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# **INDEPENDENS LONG VANUATU: THE CHURCHES AND POLITICS IN A MELANESIAN NATION**

by

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A thesis  
presented to the University of Auckland  
in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Anthropology

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## ABSTRACT.

In this dissertation I examine the relationship between the churches and politics in Vanuatu, focusing in particular on the role of the Christian churches in the independence movement of the 1970s. I also look at the political involvement of the churches in the two years immediately following national independence. The dissertation is based on fieldwork in Vanuatu from April 1981 to June 1982.

In Chapter I, I introduce and defend my national, institutional perspective on the churches. In Chapter II, I discuss the history of Vanuatu, focusing specifically on the history of the missions up to the end of the 1960s. Chapter III looks at the independence movement and recent political history. In Chapter IV I examine the relationship between the churches and politics in two contrasting rural areas: at the Catholic mission station of Walarano, Malakula, and at the Presbyterian area of White Sands, Tanna. Chapter V is concerned with the ecumenical movement in the Pacific and looks at the support of the Pacific churches for the independence movement in Vanuatu.

Chapters VI to X are parallel histories of the same period. They all look at the involvement of the churches in Vanuatu politics from about the beginning of the 1970s - when the independence movement began - up to national independence on 30 July 1980. However, each chapter is written from a different perspective. Chapter VI documents the political involvement of the Presbyterian Church; Chapter VII is concerned with Bishop Rawcliffe and the politics of Anglicanism; Chapter VIII looks at the political role of the Roman Catholic Church in Vanuatu; Chapter IX focuses mostly on the relationship between the Churches of Christ and Nagriamel; and Chapter X takes a look at the ecumenical movement in Vanuatu and the origins and development of the New Hebrides Christian Council.

In Chapter XI I examine the post-independence developments in all the major churches. Chapter XII concludes with a discussion of three issues: localisation, independence and unity, both in the churches and in the nation.

