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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial

ARTICLES

The View from Below: A Selected History of Contact Experiences, Patjarr, Gibson Desert, Western Australia

*Jan Turner*  
13

Finding the Signatures of Glass Beads: A Preliminary Investigation of Indigenous Artefacts from Australia and Papua New Guinea

*Lindy Allen, Sarah Babister, Elizabeth Bonshek and Rosemary Goodall*  
48

‘Necessary Self-Defence?': Pastoral Control and Ngarrindjeri Resistance at Waltowa Wetland, South Australia

*Kelly Wiltshire, Mirani Litster and Grant Rigney*  
81

‘The Missionary Factor': Frontier Interaction on Cooper Creek, South Australia, in the 1860s

*Joc Schmiechen*  
115

Koeler and the Dresdners: Contrasting Views of Five Early Germans Towards Indigenous Peoples in South Australia

*Robert Amery*  
145

Capturing Histories at Thantyi-wanparda: Comparing Early and Late Twentieth Century Ethnographies in Arabana Territory, South Australia

*Jason Gibson and Luise Hercus*  
175

65,000 Years of Isolation in Aboriginal Australia or Continuity and External Contacts? An Assessment of the Evidence with an Emphasis on the Queensland Coast

*Michael J. Rowland*  
211
EDITORIAL

This special edition explores the transformative experiences of contact between Indigenous Australians and others, beginning with South-East Asian contact, through to early European colonisation and the recent past. The edition seeks to expand our knowledge of the multiple and complex ways in which Indigenous individuals, families and groups lived through and negotiated the contact and post-contact eras. There is a significant amount of evidence that illustrates that Indigenous Australians were dynamic societies that responded and engaged with colonisation throughout Australia's recent history.

A subaltern historical approach to Indigenous Australian culture contact history examines closely the actions and reactions of events affecting people at macro and micro scales. Each phase of Indigenous Australian contact history carries its own set of unique conditions dependent on social, economic and political factors. Many Indigenous Australians have asserted that they are the ongoing victims of the colonisation process which is manifested in areas such as constitutional arrangements, government policies, and systemic racism that have resulted in poor socio-economic achievement. The aim of this volume is to contribute to the ongoing examination of the culture contact history of Indigenous Australians.

First encounters between Indigenous Australians and others occurred in many locations around coastal and interior Australia (Konishi 2008; Lewis 2005; McIntosh 2008). Coastal Indigenous groups tended to be caught in early entanglements whilst the focus was on early European exploration, establishment of initial colonial settlements and the exploitation of marine resources such Macassan trepang harvesting and European whaling (Banner 2007; Lawrence and Staniforth 1998; Macknight 1976). Encounters between interior Australian Indigenous groups came later during the
colonisation experience. These occurred initially with overland exploration parties and later as colonial settlements, pastoralism and other economic ventures pushed into the arid interior of Australia (Lloyd 2008).

Encounters in the 18th century with Dutch explorers were quite different to those experienced later as British colonial settlement reached nearly every corner of Australia by the late 19th century. A significant bias has been identified and exposed within the historical accounts of Indigenous Australians written by European writers (Konishi 2012; 2013). Despite these ethnocentric biases, there have also been important revelations about Indigenous Australian history that have arisen from a close reading of these accounts (cf. Peters-Little et al. 2013).

Engagements between Indigenous Australians and outsiders range from the fleeting to the prolonged, sometimes cooperative and beneficial and in many others violent and destructive, as demonstrated in various articles in this volume. These culture contact experiences involved not only British colonisers, but also a range of western European nation states as well as maritime communities from island South East Asia. As posited by Rowland (this volume) these encounters could have occurred at different times during the long 65,000 year period of Australia's history. Rowland discusses the proxy evidence for early transitory encounters in coastal northern Australia. The timing of island South East Asian visitation to northern Australia continues to be a contentious issue in Australian archaeology and history (cf. Macknight 2013; Wesley et al. 2016). Written accounts of these early encounters between Macassans and Indigenous Australians by Macassans themselves are rare and are mainly provided via Dutch and British historical sources (Macknight 1976, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to examine evidence from Indigenous narratives, rock art and archaeology to piece together these early encounters (Clarke 2000; Clarke and Frederick 2008; McIntosh 1996, 2006, 2008; Taçon et al. 2010; Wesley et al. 2016). Archaeological evidence from rock art and Macassan trepang sites in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, show that it is possible to place culture contact with island South East Asia in Arnhem Land to circa 1620 AD (Taçon et al. 2010;
Wesley et al. 2016). This aligns with the economic and political globalisation occurring throughout South East Asia at that time. Evidence such as glass beaded objects, as discussed by Allen et al. (this volume), provide an example of the impact and reach of globalisation for Indigenous Australians. Owing to the massive demand for raw materials from island South East Asia to China by the 16th century, there was a very high likelihood that expansion towards Australia, in search of new resource areas to exploit, was to follow. The impact of the subsequent Macassan and Indigenous relationships that arose from the trepang industry have been well documented and were incorporated into Indigenous narratives, myth and legend (Macknight 1986; McIntosh 2006; Thomson 1949).

One of the most well known vectors of first encounters with Indigenous Australians was between maritime and overland explorers of different European nationalities (Buchan 2008). These experiences were recorded in journals and diaries, and later were usually published with significant detrimental affect such as Dampier’s declaration of Indigenous Australians as ‘the miserablest...[people] in the world’ (see Anderson and Perrin 2007:18). What Dampier, and many others such as Cook saw as the utter lack of improvement and, most significantly, the alleged failure to have cultivated the land, condemned the Indigenous Australians to the pronouncement of Terra Nullius (Buchan and Heath 2006). Values and expectations of the colonisers were deeply rooted in their own religious and moral belief systems and were tied to the contemporary political, legal and economic systems from the nation state authority. During the colonial period, even after Australia was formerly claimed by the British, many encounters occurred with explorers of non-English heritage, including the early 19th century French expedition led by d’Entrecasteaux and that of the Prussian born explorer and naturalist Ludwig Leichhardt (Leichhardt 1847; Mulvaney 2007, 2008). These non-English explorers and naturalists brought with them their own expectations and ideologies.
which may not have been comparable to the English colonial narratives of the time, providing not only different culture contact experiences but also alternative views of Aboriginal society (Konishi 2008, 2012; Mulvaney 2007). Likewise, contrasting examples of Aboriginal experiences of English colonial attitudes and colonisation can be seen via German missionaries (Schmiechen this volume) and other observers (Amery this volume) in South Australia. The ongoing development of western philosophies and ideologies significantly influenced the behaviour and expectations of such colonisers and how they engaged with Indigenous Australians.

The introduction of colonial governance and settler economies brought new technologies and material culture that had severe impacts on the residential mobility and social cohesion of Indigenous Australians. Altman (2006, 2009) argued that an Indigenous hybrid economy model provides an effective lens through which to view culture contact history in some areas of Australia. Importantly, Altman (2006, 2009) argued that these labour histories involved a specific Indigenous ‘moral economy’ that included reciprocity, kinship ties and demand-sharing, and which took place within a wider context of interlinked economic practice—thus placing Indigenous economic practice in a nexus between the state, customary practice and the market economy. This manner of Indigenous engagement with settler and government economies has been documented in a number of regions around Australia (cf. Keen 2010). The hybrid economic basis of engagement that developed in Australia between Indigenous peoples and the colonisers/outsiders facilitated the transmission of incoming ideas, technology and material culture, notwithstanding the violence and dispossession that was co-occurring across the nation. Labour, the primary conduit to economic participation for Indigenous Australians, was continuously widely exchanged throughout Australian history, though argued by many within an underlying framework of ‘internal colonialism’ evident in exploitation and marginalisation endorsed by the state (White 2011). Australian Indigenous societies responded to encounters with colonisers using customary knowledge, beliefs and law, and this in turn
informed the basis of mediation and exchange, or hostility, in each stage of contact. This is evident in the way that Turner (this volume) poignantly describes the Patjarr community’s experience of the intensifying intrusions into their country by Australian government and commercial interests during the mid to late 20th century. Colonising experiences have also been articulated by the Indigenous groups across Arnhem Land through their rock art production (Gunn et al. 2017; May et al. 2010, 2013, 2017). Various groups in Arnhem Land continued to produce rock art with a focus on customary imagery alongside imagery of Europeans and their material culture, in a process that consolidated their cultural systems and also told of individual experiences in the face of the colonising disruption (Gunn et al. 2017; May et al. 2010, 2013, 2017). The Patjarr experience illustrates the importance of maintaining customary traditions, narratives and ownership of their personal stories in the face of this disruption.

A strong theme throughout this volume relates to the role of anthropology and the ‘anthropologist’ in the Indigenous history of Australia. When sentencing several Aboriginal men in 1935 in the Northern Territory, Judge Wells said, ‘Here is an occasion where some of these anthropologists may be of use, they always seem to be where they are not wanted, and never where they are wanted’ (Asche 2004:50). The case studies in this volume provided by Gibson and the late Hercus on their work with the Arabana and Turner with the Patjarr community demonstrate the significant influences and experiences that anthropologists have had when working with Indigenous communities. Both papers demonstrate the different modes of engagement that anthropologists have had with Indigenous communities throughout the 20th century. A cornerstone of Indigenous customary belief system according to Hiatt (1975) are myths that are ‘proto-analytic insights into the stuff that dreams are made of’ and which Sutton (1988:253) states should not be seen as ‘invented pasts’ but should be considered a ‘combination of myth and memory.’
Austin-Broos (2009) establishes the powerful agency of the Indigenous mythological narrative when describing modern Arrente myths of first contact with missionaries in central Australia. Therefore, historical stories are ‘interwoven with events of the Dreaming’ (Sutton 1988:256). Gibson and Hercus (this volume) also demonstrate the enduring nature of local language and mythologies. Some Aboriginal histories have approached what may have been historic events as myth—using similar structures and customary narrative processes. Therefore, this is a form of Indigenous people telling histories in ways ‘unconstrained’ by documentary sources as shown by Turner (this volume). One such contentious area concerns early culture contact with the Bayini and the Yolngu of north eastern Arnhem Land where anthropologists, historians and archaeologists disagree about whether the Bayini reference the arrival of early South East Asian mariners prior to the Macassan trepang industry (Macknight 2013; McIntosh 2008; Wesley et al 2016). This is where proxies (see Rowland this volume) and material culture (see Allen et al. this volume) are vital and integral to the ongoing debate of early Aboriginal culture contact.

Every chapter of Australian Indigenous history has some form of resistance, explicit or subversive (Moses 2000). The overt resistance falls largely in the early combative resistance and frontier violence prevalent throughout the 19th century (Loos 1982; Reynolds 2012). A cycle of persecution, warfare and reprisals occurred throughout Australia leading to severe depopulation and/or movement of people into other territories. Indigenous populations often either gravitated to townships and settlements or were forcibly moved to reserves or missions depending on the protectionist policies pursued by each State and Territory (Broome 2005; Jacobs 2009). Aboriginal peoples have also initiated ingenious methods of maintaining connection with country despite obstacles of government policy, local industries and development. Indigenous peoples also participated in a wide variety of economies and industries around Australia. This was a period of survival, which required more subversive resistance to colonisation as experienced by the Dieri (Schmiechen this volume). Whiltshire et al. (this volume) describe the tension that
occurred in the relationship between Ngarrindjeri and pastoralists that took possession of their country. Finding ways to be able to stay on country by working on pastoral stations or in maritime industries were among some of the methods to ensure connection to land and sea (Beckett 2010; Rose 1991). Indigenous groups became an integral part of the cattle industry as a labour force until fair pay and poor treatment disputes arising in the 1960s resulted in the majority of Aboriginal cattlemen and their families being forcibly removed from their country (McGrath 1987). Although inequitable, internal colonialism and modes of hybrid economies were mechanisms that allowed for the maintenance of cultural continuity and traditions (White 2011).

Ritchie (1998) has identified the ongoing conflict between the Aboriginal concept of the world and their place and accepted western world concepts and practices. Indigenous populations that were brought under colonial and State law, with their lives heavily restricted through protectionist era policies, saw the nature of resistance change to reflect a desire for citizenship, equality under law and a measure of autonomy within colonial society which began with letter writing, petitions, rallies and publicised meetings as Indigenous peoples took up activist roles (McGregor 2009:348). Indigenous voices that emerged in the fight for the recognition of a distinct and valuable Indigenous culture and identity revealed the depth of Indigenous cultural continuity that was maintained around Australia (Attwood 2000; Kinanne 2005; McGregor 2009). Although there were some Indigenous rights movements in the early 20th century it was not until post World War II that significant political agitation for the right to equality and to negotiate for land became a formidable force (Attwood and Markus 1999). The connection between country, law, birth, death, ancestral beings and other religious concepts are complex and have gradually become codified through land rights and native title legislation (Strelein 2009; Wood 2015). The application of western legal, scientific and social principles continues to
provide a source of conflict for Indigenous Australians. Morphy (1991:304) has argued that: ‘One sometimes gets a sense of...[Aboriginal people] trying to transform their system, trying to maintain control over the directing of their future, but being caught in an exponential spiral of external forces that threaten to make the process of adjustment impossible’.

The prolonged (and ongoing) impacts of colonisation and the formation of the Australian state have caused immeasurable suffering and change for Indigenous Australians. Many of the experiences that are told and uncovered feature frontier warfare and violence that involved the decimation and subjugation of Indigenous populations. Protectionist legislative policies further marginalised Indigenous peoples off country and into government and mission settlements, which also relentlessly controlled Indigenous peoples’ freedom of movement, marriage and employment. This also involved forced labour and stolen wages from Indigenous people in combination with assimilation policies that led to the stolen generations, poor access to health care and the denial of education opportunities. These are all recurrent themes in Indigenous Australian experiences and narratives. On the other hand, we have also heard many stories of resilience directly from Indigenous voices. As Rowse (2004) stated ‘autobiography is not merely a handy evidentiary supplement to other sources, it is the premium site for the development of Indigenous selves’.

*Daryl Wesley and Amy Roberts*
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THE VIEW FROM BELOW: A SELECTED HISTORY OF CONTACT EXPERIENCES, PATJARR, GIBSON DESERT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

In the Gibson Desert of Western Australia, the first physical encounters between Aboriginal and European Australians were often with military, mineral exploration or surveying personnel who came to that remote country by helicopter. This paper discusses stories of cross-cultural contact in the period 1957–1975, which continue to be publicly recalled; they include accounts that vary from hiding in great fear, nervous contact and goods exchange, to assertive action to drive these intruders away. Particular attention is given to the narratives of one man: Fred Kumpari Ward, Tjungarrayi, speaker of several desert languages and senior Law man for the country in which these contact encounters occurred. Fred Ward was also the senior Applicant of a native title compensation application that was discontinued in 2015. For over 20 years the political and legal processes engaged to provide secure title to their lands have proven, to the desert people, to be as alien and as difficult to comprehend as their first contacts with ‘white men’ less than 60 years ago.
Introduction

This paper responds to the challenge presented by Mike Smith in his monograph centred on the people of the Cleland Hills to ‘bring Aboriginal people as individuals into historical focus, redressing the anonymity that frontier histories usually confer on Aboriginal people’ (Smith 2005:2). It utilises filmic and audio archival materials created with those directly involved to tease out and personalise frontier histories from a numerically small, culturally strong, population associated with Patjarr, a sacred and extremely important desert site complex and now a small residential community, in far eastern Western Australia (WA). Those telling their stories are referred to as Story Owners and wherever possible individual names are specified.

The Indigenous experiences documented in this paper come from many years spent as an anthropologist working with residents of what is now known as Patjarr (or Karilywarra) Community, nestled beside the Clutterbuck Hills, some 240 km north of Warburton in the Gibson Desert (Figure 1). Much of my work was collaborative and I wish to acknowledge at the outset the contributions and many conversations had with my colleagues since 1988: anthropological, David Brooks, Dianna Newham and Chris Perry; historical, Mark Chambers and Tom Gara; multi-media arts, Albie Viegas and Gary Proctor from the Warburton Arts Project; film, Adrian Holmes; and three thinkers that cannot be pigeonholed by profession, Damian McLean, Nicolas Rothwell and John von Sturmer. Over the years a small group of my Ngaanyatjarra peers have increasingly driven the recording and research: Daisy Ward, Lizzie Giles/Ellis, Richard Ward (deceased) and his brother Ian Ward (deceased).

