination of magic, mobilizing whole groups for ritual practice and force.

The Namite myth belongs to the killer myth, listed in my archive under heading 310, "Killer" or "Cannibal Killer." This myth is very widespread, but outnumbered by the stories grouped under heading 320, "Flood Myth." The origin of the killer is unknown, for instance, in the Namite variants in Mambuan. The origin is given in some other variants, e.g., in the Goam languages, which structure the myth into three phases.

No reason is given for the cannibal to kill and eat humans. This is in contrast to the 320 "Flood Myth" in which the killing occurs as punishment for a misdeed. The Sokumu case (M04 310T12F4) is an exception. There the snake Wawasike kills because of the stealing in the garden.

The killer and eater of humans are male but also female, as three samples show in the Finisterre Language Area as well as on Long Island (X13), an Austronesian language. The killer may have a wife and/or a daughter who do not agree with his killing and eating man. He appears as human or as animal, snake, hawk, and pig, depending on the area. The killer likely represents another population with a different culture or a deceased personified as a killer. He is the cause of severe harassment.

The population flees to another destination, to an island or into a forest. They are not stopped in their flight though it is to the disadvantage of the killer. A woman, young or old but mature to give birth, or crippled, sometimes with mother or sister, is left behind for some reason, for instance, not wetting the vines, being pregnant, and for this reason being too heavy for the canoe. She protects herself or is helped to protect her from the evil in a cave, a hole, in roots. She gets pregnant – how is not said – or she is pregnant by her husband, gets pregnant by herself or lesser animals of some sort. She gives birth to male twins. One is older, one younger. Since they are more than two, the youngest is opposed to the elder. The two boys grow up gradually, learning first to shoot at lizards down on ground, then birds

up in the trees. They meet the evil man by shooting at a bird. They escape him by tricks and return to mother.

The forthcoming battle is prepared. Mother demands the two children to get the materials. That event is dramatized by bringing first the wrong material one or two times, but in the second or third attempt they bring the right one. Mother makes weapons, arrows or spears, bows, and shields.

Here are the parallels to the Marge myth, i.e., in the preparations for the ambush. Some variants of the Namite myth mention also a house with platform, weak for the killer and firm for themselves. Mother has to be ready on a raised spot, on a tree, veranda of a house, platform with boiling water and stones. The proud evil killer is mocked and presents himself as stupid and weak after the long battle.

Eventually, his true death has to be attested by some insects, one going in through his mouth, the other through his anus, or by one of the defendants changing into a dog and tearing at the dead body.

However, the dying evil man undergoes a dramatic change of mind and heart in some of the samples in the Bosmun and Goam Language Areas. The reckless killer changes into a benevolent benefactor, giving good things, such as tools, ways of life, white magic (*marila*), but also harmful things, black magic (poison), and even *sanguma*. The last is very serious, mean, and secretly causing a long lasting dying of innocent people.<sup>47</sup>

When seen in comparison to the Marge and Namite myths one can take such a death also as a type of self-sacrifice. The original killer decides on the moment of his death. The corpses do not transform into human beings or cultural objects. They are in his stomach or at a location the people do not know, and have to be told. In short, the reckless killer of man and the cannibal, the defender of his own life, changes into a benevolent benefactor and then surrenders his life. This is some sort of self-sacrifice.

46 The observations mainly based on the author's archive: drafts in progress. The details referred to are repeated in a group of variants or in a certain area with a group of languages of course with exceptions. If a detail is found only in one or two cases, it is indicated. – The Marge myth can also be compared with variants of myths which according to the author's classification (Z'graggen 1983, reprinted as Appendix 6 in Z'graggen 2011 and applied to the corpus of texts in TPT, Z'graggen 1964–1991), labelled as either 2A1 with a female actor, or as 2A2 with a male actor who demand or deceive to get killed. The scholar is also referred to Z'graggen (1995), which presents materials on the voluntary killing of a mythological actor, male or female. The killing is forceful in contrast with natural death, but freely demanded as in this case by Marge.

47 The book "Sanguma in Paradise" (Zocca 2009) relates the use of *sanguma* (black witchcraft) in present times. I experienced the fear the people have with regard to *sanguma* in my long stay at the northeast coast of Papua New Guinea. The culprit may be a member of the community, respected, and taken as harmless, giving no reason for suspicion. But nobody knows. I remember when a daughter, age of first grade, suddenly went missing without any trace. The people pushed in an iron splint into the blood vessels of the suspected witch. It was luck that they did not use a bamboo splint that cannot be detected by x-ray. Just to use the word *sanguma* caused fear, not so the word *masalai* (spirit). The so-called "paradise" is a euphemism. Further research has to be done on the connotation of the term *sanguma*. The term is used also for an inferior population dwelling in caves, on trees, and antagonizing an ordinary population.

