
The Mambare

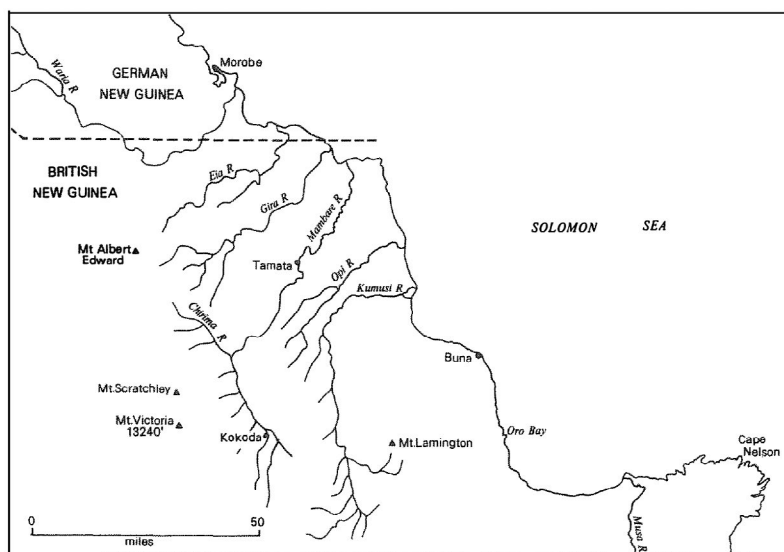
natives of the fighting variety

Away from the main shipping routes, the people living north of Cape Nelson had seen few Europeans. When Captain John Moresby took the *Basilisk* along the coast in 1874 he was conscious of his privilege in being directed to chart one of the last areas outside the polar regions still marked on world maps by guess-work and dotted lines. Having been able to land and mix freely with the peoples of the southern coast and the islands of the south-east, Moresby attempted to take a boat into shore at a point where about a hundred men had gathered. But the men, decorated with paint, bird-of-paradise head-dresses and shell necklaces, danced on the beach and waded out into the water, holding aloft their spears, stone clubs and shields. The warriors ignored gestures of peace, seized presents, offered nothing in return, and attempted to drag the boat inshore. Moresby abandoned the attempt to land and named the place Caution Point. The next day, further along the coast, Moresby fired into the shield of a warrior to protect a shore party collecting wood. He named Ambush Point and Traitors Bay to commemorate the events near the mouth of the Mambare, a river he called the Clyde.

Inspecting the limits of his sovereignty near the border with German New Guinea in 1890, MacGregor found no evidence that missionaries, traders or fishermen had been there before him. The people he met south of the Mambare mouth knew nothing of iron or tobacco. When MacGregor tried to obtain spears and stone clubs by barter 'They laughed at the idea of giving one of their weapons for anything we could offer them in exchange'. For the information of other travellers MacGregor marked on his published map that the area was 'Occupied by a powerful and friendly tribe'. Moresby, comparing them with other New Guineans, had called them a 'fiercer race of savages'.

In 1894 MacGregor, the first foreigner to ascend the northern rivers, made short trips up the Gira and Opi, and took a steam launch as far as possible up the Mambare and Kumusi. At the end of his tour MacGregor wrote that the district was 'without exception the most

Map 9 The northern rivers



attractive one I have seen in New Guinea'. Between the mountains and the north coast was a fertile plain about 40 miles wide cut by broad rivers. It supported a large population. Several times MacGregor confronted armed parties, and he described their dancing in terms from his homeland (a 'strathspey') and his learning (a 'pas seul'); but he was uncertain whether they danced to intimidate, propitiate or welcome. After their initial suspicion had been allayed, most of the river villagers were prepared to trade; and MacGregor decided they would be 'easy to gain over'. There were land and people on the northern plain, MacGregor decided, to welcome the trader and the planter; but of more immediate consequence, he reported seeing gold in the wash of the upper Mambare, and two of his officers found colours when they tested ground away from the river.

On the Mambare the people had shouted the greeting, 'orokaiva', and the foreigners had assumed it was a password for those who came in peace. Later travellers used it throughout the district and within three years they had applied it to the people as a group name. Away from the Mambare some 'Orokaiva' first heard the term when it was shouted at them by approaching foreigners.

The Orokaiva, loosely related peoples sharing a basic common culture, occupied the land bounded by Oro Bay, Mount Lamington and the headwaters of the Kumusi in the east and north; the hills leading to the great peaks of Mount Victoria, Mount Scratchley and Mount Albert Edward in the west; and the Gira and Eia Rivers in the north. Most of their lands were covered in dense rain forest broken by

patches of grassland and swamp. In the wet season from October to April the rivers flooded, becoming wild torrents on the northern slopes of the ranges and spreading deep and still over thousands of acres of low country. The Orokaiva were constantly clearing forest for new gardens, the abandoned gardens soon disappearing under secondary growth. Their basic crop was taro, but they also cultivated yams, sweet potato, sugar cane and bananas, and harvested the tree crops, coconuts, okari nuts, breadfruit, sago and betel nut. By hunting and fishing they added to their food supply, the most successful hunting taking place at the end of the dry season when the villagers gathered to burn-off patches of grassland and drive the fleeing game into lines of nets held by men armed with spears and clubs. Policemen and labourers from other districts coming to the northern plains for the first time marvelled at the piles of betel nut in the villages, the numbers of pigs, and the gardens often extending for over 100 acres of planted ground. Among New Guinea peoples Orokaiva were rich, numerous and aggressive.

They were constantly forming alliances, fighting, celebrating a victory or gathering a force to fight again. They recognised different classes of warfare: the ceremonial in which opposing lines of spearmen advanced and retreated, challenged and posed, while their leaders engaged in shrill oratory; fighting between clans prepared to wound and kill but where one clan would not attempt to annihilate the other and the victors would not eat the enemy dead; and *gitopo itoro* in which an alliance of clans attacked people from another language group, sometimes attempting to kill all of them, eat their dead, destroy their gardens and occupy their lands. Raiding parties made surprise attacks on enemy villages, but the Orokaiva also met in open warfare with the lines of spearmen clashing, and behind them were the drummers and conchshell blowers, the sorcerers and strategists, and the women screaming encouragement and bringing up more spears. Young men were trained to use weapons and all listened to the clan histories of attack, defence and alliance. At maturity the men were formally presented with their fighting weapons: the long spear, the stone club and the pointed wooden shield wrapped in woven cane. A man made a name by his prowess in war, and the prestige of his group depended on its capacity to fight. If a member of a clan were killed, all the men felt an absolute obligation to seek vengeance. The widows and children of the slain were a constant reminder to the warriors of their obligations; a specific obligation to those who had suffered and a general obligation to the unborn, the living and the dead to maintain and extend the power of the group. A man caught in a hopeless position by a raiding party would call his own name, proclaim his past victories over his attackers and die shouting defiantly of the terrible retaliation that his clan would inflict.

