

Storibuk Pairundu

STORIBUK PAIRUNDU

Tales and legends of the Kewa
(Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea)

Collected by Alex Yapua Ari
Edited by Holger Jebens

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When, in March 1991, Katharina Wieker visited me in Pairundu, she consulted Alex about the first few narratives he had already recorded at that time and took down some notes, making it much easier for me to transcribe the original manuscript later. Throughout all my visits to Papua New Guinea, Fr. Matthias Olape generously provided me with both sound advice and practical assistance. Over the years a close relationship has developed between us, and today I am proud to call him a friend.

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Most of all, however, I feel indebted to Alex. During my first fieldwork he not only did the household chores, acted as a translator and provided me with first-hand information about various aspects of village life, but his intelligence, creativity and sense of humour also made him a pleasant and inspiring companion. Over the years I was able to watch him grow up, and by 2008 he was, of course, no longer the young adolescent I had met almost two decades earlier, but to my delight he proved to be as kind and helpful as ever.

INTRODUCTION

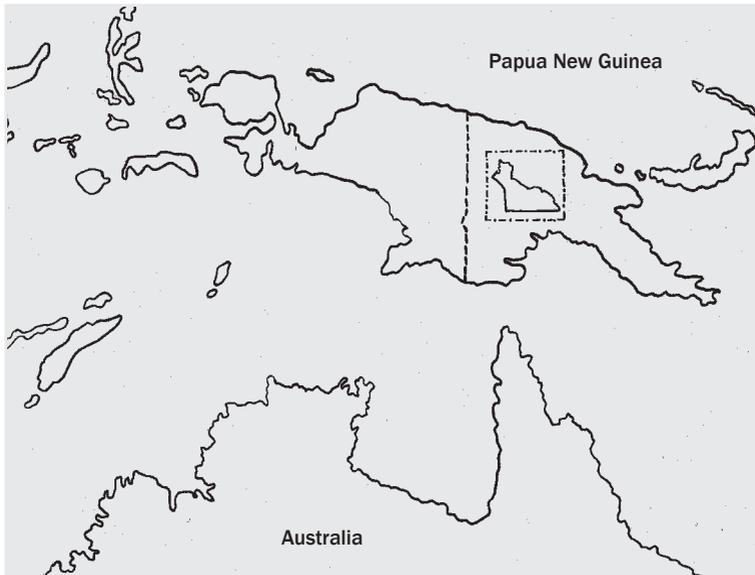
A collection of stories

This book goes back to a rainy day in January 1991.¹ My first fieldwork in Pairundu, a small and remote rural village in the Kagua District of the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea,² had just started, and I was beginning to develop a daily routine. The people of Pairundu had allowed me to live in a house with a thatched roof and a central fireplace (p. 7, no. 32). Following my request, two corners had been separated with walls made from cane stalks to form a small room for my sleeping bag and an equally small ‘office’ where I used to read, transcribe interviews or keep my field diary. I was sitting in this ‘office’ and must have been quite focused elsewhere or absent-minded because it took me some time to realise that a few visitors had come and gathered around the fireplace. I recognised the voices of Yawa, Alex and others. Yawa was one of the Big Men of the village, and Alex, then about thirteen years of age, had moved in with me to fetch firewood and do the cooking.³ At one point I decided to join the visitors and saw that Yawa was talking and that, sitting next to him, Alex was taking notes, writing on the right-hand side of a DIN A4 page, folded lengthways – just like I used to do, leaving the left-hand side for the later entry of additional comments.

I was surprised looking at this scene, and I still remember that I had the strange feeling of looking into a kind of mirror or of being mimicked in my role as an anthropologist. Apparently Alex himself did not think very differently: ‘I saw you collecting stories and writing them down, and I wanted to try and see if I can do that too’, he told me in the evening. ‘Of course you can do that too’, I replied, ‘and if you want to continue, please feel free to do so’. Alex accepted this invitation, from time to time I provided him with a pen and paper, and before my first fieldwork in Pairundu was over he presented me with a collection of 62 stories, carefully hand-written on 139 pages.

These stories are presented here in their entirety and in their original order. In the Neo-Melanesian Pidgin English (Tok Pisin), Alex referred to all of them as ‘stori’, whereas in the vernacular, he differentiated between ‘iti’ and ‘rema’: an *iti*, people in Pairundu had told me quite early on, has been handed down by the ancestors (a *tumbuna stori* in Tok Pisin), while a *rema*

is new, which means that it tells of a more recent past or the present. Since Alex switched freely between these two genres, on some pages people from Pairundu pursue their daily activities, grow food and raise pigs, marry and fight, while on others the protagonists encounter bush spirits, dead relatives or the inhabitants of the sky-world, tap into sources of unlimited wealth or are transformed into animals. The reader learns how a neighbour has divorced his first wife, how particular birds or mountains have come into existence and how a boy from a neighbouring village went to prison after stealing a tape-recorder. In other words, the fabulous follows on the mundane, and what seems prosaic in one story gives way to the extraordinary in the next.

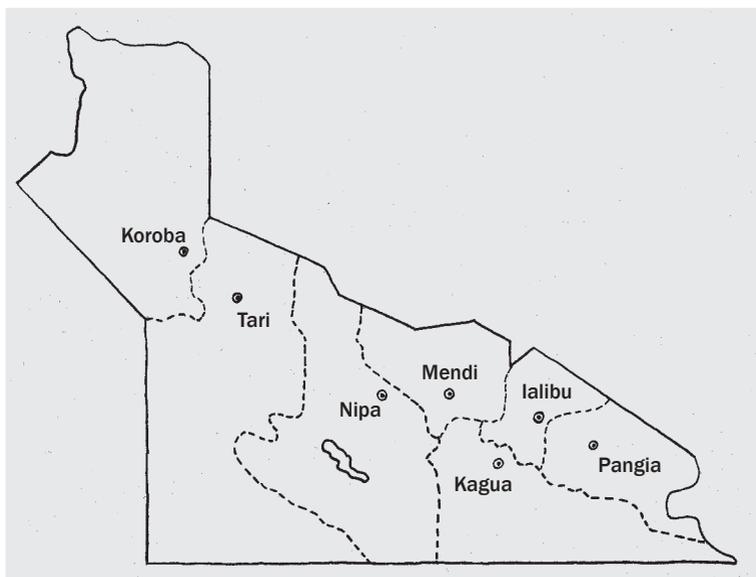


Papua New Guinea

Contexts

At the time of my first fieldwork, Pairundu had about two hundred permanent inhabitants (cf. Jebens 2005: Chapter 1). Most of them belong to a patrilineal clan called Kome and consisting of three sub-clans: Auro Kome, Rata Kome and Rudu Kome. The Mamarepa, who live in the surrounding villages of Sua/ Yeibu, Ruri and Anapote, are considered a ‘brother clan’. Both the Kome and the Mamarepa rely on their subsistence economy, growing sweet potatoes as a staple crop and raising domesticated pigs. In 1991 the majority of the villagers regarded themselves as Catholic, but what was once a religious monopoly had come under threat from a rapidly growing community of Seventh-day Adventists (cf. pp. 322–327).

