Do the Banaro Really Exist? Going Back After Richard Thurnwald

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ABSTRACT

Between 1913 and 1915, the Austro-German anthropologist Richard Thurnwald explored the Sepik area with the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde expedition. In the last months of his stay, he worked with two Banaro informants and later on published his famous study on that society. Eighty five years after, the only anthropological reference on the Banaro is still his own articles. Bernard Juillerat spent four months among the Banaro in 1989, discussing with the people Thurnwald's analyses on the social structure and the *mundu* partnership. A book was published in French in 1993. This article is a short abstract of the book, where the author discusses Thurnwald's interpretations and gives ethnographic material on men's house ritual and initiation. Some more anthropological information is given on the transformations of Banaro society in the meantime.

The Banaro (who live along the middle course of the Keram River, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea) were the first society in the Sepik River valley to be studied by anthropologists; subsequently, they were frequently cited for purposes of comparison. Nevertheless, the sole reference is still Richard Thurnwald's study (1916, 1921), carried out between 1913 and 1915 in the framework of an interdisciplinary expedition organized by the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde. It may seem surprising that this society, so easily reached since it came under Australian control, has not been visited at length by any anthropologist since Thurnwald, and that, at the end of our century, his texts are still the only reference. To make a comparison with the same region, the Iatmul, after Bateson, were restudied, as were the Chambri and the Mundugumor after Margaret Mead, the Kwoma after J.W.M. Whiting, or the Abelam after Phyllis Kaberry. The purpose of the present article is to make available to English-speaking anthropologists the findings of my own work among the Banaro in 1989-1990.[1]

I would like to do three things:

1) provide some details on Richard Thurnwald's working conditions among the Banaro (which he relates in his unpublished Journal[2]) and briefly set out the scientific objectives that went with the anthropology of his time;
2) correct some ethnographic errors and misinterpretations that appear in his analyses;
3) give some complementary details on Banaro society then and now.

THE CONDITIONS OF RICHARD THURNWALD'S STUDY

Richard Thurnwald was born in Vienna, in 1869. He studied first law and then sociology in Austria, was influenced by Carl Menger and, at the instigation of Ludwig Gumplowicz, acquainted himself with Lester Ward and American sociology. In 1900, he moved to Berlin, where he met Alfred Plœtz and became an assistant at the Museum für Völkerkunde, headed by Felix von Luschar. He initially worked on ancient legal systems while taking courses in ethnology. He was also influenced by Neo-Darwinian currents, by the social psychology of Alfred Vierkandt and Carl Strumpf, and by the experimental psychology that Rivers had just begun practising in the framework of the British Torres Strait expedition, in 1898.[3] During the first Melanesian expedition (1906-1909), organized for him by the Museum, he concentrated on South Bougainville (the Buins) and the Bismark Archipelago (Baining and New Ireland) (Thurnwald 1912). Although his main job was to collect objects and make sound and visual recordings, he took a more personal interest in socio-political organization, exchange and linguistics, as well as in the effects of colonization. The *Schutzgebiet* (Protectorate) was developing a plantation policy based on the distribution of lands to settlers and on the more or less forced enlistment of labor; Thurnwald condemned the perverse effects of the latter. Because he was highly mobile, he rarely stayed in one spot for very long.

The 1912-1915 Kaiserin Augusta Fluss (the German name for the Sepik River) multidisciplinary expedition, was more complex; its purpose, insofar as Thurnwald was concerned, was to explore the Upper Sepik and its tributaries, as well as the coast range. The Berlin anthropologist was exploring the headwaters of the Sepik when war was declared in Europe. Although the colonial government in Rabaul capitulated, Thurnwald was authorized by the Australian forces to continue with his research where he was until a way could be found to evacuate him to Europe. He took up residence at the Marienberg mission (Lower Sepik) with Father Kirschbaum, and an Australian officer found him two young Banaro-speaking informants who had just returned from several years' work in Bukati, near Madang: Yomba, from 'Banaro village' (probably Kevim, in the territory of the central Banaro) and Manape, from Ramunga (present-day Yar, downriver Banaro), both on the Keram River. He worked with his two informants from June to October 1915, at Marienberg, before accompanying them back to their villages and leaving New Guinea, via Batavia, for the United States, where he met Kroeber. In the meantime a large portion of his field notes was lost together with numerous crates, which had been shipped back to the Museum in Berlin. These, then, were by and large the conditions in which Richard Thurnwald did his 'fieldwork' according to his own Journal and to the findings of Marion Melk-Koch (1989).

In 1913, he made his way up the Keram River and its tributary, the Gorogopa, the first time in February, as far as Bungaram, and the second time in April-May, when he set up an isolated base camp between Yar and Bungaram, where he spent five weeks; from there he explored the Upper Keram (the Rao people) as far as the Schrader Range, but was not allowed to spend so much as a single night in a Banaro village owing to the extremely aggressive reception of the population.[4] The Rao, on the Upper Keram, whose fortified villages he admired, were the only ones who received him briefly (Thurnwald 1913). In October 1915, he took Manape back to Ramunga, where he exchanged him for another young man, who was to assist other members of the expedition back at the base camp; in the case of Yomba, the Kevim villagers refused a similar trade, so Yomba was taken back to the Sepik (*Tagenbuchbriefe*).

Given such working conditions, errors in Thurnwald's ethnography and analysis were almost inevitable. At most he could be criticized for not having divulged enough of the details of the conditions of his study. When he got to the United States, he published his article in English (1916), and this served as the basis for a more complete analysis when he

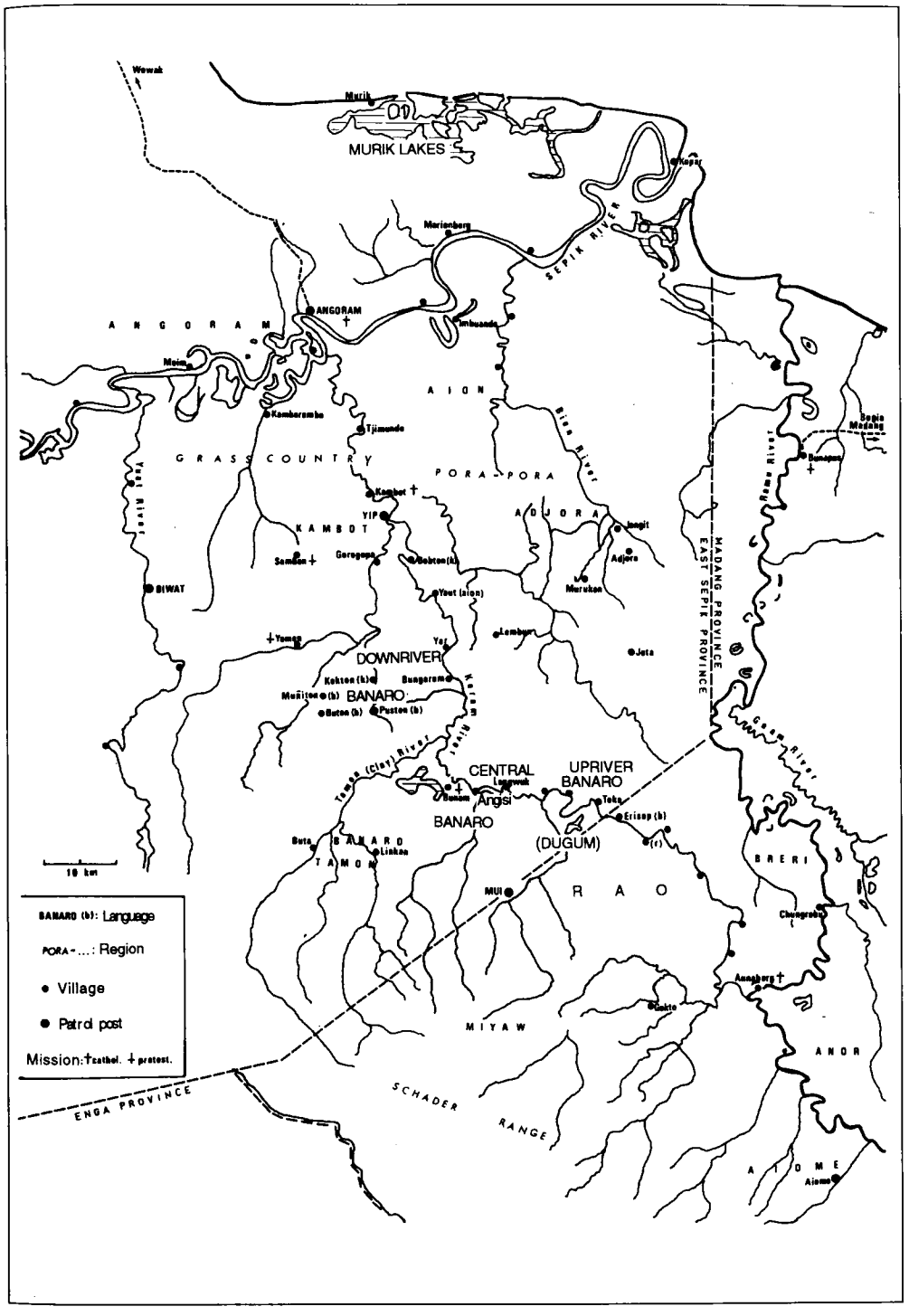
returned to Germany (1920-1921). Thereafter he wrote very little on the Buin or the Banaro for the rest of his career, which he devoted to more general studies on Oceania and on the evolution of social systems in general. He did, however, pay one more visit to the Buin, with his wife, Hilde, herself an anthropologist, and he carried out a mission in East Africa with her as well, in the early 1930s. Although he always denied it, his 'historical' conjectures took on a clearly evolutionist coloration which was not without importance in his defence of the German colonial enterprise.

