



# Landscape terms and place names in the Trobriand Islands – the Kaile’una subset

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## Abstract

After a brief introduction to the topic the paper first gives an overview of Kilivila landscape terms and then presents the inventory of names for villages, wells, island points, reef-channels and gardens on Kaile’una Island, one of the Trobriand Islands in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. The data on the meaning of the place names presented were gathered in 2004 with six male consultants (between the age of 36 and 64 years) living in the village Tauwema on Kaile’una Island. Thus, the list of place names is quite possibly not the complete sample, but it is reasonably representative of the types of Kilivila place names. After discussing the meaning of these terms the paper presents a first attempt to typologically classify and categorize the place names. The paper ends with a critical discussion of the landscape terms and the proposed typology for place names.

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...the landscape represent[s] a continuous story... (Malinowski, 1922, p. 298)

## 1. Introduction

I first hit upon landscape terms and place names in 1978 when I started the literature search for my Ph.D. thesis on the language variety of workers of my hometown (Senft,

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1982). I found many publications on landscape terms and place names in that area (see e.g. Christmann, 1937a,b, 1938, 1940, 1968) and I learned that German dialectology and toponymy developed into scientific disciplines roughly at the same time. One of the first landmarks in German toponymy was Förstemann's (1863) monograph on German place names; Bach's œuvre on German toponymy, the second enlarged edition of which was published between 1952 and 1954, still constitutes one of the most important reference books in the field. The discipline is still flourishing in Germany (see e.g. Schützeichel, 1985; Ernst et al., 2002; Urnes, 2004). It is interesting to note that German research on landscape terms and place names has always closely cooperated not only with dialectology, but also with history, geography, sociology, folklore, and psychology (as can be seen in the subtitles of Bach's volumes).

It is interesting to note that the German scholar Franz Boas, who finished his studies in Berlin with his 'Habilitation' on Baffin Island as a 'Privatdozent' in geography, became not only the 'father' of American anthropology but also one of the founding fathers of toponymy in the United States. As early as 1934 Boas – with his publication on the geographical names of the Kwakiutl Indians – had established toponymy as an important co-discipline of anthropology. He was one of the scientists of the late 19th and early 20th century who realized the importance of this discipline for multidisciplinary oriented anthropological and linguistic research, and he founded a tradition within American anthropology that is also still active (see, e.g. Lounsbury, 1960; Basso, 1984; Mithun, 1984; Bright, 1998a,b, 2004; Hunn, 1996; Cowell and Moss, 2003).<sup>1</sup> Research on place names in the vein of scholars like Förstemann, Bach, and Boas is done worldwide these days (see e.g., Broderick, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2005; Dominy, 1995; Hercus et al., 2002; Hosokawa, 2003; Kari, 1989; Marck, 1994; see also Tindale, 1962). However, the discipline is also open for innovative developments. Thus, just a few years ago a new field of study – geographical ontology – was established by researchers like David Mark, Barry Smith, and Andrew Turk (see e.g., Mark and Turk, 2003; Smith and Mark, 1999, 2001).

This paper aims to contribute to the research of landscape terms and place names in Oceania. In what follows I will first provide some general information about the Trobriand Islands, about the Trobriand Islanders and about their language Kilivila. Then I will give an overview of Kilivila landscape terms and present names for villages, wells, island points, reef-channels and gardens on Kaile'una Island, one of the Trobriand Islands in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. After discussing the meaning of these terms I present a first attempt to typologically classify and categorize the place names. The paper ends with a critical discussion of the proposed typology.

## 2. The Trobriand Islands, the Trobriand Islanders and their language

The Trobriand Islands, a group of about 20 islands and islets, are situated at the 151.04° of Eastern Longitude and 8.38° of Southern Latitude in Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. Kitava Island is an elevated coral island which rises to about 30 m at a central ridge. The other islands and islets are low-lying flat coral atolls. All islands

<sup>1</sup> I would like to note here that since 1998 Bill Bright has a column called 'The place department' in the *Newsletter of The Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas* (SSILA).

are coral formations composed of coralline limestone. Most of them are fringed by coral reefs. The islands Kitava, Kiriwina, Vakuta, Kaile'una, Muwa, Kuiawa, Munuwata, Tuma, and Simsim are populated. The islands are considered to be an important tropical rainforest eco-region.

The Trobriand Islanders have become famous, even outside of anthropology, because of the ethnographic masterpieces on their culture published by the famous anthropologist Bronislaw Kaspar Malinowski, who did field research there between 1916 and 1920 (see Young, 2004; also Senft, 1999). The Trobrianders belong to the ethnic group called 'Northern Massim'. They are gardeners, doing slash and burn cultivation of the bush; their most important crop is yam. Moreover, they are famous for being excellent canoe builders, carvers, and navigators, especially in connection with the ritualized *Kula* trade, an exchange of shell valuables that covers a wide area of the Melanesian part of the Pacific (see Malinowski, 1922). The society is matrilinear but virilocal.

Kilivila, the language of the Trobriand Islanders, is one of 40 Austronesian languages spoken in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. It is an agglutinative language and its general unmarked word order pattern is VOS (Senft, 1986). The Austronesian languages spoken in Milne Bay Province are grouped into 12 language families; one of them is labeled Kilivila. The Kilivila language family encompasses the languages Budibud (or Nada, with about 200 speakers), Muyuw (or Murua, with about 5000 speakers) and Kilivila (or Kiriwina, Boyowa, with about 25,000 speakers); Kilivila is spoken on the populated islands mentioned above. The languages Muyuw and Kilivila are each split into mutually understandable local dialects. Typologically, Kilivila is classified as a Western Melanesian Oceanic language belonging to the 'Papuan-Tip-Cluster' group (Ross, 1988, p. 25, pp. 190ff; Senft, 1986, p. 6).

### 3. Landscape terms and place names on Kaile'una

After I had finished my Ph.D. in 1982 I started research on the language and culture of the Trobriand Islanders. One of my research aims was to write a grammar and a dictionary of Kilivila. My lexicographic work revealed that it was relatively easy to get information about landscape terms. I also heard, learned and noted down a number of place names. However, whenever I asked my consultants about the meaning of these place names they told me that they did not know anything about it. There was only one exception – one of my consultants told me a story that goes with a place name which refers to a reef formation close to Tauwema, my village of residence on Kaile'una Island (see Senft, 1995). After a few more years and fieldtrips during which I tried in vain to get any further information on the meaning of place names, I had actually given up this subproject of my research. However, during my 2004 fieldtrip I wanted to at least document the named places I knew on a proper map. On the 22nd of July Mokeilobu (64 years old), Taidyeli (57 years old), Moagava (41 years old), Kwelava (36 years old), Kalavatu (51 years old), Bulasa (65 years old) and Mobiliuya (62 years old) were sitting on the veranda of my house, smoking and gossiping. When I asked them whether they would like to help me document place names on my map,<sup>2</sup> they immediately agreed – and I was absolutely

<sup>2</sup> For the documentation of the place names and landscape terms I used a number of xerox copies of the following map: Kiriwina, Papua New Guinea, Scale: 1: 250 000, Series 1501, Sheet SC 56-1, Edition 1, printed by the Royal Australian Survey Corps Dec 1981. The figures presented in this paper are based on this map.

flabbergasted when they asked me whether I would also like to know anything about the meaning of these names.<sup>3</sup>

In what follows I will first present the Kilivila landscape terms that I managed to document and then I will present the Kilivila place names and their meanings which I gathered with the six male consultants mentioned above. They all live in the village Tauwema on Kaile'una Island. I am almost certain that the list of place names presented and discussed is not complete, but it is reasonably representative of the types of place names to be found in Kilivila.