My hosts and interlocutors often told me that I had come to a place ‘hidden in the bush’ or cut off from the ‘outside world’. Indeed Pairundu was not visited by colonial officers or missionaries until the late 1950s, and more than thirty years later there was still no permanent road to the capital of Kagua

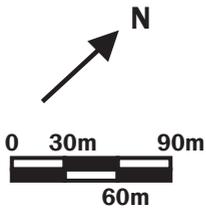
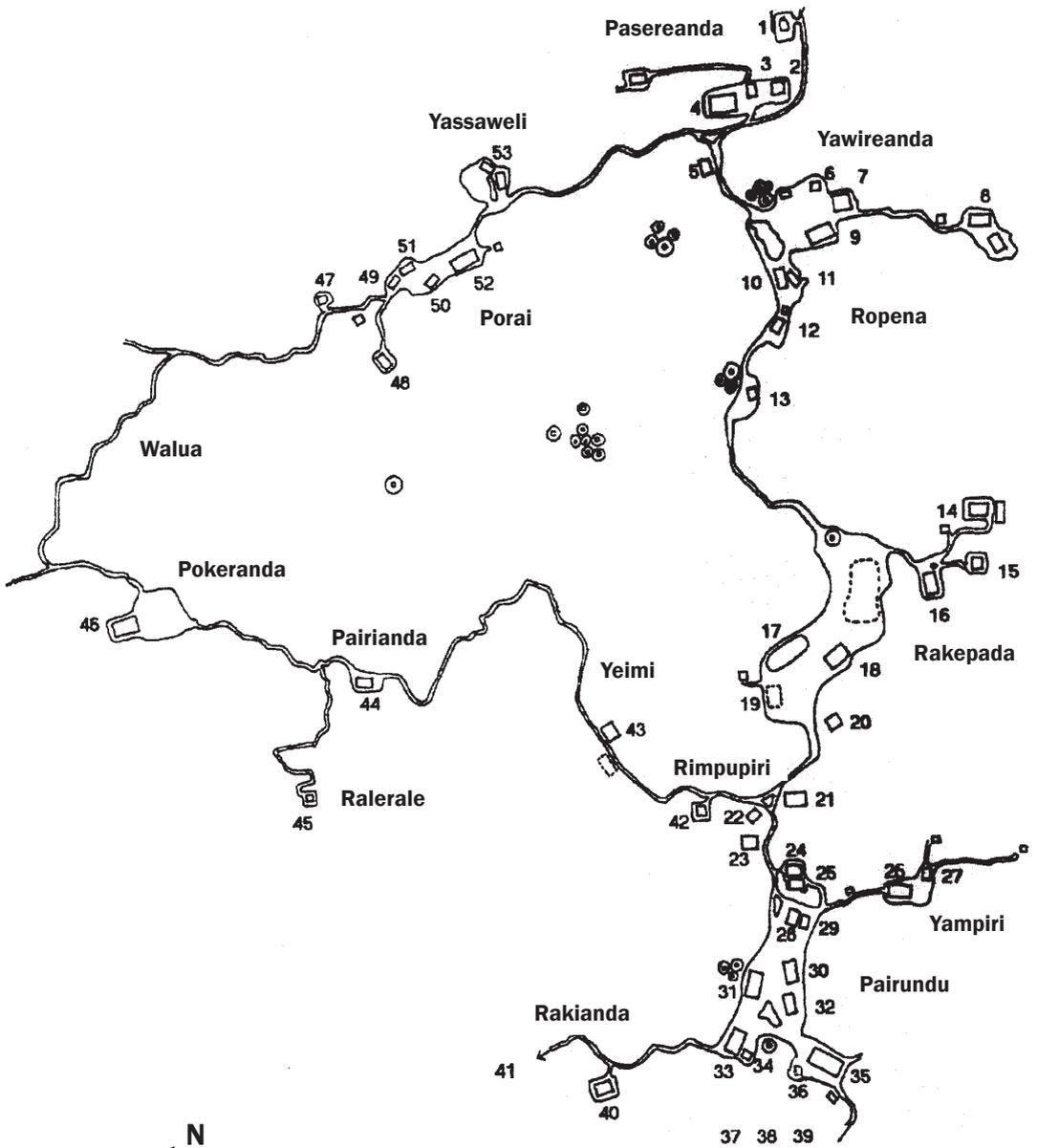


Southern Highlands Province

District. Hardly anyone had ever left the province or attended more than a few years of community school, and very little could be earned by growing cash crops. As a result socio-economic differentiation appeared to be relatively unmarked, the traditional Big Men had retained much of their power and, perhaps as in the precolonial era, patrilineal descent, co-residence and cooperation were still the most important factors governing the composition of social groups.