The Binandere, the most northern of the Orokaiva peoples, occupied the central and lower Mambare, the lower Gira and central Eia Rivers. Less than 100 years before the arrival of the Europeans, the Binandere had left the Kumusi and from Eraga, a settlement on the Mambare above Tamata Creek, they killed, dispersed and absorbed the Dogi, another immigrant peoples, and the Girida, who had previously possessed the area. One of the last decisive battles was at Tai Hill on the Eia. Kewotai of the Yema and Waie of the Binandere combined their forces to attack the Girida. The Girida saw smoke from the raiders' fires and a man shouted, 'Who are you?' Waie replied, 'Have you fucked your wife?' implying that he had better for it was his last chance. By watching the pigs enter the stockade in the evening the Binandere and Yema found a way into the village and attacked just before dawn. Some Girida escaped to the tree-houses and fighting platforms, but the raiders piled wrecked houses at their base, set fire to them, and forced the Girida to jump. The Binandere and Yema feasted on the slain.

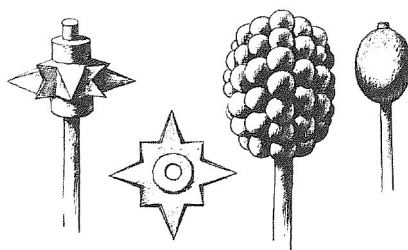
By the time the miners reached the Gira, the Yema too were being absorbed by the Binandere, who were continuing their northward expansion. Fighting parties travelled almost to Salamaua, and Binandere clans had formed alliances with the Suena at the mouth of the Waria for a series of raids against the Zia and Mawai peoples higher up the river. In the south the Binandere were still engaged in sporadic conflict with other Orokaiva peoples. The Binandere took their canoes from the river villages to travel over 100 miles south-east to round Cape Nelson, but they clashed more frequently with their Aiga and Taian Dawari neighbours.

Moresby had named the place where he had fired a shot into a warrior's shield 'Traitors Bay'; to the Binandere it was Totoadari, the place where Totoa, the head man of Girida, had been killed. It was close to Taian Yabari where the Binandere had counted the Taian Dawari dead to make sure that they had killed at least as many as they had lost when the Taian Dawari had attacked them in an earlier raid; and to Dawari Odari, the site of a long-remembered battle. Europeans who entered the Mambare did not merely encounter a 'fiercer race of savages'; they met a warrior people who had occupied the area by conquest. The land everywhere reminded them of other triumphs and defeats. They were bound by the system of 'payback', the obligation to exchange the spirits of the slain; and each clan felt that its survival depended on its ability to maintain delicate alliances.

Sometime before the arrival of the Cairns prospectors the Pure clan had been the strongest on the Mambare. They raided and looted with little fear of counter-attack. Ribe village, the centre of their strength

on the middle Mambare, was said to be so big that the people at one end would only learn of an attack at the other because they heard the blowing of the conchshells. But Dandata, a war leader from higher up the river, secretly gathered a strong force by uniting Binandere clans from above and below Ribe, and calling in allies from the Gira and Waria on the west, and from the Aiga in the east. The Pure of Ribe village, whose heavy spears had for so long knocked aside the shields of their enemies, were overwhelmed and their village destroyed. The Pure survived as sections of other Binandere villages. When the foreigners entered the Mambare many clans along the river were suspicious that the Pure might attempt to recover their position by forming an alliance with the outsiders; or that other groups would exploit the new forces to enrich themselves and destroy their neighbours.

Stone clubs, Papuan South Coast, after Stone 1880



At the end of June 1895, Clark's party entered the north-west mouth of the Mambare and anchored about 2 miles upstream. The villagers near the river mouth were willing to trade, even agreeing to sell the prospectors the canoes that they needed to take some of the load from their one whaleboat. After five or six days the miners had reached the more densely populated parts of the middle river. Large numbers of men, some in canoes and some on shore, began to follow the miners upstream. The Binandere robbed one of the expedition's canoes, but when Clark appealed to Bousimai, recognised by the miners as 'a big chief of the tribe thereabout', the goods were returned. The miners noticed that the crowd accompanying them was increasing and included no women and children. On about 11 July the Binandere threw stones into the camp and Clark ordered them to keep back, supporting his command by firing a shot at a canoe. The expedition encountering rapids at noon the next day, four miners took the end of a rope to haul the whaleboat into clearer water; Clark stayed on board to hold the steering oar. Binandere came forward as they had on previous days to haul on the tow-line; but unnoticed by the miners one warrior cut the rope allowing the whaleboat to rush back into the

following canoes. Jumping into the boat, the Binandere threw the rifles and shotguns into deep water and began looting the trade and stores. Clark fired his revolver into the Binandere then jumped overboard using the side of the boat to protect himself. Tom Drislane, swimming to Clark's assistance, saw Clark hit over the head with a paddle, speared and disappear. The Binandere withdrew without attempting to press their attack on the miners, who were now armed only with their revolvers and two rifles. The two Queensland Aborigines, Tommy and Milori, deserted and were not seen again.

The miners decided to return to the coast. In the villages they heard women crying for their dead, and jeering groups of warriors, gathered on headlands, threw spears at the miners who cleared their path with rifle fire. Believing they were the only foreigners within 100 miles of the Mambare, the diggers suddenly encountered the cutter *Mayflower* 20 miles from the river mouth with seven members of the *Ivanhoe* prospecting party on board. The two parties combined under the leadership of William Simpson to go back up the river. In the villages of the men thought to have been responsible for killing Clark, the miners burnt houses, broke canoes and made 'free use' of pigs and poultry. Beyond the highest Binandere villages the diggers prospected 'likely looking' country to the south-west, then, when most of them became ill with malaria, they rafted back to their highest camp on the river.

At the mouth of the Mambare the miners divided, one group establishing a camp and the other leaving on the *Mayflower* to report the death of Clark and pick up stores in Samarai. A month after the attack, Europeans in south-east New Guinea learnt of Clark's death, and in another month the news reached Cooktown. Ignoring the fact that for several days the Binandere had obviously been gathering their strength and testing the foreigners' power, and that Clark had fired on the Binandere the previous night, Australian commentators saw the killing of Clark as yet another case of the generous and trusting white man murdered by treacherous natives. It was to be quoted by men who wished to show that 'a fatal mistake is made by those who place any reliance on the apparent friendliness of the native races'.