As an anthropologist, I have never been satisfied with note-taking, realising the abundant limitations in my own understanding and filtering of experiences as they occur. As the years progressed, records of my time with the people of Patjarr changed. The recordings that began with simple note-taking and sound files, progressed to the audio-visual, from mini digital video cassettes to utilising small professional film crews. Visual arts became integral to a non-literate, non-English speaking peoples’ communication and representation of themselves to mainstream Australia (Turner 2003). This paper presents Patjarr peoples’ stories to a new audience primarily by means of
acrylic paint on canvas and transcripts of film recordings with permission from the speakers and Story Owners.

Figure 1 Patjarr Community in relation to other Indigenous communities and vehicle access routes in the tri-State border area, 2018. Reproduced and modified with permission from the NPY Women’s Council.

The resourcing and accumulation of the set of archival materials referred to in this paper has primarily been driven by the requirement of matching specific people to a defined area of country, the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve, for the purpose of gaining recognition of traditional ownership and customary rights under European laws, both State and Federal. Since 2000, this has not always been undertaken in an organised, directed and coherent manner. Rather, the archives exist by dint of
funding opportunities and political circumstances. However, for the people of Patjarr the archival materials are an immensely detailed and often cross-referenced repository of their life experiences, recorded on-country, recorded in their own language, in the presence of family and friends.

In 2002, a substantial number of acrylic artworks on canvas, owned by the Warburton Arts Project\(^1\), were taken to Mina Mina claypan, north of Patjarr. During a three-day camp, the artists showed their artwork to their extended families and other community members present. As artists revealed their own paintings one by one, songs associated with the specific *Tjukurrpa* depicted (Dreaming tracks and song cycles), were sung by the men and women present. This three-day event was filmed for Warburton Arts by Brites, Perry and Janicki. A senior woman, Pulpurru Davies (pers. comm. 2002), described this event as ‘when every painting had its song’. Her words greatly influenced my preference for audio-visual recordings over standard anthropological note-taking traditions. Six months later at a second event, assisted by the then Ngaanyatjarra Council Native Title Unit, a State government minister, the Hon. Judy Edwards and her staff witnessed declarations of ownership and deeply rooted cultural connections to country through the revelation of Dreaming paintings and their associated ceremonial songs. This second event, also held at Mina Mina, was recorded by Ngaanyatjarra Media.

Since 2009 an ethnographic, culturally responsive, film making team has developed and Indigenous team members have become integral to this process: Norma Giles and Fred Ward have assumed senior status in matters relating to cultural guidance; Lizzie Ellis and Daisy Ward have become regular interpreters; and Daisy Ward has performed in an interviewing role. In addition, Bruce Smith and Richard Ward (deceased) have acted as facilitators and interpreters. Industry professionals, cinematographer, Jason Thomas, and director, Adrian Holmes, have become well known to the people of Patjarr. In 2012, Owen Hughes, a professional sound recordist, joined the team in

\(^1\) The Warburton Arts Project began in 1989 as a way of Ngaanyatjarra people retaining control of the articulation of their culture in art form. From 1990 the Arts Project has bought community paintings, and artworks in other mediums, and now holds them in the Warburton Collection, the largest archive of Aboriginal art owned by the people themselves in Australia (Biddle 2013:19).
relation to those films funded under the Indigenous Community Stories (ICS) grant system operating in WA.\(^2\) ICS proved to be a way of recording a range of cultural data: songs, dances, group story telling, personal story telling, genealogical details, land usage, inter and intra group dynamics, free from any legal constraints associated with native title. Central Desert Native Title Service (CDNTS) has provided considerable financial assistance in filming trips, most of which have been ‘piggybacked’ onto the more legally driven progression of a native title Compensation Application (see Part 3 of this paper).

The film materials contain several detailed stories of how individuals and families saw their first white skinned humans. What is most noticeable is the proportion of stories that involve sightings of low flying planes, accompanied by helicopters and often supported by land based vehicles. All adults of Patjarr Community aged over 60 years were brought out of their desert home to Warburton, Wiluna or Papunya by Native Patrol Officers at least once. ‘Contact’ refers to the experiential interface between people from different cultures who encounter each other for the first time. ‘Contact’ and ‘first contact’ are terms that have been applied to the people of Patjarr in what, from a review of the literature, appears to be a particularly Australian-British context, exemplified by the film Contact (2009) based on a book by Davenport, Johnson and Yuwali (2005). For the Indigenous people of Central Australia there are many still living who have experienced contact in their own lifetimes. In the words of Teddy Biljabu:

Many Martu people, like Yuwali and me, were born in the desert. Our lives changed because white people came into our land within our lifetime. Each Martu family has extraordinary stories of what happened when white fellas first came into our country. (Davenport et al. 2005:back cover)

\(^2\) ICS was a joint initiative of the Film and Television Institute of WA and ScreenWest, operating between 2008–2016. Its purpose was to record on film stories from Indigenous individuals and communities in WA in a format that could be archived with AIATSIS and remain accessible well into the future, ‘100 Stories for 100 Years’ (ScreenWest 2017).
In the experience of those working in the desert country of WA we can extend Biljabu's words and widen the application of contact to include each Pitjantjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Pintupi and Ngaatjatjarra family who share similar stories and experiences (Brooks 2004, 2012; Brooks and Kral 2007; Brooks and Plant 2016; Ellis 2016; Plant and Viegas 2002; Ward 2018). In the regional Ngaanyatjarra context, in which Patjarr Community is placed, contact is used as a concept to assist non-Indigenous people understand the continuing relevance of desert Indigenous culture to contemporary life (Brooks 2011a, 2011b; Brooks and Jorgenson 2015; Kral 2012, 2014; Thompson 1998; Thorley 2016). My research confirms that for those concerned, and their families, contact is integral to the present. Contact encounters are not events that occurred in a distant, historical past.

In February 2011, I had the privilege of recording a Ngaanyatjarra elder, Mr Fred Ward, at my home in Perth. During the week of filming, with Jason Thomas on camera, Fred spoke of his life growing to maturity in the Gibson Desert of WA prior to living in residential communities at Papunya and Kintore in the Northern Territory (NT) and Kiwirrkurra, Patjarr and Warburton in WA. His oral accounts give us a fascinating glimpse into the dual forces of isolation and contact. Fred Ward’s Story was recorded in the presence of his wife, Lalla West, and his younger cousin-sister Daisy Tjurptarnari Ward. In part, Fred was speaking directly to Daisy, educating her in her family’s history, for he had grown up with her father and mother before Daisy’s birth. That they took place at my home was not coincidental. Daisy and I have worked professionally according to the Malpararra model for many years (NPYWC 1998). We are classificatory sisters and so much more. Daisy offered a translation into English at the time of recording (Turner 2011). The raw film materials provide an intimate and detailed recount of a time and lifestyle little affected by outside influences.

This paper is presented in three parts. In Part One, Yarnangu [Aboriginal] stories of contact encounters by air are presented in their own voice, undated by year. The stories highlight both the limited road access to this part of WA and the permeability of the contact frontier as experienced by the people of Patjarr who came in and out of Warburton as circumstances dictated. In Part Two, these encounters are placed in a wider
socio-geographic and historical context. Questions of ‘where?’ and ‘when?’ that the reader may have are, in part, addressed. Direct contact experiences are contextualised with other phenomena occurring simultaneously. The first vehicular inroads into the desert occurred as desert peoples’ views of the skies were also changing. Planes and their vapour trails were increasingly seen in the desert skies. The first satellites were visible in the night skies, travelling quickly through the spaces between stars and planets so well known to the people of Patjarr. Part Three places these stories in a modern political context taking them from interesting cross-cultural anecdotes to strong irrefutable justification of entitlement to recognition of the Story Owners’ status as traditional owners of country. Personalised contact stories from the recent past are juxtaposed with a legal judgement that precluded the granting of full native title rights. The paper concludes with a discussion of the ongoing and inexplicable nature of contact for those directly and actively involved in the cross-cultural frontier.

**Part One**

**Fred’s Stories**

In 2009, whilst filming *Tatitjarra’s Story* as part of an Indigenous Community Stories grant, Fred Kumpari Ward told a story about contact with a helicopter, standing beside a bush track pointing to country where the story took place. This eight-and-a-half minute recording is in his own language. At the end of the shot the renowned interpreter, Lizzie Giles, spoke to camera:

This is—Fred’s talking—my brother Fred is talking about the spot—this is the spot where he looked across over there to where he’s pointing and he saw the first white men and they were—there was a plane and a helicopter here and there were some of his families were here and he was by himself when he came with his bundles of spears and it was at this spot where he first met the white man—a white man for the first time and that man was Mr McDougall and he was the one who was coming out into country and getting people—talking people into going back—going into missions where the government had set up missions like Warburton and right here he was telling about how his family saw him and had a cry and after here he went...
back to Patjarr and there he saw lot of—there was a large number of white people there who were talking people into going to missions—government set up missions to live and it was at that place where Mr Lawson told him said ‘where do you want to go—do you want to go to Jigalong or Wiluna or Warburton?’ and he didn’t say anything he just nodded his head and he talked about his family—what they were doing here prior to going to Patjarr and his mother—his mother caught up with him before he went to Patjarr just after being here and how she wore this huge dress that was billowing out behind her and um yeah that’s it and he went with—he went to Warburton from Patjarr they got him into a vehicle but they couldn’t get all his dogs in ‘cos they were too wild.

(2009 Disc 1, Tatitjarra’s Story)

This was not Fred Ward’s first encounter with white men or helicopters, rather it was the first time that he had been spoken to by a ‘white man’. A fuller story was forthcoming in 2011, filmed entirely in Mantjiltjarra language. His cousin sister Daisy Ward provided a running translation or summary in English. Earlier in his life, whilst still a boy, Fred, with many others, walked towards Warburton Mission:

When we could see smokes we would walk towards them to find other people. We walked to the Makarn Rockhole and Kumpul along the Gunbarrel Highway. At this time, we were walking towards Warburton. During these travels, we saw many men going in with gifts of kangaroos, wallabies and spears. As we approached Warburton, we could see white men were there. We picked up rations, nanny goat, sheep and kangaroo; and then went back to the bush. We wanted to kill dingo to trade. During this time, it was raining, we were naked without clothes, soaking wet. We ate kangaroo and drank the water at Kurnapuru, Warupuyu, Parntaltjarra and Pilyki, the claypan. We bumped into men during these travels, and the men joined us. The children travelled with their ngunytju [mothers] towards Mitika northeast of Warburton—where the cutline road was made a few years later from Giles Weather Station to Warburton, it joined up Wanarn and Mitika Homelands with Warburton. At this time, I was with Inkimata...who was my other ngunytju, and also my grandmothers, Kiwinyi and Taturli, from near Warakurna. We had bumped into Business [travelling Law ceremony] so men joined in too and we went into Warburton. We did not stay long. I learnt a song in Ngaanyatjarra language, a different language way of talking to me. I was given a pair of trousers. I didn’t know how to wear them and put the zip at the back. I was given a grey government thick blanket and I remember Captain West and his wife saying to the men with me ‘You can take him back to Patjarr, but return
him here later’. Captain West knew a lot about the mission and worked with the missionaries. I don’t remember seeing Captain West after this. I was just a boy when the families were heading back from the Warburton Ranges to the bush. I could see smoke and climbed up and called out thinking it was my mother. Old Mrs Lawson, Daisy’s mother, skin-way mother, was coming from the east and met us. She said ‘Come on child sing me a song’. I sang in Ngaanyatjarra and she was amazed. When I came back to Warburton when I was a man she told me about this. My ngunytju [mother] was still travelling so I continued on with the other women.

(2011 Disc 3, Fred Ward’s Story)

After visiting Warburton and receiving a blanket and trousers the young Fred returned north with the larger group to what is now known as the Alfred and Marie Ranges. It was to be several years, as a teenager, before his first encounter with a helicopter:

We were coming back to Patjarr way. On the lakey country we saw it. Alo! They saw something coming. Alright now! They got up to have a look. Maybe someone had done a spell. Old Jimmy Ward shouted ‘Pakala’ [go away]. The ladies and children hid under the bushes and the men pointed their maparn [magic] to that thing. They put the maparn into the helicopter. Power things really. We could hear the maparn hitting the helicopter. The maparn was going off like fireworks. There were two white drivers [pilots]. All my people thought they were devils. Everyone was really scared. Then the helicopter went over the horizon. It was flying towards the Rawlinson Ranges. Must be that it fell over because of all that maparn. It was our very first plane [aircraft]. We all looked after each other and knew that it was a lucky escape from the white devils. We all had to stay together and stay away so the adults began nominating places that we should go, directions for travel to stay safe. We knew we shouldn’t separate or the white mamu [devil] might eat us.

(2011 Disc 3, Fred Ward’s Story)

Many months followed and the seasons changed. Older men could read the bird signs that a party of warriors were coming. Very early one morning Fred’s group took off towards Patjarr, in the Clutterbuck Hills where there were good hiding spots and water. Throughout his narrative Fred speaks of encounters with warrmarla (revenge warriors, avengers) and of being trained to be a warrmarla himself. In his second encounter with a
helicopter, he was travelling with an older man, Mr Campbell, tracking an unidentifiable bird from the imprints in the sand when:

We could hear this whistle from the top of the hill. We looked around. It was early morning. There was the sound of rock being hit. We heard it clearly then we saw the rotor and the helicopter was going up. 'Wait, wait, wait' we called. We would spear it if it came back. So, we went to Kurlkapitjarra. We went walking through the pila [spinifex plain] trying to get the helicopter but it flew off and we returned to where we had eaten the kangaroo meat. We stayed at Tjuntju for three nights and then we went back and there was that same track, the chopper had gone to another rockhole, Wayul way [a very sacred place].

(2011 Disc 4, Fred Ward's Story)

We had many surprises at this time. We were living our own way without whitefellas. I was a scrub boy and was learning Law for many years.

(2009 Disc 2, Tatitjarra’s Story)

Fred spent several years going through different aspects of men’s Law. During this time, he had his third crucial encounter with a helicopter:

After I went through the Law we went to Talala hunting around. It was raining, there were rabbits. Then we went to Pukurti. We slept near the creek bed because there was lots of water. I speared a kangaroo and then I could hear a weird whistling noise. Then I saw a helicopter on the other side and I saw a white man. I said I would stand there and told Mr Campbell to go around the other side to spear it because Mr Campbell was a left hander and might miss the white man. I was crawling on the ground and got to Mr Campbell, I told him to come closer and talk to the two whitefellas. They had binoculars and could see us and they had walkie-talkies. I had a spear and wanted to spear them right there. I got my spears, but the rotor going, going, around, around and the chopper took off. I tried to spear the helicopter. I got angry with kamarru [uncle], Mr Campbell, because he hid himself from the white men. I wanted to kill the two white men and burn the chopper! I was laughing at the way the chopper was running away. The whitefella was running to the chopper to run away and was gone. Mr Campbell was hiding in the branches. The chopper was in the air circling, they were looking for us. Those white men saw our smoke; they landed where we had burnt the grass. I asked him, 'Why are you getting sorry for the whitefellas? They are not your father!'. Mr Campbell was so frightened of the chopper, but I was so angry.