The inhabitants of Pairundu are part of a group of 40,000 to 50,000 people who speak Kewa. Despite considerable cultural heterogeneity, this group can be seen as more or less 'typical' of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea in general, and they have received some attention from Western researchers. Karl Franklin documented the Kewa language.⁴ John LeRoy has examined various aspects of Kewa culture, from modes of reciprocity (1975) to songs (1978), the killing of pigs (1979a), competitive exchange (1979b) and ancestries (1981). Lisette Josephides has analysed gender relations (1983, 1985), as well as constructions of the self (1998, 2008). Mary MacDonald, a former missionary, devoted a longer monograph to Kewa religion.⁵ My own work relates to the same topic but focuses particularly on the indigenous appropriation of Catholic and Adventist Christianity and assesses it from a more anthropological perspective.⁶

All of my 'ethnographic predecessors' among the Kewa have also been interested in stories that correspond to the category of *tumbuna stori* or *iti*. The first was Karl Franklin, who in 1972 published a literacy booklet with a few texts in West Kewa.⁷ John LeRoy documented several *iti* in Part IV of his 1975 dissertation, as well as in an edited volume that came out ten years later (1985b) accompanied by a monograph entitled "Fabricated world: an interpretation of Kewa tales".⁸ There he argues that all *iti* are constructed from a limited number of sequences and episodes which 'recur in different variations and combinations' (1985a:7). In addition, LeRoy also published an article with 'new stories' or *rema*.⁹ Shortly after LeRoy's dissertation appeared, another edition of *tumbuna stori* or *iti* came out. Put together by Ulli Beier (1977b), it



Pairundu

consists of texts recorded and transcribed not by Western ethnographers, but by Stephen Rambi and Frank Nimi, two Kewa-born students at the University of Papua New Guinea, who, ‘in the Christmas vacation of 76/77’ (Beier 1977a:1), worked in Kagua District, presumably in the areas of their respective home villages.¹⁰ Collections of different categories or genres have also been published by Lisette Josephides and Mary MacDonald. Whereas Josephides presents a small number of *rema*, *iti* and songs in an article from 1982, the second part of MacDonald’s 1991 monograph on Kewa religion assembles a total of 188 texts, among them not only *iti*, *rema* and songs, but also various reports on dreams, as well as a few shorter statements by MacDonald’s informants.¹¹

In various parts of the Pacific, anthropologists and missionaries had already collected stories at the beginning of the last century, that is, some fifty years before many Kewa were to experience their first contacts with Westerners. The intention was often to learn and document vernacular languages, and thus the resulting publications regularly include original texts, as well as translations in an interlineal or double column form. More often than not the early anthropologists and missionaries relied on a limited number of interlocutors acting as narrators, at times having asked others and thus having become collectors themselves. These interlocutors were mostly elders or religious specialists in the case of anthropologists and young men or school boys in the case of missionaries.¹² Soon compilations of texts became a regular part of synoptic accounts of particular cultures such as those by Margaret Mead (1938, 1940, 1947a, 1947b, 1949) on the Mountain Arapesh or Georg Vicedom and Herbert Tischner (Vicedom 1943) on the Mbowamb.¹³ Recorded stories were subjected to psychoanalytic or structuralist interpretations, while newer approaches focused on how individual narratives are embedded within their cultural, social or linguistic contexts (cf. Beer 1999:10–12). In recent years, however, anthropologists and missionaries appear to have lost interest not only in collecting stories, but also in documenting vernacular languages. At least there are almost no original texts in the aforementioned publications of LeRoy, Beier, Josephides and MacDonald.¹⁴

Moreover, my 'predecessors' among the Kewa largely refrain from pointing out correspondences between 'their' stories and those that have already been presented by others.¹⁵ This fits in with the impression that in general the relevant literature is not very systematised: anthropologists working on the Pacific tend to ignore the highly elaborated indexes of types and motifs of tales developed in the context of folklore research,¹⁶ and, variously labelling 'their' stories myths, legends, folk tales or narratives (cf. BurrIDGE 1969:xvii), they seem to be able to work without overly strict definitions. Here the term 'myth' appears to be particularly widespread, yet it is also contested, since it involves a wide range of distinct and sometimes conflicting understandings and theories.¹⁷ Dialectal differences notwithstanding, LeRoy and Josephides both claim that *iti* are myths, but they say the same about *rema* too.¹⁸ More or less explicitly, they also state that, unlike *rema*, *iti* are not believed to be true, yet they agree that *iti* can convey 'truths of a figurative kind' (LeRoy 1985b:xii) or refer to 'real "essential truths"'.¹⁹ Apparently the categories overlap, thus LeRoy's translations of *iti* as 'tale' and *rema* as 'legend' (1985b:xi) have to be treated with some caution.²⁰

In a collection of 'myths, fairy-tales, and new stories' from the Wampar (Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea) that came out in 1994, Hans Fischer has taken anthropologists to task, not only for providing very little information on how they have collected their stories,²¹ but also for arranging them 'according to self-designed criteria without even naming indigenous categories or terms, let alone discussing them' (1994:235). Moreover, for Fischer many published accounts actually prove to be 'retellings or condensed summaries, not to mention those narratives where sections, repetitions and enumerations have been left out deliberately' (1994:23). Such editorial changes are often not identified (cf. Beer 1999:23), and without the reproduction of original texts, even a reader who knows the vernacular language can only guess how what is printed differs from what was said in the field. Repeating his criticisms in a more recent book, Fischer asserts that, when it comes to recording and publishing narratives, '[t]here are hardly any minimal standards that are met with' (2006:2).

This judgement is perhaps a bit harsh as far as LeRoy, Josephides and MacDonald are concerned: they at least write about the techniques and contexts with and within which they have taken down their stories, they discuss indigenous terms such as *iti* and *rema*, and, unlike the first anthropologists and missionaries or some of their ‘successors’, they do mention the narrators of individual stories by name.²² Yet, in a way these narrators do not come to life, since one does not learn much about them or about their relationship with the ethnographer. It is the latter who decides which of the recorded texts to select for publication and how they are to be ordered and captioned. Allegedly not inclined to talk about the meaning of their tales and legends,²³ the Kewa themselves may act as storytellers or even as collectors, but they are not authors or editors, and in this sense they remain mute.

