DASH TO THE SOURCE OF THE SEPIK RIVER

AND TO THE SOURCES OF THE SAND AND NORTH RIVERS AS FAR AS THE COASTAL RANGE

Dr Richard Thurnwald

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Annotations and footnotes by Barry Craig

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Note by Barry Craig:

Translated from the German by a post-graduate student

of the University of Sydney in the late 1960s,
whose name, unfortunately, I have forgotten.

During the European spring and summer months,[1] the weather on the Sepik[2] is clear and dry. The high mountains in the south, usually covered in mist or cloud, now gleam blue in the sunshine. That was my goal this time – the mountains which up till now have hidden the source of this great river.

The journey to the foot of these mountains was a month and a half away from my main camp, time enough today to go around the world if the most advanced methods of transport are used. But most of this journey had to be carried out in canoes or on foot. I recounted the first part of the journey by boat, as far as the Christmas Camp, in my last report (1914).

As my Base Camp for this expedition, I chose Meander Mountain, immediately downstream from the mouth of the Yellow River. I could not reach as far upstream with the pinnace and motor boat as I did in 1913, due to the low water level of summer. We therefore had to give up the more comfortable journey in the boats several days earlier.

Driftwood deposits and gravel banks were present everywhere among the rapids. The canoes we brought with us were now put to use between the mouths of the October and West Rivers. Many of the men in our company were inexperienced in the use of simple single-hulled canoes for, on the coast, canoes with outriggers are used. Other men, coming from the forests inland, were totally unsure and afraid in the water. Based on my last experiences, I had equipped all canoes of my fleet with a construction in the front in order to prevent water streaming into the bows of the canoes in the rapids.

The journey progressed easily enough by paddling or punting as far as the ‘Pinnace Camp’ (which I had been able to reach in the pinnace during the high waters of January).[3] From here on the difficulties began. Whilst the river had so far been

[1] April to September.
[2] ‘Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss’ will be translated as ‘Sepik River’.
[3] Thurnwald had reached Pinnace Camp, which was located in Dutch (now Indonesian) territory at

flowing in a single stream hemmed in by forested banks, it now became wild and disrupted. The water spilt out into an enormous number of channels, here dividing, there flowing together. In among them, giant islands of boulders and sand were deposited, upon which pitpit [*Saccharum spontaneum*] spread and young forests sprang up.

South along the Sepik River towards the Star Mountains in far distance, from between the October River and the International Border. Photo: B. Craig, USEE 1968:7:25.

The banks are uncertain, for the water tries here and there to break through the old boundaries and washes sand into the forest where white corpses of trees stand out, a sure sign that there the forest is doomed to destruction. Meanwhile, in another place, a new forest is springing up on silt deposits. The islands and channels change their positions with each high water.

The water flows more strongly through this network of branches than further downstream. Here we had to tow the canoes along the bank. Often a tree trunk or the mouth of a channel barred our way and we had to change banks. That was the chief difficulty because of the strong current and the obstacles that usually lurked on the

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4°20’ S x 140°57’ E., during his first expedition on 13 January 1914. From this point upstream to the Zweifel Gorge, where it emerges from the Mountains, the Sepik is an intricately braided stream.

other side as well. If the canoe met one of the logs stuck in the water, or if we failed to hold it with the rattan rope, an accident was certain.

Here great deposits of logs, branches or wood were piled up in the river, having been washed gradually from one deposit to another by the flood water. Great tree trunks floated down in the water; tall trees, stuck in the sand, stood out of the water like cannon barrels. Sometimes we had to chop the trunks apart with an axe in order to pull the canoes forward; now and then a driftwood deposit obstructed the way so that the canoes had to be unloaded and pulled around empty. Again and again, a new deposit of wood, a new course of the water or a different position of the banks presented exceptional difficulties or set a new problem to be solved. Every manoeuver had to be directed, every stroke of the paddles watched. Only when they felt themselves to be continually watched did the men devote the necessary attention to avoid accidents. Every hour was full of tension for the next obstacle and full of concern that the men would use all their strength to execute the necessary manoeuvers. In the maze of channels it was often difficult to maintain one's sense of direction and often one or another of the canoes would get lost.

So we pressed on, day after day, concentrating our entire attention and all our strength to get through a monotonous, barren landscape. There were no native settlements anywhere in the vicinity.

A crocodile hunt broke the monotony. My canoe had been driven onto a log in the water and tipped over. We plunged in and were dragging the equipment out, piece by piece, when suddenly a man shouted: 'Buk buk he stop long water!' ('A crocodile is in the water!'). He had mistaken it at first for a piece of wood among the other trunks and branches.

First panic! Then discussion. Finally the plan for catching the animal. We prodded the spot with sticks to make sure the crocodile was really sound asleep. A long piece of rattan was fetched, and a noose slipped around the hind leg of the animal. When the man who had attached the noose returned to the river bank, we pulled the monster out. Only then did he wake and start thrashing around with his tail. A few shots killed it and later we had the rare pleasure of roast crocodile, which tastes rather like turtle.

Hunting also provided us with the occasional Crown Pigeon,[4] usually present in great numbers. Here and there we got cassowaries, wallabies and wild pigs.

The mountains, often shrouded in mist till late afternoon, seemed to get further and further away, like the apple of Tantalus.[5] Finally, we lost all sense of the distance we had covered and began to doubt our estimations. Imagine my delight, therefore, when I came unexpectedly on the so-called 'Mountain-Gate' one midday. Two low hills, from ten to thirty metres high, guarded the entrance to the sanctuary of the mountains. The river flowed out through a gorge no wider than twenty metres, into a world where it immediately spread itself pretentiously over the inextricable maze of channels that I hoped now lay behind us. It formed a great whirlpool at the foot of the hills as though considering its next step into the wide plain.[6]

Overcoming the river at this spot was as difficult as hurrying along with it on the way back. Behind this outer 'Mountain-Gate', the hills stood back and we arrived in a basin about ten kilometres wide and thirty-five kilometres long, covered with channels, gravel banks and pitpit.[7] The current was stronger here and therefore there was not so much driftwood piled up.

A long narrow gorge, the 'Inner Mountain Gateway',[8] led into the heart of the range. The change in altitude was still gradual here, the next line of hills being no more than 150 to 200 metres high. However, at the bends in the river, steep cliffs had been cut from the ridges.

Trees and logs were no longer the inconvenience; the difficulties were now of another kind. In only a few dozen metres, the river-bed rose two, three and even four metres

[4] *Goura victoria*
[5] Tantalus – a mythical Greek king condemned to stand up to his chin in water that receded whenever he stooped to drink; and fruits hung above him which always evaded his grasp.
[6] This description indicates that Thurnwald had deviated from the mainstream Sepik at about 4°22' S into the smaller, easterly Schultze Annabranche, with the Mountain Gate at 4°31' 20" S.
[7] Thurnwald's estimate of the extent of this inner basin was exaggerated; it is about 13 kilometres long but he got the width right at about 10 kilometres.
[8] This 'Inner Mountain Gateway' is the Zweifel Gorge, named by the joint Dutch-German Border-marking expedition of 1910. It is just two kilometres west of the present-day Yapsie airstrip.

and the canoes had to be hauled through raging rapids with much effort.[9] Sometimes we had first to empty them to pull them forwards. The men stood on flat rocks in the rushing water, keeping upright with great difficulty, hauling on the lengths of rattan or shoving the sides of the canoes. Again we had to unload the canoes on the sharp corners and hair-pin bends of the river, or where the river bed was covered with great boulders. Sometimes it was necessary to pull the canoes forward from up on high steep cliffs. Every hesitation or slip by the men wading in the water or climbing on the wet cliffs above allowed the canoe to be driven back or threatened to smash it against the boulders or cliffs. Only intense devotion to every detail guaranteed our 'luck' in continuing safely.

Every day the valley was wider until it was soon several hundred metres broad. This basin was similar to that between the inner and outer mountain-gates, but on a smaller scale. Here and there, different-sized tributaries flowed in and it was here that we saw the last sago palms. We had left the coconut and betelnut palms far behind by the vast network of streams. The breadfruit tree, which further downstream grew in great numbers on the inside banks of the river bends, became rarer.

[9] See Marion Melk-Koch 1989 *Auf der Suche nach der menschlichen Gesellschaft: Richard Thurnwald*, Berlin; Abb. 36 for Thurnwald's photograph of this procedure.

The smaller scale basin that Thurnwald noted. Atbalmin territory just upstream from the Sepik-Hoffnungs (Ip) junction. Photo: B. Craig, 1963:17:18.