(2011 Discs 4 and 5, Fred Ward’s Story)
Where does the first story fit into the narrative of Fred’s life? In preparing his Witness Statement for a Federal Court hearing in 2014 Fred confirmed again the information he had given three years earlier in Perth but this time in a more constructed narrative form (Ward 2014):

We were south of the Clutterbuck Hills. Everyone was together, Tjakamarra and his family were there and Napula Morgan she was there. We saw the helicopter. One whitefella could understand Luritja language from Alice Springs so I talked Luritja to him. He asked that we sit and he would come back with transport and we would get oranges and apples and tinned meat. Maramurtu [Walter MacDougall] used the radio and then they flew back to Giles [Weather Station]. Daisy’s father had speared a white fella and was soon going to be taken to jail. He asked that I be brought to him. He said: ‘Go back and get my son [Fred Ward] or I will spear you all’. My mother came to look for me and tell me these things. She had walked a long way to get me and she was angry that I was not getting a good feed from the Ward families. She told me that whitefellas had come and left tinned meat. We were found by the patrol officers at Tika Tika. Maramurtu gave me a lift through Karilywarra to Warburton. Mr Lawson spotted me, and recognised me from being at Warburton as a little child. He cried out: ‘I was looking for you’. I didn’t say anything; I just shook my head slowly. Maramurtu sat next to me and he said: ‘I can take you to Jigalong, Papunya, where do you want to go?’. I said I wanted to go to Warburton. Fred’s departure from his homelands this time was far from easy; I was a really wild and an angry bushman. I was not happy. I wanted to spear the whitefellas, not live with them. But my families said the whitefellas would feed us. I put my ngupanu [dingo] on the truck but the people were scared of the dog and jumped off. So, I left my dog behind at Patjarr. Tjaapuyu was a good hunting ngupanu. I wasn’t happy about leaving my ngupanu there. (Based on 2011 Disc 5, Fred Ward’s Story)

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3 Walter MacDougall was appointed a Native Patrol Officer by the Commonwealth Department of Supply in 1948, to safeguard the interests of Aboriginal people during the Woomera rocket tests (Gara 2017:366). He was called Marapika, *mara-pika* (hand-sick) at Yalata because he’d lost a couple of fingers in a rifle accident (Gara pers. comm. 2018). His name, Maramurtu, in northern desert languages refers to the same hand damage, *mara-murtu* (hand-short).
**Others Tell Their stories**

In January 2011, Daisy Ward and I, with Jason Thomas on camera, travelled to the Goldfields town of Wiluna in WA to record potential witnesses for an upcoming Federal Court native title case situated in the Gibson Desert (see Part Three). The Wiluna film trip occurred one month before Fred Ward was filmed in Perth. Napula Morgan spoke in Mantjiltjarra of seeing her first plane near Patjarr and her first white man at Kumpukurra on the west side of the Clutterbuck Hills when a helicopter landed and a white man gave food to her and two other girls. Her future husband went in a car, associated with the helicopter, back to Warburton with a Ngaanyatjarra man from Warburton, Andrew Lawson⁴, but shortly after walked back to the desert to take her as his wife. Her story cross references the first story told by Fred:

> We was scared that time when we were small. Don’t know what’s going on.
> (2011 Disc 3, Wiluna Film Trip)

Cyril Maddog Morgan, deceased, told his own story in Mantjiltjarra in Wiluna in January 2011. It was Daisy’s father, Mulyamaru Ward, who he credited as travelling with MacDougall, the Native Patrol Officer, when the latter brought Cyril out of the desert and into Wiluna. Cyril, Fred and Daisy shared the same grandmother, Waparra, buried at Taltiwarra, in the northern Gibson Desert. Waparra had the three children: Fred’s father, Daisy’s father and Cyril’s mother. Cyril spoke of seeing helicopters and not knowing what they were. It was not until he was brought in to Wiluna that he understood helicopters were made by white men (2011 Disc 1, Wiluna Film Trip).

In 2002, canvasses from the Warburton Arts Collection were laid on the ground at Mina Mina claypan north of Patjarr. Artists took turns to speak to their paintings. The event was recorded on mini DV tapes, some of which appear to have been

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⁴ The same Mr Lawson referred to by Fred Ward. In 2001 Andrew Lawson (deceased) was awarded an OAM for ‘service to the Aboriginal communities of the Western Desert’. He was a longstanding Chairman of the Ngaanyatjarra Council until his death.
lost. Pulpurru Davies\textsuperscript{5} explained and sang Songlines for many paintings, including a specific painting reproduced here, see Figure 2. I recorded Pulpurru’s words in a notebook, translated by her daughter Dorothy Ward:

White fellas bought helicopters. They came with a whistling noise and surprised us by landing. We was quietly digging for goanna. It was winter and they were all underground (hibernating). When we heard that whistling, we dropped everything, wanna [digging stick], wirra [wooden bowl] and all. We hid. We was in the tali [sand hill country]. Bye and bye we saw them lift straight up, go sideways and fly away. We went over the tali to where they landed and looked at the tjina [imprints in the sand]. The whirly wind had taken the sand and flattened the plants. Those men must be wearing boots, there were no toes. No worries today. I get in plane and fly to Kalgoorlie [much public laughter]. In those days we don’t know what to call satellites or the big planes [jets]. Things was just moving in the sky [my emphasis].

It is Dadina Georgina Brown that provides the most recent contact experience with helicopters. This was in 1974 before the death of her elder sister in the desert. Whilst her parents were familiar with helicopters from their own experience in Wiluna, the children, born in the desert, were not. Dadina was frightened. The pilot landed on a flat claypan and on the second visit in 1975 gave her father a machete (Herrick and Brown 2009:16, 82).

...and when my mum and dad went hunting and my sister and me we used to follow them. My sister would always walk off and I’d always follow my sister so she could learn me and when we see a aeroplane coming we’d just grab—she’d grab my hand and we run when we see the tree or anything in front of us, we’d just go in and sit there ’til the noise stopped and she grabbed me and run to our parents.

(2011 Disc 10, Wiluna Stories)

\textsuperscript{5} Pulpurru Davies was a foundation artist with the Warburton Arts Project. Many of her artworks are considered masterpieces of the Warburton Collection. Previously known as Katapi she featured extensively as an adult in several of the short ethnographic films directed by Ian Dunlop (\textit{People of the Australian Western Desert} [1964–1968]), some of which were re-edited into the feature film \textit{Desert People} (1968).
Figure 2  *Karilywarra Way*. Painting by Pulpurr Davies. Undated (prior to 2002), acrylic on canvas 1300 x 1700 mm. WAC 234(L). From the Warburton Collection, reproduced with permission of the Warburton Arts Project.

**Part Two**

**Gibson Desert, 1950s and 1960s**

The Story Owners of Part One came from a small and tightly related group that remained in the heartlands of the Gibson Desert when those on the desert fringes had already moved west to the towns of Laverton and Wiluna. From the west, vehicle access had been established from Laverton to Warburton Mission in 1934, but this road was well south of the Gibson Desert and terminated at the Mission. The first vehicle access into the Gibson Desert resulted from the creation of a road and facility network in WA, surveyed and constructed under the leadership of Len Beadell as part of a joint British and Australian government plan, formed at the end of World War II. Blue Streak missiles and rockets were launched from Woomera in South Australia (SA) and tracked from Anna Plains, on the coast near Broome in WA. It was envisaged that the rockets would follow a single trajectory known as the ‘centreline-of-fire’ (Bayly...
2010:20; Davenport et al. 2005:3) (see Figure 3). Warburton and Jigalong Missions were the only European outposts of permanent settlement between Broome on the north-west coast of WA and Woomera in SA.

**Figure 3** Australia, 1964, showing the rocket firing line, Giles Weather Station and Prohibited Areas in relation to Patjarr and the Central Aboriginal Reserves. Reproduced from Davenport et al. (2005:xiv). Original drawn by Brenda Thornley.
Warburton Mission, the most remote of the outposts, itself lay inside the western boundary of statutorily dedicated Aboriginal Reserve Land.\footnote{In 1920 the Western Australian government declared a large area of land adjacent to the Northern Territory and South Australian borders as ‘Land Reserved for the Use and Benefit of Aboriginal People’. In 1921 the South Australian government reserved land in the north-west of the State and the Commonwealth reserved land in the south-west of the Northern Territory for the same purpose. These three ‘reserves’ formed what became known as the Central Australian Aboriginal Reserves (Kral 2012:85 and 110). In 1988 responsibility for the majority of the Western Australian reserve lands was transferred from the Aboriginal Lands Trust to the Ngaanyatjarra Land Council under a 99-year lease.} Giles Meteorological/Weather Station was built in 1956 to provide information on atmospheric conditions relevant to the testing of nuclear weapons at Maralinga in SA (Bayley 2010:36; Doussett 2002). In 1958, Beadell completed the surveying and grading of what he called the Gunbarrel Highway, the first access road to connect Warburton Mission to Giles Weather Station to the north-east and beyond to the NT and SA. This single road also opened up access from Warburton to the mining and pastoral town of Wiluna to the west.

The construction of the Giles Meteorological Station with its airstrip and communication facilities enabled the first detailed aerial surveys of the eastern Gibson Desert. In 1957, John Veevers was employed by the Bureau of Mineral Resources in Canberra to command two crews; the first, ground proofing airphoto mosaics previously produced from low flying Air Force surveys flown in a series of east-west transects from a base at Noonkanbah Station to the north, and the second taking rock and fossil samples as indicators of potential oil deposits in the Canning Basin, a geological formation extending beneath the Gibson Desert (Government of Western Australia 2014). One party was based at Well 40 on the Canning Stock Route, another east of what is now Kiwirrkurra Community. During an interview recorded with me in Sydney, a reflective Veevers made several points pertinent to understanding what the Aboriginal people had seen and experienced north of Patjarr (Veevers 2002). For the times, the scale of the work was huge. The Department of Supply arranged for a truck and two Land Rovers to be shipped from Perth to Derby and then driven south. The Air Force flew a DC3 plane from Alice Springs to allow Army
dispatchers to parachute-land fuel drums for helicopter use. The ANA British military helicopter was flown from Melbourne to Alice Springs to Giles where it was serviced before heading to the survey area. It had wheels which could easily bog and:

...didn't have a crank. Our way of working was to come down on an outcrop, I'd have a look at it and Siggs Waterlander [the geophysicist] would take his gravity meter away from the rotor blades, motor still going of course, and measure the barometer for the elevation, which is important to the gravity meter and then use the gravity meter and then we would come back and carry on to the next point. At occasional places, like, a decent outcrop, I would want more than five minutes or so there. I would be allowed to get one shut down [motor switched off] on the day and that was very exciting, because if the battery had failed, and to that effect we carried a spare battery at any rate in case the power ran down, they cranked it out and they were always working very heavily on John [speaking of himself] not to stop [laughs] and take samples, because if it ran out...this thing [helicopter] was costing us one hundred pounds an hour, which is a fortune.
(Veevers 2002:tape 1, side 1)

Drums of fuel were also placed in slings beneath the helicopter. The helicopter was used by the surveyor who would venture out to land before dusk to make an astrofix:

They were the night blokes who would go out from wherever we were...these various corners [of the maps] and shoot the stars and come in the next day. They didn't want to fly at night, of course, and return that way.
(Veevers 2002:tape 1, side 1)

Their actual interactions with Aboriginal Australians were rare. At the base camp at Well 40:

...they had been into our camp and this was rather pathetic, they hadn't taken anything, things were left lying around, breakfast or whatever, but they had made the most crudest cover up of their tracks that I had ever seen [laughs] for people who were meant to be good at that, or at detecting tracks. It was very
obvious that. A very poor cover up. On another occasion coming into Well 40 we actually flushed people out, because we were naughty aggressive people in a way. If we thought there was someone there we would hover over them and no doubt scare the daylights out of them, I am afraid. I think we actually sighted somebody, but it was the night party, Casper’s the surveyor, that made the first real contacts. They saw these folk and they actually came out of the woodwork as it were, became visible out from Well 40 when they landed and that must have been the occasion when they took the woman with a spear wound in her thigh and a boy of ten or twelve years who had severe osteomyalitis. His ankle was a mess. So they were taken no doubt in their first contact with a helicopter to Well 48 and from there they went on to Balgo Hills. [The boy was the artist Helicopter Tjungarrayi, a close relative of Fred Ward (Haskin 2018)]. They must have been becoming quite familiar with us because I can remember Siggs Waterlander, the geophysicist, would have offered these chaps some food in the form of an opened can of beans or something like that. It was quaint to us, I remember it now vividly, because instead of taking a bit and passing it round [laughs] he hung on to it. They were dressed this way, in a laplap, or whatever it is. I don’t know if that was our rag or his. I suppose it was ours. (Veevers 2002:tape 1, side 1)

In 1961, the Western Command Field Survey Unit of the Army was surveying land to the west and south-west of Patjarr. The historian Mark Chambers (pers. comm. 2014), researching this event, ascertained their work involved a helicopter, pilot and support crew and ground support in two Land Rovers. There appears to have been no direct contact with local people.

By 1963, four Beadell vehicle access ‘roads’ had been graded in what could be termed an encircling manner around a huge portion of the Gibson Desert, that contained deep in its interior, the well-watered, in desert terms, Clutterbuck Hills and Patjarr waterhole (see Figure 4). Almost immediately the Commonwealth Government deployed Native Patrol Officers to the area, men employed through the Weapons Research Establishment at Woomera to establish contact with Indigenous persons living in the desert. The new roads, few as they were, provided access into the desert hitherto only available by

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7 Veevers laughed at his own naivety when I suggested that the Aboriginal people may have assumed that he, like them, could track individuals and were therefore obscuring the likelihood that he could identify individuals from their footprints.
helicopter or camel. The Patrol Officers reported sighting people as they passed through the desert to the north of Warburton. Aware of the weapon-testing timetable, these Patrol Officers suggested and assisted the relocation of any groups they encountered that could be in physical danger from rockets that malfunctioned in flight and crashed to earth. Patrol Officers Robert Macaulay (1964), William Neech (1965), Walter MacDougall (1965), Bob Verburgt (1966 and 1968) and Glen Cornish (1967) wrote detailed reports of the Indigenous groups they encountered (Sackett 2014). These were the first archival records of the people of Patjarr. In most cases, individuals remain unnamed, identified by their relationships to each other, their approximated age and classificatory skin name according to desert sub-section customary rules.

Figure 4 Weapons Research Establishment road network. Modified from Bayly (2010).
In 1965 the first commercial oil exploration was undertaken by the exploration consortium Alliance Petroleum and Union Oil and it appears that the Native Patrol Officers utilised the resources of oil exploration staff on the ground. The permit system for access to Warburton tied in with the Patrol Officers also reporting to the Western Australian Department of Native Welfare (Keller 1965). This accords with Indigenous recall.

Several individuals quoted in this paper were filmed in 1965 and 1968 in an internationally acclaimed series of short, ethnographic films made by Ian Dunlop for Film Australia, People of the Western Desert. Anthropologist Robert Tonkinson, assisted on some shoots, providing detailed anthropological observations that became incorporated into Dunlop’s own notes and subsequent film narrations (Dunlop 1965, 1966a, 1966b, 1974, 2003). In the mid-1960s, ethno-archaeologist Richard Gould and his wife, Betsy, observed and recorded the daily lives of people living at Patjarr waterhole and other locations in the Gibson Desert (1967, 1968a, 1966b, 1969, 1970). Dunlop, Tonkinson and the Goulds clearly name and identify individuals. This familiarity was reciprocated with two children being named Ian and Richard after Ian Dunlop and Richard Gould respectively.

Pulpurru Davies, artist of the helicopter painting, features as a mature woman in the Dunlop films (Parts 1 and 2) at Patjarr in 1965 where she is called Katapi. She is filmed with her husband Tjakamarra, and surviving co-wives: Marnupa and Tjungupi, and their children including Ngampukutju/Ian Ward quoted below. Napula Morgan, cited in Part One, is also with the family. Dunlop notes the family had been met by the Patrol Officer, MacDougall, in 1964 and after the filming MacDougall met them again, north of Patjarr in 1965. In October 1965, a patrol took the family into Warburton. A few weeks later Pulpurru/Katapi’s husband Tjakamarra died (Dunlop 1966a:8). Four years later, the Goulds camped at Patjarr where they observed Katapi/Pulpurru with her second husband and four of her children from the first marriage including the late Tana (Richard Ward who guided the initial ICS film project Tatitjarra’s Story) and young son Ian Ward (Gould 1969).

In the late 1960s, the juxtaposition between international developments in space exploration and the lives of these desert dwellers could not have been larger: several
countries were launching satellites; American and Russian astronauts had walked in space, a vehicle landed on the moon, and the first human had walked on the lunar surface (Glover 2005). Of those he observed at Pulykara, Gould (1970:1) mused: ‘In an era marked by moonshots and urban blight, wars and dissent, ten Australian Aborigines peaceably subsist as hunters and gatherers with time to spare’.

Where does Fred Ward (and his detailed helicopter stories) fit in? Both Gould and Dunlop documented and filmed Fred’s stepfather Mitapuyi/Tjiltjit/Jimmy Ward and his mother Yiniparni/Ngurpaya and co-wives and younger children but by the mid-1960s Fred was a man leading his own independent desert life, seldom mixing with families. It is likely that he encountered Maramurtu/MacDougall in 1965. Napula Morgan and Dalpo/Mr Cawley Campbell were filmed at Patantja Claypan to the northwest of Patjarr, and at Kunapurl, north of Warburton (Dunlop 1966b:Parts 11–19). This is the same Mr Campbell in Fred’s story who refused to spear the white fella, choosing instead to hide. Napula had been given as a child to her deceased mother’s sister, Katapi/Pulpurru. As such she was filmed firstly with her family as a teenager and then a few years later as a young mother.

