Ihan manu ata Raga 'NAMES OF BIRDS BELONGING TO RAGA': AN EMIC CLASSIFICATION OF THE BIRDS OF NORTH PENTECOST

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims primarily to present and comment on Richard Leona's subgrouping of the labelled *manu* 'bird' categories of his first language, Raga, which is spoken on North Pentecost, Vanuatu. The presentation also associates the Raga *manu* terms with both the formal ornithological and the lay English nomenclatures.¹

1.1 LOCALE, TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION

Pentecost Island, in north-eastern Vanuatu, between 15°23' and 16° south, and between 168°4' and 168°14' east, is so named because Cook sighted it on Whit Sunday in 1774. Its local names, Raga and Arag, have been effectively supplanted by Pentecost, despite some general post-independence pressures to localise introduced placenames. The island is about 58 kilometres from north to south, and up to 13 kilometres from east to west.²

The northern and central regions consist primarily of raised coral limestone, reaching up to about 940 metres above sea-level in the central region, while the southern region consists in part of raised coral limestone, and in part of various volcanic rocks. Much of the eastern coastline is rugged and inhospitable, with extensive cliffs, and is frequently pounded by the turbulent tahi mauri '(the) sea (that is) alive/living'; while the western coastline is predominantly gentler, with many small sandy beaches lapped by the usually placid lee-shore tahi mate '(the) dead/calm sea'.

The northern third of Pentecost is the homeland of about 3,500 speakers of the Raga language. This region has smallish areas of flat land on the western and northern coasts, an undulating plateau of between about 150 and 200 metres above sea-level in the northern eight kilometres, and a higher undulating plateau of between about 250 and 320 metres above sea-level in the southern part. Most of the Raga people live in villages on the northern and western coastal land, on the plateaux, and, as a result of recent increasing pressure of

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Bregulla (1992:21-43) provides a useful general description, by Marcus Chambers, of the geography, geology, climate, etc. of Vanuatu.

population on cultivable land, on the less accessible and more mosquito-ridden eastern coastal region.

The natural forest cover of North Pentecost has been modified in virtually all the easily to moderately accessible areas and even in some of the less accessible areas, by many centuries of slash-and-burn subsistence horticulture, and has been affected in some (mainly coastal) areas by the planting of coconut trees for copra production. The rotating cycle of subsistence horticulture has created considerable areas of second-growth natural vegetation cover in varying stages of maturity. Four broad etic types of vegetation-complex may therefore be distinguished: coastal, current garden-land, fallow garden-land and virgin forest.

1.2 LANGUAGE AND ORTHOGRAPHY

The Raga language is a member of a lower-order grouping within the notional Eastern Oceanic (EO) subgroup of East Austronesian,³ and its closest relatives are the languages of north-eastern Vanuatu.⁴

Most of the orthographic symbols used for the Raga data have one-letter-one-phoneme values, and have broadly conventional sound values, with the following exceptions: b is a bilabial stop with or without voicing, bw is a bilabial stop with voicing and labio-velarised release, \bar{g} is a velar stop with voicing and homorganic prenasalisation, v is a labio-dental fricative with or without voicing and with labio-velarised release, g is a velar fricative with or without voicing, mw is a bilabial nasal with labio-velarised release, and \bar{n} is a velar nasal.

1.3 ETIC AVIFAUNAL PERSPECTIVE

There are two substantial published ornithological studies which cover Vanuatu: Mayr (1945, republished 1978) in which Vanuatu is considered along with the other regions of the south-west Pacific, and Bregulla (1992) which is devoted exclusively to Vanuatu. According to Mayr (1978:176) there are "about 54 native species of land and fresh-water birds known from this region [Vanuatu]", and he also associates a few sea and seashore birds with Vanuatu. Bregulla describes 121 land, freshwater, sea and seashore species as present in Vanuatu (1992:77-274), of which about 80 breed there (pp.56-61), including 35 land and freshwater species which are ornithologically recorded as breeding on Pentecost (pp.71-75).