The miners on the *Mayflower* met MacGregor on the north coast: he sailed immediately for the Mambare. On the lower river he found that the Binandere had visited the miners' camp and they were prepared to trade and talk with the government; but higher up the river they were suspicious and hostile. In deserted villages the government party saw goods taken from Clark's boat, and signs that men had been making new weapons. At Eruwatutu armed men pressed forward as MacGregor and the police boarded their boat. Seeing two men about to throw spears MacGregor called to his secretary, John Green, standing

on the bank. Green wrote to his family:

I turned round like a flash and saw a native just in the act of lifting his spear at me. I shot him in the side with my shot gun, and he dropped his spear like a hot iron & off into the scrub. I ran after another man who had a spear and shot him in the seat of honour.

Always determined to show that the government never retreated, MacGregor landed again at Eruwatutu and at another village higher up the river; but having only six police he made no attempt to arrest anyone.

The miners from the camp near the coast left the Mambare with MacGregor, and while the *Merrie England* went on to collect more police and carriers MacGregor took the miners up the Musa by steam launch. The government officers met people anxious to trade for the steel axes and knives which they had heard of but never seen; the miners prospected beyond the highest navigable point but found no gold. On their return to the mouth of the Musa, John Green watched

between thirty and forty large canoes, each full of armed natives, about four hundred fine big men ... all decked out in war gear. In the centre and largest canoe were two men evidently chiefs, each holding a banner made with white feathers fixed on to spears. I called the Governor and we prepared for a fight. But they passed us as if we were not worth looking at. The swish of about 300 paddles in the water and the weird and savage appearance of such a number of men ... was a sight I shall never forget.

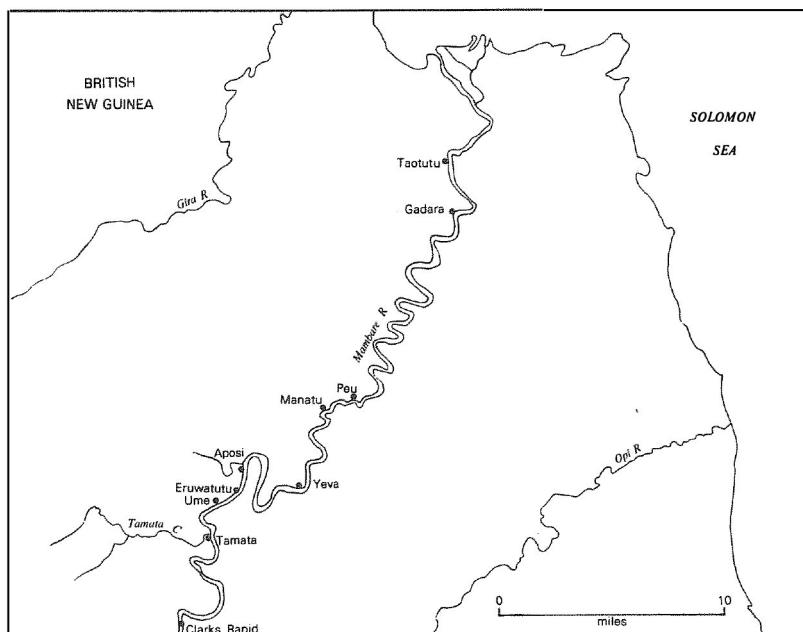
After collecting the additional police from the *Merrie England* MacGregor took a force back up the Musa where they saw gardens devastated by the raiders and in their canoes abandoned against the river bank were 'roast legs, arms, ribs, heads, backbones etc.; some partly eaten'. The government party determined to shoot the raiders 'like pigs'. Having destroyed the canoes, the five white officers and twenty-five black police confronted the warriors. They shot three dead immediately and wounded others as they pursued them through the scrub. Remembering the body of a young girl found in a canoe, her skull smashed and her body prepared for cooking, Green felt no mercy as he fired.

The six men from the Cairns and Ivanhoe prospecting parties travelling with MacGregor must have thought now that even the most lurid stories of brutality in New Guinea were told with restraint; and that the strengthened government force would exact a savage penalty from the communities involved in the killing of George Clark.

But MacGregor did not attempt to crush the Binandere. While he led a party for seven days' walk beyond the point where the prospectors were attacked, the Honorable Matthew Moreton, the Resident Magistrate of the Eastern Division, Archibald Butterworth, the Commandant of Police, Tom Drislane and a troop of police built a camp at the junction of the Mambare and Tamata Creek just above the highest Binandere village. Gradually the number of people coming to the camp to trade increased. They were truculent and bold, selling food to the Commandant, stealing it, and selling it again. Drislane having pointed out some men involved in the attack on Clark, Butterworth ordered their arrest. In a short violent struggle six or seven men were shot dead and another six taken prisoner; they were the first Binandere to wear the government chains. As the steam launch carried them past the upper villages men onshore wept and uttered a 'plaintive wailing shout', which was answered by the prisoners on the deck. MacGregor reported the conflict at the Tamata camp as another example of the one 'thorough and complete' defeat that 'never fails to put an end to fighting in a district'. But the Binandere tell stories that the men who were shot and arrested were from a clan which took no part in the attack on Clark. The fight at Tamata, they say, helped unite the people of the upper Mambare against the foreigners.

MacGregor appointed John Green Government Agent at Tamata to protect the miners moving back up the river and bring the Binandere under government influence. Green was thirty years old. His home was a farm near Healesville in Victoria and in letters to his family he remembered the tennis, football and rifle clubs, playing the organ in the Presbyterian church, concerts at the Mechanics' Institute and 'our blacks' at the Coranderrk Aboriginal station. The family sent copies of the Healesville *Guardian*, the Lilydale *Express* and Saturday's *Age* with their frequent letters; yet more than any of MacGregor's other officers Green was at home in New Guinea. Having arrived there in 1892 hoping to establish a plantation near Kabadi, Green had immediately taken an interest in the men and women who chattered boisterously as they unloaded his goods from a Thursday Island schooner. Sometimes judging his own countrymen by puritanical standards, he was tolerant and curious of New Guineans. When they burnt the grass at Kabadi he joined the men in 'scenes ... wild beyond description' as they tried to net and spear pigs and cassowaries. He was a good bushman, able to endure the climate and willing to eat local foods, but most of all his capacity to talk to New Guineans gave him knowledge and ties unavailable to other white men. Soon after he began work at Kabadi he discovered a talent for mastering new languages, and within three years he could converse in three of the languages of the south coast. On the Mambare he saw that his first task was to acquire the Binandere language.