From the late 1960s and early 1970s, stories that correspond to the category of *tumbuna stori* or *iti* increasingly gained in popularity in what later became the independent state of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Collected from all parts of the country and translated into Tok Pisin, they were broadcast by the radio (cf. Fischer 2006:122–123) and began to fill a column that regularly appeared in the weekly newspaper “Wantok”.²⁴ Just like Stephen Rambi and Frank Nimi had done among fellow Kewa in Kagua District, other students also recorded examples of their oral traditions (cf. Schild 1981:76, Beier 2005:43), and, often based on translations, adaptations and interpretations of these traditions, more and more works of poetry, drama, fiction and autobiography emerged in what Ken Inglis, Vice Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), termed an ‘outburst of creativity’.²⁵ Accordingly, the UPNG came to be regarded as the ‘birthplace of Papua New Guinean literature’ (Stella 2007:167), and Ulli Beier, who not only offered courses in creative writing, but also provided individual authors with publication venues in the form of anthologies or newly founded journals, was praised for having ‘the genius of a midwife’.²⁶

Given that the Australian administration had introduced the UPNG as well as other institutions of tertiary education in order to train functionaries

who would be able to replace departing colonial officers and other expatriates (cf. Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1995:114), it is perhaps not surprising that the first works of PNG literature often expressed strong nationalist and anti-colonialist sentiments.²⁷ Moreover, many of the young and mostly male writers attempted to assure themselves of their own cultural backgrounds from which they had become alienated as they advanced in the Western school system (cf. Schild 1981:160). John Waiko deplored the fact that ‘the books, plays, articles we produce hardly reach the villages’ (1974:4), and he warned that if ‘traditional values’, ways of thinking and languages were ignored, the newly formed indigenous elite would ‘have no alternative except to continue the colonial pattern’ (1974:6). In some cases, however, efforts to ‘find a common tradition in this country’ (Waiko 1974:6) involved a romantic longing, a certain nostalgia ‘for the village and its calmer life’ (Gorle 1995:99–100) or for what had allegedly been ‘lost during the time of colonial invasion’ (Winduo 2012:107).

Drusila Modjeska has referred to the late 1960s and early 1970s as “golden” years’ in which ‘the arts flourished, poetry was published, cultural institutions were founded, writers were writing, theatres were full, and there could still be some thought of a national culture’ (2003:48). This picture changed soon after Papua New Guinea’s independence in 1975, when most authors turned themselves into full-time politicians or became involved in the business sector and when literary journals such as “Kovave”, “Gigibori”, and “Papua New Guinea Writing” or book series such as the “Papua Pocket Poets” ceased to exist.²⁸ In 1980, the “Times of Papua New Guinea” featured an article in which Bernhard Minol referred to ‘the scarcity of publishing outlets’ as well as ‘the lack of an interested reading public in PNG’ and which, in its title, even declared “The death of PNG writing”.

However, as some writers disappeared others entered the scene, new periodicals such as “Ondobondo”, “Bikmaus” and “Savannah Flames” were founded and attention was focused on social, economic, and cultural change in the postcolonial or post-independent state, with oral traditions influencing ‘dramatic works and radio plays’.²⁹ At the same time, Nigel Krauth still

noted 'a gap between writers and the populace' (1993:54), Drusila Modjeska considered a 'reading culture' to be 'virtually non-existent' (2003:50), and Steven Winduo declared that, whereas 'the birth of PNG literature' had been supported by the Australian administration, the scenario in 2012 was 'one of neglect'.³⁰ In a manner reminiscent of older nationalist or anti-colonialist sentiments, current complaints and claims can take on undertones that are averse to 'foreigners' in general or anthropologists in particular. According to Russell Soaba, for example, PNG should 'reaffirm its ability to teach other cultures through its own books and literature, so that outsiders need no longer spend months out in the field trying to work out how to "grow up" in New Guinea or "come of age" in Samoa'.³¹

Unlike the people with whom early anthropologists and missionaries worked, the protagonists of PNG literature tend to turn from nameless narrators into self-conscious authors who want to speak for themselves. Yet, they belong to a small elite, a somewhat exclusive group which largely consists of university-employed intellectuals. Recent attempts to bolster literacy in local villages notwithstanding,³² books, plays and articles written by Papua New Guineans continue to have little impact on the majority of the population, and in this respect not much has changed since the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Conclusion

This book documents all the stories Alex recorded in 1991: 27 *iti* or tales and 35 *rema* or legends, told to him by people of different clan affiliations, ages and genders. For every one of these stories I provide a transcription, a literal translation and a section with comments.³³ The handwriting of the original manuscript presented various problems, among them the difficulty in differentiating between upper and lower case letters and in telling whether particular words had been spelled separately or together. In these cases I have based the transcription consistently on the rules of English orthography, but

STORI BILONG MIDU NA YAKO MANO. STORI

Hia long pairundu mipela igat wampela man i save
painin aut ol man i save still long en. Na mipela
i save amamas long en. Na sampela long mipela i laik
painin aut man i save still na pekpek long en tasol en
i hat tru long painin olsem dispela en i pekpek
bilong dispela man o nogat, tasol dispela man Midu
i kany na tuk dispela en i pekpek bilong dispela man
na en i save painin tru husait i bin pekpek long en.
na stillin santing long en. Wampela taim Midu na
OTOMA na sampela man ol i laik mumu na ol i katin
karuka na dutin long plas na ol i stap, na YAKO MANO
eni kam long wait na i bin stillin olgeta. ~~karuka~~ karuka
na moemol ol i lukim karuka bilong ol i no stap,
na ol i painin na ol i lukim pekpek bilong en.
Na ol sampela i tok, mipela lukim en i pekpek tasol
mipela i hat long painin aut. Na MIDU i tok, mi
bai lukim na en i stap we. Na ol i Soim Midu na MIDU
i TOK. En i pekpek bilong YAKO MANO, bikos en
luk save olsem, eni kaikai kaukau ol i bin save long
sapan na tu en i luk save long onion wantaim
kaukau pekpek. Na MIDU i tok, nogat man i save
paipainin onion na nogat man i save kaikai kaukau
ol sapim long sapan, dispela en YAKO MANO TASOL -
Tru YAKO MANO i bin stillin ~~karuka~~ karuka. Na eni bain
long tupela kina SHAI. NA MIPELA TOK, YU still manymes
STAP PROVINGET membaia eni stop is yia. BY HILEKS AR.