Two native houses stood quite isolated in front of the inner mountain gate. They were the last houses situated on the riverbank – cubical buildings erected on five metre high stakes with round roofs like open umbrellas.[10] Further upstream, houses were discovered only on the slopes of the mountains. In the valley the river had carved through the mountains, there were no traces of natives apart from occasional overnight huts, rarely trodden paths, and sparse gardens of bananas, taro, yams, sugarcane and tobacco.

Most notable, however, were the suspension bridges of rattan which spanned the river in narrow places, usually from a projecting rock and often at a height of ten or more metres above the river level.[11] On the other side, a ladder usually led to a carefully-secured bridgehead. The suspension bridge itself usually consisted of three lengths of rattan, one to two centimetres thick, woven into a single rope. At shoulder height, two more such ropes were secured to right and left and fastened to the lower, centre rope every metre or so. Thus a kind of net was formed within which the 'tightrope-walker' was steadied when it began to sway at his step. Higher up in the mountains, where the distances to be bridged are less, long saplings were chopped down and tied into a narrow bridge scarcely wider than one's foot. However, these bridges were easier and safer to use than the rattan suspension bridges as they do not sway.

Bridges were built because the river rises dramatically after the frequent flooding downpours or rushes down with such speed that it is virtually impossible to cross with rafts, as I observed last year on the August River. Naturally, canoes are not made by the people up here.

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[10] These rectangular buildings with conical roofs appear to be a feature of the architecture of peoples west of the Sepik and north of the central range. O.L.Andersen (2007, *The Lepki People of Sobger River, New Guinea*) describes such houses (*tinmin*, pp.28-29), often 'very large' and accommodating several family units. Franz Kvech (pers. comm. 21 March 2007) sent me images of such a house among photographs he took among the Biksi, Yetfa and Lepki-speaking peoples. R.L. Wight reports such a house in his 'Expedition from Kiwi to the area of the Aipki people' (*Irian* 3,1: 34-36). The Aipki speak Pyu, possibly related to Biaka, Baibai, Kwomtari and Fas of the upper Sepik.

The valley narrowed into a gorge, the slopes became steep and sharp so that we had to be on the lookout for flat places to spend the night. The rocky walls became higher and only by all manner of mountaineering skills did we succeed in pulling the canoes forward along the walls if there was no handy sandbank in the middle of the river. The rapids became regular waterfalls and the stones monstrous rocks, between which the water rushed from one rocky wall to the other in sharp zig-zags. Rapids followed rapids so that it became more and more difficult to pull the canoes through the raging foam.

We passed the point which Professor Schultze reached in 1910[12] with his Dayaks and their canoes, but I was able to continue my canoe journey only for another one and a half days.[13] The faster the current, the longer time it took to get anywhere. Finally we had practically only rapids in front of us so I decided to end the canoe journey.

Of the five canoes with which I had started out, two had been smashed on the way and a third had drifted off on the very first day after our arrival at this 'Canoe Camp' and got into distress in a whirlpool. However, each time we were able to save most of the equipment.

From the 'Canoe Camp' I sent out men immediately to establish food depots. Meanwhile,[14] I set out to investigate the surroundings of the camp, close to which we had found an excellent harbour for the canoes in a small, dead channel near a rock wall. A few of my men began cutting a new canoe for the journey back.

Below the camp, a rattan suspension bridge linked two mountain paths.[15] We had passed many of them on our way up here. They were the only sign of human activity

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[11] See Melk-Koch 1989, Abb. 38 for Thurnwald's photograph of such a bridge.
[12] At about 4°48' S
[13] At about 141°17' E., nine kilometres further up the Sepik. This 'Canoe Camp' was just downstream from where Thurnwald's 'Moosgrat' joins the Sepik from the south – probably the Ok Irit or 'Return River' of the 1965 Series T504 maps (1:250,000).
[14] 21 August – 2 September 1914.
[15] These bridges would have facilitated movement between territories north and south of the Sepik. It appears that the Wimurapmin and Amtanmin parishes of the Atbalmin south of the Sepik claimed territory on the north side of the Sepik between approximately 141° 10' and 141°20' East longitude – which would most likely have brought them into conflict with the Mianmin around the headwaters of the Tabu River further north.

apart from a few distant gardens here and there on the mountain slopes. So far we had not seen any local people during the whole of the canoe-journey in the mountains.

Climbing the 'Moss Mountain' [Mossy Ridge] south of the 'Canoe Camp', I met a few people unexpectedly. They took to their heels and sounded a wooden trumpet as a warning to their people.[16] On various paths I laid out presents of rings, knives and beads, but they remained untouched. They fearfully avoided the suspension bridge below the camp ever since I fastened to it a flag made out of bits of black, red and white calico; it is probably still there today! They preferred to wade through a ford in the raging water far downstream.

'Bamboo Mountain' north of the camp [a southern ridge of the Drei Zinnen or Three Pinnacles] provided an excellent vantage point. The long valley of the Sepik lay upstream, its ridges drawn forward like curtains as far as the central range, which stretched in an east-west direction some 50 kilometres away. I could see it spread out in the sunshine before me, as though on a relief map.

It was a good thing that I had established advanced depots, for the carriers could not be expected to carry more than fifteen kilos of rice or beans in the mountains. In a middle-sized canoe about ten metres long, manned by four people, we could transport seven cases of rice or beans at thirty kilos each, ie. 210 kilos altogether. Four men on foot could carry only 60 kilos. Thus we were able to carry nearly four times as much in the canoe. That is why I had continued in the canoes as far as possible.

On the 3rd September 1914, I set out on the actual exploration of the mountains. We could use the river valley only on the first day. We kept to the bank but here too the steep walls forced us several times to wade up to our chests in water against the current. The next day, however, we found ourselves blocked by high walls on both sides of the river and a rocky peak that looked like a ruined castle. We had to make

[16] Wooden trumpets are made by Abau speakers of the upper Sepik lowlands but there is no record of them being made by Ok speakers. Perhaps one had been traded to these people, perhaps members of a Wimurapmin parish of the Atbalmin.

our way upwards along a torrential watercourse full of casuarinas[17] in order to reach the main valley once more, crossing a mountain-top we called 'Snake Mountain' [the ridge between Casuarina River and the Sepik]. On the way we came across a well trodden native path which petered out in the river valley. Further on, we continued over gravel banks,[18] sticking to weathered, broken slate cliffs, along the slopes, over wet slippery logs bridging torrents and over landslides falling away from slopes that were getting steeper and steeper. The valley got narrower and narrower; the water raged between high walls and over giant rocks. Suddenly we found ourselves at the top of a 100 metre drop which we had to descend in the rain in order to cross a torrent. Then, on the other side, we had to climb a height almost as steep.

On the sixth day we reached the last depot.[19] We waded from the left to the right bank and found there an old native overnight hut from which a good path led up along a ridge. From here on we preferred to travel along the ridge, working our way along the right bank. Travelling along the ridge had the additional advantage that we could see better where we were going and we had a good view of the area.

The ridge continued upwards. From the valley north of it [Eliptaman], steep ridges 500 to 600 metres high stood out, behind which more peaks rose out of the mist, especially to the north-east. In the afternoon, as we journeyed south-east, we could see giant, bare rocky mountains lying before us at the far end of the valley, rising up steeply in a huge arc swinging round to the south. The slopes and rocks of these giants glowed red in the setting sun, like the Dolomites in the Alpine glow. Would we ever reach them? They seemed so far away!

The next day the ridge led us even higher. The ground was covered with layers of moss a metre or so thick. Mossy shreds hung down from the trunks and branches of the trees. We looked through the forest as though through the green curtains of a theatre. We moved forward slowly, each step sinking deep down as though into snow.

[17] Casuarina River/Ok Iugum, flowing from the south into the Sepik and forming the border between the Amtanmin and Unanklimin parishes of the Atbalmin.
[18] See Melk-Koch 1989, Abb. 39 for Thurnwald's photograph, probably from this point in his journey.
[19] On 8 September 1914, in the vicinity of the junction of the Donner River (Ok Elip) with the Sepik.

We climbed up a mountain torrent coming down from the east between rubble, lost the path, found it again, followed another torrent, climbed across a landslide and reached a half-burnt forest. The locals [Sepkialikmin parish of the Telefol] had set fire to the forest to make a garden clearing. Again we had a view to the south and could see that we were already very close to the rocky giants we had seen earlier. After a lengthy reconnoitre, I decided to continue travelling along this spur over a huge ridge lying in front of us.