Map 10 The Mambare 1895



In October 1895 Green, his personal servant, Gamaruya of Fergusson Island, Corporal Sedu of Kiwai and nine constables occupied the four tents enclosed by a log stockade on the point formed by the meeting of the Mambare and Tamata Creek. From the camp Green believed that with his Martini-Henry rifle he could command the 200-yard breadth of the river. The police, who spoke the languages of Kiwai, Mailu, Orokelo and Taupota, could only talk to Green and Gamaruya in Police Motu and a few phrases of English. Later, complying with MacGregor's general instruction, Green insisted on English at all times, fining in tobacco those who used 'broken dialects'. Green, not expecting further stores or instructions until January, began cutting timber for a permanent station with an axe and cross-cut saw, clearing land and planting a food garden, drilling the police, evading the flood waters which crept slowly into the camp after storms on the Mambare headwaters, and trying to build up his contact with the Binandere. All the men at Tamata camp were held together by the knowledge that they were dependent on each other to survive.

Having deserted the camp after the shooting and arrest of the men thought to have taken part in the attack on Clark, the Binandere gradually returned to trade. An old man, Gaina, came in regularly; women brought food for sale; and eventually the young men again

began to visit. At least for a while it was to be *orokaiva*. Green set values in beads, fish-hooks, plane-blades, cloth and axes for food and building materials. At the end of 1895 the Binandere completed the building of their first canoe made with steel tools. Gaina was introduced to *raisi*, *bulamakau*, *kuku*, *kisi kisi* and *si* (rice, tinned meat, tobacco, biscuits and tea). But Green found it difficult to gain influence among the Binandere. After a month he had a list of only forty Binandere words. Knowing that at least twelve men had been shot and six gaoled since Clark's death, Green thought that the Binandere had suffered sufficiently. And he worried that more of them were likely to be killed. They knew that he had shot the two men at Eruwatutu, and nearly every night Green and the police heard the laments in the villages, keeping alive the memory of the dead, and making it impossible for any Binandere men to feel at ease in the presence of the foreigners.

By February 1896 Green was more confident. He believed that the Binandere accepted that the foreigners were going to stay and that he was 'master of the Mambare'. The police went unarmed to some of the villages. But in April Alex Clunas of the Ivanhoe party reported that on his return up river he had been threatened by a large group of armed men at Peu village. The next day Green and the police took the government whaleboat down to Peu. As they approached the village they could see a large crowd of men and 'in handy positions' were 'scores of spears' stuck in the ground close to the bank. Green instructed six police to arrest three men while he and the other police held the rest of the villagers at bay. As soon as the boat touched the bank the police seized three men and, using their rifles as clubs, helped Green drive the rest of the surprised warriors back through the village. Green fired the only shot; he wounded Bousimai in the leg with gun-shot. The police gathered over 400 spears, shields and clubs and burnt them in the centre of the village. A fortnight later when Green returned with the released prisoners, the villagers welcomed their kinsmen and showed their resentment against the foreigners. Green decided to confront the sullen villagers by landing and cooking lunch. As the police prepared to take the boat, away from the bank the Peu fighting men crowded forward. At a warning shout from the police, Green shot a man about to throw a spear. It was a similar incident to the shooting at Erwuatutu twelve months earlier. Again the police occupied the village and burnt all weapons; and this time they stayed on to force the Peu to spend the night in the bush.

Early in August Butterworth and Ross Johnson took charge of Tamata while Green accompanied MacGregor beyond the headwaters of the Mambare to Mount Scratchley and Mount Victoria. Green then returned down river, and took the *Merrie England* to Port Moresby to

meet MacGregor who came overland down the southward flowing Vanapa. Butterworth found that the Binandere were as inclined 'to beat their drums, etc., and to show fight' as they had been a year before. A man from Ume killed a labourer working for the miners, and a large group of warriors attempted to ambush government carriers. Butterworth trapped the Binandere by sending an apparently defenceless canoe-load of carriers up river. When a combined force from Ume and Aposi attacked the carriers, two miners concealed in the canoe protected them by firing over the heads of the Binandere. Then, knowing the home villages of the aggressors, Butterworth landed and destroyed ornaments and weapons, shot pigs and shattered canoes with dynamite.

On his return to Tamata in December Green, the police and a group of prisoners from Samarai gaol began shifting to a new site on Tamata Creek away from the frequent Mambare floods. To obtain materials and labour, and increase contact with the local villagers, Green wanted the Binandere to help build the new station. He could be hopeful that they would. A large group had gathered at the old station on his return protesting friendship with the government; he could now speak a little of their language; and one of his policemen, Dumai, came from the upper Mambare. Arrested at Tamata by Butterworth after the killing of Clark, Dumai had become a prison warder and then a constable. But Dumai had not abandoned his own people when he put on the police *rami*. According to Binandere stories he wept when he saw the children and widows of the men killed when he was arrested; and he told the fight leaders that after seeing the white man's settlement in New Guinea he knew that there were few white men, and that their strength lay in their *epidi* (rifles).

Because of the constant rain at the beginning of the wet, the increase in malaria, and the need to return labourers at the end of their contracts, most of the miners working on the creeks on the upper Mambare took the track down to Tamata. In January 1897 Fry, Haylor and six labourers left by canoe and raft for Mambare beach. A few days later Davies, Steele and Olsen and twelve labourers followed on two rafts. Soon after leaving Tamata they passed jeering, threatening crowds. From one of Fry and Haylor's labourers they learnt the reason for the excitement along the river. While Haylor and Fry had been ashore at Peu, the Binandere had seized their rifles. In desperate flight, the miners and labourers rushed back to the river where Fry and two labourers were clubbed to death on the raft; Haylor and the other labourers escaped in the canoe. The Peu pursued Haylor who was 'bad with fever' and killed him on the beach. The rescued labourer believed that he was the only one of his party still alive. Having kept the 'yelling mobs of cannibals' on the river at a distance, Davies' party camped on the coast to wait for a boat going to Samarai.

Perhaps unaware of the violence down the river Green continued work on the new station. The police suspected that an attack was likely, but Green, who knew that the people from the nearby villages would not work on the station alongside armed men, insisted that the police put their rifles aside. On 14 January the Binandere suddenly attacked. Speaking in Binandere Green called to Dumai: 'I have helped you to sleep comfortably and I have given you good food, and taught you good things for your benefit; but you are not loyal to me, and are here with your people to kill me.' But Dumai did not attempt to stop the warriors. All those working at the new station were killed: Green, Corporal Sedu, three constables, Kess Kess (Green's cook), and three prisoners. The five police remaining at the old camp secured their defence before they could be taken in a surprise attack. Petari, one of the men who took part in the attack on Tamata station, told his grandson that the Binandere laid the bodies in a line and felt triumphant when they saw that the foreigners had not shot as many of their kinsmen as they had killed on that day.