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# MAPS



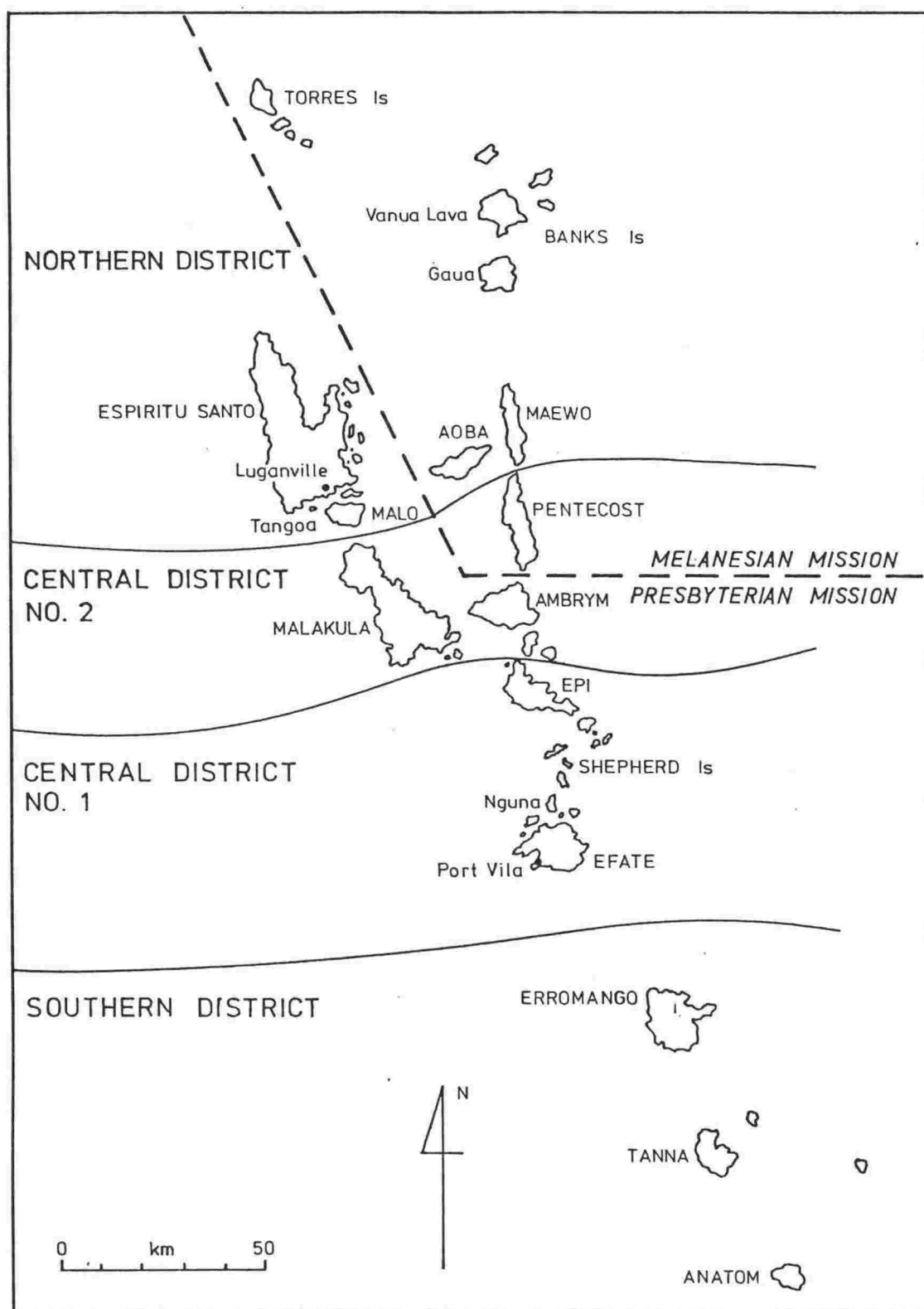


Figure 1. MAP OF VANUATU: Map of Vanuatu showing the four administrative districts before independence, and the partition of the islands between the Presbyterian and Melanesian Missions, 1881.