LOCAL GROUPS AND DESCENT

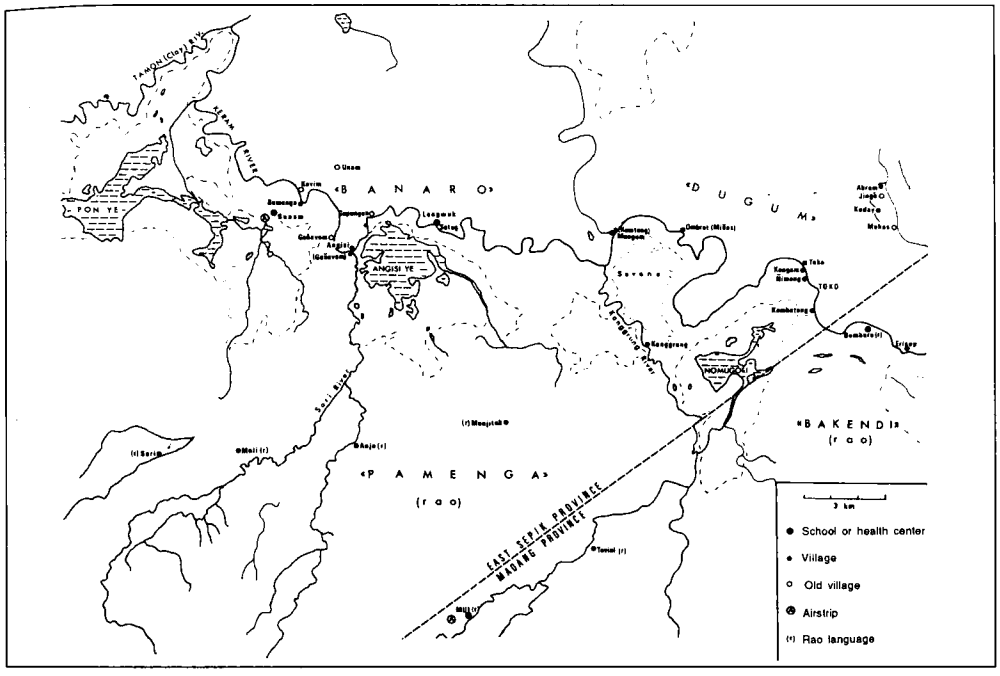
Thurnwald describes the Banaro as a small group, at the centre of the linguistic area today designated by the same term,[5] composed of four villages which were divided, he writes, into between three and six hamlets, each with its own men's house (*buek*, Thurnwald's transcription; *puk*, my transcription). Nowhere does he name these villages. According to my own research, the central Banaro (see map) were indeed designated, by the people on the Lower Keram, by the term *kɔbanaro*, the meaning of which I was unable to learn. The villages concerned were Kevim, Goñavom, Angisi and Gupungen. The village of Unam, a short distance from the Keram on the right bank, must also have belonged to the 'Banaro' group, as must have Nam, on the Sori River, and Omñom, further up the Keram. Today Angisi, Gupungen and Goñavom have been fused into a single village, Angisi, at the mouth of the Sori. Unam merged with Kevim and Longwuk, then Kevim joined with Bunam (a Protestant missionary station with an airstrip) and Bomenga. Today the name Banaro designates both the language spoken between the villages of Yar, downriver, and Erisep, upriver (Madang province),[6] and the census division, the seat of which is Yip (downriver from Yar). The upriver group (from Mungum on), also Banaro-speakers, bears the name Dugum. All groups in this latter region settled at some distance from the river. Thurnwald regarded the four villages as belonging to a single 'tribe' (*Stamm*) called Banaro (which I refer to as the central Banaro).

Nevertheless, he seems to have been mistaken when he spoke of several hamlets per village each having a men's house, and had probably confused them with the downriver villages, Yar and Bungaram.[7] According to information I gathered from elderly men, each central Banaro village had only one ceremonial house, except for Unam which had three and which Thurnwald did not see. Alternatively, Yar (Ramunga) and Bungaram had five and three *puk*, respectively. All of these villages were highly mobile and were rebuilt, together with their men's house, on a succession of neighbouring sites. The new local group (which often underwent demographic modifications on the occasion of the move) would then be given the name of the place formerly occupied, and so on. The *puk* also had a name, which could be that of the village or of the fraction of the village it governed. Cognatic reckoning does not create corporate groups and people identify with the ancestor's name from whom they trace their descent.

Thurnwald (1916) regarded each 'hamlet' that had a men's house as forming a patrilineal clan (*gens*). He qualified this statement in his 1921 German text by speaking of *Klan* 'in the strict sense of the word' and 'in the broad sense', but it is not clear what he meant by the distinction. The 'clan in the broad sense' seems to be the equivalent of a local group endowed with a men's house. In fact, he rightly stresses the importance of local groups. It must be said that cognatic or bilineal descent reckoning was not theorized at the time. Another notion, closely linked at the time with the idea of unilineal groups, is that of exogamy. Each Banaro 'clan' is given by Thurnwald as strictly exogamous, which at no time corresponded to reality according to present-day Banaro informants.[8] Furthermore, Thurnwald frequently uses the term 'sib' (Ger. *Sippe*), which seems to mean something close to 'clan moiety' (1921: *Klanhälfte*), since he distinguishes two 'sibs' per men's house and again uses the term in analyzing ritual exchanges between *mundu* partners (see below).



MAP 1: Lower Sepik and Keram river area.



MAP 2: Middle Keram area: Central Banaro and Dugam

My fieldwork did not reveal any unilineal groups, except among the Dugum (specifically in Miñas [Ombrat]), where people tend to give their genealogies as agnatic lines sometimes designated by the name of the apical ancestor. But it seems that this patrilineal-like structure is simply a consequence of the patri-virilocal residence pattern. Elsewhere, the Banaro construct their genealogies in an undifferentiated line, preferably having some connection with a prestigious immigrant ancestor. These ancestors, most of whom came by canoe from the Sepik and even, according to tradition, from Manam Island,[9] brought their *morom* spirits with them and founded individual local groups and *tambaran* cults.[10] The migrants penetrated the region using the secondary waterways that are typical of this frequently flooded zone. They situate themselves somewhere between the sixth and the eighth generation, however if they really do have a historical reality, they must be much older.

The history of each local group can be summed up as the story of a migration and the founding of the first village, followed by local micromigrations, divisions and fusions, feuding and the founding of a succession of other sites, each endowed with a men's house. There are myths to explain the reason for each move (war, feuds, food problems). The first incoming groups are said to have found an uninhabited land, whereas following immigrations often had to contend with the previous settlers. The Dugum are believed to have been the last group to arrive, from the Sepik. At that time, the upriver groups lived relatively far from the river, but they entertained relations with the Rao, to the south, on the Upper Keram and at the foot of the Schrader Range. The first villages were built some distance from the Keram and in the interfluvial zones, where some hamlets can still be found today. They moved closer to the Keram River under the Australian administration.