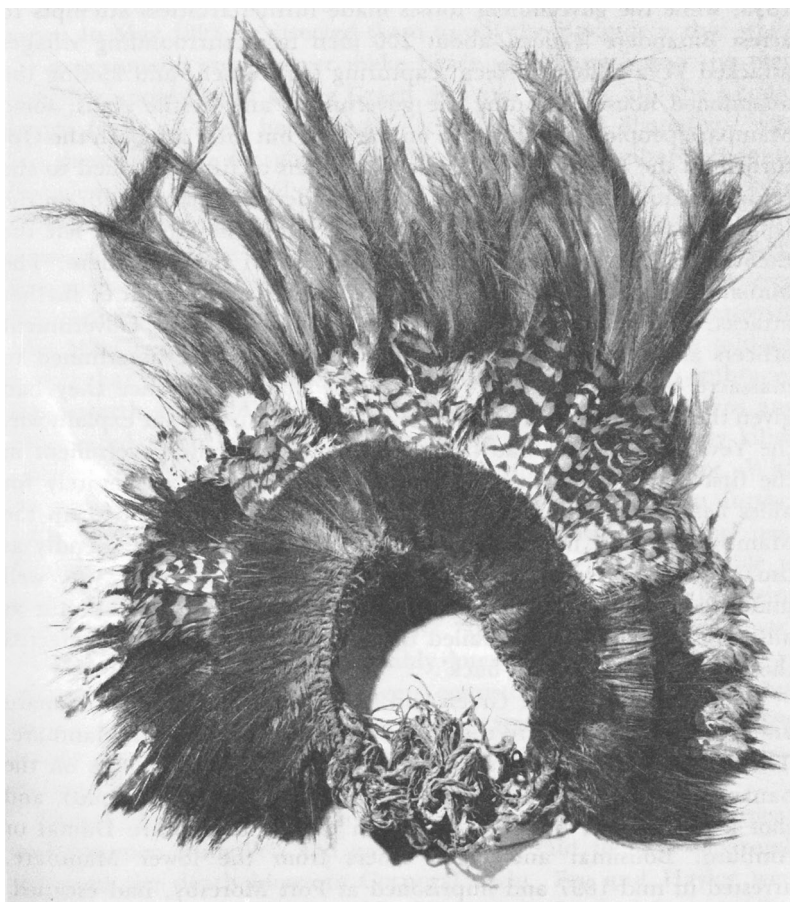
The reports of the violence on the Mambare, which reached Samarai in mid-February and Australia ten days later, were shrill cries of a 'terrible massacre in New Guinea'. Six Europeans, nine police and thirty labourers were said to have been killed. The fate of another three miners and their labourers still on the headwaters of the Mambare was unknown; perhaps they were already murdered. Again there were calls for a 'more efficient lesson' to be handed out and MacGregor, contrary to fact, was condemned for making the country a reserve for the missionaries while keeping it closed to 'enterprise and civilization'. The *Cooktown Independent* took consolation from the thought that the massacre would only mean a delay; the miners were at the front of 'the advancing race before which the native and receding race must eventually disappear'. In Healesville the death of a son in the 'far-off land of savages' cast a 'palpable gloom' over the community; here was further proof of 'proverbial' native treachery. But during the following days the apparent magnitude of the tragedy declined. Three of the assumed dead, Davies, Steele and Olsen, had been in Sydney for a week before news reached Australia of Green's death. When the Binandere had attacked their camp at the mouth of the Mambare, the miners and their labourers put to sea on two rafts. The miners and three labourers on one raft drifted helplessly for several days before landing in German New Guinea, purchasing canoes and reaching a Lutheran mission station. Taken to Sydney by the German cruiser, *Falke*, they were unaware that Green had been killed while they were at their camp on Mambare beach. Nor did they

know what had happened to the nine labourers on the other raft which had become separated at sea. But two at least survived: they identified themselves after hearing their home language being spoken by carriers working for Matt Crowe on the Waria in 1909. Three of Haylor and Fry's labourers were picked up from canoes 80 miles along the coast from the mouth of the Mambare. The three miners on the upper Mambare, a week's walk beyond the highest Binandere village, learnt about the attack on Tamata station from one of their carriers bringing up stores. They were never in danger of attack, but it was another five months before anyone from the lower Mambare knew that they had survived. In all, during January 1897, the Binandere had killed three Europeans (Green, Fry and Haylor), four police, three prisoners and about fifteen labourers.

Again the government was slow to gather its forces. MacGregor was at Boigu in Torres Strait when he heard that Green had been killed, and it was April before he arrived on the Mambare. Moreton had already been to Tamata, but had made no attempt to arrest or punish. The Binandere, MacGregor now conceded, were 'more warlike, pugnacious and cunning' than any other peoples he had encountered. They were also better armed. If the Binandere had retained all the weapons from their victories over the miners and the government, they had up to fourteen rifles and hundreds of rounds of ammunition; and Dumai was trained in their use. The government officers knew that they had kept some rifles for men at Peu and Tamata had fired on Moreton's party. But in spite of the involvement of people from the beach to Tamata in attacks on the foreigners and wide distribution of loot, the Binandere were still divided. On the Gira and at the small villages of Manatu and Yeva on the Mambare the people were prepared to tell the government the names of those who had taken part in the fighting and to accompany government forces on patrols.

After ten weeks on the Mambare and the deployment of fifty police, several white officers and two temporarily enlisted miners, MacGregor could report little success. The acting Commandant of Police, G.H. Livesey, had been most ineffective. On his return from pursuing Binandere warriors across the divide between the Mambare and Gira, Livesey had been unable to say where he had been; he and twenty police had withdrawn in the face of jeering spearmen; two of his four prisoners had escaped; in separate incidents his police had shot and killed an old woman from the upper Mambare and a man from Gadara on the Mambare; and he had suffered frequent attacks of malaria. MacGregor was pleased to accept his resignation. Apart from an occasional shot fired from a distance, the Binandere had not used their rifles: they had frustrated the government, not confronted it.