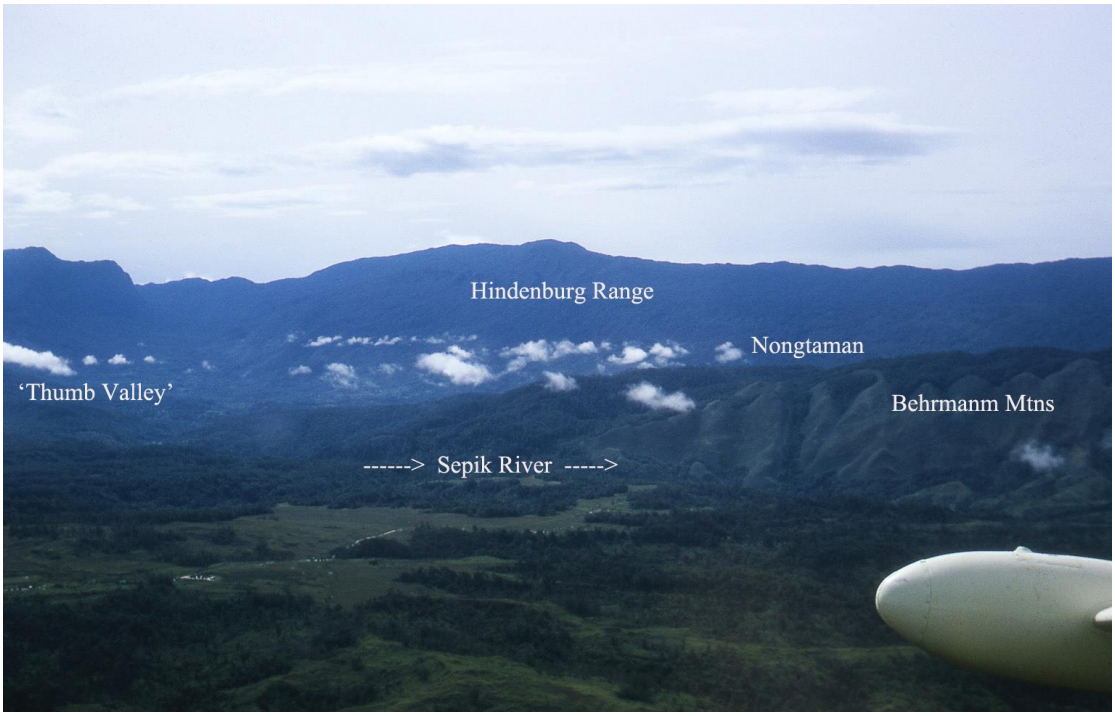
The last few nights had been very chilly. In the morning the temperature was about 15°C. My carriers got quite cold as they were used to temperatures rarely below 23°C. They did not have much use for the clothes I had distributed earlier but preferred to sit by a fire and burn holes in tents, rucksacks and shirts. On the summit of the big ridge we crossed shrouded in mist, it was 9.8°C at 6 am.

We descended into a valley [probably Okfekaman] that opened out directly opposite the ‘Giants’ [Iltigin]. Here we came across a remarkably well trodden path with a large overnight hut nearby. Its roof was covered with pieces of bark and inside was stored firewood, dry moss tinder, rattan ropes for friction fire-making, and bamboo tubes for carrying water ─ the usual equipment of the huts we came across scattered here and there in the forest. I found several such huts built among the roots of wild ficus trees.

Of the twenty men I had taken along with me from the ‘Canoe Camp’, I had sent several back one by one during the trek as the load of provisions they carried were used up. From here on I kept only fifteen carriers so as to feed as few mouths as possible. Further, to stretch out the march to the utmost, I reduced rations by half from now on.

From the new shelter huts and the abandoned fireplaces, pig falls, cassowary enclosures, the remains of meals of cooked fruits etc, we concluded that the local people were close by now. Often we noticed from the remains of the fires that someone had left the spot only a short while before. The path along which we climbed was so well used that it suggested a densely populated area.

We came to a comparatively low, broad ridge which reached eastwards as far as the deep gorge the Sepik had cut at the foot of the ‘Giants’. A rocky crag, overgrown with ferns, stood 200 metres above the river at the end of this ridge and provided a far-reaching panorama. In front of us to the east there stretched a valley some five to ten kilometres broad and about 30 kilometres long. It increases in size at the far end and ends like a hand with finger-like valleys branching out in all directions. Three come from the east [the Sepik headwaters], one from the south [the Nong] and one from the north [the Sol]. In the north-east corner, the massif of the Victor-Emmanuel Range is enthroned with mighty attendants on its northern side. It is separated from the neighbouring high mass of mountains in the south-eastern corner of the valley by the finger-shaped valleys. A broad, short valley in the shape of a thumb, rising steeply towards a pass in the south-east, cuts into this mountain mass with steep cliffs. We called this rather high southern mass of mountains ‘South Block’. It was probably this which D’Albertis saw in the north from the Fly River and gave the name Victor-Emmanuel Range. Over time, this name was shifted more and more to the north on the maps.



South-east across Ifitaman, Telefomin towards the Hindenburg Range. Photo: B. Craig, 1967:71.

A uniform 300 - 400 metre high ridge [the Behrmann Mountains] marks off the southern limits of the valley. Behind this ridge stretches a second row of mountains about 100 to 200 metres higher [the Hindenburg Range – actually around 1000 metres higher]. The valley [Nongtaman] enclosed by these two ridges opens out towards the 'Thumb Valley'.

Behind the bare foothills of the 'Giant' (the 'Bald Head'), opposite the 'Steer's Head' on the other side of the Sepik gorge, a broad valley flows in from the west [Ilamtaman]. It winds around to the south-west making a show of the pointed, jagged tops of its diadem-shaped crown in the background. Behind us in the north-west, the valley of the great river slopes down. The mountains that seemed high further down now appeared shrunken like dwarfs. Even the valley bed is high up here. Behind the heights around the valley of the great river, mountains tower upon mountains in the west and south.

Thurnwald's 'Giant' or 'Bald Head' (Iltigin), showing the Ilam valley immediately behind in the west. Photo: B. Craig, 1963:7:33

The view north of the main valley was partially blocked by the green walls of the ridge we had been walking along for the past few days. These heights are connected with the outer foothills of the Victor Emmanuel Range. The big valley lying in front of us looked like a moderately-sloping valley bed from afar. But we soon found out that it consists of low, broad waves of hills deeply cut into by watercourses from the north. These flow into the Sepik River, which has dug itself into the southern side of the valley. In many spots we saw columns of smoke rising, some in the valley and some on the slopes, a sure sign that we would meet people there. The low forest, bamboo or fern was being burnt. Brown and yellow slopes could be seen, covered with burnt wood or bare, loamy earth.

We climbed down the ridge. The cool air around midday was about 18 to 20° C. Between scanty bush and real grass we could stroll along as we do at home on the

edges of fields. At intervals we passed through old, tall forest again and crossed deeply-cut watercourses, then climbed up again onto heights overgrown with bamboo, through which the path led on. The thin bamboo stems were so densely packed that we often pushed through with difficulty, bent double under the stems spread out over the path like pointed gothic arches.

As the path emerged from the bamboo thicket, we found ourselves unexpectedly in front of a village of five houses.[20] A little boy with a big stomach and a lot of dirt on him eagerly chased after a butterfly. I stood there and waited a long time before he noticed me. He caught sight of me, stared for a minute, then ran away with a cry of horror. A man, just coming out of a house, fled into the forest howling with fear. The doorways of occupied houses were hastily barred.[21] Behind the village, another man came out of the forest with bow and arrows, stared for a while and rushed back downhill. Deep silence reigned in the circle of village houses. I went up, knocked at the doorways and spoke, putting knives, glass beads and rings – the usual presents – in front of the houses in which I suspected there were people. But in vain; nothing stirred.

Meanwhile, I examined the houses. They were cubical buildings, the walls being three or four metres long and erected on 250 mm to 500 mm high posts. The walls were fabricated from poles lined up next to each other or from halved saplings.[22] In the front or along the sides there was a narrow verandah for stacking firewood, taro shoots or banana suckers, and the bamboo water containers. One gained entry to the smoke-blackened huts through a narrow opening hardly a square metre in area.[23] In the houses occupied by people, the entrance was closed up by a door of planks.

I went into a few huts that stood empty and had a look inside. In the middle there was a square fireplace,[24] [above] which was constructed a rack of sticks for hanging up net bags and for drying tobacco leaves, etc. This is customary elsewhere too. Along the

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[20] Probably an Atemkiakmin parish settlement of the Telefolmin.
[21] Horizontal slabs of wood are used to block the small doorways of houses.
[22] Vertical poles are a feature of the walls of men's houses (*tinum-am*) whereas vertical split timber walls are a feature of women's houses (*unang-am*).
[23] The openings are around a half metre wide by a metre high.
[24] Immediately east, the houses have two fireplaces.

walls and under the roof were a few bows and arrows, but otherwise the hut was empty. These small huts had the advantage of offering good protection against the cold nights. A fire would be lit in the middle to provide warmth and the people would lie down close together, side by side.