I present the Kilivila landscape terms in an order that seems to be appropriate to me keeping in mind that the speakers of this language are islanders. Thus, I start with terms for the sea, sea areas, currents, rivers and other bodies of water – i.e. with hydrology terms, and then present the terms that refer to the coral reefs, islands and to landscapes on the islands (or elsewhere), i.e. the geomorphology, pedology and biogeography terms.<sup>4</sup> However, first of all I will briefly discuss the general Kilivila concept of *valu*.

The term *valu* is a semantically very general noun meaning something like 'place' or 'area' as in *kosi la valu* '(the) ghost's place (literally: ghost its place)'.<sup>4</sup>

However, in specific contexts it can also be glossed as:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 'village'                   | as in <i>valu Tauwema</i> – '(the) village Tauwema'  |
| 'town'                      | as in <i>valu Alotau</i> – '(the) town Alotau'   |
| 'city'                      | as in <i>valu Port Moresby</i> – '(the) city (of) Port Moresby'  |
| 'country'                   | as in <i>valu Diyapani</i> – '(the) country Japan'   |
| 'continent'                 | as in <i>valu Amelika</i> – '(the) continent America'  |
| 'world'                     | as in <i>valu valu kumwedona</i> – literally 'place place all'<br>or in <i>valu vatanavalotanava</i> – literally 'place on (the) ground' |
| 'landscape/<br>environment' | as in <i>valu katitekina Alotau</i> – literally 'place(s) near Alotau'   |
| 'weather/climate'           | as in <i>ekuna, sena gaga valu</i> – 'it's raining, (it's) very bad weather'   |

Moreover, it is also used in the Trobriand expression for 'map' – *kekwabula valu*, literally 'picture/drawing its place'.

### 3.1. The sea, sea areas, currents, rivers and other bodies of water

The Kilivila terms for 'sea' consist of the hyperonym *bwalita*, a noun that refers to the sea in general, and the following phrases that refer to specific areas of it:

*omamala*    literally 'at low tide'    'shallow sea between the beach and the inner reef'

This prepositional phrase consists of the locative *o* and the noun *mamala* 'low tide'. It refers to the shallow waters area between the beach and the inner reef at low tide. There is no special name for this area at high tide.

<sup>3</sup> The fact that all seven consultants agreed on the meanings they provided for the place names indicates that the explanations were not made up on the spot (see also Malinowski, 1922, p. 40, 44, 298, pp. 330ff.; Senft, 1995, pp. 21f.).

<sup>4</sup> Kilivila landscape terms and place names are printed in *italics*, Kilivila place names are written with a capital initial.

*o tulupwaka*                    literally ‘at white’                    ‘sea between the inner and the outer reef’

This prepositional phrase consists of the locative *o* and the nominalized contracted form of the colour term adjective *pupwakau* ‘white’. It refers to that part of the sea between the inner and the outer reef where the water gets white after the waves break at the outer reef.

*omata sulusulu*                literally ‘in front of the boiling’        ‘sea that covers the outer reef’

This prepositional phrase consists of the locative *omatala* ‘in front of’ and the nominalised form of the verb *-sulusulu-* ‘to cook’, ‘to boil’. It refers to the sea that covers the outer reef. At the drop-off of the outer reef the water seems to boil when the waves first break there.

*omata takivi*                literally ‘in front of the cut’                ‘sea between the drop-off  
of the outer reef and the deep sea’

Once again, this term can be analysed as a prepositional phrase consisting of the locative *omatala* ‘in front of’ and the nominalised form of the verb *-takivi-* ‘to cut’. It refers to the sea area where the outer reef drops off and the deep sea starts.

*o tulubwabwau*                literally ‘on the deep dark sea’                ‘deep dark sea’

This term can once more be analysed as a prepositional phrase consisting of the locative *o* and the noun *tulubwabwau* ‘deep dark sea’. This form as well as the noun *vivitu* ‘dark sea’ refer to the deep, generally dark blue sea.

It is obvious that these terms represent a taxonomy that is based on the areas between the beach, the inner and the outer reef, the reef break-off and the deep sea. These areas are associated with other perceptual features like depth, colours and other observable qualities, which may also play a role in meaning.

Fig. 1 shows the extension of these sea areas for Kaile’una Island, and Fig. 2 does this for all of the Trobriand Islands.<sup>5</sup> These figures were drawn by Moagava. When he was a very young boy his father Nusai started to take him with him and his small crew on his travels around the Trobriand Islands. Moagava did these sailing trips onboard his father’s big *masawa* type canoe for many years and learned how to sail and to navigate. He drew the figures on the basis of this experience. He carefully chose five different coloured pencils out of a set of 18 pencils with different blue and green shades.

Fig. 3 presents the general currents in the sea surrounding the Trobriand Islands. These currents change their direction by day and by night, due to the tidal changes. The general Kilivila name for ‘current’ is *yelu*. However, the specific currents around the Trobriand Islands that are marked on the map are called *Dam*, and the current in the channel between Kaile’una and Kiriwina Island is called *Dum*. My consultants refer both expressions to, and explain them with, the utterance *edumdumsi kesa’i* ‘they (break and) beat the waves’, i.e. ‘the current(s) where the waves break and beat’.

<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank Alex Dukers for transforming the original drawings and my notes on the maps into printable figures.

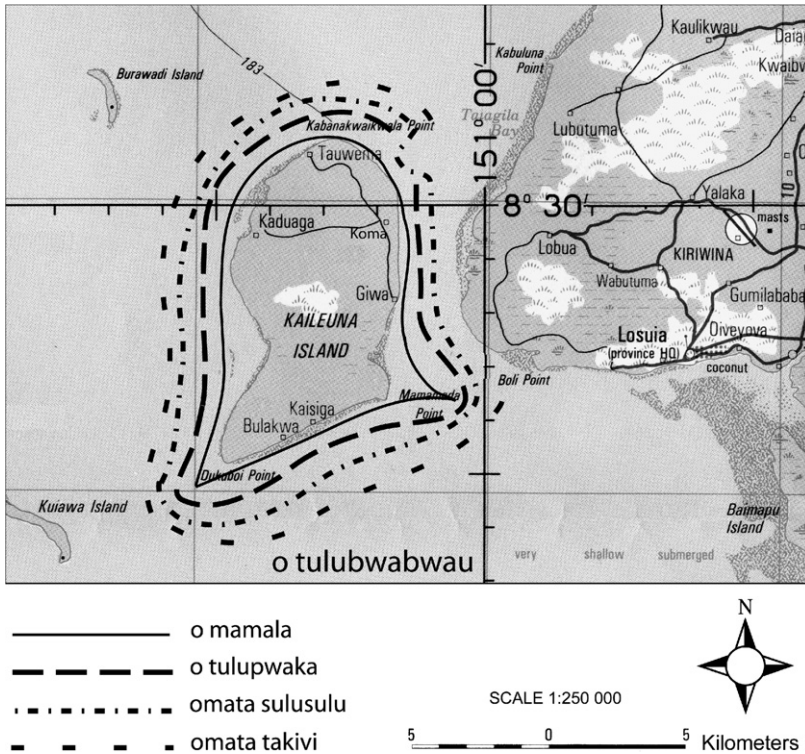


Fig. 1. Extension of sea areas for Kaile'una Island.