They always knew in advance when the government men would try to surround villages or trap groups of warriors. Only once the Binandere misjudged the government's strength. A group of warriors taking refuge on the Gira fought the police and lost six dead. MacGregor saw the clash as decisive: they had been 'completely humiliated in the eyes of the other tribes' and it would only be a matter of time before the people along the Mambare were 'pacified'. MacGregor left the area with Dumai, Bousimai, the leader of the people on the lower river, and Amburo Apie, who had gathered the fighting men of the upper villages, still free. To enforce peace and arrest those involved in the January fighting MacGregor re-opened Tamata station and posted a troop of police at the mouth of the Mambare.



Head-dress with bird-of-paradise plumes from Kumusi River presented to the Australian Museum, 1907

PHOTOGRAPH: G. MILLEN, THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

In the two years after the attack on Tamata station many more Binandere died from spear and club than from rifle fire. To the foreigners the dominant encounter was between them and the 'natives'. To the Binandere the clash with the foreigners overlay and complicated older wars and alliances. What mattered most to the Binandere was the strength of one clan or alliance of clans relative to others; and the foreigners were most important because of the ways they changed, and could be induced to change, the strengths of different groups.

Between the attacks on Clark and Tamata station there had been fighting between Gira and lower Mambare peoples, and between the upper Binandere villages and the Orokaiva of the Opi and Kumusi. In 1898, while the government forces made further fruitless attempts to arrest Binandere leaders, about 200 men from surrounding villages attacked Yeva killing thirteen, capturing ten women, and looting the abandoned houses. Evading the government and hostile clans, some Mambare peoples sought refuge on the Opi, but after a month the Opi turned on the Binandere and killed some ten to fifteen. Allied to the refugees who had been attacked, the Binandere of Onombatutu on the Upper Gira crossed the Mambare, raided along the Opi, and left the exchange of the spirits of the dead in favour of the Binandere. The Manatu and Yeva, having suffered great losses and fearful of further attacks, built a temporary village close to Tamata station. Government officers assumed that the marauding Binandere were determined to massacre the Manatu and Yeva because of the assistance they had given the government. That was partly true, but it did not explain why the Yeva and Manatu had been prepared to help the government in the first place. The Manatu, it seems, were looking desperately for allies before the killing of Green. MacGregor on his first trip up the Mambare in 1897 had noted that 'The Manatu tribe was friendly as usual', and three weeks later on the Gira he had found it 'very well understood' that the Manatu were friends of the government. But as allies the government had failed the Manatu: they had not protected them, nor had they 'paid-back'.

Eighteen months after Green had died the remnants of the Manatu and Yeva at Tamata were the only Binandere living on the Mambare. The police, dominant on the river, had harried the villages on the banks, seized an occasional prisoner (usually a woman or child), and shot a few people; but they had been unable to capture Dumai or Amburo. Bousimai and eight others from the lower Mambare, arrested in mid-1897 and imprisoned at Port Moresby, had escaped. Put to work on a road leading north from Port Moresby, the Binandere prisoners had learnt that they were cutting a track to take the miners overland to the Mambare; they left to walk home. Having

crossed the Owen Stanley Ranges they looked down on the headwaters of the Mamba which they followed to their villages near the coast. Two men died of starvation and exposure on the track. A year later Henry Stuart-Russell led the first government patrol to cross the 'Gap', and reported that it would be possible to build a road from Port Moresby to Tamata, a distance of about 140 miles. Another forty-three years later thousands of Australian and Japanese troops followed the same route across the Owen Stanleys; they found neither a road nor a gap, but an endless series of ridges, the same ridges seen by the miners cutting their way up the Goldie in 1878. An Australian journalist in 1942 called the line scarred by soldiers' boots and carriers' feet the Kokoda Trail.

MacGregor saw the futility of his officers' policy of sporadic harassment. In May 1898 he directed them to tell the Binandere that while the government would never make peace with Dumai and the men directly responsible for killing Green, Fry and Haylor, all others could return freely to their homelands. Although Michael Shanahan, who was then directing the government forces on the Mambare, thought that clemency would lead to disaster, most of the Binandere were keen to return and rebuild. Debera was able to convey the government's message. One of the men arrested in 1895 after the killing of Clark, Debera had, like Dumai, joined the constabulary. Having completed the normal two-year period of service for recruits, he now returned with MacGregor to his home in Ume village. When Debera told his people that the government wanted *orokaiva*, an old woman embraced Butterworth and told him that they had no homes, no gardens and they feared attacks from the Kumusi people who had already killed some of them; they needed to be friends with the government. With the people from the lower river constantly on guard against further raids from the Gira, and the Yeva and Manatu sheltering near Tamata, all the Mambare Binandere were scattered and unable to invest the wealth of their gardens in alliances; they were losing strength relative to their neighbours. In transmitting MacGregor's offer of peace Butterworth probably knew that he was making an alliance with the Mambare villagers consistent with agreements they had known in the past; some other officers realised that the Binandere sought peace out of self-interest; and some thought that they had changed their ways because they were becoming 'civilised'.

Dumai, Amburo, Bousimai and the other Port Moresby escapees, and two men from Peu and one from Ume said to have separately delivered the death blows to Corporal Sedu, Fry and Haylor were arrested before the end of 1898. Binandere who had been to Port Moresby or villagers who had entered agreements with Butterworth helped persuade the wanted men to surrender to the police.

Accompanied by fellow villagers, they then met the white officers at Tamata or the beach. Bousimai was released almost immediately as there was little evidence against him; Amburo was returned home in January 1899, taking his betel nut on the platform of his house without any sign of emotion while his people celebrated his release. Dumai and two other men found guilty of manslaughter were sentenced to five years in prison; they suffered the harshest penalty imposed on any Binandere by the formal processes of law.

At first receiving food and seed plants from the government, by mid-1899 the Mambare villagers were selling taro and other garden crops to the miners. New villages were built at Duvira at the mouth of the Mambare, Mowata, Aposi, Ume, Umbogi and Beya. Peu, its inhabitants scattered on the Gira, Mambare and Opi, was the most outstanding of the old villages not rebuilt. At Duvira men were contracting to carry miners by canoe to Tamata at a standard price of an axe per passenger. The Binandere would not carry the miners' stores overland from Tamata to the goldfields; but they strengthened their new alliance by working for the government. Following the outward movement of the miners, the government forces were then coming into collision with peoples on the Kumusi, Opi and Upper Gira. By volunteering to carry for patrols the Binandere associated themselves with government victories, and were sometimes able to loot deserted villages or influence whether the government would have peace or war with the peoples encountered. The very presence of particular Binandere clans with a patrol helped neighbouring groups decide whether they should welcome or fight the 'government'. But those Binandere who took the *dabua* (uniform) and *epidi*, who joined the police, were better able to demonstrate their alliance with the government and direct the government's power.

