

INTERIM - DRAFT ONLY.

PRE-WAR CULTS - POPONDETTA/IOMA AREAS.

This basically aims to be a listing of references to the above, rather than a source of what they contain, or a discussion of the "cults" (adjustment movements?) themselves.

It has come about because of my discovery of published comments by Henry Holland on the subject. Photocopies of what he had to say, in the A.B.M. Review for April 1, 1933, and May 1, 1933, are attached. My research is not thorough, and it is quite possible that he made other observations at other times; I am not aware of any and, as we shall see, doubt that he did. This is unfortunate - see tributes to him on pages 7 & 75 of "Orokaiva Magic".

Rev. Cecil Saunders, who had been at Sangara with Holland for two years (for description, and tribute to Holland, see his article in the A.B.M. Review April 12, 1927), said that Holland was not a letter writer (A.B.M. Review, February 12, 1928, p.199), and so his work was largely unknown. It may have been this observation of Saunders which led to the attached photocopies for I think Holland was on leave in 1933, i.e. I suspect someone pressured him into writing them.

General references are:-

Williams' "Orokaiva Magic"
Waiko's Sixth Waigani Seminar paper (available in "Priorities in Melanesian Development").
Worsley's "The Trumpet Shall Sound"
and the Chinnery/Haddon paper "Five New Religious Cults in British New Guinea" (Hibbert journal, 15:448-63, 1916/17).

Williams looks at the whole picture, Waiko discusses the happenings from a certain point of view, and Worsley is a very comprehensive study of published literature. Most of the following references appear in Williams &/or Worsley.

In the following, no attempt will be made to give specific references to the above for what is being discussed.

Baigona. PAR 1912-13:154-5
" 1911-12:14 & 129
" 1914-15:58
" 1919-20:63.

Also PAR 1927-28:6-7, 34 (this is 'Poroga', included here because of what Waiko (1973) has to say).

Taro. PAR 1914-15:58
" 1920-21:47-8
" 1924-25:43.

The A.B.M. Review for October 7, 1919 (p.106) reported "a great revival of the worship of the Taro spirit."; Rev. Flint was writing from Ambasi, but his area then included the Mamba.

The "Magic Spear" cult, and the "Spear men" (Gi-embo), will be considered separately, elsewhere.

Manau. PAR 1914-15:58
" 1920-21:47-8.

strange?
"There is a new cult with its prophet and teacher amongst the people, what seems a strange medley of Christian and heathen teachings -- the Christian teaching being perhaps perversions of partly understood truths from our own and Lutheran missionaries."

(from the Mamba report, NGM AR 1922, in A.B.M. Review May 1923)

2. See also NGM A.R. \leq 1939
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A tragic postscript to this is given by S.R.M. Gill on pp. 24-5 of his "Letters from the Papuan Bush, 1942-1946" (1954); this is in a letter dated September 20 (1942).

Kekesi. PAR 1914-15:58.

"Magic Spear" cult.

"At one of these [villages between Dobodura and Sangara] I came in contact with the new "Magic Spear" cult, which is taking the place of taro worship in some of the villages."

(Bp. Henry, writing in A.B.M. Review, July 12, 1924, p.78)
He went on to say that the greeting with this was "Oroda". This was the Taro one too (see Holland), and I suspect they are near synonymous (see also comment on Naniu in NGM AR for 1924). A separate listing has been made because of the Bishop's comments, above, though.

Spear men.

These, called Gi-embo, or Ki-embo, are discussed by Murray, partly quoting S.R.M. Gill, in PAR 1932-33:21-2.

Imminent cataclysm. See PAR 1937-38:35-6.

"... from the Northern Division comes a similar account of a rumour that "the earth is going to turn upside down and all the people including the Assistant Resident Magistrates are to disappear"; and the result of the rumour was that the people began a slaughter of pigs." (p.35)

And, in more ways than one, this brings us right up to modern times.

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About 1924, Philippa Bridges was the first white woman to walk the Kokoda Trail (actually from Moresby to Buna). They camped at Sombo, where Mr. Holland paid them a visit:-

"Mr. Holland's conversation was very interesting. It chiefly concerned sorcerers and the queer ideas that suddenly spring up in the natives' minds, and would soon become tradition if they were not nipped in the bud;"

(p.72, "A Walk-About in Australia", Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1925?)

Miss Bridges' reporting isn't always completely accurate but, even with that proviso, I found this of great interest (as anyone who has read "Of Myths and things" could well imagine).

It is interesting to note that King (PAR 1912-13) comments that the profession of Baigona had possibly only recently been grafted onto an old practice (treatment). In fact somewhere quite recently I have seen it stated that Baigona was at Cape Nelson even in Monckton's time, but was not then known by that name.

Murray (paper)

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I believe there is a fairly general thread running through all of these movements (and it isn't the one claimed by Waiko).

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