Fig. 4 presents the named parts of the sea around the Trobriand Islands that all my consultants mentioned during my interview with them. The sea area in the southwest of the Trobriand Islands that covers the area between the western shores of Vakuta and Kiriwina Island up to Boli point (of Kiriwina), the southern shores of Kaile'una, the northern point of Munuwata Island and the sea current *Dam* around the Islands is called *Sasani* 'rattles'. The name may have onomatopoeic connotations.

The strip-like area between Dukuboi point of Kaile'una and Kaduwaga<sup>6</sup> village on Kaile'una Island that covers the uninhabited islands Labi and Nakwabi and ends at the current around the Trobriands is called *Kugwa* 'first'. My consultants do not know why this area was given this name.

The area above the northern border of the *Kugwa* part of the sea is called *Kaunumayola*. It covers the area between Kaduwaga village and Kabulukwevala<sup>7</sup> point on Kaile'una Island and stretches to the northeast along the eastern coast of Bwemwaga<sup>8</sup> and Tuma

<sup>6</sup> Fig. 8 presents the map of Kaile'una with the names of the villages. Note that the name of the village is spelled *Kaduaga* on the map. However, *Kaduwaga* is the proper Kilivila name of this village – and represents its proper spelling.

<sup>7</sup> Note again that the name of this point is spelled *Kabanakwaikwala* on the map. However, *Kabulukwevala* is the proper Kilivila name of this point these days.

<sup>8</sup> Note again that the name of this island is spelled *Boimaga Island* – and the name of the island south of Bwemwaga is spelled as *Burawadi Island* on the map. However, the proper Kilivila name of these islands is *Bwemwaga* and *Buliwada*:

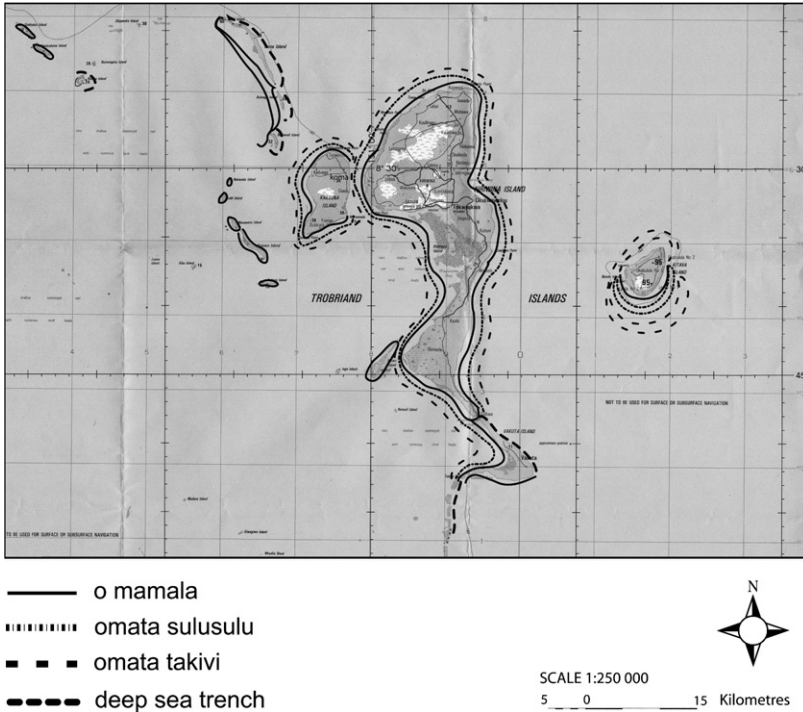


Fig. 2. Extension of sea areas for all of the Trobriand Islands.

Islands to the sea current around the Trobriands, but then extending to the west and covering the area north of Simsim Island.<sup>9</sup> My consultants told me that the name *Kaunumayola* is an archaic variant of the word *kaduvanogwa* ‘very old’. Again, they have no idea why this area was given this name.

The area that covers the channel between Kaile’una and Kiriwina Island, and stretches from the parts east of Kabulukwevala point on Kaile’una Island to Bomatu point at the north of Kiriwina Island, is called *Kaulakoki*. My consultants explain this name with the expression *kaula o ki* ‘food oh indeed’, but they do not know why this area was named like this.

Finally, the area that covers the sea from the south-western point of Vakuta Island and between the eastern shores of Kiriwina Island and the western shores of Kitava Island up to Bomatu point on the northern tip of Kiriwina is called *Dauya*. My consultants explain this name as a variant of the noun *tauya* ‘snail trumpet’ (i.e. triton shells, *Charonia tritonis*) and refer to the fact that triton shells can be found in that area. All other parts of the sea are just referred to as *bwalita* ‘sea’. My consultants are well aware that the English geographic name of this part of the Pacific is Solomon Sea. However, they hardly ever use this name if they refer to the sea.

<sup>9</sup> Note again that the name of this island is spelled *Simlindon Island* on the map. However, the proper Kilivila name of this island is *Simsim*.

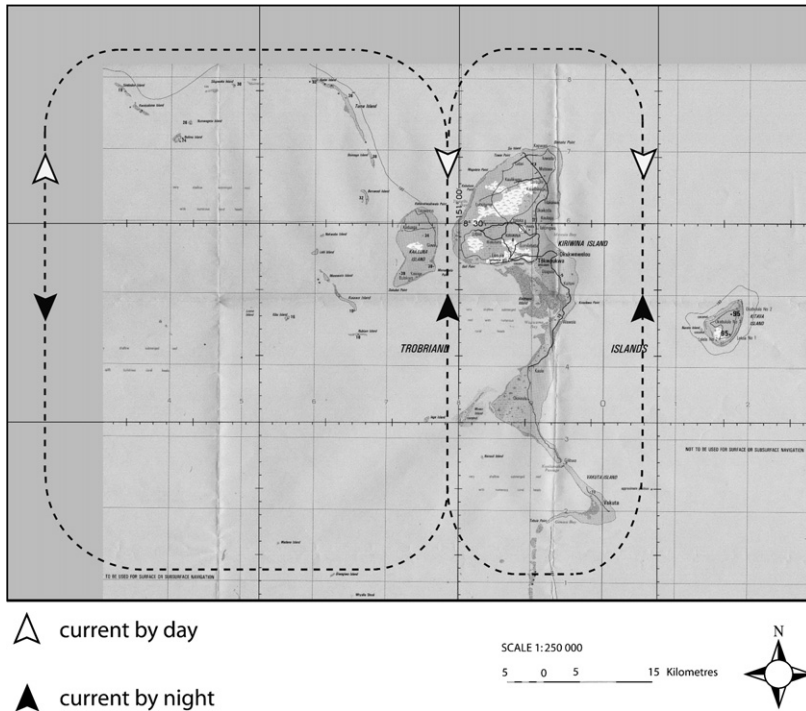


Fig. 3. Currents in the sea surrounding the Trobriand Islands.

Other hydrology terms that I could document with the help of my consultants refer to two rivers and some freshwater wells on Kaile'una Island (see Fig. 5).

The name of the river that has its source in the swamp in the centre of Kaile'una Island and that flows out into the sea between Negwa point and Mamamada point in the south east of Kaile'una is called *Uyanaki*. My consultants explain this name with the following anecdote: Once there was a man who always boastfully shouted *ula vavagi* '(this is) my making', claiming that he was responsible for the many fish in this rivulet. Then people started to refer to this river with the phrase *ula vavagi* – and then corrupted it into *Uyanaki*.