While the genealogies have a clearly cognatic character, a double unilineal structure can be seen in the transmission pattern of the totems, called 'birds': *gora* in Banaro or *pisin* in Melanesian Pidgin. These totemic units, which extend well beyond the Banaro-speaking groups, are strictly exogamous, even if no actual blood ties can be established. Curiously enough, although Thurnwald was interested in the problem of totemism, a fashionable ques-

tion at the time, he does not report anything on Banaro totemism, with the exception of a hypothetical link between 'sibs' and totems. He stresses the pairing of totems – since he regards the so-called moieties of 'clans' and men's houses as 'sibs' (*Sippen*) – and speaks of 'linked totems' (1916, 1917-18, 1921), sometimes hierarchized and sometimes ranked by opposite-gender pairs.

In reality, belonging to a, or rather to several, *gora* is nothing like belonging to a clan. The totem is transmitted according to a bilineal rule,[11] with a boy receiving his father's *gora*, and a girl, her mother's; this applies to the person's main totemic identification. In addition, each individual has a secondary affiliation with his opposite-sex parent's totem as well as with the totem of his or her mother's father and his or her father's mother. One could not choose a spouse with the same primary *gora* or the same secondary *gora*, even if there was no known genealogical connection between the two people and they belonged to different linguistic groups. Nowadays marriage is tolerated with someone affiliated with the same grandparent totem but which is different from that of the father and the mother; in fact today's Banaro often does not know the *gora* of one of his grandparents.

It seems that, before Christianization,[12] totems had a religious significance and were associated with the *morom* spirit brought by the migrant ancestor or adopted from another local group. The Banaro I encountered did not seem to connect their *gora* with religion, but, according to the Dugum, it could nevertheless make them ill. A person's *gora* is not, however, systematically identified with his or her founding ancestor: far from it, since each person is related cognatically with a purported ancestor. Alternatively, there are still traces of a connection between totemic affiliation and land rights, in the form of hunting and fishing arrangements between local groups.[13]

Independently of any person's or group's totemic affiliation there is a dual hierarchy among totems, at least in the case of the upriver Banaro (Dugum). For instance, an old man from Toko gave me the following totemic structure, in which Pig and Cassowary are the two main totems of this group.

CROCODILE (*som*)	
CASSOWARY (*bon*)	PIG (*tɔ̀ma*)
To'ot bird	Crowned pigeon (*mangraN*)
Mama tree	*Tɔ̀mbɔ̀n* tree
Ramnana bird	*Krok* bird (egret)

A system of associations justifies this hierarchy, which is arranged vertically in space: birds drop seeds, which are eaten by the pig and the cassowary, while the 'mother' of them all (the crocodile) lives underwater; furthermore, the *tɔ̀mbɔ̀n* tree secretes an oil that pigs rub on themselves to heal wounds; the *mama* tree (*garamut* in Melanesian Pidgin) is called the cassowary tree, the *ramnana* bird, the *mama*-tree bird. A similar model from the village of Mungum does not have an all-inclusive category:

CROCODILE (*som*)	PIG (*tɔ̀ma*)
Cassowary (*bon*)	Flying fox (*tɔ̀ngɔ̀n*)
Calao (*ngangbara*)	Crowned pigeon (*amngran*)
Mango tree(*toran*)	*Tɔ̀mnɔ̀n* tree
Meyo tree	Iron tree (*kɔ̀ndañ*)

The totems that head the list are called *gora me-sii*, 'totem head'. In Toko, some men claimed that this dual division used to correspond to the two longitudinal divisions of the men's house (see below). Others maintained that the *puk* had only transversal divisions. Thurnwald's postulate presupposing the existence of pairs of totems is therefore not entirely wrong. Yet this binary system is not confirmed among the central and downriver Banaro.

On the other hand, a Rao man married to an Angisi told me that, in his natal village (at the foot of the Schrader Range) – and Aloys Kasprus (1973:23) reports similar information for the Rao on the Middle Ramu – there used to be exogamous moieties, each of which had a certain number of totems, which seemed to be classified by sexual gender.

J.M. Stanhope (1970) defines Rao social structure as being characterized by matrilineages grouped into named totemic clans, which are themselves divided into two non-named moieties; but he also points out that the patrol officer J.B. Moyle reported, in 1936, that certain upriver Rao groups (on the Ramu) were organized into totemic moieties, Crocodile and Cassowary, each composed of between five and seven matriclans with their own secondary totems.[14] The Rao influence on the Banaro-Dugum seems clear.[15] Among the central and downriver Banaro there are also other, unpaired *gora*: Sun, Sago palm, Python and so on.

MEN'S HOUSES AND THE *TAMBARAN* CULT

It is difficult to describe Banaro men's houses with exactitude; the last of them disappeared shortly after the Second World War, in the case of the central and downriver Banaro, and in the late 1950s, for the Dugum. Initiations were abandoned at the same time (in Toko, the last initiation is said to have been held in 1956). Previously a Catholic missionary, Father Schwab, had already confiscated all the sacred objects from the downriver and central Banaro, leaving the men's houses empty.

The downriver Banaro probably built their men's houses on the same model as those of the Kambot, on the Lower Keram, a few examples of which could still be found recently. The central and upriver Banaro's men's houses (*puk*, which Thurnwald transcribes as *buek*), were buildings some 40 metres long with a veranda by which one entered.[16] Thurnwald describes the *puk* as being divided lengthwise into two sides, *tan* and *bon* (I prefer to spell them *ətan* and *əpon*), which he translates as 'right' and 'left', but which actually mean 'upriver' and 'downriver'. The *puk* were built at right angles to the river, thus putting one of the two longitudinal divisions upstream and the other downstream.[17] The same terms were also used to designate the upriver and the downriver parts of a hamlet and, when there were two men's houses in the village, the upriver *puk* and the downriver *puk*. Thurnwald (1916, 1921) provides a rough ground plan of a men's house, but it remains only an approximation. In reality, he was probably unable to visit a *puk* and drew up his floorplan from incomplete information.

My situation is no better, but I was able to obtain the following information for the central Banaro. The men's house had one big room with a fireplace in the centre; near the entrance and at the far end were altars in the form of niches containing small carvings of the gods, *bəka morom* (literally, 'wood/deity') that the men of a family worshipped (offerings of first fruits, prayers, anointing, etc.); mosquito bags lined the side walls; at the rear of the *puk*, a space separated by a partition (reached by a narrow corridor on either side) sometimes held a particularly sacred sculpture and was reserved for a minister of the cult;[18] no one was allowed to gaze directly on this *bəka morom*. The ritual bamboo flutes (*pepot*) that were played in pairs or in threes were stuck in the roof thatching. The *puk* also held a few small slit-gongs (*pəngarəset*), while the large ones (*kropəkə)* were kept under the flooring. Among the Dugum, the men's house also had long bamboo tubes, three or four metres in length, which they sang into during rituals.

Morom are nature spirits, almost always male, named, generally of aquatic origin, but who have represented the law of the ancestors ever since they were captured, as it were, by men and taken back to the *puk*. They are distinct in all ways from bush spirits (which possess mediums, are not associated with the cult of the men's house and are termed *koñim* [Melanesian Pidgin, *masalai*]). When groups migrated, they would take their gods with them; in other cases, the *morom* might be stolen in the course of war, or bought. The same spirit might be represented by different *bəka morom* and worshipped in more than one men's house.

The important deities were venerated by local groups, or more specifically by a family group; less important *morom* belonged to a single individual. When a spirit gained prestige (for example by bringing his protégé(s) success in war), a larger group would rally to him. Thus the spirits' renown was shared by the groups. The link between a *morom* and a group could be legitimated by a myth that told how the god had been found. This social history of the *tambaran* no doubt explains how they came to be ranked, something like totems. For instance, among the Dugum-Banaro, the Dambo *morom* has a high rank, and a myth explains his primary association with men and the invention of initiation rites, which he taught the society. He is called *me-sii morom* (head *morom*) because he stands at the top of the hierarchy of a group of spirits connected with him.

As I said above, a *morom* was theoretically associated with a totem, and with one of the sides of the *puk*, *ətan* or *əpon*. His owner belonged to the same side, on which he slept. Most middle-aged Banaro could tell me the side of the *puk* they used to belong to. This dualism was more symbolic and ritual than sociological though. When a *puk* had more than two totems, the longitudinal division of the men's house gave way to a transversal subdivision into as many units as were needed. My hypothesis would be that the original division had two totems per *puk*, one for the upriver half, the other the downriver half, but that when other migrant groups introduced new *gora* and *morom*, the men's house had to be reorganized. According to Thurnwald's descriptions, the lengthwise division was still in use at the time of his stay. But he is wrong to attribute stable sociological values to it.