Dadina Brown’s first sighting of white men in 1975 has been well documented by both herself (Hercock and Brown 2009) and those in the expeditionary crew who brought her family into Wiluna (Peasley 2006, 2015). She is also the subject of a film made in 1997, The Last of the Nomads.

The late Ian Ward8 brought together the changes his family had experienced in a recorded interview with me in 2003:

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8 Mr I. Ward died 27 January 2008 whilst in protective custody. His death was the subject of a documentary Who Killed Mr Ward? by reporter Liz Jackson for Four Corners, ABC.
We was living with the rockhole and we were happy, everybody getting *kuka* [meat], and then whitefella came and they want to drop the bomb, bomb, want to drop the bomb in one certain place. All the *yarnangu pirni* [Aboriginal people] had to shift *ngurra* [country]...We came in through the testing of the rocket. It was gathered to us to the Mission. The whitefella took all the people into the Mission...Government time, the Mission was closing down, just a little bit of missionary there. Community got big. From there Hunt Oil was looking, searching for oil. At that time we had no power, no authority, no protection. They came *yiwarra* [tracks, roads], cutline, through all the sites and *ngurra*. Lately they had a satellite that could take photos of all the rocks, the colour, the place, the soil below, underneath so they could find rocks. They looked at all the richness of underground beneath the surface—different colour, soil, *purli pirni* [all the rocks]. Then they came in.

(I. Ward 2003)

Warburton Community is located 560 km northeast of Laverton and 900 km northeast of the closest regional centre, Kalgoorlie. It is 1050 km southwest of Alice Springs. When they did arrive at Warburton, the Gibson Desert people experienced a world quite unlike that experienced by the majority of their Indigenous contemporaries elsewhere in Australia (Brooks and Plant 2016; Plant and Viegas 2002). At Warburton Mission they became incorporated into a larger Indigenous world in a more persistent manner than hitherto experienced, joining together with families who themselves had experienced contact at most 30 years earlier with the establishment of the Mission in 1934. There were no other concentrations or communities of Indigenous people other than at Warburton for hundreds of kilometres. The creation of the tri-state Central Australian Reserves had, to a great extent, insulated and protected the lifestyle and traditions of the desert inhabitants from external Australian incursions and influences (Tindale 1940–41:71–81). A lone mission and the Weapons Research Establishment era had done little to change this isolation.

Warburton as a residential community had its own unique profile in the late 1960s. Brooks asserts that in the Ngaanyatjarra region:
...the overall impact of settler society has been relatively light. The people were not moved away from their country, the mission era was relatively benign and through the decades up to the 1960s, most of the population was able to adjust to the new circumstances at their own pace. (Brooks 2011b:208; see also Kral 2014:172–174).

In the ensuing years, this small group of closely related families became incorporated with other desert groups based at Warburton, the Ngaanyatjarra on whose traditional country Warburton was situated, the Pintupi, Ngaatatjarra, Nyuntunatjarra and Pitjantjatjara. They became part of what is glossed as the Ngaanyatjarra Peoples9, inhabitants of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands10, members of the Ngaanyatjarra Council11, serviced by a range of Ngaanyatjarra Council operated transport, health and education services, residents of small residential communities within the Shire of Ngaanyatjarra12.

However, their co-existence with other desert groups at Warburton was and still is uneasy. They are referred to as ‘northerners’ in a pejorative way (Turner 1993). In the words of Daisy Tjuparntari Ward:

Kids at Warburton used to say to us kayilinykutu [go back to the north]...They called us “lizard eaters”...I used to recognise that my father’s Mantjiltjarra wangka [language] was different to what they spoke in Warburton when I was growing up...Sometimes at Warburton it was hard and if people got jealous for us kayili [north] mob, kids would give us cheek and say ‘go back to Tika Tika’. I heard about Tika Tika and I thought, where is Tika Tika? (Ward 2014)

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9 This term was initially used sporadically (McLean 1994; Thompson 1998) and then more extensively throughout the native title period in multiple volumes supporting the native title application brought by The Peoples of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, WAG 6004 of 2004 (Brooks 2004).
10 A specific area of ‘A Class Reserve Land’ leased to the Ngaanyatjarra Council for a period of 99 years by the Western Australian government in 1998.
11 The Ngaanyatjarra Council is the principal governance organisation in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.
12 The Shire of Ngaanyatjarra was established in 1993.
This uneasiness translated into a deep desire to return to their traditional lands and create a settlement at Patjarr. By the early 1980s this movement to return northward was under way (Turner 1993). Inter-related family groupscamped out and by their own labours cut a single road by hand from Mipultjarra, a significant site on the Gunbarrel Highway to Patjarr. Over time the residential settlement grew from a few makeshift camps into a small functioning incorporated community under the auspices of the Ngaanyatjarra Council. As late as the early 1990s the twin forces of isolation and lack of vehicle access meant few visitors came to Patjarr, including government employees responsible for the A Class nature reserve on which Patjarr people had unwittingly sunk their water bores and built their airstrip. This was to change with the introduction of native title legislation in Australia.

Part Three

The Native Title Era

For those seeking to address issues of native title, ‘first contact’ in the 1960s is interpreted as recent contact in the settled history of Australia and as such is a clear means of establishing customary practice and cultural continuity from a period that predated British Australian influence to the present. Native title work in the desert regions of WA began in the late 1990s. Its influence has now been felt for nearly twenty years.\footnote{The Martu, Kiwirrkurra and Spinifex native title claims were registered in 1998 with the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT).}

Patjarr people enthusiastically embraced native title research. The methodological challenge was how to enable people who speak their own languages and have either limited or no English to best represent themselves in the Western legal system. One way was for them to speak to, sing and celebrate their culture by reference to the artworks held in the Warburton Collection and for these actions and events to be recorded visually and in film forms for the perusal of all parties (Turner 2005).

The majority of desert native title claims have been resolved by mediation, undertaken by members and staff of the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) (Central Desert Native
Title Services 2017)\(^{14}\) and more recently Registrars and staff of the Federal Court through case management. The State of WA has been party to all these mediations which when finalised are termed Consent Determinations (see s. 87 of the *Native Title Act 1993* [Cth]). The Indigenous claimants are not required to give evidence in person. Published, archival materials and research undertaken by the applicants’ experts is brought together in a Connection Report to confirm the threshold issue of whether the Indigenous applicants have a case for proving strong links and continuity to the country (Neate 2002:4)\(^{15}\). However, this process which avoids the costs and intrusiveness of Court proceedings was unavailable to the people of the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve.

The State formally vested a significant portion of the Gibson Desert as a Class A Nature Reserve on 22 April 1977\(^{16}\). With this vesting native title rights and interests over the land were fully extinguished at law. On every side of the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve (GDNR) the Federal Court had determined legally the existence of the strongest form of native title, exclusive possession. The State of WA had agreed by consent determinations. In 2005, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court pronounced that the effected lands would have been included in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands Determination of full native title but for the creation of the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve in 1977.

The establishment of the GDNR after the introduction of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), created a legal liability for the State to compensate the Mantjiltjarra People of the GDNR for the extinguishment of their native title rights under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). This liability was recognised in 2005 by the State signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the

\(^{14}\) The NNTT was established as an impartial, independent body (Neate 2002:7). Mediation occurs under s 86A(1) of the *Native Title Act 1993*.

\(^{15}\) At the minimum, expert anthropological research will be undertaken, however some claims also include research reports by linguists, archaeologists and historians.

\(^{16}\) Reserved under section 29(1) of the *Land Act 1933* and vested in the WA Wildlife Authority (superseded by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions).
People of the GDNR (Fred Ward, Ian Ward, Daisy Ward and Jacky Giles were signatories) for joint management pending the creation of relevant legislation. Whilst begun with good intentions, the Indigenous Conservation Title Bill was not realised. The People of the GDNR had tried the political process and indeed got very close to success with both Houses of Parliament passing the Indigenous Conservation Title Bill, despite the opposition of the Liberal Party. On the eve of a state election technical drafting issues meant further work was required before the Bill could be proclaimed. The ensuing landslide victory to the Barnett Liberal Government, which had opposed the Bill in principle, meant the ICT Bill was now dead. The attempt to gain a new form of Indigenous title with a leaseback to the State conservation authority was discontinued. The last resort available to the traditional owners was legal compensation action under the Native Title Act.

Thus, the people began a Compensation application, Fred Ward & Ors on behalf of the Traditional Owners of the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve vs State of Western Australia [WAD86/2012]. Representatives of the State and the Federal Court met face to face for the first time with traditional owners on country in August 2014. For two weeks individuals were put to proof at a Federal Court hearing, at Mina Mina north of Patjarr. People gave evidence in the variety of ways open to them under the strict rules of Court proceedings. In one session, they sang the ceremonial songs associated with the acrylic canvasses painted throughout the 1990s, known as the Masterpieces of the Warburton Arts Collection, and told of the cultural information encoded in the art-glass panels and bowls of contemporary artistic practice. Reference was made to the Tingarri art-glass panels made by the Senior Applicant, Fred Ward, now installed into the walls of Parliament House in Perth. Finally, artworks some 25 years old, fulfilled a role that in the words of Jennifer Biddle ‘has taken the Australian consciousness twenty years to grasp: that Aboriginal art is history, archive, proper’ (Biddle 2013:19).

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17 In 1993 a large kiln was installed at Warburton and artists began creating artworks in slumped glass for the architectural and domestic markets. Several art-glass panels remain in the Warburton Collection.
To the people, the connectedness between themselves and their aspirations to be recognised by the State as the rightful owners and decision-makers for the land now called the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve were tangible and obvious. Court staff assisted by transcription officers, barristers and solicitors for the Aboriginal Applicants, the State and the Commonwealth witnessed the presentation of Aboriginal evidence (Tasker 2014). Sacred places and stories were shared, ceremonies witnessed, special sessions convened for men and women elders to give separate sacred gender specific evidence according to customary traditions. All evidence was open to cross-examination. Each morning, Court and legal practitioners would alight from planes at the Patjarr airstrip. Each evening, planes would depart with these workers for their accommodation at Warburton Roadhouse. Site visits were undertaken by helicopter.

In August 2015, the people were told by their solicitor that the Judge, Barker J, had ruled that the grant of historical petroleum exploration licences early last century extinguished the native title right to ‘exclude’ others from the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve. This decision largely undermined the basis on which the compensation claim was brought, the consequential quantum of compensation that could be obtained and therefore the leverage which it was hoped would persuade the State to offer title to the land and monies for joint management (Tasker 2015). The Applicants produced their own press release:
This week a group of culturally strong Aboriginal men and women met with staff from the Central Desert Native Title Service to discuss in detail their options in Australia’s test case on native title compensation. There was stunned silence from the attendees at the small remote residential community beside the Clutterbuck Hills in the Gibson Desert of Western Australia. How could it be that an oil exploration licence issued in the 1920s and never worked upon could take away a major part of their native title rights? This was before their first contact with Europeans in the 1960s, before Len Beadell graded his famous desert access roads in the 1950s, before even Warburton Mission was established in the 1930s. No strangers had been in this country yet the existence of a paper license had taken away their rights at law. 

(Turner 2015)

If the oil licenses were known to exist why were they not raised in the surrounding native title applications and determinations? In the words of claimant Daisy Ward (pers. comm. 2015): ‘this is the actions of mean-spirited people who won’t share with us bush people, who won’t pay compensation for taking our rights away without asking’. The senior Applicant Fred Ward (pers. comm. 2015) broke his silence as the decision was made to withdraw from legal action, rather than proceed in such reduced circumstances. His sentiment, spoken in his own language:

...we can not trust these whitefellas, this white law [the Native Title Act] is not for us. No-one can tell us that we do not control the knowledge for this country, the sacred power that lies within.

Political process and the Native Title Act had failed these culturally strong desert elders, members of the last traditionally intact Indigenous society to stay on their lands before contact with the Western world.
Conclusions

Sixty years ago the desert inhabitants of what is now known as the Gibson Desert wondered about the new forms of twinkling, moving lights in the night sky and the vapour trails high in the daytime skies. It was another ten and in some cases 20 years before they met the white skinned occupants. In subsequent decades, they have themselves become accustomed to helicopters and aircraft, using them for site surveys, aerial burning and feral animal control (Figure 5). Many have benefitted from medical evacuations through the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Some artists have travelled nationally and internationally. Yet despite these contemporary experiences they remain individuals who are defined by contact and continue to be at the experiential interface between peoples of different cultures.

Figure 5 Ben Brown Jnr and Jeffrey Stewart, both of whom directly experienced contact, on fire patrols west of the GDNR. May 2012. Photo: A. Wall. Reproduced with permission of DBCA, Kalgoorlie Office, and with the men's consent.
My research confirms that for those concerned and their families, contact is integral to the present. Contact encounters are not events that occurred in a distant, historical past. Rather, contact is a concept that assists non-Indigenous people to understand the continuing relevance of desert Indigenous culture to contemporary life (Brooks 2011a, 2011b; Brooks and Jorgenson 2015; Kral 2012, 2014; Thompson 1998; Thorley 2016).

This paper responds to the challenge presented by Mike Smith in his monograph centred on the people of the Cleland Hills to ‘bring Aboriginal people as individuals into historical focus, redressing the anonymity that frontier histories usually confer on Aboriginal people’ (Smith 2005:2). The limitations of vehicle access and relatively recent date for road construction has meant the people of Patjarr in the Clutterbuck Hills have experienced contact very differently to those described by Smith for the Cleland Hills less than 300 km to the east as the crow flies but some 1100 kms by road. The people of Patjarr are named, their voices heard, albeit in translations, their family relationships established as they speak to us of their contact experiences through film, oral recordings, paintings and art-glass. The artworks in the Warburton Collection are indeed their ‘history, archive, proper’ (Biddle 2013:19). These archival materials are an immensely detailed and often cross-referenced repository of their life experiences, recorded on-country, recorded in their own language, in the presence of family and friends.

The stories demonstrate their Story Owners long standing cultural strength and fortitude, juxtaposed with the emergence of cadastral borders, the ignorance of dominant Australian cultural paradigms and the incomprehensibility of Western law. In a letter to Justice Barker dated 23 August 2015 Daisy Ward wrote:
We grew up observing things not having them talked about all the time and there were strict punishments if you did wrong...When you came out to the lands, Judge, you were welcomed and people shared these stories with you, shared how scared they were when they saw whitefellas and their things, when they were given strange food, was it poison? They hid their children away from the big devil. But my people went even further for you. They told you and showed you the rock-holes, how they got water, showed you many things...We gave our sharing and gifts to you on the country so that the Court people would not feel like strangers, but then in Perth what happened? This news makes it seem like we are all still strangers...For me growing up I thought there were no other white people, because there were only black people living on the lands, until I learnt from school: about the man going to the moon; James Cook; the early explorers, all that I was learning at school. That’s when I realised there were cities and other countries...I am a strong culture woman I showed you and protected you from danger and going crazy. The spirits were with us, they were on the ground when we were preparing for you, the wind showed itself. I knew the spirits were with me. You put your trust in me to protect you. And I did. But who protects me from a piece of paper in the 1920s?

The Court staff and State and Commonwealth barristers had flown daily in and out of Patjarr daily. Site visits were done by helicopter. The irony was not lost on the people.

They just fly in and out. They don’t know how to stay and live on country. Just fly in and out. Like they always done.