Midu and Yako Mano (facsimile)

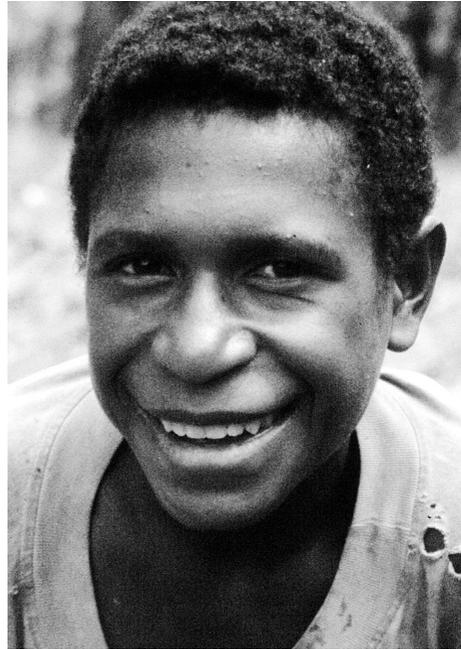
have otherwise refrained from correcting misspellings. I have also supplied the line breaks and punctuation marks. In cases where I believe that Alex had just omitted certain words inadvertently, I have included them, enclosed by square brackets.

In rendering the Tok Pisin of the original into English, I have attempted to reproduce its texture and rhythm, as well as its specific characteristics, such as the frequent use of direct speech. However, in order to make the stories accessible to the Western reader, I have added explanatory footnotes. Whenever the meaning of particular personal pronouns would otherwise remain unclear, I have inserted a few words, again enclosed by square brackets.

The concluding comments vary in length, but they all refer to conversations with Alex in which he categorised every story as an *iti* or a *rema*. Moreover, he often named the person from whom he had heard the narrative and in some cases summarised what he saw as its meaning. If possible, I have identified particular topics or elements which also appear in other stories and collections and which correspond to the sequences and episodes analysed by John LeRoy (1985a). Finally, some comments end with brief explanations, interpretations or references to my fieldwork experiences in Pairundu.

While the stories share many elements with tales and legends already published, these tales and legends also contain elements that are missing here.³⁴ In general, similarities appear to be correlated with geographical proximity: the stories from Pairundu correspond most obviously to those Stephen Rambi and Frank Nimi (Beier 1977b) recorded in the same district, whereas in the case of Mary MacDonald (1991), who worked further south, such resemblances seem much less explicit. If Rambi and Nimi on the one hand and MacDonald on the other represent opposite poles on a continuum, Karl Franklin (1972), John LeRoy (1985b) and Lisette Josephides (1982) can perhaps be positioned in between.

At the same time, the collection presented in this book differs from other collections in that it was not a Western visitor but a local villager, Alex, who put the individual tales and legends in his own words and who also selec-



Alex in 1991

ted, ordered and captioned them on his own. In this sense Alex is closer to PNG literary authors than to the elders, religious specialists or school-boys the early anthropologists and missionaries relied on. Yet, in 1991 Alex could by no means be seen as part of an indigenous elite. Intelligent and perceptive though he was, he had dropped out of community school after three years, was only the third-born son in his family and in my view did not enjoy any more prestige or influence than other young adolescents in the small and remote rural village of Pairundu.

Alex not only recorded stories and thus did what he believed he had seen me doing, in the course of time he even adopted the 'emic' perspective of an outsider. I remember, for example, a particular moment when we were just walking back from a neighbouring village and he suddenly said, 'Let's re-enter our small world of Pairundu now'. One might thus argue that, to some extent, he actually succeeded in becoming an anthropologist and that his collection of *iti* and *rema* can be interpreted as reflecting his perceptions of his own culture. Indeed, the texts include numerous references to daily activities such as gardening, raising pigs and hunting, as well as to pieces of traditional clothing and

bodily ornaments (nos. 19, 31, 33). Unlike the first works of PNG literature, however, they appear to be free from any romantic longing or nostalgia for what had allegedly been lost.

Perceptions of the cultural Self usually relate to those of the cultural Other (cf. Jebens 2010:121), yet in the 27 *iti* and 35 *rema* put together by Alex, ideas about Western culture and its representatives are largely left implicit. While in one case three brothers from Pairundu travel to the capital of Morobe Province and look for contract work (no. 36), only a few stories, for example, make any mention of manufactured goods such as torches, cars or houses roofed with corrugated iron (nos. 40, 57, 58). They do so without any negative evaluation, let alone dismissal of 'foreigners' or 'outsiders', and this fits in with the absence of a romantic longing for one's own past. Hence the tales and legends from Pairundu show that neither the nostalgic and anti-colonialist sentiments of early PNG literature nor the corresponding statements of contemporary intellectuals have to be reproduced on the village level.

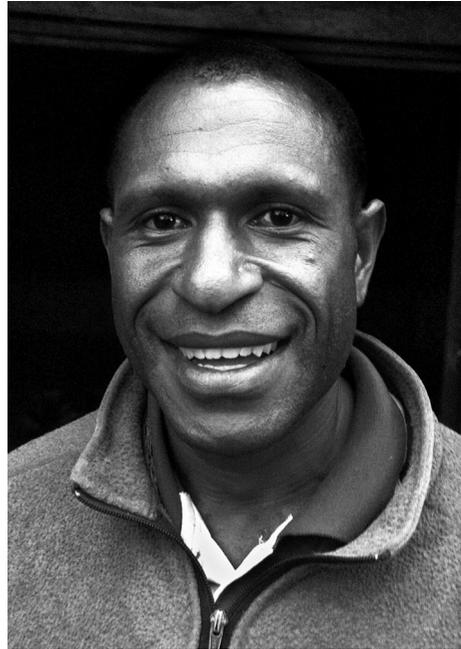
If I served as a kind of model for Alex when he decided to record stories, it seems safe to say that, without my presence in the field, this collection would not have come into existence, or that, in other words, the anthropologist himself has more or less unwittingly contributed to the emergence of the very subject he is writing about (cf. Fischer 1994:30, Jebens 2003:124). However, I believe that this is only part of the picture and that my initial feeling of being mimicked was misleading in the sense that, rather than constituting the result of a mere imitation, the texts presented here express something quite specific for the people of Pairundu. They reflect the same thoroughly pragmatic attitude I encountered, for example, in the way divergent religious beliefs and practices were being reconciled with one another (cf. Jebens 2005, 2011), as well as a certain laconic tone and at times a dry, yet compelling sense of humour.