The other river has its source also in the swamp in the centre of Kaile'una Island but flows out into the sea between Lovakakata point and Budabuda point in the west of Kaile'una Island. Its name is *Ludobu*. My consultants say this name is an archaic variant of the noun *kabokariga* '(place) where one dies' and explain it with the fact that there are many dangerous crocodiles close to the mouth of this river. The general word for river is *vaya*, and the Trobriand Islanders distinguish between its source *u'una* 'root', 'source', 'origin' and its mouth *matala* 'its head'. The term for a small course of running water is *yeyelu* 'creek'. The word for 'swamp' is *dumia*; the swamp on Kaile'una Island does not have a specific place name.

Quite generally the noun phrase *sopi bwena* 'good water' refers to freshwater wells. My consultants mentioned the following names of freshwater wells that are all located in the vicinity of Tauwema village (see Fig. 5):



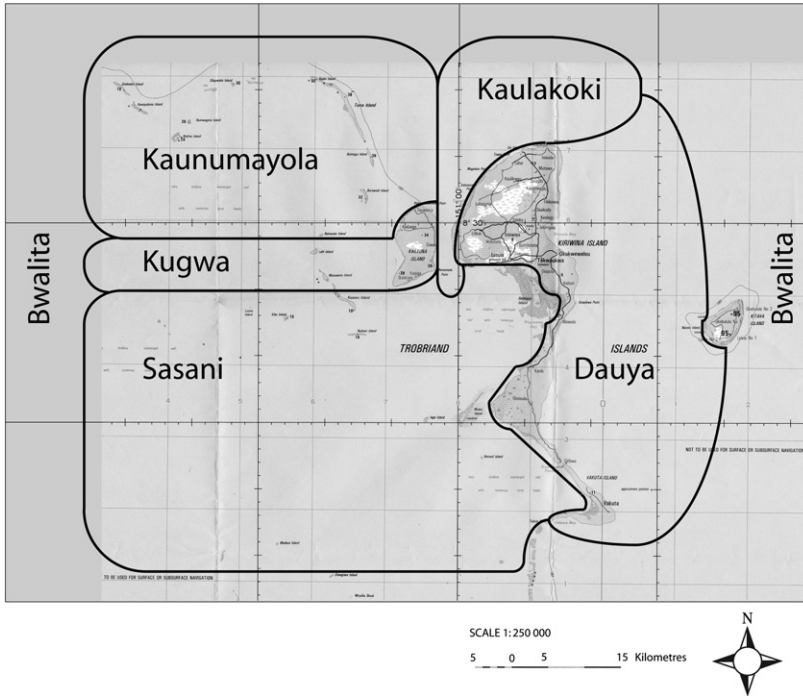


Fig. 4. Named parts of the sea around the Trobriand Islands.

According to my consultants *Buyaku* is a corruption of the phrase *o buyagu* ‘in the garden’. This freshwater well actually is inside a nice grotto which is said to be the home of Namsasela, a spirit woman who may harm people if they disturb her or do not respect her. Therefore not many people dare to take a bath in the *Buyaku* grotto which is still in the bush but close to the beach about 1 km northeast of Tauwema.

*Tuyabwau* is the name of a freshwater well which a man called Moyabwau dug out and – using some coral stones – constructed a kind of natural bath-tub around it and who then named the well and the bathing place *Tuyabwau*. In the afternoon the men of Tauwema usually go there to have a bath. The place is at the beach about 200 m southwest of Tauwema.

*Kauyakum* is the name of another fresh water well at the beach about 600 m southwest of Tauwema. According to my consultants the name is a corruption of the phrase *kauya lakum* ‘bag (of the) crab(s)’ and it refers to the fact that there are many crabs in the vicinity of this well.

*Bugei* is the name of a beautiful grotto filled with freshwater southwest of Tauwema in the bush, about 300 m away from the shore. The fresh water comes directly from the freshwater bulb below the coral island; therefore, the height of the water inside the grotto is dependent on the tides. The terms *dubwadebula*, *katukwaka*, and *vavatu* refer to caves and grottos of different size; however, all caves<sup>10</sup> or grottos filled with freshwater have a specific place name. My consultants explained the name *Bugei* with the following anecdote.

<sup>10</sup> The term for ‘cave’ is *lagi*.

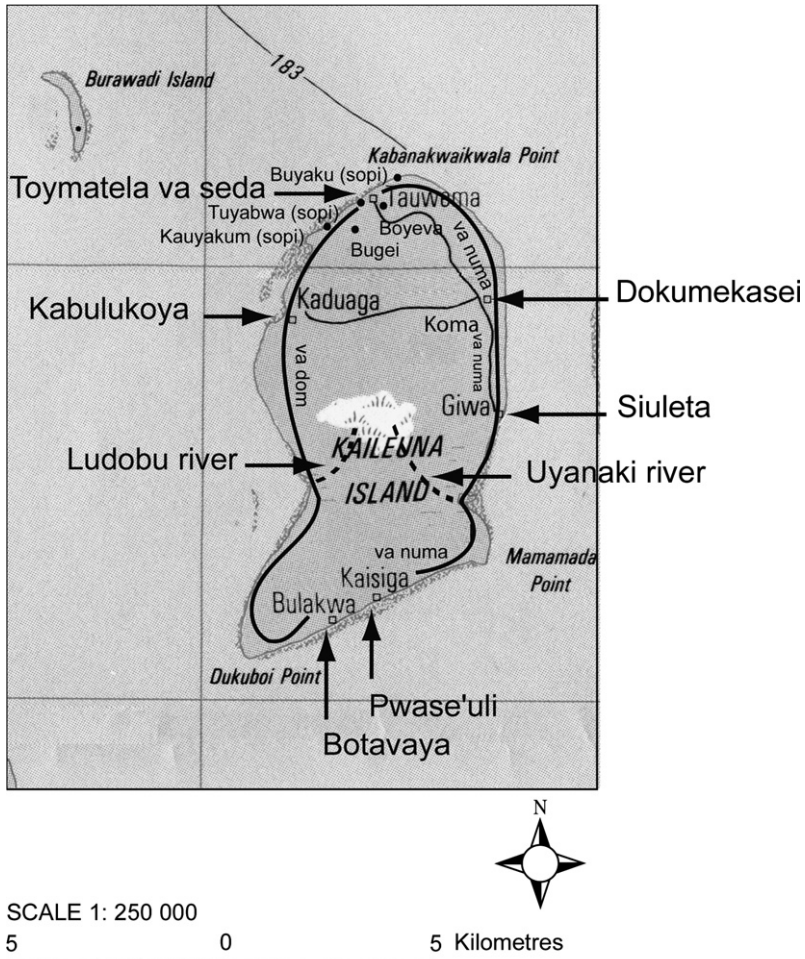


Fig. 5. Names of rivers, fresh water wells, and reef-channels on Kaile'una Island.

dote: The water there is rather cold; therefore many people are said to have answered invitations to go and have a bath with someone in the grotto as follows (using the subject-marker of the dual inclusive as a defocusing and impersonalizing device of very polite language use):<sup>11</sup>

|                           |                    |                    |                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| <i>Lagela</i>             | <i>bata-sisu</i>   | <i>bogiu</i>       | <i>bata-la</i>   |
| Today                     | Fut.Dual.incl-stay | day.after.tomorrow | Fut.Dual.incl-go |
| <i>bata-kaya</i>          |                    |                    |                  |
| Fut.Dual.incl-have.a.bath |                    |                    |                  |

‘Today one will stay (here, but) in two days one will go and have a bath.’