(Daisy Tjuparntari Ward pers. comm. 2018)

Attempts to secure title to their lands have been circuitous for the Story Owners represented in this paper and the questioning of their bona fides as circular and maddening to the people of Patjarr as the whirling blades of the helicopters with which they first experienced contact.
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FINDING THE SIGNATURES OF GLASS BEADS: A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF INDIGENOUS ARTEFACTS FROM AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Abstract

Formal analysis and testing of glass beads in Indigenous museum objects has the potential to contribute significantly to our understanding of the global economy of trade and exchange in the colonial era. The unique chemical signatures of glass and the formal characteristics of the beads are the product of specific manufacturing processes, and, as such, can offer insights as to the possible identities of manufacturers in Europe and Asia that produced glass beads on an industrial scale for colonial markets. Where and how glass beads were used by Indigenous peoples provides another essential layer of context within which to consider the global pathways of the distribution and networks of exchange, including Indigenous trade systems, along which glass beads travelled. In this paper we discuss the results of a preliminary survey of a sample of objects drawn from the Indigenous collections at Museums Victoria in Melbourne. Using a portable X-ray fluorescent analyser (p-XRF), the chemical composition of glass beads in objects used by Australian Aboriginal groups was identified, the majority being neck chokers from the 'Top End'. A comparative set of glass beads in objects from neighbouring Papua New Guinea (PNG) was tested in order to gain a broader understanding of possible pathways along which beads and beaded objects made their way into the Pacific during the colonial and pre-colonial eras, and to consider the possibility of common origins with those found in Aboriginal objects. The relative absence of glass beaded objects from Aboriginal Australia is in marked contrast to the experience of PNG, where glass beads were actively sought in many parts and incorporated into the production of a range of objects, including high status objects where glass beads replaced the highly prized shell beads. We discuss the results of the analysis while also highlighting the limitations of the study and the readings gained from using the p-XRF.
Introduction

This paper seeks to contribute to the dialogue regarding the origins and distribution of glass beads used as global capital throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Glass beads, referred to variously in the literature as ‘contact’ or ‘trade’ beads, were embedded in vast global networks of exchange. They were a valuable portable commodity exchanged, gifted or traded by colonial administrators, explorers, navigators, missionaries and traders with, and consumed variously by, Indigenous peoples across the globe. For Indigenous peoples in North America, the importance of beads is evident in their application in elaborate embroidery on garments, particularly those made to reflect an individual’s high status. However, as Lidia Sciama (2001:13) suggests, the importance of beads has been somewhat trivialised; understanding beads as ‘trinkets’ reveals more about European attitudes to women’s work, as beading resides primarily within the domain of women’s craft production. Regardless, given the endless examples of Indigenous glass-beaded objects from around the world in museums today, a significantly large volume of beads sustained active colonial markets.

While the role of glass beads in the growth of a global economy of exchange fundamental to European colonial expansion and power requires further research, the mass production of beads in the colonial era provided a lucrative export product for Europe’s vibrant glass-making industry; for example, beads were a key commodity in the 17th century slave trade along the west coast of Africa and used by traders there as currency. Further, a general assumption has been that the likely origin for the manufacture of these glass beads is Venice, yet during the 17th century, glass studios and glass-bead manufacturing had expanded into many other parts of Europe.

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1 This paper is based on a presentation at Beads, Beading and Beaded: Developing Australian Indigenous Bead Research Conference at The Australian National University, 17 November 2017.
2 The term ‘trade beads’ is one used in relation to the Pacific, while ‘contact beads’ is the preferred term in the Australian literature.
such as Bohemia (now western Czech Republic), England, Spain and the Netherlands\(^3\). The identification of glass bead production sites is critical to mapping the extent and reach of these mass produced objects during centuries of colonial expansion.

Using museum collections, our interest is to consider the use of glass beads by Indigenous peoples on the colonial frontiers of Australia, and contrast it with usage in neighbouring Papua New Guinea, and investigate the possible common origins of these beads. The striking absence of glass-beaded objects from Australia\(^4\), despite thousands having been distributed across the continent as gifts or trade items in negotiations between Aboriginal peoples and settlers, explorers, traders, anthropologists, scientists, and others, sits in stark contrast with Papua New Guinea, where an active gift economy, fuelled by networks of alliance building and negotiation, saw an abundance of glass beads incorporated into objects. New materials, like glass beads, were variously rejected or adopted, replacing or complementing beads made from natural materials, particularly shell, and used to make high status objects, and, at times, to create new forms.

We present here the results of a preliminary study of glass beads in museum objects, including chemical characterisation. Manufacturing methods produce unique chemical signatures in glass, and the results of chemical analyses of beads can be used to propose possible origins of specific beads. Glass-bead production methods also dictate the physical form of the bead, and detailed analysis of the physical characteristics of the beads provides another layer of data to identify possible sites of production.

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\(^3\) Venice experienced a major downturn in bead production in the 17\(^{th}\) century due to deaths of glass-makers from plague outbreaks and difficulties sourcing raw materials (see Graham 2006).

\(^4\) This study focuses on glass-beaded objects from Aboriginal Australians, not Torres Strait Islanders; and the original study also included testing glass-beads in objects from Africa.
The beads tested in the study were drawn from objects in the Indigenous collections of Museums Victoria (Table 1). Their chemical composition was assessed using portable X-ray fluorescent analysers (p-XRF), and a common baseline of attributes was applied to establish bead types based on methods of manufacture and their structure, shape, size, diaphaneity (the capacity to transmit light) and colour of the glass, the latter being particularly important in considering where beads have originated, as specific chemicals are required in producing specific colours. Similarities and differences in bead types present in objects from Australia and Papua New Guinea are identified, the most prevalent being the ‘small drawn oblate beads’, commonly known as ‘seed beads’. Our analysis and conclusions are, however, tempered by a consideration of the limitations of the study’s sample size and of the technology used.

Importantly, we consider the physical evidence emerging from the materials-based research methodologies of conservation practice within the context of broader cultural and historical considerations, the latter drawing upon critical analytical tools underpinning contemporary museum anthropological and material culture research. The results of this study provide a strong foundation for attributing provenance and geo-cultural associations to glass-beaded objects with little or no associated documentation.
## Table 1

List of objects in the study sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian Objects</th>
<th>Place of collection</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Collector/Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X25839, Choker</td>
<td>Adelaide River, Northern Territory (NT)</td>
<td>c. 1911</td>
<td>Gerald Freer Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X25840, Choker</td>
<td>Adelaide River, NT</td>
<td>c. 1911</td>
<td>Gerald Freer Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X26908, Choker</td>
<td>Daly River, NT</td>
<td>c. 1916</td>
<td>Harcourt Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X29139, Choker</td>
<td>Adelaide River, NT</td>
<td>c. 1923</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X29140, Choker</td>
<td>Adelaide River, NT</td>
<td>c. 1923</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X29141, Choker</td>
<td>Adelaide River, NT</td>
<td>c. 1923</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X38662, Choker</td>
<td>Rum Jungle (now Batchelor), NT</td>
<td>c. 1930</td>
<td>D. Raymond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X71564, Choker</td>
<td>NT (attributed)</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X71565, Choker</td>
<td>NT (attributed)</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X71566, Choker</td>
<td>NT (attributed)</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X71567, Choker</td>
<td>NT (attributed)</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X75974, Choker</td>
<td>Eastern Arnhem Land, NT (attributed)</td>
<td>c. 1930</td>
<td>M.A. Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X92710, Choker</td>
<td>NT (attributed)</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X25921, Biting bag</td>
<td>Oenpelli, western Arnhem Land, NT</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Paddy Cahill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X25934, String of glass beads</td>
<td>Oenpelli, western Arnhem Land, NT</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Paddy Cahill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X28711.12, String of glass beads</td>
<td>Oenpelli, western Arnhem Land, NT</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Paddy Cahill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X25695, Arm ornament</td>
<td>Lorangau, Manus Island, Papua New Guinea (PNG)</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Captain A.P. Hext</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X45536, Arm ornament</td>
<td>Manus (attributed), PNG</td>
<td>Pre-1941</td>
<td>Kew Golf Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X48140, Arm ornament</td>
<td>Manus Island, PNG</td>
<td>Pre-1940</td>
<td>W.B.P. Ashby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X48140.1, Arm ornament</td>
<td>Manus Island, PNG</td>
<td>Pre-1940</td>
<td>W.B.P. Ashby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X45542, Apron</td>
<td>Manus (attributed), PNG</td>
<td>Pre-1941</td>
<td>Kew Golf Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X83409, Apron</td>
<td>Manus (attributed), PNG</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Valerie Davies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X88382, Leg ornament</td>
<td>Manus (attributed), PNG</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Griffin Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X37391, Lime container</td>
<td>New Britain, PNG</td>
<td>Pre-1930</td>
<td>A.M. Ackroyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X80646, Arm ornament</td>
<td>Massim, PNG</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Mrs A.B. Paterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X81447, Arm ornament</td>
<td>Trobriand Islands, PNG</td>
<td>c. 1968–1971</td>
<td>Ian and Leonie Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X82753, Arm ornament</td>
<td>Trobriand Islands, PNG</td>
<td>c. 1968–1971</td>
<td>Ian and Leonie Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X81451, Neck ornament</td>
<td>Trobriand Islands, PNG</td>
<td>c. 1968–1971</td>
<td>Ian and Leonie Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X82763, Neck ornament</td>
<td>Trobriand Islands, PNG</td>
<td>c. 1968–1971</td>
<td>Ian and Leonie Page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glass Beads in Aboriginal Australia

Throughout the 18th century Macassan fishing fleets (from Sulawesi) and Dutch and French explorers visited Australia’s shores. The origins of beads that they brought could be any of the glass-making centres of Europe or Asia. Glass beads recovered from archaeological sites in Australia have been identified as coming from southeast Asia, ‘mostly discussed as a component of a general corpus of Macassan trade goods used to assign the sites from which they were recovered to broad temporal categories’ (Wesley and Litster 2015:11). May et al. (2013:85) identify an image of a Macassan prau in rock art at Djulirri in the Wellington Ranges of western Arnhem Land as being ‘the earliest identifiable contact art...found in Australia [and] dates to before AD1664 (and possibly to sometime in the 1500s)’5. As glass beads had been part of the trade from Europe to Asia at least from the 1500s onwards (see Sher Dubin 2015), any that made their way into Australia via southeast Asia a century or more before Dutch and French navigators and explorers visited Australia’s shores (from the 18th century onwards) could have been manufactured in Europe. The earliest written account of glass beads in Australia is in 1705 when Tiwi people were reported by Dutch navigators to be ‘very greedy after linen, knives, beads and such knick-knacks’ (Forrest quoted in Litster et al. 2015:300).

In the 1930s, anthropologist Donald Thomson (1949) investigated the impact of Macassans on Arnhem Land people, and in his book, Economic Structure and Ceremonial Cycle in Arnhem Land, wrote about the importance of glass bottles for making scrapers, especially for spear-making, and the inclusion of beads or manimani (a word still used by Yolngu people of eastern Arnhem Land for ‘necklace’) amongst the goods Yolngu gained from Macassans (Thomson 1949:86). However, in his original handwritten field notes (see Thomson 1937, 1942), Thomson makes no mention of beads, listing tomahawks, knives,

5 See also Macknight (2008) for a review of current thinking regarding Macassans visiting Australia from the mid- to late 18th century; also Veth et al. (2008) and Clark and May (2013).
calico and tobacco as the ‘chief items’ (Thomson 1949:86) sought by Yolngu in return for their permission for Macassans to strike camp, build smokehouses and access sea estates primarily to harvest trepang or bèche de mer (Thomson 1949).

Early historical accounts of encounters with European explorers, navigators and traders confirm the extensive distribution of glass beads, however the paucity of evidence surviving in museum collections appears to suggest they held little value for Aboriginal people. In 1802, the botanist on the Baudin expedition, Jean-Baptiste Leschenault de la Tour wrote of an encounter with Palawa men on Mariah Island in Tasmania.

One of the last of this group seemed to have some authority over the others [and] gave me the necklace he was wearing, which was made of small shells [and] asked in exchange a necklace of glass beads.

(Quoted in Plomley 1983:130)

Baudin noted the preference for buttons on a jacket given to a Palawa man in an exchange for a kangaroo skin, the jacket being discarded while ‘the buttons, which were blackened bone and not metal, had disappeared’ (Quoted in McAdam 2008:39).


It was the gift exchanges, which occurred during that last week of 1793...[in which] the exchange of European goods took place on a surprisingly large scale, as by the final days together officers, scientists and the entire crews became enthused with gift giving...These goods included the ‘conventional trinkets for the natives’, such as mirrors, glass beads, bracelets, coloured cloths and handkerchiefs.

(Mulvaney 2008:121)

D’Auribeau, on the same expedition, noted a preference for ‘axes above all else, and indeed I think that the axe is the object from which they can draw the greatest benefit’ (as quoted in Mulvaney 2008:121). The ‘tomahawk’ or hafted steel axe had universal appeal across the continent, as did other metal items like knives and nails. Particular items were highly prized by the Europeans, and the Aboriginal Protector in Tasmania, George

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6 Palawa is a generic term used by Tasmanian Aboriginals to refer to themselves.
Augustus Robinson, described his difficulty at Sandy Cape in northern Tasmania in persuading Palawa people to let him have ‘a large and excellent basket [and] I put beads, buttons, knives...in the basket and came away’ (2 June 1830 as quoted in Gough 2009:12).

Perhaps the most famous (or infamous) encounter was the signing of the so-called ‘Batman Treaty’ transacted in 1835 by the Port Phillip Association, represented by John Batman, and the Ngurungaeta (headmen) of the east Kulin nation. The latter were given blankets, scissors, knives, ‘looking glasses’, ‘tomahawks’, ‘beads’ and flour in exchange for 240,000 hectares (600,000 acres) of land around Port Phillip Bay in Victoria. However there is no indication as to value placed on any of these goods by Kulin people, and glass beads have not been found in southeastern Australian objects in museum collections to date. They are absent from objects collected in the desert regions of Australia as well. However, in 1902, anthropologist Baldwin Spencer took beads to Barrow Creek in the Northern Territory, writing ‘[t]he day after our arrival we unpacked our stores of knives, tomahawks, looking glasses, bead necklets and pipes [and] in a very short time we were busily engaged, bartering our goods in exchange for native things’ (Spencer and Gillen 1912:318).

The relative absence of glass-beaded objects in museums may be due partly to collector bias. Spencer himself had little regard for objects containing introduced materials, noting, ‘[h]ow readily the blackfellow succumbs to the temptation to use some white man’s material and at once spoils his own originally simple but beautiful native work’ (Spencer 1928:848). In 1912, Spencer carried beads amongst his store of goods again, this time to Melville Island:
My trade consisted of 15 bags of flour, 25lb. of the strongest twist tobacco available, a gross of pipes, 60 yards of turkey-twill, 60 gorgeous handkerchiefs, each a yard square...24 tomahawks for special occasions, 48 knives, 20lb. of assorted coloured beads, 12 tins of black treacle, 28lbs. of lollies for the piccaninnies, with the secondary aim of gaining the goodwill and personal ornaments of their mothers. (Spencer 1928:653)

Despite a preference for the ‘authentic’, Spencer collected a glass-beaded choker (X27541) on Melville Island, the only object with introduced materials amongst the 1200 or so objects he collected on Melville and Bathurst Islands. These chokers, worn mostly by men, are the most common Aboriginal beaded object to survive. Spencer most likely collected it from an Iwaidja man working for the buffalo hunter, Joe Cooper, at his camp on Melville Island, as there is no historical evidence of Tiwi men wearing these chokers. Iwaidja people come from the mainland opposite around the Coburg Peninsula in western Arnhem Land. Paul Foelsche photographed Iwaidja men wearing these, as well as a Larrakia (Darwin) woman, an ‘Alligator’ River woman and a seven year old Iwaidja girl. The German ethnologist, Erhard Eylmann, observed glass beads on ‘decorative objects’ belonging to Aboriginal people of ‘six or seven tribes’ when visiting their camp outside of Darwin. However, Eylmann does not identify these ‘tribes’ nor the types of objects they had, but could have likely included glass-beaded chokers (diary entry, 21 September 1897, translation by Courto 2003:155).

7 Museums Victoria’s register entry is ‘Neckband of European beads of Malaysian influence’, but is recorded as ‘missing’ in the 1966–1967 stocktake. It may be one of four chokers found without registration numbers during that stocktake and registered as X71564, X71565, X71566 and X71567.
8 The Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology has individual glass beads from Bathurst Island that are most likely from rosaries.
9 Paul Foelsche’s photographs are held at the South Australian Museum, Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, Cambridge University, Musée d’ethnographie de Genève, amongst others. The images of the women were taken around 1890, 1879 and 1877 respectively.
The distribution area for many glass-beaded chokers in museum collections world-wide\(^{10}\) is confined to a discrete part of the ‘Top End’ of the Northern Territory. It is essentially loosely bounded to the east by western Arnhem Land and adjacent islands and in the west to Adelaide River and north to Darwin and south to Daly River (see Figure 1). Museums Victoria holds the largest number of chokers, with five of the 16 coming from around Adelaide River. Three of these (X25838, X25839, X25840) were collected by Gerald Freer Hill, the naturalist and photographer on the Barclay Expedition that departed Adelaide River on its journey overland to Borroloola in 1911.