1.4 RAGA DATA SOURCES

The Raga data for this paper were obtained by the authors in the course of compiling a dictionary of the language. The main ongoing Raga input on *manu* has been from Richard Leona with substantial assistance in the early stages from Peter Sagai, and with many valuable supporting contributions from other Raga speakers.

The basis for, and the composition of, EO are considered in Biggs (1965) and Pawley (1972).

The relevant lower-order groupings of the languages of northern and central Vanuatu are considered in Tryon (1976:79-93) and Walsh (1982).

⁵ For b, bw and d there are phonologically conditioned homorganically prenasalised allophones, but the relevant conditioning does not occur in the context of the cited data.

At various times between 1969 and 1982 three kinds of information on manu were accumulated: (i) fieldnotes on the size, shape, plumage, habitat, cultural significance, etc., of the referent or range of referents for each labelled manu category; (ii) the associating, by three Raga speakers, of the manu labels with stuffed bird specimens, labelled in terms of the ornithological and the lay English nomenclatures, which were on display in 1972 in the Cultural Centre Museum in Port Vila; and (iii) checking and refining of the associating of the manu labels with the ornithological and lay English nomenclatures when Mayr (1978) became available. Some supplementary refining of ornithological detail also came from conversations with Ralph Bulmer and from correspondence with Jared Diamond. The latest inputs have been Leona's subgrouping statement for the labelled manu categories, and Walsh's use of Bregulla (1992) and Marchant and Higgins (1990, 1993) to further refine the manu glosses.

2. AN EMIC SUBGROUPING OF THE LABELLED manu CATEGORIES

In this section Leona's emic subgrouping of the labelled *manu* categories is presented. Leona regards this subgrouping as being essentially that which is generally current among Raga speakers. These subgroups are covert categories; they do not have specific unitary labels, but they can be, and are, referred to by means of the descriptive constructions which are used below.

In this subgrouping presentation the labelled *manu* categories are associated with both the formal ornithological and the lay English nomenclatures. Within the glosses, page references to the two main ornithological sources are preceded by M for Mayr (1978) or B for Bregulla (1992). The following symbols are used: ~ occurs between alternant or variant labels; in the Raga *manu* labels a hyphen indicates a morpheme boundary within a word, and (-) indicates a possible such boundary.

2.1 manu-n imwa 'BIRDS OF (THE) HOUSE'

These are *manu* which are familiar in and around the house, and which often nest in the roof timbers.

2.1.1 bet(-)bete-a(-)ulu

Hirundo tahitica subfusca Pacific Swallow (M188, B215); ~ House Swallow ~ Coast Swallow ~ Welcome Swallow (B215). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). (See also 2.4.2)

2.2 manu-n mahava 'BIRDS OF (THE) SPACE' ~ manu-n mahava ten lañi 'BIRDS OF (THE) SPACE UNDER (THE) SKY'

These are manu which habitually fly high in the space between the earth and the sky.

⁶ The specimens in the Cultural Centre display were mounted and labelled primarily by Bregulla.

2.2.1 arulai

Falco peregrinus nesiotes Peregrine Falcon (M178, B128). Although there is as yet no ornithological record of this species on Pentecost, the Raga identification is unequivocal.

2.2.2 mala

Circus approximans approximans Swamp Harrier (M178, B125-126); ~ Marsh Hawk ~ Marsh Harrier ~ Australasian Harrier (B125). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.2.3 mal-kal-bwiru

Accipiter fasciatus vigilax Australian Goshawk (M177, B123); ~ Brown Goshawk (B123). Although this species has been ornithologically recorded only for Aneityum (M177, B124) and possibly Efate (B124), the Raga identification is unequivocal.

2.3 manu-n mwanea 'BIRDS OF (THE) GRASS' ~ manu-n tano 'BIRDS OF (THE) GROUND' These are manu which are usually found on the ground in open grassy areas.