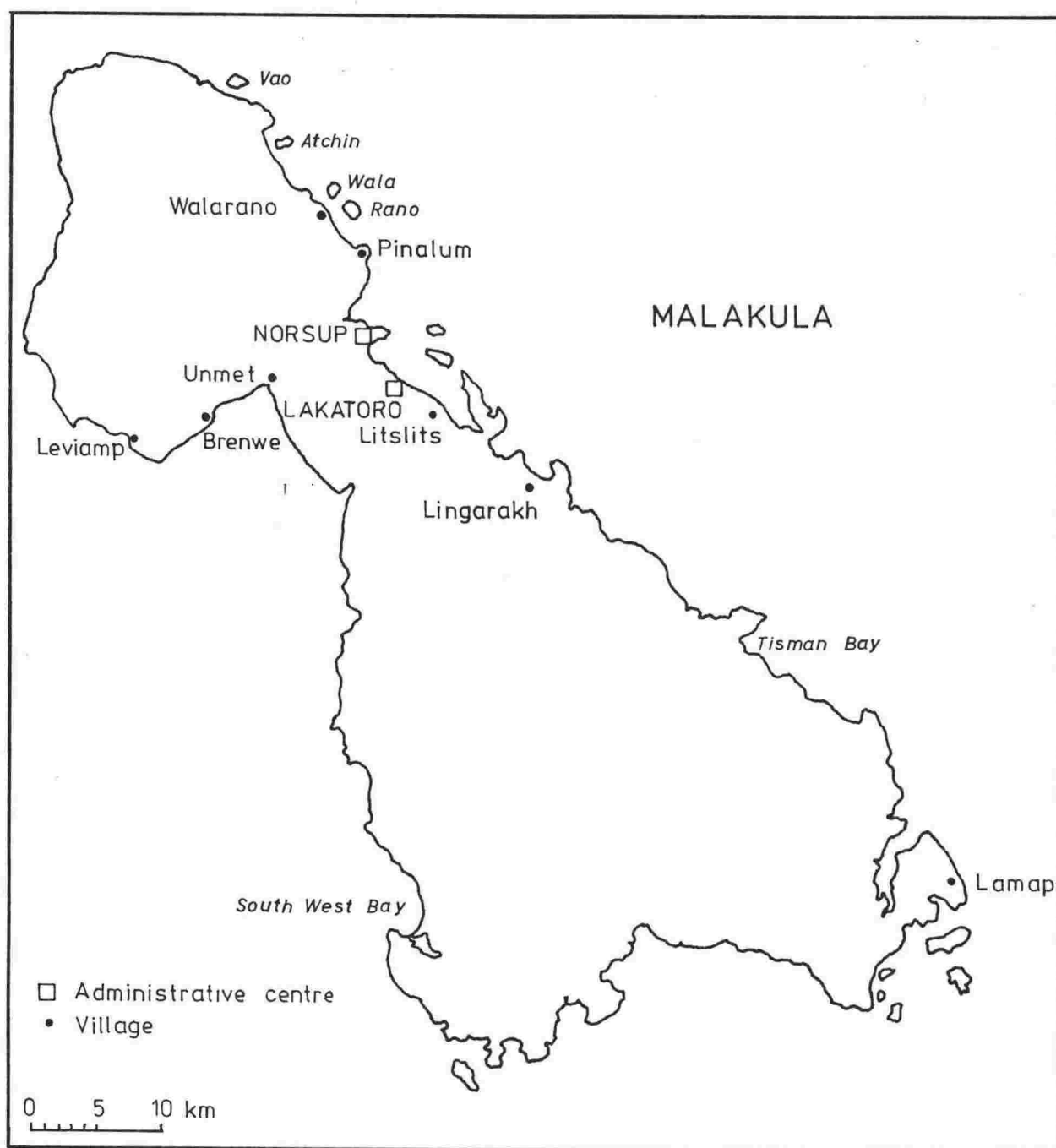


Figure 2. MAP OF MALAKULA

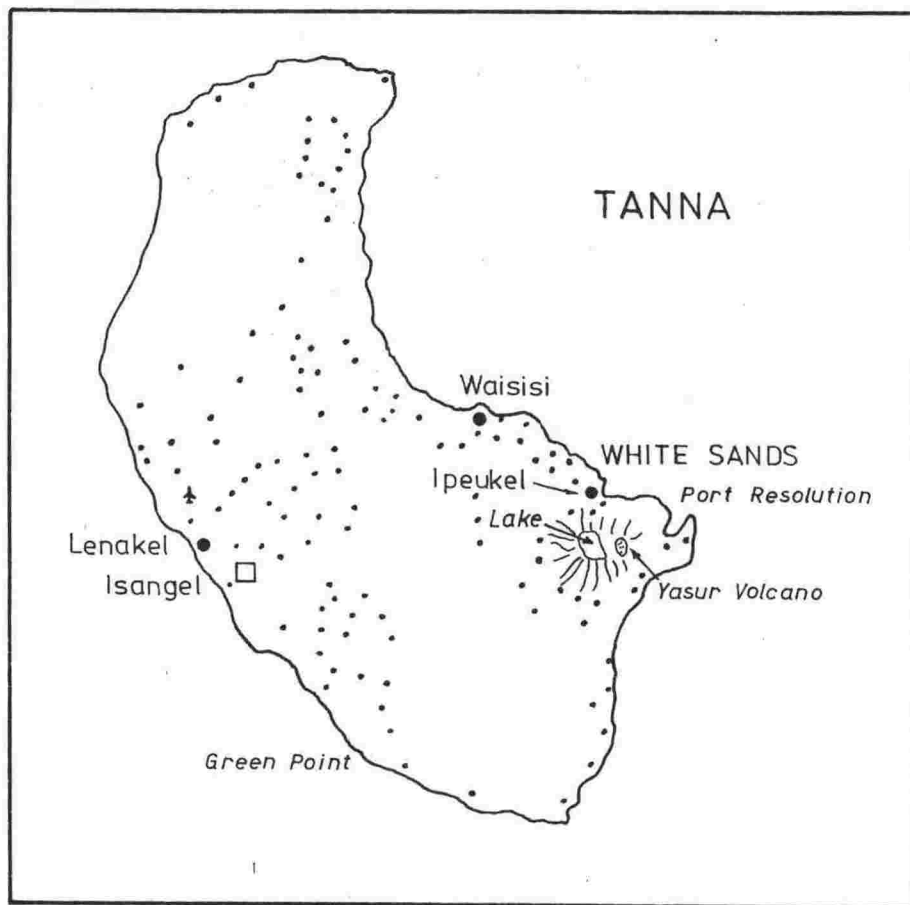


Figure 3. MAP OF TANNA

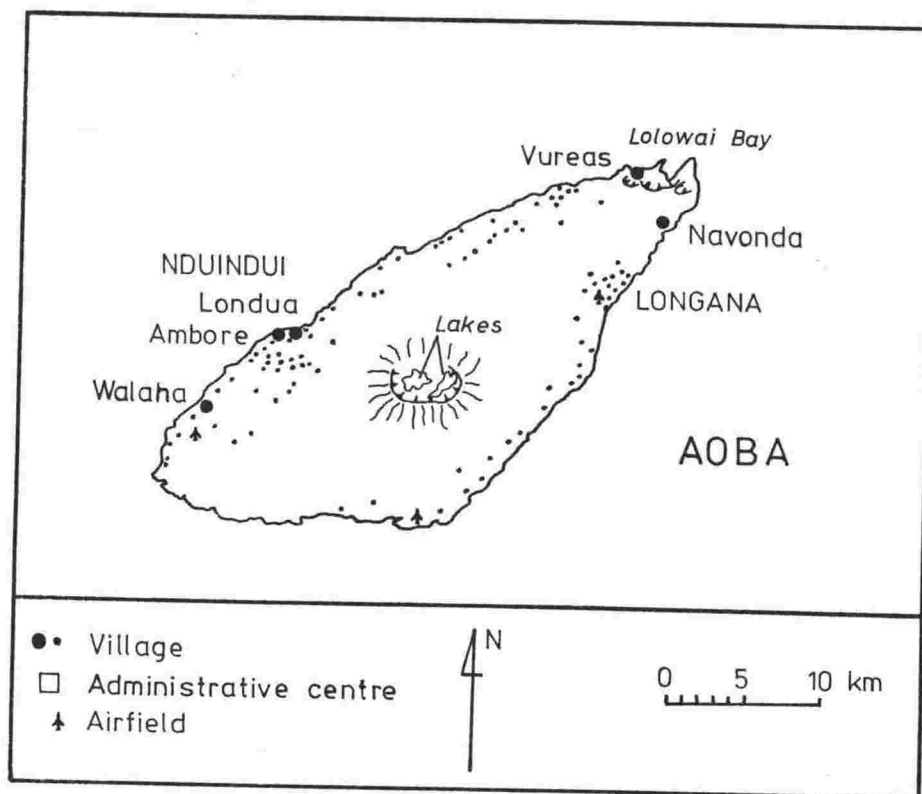


Figure 4. MAP OF AOBA

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