Among the Dugum-Banaro, the most important ritual concerning the *morom* involved going to their ponds and drawing them out by the music of the long bamboo tubes, after which the men would take them back to their *puk*. There the gods were supposedly invited to partake in a lavish feast prepared at home by the women; the *morom* were reputed to assume the form of enormous humans and to have a prodigious appetite. It was because of this presumed fleshly form as it was explained to Thurnwald that he chose to call these spirits 'goblins' (in German *Kobold*). After a few days of feasting, to the detriment of the women's chores, the *morom* were bid farewell with languid songs and sent back to their natural home. The men would cut down a few arecas and coconut palms and would make huge footprints to fool the women and children. Aside from these festivities and initiation rites, the gods were asked by their various owners to ensure the fertility of their gardens, their success in hunting and in war, or their recovery from illness. The *me-sii morom* were also consulted for collective undertakings such as war; in this case divination was performed by one of the *puk* leaders. One man assured me he had been preserved during the war in the Pacific, where he served in the Allied navy, thanks to his *morom*, whose name he shouted whenever he was in danger.

GERONTOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP

In speaking of the forms of power found among the Banaro, Richard Thurnwald (1919) uses the expressions 'gerontocratic democracy' or 'Papuan gerontocracy'. He saw in the 'local clan' – let us say the residential or local group assembled around a men's house – the embryonic form of the Nation-State. Like the men's house, 'the State is a male organization designed to provide protection without and order within' (1921: 247). Power is not inherited in Banaro society; it is acquired through merit and in accordance with a person's qualities. Society thus filters out the best men to carry responsibility. Thurnwald (1926) calls this 'sifting' (*Siebung*). He believed that the community attached to a men's house would be governed by a few mature men. Thurnwald saw their power as covering exchange of women, allocation of land (which is incorrect, given that land rights are collective and inherited), warfare and peace, organization of initiation and religious ceremonies. They also decided on the young bride's attribution to an elder for her sexual initiation.

My short field study yielded the following details and rectifications. In Banaro, these

leaders are called *kiyegre* or *o¥ap*, the latter term meaning 'big' (see n. 22). For the *puk*, however, one man was singled out as the founder, the *puk me-ñoa* (*ño(a,)* meaning 'father'; this was the man who had presided over the erection of the centre post (*ro*) of the men's house, which was often taken from an earlier building with which it was identified.[19]Although it was not an inherited function, the title of *puk me-ñoa* usually passed to the eldest son or to an agnatic nephew, or even a sister's son. As Thurnwald points out, however, personal qualities still weighed heavily in the choice. Fight leaders, for instance (who exercised their skills in pairs) were usually *puk me-ñoa*, although there was no necessary connection between the two functions. It is still an open question as to whether or not *puk me-ñoa* are like 'big men', in the anthropological sense of the term. My informants claimed that there was no rivalry between them: they maintained that competitive exchanges did not exist and that they merely invited the men from the other *puks* to their *morom* or initiation ceremonies. Alternatively, social prestige depended heavily on controlling large herds of domestic pigs, the principal sign of wealth in the old Banaro society.[20] But such indications are visibly intended to portray an idealized society and might well hide actual rivalry between men's houses, which may have then been expressed during festivals and ceremonies. To pig herds as a sign of prestige must be added the cultual control of a famous and therefore coveted *morom*.

More generally, Banaro society accords special status to the eldest male sibling, called (*me-*)*sii* ('head'). He is responsible for organizing the economic and ritual activities of the sibling group; in former times, he was often polygynous. To exercise responsibilities, one must have fathered children. In most cases, the *sii* of the sibling group had a better chance of acquiring an important rank within the society, although this was not an absolute rule.

The opposition Thurnwald drew between the Banaro (no hierarchy, practice of sister-exchange) and the Buin of Bougainville (chiefs, practice of marriage with brideprice paid in shell-money) contributed to his evolutionist reconstruction of Melanesian societies (Juillerat 1993*a* and *b*).

INITIATION OF BOYS[21]

The Banaro used to perform their initiation in the dry season and in a single grade. In order to initiate his son, a man had to dispose of a sufficient number of domestic pigs. Wild-pig hunts were organized as well. All the boys of one men's house between the ages of 9 and 13 (*kuli*) were initiated at the same time. For the central Banaro, the guests would come from all local groups, as far away as Longwuk and even upriver as far as Konggrung. The Dugum, on the other hand, remained outside these exchanges and organized their own initiations.

Among the central Banaro, the *puk* would be renovated, and then, the night before the boys' admission, co-initiate partners (*ambo*) would exchange wives. Only then were the guests invited into the *puk*, which could hold a good hundred men. A big meal was shared, while the boys waited at home with their mothers. Earlier each boy had been chosen, in agreement with his father, by a man from the same men's house, who would become his 'sponsor'; this could be the mother's brother or another maternal kinsman. The boy's father had a reciprocal duty to the son of his own boy's sponsor. The sponsor and the novice called each other *ange*. At around five in the afternoon, each sponsor would take his protégé on his shoulders and carry him to the men's house, around which a tall fence had been built.

The initiates (called *kuliñaN*) were struck and singed with firebrands by non-kinsmen. Then they were sat down in two facing rows, according to their father's moiety: *ðtan* or *ðpon*. Each boy became the *ambo*, the co-initiate, of the boy opposite him. The flutes, and for the Dugum the long bamboo tubes, were played before them and laid on their navel; but they did not yet learn to play the instruments. Nor were they allowed to see the *bðka morom*, which were left in their niches.

Among the Dugum, the *kuliñaN* were kept awake during the first night of the initiation by speeches from non-kinsmen known in the area for their wisdom. These lessons (*mik-re* 'ancestral message', or *skul*, in Melanesian Pidgin) taught them to be hospitable, generous and faithful to their wives. The speeches were punctuated by the refrain: 'You are to obey my law'. At dawn, two men wearing the *tinbit ñangoN* masks (associated with the dominant *morom*), would emerge from the far end of the *puk* and set about striking the boys and pretending to be about to sodomize them. They embodied the phallic maternal figure, Yambukut. The following day, the novices began a several-month-long period of seclusion in the men's house, during which they were subjected to a number of taboos, among which were drinking cold water, touching their own body or speaking to adults; they were required to sit with their legs extended in front of them (opposite of the fetal position?). At the end of the seclusion, the initiates donned a special belt and underwent a few rites, among which were purification by being washed with sago, being shown the bull-roarer (*virmup*) played in the bush, being taught urethral bleeding using a prickly vine (a practice the Banaro say was borrowed from the Rao).

During the year following their initiation, the *kuliñaN* would sleep in the *puk* and avoid approaching women and any contact at all with their mother. In the daytime, they would work with their family, but would be given a meat-rich diet, as they were supposed to put on fat. At the close of this period, they would exchange their initiate's apparel for a man's loincloth made of beaten bark.

THE WOMAN'S STATUS

Thurnwald's tendency to see Banaro society as an example of a 'democracy' run by a few elders led him to the rather hasty conclusion that men and women took a largely equal share in the economic tasks, which he sees as complementary (1921: 53-57). But he also writes that the Banaro hunter 'brings back [to his wife and children] the leftover kill, whatever he has not eaten himself or used for the male ritual' (1921: 57). This points to the precise location of the dietary aspect of inequality, which Thurnwald refused to see. Male sovereignty does not lie in the exercise of 'formal authority' or in the threat of legal sanctions; it is an integral part of the social system and owes its effectiveness to the tacit consent of the women and young boys. Thurnwald's functionalist view of the internal solidarity of the local group kept him from recognizing the inequality between the sexes, which is inseparable from the institution of the men's house and the *tambaran* cult.

Today's Banaro men spontaneously acknowledge that yesterday's men lied about the physical presence of the *morom* (and their prodigious appetites) in order to get the women to prepare lavish meals. And today the old women say they believed in the *morom's* physical existence and are somewhat resentful about the past. The men (especially the Dugum) however take pleasure in recalling these memorable times when they ate like kings, even though they seem to feel some guilt about it, expressed with missionary words like sin, lies, even Satan. The Annaberg mission, which covers the Dugum territory, probably played a large role in ending male domination in the 1950s. Because of this, in 1987 the men of Toko decided to reveal the truth to the women by playing the flutes in public. In another Dugum village, Miñas, the men assured me, in 1989, that they had still said nothing to their wives because they feared reprisals from certain still-powerful *morom*, despite the fact that the area had been Christianized for some time: 'Our sons will tell them the truth'.