The refugees are informed about the removal of the evil; they are surprised, return safely, or get extinct in some variants. If they get extinct, it has a sequel.

Namite, the mother, wants to avoid complete extermination, because only she and her two sons exist. They will surely die and no humans shall ever exist. The mother wants to solve the problem and demands her death by her two sons. She has to convince them. The two sons reluctantly understand her, but they debate who should do the act. The event is dramatized. The younger one kills her.

In comparison to the Namite myth, Marge does not flee, she is hindered from obtaining a sufficient supply of fresh water, does not get pregnant nor give birth; she incidentally causes the coming of the two boys, whom she accepts as her children and who thus become obliged to help her.

It should also be mentioned, that some episodes or elements of action look to be the same across various narratives, others are quite different. See, for instance, the preparations for the ambush above. To postulate a transfer from one to the other is futile. One can assume an independent act of imagination.

A tagmemic comparison of the Marge and the Namite myths may help to demonstrate this point. Based on Phase A, the Marge myth is in a category of its own. However, the Marge and Namite myths share one feature that is Phase B: a mythological actor, male or female, freely demands his or her death to bring forth the human community.

While still working in Madang, comparing topics and variants of collected legends, my attention was drawn to the stories of creation. In the beginning there are the nonexistence of living beings and the existence of one element: the sea, the stone or stones, the land; then the life cycle of some mythical personalities. In the array of topics, it is fascinating to see the many aspects of creation with little attention to the future. One can assume that the thinking is more concerned about the past, the becoming of the presence than the future to come. Fascinating is the topic of death. Death itself is dealt in another group of myths. The wanted, voluntarily wanted death to bring forth life is unique. The enforced death by hunting and being hunted to maintain life is found in all sections of the creation, but the demand to destroy one's own body to bring forth creation is in contrast to the rest of the creation.<sup>48</sup>

A structural analysis of sacrifice can improve our understanding and facilitate a comparison across the cultures. Three essential elements are proposed:

(A) the sacrifice; (B) the gift, present; (C) the addressee; and (E) the purpose, embracing all three elements. Self-sacrifice is by word a sacrifice, but distinct, marked down by self. What is self? It is not the aim to press all the applications of the term sacrifice into one frame. The general frame must be adapted to matter of facts. Self-sacrifice (A) is divided in (A1), the one who wants or demands death or extinction, and (A2), the one who does the act. (B) is identical A1, the one who wants the death is coincident the gift or sacrificial object. (C) is omitted. Though an essential element is missing, the human mind uses terms based on common features and that is the giving. (E) is the product of the action.

These are the common features in the two myths under consideration, though they are otherwise divergent:

Marge:

- (A1) Marge demands her death.
- (A2) The younger child does the killing.
- (B) Is (A1) Marge.
- (C) –
- (E) The product is a new population.

Namite:

- (A1) Namite demands her death.
- (A2) The younger child does the killing.
- (B) Is (A1) Namite.
- (C) –
- (E) The product is a new population.

### The Term *dema*

A few words need to be said on how the motif of sacrifice might be linked to the motif of a dominant mythical person being killed to bring forth new forms of life, often referred to as the fate of *dema* deities.<sup>49</sup>

49 The term *dema* originated from the Marind-Anim people, currently in the Indonesian part of New Guinea. P. Wirz first documented this term between 1915 and 1918 (Wirz 1922). Wirz described a whole class of beings with mythical origin, each one leaving behind an important useful plant (such as the sago palm, the coconut palm, the banana plant) or an institution (such as hunting) after getting killed. But Wirz does not always distinguish between the native use of this term and his own in his writings. J. van Baal (1966) titles his extensive, scholarly publication "Dema. Description and Analysis of Marind-Anim Culture (South New Guinea)." Ad. E. Jensen and others used the term *dema* to describe types of mythical actions in a much wider area, covering at least the eastern and marginal part of the cultural sphere of Indonesia (see Jensen 1939, 1966). C. A. Schmitz (1960: 227) takes Dema as divinity, though the concerned actor is seldom described with properties indicating a supernatural or divinity.