Taller and blacker than the people of the south-east, the Orokaiva 'looked like fighting men' to Europeans. In 1906 Colonel Kenneth MacKay, recently commander of the New South Wales 6th Imperial Bushmen's Contingent in South Africa, believed they would serve their Commonwealth and Empire with distinction. His review of Australia's resources in its new Territory included the statement: 'what splendid material we have for soldiers in Papua'. Within a few years of the attack on Tamata station most of the police serving in the Northern Division had been recruited locally, and in many villages the leading men were ex-policemen. In 1908 John Higginson, who had served at Tamata station, wrote that the 'local natives' formed the 'cream of the admirable native constabulary'. Over the next thirty years government officers who worked alongside them repeated his judgment.

Related men joined the police: Bia and Barigi, two of the most praised N.C.O.s; Bakeke and Tamanabae, brothers of the man who

killed Clark; Poruta and Oia, Bousimai's sons. Of 'a high order of intelligence', Bousimai exploited his close ties with the government. In 1900 he obtained the assistance of three policemen from the camp on Mambare beach to raid the Gira peoples where they killed one man and looted gardens. Arrested and gaoled at Tamata, Bousimai persuaded his guards to set him free. Poruta, newly recruited into the police force, negotiated his surrender. Impressed by the bearing of the 'powerfully made man' and aware of his predominance in Duvira, Lieutenant-Governor George Le Hunte, educated at Eton and Cambridge, extended the privileges of high birth to a 'chief'. Bousimai was not to be treated like 'a common criminal', but he and his wife were to stay for a period at Cape Nelson station where his two sons were serving in the police. Monckton, the Resident Magistrate on the station, watched Bousimai assume a position of influence:

on his first day at the station, [Bousimai] began by sitting on the steps of my house; on the second day, he had oiled himself into my office, where he sat upon the floor, whilst I did my work or heard native cases, throwing in a little advice at intervals; on the third day, he had made up his bed in my room; and on the fourth day, he had picked up the largest axe on the Station, and was acting as general overseer and adviser.

On patrols Bousimai spoke for the government. In 1901 he was said to have given 'good fatherly advice' to Opi and Kumusi peoples who appeared to hold him in great respect. On the same patrol the police shot some villagers and made friends with others. But Archibald Walker, the Resident Magistrate, who wrote about the 'instructive object lesson' his patrol had given, could not speak the language of the people he was appointed to rule. He could understand only the hoots, derisive laughter and slapping of bare backsides as signs of hostility; and nose-rubbing, boisterous welcomes or pathetic submission as evidence of peace. He could not know the details of the shouted exchanges between patrol members and villagers, nor could he have known that all Bousimai had said was good and fatherly.

At Duvira Bousimai served the government as village constable, briefly commanded the police camp on the Mambare (although the government Secretary doubted that he was fit to hold such office), and after the police were withdrawn he was responsible for the government store near the beach. But he took more from the government than some of its officers thought just. He persuaded the government to protect Duvira. Walker issued an extra thirty rounds of ammunition to each man at the police camp when Bousimai, Poruta and Tein (another leading man of Duvira) explained that the people on the Opi were planning to attack them. In 1904 he was gaoled for three months

for possessing a police uniform and leg irons; presumably the resident magistrate was more concerned about the use of government property than just ownership. Five years later Bousimai killed Anjiga of Bongata village on the Mambare and escaped to Buna where his son, now Corporal Oia, could intercede for him. Having convinced government officers that he had suffered great provocation, Bousimai again avoided imprisonment. But he lost formal power; Poruta succeeded him as village constable. A warrior when Moresby had sailed along the north coast, a leader on the lower Mambare during the conflicts with the foreigners, Bousimai had been able to use the new institutions to pursue old aims and spread his name throughout the Division.

Warfare had ceased on the Mambare by 1899; but over 2000 Binandere on 40 miles of the lower Gira continued to celebrate and suffer after raid and counter-raid. As the miners were not interested in the swampy lands of the lower Gira and they reached the gold-bearing country of the upper river by crossing overland from Tamata, the Gira villagers saw little of the foreigners. Still uncertain of the power of the police, they sent a challenge to the police camp after the Mambare Binandere had decided it was better to join the police than fight them. In 1901, with the assistance of some Mambare warriors who had old debts to pay, the Gira raided the villages of the Zia on the Waria. In spite of losing fifteen killed, the raiders looted villages and brought back canoe loads of Zia dead. This was *gitopo itoro*; but it was now given another name, *kiawa itoro*, a whiteman's war, for the Binandere had used rifles. John Waiko collected and translated the story of the fight from the grandson of one of the raiders:

the men with the rifles waded into the water [of the Waria] until it reached their armpits. They stood in the water with rifles on their shoulders. The other fighters stood on the bank of the river and they beat their drums and sounded their conchshells to match the tune of their war songs.

These attracted the Jia tribesmen to come across like ants in order to kill the Binandere men. But as they came the Binandere men killed them all with the rifles.

A year later ex-constable Ade reported to Tamata that a woman and child had been killed in fighting on the Gira. He was given a Snider rifle and twenty rounds of ammunition to secure peace. But Ade had told less than the truth. Six Waria men returning home from Tamata had been killed at Umuta on the Gira. In retaliation the Waria surrounded Umuta at night, set fire to the houses, killed twenty-six and wounded others. Ade aimed to lead an attack against the Waria, but news of the extent of the fighting at Umuta reached Tamata before he could act.

In 1904 Higginson reported that people on the Gira 'seemed to have settled to civilisation'. The village stockades had been taken down and men from German New Guinea and the Mambare were visiting to trade. The changes on the Gira were not imposed by force of government arms, but by villagers, knowing what had happened to their neighbours, deciding that the old days with their ideals and savagery of warfare had gone.

The Binandere were not a defeated people. Foreigners noticed that they laughed a lot and were generous to each other. They passed cigarettes from man to man, and if one obtained a tin of *bulmakau* (meat) he took a share and handed it on. H. R. Maguire, who surveyed dredging leases on the Gira and Mambare in 1901, said that the Binandere looked you straight in the face and you knew that you were among 'men of the highest calibre — as far as physical perfection, courage, and savage nobility is concerned'.