The girls' initiation was not highly elaborated; it consisted of only one set of rites, when a girl menstruated for the first time. The *njuta*, as she was called, was shut away in a special hut. The family would gather around the menstrual hut, and each person would spit betel juice onto the others (the association between betel juice and menstrual blood was denied, however, by the Banaro I questioned). At the end of the seclusion period, the girl's father would kill a fattened pig and distribute the meat to those who had been marked with

the betel juice. When the girl emerged from the hut, her head was shaved; she was bathed and her body decked with ornaments. The rite included advice from the oldest women on the girl's future wifely duties; this was the women's *mik-re*. Today, at least among the Dugum, the girl is still isolated when she menstruates for the first time, but in her own home.

Thurnwald writes that female initiation occurred shortly before marriage. The age for marriage must have increased since then, though, for today the Banaro say that a man should marry a woman whose breasts are already heavy, the only way to be sure she will be able to nurse her first child.

KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Thurnwald did not provide detailed information concerning marriage rules. The different kinds of marriage were not well known at the time, and kinship studies focused mainly on terminologies. I noted that kinship terms vary considerably between the downriver Banaro, the central Banaro and the Dugum, and even from village to village. In addition, the (incomplete) sets of terms that I recorded often do not correspond to those given by Thurnwald. Therefore I cannot provide reliable documentation for this area.[22]

Concerning kinship behaviours (which Thurnwald does not mention), I noted among the central Banaro a taboo (*regram*) still in force between the eldest brother (*aye*) and his younger brother's (*ne*) wife.[23] This applies to cousins as well. A similar prohibition governs relations between a man and his daughter-in-law. Furthermore, the younger brother's or cousin's wife is called by the same term as the daughter-in-law (*ngom*), while the older brother's (cousin's) wife is called 'mother' (*maye*). The older brother may not speak to or take food from his younger brother's wife; when she is present, he enters the house by stepping on breadfuit leaves. In addition cross cousins in general are said to exhibit avoidance behaviours, whereas parallel cousins are said to entertain a joking relationship.

As far as marriage goes, all the Banaro I talked with stressed the imperative character of sister-exchange, which is what Thurnwald had reported. They also confirmed that the ideal is to have the same number of children of each sex, in order to facilitate their marriage; this is probably one of the functions of the frequent practice of adoption, which makes it possible to balance the sex-ratio of the sibling group. The infanticide reported by Thurnwald was another, more radical, solution practised by the central Banaro. When sister-exchange is not feasible, it is possible to pay the fiancée's brother a fee of ten or so pottery vessels.[24] A man who has given his sister without receiving in exchange a woman or compensation has the right later to ask his uterine niece's husband for coconut and areca cuttings; this deferred compensation creates a special relationship between the two men, called *aNtse*.

One of the points that made Thurnwald's analyses famous, aside from the sexual services between partners (see below), was the double sister-exchange between homologous moieties ('sibs', *Sippen*) of two men's houses or 'clans' (*gentes*, *Kläne*). Direct double exchange involves four marriages, each of which unites two spouses belonging respectively to the homologous moieties (*ðtan* or *ðpon*) of two men's houses. For instance: a man from the *ðtan* moiety of men's house A gives his sister to a man from the *ðtan* moiety of men's house B, who gives him a sister in exchange; conversely, in the second exchange, a man from the *ðpon* moiety of men's house A exchanges his sister for the sister of a man from the *ðpon* moiety of men's house B. In principle, the *mundu* (ritual exchange partner) of the bridegroom's father is in each case the father of the bridegroom from the other moiety of the same men's house (Thurnwald 1916, 1921).

Yet, with the exception of Yar village, where I was told that this is indeed a sought-after but rare form of marriage, I found no confirmation of double sister-exchange ever having been practised or even desired. Today marriages can be made between any two individ-

uals provided they do not share the same totem and were not first- or second-degree cousins; I found no confirmation of any reference to the *ətan/əpon* moieties of the men's house with respect to marriage. I was told a man could marry a woman whose father and brothers belonged to the same *puk* and even to the same longitudinal side, provided the marriage rules were respected. The genealogies I recorded confirm total liberty with regard to the spouses' residence. What Thurnwald alternately confirms and questions for the Banaro is the repetition of marriage by exchange between two same lines from one generation to the next, which would be the equivalent of marriage with the bilateral cross cousin.[25] As for the residence pattern, it was and still is primarily patri-virilocal, although one can see relatively frequent uxorilocality.

The model constructed by Thurnwald in his two texts on the Banaro led not only Günter Guhr[26] but also Paula Rosman and Abraham Rubel[27] to believe that marriage linked two 'clans' (two *puk*) and thus created a stable pair, in other words, two intermarrying classes. Now, although he was not clear on a number of points, **nowhere did Thurnwald say anything of the sort**. His diagram (1916: figs. 92 and 94; 1921: pp. 19 and 36) is merely an attempt to formalize the particular example of an ideal double sister exchange and the sexual services between *mundu* (partners) this entails. **The Banaro have therefore never had a 'double dual system'** and marriages are not duplicated from one generation to the next between two moieties, as Rubel and Rosman's model shows. The marriage pattern was probably not (even in Thurnwald's time) organized with respect to the local groups affiliated with a *puk* – these, we have seen, are neither unilineal nor exogamous – but only with reference to affiliation with a totem and degree of consanguinity. The only dual organization I managed to discover (of which no trace remains today) had to do with the men's houses being ritually subdivided into two sides *(ətan/əpon)* sometimes connected with division of the totems into opposing groups (see above).

THE *NDU*[28] PARTNERSHIP

Here a rapid review of Thurnwald's material is in order. According to Thurnwald, once a marriage by exchange had been arranged, the girl had first of all to have intercourse secretely, in the men's house and at night, with a mature man, until she became pregnant. She could not live with her husband-to-be until she had given birth to this first child, called the *moroms'* child (*moro-me-mean*) [Thurnwald] or *morom mana-mean* [my transcription]). The biological father remained anonymous and was called 'father of the *tambaran*' (*moro-mi-nio* [Thurnwald] or *morom me-ñoa* [my transcription]); he is supposed to have continued to have a sexual right to the young woman on ceremonial occasions even after her marriage. The woman's husband became the child's social father. In the event of simple sister-exchange, the bride's sexual initiator was chosen by consensus among several influential men, but when the exchange was double, Thurnwald claims that each bride's initiator, acting on behalf of the *morom*, was the groom's father's exchange partner, *mundu*, from the other half ('sib') of the same men's house. The exchanges themselves, as stated above, took place between two homologous moieties (*ətan* or *əpan*) of the two different *puk*.

On the eve of the first sexual relation, the girl's future father-in-law would conduct her to the men's house and there hand her over to his *mundu*. The relationship between *ndu* passed from father to son, so that, in principle, the groom would become the *ndu* of his father's partner's son. *Ndu* are also supposed to have exchanged wives ritually on certain ceremonial occasions. Let us keep in mind that Thurnwald establishes a temporal and institutional continuity between the initiation of the future spouses, the initiation of sexual relations between the girl and a representative of the *morom* and finally marriage by (double) exchange.

What do today's Banaro have to say about this institution, as it was analyzed by the Austro-German anthropologist, and what variants emerge, from my study, between the three

main zones of the Banaro linguistic area? As this institution had obviously been watered down under the influence of Catholic missionaries and had certainly disappeared altogether, along with the men's houses, shortly after the war, it is understandable that the memory today's Banaro have of it is no longer very clear. On the whole, my informants acknowledged the practice of wife-exchange between *ndu* as well as the ritual deflowering in the *puk* of the nubile girl or the young bride. Wherever I went, though, everyone denied that the bride continued to have intercourse with her initiator or that custom dictated that she have a child by him. Nor could I find any confirmation of the relative position of the *ndu* in the moieties or the transmission of the right from father to son; today's representation is that the sexual initiator was chosen in a fairly arbitrary manner.

The details given me by the downriver Banaro (Bungaram and Yar villages and those on the Gorogopa River) came closest to Thurnwald's material, although he claimed to be writing exclusively about the 'Banaro' proper (i.e. the central Banaro). After some hesitation, they confirmed that *ndu* came from two moieties of the same *puk*, but added that a man might have other *ndu* in other men's houses. They said that the relationship was passed on from father to son and that two brothers could be the partners of the same man. This institution, I was told, must be clearly distinguished from the special relationship between co-initiates (*ambo*) in the same *puk*. Nevertheless, two boys, sons of *ndu*, could bolster each other's morale during the initiation ordeals.

The initiator of the young bride would have intercourse with her only once, at night, in the men's house, in front of the altar of his *morom* (and not before the sacred flutes, as Thurnwald wrote). The expression *morom mana mean*, '*morom's* child', designates the child that happened to be born of this union: in this case, the mother was supposed to give birth to the child and to nurse it before going to live with her husband. In Bungaram, I met a man around 75 years of age who claimed to be a 'child of the *tambaran*', but who did not automatically consider that a woman had, at that time, to have her first child by her sexual initiator.