Throughout the time of my first fieldwork in Pairundu I did not think much about tales and legends at all. In the first few days and weeks the villagers themselves seemed more interested because they came and told me various *iti*. I liked to listen, and occasionally I reciprocated with a German fairy tale, but

I didn't specifically ask to hear more.³⁵ When, shortly afterwards, Alex said that he 'wanted to try and see' if he could collect stories and write them down I encouraged him, but soon the resulting texts ceased to be mentioned in our conversations.³⁶ Thus it was a bit of a surprise when, towards the end of my stay, Alex presented me with his package of 139 hand-written pages. I remember that I immediately perceived them as a kind of personal gift, and that I also enjoyed the idea of having a promising future publication at my disposal, although I did not yet know that the stories were actually fun to read and that as a whole they would prove to be quite unique when compared to other collections. At the same time I kept postponing the completion of this book, and from today's perspective I can only speculate about the possible reasons. Perhaps, on some unconscious level, I had come to see the pages written by Alex as a kind of 'treasure' that not only became more precious the longer it remained untouched, but was also in danger of somehow losing its value when exposed to the critical eyes of the public.

In December 1995, I returned to Pairundu, in my luggage a preliminary transcription of all the 27 *iti* and 35 *rema*. I gave Alex a copy which already had the term 'storibuk' in its title,³⁷ and within a few days of concentrated work, he provided me with additional information on every story before he left for the district capital in order to take up a place in high school. Alex told me that the collection should be turned into a book so that he could 'earn money', and he asked me specifically to mention in the Introduction that when writing the tales and legends he had hoped that they would somehow help him to come to Germany and give readings.

Naki and Robert, two of Alex's age mates, must have harboured similar ideas, because after a few weeks they approached me independently and suggested that they could also write down or tell me stories and that I should then make a book of them or put them to paper. Alex himself wanted to produce another collection, again I encouraged him, and by March 1996 it consisted of 57 hand-written pages and 19 texts.³⁸ Two of them belonged to a genre that seemed relatively new, since no one had talked about it five years earlier:



Alex in 2008

labelled ‘new tales’ or ‘tales of the white man’, these narratives usually included references not only to Westerners, but also to cities, cars, horse races or ‘taxi races’, as well as kings or queens.³⁹ As I became more interested in these ‘new tales’ or ‘tales of the white man’, I managed to record and put together a variety of further examples.⁴⁰

When I returned again in 2008, people still felt that they were cut off from the ‘outside world’, and if in the past they had complained about having no access to ‘development’, now they were voicing such concerns even more forcefully. Moreover, one repeatedly pointed out that at the district capital the houses and roads that had been built during the colonial era were now derelict and that the land of the Catholic mission station was again overgrown by bush vegetation – almost as if the influences of colonisation and missionisation had been undone, or as if time had been going backwards. Alex, in 1991 a young adolescent without much prestige or influence, had turned into one of the leading Big Men, but in a sense he had also remained the same person so that we could build on our old familiarity. Once he asked me discretely if, in the meantime, I had done anything about his old collection of *iti* and *rema*, and I am afraid that he will eventually be disappointed should his hopes of earning

money and coming to Germany not bear fruit. As a Big Man he might still try to use this book to impress others and to bolster his importance, or perhaps he might even see it as a token of my gratitude, if not as a kind of counter gift. In the end, however, I cannot predict what Alex or other villagers will have to say, but I certainly hope to find out on the occasion of my next visit to Pairundu.

Notes

- ¹ For a briefer account of the following, see Jebens (2013).
- ² This fieldwork lasted from December 1990 to October 1991. For the location of Pairundu, see pp. 4–5.
- ³ In 1991 I had reckoned Alex to be fifteen, but a few years later he told me that a high school teacher had made the same estimate in 1993. In retrospect I think this teacher might have been correct meaning that, at the time of my first fieldwork, Alex has been younger than I thought.
- ⁴ See Franklin (1965, 1967, 1971), also Franklin and Franklin (1978). According to Franklin (1971:5–6), the Kewa language consists of three major dialects (Eastern, Southern, Western) and two sub-dialects (Southeastern, Northwestern). People in Pairundu speak what corresponds to Franklin’s West Kewa.
- ⁵ MacDonald (1991). This followed shorter articles on marriage and exchange (1984a), symbolism (1984b) and magic (1985).
- ⁶ See Jebens (1991, 1997a, 1997b, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2011).
- ⁷ Some of them were later translated into English and included in a collection of stories from different parts of Papua New Guinea: Franklin (1972:4) corresponds to McElhanon (1976:133–134); Franklin (1972:19–21) corresponds to McElhanon (1976:124–127); Franklin (1972:25) corresponds to McElhanon (1976:132–133); Franklin (1972:37–41) corresponds to McElhanon (1976:127–130); Franklin (1972:43–46) corresponds to McElhanon (1976:130–132); and Franklin (1972:48–49) corresponds to McElhanon (1976:135–137).
- ⁸ LeRoy (1985a). Whereas in his dissertation LeRoy uses the term ‘tida’ for the stories he documents (1975:272), he later states that they are called ‘lidi’ in East Kewa, ‘iti’ in West Kewa, and ‘rida’ in South Kewa (1985a:290n.4). Thirteen of the texts from Leroy’s dissertation reappear in his edited volume, albeit with different titles and in part slightly re-written: LeRoy (1975:289–293) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:23–25); LeRoy (1975:293–297) corresponds to LeRoy

(1985b:20–23); LeRoy (1975:297–302) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:102–106); LeRoy (1975:320–323) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:7–9); LeRoy (1975:339–343) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:232–235); LeRoy (1975:363–374) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:54–60); LeRoy (1975:385–388) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:60–63); LeRoy (1975:388–392) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:63–65); LeRoy (1975:392–395) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:75–77); LeRoy (1975:395–399) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:77–80); LeRoy (1975:420–424) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:195–198); LeRoy (1975:523–524) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:89–91); and LeRoy (1975:526–527) corresponds to LeRoy (1985b:46–48).

⁹ According to LeRoy, they are called ‘ramani’ in East and South Kewa (1983:67n.1). Abridged versions of two of them were already included in Appendix 6 of LeRoy’s dissertation, which lists ten ‘supporting narratives’: LeRoy (1983:76–80) corresponds to LeRoy (1975:516); and LeRoy (1983:108–109) corresponds to LeRoy (1975:517–518). Moreover, a revised version of one of the *rema* from LeRoy’s article (1983:107) is reproduced and discussed in his “Fabricated world” (1985a:181).

¹⁰ The first story from this collection, entitled “The creation of the tribes and the origin of death” (Beier 1977b:5–6), has been translated into German by Ulla Schild (1977:20–21).