2.3.1 boro-gai

Rallus philippensis sethsmithi Banded Rail (M179); Gallirallus philippensis sethsmithi Banded Rail ~ Buff-banded Rail (B138).⁷ Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.3.2 bwat-bwiru ~ bwiru

Porphyrio porphyrio aneityumensis Purple Swamphen (M179); Porphyrio porphyrio samoensis Purple Swamphen ~ Purple Gallinule (B143).8 Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.3.3 mwalau

Megapodius freycinet layardi Incubator Bird (M178, B132); ~ Scrub Fowl (B132). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.1.16.

2.3.4 tarere-sañvulu 'COMB-TEN'

A variety of toa(2.3.5).

Gallirallus philippensis (B138) is supported by Marchant and Higgins (1993:495).

Marchant and Higgins (1993:577) prefer 'Purple Swamphen' for *Porphyrio porphyrio*, as 'Purple Gallinule' is already in use for *Porphyrio martinica*.

2.3.5 toa

Gallus gallus Red Jungle Fowl ~ Wild Fowl ~ Jungle Fowl (B136); also various domestic fowl breeds and Jungle Fowl-domestic fowl crosses.

2.4 manu-n tahi 'BIRDS OF (THE) SEA (AND SEASHORE)'

Some of these manu fly over the open sea, and some are found around the seashore.

2.4.1 ahi-gari 'MOVE/TURN OVER (THE) SHELLFISH CALLED gari'

Pluvialis dominica fulva Pacific Golden Plover (M37); Pluvialis fulva Pacific Golden Plover ~ Lesser Golden Plover ~ Eastern Golden Plover (B149).⁹ A migratory visitor which spends September-April/May in Vanuatu.

2.4.2 bet(-)bete-a(-)ulu

Collocalia vanikorensis vanikorensis Vanikoro Swiftlet (M149); Aerodramus vanikorensis vanikorensis Uniform Swiftlet ~ Vanikoro Swiftlet ~ Island Swiftlet ~ Lowland Swiftlet (B206). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). (See also 2.1.1.)

2.4.3 man-duru-one 'BIRD (THAT) POKES BEACH-SAND'

Numenius phaeopus variegatus Whimbrel (M39, B153); ~ Asiatic Whimbrel (B153). A migratory visitor which spends September-March/April in Vanuatu.

2.4.4 man-gege 'BIRD (WITH) SPREAD WINGS'

Sterna fuscata serrata Sooty Tern (M25, B164-165); ~ Wideawake Tern (B164). "[It] is a pelagic species and in normal conditions comes to islands only to breed" (B165). It has not been recorded as breeding on Pentecost, and when it comes inland it is regarded as a sign of an impending cyclone.

2.4.5 man-sege 'BIRD (WITH) BENT WINGS'

Fregata minor Pacific Man-o'-War (M20); ~ Great Frigatebird ~ Man of War bird ~ Sea Hawk (B103); and/or Fregata ariel Least Man-o'-War (M20); ~ Least Frigatebird ~ Lesser Frigatebird ~ Man of War bird ~ Sea Hawk (B104).

2.4.6 man-siro-boe 'BIRD (THAT) SEEKS PIG'

Diomedea exulans Wandering Albatross (M6, B81); and/or Diomedea epomophora sanfordi Royal Albatross (M6, B81).

⁹ Marchant and Higgins (1993:800) agree with B149-150 on distinguishing Pluvialis fulva 'Pacific Golden Plover' from Pluvialis dominica 'American Golden Plover'.

2.4.7 ova

The dark phase/morph of *Demigretta sacra* Reef Heron (M177); *Ardea (Egretta) sacra* Eastern Reef Heron ~ Reef Heron ~ Reef Egret (B111); *Ardea sacra* Eastern Reef Egret ~ Blue Heron ~ Reef Heron ~ Blue Reef Heron ~ Sacred Heron ~ Pacific Heron (Marchant & Higgins 1990:1002). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). (See also 2.4.8.)