48 A number of samples on that are presented in Z'graggen (1995).

## The *dema* Act

Fascinating is the freedom and demand of a violent act to die with the purpose to create humans or new things. The main elements are the following.

The actor, man or woman, demands his or her killing. He or she is in ordinary human form, only occasionally called a spirit, *masalai*, in PNG. The killing is not forced upon, it is free (so the actor falls into my type (A1) of actors in sacrifice). That aspect is ignored by the numerous authors I have consulted. The act has a purpose, but the addressee (C) in the sacrificial scheme or recipient in sacrifice proper is omitted. The purpose (E) is to bring forth something then not existing; it varies from population, garden plants, individual plants, individual animals such as pig, tools, magic, poison, and even to *sanguma*. The recipients are surprised, jubilant over the unexpected they receive. But they are disappointed with poison and *sanguma*, even regret especially with *sanguma*.

A few observations on other narrations from the wider area of northeastern New Guinea might help to illustrate the concept. The actor (A1) deceives and is killed as pig in a trap, but his body is in the dwelling place. It is an old woman who deceives as cassowary at the eastern end of the Adelbert Range. Her body is not dismembered, but her cassowary body is let to decay. Maggots from her decaying body transform into humans. The men shout: "Let's go hunting!" after creation in the morning. It is a man in the Finisterre Range Area and on Long or Arop Island, Austronesian language (X13), a woman who disguised as a bird invites for the kill; but (A1) does not die and is able to collect his or her blood from which a population originates. In the "Daughter Nimokodo Myth," she kills herself in burning herself as reaction to the unjust beating up by her father because of a betel nut. There is no (A2), because she burns herself while singing a song. She tells in a dream what to do with her head in the grave. The betel nut, tobacco, and the coconut do become from her head. In the human origin of the "Pig Myth," one of the antagonistic pairs turns into the pig in response to the mistreatment of the other part. So the pig is a human. The one who rears a pig is not to eat that one, but can eat the pig raised by somebody else. Many more such acts can be found across the Austronesian and Papuan cultures. Also some divine actors in the other world perform a similar act or some animals in the animal world perform a similar act, such as a spider-type in Australia. I mention also that the death of Jesus in Christianity fits this scheme, although adapted. The purpose (E) is the reconciliation of mankind which

results in the creation of new life, called "resurrection" in the Bible.<sup>50</sup>

## A Final Observation

Appreciating the narrations from Papua New Guinea, it is interesting to observe the divine working in the natural. In the Marge story, the bird acts according to its nature, but the intention attributed to it by the human mind is supernatural. That is mentioned only occasionally. The divine sees the human in need and acts – that is explicitly said in Variant 9. The divine acts not naturally but miraculously through the eggs of the bird and the two boys in order to help the woman, who expresses no desire to remedy her unfortunate situation. Seeing the two boys, the woman is happy not to be alone rather than to have recruited future help to subdue the troublemakers. What is also astonishing is the supernatural act of the woman in demanding her children to kill her so that they can live in a village with many people. There is no suffering. In Variant 11, she stays alive. Is it a mythical image from earlier times or an idea reflecting renderings of the death of Christ? Marvellous is the praising of the mother in the morning, when the grown-up boys see what has happened.

I thank Dr. Christian Kaufmann, former curator of the Oceanic Section at the Museum der Kulturen, Basel, for his comments and his editorial skills. Then I wish to mention the help of Ernst Lehner, Wettingen (Switzerland) for drawing the map. Of course, thanks to the editing staff of the *Anthropos* Journal for publishing this article and by this implementing the old tradition of *Anthropos*. Father Wilhelm Schmidt SVD founded this journal in 1906 for missionaries, but not exclusively, to give them an opportunity to make available their knowledge of the cultures they got to know through their work as missionaries. May the present publication be an answer to his calling and encourage the missionaries to listen, admire, and appreciate the marvellous myths of the peoples rather than belittle or take them as nonsense. To preserve them with their social implications is their job.

50 I found my doubts on Ad. E. Jensen's linking the killing of Hainuwele to the *dema*-type sacrifice confirmed by Karl-Heinz Kohl (1992). Hainuwele was murdered unexpectedly by herself as we can see from her crying, and motivated by the jealousy of the men. A tagmemic analysis, including rather than excluding the death of Jesus according to Christian belief, could shed light on the understanding of the phenomenon across the cultures of the world.

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