¹¹ Josephides does not use the terms ‘rema’ and ‘iti’, but speaks of stories about ‘real past events’ on the one hand and ‘lidi’ on the other (1982:3). MacDonald generally refrains from labelling her texts, a few exceptions notwithstanding (1991:262, 377).

¹² Some of the early missionaries also published stories from areas they themselves had not yet visited. Fr. Josef Meier’s main informant, for example, came from what is now Manus Province (Papua New Guinea), a group of islands that Meier ‘had not yet seen at all’ (Meier 1907–12:646; all translations from the German, H.J.). On Meier, see also Fischer (1994:232). Similarly, Fr. Friedrich Hees, who, like Meier, lived on a mission station on the Gazelle Peninsula (Papua New Guinea), worked with a few Nakanai from a neighbouring part of New Britain, which at the time was still considered ‘*terra incognita*’ (Hees 1915/16:36; italics in the original). On Hees, see also Jebens (2010:25–27).

¹³ According to Vicedom, the third volume of his and Tischner’s monograph was the first publication of ‘traditions’ from the interior of New Guinea, since, up until then, scholars had solely focused on the coastal areas (1943:xi).

¹⁴ The one exception is the second part of Josephides’ 1982 article, where she reproduces song texts in both Kewa and English. See also Fischer (1978) with original texts in an appendix and Heeschen (1990) with interlineal translations. Schmid and Kocher Schmid have documented several texts in Tok Pisin (1992).

- 15 There are only two exceptions: LeRoy (1985a:146) states that two stories collected by Rambí (Beier 1977b:7–9) and by himself (1985a:146–150) closely resemble one another, while MacDonald (1991:130n.17) claims that one of the stories from her monograph (1991:115–117) appears as a section in two longer texts published by LeRoy (1985a:35–41, 77–80). However, the bibliographies in MacDonald’s monograph and LeRoy’s edited volume include references to earlier collections of Kewa stories, except Franklin (1972) and the corresponding translations in McElhanon (1976).
- 16 Exceptions are Lessa (1961), Kirtley (1971, 1980) and Slone (2001a, 2001b). For the indexes referred to, see Thompson (1955–58), Aarne and Thompson (1961) and Uther (2004a, 2004b, 2004c). For more general overviews, particularly of African folklore research, see Geider (1998, 2003).
- 17 Cf. Zinser (1992) and Assmann and Assmann (1998). See also Fischer, who notes that in anthropology ‘myth’ is often used as a generic term for many kinds of oral traditions that in other disciplines are categorised differently (2006:2).
- 18 LeRoy first speaks of ‘Kewa *tida* (myths)’ (1975:272) and then translates ‘rema’ or ‘ramani’ as ‘myths and legends’ (1983:58; cf. 1985a:24). Josephides sees a difference between *lidi* or ‘mere myths’ and ‘clan stories of origin’ (1982:3), but also refers to the latter as ‘[m]yths of origin’ (1995:195). Similarly, MacDonald believes that the term ‘myth’ includes ‘Kewa *tida* and those *ramani* which claim to represent real happenings of the time when the land was shaped and customs established’ (1991:112; italics in the original).
- 19 Josephides (1995:195). LeRoy describes *iti* or *lidi* as ‘fictitious and imaginary’ and *rema* or *ramani* as ‘nonfictional and historical’ (1985a:23; cf. 1983:58). As already stated (endnote 11), Josephides differentiates between *lidi* on the one hand and stories about ‘real past events’ on the other (1982:3). For MacDonald, ‘[b]oth *tida* and *ramani* are “true talk” (*ora agele*) but they embody different kinds of truth, one metaphorical or literary, the other literal, or supposedly so’ (1991:105; italics in the original).
- 20 Attention has been drawn to the overlapping of categories by Josephides (1982:3) and LeRoy (1983:67, 1985a:24, 1985b:xi) with reference to *iti* and *rema*, and by Beer (1999:406) and Fischer (2006:135) with reference to collections of stories more generally. Moreover, LeRoy’s wording could also be reversed, which would render ‘iti’ as ‘legend’ and ‘rema’ as ‘tale’. Indeed Josephides (1982:2) and Franklin (personal e-mail communication, 8 June 2013) both use the term ‘legend’ for ‘iti’, but I am doubtful that ‘tale’ really captures the sense that *rema* are believed to be true (as expressed by Josephides and LeRoy) or new (as expressed by the people of Pairundu), irrespective of whether ‘legend’ works better in this respect. At any

rate, it is with overlapping categories and a potential reversal in mind that I am speaking of ‘tales’ and ‘legends’ in the present work.

- ²¹ Fischer (1994:231–232). Indeed, Bamler (1911), Keysser (1911), Lehner (1911), Stolz (1911), Zahn (1911) and – to give some more recent examples – Schmitz (1960), Lessa (1961), Burrige (1969) and Wagner (1978) do not even document the names of the people who have served them as narrators.
- ²² Such names are also given by Franklin (1972) and Beier (1977b). For information on techniques and contexts of story-telling, see Josephides (1982:1), LeRoy (1985a:26–27) and MacDonald (1991:223–224).
- ²³ See Josephides (1982:2) and LeRoy (1985a:27). Incidentally both of them use the term ‘native exegesis’, Josephides with and LeRoy without inverted commas.
- ²⁴ Thomas Slone published two volumes with English translations of the stories from “Wantok”, covering the periods from 1972 to 1985 (2001a) and from 1986 to 1997 (2001b). Ten additional volumes present these translations together with the Tok Pisin originals (Slone 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Prior to “Wantok”, the monthly journal “The Papuan Villager”, founded by F.E. Williams and published between 1929 and 1949, also featured renarrations of ‘traditional legends’ (cf. Schild 1981:66–68, Winduo 2012:13), and, during the 1980s, similar texts were included in the periodical “New Nation” (cf. Winduo 2012:207n.57).
- ²⁵ Inglis (1974:3). See, for example, Beier (1971, 1973), Eri (1972), Kiki (1968) and Krauth and Brash (1972). Similarly, between 1970 and 1971, students of the University of Technology in Lae recorded stories for the yearbook “Nexus”, and this served as a model for High School students (Aune 1974). For renarrations of the contributions to “Nexus”, see Stokes and Ker Wilson (1978). In 1996, a new edition of their book was published in two volumes by Oxford University Press (Stokes and Ker Wilson 1996a, 1996b).
- ²⁶ Inglis (1974:2). Before he came to PNG, Beier had worked with local artists at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. Accordingly, African authors were read at the UPNG, where they worked as teachers, and Papua New Guineans travelled to Africa in return. ‘Once an Africa-Pacific link had been established’, Paul Sharrad writes, ‘it generated its own momentum of conferences and staff visits’ (2002:725). On Beier, see his own recollections (Beier 2005), as well as Brash (1974:36–37). Apart from the UPNG, other institutions such as the Bureau of Literature, founded in 1968 (Ellerman 1995), and the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, founded in 1974, also contributed to the emergence and development of Papua New Guinean literature. On this literature, see also Gorle (1995, 1996), Krauth (1974), Mrośko (1988) and Schild (1981), as well as the