2.4.8 ova-maita 'WHITE ova'

The white phase/morph of *Demigretta sacralArdea sacra*. Gloss details are as for 2.4.7 except that "White Heron ~ White Reef Heron" replaces "Blue Heron ~ Blue Reef Heron" in the Marchant and Higgins data. Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.4.9 taraño

Puffinus l'herminieri gunax Dusky Shearwater (M10); Puffinus lherminieri gunax Audubon's Shearwater (B91; Marchant & Higgins 1990:662); ~ Dusky-backed Shearwater (B91). Not recorded as breeding on Pentecost, but note "perhaps breeding in Vanuatu" (Marchant & Higgins 1990:662), and "It is likely that Audubon's Shearwater still breeds in Vanuatu but colonies have yet to be located" (B92). Other Shearwater and/or Petrel species may possibly also be included under taraño.

2.5 manu-n ute vono 'BIRDS OF PLACE THICK'

These manu are found where there is dense vegetation cover. There are three subclasses of manu-n ute vono, between which there is some overlapping membership, indicated below by "Occurs also as...".

2.5.1 manu-n ut metue 'BIRDS OF PLACE DARK'

These are manu that live principally in the virgin forest.

2.5.1.1 biri(-)via

Myiagra caledonica marina Broad-billed Flycatcher (M192-193, B231). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74).

2.5.1.2 bune

Possibly the immature *Ptilinopus greyii* Red-bellied Fruit Dove, for which species see also under *vweru* (2.5.1.22) and *roi(-)rau* (2.5.1.17). Occurs also as 2.5.2.1.

2.5.1.3 bwat-higo ~ higo

Halcyon chloris santoensis and/or Halcyon chloris juliae¹⁰ White-collared Kingfisher (M185-186, B208-209). Halcyon chloris (race unspecified) is recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.3.1.

2.5.1.4 bwat(-)i-manu

Myzomela cardinalis tenuis Cardinal Honey-eater (M197, B247). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74).

2.5.1.5 bwat-vwisi ~ vwisi

Tyto alba interposita Barn Owl (M184, B199-200). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.5.1.6 bwau(-)eve

Macropygia mackinlayi mackinlayi Rufous-brown Pheasant-Dove (M181, B183). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.2.2 and 2.5.3.2.

2.5.1.7 deña

Vini palmarum Green Palm Lorikeet (M183); Charmosyna palmarum Green Palm Lorikeet ~ Vanuatu Lorikeet (B191).¹¹ Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.5.1.8 esi(-)esi

Turdus poliocephalus malekulae Island Thrush (M190, B222). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.5.1.9 gaba(-)gaba

Collocalia esculenta uropygialis Glossy Swiftlet (M185, B203); ~ White-bellied Swiftlet (B203). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). This manu category may also include Collocalia spodiopygius leucopygia White-rumped Swiftlet (M185); Aerodramus spodiopygius leucopygia White-rumped Swiftlet ~ Grey-rumped Swiftlet ~ Grey Swiftlet (B204-205).12

¹⁰ In terms of the distributions for Halcyon chloris santoensis and Halcyon chloris juliae given in M186 and B209 it is unclear whether Pentecost is regarded as being in northern or in central Vanuatu, therefore one has to conclude that either or both of these races may be present on Pentecost.

¹¹ "Formerly the 14 Charmosyna species were grouped together in the genus Vini...They have now, on reasonable grounds, been placed by most authors in the genus Charmosyna" (B191).

¹² M185 has the White-rumped Swiftlet as "found throughout the New Hebrides", but B205 notes that "by the 1960s it was found only on Malo and on the west coast of Santo where it was uncommon".

2.5.1.10 laga(-)laga-n-ut-metue 'laga(-)laga OF (THE) PLACE DARK'

Female Pachycephala pectoralis banksiana Golden Whistler (M194-195, B227); ~ Common Golden Whistler ~ Thickhead (B227). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74). (See also 2.5.1.21.)