The largest structure of them all was somewhat apart from the others.[25] A hedge of red and yellow-leaved ornamental plants had been grown in front of this, as is usual in New Guinea. Later I also found such spots in other villages up here. The people won't set foot on them. My men were prevented from crossing these places but if I deliberately walked onto these places, I was allowed to continue. As I strode up to this place, a little bearded man with bow and arrows stepped out from behind the big house and indicated that I should not approach it. I waved him over to me, however, and walked carefully up to him so as not to give the hesitant fellow a fright, and stretched out my hand to him. Then he did likewise. I was not a little surprised that he looked me in the eyes, as in European fashion, took my right hand and pressed it, and added half-questioningly: 'Fino, afin, afino, afinka'. As I later found out, this meant roughly: 'I friend, you friend, we all friends', a form of greeting which I was from now on to experience every time up here.[26]

To confirm my good intentions by deeds, I wanted to give the man presents. I offered him first a knife, then glass beads, then white rings. But he declined everything with apprehension and withdrew shyly. Scarcely had I approached half a step than he stormed away, yelling; but upon my calling him he stopped again, waved me back, called out something to the people hidden in the houses, and disappeared into the bushes. Then the doorway[27] of one of the houses was opened and two young men crept out one after the other, both unarmed. They came up to me, shook hands with me, smiling in a friendly way, then ran off as fast as they could, happy to have carried out the greeting without coming to harm. After a while, another man and two boys emerged, shook hands with me and charged away after the greeting ritual. I could not attract them back to me either by calling out or by offering presents.

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[25] This would have been the men's cult house (*yolam*).
[26] These words could not be linked to a greeting by reference to P. & A. Healey's *Telefol Dictionary* (1977). The closest word found there was finan-in, finano = fear, be afraid.
[27] Nowhere in this account does Thurnwald mention observing carved and painted doorboards (*amitung*). Most villages would have had at least a few, especially one on the *yolam* (cult house).

The people were all very small but, despite their shyness, seemed intelligent. They wore rattan loops [*oltil*] wound several times around their hips and the usual [gourd] penis-sheaths [*kamen*]. Their hair was bound at the back into two long plaits. Many wooly tufts of hair are first bound with small strips of rattan; these are bound into two large plaits with broader rattan strips and then smeared with red clay.[28]

Then I stood alone in the village again waiting for the remaining youths to approach, took photographs and left, as I saw that all my efforts to entice the people back were in vain. I made camp for the night further down along a creek.[29]

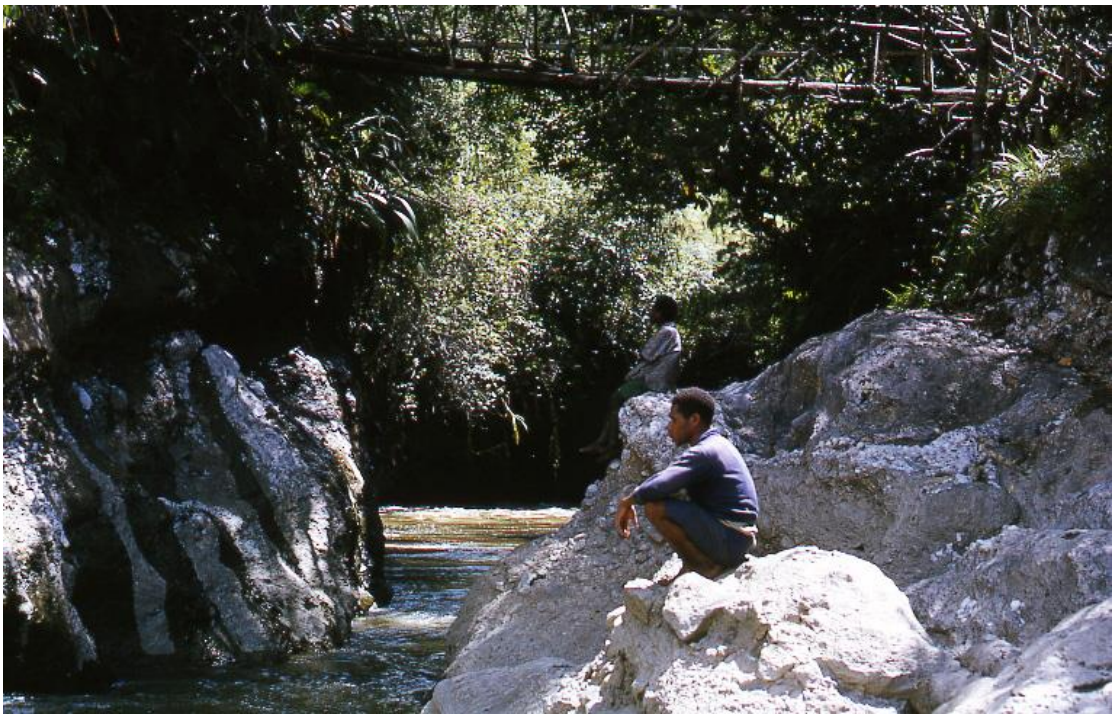
After we broke camp next morning, we soon noticed that many people followed us. We passed extensive gardens. As we approached these, the people yelled at us in a great fright. When we climbed a hill, the crowd accompanying us in the distance climbed a neighbouring bare hill. There appeared to be 40 to 50 men armed with bows and arrows, their heads decorated with feathers and cuscus fur. They remained at a distance of several hundred metres. I didn't let myself be disturbed and kept on photographing and examining the landscape. When we continued on, they followed.

After some stopping and calling out, they approached so close that I felt I could risk another attempt at offering presents. Finally, I succeeded in persuading one of them to accept a few rings; then a second and a third man. Now that one or other of them stood there with a white glass ring or with glass beads on his chest, without feeling bewitched, suddenly everyone wanted to have something, and more and more people turned up until I was surrounded by 80 to 100 people. With my fifteen carriers, tired out from the long, exhausting trek, I was in a situation that called for caution. However, I wanted to make use of the opportunity to replenish the scanty rations of my team. By appropriate signs I got the people to bring taro and yams, which they did willingly; they added sugarcane and tobacco as well.

Then several old headmen came hesitantly up to me. One of these took the lead and brought us to another village. From there we climbed down along a mountain stream

[28] This type of head dress is called *mafum* and is a marker of the fourth stage of Telefol male initiation.
[29] Probably 15 September 1914, on the south bank of the Ok Fek.

to where the Sepik River frothed between cliffs and boulders, its waters only 5 to 10 metres wide. There we made camp in the presence of our guides.[30]



The bridge across the Sepik gorge at the foot of Iltigin, on the trail between Ulapmin and Telefolmin villages. Photo: B. Craig, 1964:26:35

There was no end to the amazement when the 'houses' (the tents) were conjured into existence and the carriers showed off their warm blankets, the trees fell under the knife and axe, the tin cans were changed into food, and I took off my shoes and clothes (which they thought to be skin) in order to bathe in the 17°C water. We could hardly get them away from the camp. Wasn't this after all rather fabulous for these people who until then had never heard anything of the existence of the white men? Into the midst of their normal routines bursts a strange apparition as from another world with inexplicable things, for the comprehension of which they lacked any foundation or precedents. The appearance of the white man was indeed more unusual than lightning or an earthquake; the spirits of the other world had appeared in person. As we didn't carry bows and arrows and they were unaware of our firearms, we seemed to them to be unarmed. We seemed to bring about supernatural effects directly without any other means, by word or deed, like a spirit or a divine entity.

[30] Around 16/17 September, near the bridge that carries the trail across the Sepik between the Ulapmin

The people sprang ahead of me with branches and wiped over the path with magic gestures. As I was leaving one district,[31] usually combining two or more villages, they asked me to make a circle above my head with a moss sponge full of water and to squeeze out the water whilst facing the district, as if it was being washed clean of an evil spell in this way. They continually tested their belief in my reality by grasping, pressing and tugging at me; I just hoped they would not try any unexpected experiments with their arrows.

Thus we moved on, from district to district, from village to village in close succession. We had left behind the river and its wooden bridge across a narrow spot barely 5 metres across, where the river forces its way between two cliffs. The inhabitants of a district only ever followed us up to their border; on the other side their neighbours stood ready to receive me and thus I was handed on from one district to another. We crossed ridges covered with well-cultivated gardens and over wide grassy areas with small clumps of trees. Constantly, people turned up from various directions and greeted me with handshakes and the assurance of friendship: 'fin, afino'.