The choker form closely resembles the tightly looped string headbands or 'head filets' worn on the forehead during high order men’s ceremonies by groups around the western and central Arnhem Land region. They are similarly long thin rectangular shaped bands with ties of various materials attached to either end for securing around the head. Two chokers from Adelaide River (X25838 and X25839) have a tiny wooden message stick attached to the end of the ties, and could indicate these were worn by messengers who travelled across neighbouring territories to notify other groups to gather for funerals, ceremonies and so on (see Allen 2014).

\(^{10}\) Forty-five chokers were identified at Museums Victoria (16), British Museum (8), South Australian Museum (7), National Museum of Australia (5), Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (4), Musée d’ethnographie de Genève (2), Australian Museum (2) and University of Queensland Anthropology Museum (1).
The distribution of the ‘head filets’ called *galamba* overlaps on the eastern and southern boundaries with that of the glass-beaded chokers. Thomson collected at least 11 from Burarra people of Cape Stewart and neighbouring groups closely aligned with Burarra through marriage and ceremony. One of these (DT155) was obtained from a Rembarrnga man, whose territory lies inland and southwest of Burarra country, and Thomson wrote on the object tag that it is ‘not used in groups to eastwards’. Thomson noted on the tag for another of these (DT181) collected from a Burarra man at Milingimbi in 1935, that it came from Mayali people whose country is in western Arnhem Land. Thomson further noted that ‘head filets’ entered into central Arnhem Land via Indigenous trade networks from the southwest around Katherine and Daly River (Thomson 1949:63). The most south-westerly known choker is from Daly River (X26908) (Figure 2), and during consultation about this choker in 2016, Margaret Gilbert, a senior Merrepen (Daly River) woman, recounted that during her childhood one old ‘bush’ man, who baked bread for the mission, wore one, as did his wife (pers. comm. to Lindy Allen, 7 August 2016).

The next most common object with glass beads is the small string bag or ‘biting bag’ worn by Aboriginal men (see Hamby 2011). When the late Garnbaladj Nabegeyo, a Kunwinjku woman from Gunbalanya, visited Museums Victoria’s collections in 2004, she remarked these were ‘used in ceremony to make a young man’, and the beads and buttons were most likely added to ‘make pretty to sell’ (pers. comm. to Lindy Allen, 19 February 2004). No examples of the chokers were amongst the objects that Paddy Cahill, the pastoralist at Oenpelli (now Gunbalanya), collected for Museums Victoria after Spencer’s visit there in 1912. However, Spencer photographed a young Gaagudju man wearing what appears to be a glass-beaded choker and a biting bag (see Batty et al. 2005:152 and Pl.106), and other Aboriginal men and women he photographed appear to be wearing glass-beaded necklaces.
Four men in an image taken by photographer and adventurer, Ted Ryko, around 1911 are wearing chokers and biting bags (Figure 3). Based on their body painting as well, these are most likely the ‘Arnhem Land warriors’ to whom Ryko refers in his caption. Thomson’s observation that biting bags entered central Arnhem Land from the west via established trade networks (Thomson 1949) gives weight to the contention that biting bags are closely associated with western Arnhem Land groups. However, Museums Victoria has one choker attributed to ‘eastern Arnhem Land’ (X75974) that was found inside a bathi minydjapli, the type of basket used by senior men of eastern Arnhem Land. While an isolated example, it may indicate that the eastern distribution of chokers may extend into the central Arnhem Land region into which both biting bags and galamba were traded.

A few examples of glass-beaded necklaces and/or bracelets have survived from western Arnhem Land. In 1918, Cahill collected a looped string bag with its contents intact (X25934) including a long string of glass beads (discussed further below). In 1922, he collected another string bag with its contents (X28711) including a single strand of close to 500 coloured glass beads and a bracelet of beads. The latter had belonged to a woman pregnant with her first child, the contents, Cahill noted, being ‘a gift for the child’. A very small blue bead was also recovered from a tightly looped string bag collected by Cahill. Glass-beaded necklaces were also found in other parts of Australia, particularly north Queensland.

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11 Others here are Tiwi men, wearing false beards being a customary Tiwi practice. Their body painting is also consistent with Tiwi designs.
12 The British Museum has two interlaced armbands with small glass beads stitched onto them collected by Jessie Litchfield (the source of the British Museum’s chokers). Pitt Rivers Museum has a string of eight white beads collected in Queensland; Macleay Museum, University of Sydney, has a gum nut bead necklace containing very small blue glass beads; and Museums Victoria also has a beaded biting bag from Darwin (missed in the study).
Figure 1 Locations in the ‘Top End’ of the Northern Territory mentioned in the text. Source: Vanda Fletcher.
Figure 2 A glass-beaded choker from Daly River collected in 1915–1916. Source: Museums Victoria, X26908.

Figure 3 ‘Arnhem Land Warriors’, around 1911. Photographer: Ted Ryko. Source: Museums Victoria, XP20278.
Glass Beads in Papua New Guinea

In stark contrast, glass beads are found on many 19th century objects in museum collections from Melanesia, especially Papua New Guinea (Figure 4). These, as in Australia, were introduced during the colonial, and pre-colonial periods\(^\text{13}\), but little attention has been given to the source of these beads. Red trade beads were particularly sought by people in the Port Moresby area, where makers of red/pink shell beads (*Spondulus* sp.) supplied the *kula* network operating in the Massim area via trade activities along the south coast\(^\text{14}\). Demand for glass beads in exchanges for hafted adzes and axes was recorded by Captain Moresby in 1873 (Davies 2012:132). In 1875, Octavius Stone brought 28 pounds of red beads to trade with Motu people, and two months later only two to three pound remained. He noted red beads constituted considerable wealth being incorporated into the making of body ornaments, such as long ear pendants worn by men and women; and necklaces made of strands of beads were considered ‘treasure’ (Octavius Stone cited in Davies 2012:132). The trader Andrew Goldie, who arrived in Port Moresby in 1876, was quickly relieved of his store of red trade beads receiving ‘a few curiosities’ in return (Davies 2012:129).

\(^{13}\) Papua New Guinea’s colonial history is complex: the northern half of the island was annexed by Germany in 1884, followed by British annexation of the southern half later in the same year, while the western half had already been claimed by the Dutch.

\(^{14}\) See Swadling and Bence (2016) for a discussion on changes in the supply chain connecting these areas in relation to boar’s tusk ornaments and *kula* valuables, both of which required shell beads.
Trade goods did not have uniform appeal across all Indigenous trade networks on the south coast. By the 1880s, tobacco had replaced red beads as a favoured commodity, and elsewhere, for instance in Cloudy Bay, Goldie traded hoop iron for bird of paradise plumes. Thirty years earlier, John MacGillivray on *HMS Rattlesnake* had observed hoop iron was a prized commodity used in tools to replace stone (MacGillivray 1852 cited in Davies 2012:134). But while the people of Kerepuna were keen to acquire red beads, they maintained a preference for carving with stone tools up until the 1890s. Davies (2012) interprets these exchanges as evidence of Indigenous agency about what to accept or reject while interacting with traders and others.
On the north coast a large number of trading stations were established during Richard Parkinson's (1999 [1907])\textsuperscript{15} time in the Bismarck Archipelago (in former German New Guinea)\textsuperscript{16}. His writings provide insights into the nature of trade exchanges and the impact of introduced materials on many of the islands; for example, tobacco and betel nut were considered 'luxury items', the former having been recently introduced to the Gazelle Peninsula and the rest of the archipelago by traders with tobacco possibly imported into western New Britain much earlier from mainland New Guinea (Parkinson 1999 [1907]:92). Parkinson noted that the people of New Britain, the French Islands (Witu Islands) and the Duke of York Islands used finely plaited cordage (used to make armbands) to trade for other items (Parkinson 1999 [1907]:95).

Missionaries preceded traders in New Ireland (now Latangai) and New Hanover (now Lavongai) and their offshore islands. In 1875, the Wesleyans founded mission stations on the New Ireland coast opposite the Duke of York Islands. The German administration and planters set up a coconut plantation at Nusa harbour near the Kavieng administration station where ‘trade with the natives has been going on since the beginning of the 1880s’ (Parkinson 1999 [1907]:115). However, trade with islanders was not always successful, the people of St Matthias and neighbouring islands being resistant to visitors. Parkinson noted St Matthias islanders rejected iron in trade but were ‘greedy’ for ‘red beads or red scraps of material’ (Parkinson 1999 [1907]:141).

\textsuperscript{15} Parkinson was a trader and collector who travelled extensively through the islands of German New Guinea over 30 years from 1882.

\textsuperscript{16} German New Guinea was surrendered to Australia at the commencement of WWI, incorporating from east to west, the contemporary provinces of Manus Province (formerly Admiralty Islands), East and West New Britain, New Ireland and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (formerly German Solomon Islands).
Parkinson noted further that glass beads replaced shell beads (often referred to as shell money) in the making of aprons that he described as ‘outstanding’ in the Admiralty Islands. These aprons\(^{17}\), comprising thousands of tiny shell discs, were worn for dancing on important occasions. Parkinson (1999 [1907]:162) observed the ‘not insignificant value in their homeland, so that only rich people or chiefs are able to afford such a luxury’, being worn by wealthy men or chiefs on Manus Island.

Sylvia Ohnemus (1996) references Margaret Mead and Reo Fortune’s observations in the 1930s that women wore these as part of their wedding attire (Mead 1975 [1930]:61 cited in Ohnemus 1996:105), one worn to the front and another to the back to emphasize the movement of the dancer. Parkinson observed differences in those worn by women with their soft pliable bark cloth upper surface onto which tassels of shell discs, coir and other seed kernels and feathers were sewn, and pendant shell discs with seed kernels on the end sewn onto the lower edge. He noted:

...[today] this type of apron is rarely found, if not made with imported European material, especially glass beads and bright rags—I might say adulterated and thereby significantly diminished in beauty. The natives do not seem to understand that the blending of European articles reduces the value of their original decorative items; here, too, this preference for European industrial items has arisen from the feeling that all things new are to be preferred to the old, a situation that we can often observe among civilised nations as well.

(Parkinson 1999 [1907]:162)

\(^{17}\) Two examples in Museums Victoria’s collections (X45542 and X83409) are included in the study; also see British Museum collection—0c1908.0624.70: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=503073&partId=1&searchText=apron&place=40892&page=1], accessed 15 July 2018.
By 1900, shell discs were rarely used in making these aprons, but continued in use as currency in customary exchanges and trade networks (Parkinson 1999 [1907]:390–1). As such, shell money remained positioned within a recognised value of exchange or regimes of value (Appadurai 1986), while trade beads, equivalent to those made of shell in terms to these aprons, were not an acceptable token of exchange for transactions in which shell money was used.

During field work in the Aitape area in the West Sepik between 1987 and 1992, Maria Wronska-Friend (2015) came across ceramic replicas of shell objects being used and worn by people but they couldn’t account for their origins. She discovered these were likely made by A. Sachse & Co. in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This company mass produced glass beads as well as replicas of bone and shell objects for the colonial trade and distribution throughout the German colonies.

In 1895 [Sachse] opened a branch in Venice and became the main producer of glass pearls in the world...[and] for at least three decades Albert Sachse was one of the main European producers of glass and ceramic goods, with many of his products destined for distant 'exotic' markets. (Wronska-Friend 2015:52)

Subsequently branches were opened in Germany, London, Moscow, Paris and west Africa, but the outbreak of World War 1 saw the global collapse of this market and Sachse & Co. ceased operations in 1920 (Wronska-Friend 2015:52). Wronska-Friend points out they were one of many companies that marketed beads and replicas to supply an ever-expanding network of late 19th century markets in Africa, India and North America, as well as the Pacific. However, she notes that 'little is known of the mechanisms of exporting these goods from Gablonz [now in the Czech Republic] to the Pacific or to other parts of the globe' (Wronska-Friend 2015:54), and, as such, highlights the importance of identifying the chemical composition of beads known to have been manufactured by Sachse & Co. and other companies.
The Sample

The sample of glass-beaded objects tested for the study (see Table 1)\(^{18}\) comprises 16 objects from Australia, including 13 glass-beaded chokers, a biting bag and two strings of glass beads from the Northern Territory. The 13 Papua New Guinea examples include arm and neck ornaments, aprons and a lime container and are from Manus Island and the Massim region (the eastern tip of the New Guinea mainland and neighbouring offshore islands)\(^{19}\). Selection was made on the basis of a visual match in type and colour between the beads found in objects from both regions, specifically red, blue and white beads. Similarity was important given the in-situ p-XRF analysis requires a sufficient sized grouping of the same colour bead for isolated testing. All but four of the objects were collected or registered into the museum collections in the late 19\(^{th}\) and early 20\(^{th}\) centuries, and most have little accompanying documentation beyond the donor or collector’s name and a place or country of origin. Those without provenance information have been attributed to a region or place based on their stylistic similarity to other objects.

The Analysis

A systematic methodology for characterising and categorising beads was applied to the sample, with attributes of material, manufacturing technique, structure, shape, size, colour and diaphaneity (the capacity to transmit light) according to Wood’s (2011:68) typology\(^{20}\). Individual areas of glass bead colours were

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\(^{18}\) A selection of necklaces and waistbands with glass beads from South Africa underwent XRF analysis but are not included in this study.

\(^{19}\) Ian and Leonie Page, teachers in the Trobriand Island 1968–71, noted X81451 has ‘very old glass beads’.

\(^{20}\) Bead diameter (the maximum width of a specimen, perpendicular to the perforation) was taken using digital callipers and a size range recorded for each item and classed as very small (under 2 mm), small (2–4 mm), medium (4–6 mm), large (6–10 mm) and very large (over 10 mm) as per Karklins (1985, 2012). Wesley and Litster (2015) use Wood (2011) in their analysis of glass beads from the Wellington Range archaeological sites.
tested using the Bruker Tracer III-V+ portable XRF unit with an X-Ray tube source with a Rhodium (Rh) target and a Peltier cooled Silicon-PIN diode detector. The instrument was fitted with a Ti (Blue) filter to reduce the spectral contribution from the Rh target and with a vacuum to allow greater sensitivity at lower energies. Operating conditions were 15 kV and 34 µA with vacuum for 300 sec. Under these conditions the instrument detects elements from atomic weight 13 (aluminium) to 30 (zinc). The XRF unit was placed in the vertical desktop stand with the safety shield accessory in place. Items were placed on the safety sample table above the XRF test aperture for testing. Care was taken to ensure the test aperture covered individual colour areas of the beaded material.

Examination revealed all the beads on the Australian and Papua New Guinea examples to be undecorated rounded monochrome beads, oblate in shape (commonly known as ‘seed beads’) and small in size (2–4 mm). The exception was very small (1–2 mm) beads on the biting bag (X25911). All beads are of simple construction or single layered, and of the drawn type, a manufacturing method whereby beads are made by pulling molten glass into a hollow tube, cutting them to size and reheating until smooth and round (Wood 2011: 68). Opaque (op.), translucent (tsl.) and transparent (tsp.) beads were identified across the sample, with opaque beads appearing in greater quantities overall. Across the sample range, only one choker (X71564) was made entirely of beads with the same diaphaneity, in this case opaque, suggesting colour was of greater importance to the design than opacity. Beads were assigned a colour name and Munsell notation of colour (Munsell Bead Colour 2012 Revision) to examine individual beads. Forty-one individual colours are present with the most frequently used being red, white, and blue, and, to a lesser extent, purple in the Papua New Guinea objects. Nineteen colours appeared only once and in small quantities of less than 20 beads, while the four colours that featured in large quantities across the Australian examples and repeatedly in the Papua New Guinea ornaments

21 Drawn beads were produced in Europe in the 19th century and exported in large quantities from Europe to Asia and elsewhere. This bead type (some close in colour) was recovered from Wellington Range archaeological sites (Wesley and Litster 2015).
were Bright White (op.), Poppy Red (op. and tsp.), Cerulean Blue (tsl.) and Orchid Mist (op.), indicating either preference for these or they were the dominant colours available.22

The chokers, the largest object type in the sample, consist of small sized (2–4 mm) round beads that exhibit significant colour variation: thirty-three individual colours were identified, the most prominent being Orchid Mist 2.5 RP 7/4 (op.), Bright White N 9.5 (op.), Daffodil 5.0Y 8/10 (op., tsl., and tsp.) and Cerulean Blue 7.5B 5/10 (tsl.). The beads are strung on machine-made thread and are inclined at 45 degrees in a herringbone-like pattern to form narrow rectangular-shaped beadwork.23 The connections through the beads appear to be made using warp and weft threads in a technique documented by Hector (1995:15).