2.5.1.11 livusi-gala

Eudynamis taitensis Long-tailed New Zealand Cuckoo (M184, B197). A migratory visitor which spends April - September in Vanuatu.¹³

2.5.1.12 man-bona

Ducula pacifica pacifica Pacific Pigeon (M181, B177-178); ~ Pacific Imperial Pigeon (B177). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.2.3.

2.5.1.13 man-malageha 'BIRD GREEN'

Ptilinopus tannensis Tanna Fruit Dove (M180); ~ Vanuatu Fruit Dove ~ Yellow-headed Fruit Dove (B175). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.2.4.

2.5.1.14 man-wali-rau 'BIRD (THAT) COPULATES (WITH) LEAF'

Possibly Erythrura cyanovirens regia Red-headed Parrot-Finch (M199-200); Erythrura cyaneovirens regia Royal Parrotfinch ~ Red-headed Parrotfinch (B264-265). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74).¹⁴

2.5.1.15 mwaragi

Chalcophaps indica sandwichensis Green-winged Ground Pigeon (M181-182); ~ Green-winged Ground Dove ~ Green-winged Emerald Dove ~ Emerald Ground Dove (B184-185). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.3.5.

2.5.1.16 mwalau

Occurs also as 2.3.3, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.1.17 roi(-)rau

Possibly *Ptilinopus greyii* Red-bellied Fruit Dove, for which species see also under *vweru* (2.5.1.22) and *bune* (2.5.1.2). Occurs also as 2.5.2.5.

¹³ Note M184 "Rather rare in the New Hebrides", and B198 "It is a rather rare visitor to Vanuatu".

¹⁴ M200 does not include Pentecost for this species, but B264 and Diamond (pers.comm., 1979) clearly do.

2.5.1.18 siviru

Trichoglossus haematodus massena Coconut Lory (M183, B189); ~ Rainbow Lorikeet ~ Rainbow Lory (B189). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.3.6.

2.5.1.19 tagere

Rhipidura fuliginosa brenchleyi Collared Fantail (M192, B235); ~ Grey Fantail (B235). For this species see also under *vwet(-)vete-rerea* (2.5.1.23). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74).

2.5.1.20 tutu

Ducula bakeri Baker's Pigeon (M181); ~ Vanuatu Mountain Pigeon ~ Baker's Imperial Pigeon (B180). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72).

2.5.1.21 vovov-ninovi 'GARDEN RE-CUT YESTERDAY'

Male Pachycephala pectoralis banksiana Golden Whistler (M194-195, B227); ~ Common Golden Whistler ~ Thickhead (B227). The species is recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74). (See also 2.5.1.10.)

2.5.1.22 vweru

Ptilinopus greyii Red-bellied Fruit Dove (M180, B172). See also under bune (2.5.1.2) and roi(-)rau (2.5.1.17). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B72). Occurs also as 2.5.2.6.

2.5.1.23 vwet(-)vete-rerea

Rhipidura fuliginosa brenchleyi Collared Fantail (M192, B235); ~ Grey Fantail (B235). For this species see also under tagere (2.5.1.19). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74).

2.5.1.24 vweu

Coracina caledonica thilenii Melanesian Graybird (M189-190, B217-218); ~ Melanesian Cuckoo-shrike (B217). This species is not found on Pentecost today, and Jared Diamond (pers.comm., 1979) notes that it is "unlikely to have occurred there in historic times". However, Raga speakers have identified it as vweu, a manu category not now seen on Pentecost but which features in several old stories.

2.5.2 manu-n vwai-gai 'BIRDS OF FRUIT (OF) TREE'

These are manu that live on trees and eat the berries, etc.

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2.5.2.1 bune

Occurs also as 2.5.1.2, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.2.2 bwau(-)eve

Occurs also as 2.5.1.6, where gloss details are provided, and as 2.5.3.2.