Alternatively, a connection with fertility, and more specifically with hunting, was presented to me as inherent in the *ndu* relationship. 'If my *ndu's* blood is good, I kill game; if I always come home empty-handed, I change *ndus*', one downriver Banaro told me. Which supposes that he was relatively free to choose his partner and that he could end the relationship fairly easily. So sons of *ndu* would become *ndu*, again assuming that their fathers had been successful hunters; but one became a partner only after marriage: unmarried men did not have *ndu*.

According to the central Banaro (my inquiry in Bunam and Angisi), the privilege under discussion was only a *jus primae noctis*, a right to deflower, the privilege of a *big man*, with no indication of how he was chosen. It gave no subsequent sexual right to the girl. Secrecy was strictly observed on pain of sorcery. I was also told that actual intercourse was sometimes replaced by spitting betel juice onto the body of the girl or the young bride (perhaps a later, watered-down form) and reciting spells. They told me that the ritual partner(s) were chosen independently of the moiety or the *puk* and that the bond was immediately sealed by saying something like: 'You are my *ndu*', and exchanging an arm band (*butingat*) for a bow. Further upriver, at Longwuk, the men I questioned favoured the existence of an ancient rite of defloration performed on the newly menstruated girl.

Lastly, the Dugum say they have never performed any such rites, nor have they ever exchanged wives.[29] Among both the central and the downriver Banaro, ritual wife-exchange between *ndu* (these unions, too, took place in the dim light of the men's house, before the *bɔ̀ka morom* of the lawful husband) seem to have been designed to propitiate the *tambaran*, especially before and after combat. In order to seal an alliance with another local group, a woman might be offered for one night to the *puk me-ñoa* of this community, or to its fight leader, without immediate reciprocation. As far as widow remarriage, which Thurnwald mentions (1916, 1921), all of the Banaro, from Yar to Longwuk, assured me that, if the

woman was in agreement, she would be remarried to her deceased husband's *ndu*; the latter was supposed first to avenge his friend, assuming that his death was ascribed to sorcery. The custom of levirate could also assign the widow to the younger brother of the deceased. The counterpart of secrecy was the *ndus'* loyalty to each other, which consisted in never allowing ritual relations to turn into personal adulterous relationships; such a transgression was regarded as more serious than ordinary adultery and would have given rise to attempts at revenge by means of sorcery and, of course, put an end to the special relationship between the two men.

My investigations led me to conclude that the Banaro of the 1940s had a different kind of relationship between ritual partners.[30] It is likely that, somewhere between the perfectly symmetrical, rigorous form described by Thurnwald and the wholesale freedom to choose as many *ndu* as one wanted from any group whatsoever, there is room for other distinct relationships, but nothing seems reconstructible today. As for intercourse performed before the gods inside the *puk*, it seems indeed to present for our interpretation the twin faces, religious and political, that Thurnwald had already noted in his definition of primitive law (1921: 236). Female fecundity as it was offered to the *morom* is related, he writes, to the offering of first fruits in many religions. He was unaware, precisely, that the Banaro offered the first products of their gardens to the gods, but more particularly the first yams, as the Dugum continue to do on the altars of their small Catholic churches. Beyond a simple friendship pact, the alliance sealed between the two *ndu* seems to have been mediated by the fertility of the natural world, as indicated by the allusion to the partner's blood and to that of game. Men exercise their power through their control over natural fertility, and in particular over that portion of nature embodied in human fertility.

THE BANARO MODEL

Thurnwald's universal and functionalist view of social processes, his interest in the historical formation of groups and 'jural' institutions would largely channel his ethnographic approach to the Banaro into the construction of a theoretical model. In view of his enrollment in the German historicist and sociological current and considering his penchant for abstraction and, for which his friend Robert Lowie chided him (1937), his need for systematization, it is hard to imagine Thurnwald interesting himself in a culture or a particular social system unless it was to fit it into his overall conception of 'human society'. The subtitle of his *Gemeinde der Banaro* is revealing of this orientation: 'A contribution to the history of the formation of the family and the State'.

The result was the construction: (a) of a two-part synchronic model, static and dynamic (social structures *versus* exchanges and prestations) and (b) of a socio-historical model itself pointing in two directions: to the past evolution of the society and to its probable future development into a modern nation. The static foundations of his model consist of a set of separate, functional groups related by reciprocity or hierarchy. These units are clearly defined as far as the theory goes, but some remain extremely vague from the standpoint of their empirical definition. In other words, the theoretical model is not underpinned by credible ethnography. It is part of an inclusive hierarchy of groups: people (*Volk*), tribe (*Stamm*), clan (*Klan* or *gens*)/hamlet/men's house, 'sib' or clan moiety (*Sippe*, *Klanhälfte*) and perhaps family (*Familie*) (Thurnwald 1921: 5-9). The politically autonomous central unit would be the exogamous local clan grouped around a men's house. Gerontocracy appears as the form of government, which has no apparatus for repression but instead relies on the tacit consent of its subjects. The 'sib' or clan moiety is the economic unit *par excellence* and transmits land rights; it is the unit that does the contracting in marriage exchanges and male partnerships. For the Banaro, then, Thurnwald implicitly postulates a correspondence between blood ties and territory, whereas he differentiated the two principles for the Buin. Having built up this static structure, Thurnwald goes on to define the dynamic principle that makes the whole thing work.

He places this dynamic on two complementary axes: that of egalitarian exchanges between groups (reciprocity) and that of hierarchical relations between men and women in matters concerning political decision and religious practice, and between older and younger men within the group. The *mundu* institution straddles the two registers. At the time of his first trip to Bougainville, Thurnwald had already noted the importance of reciprocity, which he saw illustrated even more strikingly by the Banaro, with their (alleged) double marriage exchanges and the *mundu* relationship. But it was not until 1936 that he really outlined a more general analysis of the reciprocity principle, in his article 'Reciprocity in the Building and Functioning of Societies and Their Institutions'. To put it briefly, let us say that Thurnwald links symmetrical reciprocity to complementarity (particularly within the couple) and explains it by bio-psychic motivations (see Juillerat 1993*a* and *b*). Furthermore, his view of male/female relations is somewhat romantic (in line with 19th-century evolutionism), with emphasis on mutual understanding and economic and reproductive complementarity rather than on conflict and discrimination in society as a whole.

In qualifying the clan and the men's house as an embryonic form of the State, and 'sibs' as 'associated States' (*zusammengesetzte Staaten*) (1921: 244), Thurnwald nudged Banaro society in the direction of more developed social structures. In so doing, he not only placed the modern State in the same evolutionary line as primitive societies, but he also breathed new life into the vestiges of the evolutionism that could be found at the time in a certain number of authors. From this point of view, the organization of Banaro society lay at the start of an evolutionary process that was to lead first to ranked organizations such as those found in Micronesia and Polynesia, via the intermediate stage represented by the Buin of South Bougainville. It is clear that Thurnwald was looking in his Banaro ethnographic material for a model of society in general at one stage in its development. One of the materials he uses to justify his reconstruction is kinship terminology, which for him, writing in the wake of Rivers, was, on the one hand, 'one of the most ancient notions of which men became conscious' (1916: 354), and, on the other hand, a stable element that could therefore be treated as a survival from the past.

Generally speaking, he explains the evolution of Banaro society (and of society in general) by external causes. He writes of the New Guinea lowlands, despite his frequent calls for scientific prudence, that the structure of early 'Papuan' societies began to alter upon contact with 'Melanesian' influence properly speaking.[31] Opposite 'the interior process' he places 'external disturbances' (1916: 375).[32] Furthermore, Thurnwald seems to have been deeply influenced by a sociology of groups represented by Gumplowicz and to have forgotten the social tissue of interpersonal relations. He attempts to explain a given society in terms of rules of general sociology, for which he was criticized by Marcel Mauss among others.

In 1919 – a year before the first part of *Die Gemeinde der Banaro* appeared in the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* – Thurnwald published his article 'Political Formations among Natural Peoples (*Naturvölker*). A systematic inquiry into the origins of the State (on the basis of personal investigations in the South Pacific)'. In this article, he lists three stages of evolution that he believes he has found in the South Pacific societies: Papuan, Melanesian and Micronesian-Polynesian. His description of 'Papuan' social organization is based directly on his Banaro ethnography, although he alludes to this only occasionally, in footnotes. Once again the Banaro serve as a model for this stage in the evolution of Oceanic societies (Juillerat 1993*b*); and we find all the features that Thurnwald described in his 1916 analyses. It has become clear that he works by abstracting and generalizing from specific material, which he is more concerned to exploit for immediate theoretical ends than to analyze in their empirical reality.