<sup>11</sup> Abbreviations used: Fut(ure), incl(usive).

This answer was then shortened into *bogiu* ‘the day after tomorrow’ and then corrupted into *Bugei* as the name of the (cold) water grotto. It is the bathing place of unmarried girls and young and old men, and usually groups of girls and groups of men bathe there together (but not in mixed groups).

Married women bathe at the water well about 50 m south of the village centre from which they also collect excellent drinking water that is not brackish at all. This well is called *Boyeva*. My consultants told me that this is a corrupted form of the expression *bwena eva* ‘good – it comes to (us)’.

The data presented in this section represent all the hydrology-related terms and place names I could find for Kilivila so far.

### 3.2. Coral reefs, corals, reef-channels, islands, and island points

As we come from the sea to the land we first have to pass the reef. The noun that refers to reefs in general is *manakapu*; however, this term is rather rarely used. In everyday conversation speakers seem to prefer using the terms that differentiate between dead and living coral reefs. The Kilivila noun *dakuna* refers to dead coral reefs, coral stone heads, and coral and other stones. The term *lai* refers to reefs and coral heads with corals that are still alive; *lai* is also the general term for corals. The Trobriand Islanders differentiate between a number of different coral species. I could document the following terms for various types of coral, although I have not been able to identify the species: *kebwa*, *lada*, *nada*, *pwaka*, *sibata*, *yalui*. I am convinced that this list is far from being complete. It remains to mention here that the edge of the reef is called *deyaga* and the reef plateau is called *leliga*.

In order to land on an island sailors or paddlers have to find channels in the reef. The general term for reef-channel is *kalikeda*; reef-channels that lead to the villages on *Kaile’una*<sup>12</sup> have specific names. Fig. 5 presents these reef-channels.

The reef-channel of *Tauwema* is called *Toymatela va seda*. According to my consultants *toymatela* is an archaic form of *toyamata* ‘guardian’, *va seda* ‘to the tropical almond tree (*Terminalia catappa*)’ is the name of a part of *Tauwema* village; thus, the name of the reef-channel means ‘guardian of the *va seda* village part (of *Tauwema*)’.

The reef-channel that leads through the reef to the path to *Koma* village (which is about 1 km inland from the sea shore) is called *Dodumekasei*. This is the name of a big stone at the beach, and there is a myth that is associated with this coral formation. Unfortunately my consultants do not know this myth.

The reef-channel of *Giwa* is called *Siuleta*. According to my consultants this name is a corruption of the phrase *esi’uli luleta* ‘he spatters his sister’. It may refer to an anecdotal event, but my consultants are unable to explain why this reef-channel was given this name.

The reef-channel of *Kaisiga* is called *Pwase’uli*, which is the name of a song cycle that is sung during the harvest ritual. These songs are called *wosi milamala* ‘songs of the harvest ritual’ (see Senft, 1985, 2003; Eibl-Eibesfeldt and Senft, 1991). Unfortunately I could not document this song cycle so far.

The reef-channel of *Bulakwa* is called *Botovaya*. My consultants explain this name as an archaic expression meaning *senā bwālita* ‘much sea’ or, rather, ‘high waves’.

<sup>12</sup> I will explain the village names in Section 3.3 below, see also Fig. 8.

Finally, the reef-channel of Kaduwaga is called *Kabulukoya* which literally translates as ‘point (of a) mountain’; however, there is no mountain<sup>13</sup> in the vicinity of Kaduwaga and my consultants explained the name as actually meaning *kabulu kweveaka* ‘difficult (heavy) point’. This is indeed a proper and quite self-explaining name for this reef-channel which is very crooked and ends at a reef plateau from which one has to walk for about 200 m through slimy mud to the village.

The reef-channels just mentioned are the most important channels for the people living on Kaile’una. However, my consultants told me that there are other reef-channels in the vicinity of the island points that allow canoe crews to land if necessary.

The general Kilivila name for island is *simla*. All the Trobriand Islands are named; however, my informants could only tell me that *Kaile’una* means *u’ula valu* ‘(the) reason for villages’ and that *Simsim* is a reduced reduplicated form of the noun *simla* ‘island’. All the islands have points, most of which are named. The general noun in Kilivila that refers to such a point is *kabulu* (also *kabunu*, *kabulula*). Fig. 6 presents the names of all the points of Kaile’una Island. However, before we look at the points of Kaile’una I would like to note the following: the eastern coast of Kaile’una – from Tauwema in the north close to Kaisiga in the south – is the part where the coral reefs of the island rise between 2 and 3 m out of the sea. At low tide one can walk on top of the reef plateau in front of the rising reef, but at high tide the sea clashes towards these relatively high reefs. The coral ridge – called *rebwaga* – gradually flattens out towards the west side of the island and is covered with bush. The reefy coast of the island is called *va numa* ‘to the reef’, ‘in the direction of the reef’ (see Fig. 5).<sup>14</sup> The coast at the west of Kaile’una – from close to Bulakwa in the southwest to close to Tauwema in the north – has large sandy beaches and there is hardly any difference in elevation anymore between land and sea-shore. This lagoon-like coast of the island is called *va dom* ‘to the lagoon’, ‘in the direction of the lagoon’ (see Fig. 5). Let us now have a look at Fig. 6 that presents the names of all the points of Kaile’una Island.

The northernmost point of Kaile’una, about 1 km northeast of Tauwema, is called *Kabukukwevala*.<sup>15</sup> The name is explained as a corruption of the phrase *kabulu kweveaka* ‘difficult point’. At this point there is a reef formation that is called *waga emilidakuna* ‘the canoe petrified’, and there is a mythical story that describes the origin of this formation (see Senft, 1995).

The next point southeast is called *Dabweta*, a shortened form of the possessed noun *dabwetasi* ‘our wreathes of flowers’. Close to this point there are many frangipani trees the flowers of which are used to make floral wreathes.

The name of *Bwabuga* point was explained by my consultants with the verb *ebwabusi* ‘they cut (trees for canoes)’ there. Thus it refers to the traditional cutting place for trees used to construct the big *masawa* type canoes (see Malinowski, 1922).

The point southeast of Koma is called *Oganagwa*. According to my consultants this name refers to trees that are called *ganau* in Kilivila (I could not verify its proper botanical name). Thus, the point’s name can be glossed as ‘at the *ganau* trees’.

<sup>13</sup> I would like to add here that the term *koya* refers both to ‘mountain’ and ‘hill’; the term *sakala* refers to ‘valley’.

<sup>14</sup> Malinowski (1935, vol. II, p. 81) refers to this topographical concept as *wa lum* and glosses it as ‘in the open sea’.

<sup>15</sup> Note that the name of this point is spelled *Kabanakwaikwala* on the map. However, the proper Kilivila name of the point is *Kabukukwevala*.



Fig. 6. Names of points of Kaile'una Island.

Between Koma and Giwa is the point called *Lupokapwaku*. My consultants explained this name with the phrase *kapwaku elupisi* which translates as 'the seagulls jump'.

The name of the next point south of Giwa is also related to seagulls. *Negwa* is a variant of the noun *nigwa* 'nest (of seagulls)'.

The name of *Mamamada* point was explained to me as an archaic form of the exclamation *o sanana* which can be glossed 'Oh, sea urchins!'. There are indeed many sea urchins in the vicinity of this point.