One evening, about 200 men had gathered around my camp. A lot of villages were named and the directions in which they lay were indicated to me. In many places, one could see smoke rising from the cooking of the evening meals. To estimate the population of this wide valley would be difficult from my superficial enquiries; However, my impression was that this mountain tribe has at least 5000 to 6000 people.[32]

The people I met and whose measurements I sometimes took, seldom exceeded the average height of 140 to 150 cm. They were quite small but looked healthy. I noticed neither ringworm nor grille nor deformities – only coughing and eye diseases. The latter may arise from sitting around in the smoky houses in which a fire is kept going for warmth during the cold nights (the thermometer usually registered a low of 12° C here). The fact that they have to tolerate the cold at night whilst naked must

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and Telefolmin

[31] Parish – the territory of a named group consisting of one or more villages.

[32] It is highly unlikely that the population of the upper Sepik source basin, including the Falamin to the east of the Telefolmin and the Ulapmin to the west, would have exceeded 2000.

have a hardening effect on the children but it is probably also the cause of the widespread incidence of coughing. It is not clear whether this is connected with the small stature of these people.

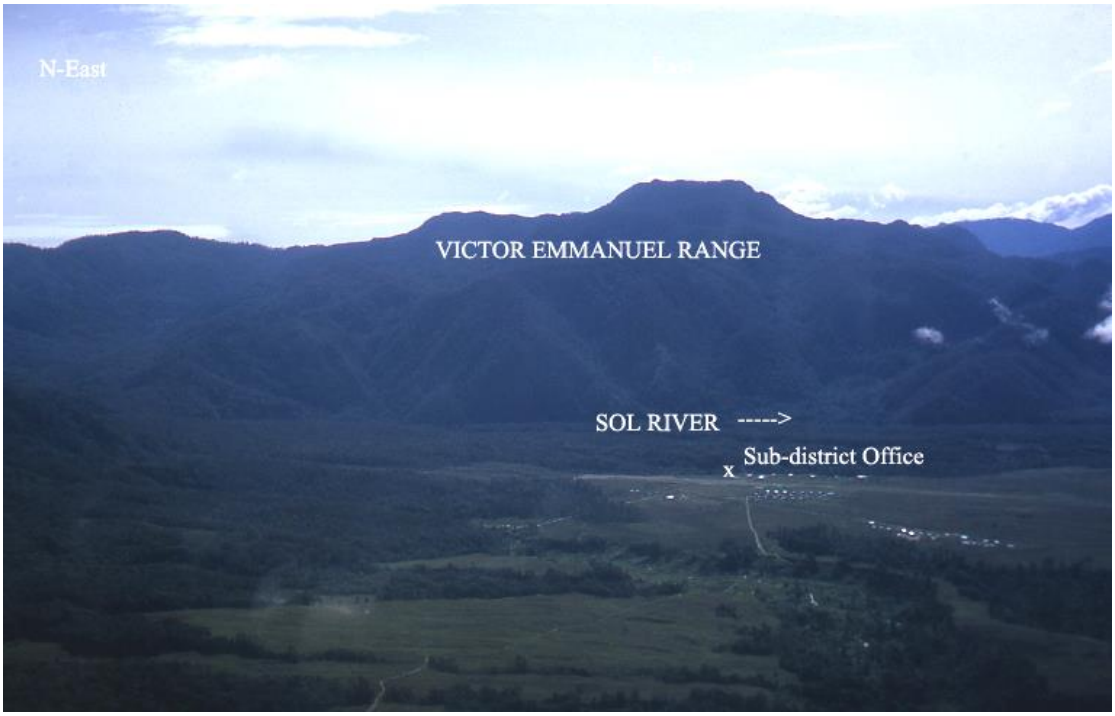
Judging by the relationship between the number of houses and the number of people in a village, a most thorough use is made of the floor space of these small houses for sleeping. These houses shelter 10 to 15 people - men, women and children - who lie about at night in no apparent order, keeping each other warm.[33] Their bodies may be washed by rain but otherwise not at all. It is not surprising that there are swarms of black fleas. They do not possess blankets; the closest substitutes are the short cassowary pelts which they attach to net bags [*tiyaap men*] and carry at their backs.

The cultural heritage of this little tribe is limited; apart from bows and arrows, I saw no other weapons.[34] Otherwise, they used stone axes;[35] digging sticks for planting bananas, taro and yam shoots;[36] bamboo containers; decorative bands set with *coix lacryma* [Job's tears] seeds, similar to those all the way down river; many possum and cassowary skins as head decoration; armbands of woven rattan [*dangkanok*] and the above-mentioned waist-bands of rattan loops [*oltil*]. There are no coconut or betel [areca] palms, or breadfruit trees. Pottery is unknown. However, as for domestic animals, I saw dogs and pigs. There must be many possums and cassowaries. Thus the diet, all in all, is not bad – the well cultivated and extensive gardens demonstrate that.

We found ourselves at the foot of the Victor Emmanuel Range. The following day we reached one of the headwaters of the Sepik, here cutting through a deep gorge.[37] Once again we plunged into the forest – layers of moss a metre thick, in which one's foot sinks, are spread over the ground, with thousands of moss veils and streamers festooned from trees like festival garlands.

[33] The men usually sleep separately in the men's houses and only sleep with their families in the garden houses.
[34] They also made and used black palm clubs (*bial sanam*), stone disc clubs (*tingi*), shields (*atkom*) and rattan cuirasses (*nam*).
[35] Stone adzes, not axes, and there were two types – *fubi* (from the west) and *mok* (from the east).
[36] Probably sweet potato not yam.

[37] Undoubtedly the Sol River.



East over Ifitaman (Telefomin) towards the Victor Emmanuel Range. Thurnwald's last camp was probably between the present-day Sub-district Office and the Sol River. Photo: B. Craig, 1967:73.

From a height, we gazed back to the other end, from where we entered the basin. The numerous adjoining valleys all invite one to explore; the mountains and passes all invite one to climb them; but that would have been a task for which my provisions were no longer sufficient and which was not at all envisaged at the beginning of this journey. The decision to return was heard by my fifteen faithful men with more jubilation than it was made by me.[38]

When I returned through the village areas, people were not exactly delighted with my reappearance. They had hoped to be rid of the dangerous apparition and now here it was again! Brandishing their bows and arrows they stormed after my party with much shouting, deceiving themselves that they were chasing me before them in this way, pretending they had won a victory. But it was enough for me to turn around and the entire howling mob would come to a halt; if I took a few steps towards them, they all raced away as though driven by the Devil. Meanwhile, my exhausted, weary carriers stumbled on quietly.

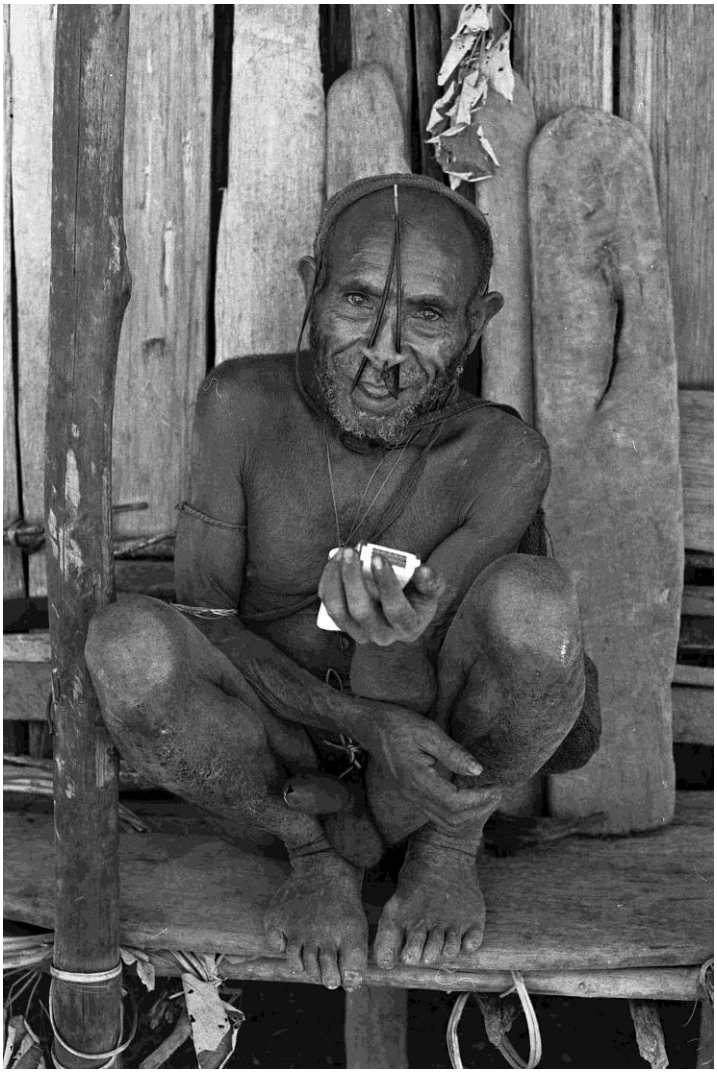
[38] Old informants in the 1960s informed me that Thurnwald's final camp was immediately east of the site of the Sub-District Office. It seems he crossed the Sol River and walked east towards Falamin territory but returned the same day, on 19 September 1914. See **Postscript** for assessment of place names in this region on Thurnwald's map.

