

talked about island chief of his day<sup>37</sup> as instanced by the fact that F. J. Moss, who was forced to by-pass Abemama when voyaging through the South Seas in 1886, was able to produce a good description of Binoka on the basis of what he had been told.<sup>38</sup> Thus it is not surprising that all the accounts of Binoka, which were nearly always written on the basis of first-hand acquaintance, tally broadly but not exactly. It was difficult to go astray here because Binoka was so unforgettable and his habits so completely different from anything hitherto encountered. His size and dress, the fact that he required careful handling, the hospitality that visiting captains had to accord to him, his acquisitive impulses, the contents of his storehouses, his prowess in the use of firearms, the native pilot, the royal gangplank, the absolute nature of his rule: these are the things invariably mentioned in written accounts of Binoka. Essentially, Westbrook's account is but one of a number.<sup>39</sup>

He does, however, make one glaring blunder that arouses one's suspicions. The two separate references about Abemamans being drunk are absurd.<sup>40</sup> For prohibition had been enforced since the days of Binoka's father with such savagery that temperance was universal amongst the Abemamans. (Members of the royal household, on the other hand, were known to get uproariously drunk.)<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Westbrook was anchored off Abemama in 1880, not long after the liquor laws there were tightened up.<sup>42</sup> How could Westbrook have made such a mistake? Probably, he got his stories mixed up. It may be that he was thinking of the incident four years previous when the brig *Vision* anchored off Butaritari (another island in the Gilbert group) to find that a recently departed vessel had ' . . . landed a good deal of liquor, and his Majesty and his Court have not been sober since'.<sup>43</sup> The two accounts are remarkably similar but, more to the point, Westbrook first went to the South Seas in the *Vision* itself and he must have heard about the incident sometime on the voyage between Auckland and the Marshall Islands. It is also quite conceivable that Westbrook used Stevenson's *In the South Seas* to refresh his memory on Binoka. Stevenson, however, only made two references to the rigidly enforced prohibition which Westbrook could easily have missed.<sup>44</sup> Hence Stevenson's account did not, assuming it was referred to, save Westbrook from error.

Westbrook's account of Binoka's method of smoking is interesting as it differs from those of Moss and Woodford who both maintain that on account of Binoka's laziness one of his wives blew smoke into his mouth for him to exhale. Westbrook, on the other hand, states that this was Binoka's way of circumventing the promise to give up smoking that the Rev. Hiram Bingham extracted from him.<sup>45</sup> The explanation by Moss and Woodford is closer to the truth. Binoka, by virtue of his rank,