Southwest of this point, close to *Kaisiga*, is the point *Obidaga*. According to my consultants this name is a corrupted form of the phrase *o mi daga* which can be glossed as 'at our ladder'. My consultants are unable to explain why this point was given this name.

Further southwest, close to *Bulakwa*, is a point called *Oko'uyedi*. This name can be glossed as 'at the *uyedi* shell'. In the vicinity of this point there are many shells of the family *Muricidae*, especially *Chicoreus ramosus* and *Chicoreus torrefactus* (see Hinton, n.d., p. 26). These shells are called *uyedi* in Kilivila.

The southernmost point of Kaile'una is called *Dukuboi*. My consultants explain this name as a variant of the exclamation *o boi!* which translates as 'oh, a heron!'. While herons are indeed common here, the point is especially known for the presence of big sharks.

*Tokasikuli* is the name of the point that is north of Dukuboi point at the west-coast of Kaile'una. This point is reminiscent of a man called Tokasikuli who was exiled from Kaisiga by the inhabitants of this village because he was covered in ulcers.

Further north is *Lovakakata* point. According to my consultants this name is a corruption of the sentence *lova ekakata kova* which means 'yesterday it burned the fire'. My consultants cannot give the reason for this name.

The next point up north on the west coast is called *Budabuda*. This name is a variant of the reduplicated noun *boda boda* 'group (of people) group (of people)' and refers to the fact that this is the place where people from Kaduwaga and people from Kaisiga used to meet each other.

*Okunukunu* – the name of the next point north of Budabuda – refers to the following anecdote: At this point a young man is said to have watched a girl bathing, and when she got out of the sea he saw for the first time the pubic hair of a girl and exclaimed: *o kunu* 'oh hair!'.

The point southwest of Kaduwaga is called *Odukwe'utina*. According to my consultants this name is an archaic variant of the phrase *o kabulula* 'at the point', but they do not know why this point was given this name.

The point northwest of Kaduwaga is called *Kabunegi*. According to my consultants this name is a variant of the archaic noun *kabonaga* which means 'thoughts' or 'thinking' (*nan-amsa* in present day Kilivila), but again they cannot provide an explanation why this point has been named this way.

The last point that is named on Kaile'una is the point that lies north of Kaduwaga, just between Kaduwaga and Tauwema. According to my consultants its name *Okegaga* refers to the archaic phrase *o kegaga* which can be glossed as 'very heavy' (*sena kweveaka* in present day Kilivila). Again my consultants are unable to explain why this point was given this name.

### 3.3. Types of soil, gardens, villages and village parts

In the previous subsection, I mentioned that one has to walk through slimy mud to reach Kaduwaga from the sea via its reef-channel. The Kilivila word for 'mud' is *podidiv-eta*. This soil is unsuitable for planting. However, the beaches in front of the villages Tauwema, Giwa, Kaisiga, and Bulakwa are sandy and white – and the Kilivila word for 'sand' – *kenakenua* – can indeed also be used to refer to beach. The other term for beach is *kwadeva*. The name for cultivable garden soil is *pwepwaya*; this noun as well as the noun *kabimwaya* refer to fertile soil in general. It is on this soil where the bush – *laodila* – grows. The term *laodila* is also used to refer to rainforest and wood. Specific types of fertile soil are also differentiated: *galaluwa* refers to a black, heavy and dry kind of fertile soil (suitable for all crops), *butuma* refers to a light red soil (not suitable for taro but for yam), *kawala* refers to a fertile black soil (suitable for most crops) that is found in the coral gardens (that have the same name as the coral ridge, namely *rebwaga*), *sawewa* refers to the soil found in the deep holes of the *rebwaga* (suitable for yam, especially for the long *kuvi* type of yam), *mo'a* is a dry light soil in the vicinity of coral gardens (good for yam), *malala* refers to stony soil (good for yam) and *kwedikidakuna* refers to very stony soil (only suit-

able for some crops). Soils that are not suited for cultivation are *poddiveta* ‘mud’, *kenakenua* ‘sand’, *dumia* ‘swamp’, and *pasa* ‘brackish mud in mangrove swamps’, *koyalawa* ‘sandy beaches between mangroves’, and *dakuna* ‘stones’, ‘rock’. Finally, the soil where the villages are located is called *bidualu* ‘soil of the village’ (see also Malinowski, 1935, vol. II, pp. 79–87).

Fig. 7 presents the various garden portions, the cultivable pieces of land that belong to the villages on Kaile’una. These garden portions are called *kwabila*.

The name of the garden land that belongs to Tauwema is *Gubale’i*. This is the name of a flower that is said to have crept up a stick that one of the men of Tauwema once carelessly stuck into the ground. I cannot provide the correct botanical name of this flower.

*Kavola* – a variant of the noun *kivola* – is the name of the garden land that belongs to the inhabitants of Koma. The name means ‘(a) find’.

The name of the garden land that belongs to the people of Giwa is *Lovebida*. This was the former name of Giwa. My consultants do not know why this garden was given this name.

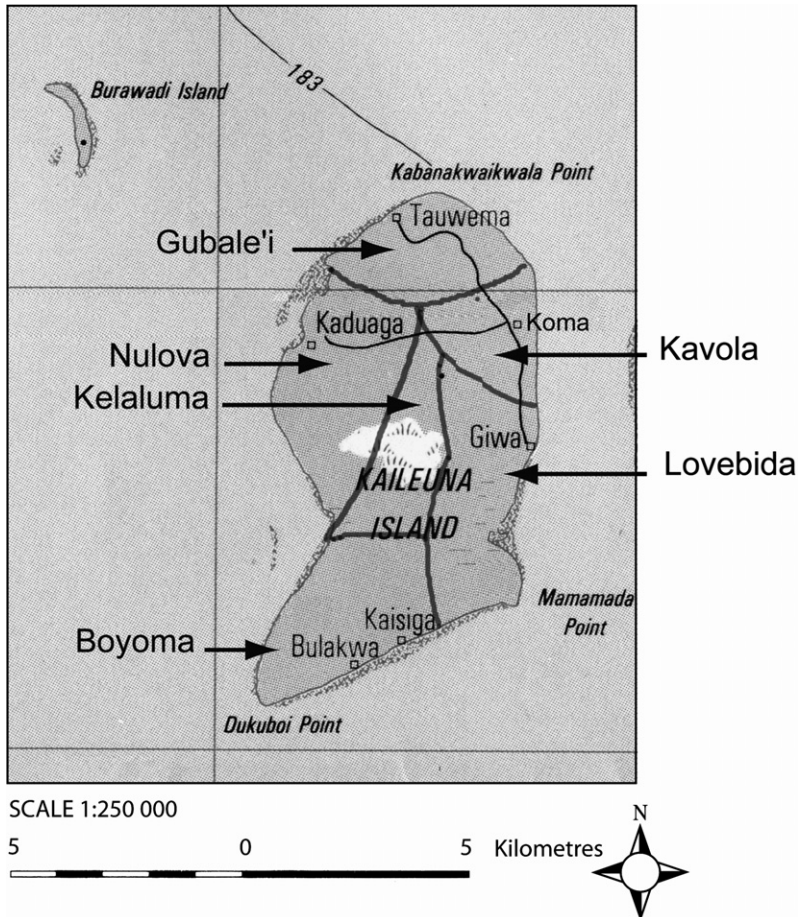


Fig. 7. Names of garden portions on Kaile’una Island.