Then the people followed us secretly. When I unexpectedly came into the vicinity of a garden, a great shouting broke out; they apparently feared I would fall upon their garden. However, I succeeded in attracting several shouters and gave them presents to bring to us taro and sugarcane from their garden. Fear of the stranger brought out one emotional reaction after another; they began to dance and jump about with joy, like puppets on a string. As we continued on our way, an argument began among the people; first the 'Revolutionary' party among them gained ascendency, then the 'Conservatives'.[39] From then on our path through the area was smooth and friendly.

In the evenings, the inhabitants of neighbouring villages came up and sat together with my carriers and conversed with them, each party speaking his own language and otherwise making himself understood by signs, bartering things with each other. They offered my carriers arrows and decorative objects, whilst the carriers made them happy by giving them strips of red calico or glass beads.

So we finally parted from one another in peace and great friendship. On the return journey I repeatedly shortened our way considerably especially as I could now make full use of the main trail which we had discovered late and could avoid the last journey over the ridge. Still, we had to climb 150 metres down a most unpleasant cliff. Exhausting forced marches followed so as not to run out of provisions before arriving at the first depot. That finally worked out to the last grain of rice! As none of us had any superfluous fat to drag about, our progress was prompt.

[39] That is, first the aggressive ones, then the peaceable group.



Binengim of Derolengdam village, Kialikmin parish (Telefolmin), who traded food for a steel knife from Thurnwald in 1914. Binengim was about 13 years old at the time and died in 1966. Photo: B. Craig 1964, M15:29A.

We found the depots in good condition. We saved ourselves much trekking over ridges by swimming down the wide stretches of river, though we had to be very careful of the boulders and rocks of plunging rapids. Once, when a crocodile emerged next to me, I gave up this method of travelling. I had not expected to find any crocodiles[40] so far up in comparatively cold water (18° to 20° C). They frequent deep spots and whirlpools beside rock walls, where the water is dammed up.

We all hoped to find supplies of rice and beans at the 'Canoe Camp', so as to be able to eat well again. But when we arrived there on the 27 September, we were bitterly

[40] In the 1960s and 1970s, some men's cult houses (*yolam*) had crocodile skulls along with other animal relics along the back walls.

disappointed. The provisions I had ordered had not come. The men who were waiting at the ‘Canoe Camp’ had had to look for leaves and fruits – especially a sort of fern in the forest – in order to stay alive. They looked as might be expected from such a diet!

What were we to do then? A long way further on, there were some sago palms. Fortunately I found another tin of cocoa and tins of soup in a trunk, though this was not much for 22 people all-told. We had another two days travelling ahead of us before the life-saving sago palms and these days demanded a great deal of attentiveness to guide the canoes with rattan ropes through the innumerable rapids. But we finally managed. Further down, we had not only sago, but good luck hunting – a cassowary and a pig were brought in the same day. We were over the worst!

The canoe newly made there was admittedly roughly hewn, but it was cut from such a large, strong tree that it did not suffer the slightest damage, though it repeatedly struck rocks in the whirlpools. The high sides made it possible to rush through the one to one-and-a-half metre waves of whirlpools, even at the risk of charging against rocks or tree trunks. Therefore I used this canoe to reconnoitre the waterway in advance. So we shot down the valley over rocks and logs. Even so, on this downstream journey, we still had to unpack the canoes several times in order to guide them over especially difficult spots.

The inner and outer mountain gates lay behind us but still there was no trace of the men who were to have brought the provisions! Again we found large quantities of sago palms suitable for extracting starch. Whilst my men extracted supplies of sago starch, I undertook a brief survey of the tributary called the Dutchman [the Ok Sio], which flows from the west into the upper part of this multi-branched section [of the Sepik]. This river, very broad at its mouth, soon divides into three comparatively small tributaries, probably originating in the nearby mountains.

We continued our journey downstream and managed to emerge from the multi—branched river without mishap. We glided downwards on the broad, quiet river. On 6 October we came to the ‘Papuan Camp’[41] above the mouth of the West [Nobe] River.

[41] Just inside Dutch territory, near the present-day village of Hufi. See Melk-Kock 1989, Abb.35.

There we saw paddles stuck in the sandbank at the edge of the river; there were canoes there. Soon the men appeared; they had made themselves at home there. They had been attacked several times by the natives and had to return once to the Meander Mountain camp with a wounded man. During another attempt [to move upstream], they were again attacked so they didn't dare to venture any further, but barricaded themselves in at the 'Papuan Camp'. It was a kind of natural fortress on a hill, which they fortified still further with felled trees. They had enough to eat so they waited there comfortably with the supplies which we had bitterly missed. Now at last we had rice and beans.

Here I heard the first dark news of the great events which, meanwhile, were rocking the world. I was told, 'Master, plenty new, English he calabush him [capture, hold] all ship belong German'. At first, the significance of this news was lost on me. Did this mean there had been an outbreak of an epidemic of plague, or cholera, in Hongkong or Singapore? Or was it war? Japan against America? Or Germany against England? So we set off downstream, past the stretches where my men had trouble with the natives. The inhabitants of the big houses (each capable of sheltering a whole village full of people) had almost entirely disappeared; probably they were hidden in the forest, observing us from the river bank. This time they didn't dare to attack because of the presence of the white man. As compensation for the attacks on my men, I restricted myself to taking away some pigs, sago and breadfruit, which had been heaped up for a feast.

On 9 October, I finally arrived at Meander Mountain with my whole company safe and sound and learned, in a fragmentary way, what had been happening in Europe.

Economic exploitation of the area investigated would depend upon the possibility of mining the minerals our rock samples indicated were present.[42] If useful minerals were there in sufficient quantity, it would be worthwhile exploring ways and means of getting them out; otherwise the journey by canoe and the trek over the mountains would be too laborious. The Highlands – a healthy place for the European, with its

[42] This was a perceptive comment. Ok Tedi has provided that economic development for the central New Guinea─Upper Fly River region and the proposed development of a copper mine on the upper reaches of the Frieda River suggests a similar development opportunity for the Upper Sepik region.

mild, sunny climate and its fresh, fragrant atmosphere – could become of some significance. The main disadvantage for economic development is the poverty of the people and their small numbers in New Guinea. If it were feasible to bring out to the island larger numbers of more intelligent workmen[43] conditioned to the tropical climate as farmers, then it might be possible eventually to extract as much or more from the land than from the paradise of [the] Sunda Island[s].[44] From a climatic point-of-view, [New Guinea] is better, rather than worse, than Java.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the population of Java was about 4 million; today it has grown to almost ten times that figure. This indicates what rational provision for indigenous populations and efficient management is capable of producing. The immigration of Malays from the Straits Settlements or the Sunda Islands would be necessary for rational development of the economy of New Guinea.[45] Only in this way would it be possible on the one hand to raise the population figures and on the other to bring about more versatile and intensive exploitation of the land through the addition of an overlay of more highly qualified workers.

The news I received at Meander Mountain was such that I decided immediately to continue my activities according to my original plan. I gave up the idea of penetrating right through to the coast, so as not to fall unexpectedly into the hands of the English. I decided therefore to extend my exploration to the coastal ranges only and then to return along the same routes.

Last year when I travelled up the Yellow River I noticed a river almost the same size flowing into it a few kilometres above its confluence with the Sepik River. I wanted to explore this river,[46] so I devoted the rest of the month of November [commencing 11 November] to the journey.

[43] This word could refer to technological skills rather than to a notion of 'innate intelligence'. Thurnwald's other publications may clarify his views on this matter.
[44] Thurnwald seems to be referring here to the main islands of the (now) Indonesian archipelago – Sumatra, Java, Borneo and the Celebes.
[45] This did not become policy for Papua New Guinea but it is the strategy of the Indonesian government in relation to [West] Papua (formerly Dutch New Guinea).
[46] The Sand (Kaigu) River.

The north-east corner of the West Range: Meander Mountain, the site of Thurnwald's base camp, at left and 'Double Head' right of centre. Photo: B. Craig, 1969:12:25.