Litster et al. (2018) contend that while the chokers they examined appeared at first to be made using a loom, the patterning cannot be achieved on a loom as it ‘creates angled bead orientation [and] does not create warp threads’ (Litster et al. 2018:307). They concluded that it is ‘an undocumented technique... provisionally named the non-weft looming technique’ (Litster et al. 2018:308).

Ties of plaited or twisted fibre appear to be made from the gathered warp threads, and a range of ties made of 2 ply vegetable fibre string, wool and/or cloth are attached at either end. A string of almost 500 beads (X28711) has translucent and transparent light blue, pink and yellow beads, and, as with the chokers, are small in size. They are strung on a single thread of undyed hand spun fibre forming a large bead group measuring 1426 mm in length. X25934 is a smaller assemblage made from similar sized transparent yellow and green coloured and clear beads threaded and joined on undyed hand spun fibre. The third example (X25921) has very small-sized (1–2 mm) orange and blue opaque beads with an average diameter of 1 mm that are

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22 Consistent light sources and settings were used. Opaque colours were examined under UV-filtered day-light approximating fluorescent CLE lamp (240 VOLT /50 HZ 5) and translucent and transparent colours by transmitted light using a MES Medical Equipment light box.

23 Median length of 217 mm, width of 29.8 mm wide and density of 24 per cm².
threaded onto machine-made undyed fibre and affixed to the exterior of the bag with an overlaid stitch technique of black thread. Detailed analysis of the threads was undertaken in this study, but the results are not included here.

The Papua New Guinea sample includes two arm ornaments (X80646 and X81447) and two neck ornaments (X82763 and X81451) decorated with individual lengths of red opaque and translucent blue beads in the small size range. Each has beads threaded as a single colour on vegetable fibre secured to a support made from shell or pigs tusk. The lime container (X37391) has two separate lengths of threaded beads strung on vegetable fibre. These consist of eight translucent green beads in different hues and the more commonly used opaque red, white and black beads. The two armlets (X25695 and X88382) and two large aprons (X45542 and X83409) are constructed where the beads themselves in combination with the vegetable fibre thread form the ground. In these examples, red, blue, white and purple beads of the opaque, translucent and transparent type are threaded to form bold geometric designs dominated by triangles and crosses.

Initial examination of the construction method shows the use of both warp and weft threads in a variety of configurations, possibly reflective of regional difference. The final group of arm ornaments (X45536, X48140 and X48140.1) are decorated with the same red, blue and white beads, threaded on vegetable fibre and sewn to a bark ring. Pink beads were not present in any of the Papua New Guinea objects.

The core glass chemical composition of all glass beads are present in similar levels, including sodium (Na) (assumed), aluminium (Al), silicon (S) and iron (Fe) and additive elements potassium (K), calcium (Ca), arsenic (As) and lead (Pb)\(^\text{24}\). Arsenic and lead are typical of the production techniques used in European and southeast Asian glass-bead production from the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century to the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century (see Fusco and Speakman 2010; Robertshaw et al. 2010). As discussed already,

\(^{24}\) The majority of glass beads are identified as soda-lime-silica glass, including Islamic and Indian glasses (Robertshaw et al. 2010) and European glass from the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Soda-lime glass beads found in America and Africa can be sourced to European or Asian manufacturing sources in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries (Fusco and Speakman 2010). Lead glasses have been identified in American (Hancock et al. 1997) and African beads (Fusco and Speakman 2010).
we know some trade beads from Papua New Guinea were sourced to Sachse & Co. (Wronska-Friend 2015). We were unable to confirm the sodium content, so it has been assumed to be present for the purposes of this preliminary study. Studies of glass beads of European and Indian origin in both ancient and present day glass manufacture have been identified as soda-alumina based glass (Dussubieux 2001; Hancock et al. 1997; Kock and Sode 1995).

Heavier atomic weight elements present in glass beads are usually indicative of the components used to create colours—iron, tin, lead, copper and cobalt being common colouring agents. Chemical elements used as colouring agents can be used for dating bead manufacture (as particular additives were used at different times). However, the sample size here is too small for source identification, but may be used for an indication of raw materials available at a particular time, a specific maker or specific source locations. Small variations in the chemical elements used for colour have been found and it is hoped that further analysis using a larger set of glass beads may lead to or be indicative of source location.

Under the test conditions, and without appropriate matrix matched glass standards, the concentrations cannot be calculated, and so only qualitative data is reported. The results are reported in raw counts where the ratio of raw counts is proportional to the ratio of the metals/elements concentrations in the following comparisons. White opaque beads and pink opaque beads have been used for preliminary comparisons, as they are the most frequently used colours in the Australian objects tested, while white is used on most Papua New Guinea objects. Overall the composition of base elements Al₂O₃, SiO₂, K₂O, CaO and Fe₂O₃ (i.e., aluminium, silicon, calcium and iron) is very similar, and the count levels for arsenic and lead show little variation across the items from the two regions. Potassium has a

25 The main components of glass, excluding oxides used in the creation of colours and modifying agents, have been identified in previous studies as Na₂O, MgO, Al₂O₃, SiO₂, K₂O, CaO and Fe₂O₃ (Robertshaw et al. 2010). The p-XRF technique under vacuum applied here is able to detect Al₂O₃, SiO₂, K₂O, CaO and Fe₂O₃.
26 This was also true for the African objects tested.
broad range of counts recorded where Australian beads generally have higher counts than the Papua New Guinea beads with some overlap.

A more detailed analysis of the beads is required to confirm if this is related to production sites. However, the analysis of glass beads in the chokers presented particular challenges as they are tightly woven and individual beads are difficult to isolate for testing. It did reveal though the presence of a high level of potassium, indicative of plant ash used in the manufacturing process: X92710 has very high counts for potassium represented by the three points on the right hand side of Figure 5, while the pink beads showed a significant variation in potassium concentration with a distinct break in the groups, Figure 6, and X71564, X71565 and X71566 have higher levels of potassium.

Discussion

Beads exhibit specific morphological features that distinguish them and their possible origins, however the mass production of the small oblate or ‘seed’ beads, the common type found in the sample, renders identification of the morphological features alone as insufficient. What we do know is it is necessary to classify beads according to measurable, consistent and standard parameters, and bead classification needs to be used in conjunction with high sensitivity elemental and structural analytical methods to determine possible production sources. The significant commonality in beads from Australia and Papua New Guinea suggests a likely common source or sources, as all exhibit a similar core glass blend. However, more sensitive analysis of trace elements is required to identify any significant differences.

Colour and the diaphaneity (transparent or opaque quality) of the glass are major discerning features in identifying the signature of a particular maker or manufacturing process. Small variations in the elements used for colour have been found, but the sample size is too small to indicate if this can be used for source identification and may only indicate the raw materials available at a particular time or production site.
Figure 5 Plot of calcium vs potassium counts for white beads.
Figure 6 Plot of calcium vs potassium counts for pink beads (note no pink beads were present in PNG objects).
The four dominant colours in the Australian examples: Bright White (op.), Poppy Red (op. and tsp.) and Cerulean Blue (tsl.) and Orchid Mist (op.), also appear repeatedly in the Papua New Guinea ornaments. It could be that these colours were more readily available or preferred. However, the most frequently used colours in the Papua New Guinea objects are red, white and blue, and, to a lesser extent, purple. As pointed out earlier, the selection of objects for the study was made on the basis of a visual match with Australian objects, in particular those with red, white and blue beads.

The limitations of sample size and the p-XRF readings has meant the findings are indicative rather than conclusive. Further, it is also worth noting that dirt, salts and forms of degradation on the surface of glass can impede accurate identification of bead colour and diaphaneity (Karklins 1985), while XRF spectrometry (a surface technique) can be impacted as degradation processes cause migration of the alkali ions to the surface of the beads affecting the concentration detected. However, the element results for the beads for Australia and Papua New Guinea are very similar, most based on a sodium glass matrix with arsenic and lead additions typical of late 19th and early 20th century glass bead-making techniques found in European and southeast Asian production centres. Importantly, the results reveal a closer alignment with those from the southern Indian region, another major centre for the mass production of beads, and provide little evidence for being Venetian in origin. While Wronska-Friend (2015:51) highlights the extent of the production of one company, Sachse & Co. in Gablonz in the Jizera Mountains that ‘reached the peak of its prosperity in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century when it became the global centre of glass and ceramic jewellery production, with dozens of manufacturers settled in and around the town’, she points out the need for research to identify many similar companies producing glass beads on an industrial scale for colonial markets. Further, it is worth considering that while manufacturers like Sachse & Co. were based in Venice at times, this does not preclude them from securing beads from elsewhere in Europe or Asia.
Conclusions

Our study reveals the potential of a multilayered approach to the consideration of the global distribution of glass beads, from at least the 18th century through to the early 20th century, by giving attention to the nature of the bead itself and its chemical characterisation as well as how beads were embedded in colonial and Indigenous networks of exchange. While more research is needed to identify the manufacturers and distributors of glass beads, our study revealed how a cross-disciplinary research approach can contribute to greater understandings of the nature of these global networks and how glass beads were distributed across the globe and inserted into Indigenous societies in Australia and the broader Pacific region.

The study also demonstrated that the presence of glass-beads and beaded objects in Australia is most strongly associated with Aboriginal people living in a discrete corridor of the ‘Top End’ of Australia, an area that coincides with archaeological sites in the Wellington Ranges where beads have been recovered (see Wesley and Litster 2015; Litster et al. 2018). The dominant glass bead type present in those sites as well as the Australian objects in our study is the ‘seed bead’. The most prominent colour in beads present in the chokers is Orchid Mist, a colour of bead that appears in virtually all of the archaeological sites (Wesley and Litster [2015] refer to the colour as ‘red-purple’). A further study would benefit from examining and comparing beads from the ‘Top End’ together with those recovered from the Wellington Ranges sites using equipment that allows for more sensitive analysis of trace elements present in the beads. Such an approach could provide more definitive answers as to the possible origins of the beads, and provide further context for the results of our preliminary study.
Any future extended study would benefit from testing the chokers in other museum collections and glass-beaded objects from the Torres Strait and from other places in the Pacific. This paper demonstrates the value in looking beyond Australia in order to understand the bigger picture of the pathways and networks of exchange along which glass beads travelled globally. In Papua New Guinea, where gift economies were particularly active, beads gained specific value in more localised contexts, for example, as discussed here, replacing shell beads on aprons from Manus Island. New items and materials were drawn into networks of alliance building and negotiation between Indigenous people and outsiders, and further investigation of glass-beaded objects from this region, and elsewhere, may be useful in exploring the processes of interaction, engagement and Indigenous agency.

Even given the limitations of the small sample and the p-XRF, this paper demonstrates the value of research on glass beads and glass-beaded objects. It provides an important template for cross-disciplinary research and has great potential as a tool for provenancing, identifying and/or attributing regional associations for objects in museums that have little or no existing information. A more ambitious project might extend testing of glass beads to those found on manufacturers sample cards, e.g., the ones in Gablonz from Sachse & Co., or those in museums such as the Victoria and Albert Museum and British Museum in London that have trade samples from Venice, or hanks of ‘trade beads’ like those from W.J. Macleays ’Chevert’ expedition to Papua in 1875 in the Macleay Museum in Sydney.
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Towards the Necessary Self-Defence?: Pastoral Control and Ngarrindjeri Resistance at Waltowa Wetland, South Australia

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Abstract

This paper explores frontier encounters between the Ngarrindjeri Nation and pastoralists with reference to Waltowa Wetland—a wetland located on the eastern shores of Lake Albert in South Australia (SA). Numerous accounts of this culture contact are framed by a colonial discourse of the ‘necessary self-defence’ taken by colonists to defend resources that included Ngarrindjeri Ruwe (country); however, little consideration is given to the ongoing agency and resistance of the Ngarrindjeri Nation to these imposed regimes of resource control. By first considering long-term Ngarrindjeri management of Yarluwar-Ruwe (sea-country), this paper frames the European colonisation of Waltowa Wetland as historical mismanagement and maintains Ngarrindjeri resistance to this mismanagement was seen as a threat that resulted in conflict between Ngarrindjeri Old People and pastoralists. Lastly, we explore how cultural memory has impressed these past hostilities onto place in the present, thereby symbolising the ongoing significance of these events.
Introduction

This paper sets out to explore frontier encounters between the Ngarrindjeri Nation and pastoralists in the Lower Murray Lakes area of South Australia (SA), with a focus on Waltowa Wetland—a shallow wetland located on the eastern shore of Lake Albert (see Figure 1). In order to contextualise these interactions, this paper commences by discussing the broader South Australian setting. Following this, we consider the long-term management of Yarluwar-Ruwe by the Ngarrindjeri Nation and the historical mismanagement that followed the arrival of settler colonialism in SA; this mismanagement includes the clearing of native vegetation and the introduction of exotic livestock associated with the establishment of pastoralism (see Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:14–16). In doing so, we maintain it is not possible to understand the conflict between Ngarrindjeri Old People¹ and pastoralists without reference to Ngarrindjeri resistance to this mismanagement and the associated regimes of resource control. In order to explore the significance of these encounters and the inherent silences that exist within historical accounts, we also discuss the cultural memory attached to Waltowa Wetland, in particular a built structure located at Tatiara Station today. Within this paper, cultural memory—also often referred to as social memory—refers to collective memories of frontier violence and resistance that are shared amongst the Ngarrindjeri Nation; memories that are not necessarily recorded historically (see Krichauff 2017; Lorey and Beezley 2001; Novak 2006; Trigg 2009). Thus, we consider how Ngarrindjeri cultural memory and material traces converge at Waltowa Wetland, highlighting the ‘inextricable link’ between place and memory (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004).

¹ The term ‘Old People’ is used to refer to Ngarrindjeri ancestors who have occupied Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe since Creation (see Bell 2008:111).
Figure 1 Location of Waltowa Wetland and Tatiara Station in South Australia (Source: Karina Pelling and CartoGIS CAP ANU).
Waltowa Wetland and the Establishment of the South Australian Colony

Recent archaeological investigations indicate Waltowa Wetland supported the gathering of Ngarrindjeri Old People for the production of stone tools prior to European colonisation (Wiltshire 2017), challenging long held ideas concerning the ‘degeneration’ of stone tool use within the region (Hale and Tindale 1930:204; Mulvaney 1960:54, 74). Contemporary Ngarrindjeri knowledges similarly attest to Waltowa Wetland’s long-term and ongoing importance as an economic and cultural resource. Specifically, Waltowa Wetland once supported a variety of native fauna including long-necked tortoises (*Chelodina longicollis*), yabbies (*Cherax destructor*), catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*), golden perch (*Macquaria ambigua*) and swans (*Cygnus atratus*)—the eggs of which were frequently collected by Ngarrindjeri Old People until the wetland declined in the 1960s (Hemming et al. 1989; Trevorrow and Rigney in Bjornsson 2005:22). Waltowa Wetland also supported a variety of native vegetation, including rushes (*Cyperus gymnocaulos*), which are an important cultural resource used for weaving (Bell 2008; Hemming et al. 1989; NLPA 2013); however, the wetland’s capacity to sustain these economic and cultural resources is limited today due to ongoing degradation as a result of historical mismanagement.

The importance of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* and the right of Ngarrindjeri Old People to manage this economic and cultural resource was ignored by early colonialists, who described SA as ‘waste and unoccupied’ (*South Australia Act 1834*). Despite this, Surveyor General E.C. Frome (1840:4) later described the resource potential of areas surrounding Waltowa Wetland, which he simply referred to as a ‘swamp’ (see Figure 2):
The rising ground at the back of these flats, though sandy, yet affords excellent back runs for cattle and the hills are well timbered with banksia, casuarina and some of the largest pines I have seen in the colony. Along the eastern and southern shores of Lake Albert the same character of country continues; the soil, however, appears to be still better and the flats more extensive, particularly 15 miles from the entrance where we crossed a swamp formerly a deep inlet from the Lakes.

In 1836 during his proclamation speech, Governor Hindmarsh declared Aboriginal occupants of SA as British subjects. Similarly, the *Letters Patent of 1836* delivered to the King in the same year authorised the colonisation of South Australia, providing:

...that nothing in those our Letters Patent contained shall affect or be construed to affect the rights of any Aboriginal Natives [sic] of the said Province to the actual occupation or enjoyment in their own Persons or in the Persons of their Descendants of any Lands therein now actually occupied or enjoyed by such Natives.