The garden land that belongs to the villages Bulakwa and Kaisiga is called *Boyoma* – this is the name of a well within this garden portion. Again, my consultants do not know why this garden was given this name.

*Nulova* is the name of the garden land that belongs to the inhabitants of Kaduwaga. My consultants explain this name as an archaic form of the verbal expression *ele'isi* 'they throw it away'. However, they do not know why this garden was given this name.

The garden land around the central swampy area of the island is called *Kelaluma*. My consultants told me that this noun refers to 'garden land with freshwater wells in it'. Both the inhabitants of Kaduwaga and Tauwema can cultivate this garden portion.

The boundaries between these garden portions are well known; they are called *karige'i*. The general unspecified term for garden(s) is *bagula*. The garden land as a whole is subdivided in smaller garden plots; these plots are called *baleko*, and the borders between these plots are called *tukulumwala*. Personal specific garden plots that are under cultivation are called *buyagu*. The expression *bagulela* refers to a garden with monoculture. The noun *kemata* refers to a big newly cultivated garden. The noun *kemgwa* refers to a medium-sized garden and the noun *kapuputala* refers to one small garden. The noun *ligaba* refers to an old garden. The noun *makavasisiva* refers to a garden where no garden-magic was performed. The noun *mowa* refers to a swampy garden. The noun *rebwaga* refers to a typical coral garden that is very difficult to cultivate. And the noun *tapopwa* refers to a taro-garden (see also Malinowski, 1935, vol. II, pp. 79–87; Senft, 1986, p. 495).

Fig. 8 presents the names of the villages on Kaile'una Island.

According to my consultants the name of the village *Tauwema* is a corruption of the phrase *tau ema* '(a) man came'; it refers to Mobiliuya, the former chief of the inland village *Yuwegili* who came to the place where *Tauwema* is now, decided to abandon the unhealthy inland village and founded *Tauwema* at the beginning of the last century.

The name of the village *Koma* is a shortened form of the verbal expression *akoma* 'I eat'. My consultants have no explanation as to why this village was given this name.

The name of the village *Giwa* is a variant of the noun *giu* 'spittle'; it refers to the coral stones called *dadagi* that are about 100 m north of the village. These coral stones are full of holes, and at high tide the seawater is 'spitting' through these holes.

The name of the village *Kaisiga* refers to an exclamation of one of its founding inhabitants who realized that his yam had rotten away. He exclaimed *ka, esigi* 'oh, it is rotten' (the equivalent expression in present day Kilivila would be *kaula egaga* 'the yam has rotten away').

The name of the village *Bulakwa* refers to the verbal expression *elaki* 'it cleans the rubbish'; it refers to the fact that at high tide the sea cleans all the rubbish that was deposited at the relatively small shore of this village.

The name of the biggest village of Kaile'una, *Kaduwaga* is a corruption of the exclamation *ka waga!* 'oh, a canoe!'. My consultants do not know why this village was given this name.

The villages *Kaduwaga*, *Tauwema*, *Giwa* and *Koma* are subdivided into village sectors; these sectors are called *kabuluyuwela* or *katuposula*; many of them have special names. The village sectors of *Tauwema* are called *Va seda* 'towards the tropical almond tree (*Terminalia catappa*)', *Oluwala* 'in the middle', *Va yayu* 'towards the *yayu* tree' and *Valu kwevau* 'the new village'. Moreover, all villages have a village ground or a village square that is referred to generically as *baku*.



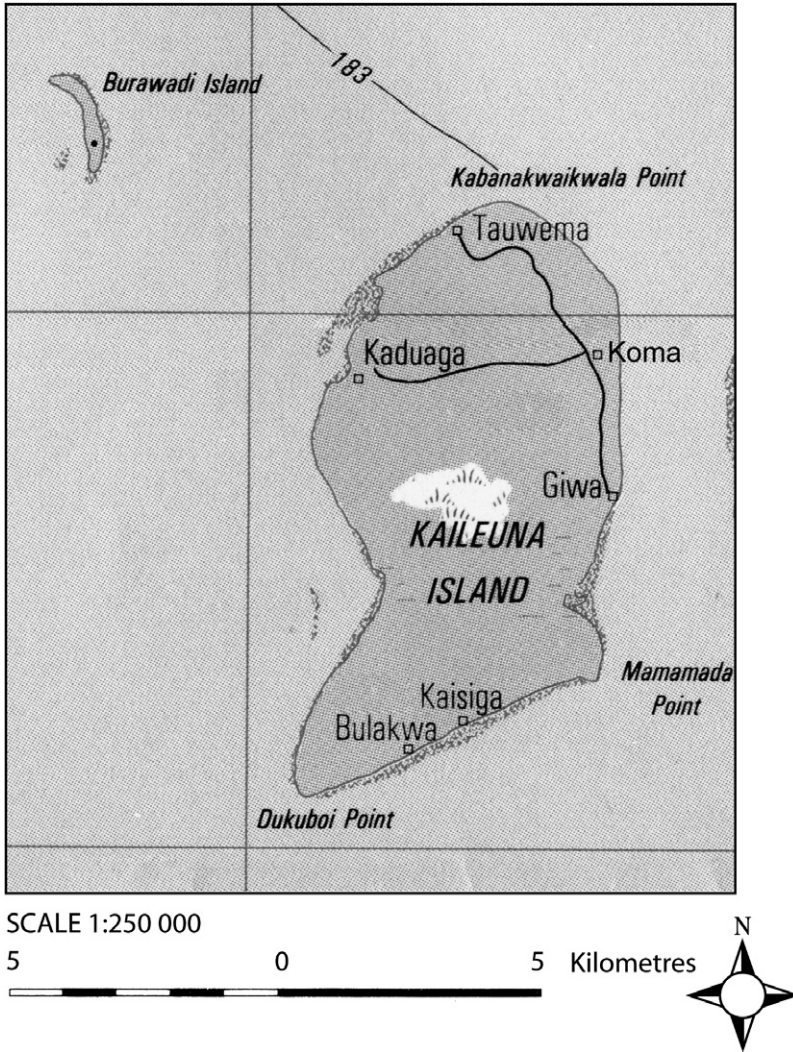


Fig. 8. Names of the villages on Kaile'una Island.

### 3.4. *Kilivila place names in the Kaile'una subset – a summary*

The landscape terms and place names that I have been able to elicit during the last 23 years of my field research on the Trobriand Islands constitute only a part of the Kaile'una subset of these terms. Despite the fact that the inventory of landscape terms and place names presented here is not exhaustive, the terms listed are reasonably representative of the types of Kilivila landscape terms and place names.

In this subsection, I summarize the names found for villages, gardens, wells, reef-channels, and points on Kaile'una and present them in a table that mentions the sources of the respective place names. As we have seen, the place names refer to events (gone by or

typically expected), landmarks, states, places, things, villages, songs, people, activities, anecdotes, food, animals, plants, and stones. Table 1 summarizes the Kilivila subset of place names and presents a first attempt to typologically classify and categorize them. In the final section of the paper, I will discuss this proposed typology of place names and the kind of landscape terms found and presented in Section 3.