In the beginning the water level was high and we proceeded comparatively quietly and easily along the countless windings of the forested banks. The river flowed from due north through the vast plain between the coastal range and the Sepik River. Later the water level dropped and our canoes kept running aground on sandbanks. We would punt forward for several hundred metres without a hitch and suddenly jerk to a halt on sand again; we couldn't see the bottom through the muddy water. We went on for days like this. We met only a few natives along the banks. Only a long way up the river do several large creeks flow in. The journey became even more difficult; again and again the canoes had to be pulled over the sand, which had become more coarsely grained. Finally, I gave up[47] and we proceeded on foot along the bed of the river until we at last reached the mountains. I climbed up several peaks which provided views in different directions; to the ridges which jut out into the plain from north to south and to the 800 metre high watershed of the coastal range.[48]

[47] 17-18 November, just above the junction of the Sand with the Kinim (named by Thurnwald the Waldbach or Forest Stream).
[48] The highest peak in the coastal range – the Bewani Mountains – is about 20 kilometres north of the furthest point reached by Thurnwald and is 2000 m ASL.

During these forays [19-21 November], I came across natives[49] who initially withdrew shyly but who, the following day, would appear in greater numbers armed with bows and arrows and short spears, wearing woven cuirasses decorated with cuscus skins and bird feathers. We exchanged presents and separated in peace. I commenced the return journey, proceeding very slowly, as we continually encountered sandbanks. Along the middle reaches of the river, large numbers of natives appeared;[50] they provided ample supplies of breadfruit and sago. There seemed to be extensive settlement here. Undoubtedly among these people were some who knew of me from my journey up the Yellow River last year and they treated me with friendliness.

I devoted December to exploring the North River. I had myself taken up to its mouth in the pinnace and here embarked into our canoes.[51] I went upstream rapidly at first; the banks here are quite high and appear dry right from the mouth of the river, with occasional swampy stretches. A few kilometres above the confluence of the North and Sepik Rivers, a tributary flows into the North River. I was later able to ascertain, by observations made from a mountain on the middle reaches of the North River, that this tributary [the Horden (Bapi)] comes almost exactly from the north-west.

After a few lonely days, we reached a densely populated area. Here again I was struck by the number of people with light skin and brown beards. If these and the Green River people were albinos, then the large numbers could only be explained by a long period of inbreeding which strengthened and spread the albino characteristics among the population. Of course, these lighter variants might also be explicable by racial influences of which we know nothing.

Thus, in the middle reaches of the North River we arrived at the hills [the Yagroner Hills] which project towards the east from the Bewani Mountains,[52] its isolated peaks jutting up even further east beyond the North River at this point. They consist of coraline limestone, which outcrops everywhere. The steep slopes are heavily

[49] Probably the Seta-speaking people of present-day Pelama.
[50] Probably Namie-speaking people of present-day Yawari and Aidadami. He would also have come across people from present-day Aiendami, Gwidami, Mukudami and Wakau further downstream.
[51] The Abau-speaking village of Beimap is on the south bank of the Sepik opposite the mouth of the North River. Thurnwald started up the North River on 13 December 1914.
[52] The mountains running north-south along the international border are now called the Border Mountains, the name ‘Bewani’ being restricted to the coastal range.

weathered and cleft and often difficult to climb. From these peaks one gets a splendid panoramic view towards the northern coastal range, to the mountains at the head of the Green and Hauser rivers in the west, to the entrenched valley of the October River, and to the great mass of the central ranges of New Guinea to the south.

The Yagroner Hills, left of centre, east from the Border Mountains. The North River flows from left to right through the Hills. Photo: B. Craig 1969:8:18.

The villages of the natives are situated both on the mountains here and inside the curves of the river bends.[53] The settlements consist of a half dozen to a dozen houses built on low supports with special men's rooms. The type of construction is similar to that found on the Yellow and Sand Rivers,[54] but differs from the community houses erected on tall poles along the upper course of the main (Sepik) river. I gave an extensive account of these in my last report. The natives here wear basketry cuirasses covering their hips, chest and back.[55]

[53] Thurnwald provides settlement names in the vicinity of the Yagroner Hills and upstream. None of these (Jerbiau, Akora, Jami, Marike, Uasrami and Fiami) can be related to present-day village names but a list of names following 'Jerbiau' does include Taibari, which could be a reference to Baiberi. Baiberi is located on the North River exactly where Thurnwald places Jerbiau. It should be noted that, over time, settlements did relocate and therefore adopt different names.
[54] The gable roofs reach to the floor along each side, with no side walls.
[55] A survey of cuirasses by Tiesler (*Abhandlungen und Berichte des Staatlichen Museums für Völkerkunde Dresden*, 41: 46-85 and Tafel I-XXVI (1984), does not include a cuirass from the North River but it is likely they were similar to those from the Border Mountains to the west (see Tiesler 1984, Abb. 15, 20, 22, 23, 24).

It is a typical feature of all the rivers that I discovered here, for the main river as well as for the tributaries, that they first break up into an extensive network of channels among pebbly, reed-covered islands after emerging from the mountains onto the plains, and then only many kilometres further downstream collect into a single riverbed. Travelling upstream, one leaves the muddy riverbeds and first comes upon sandbanks. The fine sand is replaced by coarser and coarser grains and pebbles, the riverbanks becoming lower the closer one gets to the network of channels. In this area it is often difficult to find places that are safe from flooding. Thorny rattan vines grow abundantly in these frequently-flooded places and serve as a warning to take care.As usual, we met with this phenomenon on the North River also.

A slight rise finally provided a place to set up our 'Canoe Camp' [on Christmas Day 1914]. Then we began our journey on foot once more, upstream along the bed of the river. This area seemed to be well populated; we went past several villages and saw many others, with their tell-tale coconut palms, on the mountains. Almost everyday we got visitors to our camp.

We forged deep into the mountains where the North River splits into two tributaries. First, we followed the eastern one and a narrow tunnel-like gorge forced us to make a detour over a mountain and back to the stream. Again it forked into two creeks tumbling down from the mountains over high boulders. Everywhere there were native settlements.[56]

We then went westwards obliquely across the range to hit upon the other tributary. We found it and followed it upstream for a while and then climbed Silvester Mountain. This allowed a wide view. In the east [actually, south-east] the great plain; in the [far] south, the Central Ranges extend to the high Dutch Mountains [Star Mountains]; [to the south-west], the broad depression in which the October River flows; the mountains around Yellow River[57] and in between a valley that causes me to suspect that the Keroom is identical with the Hauser.

[56] Above the Yagroner Hills, the North River is called the Senu. The people of the upper reaches of the Senu are Fas speakers and those of the lower Senu, near the Yagroner Hills, are Kwomtari speakers.
[57] This does not make sense as Yellow River is far to the east of the October River. I suspect Thurnwald got his colours muddled and meant to refer to Green River (Grün rather than Gelb).

(*Thurnwald's footnote*:- This supposition turned out to be wrong. Recent Dutch exploration has proved that the Keroom belongs to the Idenburg River system, the source of the Mamberambo). Somewhat west of north, the Coastal Range has low saddles. Only towards the east is the view north blocked by the mountains.)

Heavy rain and storms the next day – New Year's Day 1915 – caused me to hasten my return, as my way lay along the river bed and high water could endanger me or even cut off my return. However, we arrived back at the 'Canoe Camp' safe and sound, and in good spirits; we continued our journey from there in moderately high water. On the way we received ample provisions from the natives who appeared everywhere to be quite friendly. I did not need the depot I had set up at the commencement of our journey on the lower reaches of the North River. However, I was not a little astonished to find that this depot had vanished!