The confusion he maintains throughout his work, of which he appears to be conscious moreover, between history and evolutionary processes that he reconstructs on the basis of conjecture, is not due simply to the lack of historical documents in societies without written language; it also stems from the fact that early-twentieth-century historians and sociologists

were still deeply imbued with a philosophical and evolutionistic outlook. Thurnwald emphasizes the absolute necessity of fieldwork and the theoretical need for a historical approach, the only one capable of accounting for the true nature of a society; yet when he was in the Sepik, he was satisfied with investigating several societies by the intermediacy of informants and paid apparently no attention to local historical tradition.

At best, he published an article, in a book in honor of C.G. Seligman (Thurnwald 1934), on the oral tradition of the Tjimundo (a non-Banaro group on the Lower Keram). The author apparently does not know what to do with the narratives of feuds and village splits (which effectively tell us nothing about the origin of the Tjimundo), and does not seem to see that they nevertheless provide clues to social processes and change in the societies of the region. I too recorded this type of information on the Banaro,[33] but this was what enabled me to reconstruct something of the processes of migration, occupation of the lands and the dynamics of the local groups. The paradox in Thurnwald's method is that he declared the need to collect ethnographic data and to include history and the vernacular language, but once in the field he kept his distance from local reality and devoted more time to geographical exploration than to prolonged investigations in one spot.[34] The theoretician of the evolution of societies prevailed over the field ethnographer.

That being said, Thurnwald had the merit of opposing any radicalization of methodology, of not favouring any one approach to the detriment of others and of defending the use of complementary approaches to social phenomena. His definition of the principle of reciprocity underpins one of the determining notions of contemporary sociology. On the whole, he recognized the relative value of all cultures, of all forms of social organization, and as a Western observer, he was never guilty of an ethnocentric outlook.

CONCLUSION

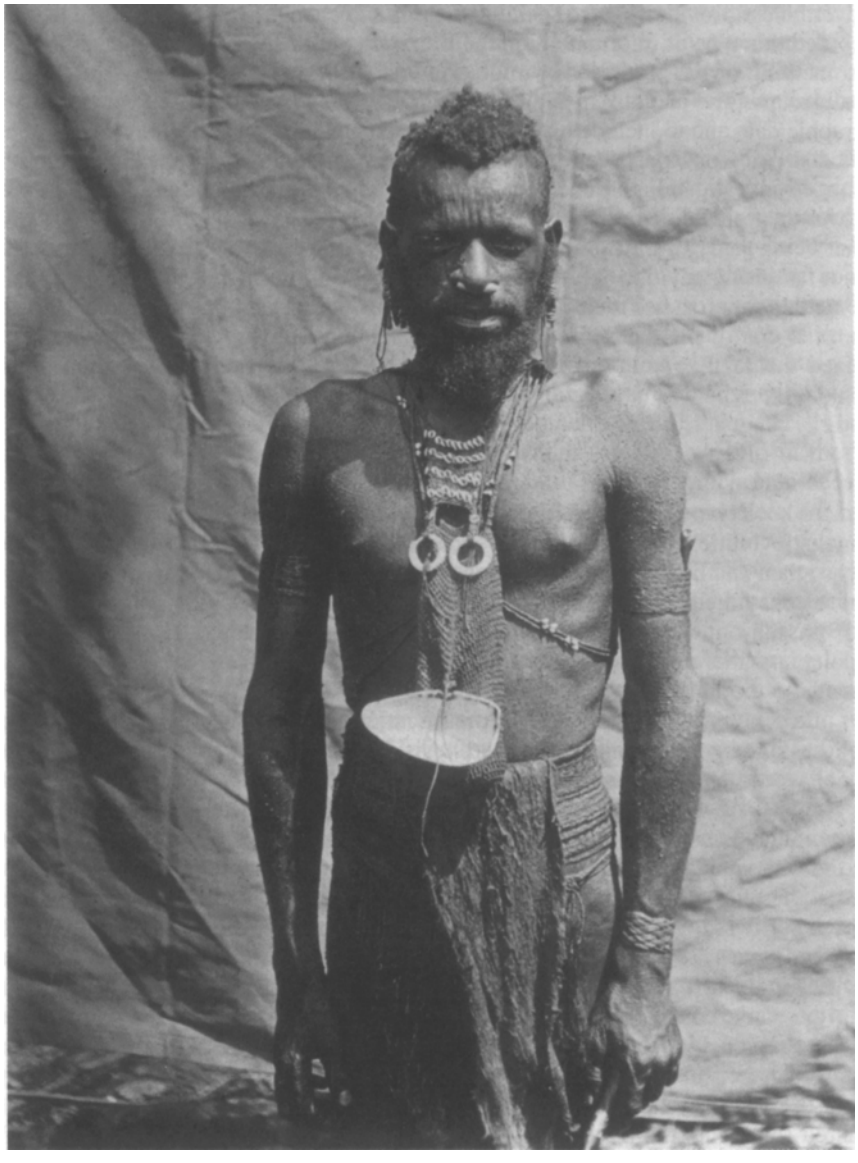
The Banaro society was modeled (reduced to a sort of scale-model) by Thurnwald to fit his functionalist-evolutionist view of human societies; because of the unbridgeable gap between the Banaro then and now. Thurnwald's model went on to become, both in his mind and in his writings, a constituted object, a 'finished product' not open to modification. It was this object that was passed on, intact, to us, and it was solely on the basis of this model that a few anthropologists attempted to contribute new commentaries and new elements of analysis; this has made the latter all the more risky. The 1915-1916 Banaro model has lasted three quarters of a century without any serious modifications, whereas in the same period, the society itself has undergone a radical metamorphosis. Thurnwald was not sufficiently aware that his model would show signs of aging and would soon be perceived very differently by anthropologists. An interpretation or a theory can withstand the passage of time only if it divulges simultaneously and in great detail the raw material on which it is built. This is why, despite the wear and tear of time on his theories, Malinowsky has remained so alive.

It was therefore necessary to go back, however belatedly. As far as the institutions analyzed by Thurnwald are concerned, the fountain has nearly dried up; but physically and socially, the Banaro are more present than ever, a thriving, healthy population. Another society seems simply to have replaced the former one, living in roughly the same locations, working the same lands, fishing in the same lakes; but this society opens more onto the Sepik-Ramu region and, beyond, onto the entire country. Christianity, Catholicism first of all and then Protestantism in the 1960s, has replaced the *tambaran* cult. After the theft of their objects in the 1930s by the Kambot mission, young Christianized Banaro themselves threw their sacred flutes into the river. First ejected physically from the men's houses, the former faith was then driven from the people's consciousness with the change of generation. The abandoning of the *puks* brought down the whole social and religious edifice. Male domination was hard hit, and the women were no doubt the main beneficiaries. While in the throes of Christianization, the Banaro were occupied by the Japanese, first of all well disposed and