#### 4. Summing up: What does it all mean?

In the previous section, I presented the Kai'leuna subset of Kilivila place names and landscape terms. As to the latter we noticed that they consist of both simple and complex forms. Usually landscape terms are (common) nouns – this holds for the terms for currents, reefs, corals, coastlines, and for different types of soils and gardens; however, we also find prepositional phrases, namely locatives (for referring to sea areas), and directionals (for referring to coast lines). All these landscape terms constitute specific taxonomies. The fact that the Trobriand Islanders have landscape terms for sea parts, currents, reefs and corals on the one hand and for different types of soils and gardens on the other reflects the conceptual importance of these domains for these islanders who are not only skilled seafarers and excellent navigators but also first and foremost gardeners.

Landscape terms do not typically enter into lexical relations with terms outside their domain and they are seldom targets of metaphor. Although I pointed out in Section 3.1 above that the mouth of a river is called *matala* 'its head' (by the way, the same term is also used to refer to the 'top of a mountain' – *matala koya*), I think that this should not be overestimated in the Kilivila case. In Kilivila only occasional body part terms are used to refer to landscape features, and these terms are grammaticalized in such a way that they are almost desemanticized. However, I would like to point out that the human body and its parts play an important role in the expression of spatial relationships in general; we find highly interesting grammaticalization processes of body part terms that are used to express these spatial relationships in the languages of the world (see, e.g., Bowden, 1992; Senft, 1994, 1997, pp. 18ff).

With the exception of one noun phrase (for referring to a reef-channel) and one sentence (for referring to a reef formation) all the place names presented above are single (though not necessarily monomorphemic) words; however, as illustrated above, their meaning can actually be quite complex. They refer to events, landmarks, states, places, things, villages, songs, people, activities, anecdotes, food, animals, plants, and stones. Most place names are far from being semantically transparent; on the contrary, they are highly culture specific and their origin is quite surprising and puzzling at times.<sup>16</sup> Like landscape terms the place names also constitute specific taxonomies (for water wells, reef-channels, islands, island points, and villages); there is no hierarchic structure whatsoever observable. We have seen, though, that place names rarely include the landscape terms as such in them. However, in general they map quite well onto each other denotationally. With the exception of terms for corals and reefs, where I could not get proper names of coral and reef formations (although I know that there are such names for formations in the Solomon Sea), Kilivila has

<sup>16</sup> However, compare, for example, the meaning of the name of the point *Okunukunu* with the etymology David Lodge provides in part iv of his 1995 novel *Therapy* for the name of the village Labacolla in the vicinity of Santiago de Compostela (see German edition: Lodge, 2000, p. 366).

Table 1  
Kilivila place names (the Kaile'una subset) and their sources

| Source of place name | Sea parts, wells, rivers, and reef-channels  | Points  | Gardens   | Islands and villages   |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Events               | <i>Siuleta</i> 'he spatters his sister'  | <i>Lupokapwaku</i> '(where) the seagulls jump'<br><i>Lovakakata</i> 'yesterday the fire burned'                                 | <i>Kavola</i> 'find'<br><i>Nulova</i> 'they throw it away'  | <i>Tauwema</i> 'a man came'  |
| Landmarks            | <i>Toymatela va seda</i> 'guardian of the <i>va seda</i> village part'   | <i>Negwa</i> 'nest of seagulls'<br><i>Budabuda</i> 'place where groups of people (meet)'<br><i>Odukwe 'utina</i> 'at the point' | <i>Boyoma</i> name of a well in this garden<br><i>Kelahuma</i> 'garden land with fresh water wells' | ' <i>Giwa</i> spittle' (close to the village the water 'spits' through holes in the reef at high tide) |
| States               | <i>Duml/Dam</i> 'waves beat'<br><i>Kugwa</i> 'first'<br><i>Kaunamayola</i> 'very old'<br><i>Boyeva</i> 'good it comes'<br><i>Botovaya</i> 'high waves'<br><i>Kabulukoya</i> 'difficult point'            | <i>Kabukukwevala</i> 'difficult point'<br><i>Okegaga</i> 'heavy point'  |   | <i>Kaile'una</i> 'reason for villages'<br><i>Kaisiga</i> 'oh it is rotten'                             |
| Places               | <i>Ludobu</i> 'where one dies'<br><i>Buyaku</i> 'in the garden'  | <i>Bwabuga</i> 'cutting place for trees'  |   | <i>Simsim</i> 'island'<br><i>Oluvala</i> 'in the middle'   |
| Things               | <i>Sasani</i> 'rattles'  | <i>Obidaga</i> 'at your ladder'   |   | <i>Kaduwaga</i> = <i>ka waga</i> 'oh canoes'   |
| Villages             | <i>Toymatela Vaseda</i> 'guardian of <i>Va seda</i> '  |   | <i>Lovebida</i> former name of the village<br><i>Giwa</i>   | <i>Valu kwevau</i> 'new village'   |
| Songs                | <i>Pwase'uli</i> name of a song  |   |   |  |
| People               | <i>Tuyabwau</i> name coined by the digger of the well<br><i>Moyabwau</i>   | <i>Tokasikuli</i> name of a man with many ulcers  |   |  |
| Activities           |  | <i>Kabunegi</i> 'thoughts, thinking'  |   | <i>Bulakwa</i> '(the sea) cleans the rubbish'  |
| Anecdotes            | <i>Bugei</i> 'the day after tomorrow' (answer people gave when invited to bath in the cold sweet water grotto)<br><i>Uyanaki</i> 'my making' (man boasting he was responsible for the fish in the river) | <i>Okunukunu</i> 'oh, hair!' (exclamation of a young man when he first saw a girl's pubic hair)                                 |   |  |
| Food                 | <i>Kaulakoki</i> 'food oh indeed'  |   |   |  |
| Animals              | <i>Dayya</i> 'triton shell'<br><i>Kauyakum</i> 'bag of crabs'  | <i>Mamamada</i> 'oh, sea urchins!'<br><i>Oko'uyedi</i> 'at the uyedi shell'<br><i>Dukuboi</i> 'oh, a heron'                     |   |  |
| Plants               |  | <i>Dabweta</i> 'our wreathes of flowers'<br><i>Oganagwa</i> 'at the <i>ganau</i> trees'   | <i>Gubale'i</i> name of a flower  | <i>Va seda</i> 'towards the almond tree'<br><i>Va yayu</i> 'towards the <i>yayu</i> tree'              |
| Stones               | <i>Dodumekasi</i> (stone close to reef-channel)  |   |   |  |

- a generic term for the sea and proper names for sea areas
- a generic term for current and proper names for currents
- a generic term for freshwater well and proper names for freshwater wells
- a generic term for reef-channel and proper names for the channels
- a generic term for point and proper names for the points
- a generic term for garden and proper names for garden lands

Like place names in other languages and cultures the Kilivila place names convey “cultural knowledge about the environment” (Kuipers, 1984, p. 465) and “signal something about the significant characteristics of the place” (Merlan, 2001, p. 370). However, they do much more, like, for example, telling tales – to mention just one of many more fascinating functions.

The place names presented here appear to contradict some of the assertions of colleagues who seek “semantic universals in place-name systems” (Hunn, 1996, p. 3). However, I would like to point out that the Kilivila data presented here suggest at least the following speculation – which may lead to a probably universal claim with respect to research on landscape terms and place names in general: landscape terms seem to be indicative of the geographical domains that are conceptually important for the speakers who coined them – thus, simply a brief look at the Kilivila lexicon would have revealed that ‘sea’ and ‘soil for gardens’ play an important role in the life of the Trobriand Islanders – and place names, once understood, reveal much with respect to the culture, the characteristics, and the culture-specific humour of the speakers who created them.

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