Believing that the resettling and civilising of the Binandere would be accomplished more successfully with the assistance of teachers of Christianity, MacGregor invited the Anglicans to open a mission station on the river! MacGregor's warning that he could not prevent another mission entering the area if the Anglicans failed to respond may have helped the Anglicans discern 'the guiding of God's hand' directing them to a new field. The Anglicans, still expanding slowly from Dogura in the south-east, had to pass 100 miles of pagan coast to establish St Andrews on the Mamba in 1899. Short of staff and money, the Anglicans found it difficult to maintain an isolated station. The Reverend Copland King stayed from 1900 to 1903 and produced the first texts in the Binandere language, but most of the European staff left after a few months, debilitated by fever. Ten years after the founding of St Andrews the Anglicans could claim only one 'hero of the Mamba', David Tatoo, a teacher recruited from the Melanesian islanders taken to work in Queensland as indentured labourers. Arriving at St Andrews soon after the first mission party, Tatoo did not take leave for five years, and often he was the only missionary on the river. The Anglicans spoke of him with condescension and admiration. He was 'not the most intelligent of our coloured helpers', nor was he as enterprising 'as a white man would be'. His triumph was personal. He had demonstrated the 'grace of perseverance'; he was 'a splendid example of the loyal, self-sacrificing Christian that a South Sea Islander can become by the Grace of God'. About twelve students attended his school, and on Sundays he preached at six places to small congregations. After ten years' work he had made no converts: the Binandere still thought all his talk was 'gammon', and the few children adopted by the mission and educated at Dogura were without

influence at home. The Binandere were to accept the teachings of the Anglicans but in 1910 their celebrations were still much concerned with the warfare that had ended.

Moresby 1876 recounted his voyage along the north coast and MacGregor's dispatches outlining his explorations were printed in the *Annual Reports* of 1890/91 and 1893/94. Both reports included maps.

The comments on Orokaiva history and society were taken from Williams 1928, 1930, Waiko 1970, 1972, Wilson 1969, and Chinnery and Beaver 1917. I am also indebted to Richmond Tamanabae, Joe Saruva and other Northern District peoples with whom I talked either in Port Moresby or in their home areas.

The activities of Clark's party were described by T. Linedale and W. Day (two members) to the *Cairns Argus*, 10 September 1895; A. Symonds, purser on the *Merrie England* to the *Cooktown Courier*, 10 September 1895; and T. Drislane and S. McClelland to M. Jones, Commander of the *Merrie England*, *Annual Report 1895/96*, pp. 15-17. There is an interesting difference in the sequence of events in the various accounts. In the *Cairns Argus* the Binandere began looting, Clark fired on them and then they attacked him. In the *Annual Report* and the *Cooktown Courier* (both probably from the same source) Clark was attacked and then he fired. If the *Cairns Argus* report is correct then loot, and not Clark, was the first concern of the Binandere.

Green wrote of the incidents at Eruwatutu and on the Musa in his letters. MacGregor's dispatches about the same events are in the *Annual Report 1895/96*. Two Binandere have written about the killing of Green, Barereba (Tago) 1964 and Waiko 1970, 1972. An obituary of Green was published in the *Healesville Guardian*, 5 March 1897. Green's letters to his family are detailed and give an insight into his relations with the police, and relations between the men at Tamata and the people in the villages. The escape of Davies, Steele and Olsen is reported in Reichskolonialamt Records (information supplied by Dr Stewart Firth, A.N.U.). Their arrival in Sydney was noted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1897. In *Annual Report 1896/97* MacGregor listed all those who he thought had died on the Mambare. At that time, 28 April, he still included the men who had reached Sydney on 18 February.

There are two well-known accounts of the killing of Green: Lett 1943 and Monckton 1921. Lett explains the attack almost exclusively in terms of Green's 'theory of appeasement': he treated the Binandere too leniently. But Lett has many major and minor errors in his account of what happened on the Mambare. He says that three miners, Patterson, Davis and Steele, left Tamata on 5 January, passed hostile peoples on the river, and put to sea after being attacked on the beach. Green, Lett says, heard a rumour of events down river but did nothing. Fry and Haylor then left Tamata. To this point Lett has made several errors. The three miners were Olsen, Davies (sometimes spelt Davis) and Steele. From the statements the miners made to the press in Sydney and from the reports of the Germans who saw them on the Mambare beach on 14 January it is clear that they followed Haylor and Fry down the river, and that they were still on the beach when, unknown to them, Green was killed. Lett describes the killing of Fry and Haylor, and claims that Green visited 'the scenes of the crimes', but made no arrests. This seems unlikely. Lett says Haylor was killed on the beach, and other sources agree on this point. Had Green gone down to the beach, a journey there and back of about four or five days, he would have seen Olsen, Davies and Steele; but there is no indication that Green and the three miners met on the beach. Also it seems that Fry and Haylor left Tamata on 7 January and Olsen, Davies and Steele followed a few days later. If the dates are accurate, then there would scarcely be time for Green to have gone down to the coast and been back at work on the new station on 14 January. Green may have heard rumours about the

events down the river but he probably had no specific news, nor is it likely that he visited the 'scenes of the crimes'. Given Green's experience in New Guinea, he would have been much more cautious and much less naive than Lett suggests had he known what had happened to the miners. After all Green had shot men on the Musa and had twice used his gun against the Binandere; he did not, as Lett claims, think that the Binandere were 'innocent and harmless children'. Lett concludes his account by stating that Green's 'confidence in native integrity' resulted in six white men losing their lives. In fact Lett only names three Europeans who were killed; and strangely enough that is the correct total.

Monckton is also astray in presenting the sequence of events. He says that the Binandere killed Green and then attacked the miners who 'fled like curs' for the coast; 'five of them were accounted for as being butchered on the way to the coast, but probably others were killed'. All contemporary evidence indicates that the miners were attacked before Green, and the few miners still in the area did not flee. Only two miners were killed on their way to the coast, not five. Later, p. 193, Monckton says that 'Bushimai' had 'killed my brother magistrate'. Bousimai was probably involved in the attacks on the miners, but may not have taken part in the attack on Tamata station. The government officers who investigated the killings did not find evidence that he had killed Green.

Apart from confusing the order of events both Monckton and Lett have many minor errors of detail and fictitious moments of melodrama.

The actions of the government forces after 1897 are given in *Annual Reports* and in some incomplete records from Tamata station. Green's call to Dumai is quoted from Barereba 1964, and Monckton 1921 described Bousimai's increasing influence at Cape Nelson. Two books concerned with the exploits of the Papuan police are Hides 1938 and Lett 1935.

Dabua is Police Motu for 'clothes', and *epidi* is 'rifle'.

The comments on the Anglican mission are based on Chignell 1913, Tomlin 1951, White 1929 and records and pamphlets of the Anglican mission kept in the library of the U.P.N.G.

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