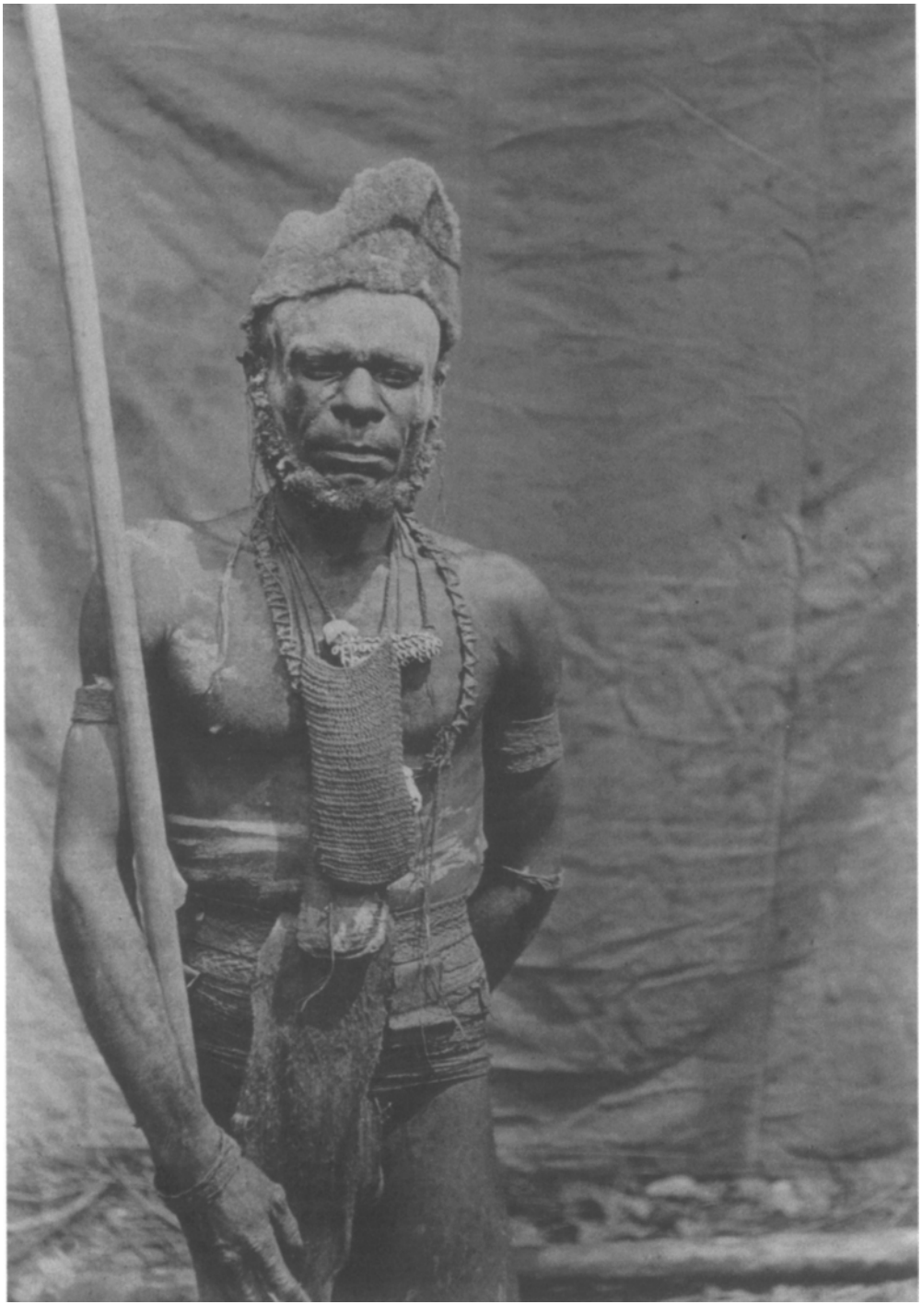
then, as the allies advanced, openly aggressive; some of the villages suffered fighting, bombardment and killings of their own people; today the Banaro are still waiting for the promised compensation payments.

I hope that my contribution will have made for a better appreciation of Banaro society then and now, as well as for a better knowledge of Richard Thurnwald.

As far as the present-day social system of these communities is concerned, everything remains to be done.



Banaro Man from Ramunga (Yar) and Bugaram, lower Keram river [(East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea)] taken by Richard Thurnwald in 1913 or 1915. Photo courtesy of Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (West)



Banaro Man from Ramunga (Yar) and Bugaram, lower Keram river [(East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea)] taken by Richard Thurnwald in 1913 or 1915.
Photo courtesy of Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz,
Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (West)

Banaro Men from Ramunga (Yar) and Bugaram, lower Keram river [(East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea)] taken by Richard Thurnwald in 1913 or 1915.
Photo courtesy of Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz,
Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (West)

NOTES

1 Published in French in Juillerat 1993a. This study was funded by the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, in Paris. Duration: 4 months. The study was limited to the Banaro villages situated on the Keram River. This article translated from the French by Nora Scott.

2 See also Melk-Koch 1989.

3 For further bibliography, see Melk-Koch 1989.

4 Contact between the central and the upriver Banaro and the Germans was still sporadic at the time, but young men had been abducted for enlistment in the vicinity of Mandag.

5 Laycock 1975; Butler n.d., 1981, 1988.

6 To these must be added the downriver Banaro villages on the Gorogopa River, two villages on the Upper Tamon (Clay River) as well as two other villages situated on the Ramu and a few remaining hamlets in the interfluvial zone in Dugum territory. According to the 1979 census, the Banaro-speaking population numbered a little over 2,500.

7 The fact that he worked with one 'Banaro' informer properly speaking, and with another from Yar, without always making a distinction between the cultural differences and the dialectal, is no doubt a source of confusion.

8 My genealogies contain countless marriages both within the same group and between local groups.

9 Some groups, much fewer in number, are believed to have come from the Ramu River or from the foothills of the Schrader Range (the present-day Rao linguistic group, south of the Banaro).

10 *Tambaran* is a Melanesian Pidgin term borrowed from a language spoken on Gazelle Peninsula (New Britain) that designated the gods and the carvings or musical instruments associated with them. The corresponding Banaro term is *morom*.

11 Or what F.E. Williams (1932) called 'sex affiliation'.

12 The establishment of the Society of the Divine Word, in 1933, at Kambot (downriver from the Banaro) and at Annaberg (on the Ramu and the Upper Keram).

13 In support of their claim to certain gold deposits in the Schrader foothills, certain Banaro groups whose ancestors lived on the land in question adduced their personal totem, but also their historical tradition.

14 Among the Adjorab (Porapora area between the Lower Ramu and the Keram), a dual organization based on paired totems has been attested (Philippe Peltier, pers. com.).

15 The central Banaro call the Rao in the foothills of the Schrader Range on the Upper Sori 'Pamenga', while the Dugum call those on the Upper Keram 'Bakendi'.

16 I was unable to find a photograph of a single Banaro men's house.

17 For the interfluvial villages, upriver and downriver (top and bottom) correspond respectively to east and west.

18. The same disposition has been described for the Adjorab (Porapora area) (Peltier 1997).

19 As a rule, the *puk me-ñoa* of a men's house came from the former house that had been pulled down. When the founder of a *puk* died, his successor would cut a new center post.

20 Pig-raising has been nearly abandoned today. Some groups, particularly the Toko, have begun raising cattle, leaving the animals to fend for themselves in the forest.

21 The following information was given to me in 1989 by old men who went in their young age through initiation.

22 I have, however, published a triple list of kinship terms: Thurnwald's list, the terms I recorded for the downriver Banaro, and the terms used by the central Banaro (Juillerat 1993*a*: annex III). I also picked up a translation error made by Thurnwald which has its importance: he regarded the suffix *-Nab* as a diminutive, whereas it is just the opposite, an augmentative; it is a suffix marking respect. We saw above that the term *oNap* or *oNab* designated men of prestige. Banaro kinship terms are always given a possessive, usually that of the third person singular (prefix *me-*, *mu-*, etc.).

23 The same prohibition is found among the Rao (Stanhope 1970: 121).

24 Pottery (no longer made) was produced by women; it was also used in economic exchanges along the Keram River (called *Töpferfluss* by the Germans: 'Potters' River'). The Dugum were not familiar with this technique and obtained their vessels from either the central and downriver Banaro or from the Rao on the Upper Keram.

25 He initially wrote (1916: 386) that the Banaro may marry their cross cousin; but later (1921: 96) he was more cautious and indicated that such a repetition of marriage 'was an exception'; I think he must have written this from memory and with no example at hand. He was almost certainly influenced by his reading of River's *The History of Melanesian Society*, published in 1914, which discusses cross-cousin marriage elsewhere in Melanesia, and must have wondered, *a posteriori*, about such a possibility among the Banaro.

26 'The Banaro tribe is divided into two clans, A and B...' (Guhr 1959: 161).

27 Rubel and Rosman speak of 'Banaro cross-cutting moieties' and of 'two pairs of intermarrying groups' (1978: 29).

28 The Banaro language gives most isolated nouns with the 3d person possessive *mu-*. However the noun *ndu* has also been used alone during my enquiry.

29 For the Rao on the Middle Ramu and the Upper Keram, Kasprus mentions the ritual exchange of wives, but does not go into detail. Stanhope (1970: 123) writes that wife-exchange took place only with women from the same matriclan, for short periods of time and with a view to increasing the fertility of the fish.

30 To these must be added the economic exchange partners in other villages along the Keram.

31 Gräbner's (1905) influence can be felt here, although in this instance too, Thurnwald is cautious about the German diffusionist school.

32 Thurnwald defends the thesis of the role of conflict in the formation of human groups (theses argued by Ward and Ratzenhofer; on the latter, see House 1968).

33 See Juillerat 1993*a*, chap. 2.

34 Thurnwald felt that ideally one should not spend more than one month in the same village (Melk-Koch 1989).

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