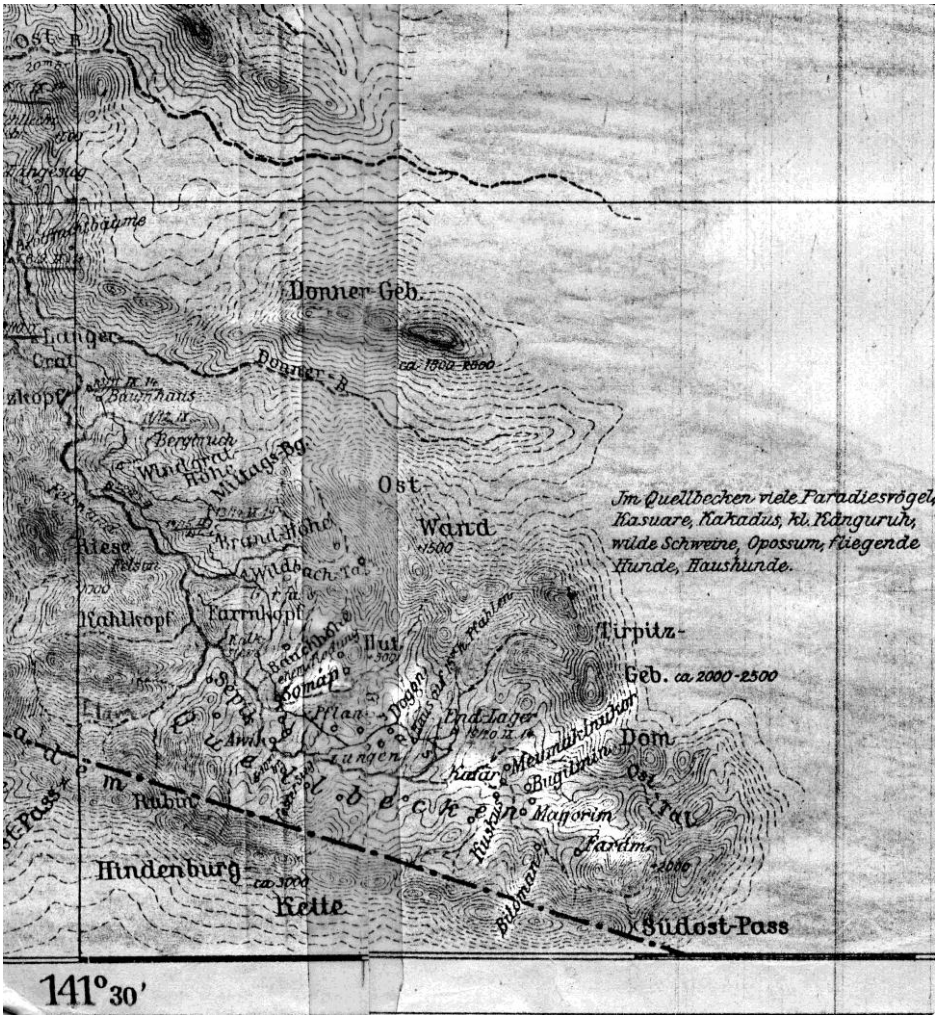
As it later turned out, this was the first greeting that the English sent me. Major Martin had travelled up in his canoe, as I later heard, for the express purpose of destroying this depot to cut off my return. He had been told of this depot by my men. This action at any rate showed 'military acuteness and boldness'. His intention was to cause me to disappear into the stomachs of the natives! An heroic undertaking! Well, the natives had provided for me better than that and thanks to the provisions they offered me, I arrived safely at the main camp at Meander Mountain.

Here another surprise was in store for me, for meanwhile war against my expedition had been undertaken with five ships and 500 men who had succeeded in storming my camp; everything not considered worthwhile removing was chopped into small pieces. Thus I found myself robbed of my pinnace and boats and deprived of gifts of barter and provisions. I had no choice now but to set out on my return journey down the Sepik by canoe. By mid-January, 1915, I arrived at the mission at Marienberg and learned there that my base camp at Karadjundo had suffered the same fate as my camp at Meander Mountain, that it had been plundered and robbed by the Anglo-Australian troops; this I was able to confirm on the spot soon afterwards.[58]

[58] For further information about the ransacking of Thurnwald's camps, see B. Craig 1997 'The Fate of Thurnwald's Sepik Ethnographic Collections' in M. Schindlbeck (ed) *Gestern und Heute – Traditionen in der Südsee.* Pp. 387-408. *Baessler-Archiv*, Neue Folge, XLV. Berlin.

POSTSCRIPT – B. Craig

Thurnwald indicated on his map several place names he recorded in the Telefomin area that he does not mention in his text. Not surprisingly, there seems to have been much that was 'lost in translation'. This in no way diminishes the quality of the map he produced which can be compared favourably to modern maps based on aerial photography, especially in relation to the courses of the rivers he traversed. His achievement in this respect is admirable.



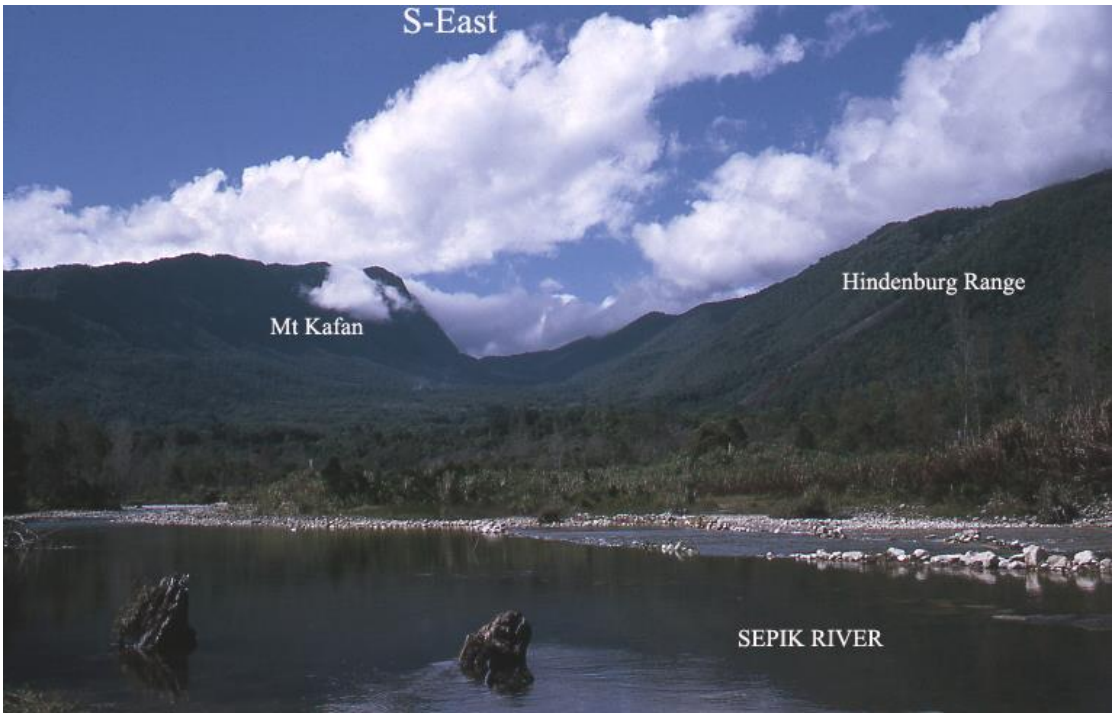
'**Somap**' is located near the junction of the Sepik and the Mirip rivers in the Atemkiakmin parish of the Telefolmin but this name does not correspond to any names I have heard.

'Awik' is located a couple of kilometres south of 'Somap' but again does not correspond to any names I have heard.

‘Dogon’, about 5 or 6 kilometres east of ‘Somap’ might possibly be a reference to the village named Derolengdam/Drolengam in the 1960s.

The cluster of seven named locations to the south-east of Thurnwald’s last camp, in the valley inhabited by the Falamin, yelds five identifiable references:

‘Kafar’ probably corresponds to Kafan-tigin (Kafan-mountain). Whereas Thurnwald may have understood the people to have been pointing at a settlement in the distance, they may have been pointing to the mountain that dominates the source streams of the Sepik River (called Tekin by the peoples of this region).



South-east from the Sepik in Falamin territory with Mt Kafan and the Hindenburg Range either side of Thurnwald’s ‘Süd-Ost Pass’. Photo: B. Craig, 1972:BK3:1.

‘Kuskus’, immediately south of ‘Kafar’, probably refers to the Kuskusmin, a moiety of the Bimin-Kuskusmin, who live in a valley about 45 kilometres east of Telefomin. Thurnwald’s informant(s) may have understood him to ask who lived beyond Mount Kafan.

‘Bugulmin’ refers to the parish name Bogalmin. The south-west section of the adjoined Telefolmin villages of Telefolip-Bogalminavip is often referred to as ‘Bogalmin’. There are no Bogalmin parish villages among the Falamin so far as I am aware so the location is marked about ten kilometres south-east of where it should be.

‘Magorim’ is not a place name but the name of a dangerous ‘bush’ spirit – Magalim – believed often to manifest in the form of a large snake. It is said that Magalim was killed at Telefolip in the sacred grove of hoop pine trees where a species of pandanus has bright red flowers said to be the serpent’s blood. The location of ‘Magorim’ near ‘Bugilmin’ on Thurnwald’s map suggests that Thurnwald was being told about the location of Telefolip adjacent to Bogalminavip and the sacred, even dangerous, nature of the location.

‘Faram’ certainly refers to the Falamin who live in the valley called by Thurnwald ‘Thumb Valley’ (the upper source basin of the Sepik River).

‘Meumakinukor’ and **‘Biloman’** do not correspond to any names I have heard.