bibliographies of Chakravati and Kais (1974), Chakravati and Chakravati (1986) and Stenderup (1985). On indigenous literature in the Pacific in general, see Hereniko and Wilson (1999) and Keown (2007).

²⁷ See Gorle (1995:86–87), Keown (2007:112), Stella (1999:222; 2007:167, 208) and Winduo (2012:69), as well as Wendt (1995:2–6), who refers to Pacific writing in general. Evelyn Ellerman notes that, according to Jack Lahui, the first indigenous director of the Bureau of Literature, ‘the Australian Administration encouraged the first generation of university students to write, partly as a means of avoiding more destructive displays of their anti-colonial anger and partly as a means of generating feelings of national unity in a country where such sentiments were foreign’ (Ellerman 1995:2008). The UPNG had been founded in 1966, i.e., after the Administrative College, founded in 1964, and prior to the Goroka Teachers’ College, founded in 1967 (Brash 1974:36).

²⁸ Cf. Winduo (1990:37, 39). See also Gorle (1995:100–101), Keown (2007:113), Modjeska (2003:49) and Schild (1981:161).

²⁹ The best-known among the ‘new’ authors are perhaps Nash Sorariba, Regis Stella and Stephen Winduo (cf. Aitau 2004:16, Nalu 2004). Like Russell Soaba, who was one of the very few members of the ‘first generation’ who continued to write after the country had gained independence, Stephen Winduo is employed by the UPNG, has a blog on PNG literature and occasionally publishes articles on the topic in the two newspapers of Papua New Guinea, “The National” and “Post Courier”.

³⁰ Winduo (2012:41). Cf. Anonymus (2005), Daure (2006), Nalu (2007), Soaba (2008) and Stella (2001:18).

³¹ Soaba (2008). Similarly, Bernhard Kaspou, President of the Papua New Guinea Writers and Artists Association, claimed to ‘detest’ the fact that collected and archived legends ‘become prey to foreigners’ who are ‘trying to make analyses’ and ‘become editors’ (Winduo 2001:8). The turn against non-Papua New Guineans also included a less positive view of Ulli Beier: for Ganga Powell, his activities prevented ‘[a] strong critical tradition’ from growing up ‘alongside the creative writing’ (1984:92), while Regis Stella not only suggested that Beier had ‘to shoulder the blame for creating a “dependency syndrome” [...] among writers, potential writers, and consumers’ (1999:224), he also referred to Beier as an example of ‘patronizing expatriates’ (2001:18).

³² Kamene and Winduo (2004) present the results of a workshop which was held in a village in Morobe Province in 2000 and which, supported by the UPNG and UNESCO, was aimed at encouraging the local population to produce shorter texts. This workshop had a predecessor, not mentioned by Kamene and Winduo,

which was held in Ukarumpa (Eastern Highlands Province) in 1973 with the intention 'to train P.N.G. authors to write for their own language areas' (Cates and Cates 1975:134).

33 Based on the individual titles provided by Alex, I have added a general heading for every triad of transcription, translation and comments.

34 For example, none of the *iti* taken down by Alex mentions a protagonist who pushes a piece of wood into his anus before turning into a bird. See Beier (1977b:37–41), Josephides (1982:23–26), LeRoy (1985b:9–15, 63–65, 127–133, 204–206, 214–217, 232–235) and MacDonald (1991:433–435, 435–437, 516–518). Similarly, no *rema* from the collection documented here explains the origins of a particular kin group. See Josephides (1982:7, 8, 9–10, 11), LeRoy (1983:70–71, 72–73, 74–75, 76–80, 81–82, 83–84) and MacDonald (1991:250, 446–447, 481–486).

35 I remember a particular night in one of the men's houses, when the catechist, after every third or fourth sentence, was translating my Tok Pisin into the vernacular. He impressed me by speaking at greater length and much more expressively than I had managed to do. Yet, on another occasion, Yapanu, Alex's mother, was moved to tears by my version of "Hansel and Gretel".

36 We only talked about the first few stories for some days in March. At that time, Katharina Wieker, a close friend from Germany who was visiting me for three weeks, and Alex went through what he had already written.

37 This copy did not include a translation, it had 62 pages, and its full title was "Storibuk Pairundu. Kainkain iti na rema bilong Pairundu vilage. Rait i kam long Hileks Ari" (Pairundu book of stories: various tales and legends from Pairundu village. Written by Alex Ari).

38 In signing these texts, Alex spelled his name 'Alex', whereas in 1991 he had written 'Hileks'. I have retained this form in the transcription but preferred 'Alex' for the translation. It would take a different publication to document the texts from 1995 and 1996 and to analyse them in relation to the *iti* and *rema* presented here.

39 'New tales' and 'tales of the white man' is my translation of the term actually used in Pairundu: 'nupela iti', 'iti bilong waitman', or 'kadipi iti' ('kadipi' being Kewa for 'white man'). Apparently the very last one of the texts collected by Stephen Rambi and Frank Nimi already corresponds to this genre (Beier 1977b:53–56). Its ending refers to the independence of Papua New Guinea and is interpreted by Beier as showing 'that story telling is still a living art form and that topical events in Papua New Guinea are reflected in the active tradition of story telling among the Kewa' (1977a:4).

⁴⁰

In my view, the resulting collection would certainly merit documentation and interpretation, but as in the case of the stories Alex wrote in 1995 and 1996, I must reserve this for a separate publication.