In other words, the local populations in the vicinity of Bambarre begin to cultivate indeterminate, unpredictable behavior as a strategy of war alongside more open physical violence.

The 1870 Field Diary’s running commentary on the cannibalism of the population at Bambarre best instantiates this dynamic.

In the diary and, indeed, in other documents from this period, Livingstone makes repeat references to his fear that the people of Bambarre are cannibals.

For example, the diary opens with a discussion of local cannibalism in relation to funeral practices (1870a:[1]-[6]), and, later, Livingstone offers a geneology of the practice by linking it to the local practice of eating sokos (i.e., gorillas) (1870c:IV).

Yet such defintive statements also stands alongside more tentative assertions.

In one case, Livingstone begins his letter to Lord Stanley by describing Manyema as the country of “the *reputed* cannibals” (1870i:XLI, emphasis added).

In another, he notes that the population now engages in the practice in secret because of the manifest disgust of the traders (1870k:LXXV).

In other words, Livingstone indicates that his characterizations may be based more on hearsay than the direct observation requisite for the professional practice of Victorian-era exploration.

Such references thus undercut the assertions made elsewhere and, collectively, introduce an irreducible strand of ambiguity into the narrative of the 1870 Field Diary.

Ultimately, it is an ambiguity that Livingstone himself foregrounds.

When discussing the population of Bambarre just prior to his departure – i.e., at the moment where his information would be expected to be most accurate due to his long sojourn in village – he on one page states that “their cannibalism is doubtful” only to reverse himself four pages later by indicating that he locals are “undoubtedly cannibals” (1871b:LXXXIII, LXXXVII).

And thus he leaves the people of Bambarre and heads for Nyangwe, where he will record his experiences in the 1871 Field Diary.