2.5.2.3 man-bona

Occurs also as 2.5.1.12, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.2.4 man-malageha

Occurs also as 2.5.1.13, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.2.5 roi(-)rau

Occurs also as 2.5.1.17, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.2.6 vweru

Occurs also as 2.5.1.22, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.3 manu-n vwenue 'BIRDS OF FALLOW GARDEN-LAND'

These are manu which are found on both fallow garden-land and some current garden-land.

2.5.3.1 bwat-higo ~ higo

Occurs also as 2.5.1.3, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.3.2 bwau(-)eve

Occurs also as 2.5.1.6, where gloss details are provided, and as 2.5.2.2.

2.5.3.3 laga(-)laga-año 'YELLOW laga(-)laga'

Zosterops flavifrons perplexa Yellow White-eye (M198, B250); ~ Vanuatu White-eye ~ White-eye ~ Yellow-fronted White-eye (B250). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74).

2.5.3.4 laga(-)laga-batai 'BREADFRUIT laga(-)laga'

Zosterops lateralis vatensis Gray-backed White-eye (M198-199); ~ Grey-backed White-eye ~ Silvereye ~ White-eye ~ Grey-breasted White-eye (B252). Recorded as breeding on Pentecost (B74).

2.5.3.5 mwaragi

Occurs also as 2.5.1.15, where gloss details are provided.

2.5.3.6 siviru

Occurs also as 2.5.1.18, where gloss details are provided.

3. COMMENT

3.1 THE GLOSSES

In most of the glosses it has been possible to associate a given manu label unequivocally with a single ornithological category. The relatively high degree of correspondence that exists between the named manu categories and the species-level categories of the ornithological classification is parallelled for the Kalam bird taxonomy (Majnep & Bulmer 1977) and for the Tzeltal fauna taxonomy (Hunn 1977). That such a degree of correspondence is demonstrable over this range of cases gives some plausibility to the notion that the etic species category may be shaped to a significant extent by the way in which humans, possibly in part for biologically determined reasons, classify the fauna of their environment.

There are a few cases (e.g. 2.2.1 and 2.2.3) where the Raga identification is unequivocal but where the ornithologists have no record of the species in question on Pentecost. Because the ornithological record for Vanuatu is still uneven as far as thorough areal coverage is concerned, the lack of such a record for a given species on a given island does not necessarily mean that the bird in question is not in fact there. Where disparity exists between local and ornithological observations, it could well be reduced by increased cooperation between ornithologists and local observers.

Where there is not a one-to-one correspondence between *manu* category and species-level ornithological category, this results either from a genuine non-fit between the two systems, as with 2.1.1 and 2.4.2 and with 2.5.1.19 and 2.5.1.23, or from unresolved problems of identification which it may eventually be possible to reduce or eliminate by combining local knowledge with the ornithological resources available in Bregulla (1992).

3.2 THE EMIC SUBGROUPING

The primary criterion used for the subgrouping is *habitat*, which is the sole basis for 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.5.1 and 2.5.3. *Habitat* plus *flight locale* define 2.2 and 2.4, and *habitat* plus *food source* define 2.5.2. The use of only three criteria to produce a two-level subgrouping for the *manu* categories is in marked contrast to the number of criteria used to produce an emic subgrouping of the Kalam bird categories (Majnep & Bulmer 1977). This difference is

ascribable in part to the much more extensive and varied avifauna of the Kalam environment, and in part to the greater prominence of hunting in the Kalam lifestyle.

Some manu categories have membership of more than one subgroup. At the higher level mwalau is in 2.3 and 2.5 (as 2.5.1.16). At the lower level all the members of 2.5.2 are also members of 2.5.1, while one of them, bwau(-)eve, is also a member of 2.5.3, and three more of the members of 2.5.3 are also members of 2.5.1. This overlapping subgroup membership adds precision to the classification of the categories concerned, and does so with considerable economy, using the smallest number of subgroups that is compatible with the culturally required result.

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