In doing so, this document initially appears to recognise Ngarrindjeri rights to their economic and cultural resources. Taken together, the Letters Patent and Proclamation were often thought to reflect a ‘different’ or more humane colony, although they did little to modify the reality of the South Australian frontier following European colonisation (Foster and Nettelbeck 2012:181; also see Rigney et al. 2008).

Before the colony of SA was officially established by these documents, hostilities between Ngarrindjeri Old People and *krinkaris*\(^2\) were inflamed by the kidnapping and mistreatment of Ngarrindjeri *mimirar* (women) by sealers occupying Kangaroo Island in the 1820s and before (Jenkin 1979:26). In an attempt to escape, one Ngarrindjeri *mimini* (woman) swam the notoriously rough waters of Backstairs

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\(^2\) White person, the dead or ghost; when European colonialists first arrived in *Yarlwo-Ruwe*, Ngarrindjeri Old People thought they were ghosts and referred to them as such (Bell 1998:141; Trevorrow in Hemming and Trevorrow 2005:244).
Passage between Kangaroo Island and mainland SA with her young child strapped to her back, only to be found:

...on the beach just above high-water mark, with the baby tied to her back. She had swum Backstairs Passage, and then, in a state of utter exhaustion, crawled up the shore and died.
(Taplin 1873:8)

Ngarrindjeri Old People continued to experience such encounters for the following two decades, until the first major conflict event occurred in 1840 following the wreck of Maria on a reef near the Coorong. Hostilities soon roused over the survivors’ sexual transgressions with Ngarrindjeri miminar—or a potential misunderstanding over payment—resulting in the deaths of the Maria crew (Anderson 2015:7; Foster et al. 2001). At the time Charles Bonney detailed how two Ngarrindjeri Old People were ‘summarily’ punished in a display of deterrence for their defensive actions:

We succeeded in capturing about forty natives [sic], and two of their numbers were pointed out by their companions as the murderers. A sort of court martial was constituted, and these two men were declared to be guilty of the murders and were hanged in the presence of their tribe. This summary method of punishing the native criminals, though not strictly legal, had a most beneficial effect on this tribe of natives who, though very numerous, never committed another outrage on the whites.
(Bonney n.d.:15)

This action sparked debate about the application of British Law and the constitutional rights of those involved in such events. It became clear at this stage that ‘pioneering South Australians placed great value on the violent theatre of the gallows, as it was thought to pacify a troublesome Indigenous population, who did not share British culture or language’ (Anderson 2015:4).

Whilst the Rufus River massacre in 1841 marked a culmination of frontier conflict within the central Murray River region of SA (Burke et al. 2016:153; Hemming 1983a, 1983b; Hemming and Cook 1995), it seems the Maria incident only inflamed existing feelings of hostility between Ngarrindjeri Old People and pastoralists. As Faull (1981:17) pointed out, the Maria ‘...incident, with the publicity it received, made an indelible impact on black/white relationships throughout the
colony’ and that ‘[f]urther violent incidents insured that relationship remained strained’. With increased pastoralism into remote areas of SA, violent encounters became more frequent. For example, in 1841 overlanding parties bringing sheep and cattle into the South Australian colony describe being ‘attacked’ and in the following year Port Lincoln was in ‘a near state of siege’, with Aboriginal people ‘attacking’ all pastoral stations (Foster et al. 2001; Foster and Nettelbeck 2012; Hemming 1983a, 1983b; Hemming and Cook 1994). For the most part, such accounts describe the actions of pastoralists as defensive (Burke et al. 2017:167).

Additionally, as outlined by Foster et al. (2001), numerous accounts of frontier conflict relate to the ‘theft’ of sheep. Johnson F. Hayward (1929:29), a pastoralist in the northern districts of the South Australian colony, reflected that ‘in every case that I missed sheep...I followed them...till I rescued my sheep or punished the thieves’. Hayward’s attitude was that Aboriginal people needed to be ‘chastised’ or ‘terrified’ (Foster et al. 2001:6). John Bull (1878:69), a pastoralist in the Port Lincoln district, suggested that ‘dread needed to be established’ in order to ensure the safety and lives of the property. Consequently, several strategies—typically involving firearms—were put into place to secure the land. In other words, violence was used as a means to reinforce regimes of pastoral ownership and control. By the late 1890s the pioneer legend of ‘subduing the land and battling the elements’ had emerged, which shaped the depiction of Aboriginal people on the frontier as hostile, a nuisance and ‘trespassing interlopers’ in their own land (Foster et al. 2001:10); all the while obscuring their ongoing agency and resistance to newly imposed, colonial regimes of control.

Despite these accounts, the early South Australian frontier is the least known from the colonial archives and was often characterised by humane dealings with Aboriginal people (Rogers and Bain 2016:86). By focusing on early culture contact between Ngarrindjeri Old People and pastoralists in the region of Waltowa Wetland, this paper seeks to contribute to our understanding of early frontier conflict in SA. Additionally,
focusing on Waltowa Wetland affords consideration of encounters along the overland route between Adelaide and the eastern states, which was established in 1844 and travelled around the eastern boundary of the wetland (see Figure 2). Relationships between Aboriginal groups and *krinkaris* along such routes were notoriously strained. Referring to the overland stock route in the central Murray River district of SA, Burke et al. (2016:170) described the nature of this relationship:

> Fear, or at least anxiety, conditioned many European responses to travelling through the landscape...bringing enormous quantities of men, goods and stock within what was a highly territorialised Aboriginal landscape, that crystallised the tone of later encounters...This combined with proprietary attitude of Europeans towards their stock and possessions as precious sources of personal profit, was a deadly mix. As layers of encounter built up along the route, attitudes towards Aboriginal people hardened and violence become even more acutely anticipated.

The resources of Waltowa Wetland were vital to the success of the overland route and in turn the colonisation of SA, which relied on its freshwater soaks to replenish large numbers of livestock. Despite this, most official accounts refer to this wetland simply as a ‘swamp’, disguising the importance of this area to both the Ngarrindjeri Nation and pastoralists who relied on it. For a short period between 1846 and 1849, the western margins of Waltowa Wetland were also a stopover on the mail route between Adelaide and the lower south east of SA; a task that was undertaken by police due to fears of violent encounters with Ngarrindjeri Old People in the region (Linn 1988:38–39). Given how heavily the resources of this wetland were depended on during these formative years in SA, we suggest Waltowa Wetland was one of the first areas within Ngarrindjeri *Yarluwar-Ruwe* to be heavily affected by historical mismanagement. Additionally, many early overland routes overlapped with previous Aboriginal pathways (Burke et al. 2016; Hemming and Cook 1994), indicating the placement of the route through Waltowa Wetland was likely a continuation of Ngarrindjeri routes through the region. It should therefore come as no surprise then that attempts by Ngarrindjeri Old People and
pastoralists to maintain control over this resource resulted in conflict.

**Figure 2** Map derived from 1844 South Australian Company documents showing overland route; note Waltowa Wetland’s location on the eastern shore of Lake Albert is simply referred to as ‘swamp’ (Source: Karina Pelling and CartoGIS CAP ANU).
Ngarrindjeri Management of *Yarluwar-Ruwe*

The Ngarrindjeri Nation are the Traditional Owners and native title holders for Ngarrindjeri *Yarluwar-Ruwe*, which consists of the lower Murray River, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert, Encounter Bay and northern Kurangk (Coorong) regions of SA. At the heart of the Ngarrindjeri Nation lies the philosophy of *Ruwe/Ruwar* (land-body), an interconnected understanding that governs Ngarrindjeri connection, rights and responsibilities to their lands, waters and all living things. The health of the Ngarrindjeri people is deeply interconnected with the health of Ngarrindjeri lands, waters and all living things; its long-term health vital to ensuring the long-term health of the Ngarrindjeri Nation. A core principle of this philosophy is the Ngarrindjeri concept of *Yannarumi*, which broadly translates to ‘Speaking as Country’. The Ngarrindjeri Nation have a responsibility to ‘Speak as Country’ to ensure the health of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* and in turn the Ngarrindjeri Nation (Hemming et al. 2016:5). Therefore, the philosophy of *Ruwe/Ruwar* and the concept of *Yannarumi* have informed Ngarrindjeri management of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* since *Kaldowinyeri* (Creation), with areas such as Waltowa Wetland being cared for and managed by generations of Ngarrindjeri people.

In line with this philosophy numerous characteristics of the Ngarrindjeri Nation also contribute to this ongoing management. For example, the Ngarrindjeri Nation was comprised of at least 18 *Lakinyeri*3 (clans) each consisting of an extended family that held exclusive resource rights and responsibilities for the management of a distinct territory of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* (Bell 1998:549–54; Berndt et al. 1993:25–56; Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:8; NLPA 2013; Tindale 1974:23–55). Given their territory specific rights and responsibilities, *Lakinyeri* families occupied these areas to the extent that they have been described as very densely settled, permanent villages

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3 Whilst there are differing accounts regarding the number of *Lakinyeri* (see Bell 1998:208–209; Berndt et al. 1993:29; Radcliffe-Brown 1918:228–229; Tindale 1974:23–25), the Ngarrindjeri Nation (2006:8) formally recognises 18 *Lakinyeri*; however, the late Elder, Tom Trevorrow (pers. comm. 2012), believed there were more. Subsequently, the Nation’s peak organisation, the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA), is seen as a unification of these *Lakinyeri* (Rita Lindsay Jnr in Bell 2008:83).
(Berndt et al. 1993:27; Faull 1981:15; Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:11; Tindale 1934:9). In one early account Surveyor General E.C. Frome (1840:4) referred to ‘(the) permanent nature of the huts of the natives [sic]’.

As a result of these distinct territory rights and responsibilities, each Lakinyeri held detailed localised knowledge and worked with other Lakinyeri in order to contribute to the broader management of Yarluwar-Ruwe (Hemming et al. 1989). All Lakinyeri shared some responsibilities in order to manage Yarluwar-Ruwe on both a micro and macro-scale. Gammage (2011:3) argued this management strategy was used by Aboriginal people more broadly, stating:

What plants and animals flourished were related to their management...Detailed local knowledge was crucial. Each family cared for its own ground...They knew every yard intimately, and knew well the ground of neighbours and clansmen [sic], sharing larger scale management...

The Ngarrindjeri Nation also use a land/body philosophy to describe Yarluwar-Ruwe, which is considered a whole, integrated and living body with individual areas described as limbs or organs (Bell 1998:264–5; Berndt et al. 1993:13–14). For example, wetlands such as Waltowa Wetland are considered a ‘liver’ or ‘kidney’ (T. Trevorrow and M. Carter pers. comm. 2011)—a fertile nursery critical to the life cycle of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe, fostering new life, nurturing living things and filtering nutrients into the surrounding landscape (see also Hemming et al. 2002; Hemming et al. 2016:5; NLPA 2013:68; Trevorrow and Rigney in Bjornsson 2005:22). The names of certain areas within Yarluwar-Ruwe also reflect this land/body metaphor; for example, the toponym Kurangk is Ngarrindjeri for ‘neck’ or ‘long neck of water’ (Bell 1998:265; Berndt et al. 1993:14; Meyer 1843:41). As such, ‘(the) health of the individual parts [of Yarluwar-Ruwe] still has relevance for the survival of the whole body’ (Bell 1998:264). In this respect, each Lakinyeri was responsible for the management of a particular territorial
‘limb’ or ‘organ’ to ensure the health of the entire body of Yarluwar-Ruwe.

In addition to this, each *Lakinyeri* was also interconnected with a different species of animal and/or plant as part of a kinship system; as the Ngarrindjeri Nation (2006:12) explain:

Ngarrindjeri people hold cultural and spiritual connections to particular places, to particular species of animals and plants, and all elements of the environment are part of our kinship system. Particular animal and plant species are the *Ngartji* (totem or special friend) of Ngarrindjeri people, who have special responsibility to care for their *Ngartji*. To care for *Ngartji* is to care for country.

Caring for *Ngartjis* and Yarluwar-Ruwe went hand-in-hand to ensure all living things thrived and flourished as part of the ongoing management of Yarluwar-Ruwe; one could not flourish without the other (Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:12). In relation to this, Linn (1988:5) pointed out that the majority of *Ngartjis* were associated with water, demonstrating the importance of maintaining healthy waters in order to maintain healthy habitats for such *Ngartjis*. *Lakinyeri* members were not allowed to harm or consume their *Ngartji*, ensuring the Ngarrindjeri Nation maintained a sustainable relationship with all living things.

The Ngarrindjeri Nation also emphasise the active role of *Kaldowinyeri* ancestors in the establishment of stories, meanings and laws that inform Ngarrindjeri interests, rights and responsibilities in the ongoing management of Yarluwar-Ruwe. As the Ngarrindjeri Nation (2006:8–13) emphasise:

As *Kaldowinyeri* ancestor Ngurunderi travelled throughout our Country…He gave to his people the stories, meanings and laws associated with our lands and waters of his creation…He taught us, don’t be greedy, don’t take any more than what you need, and share with one another. Ngurunderi also warned us that if we don’t share we will be punished. Ngarrindjeri respect the gifts of Creation that Ngurunderi passed down to our Spiritual Ancestors, our Elders and to us. Ngarrindjeri must follow the Traditional Laws…Our lands and waters must be managed according to our Laws to make them healthy…
Stories and laws established by *Kaldowinyeri* ancestors emphasise the importance of observing morals such as respect and sharing, as well as the punishment associated if these morals are not observed. For example, the story of Thukeri—in which *Kaldowinyeri* ancestor Ngurunderi plays a central role—demonstrates the importance of observing such morals:

A long time ago two Ngarrindjeri men went fishing in a bay near Lake Alexandrina to catch the *thukeri mami* (bream fish). They set off in their bark canoe to catch the big fat *thukeri*. They fished and fished until their canoe was over full and they said we have plenty of *thukeri* we will paddle to shore before we sink. As they paddled to shore they saw a stranger coming towards them so they covered up the *thukeri* with their woven mats they said this man might want some of our *thukeri*, when they approached the shore the stranger said to them 'hey brothers I’m hungry have you got any fish to share', but the two Ngarrindjeri men said no we haven’t got many fish we only have enough to feed our families. So the stranger began to walk away then he turned and said you have plenty of fish and because you are greedy and don’t want to share you will not enjoy the *thukeri* fish ever again. As the stranger walked away the two Ngarrindjeri men laughed at him. When the two Ngarrindjeri men unloaded the *thukeri* on to the banks to scale and clean them, they saw that their nice big fat *thukeri* were bony and they didn’t know what had happened. The two Ngarrindjeri men went home to the campsite in shame and told the Elders what had happened. The Elders were angry and said the stranger was Ngurunderi our Spirit Ancestor and because you two were greedy and would not share with him he has put a curse on our *thukeri mami*. Now all the Ngarrindjeri people will be punished. (Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:8)

By promoting morals, such as sharing, these stories and laws further ensured the Ngarrindjeri Nation maintained a sustainable relationship with *Yarluwar-Ruwe*, all living things and each other. In doing so, the Ngarrindjeri Nation (2006:28) maintain: 'Our economy has always been based on the sustainable use and trade of our natural resources'.

This resulted in resources that were ‘abundant, convenient and predictable’ (Gammage 2011:87), which in turn supported a large and thriving Ngarrindjeri Nation who occupied and enjoyed *Yarluwar-Ruwe* for generations. As a
result, Ngarrindjeri *Yarluwar-Ruwe* has been argued by some to be the most densely populated region in Australia prior to colonisation (Berndt et al. 1993:18; Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:11; Radcliffe-Brown 1918:229–231; Tindale 1974:111). Therefore, the philosophy of *Ruwe/Ruwar* and the concept of *Yannarumi* that informs ongoing Ngarrindjeri management ensured a healthy *Yarluwar-Ruwe* and in turn a healthy Ngarrindjeri Nation prior to the introduction of pastoralism by settler colonialism.

**Historical Mismanagement and Ngarrindjeri Resistance**

The long-term Ngarrindjeri management of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* was overlooked by early colonists (NLPA 2013:67). In order to recognise this ongoing management, early colonists needed to understand the complex nature of the Ngarrindjeri Nation. Regrettably, early colonists described the Ngarrindjeri Nation as ‘savages’ (Angas 1847) and ‘a strange people’ without history, religion, forethought, hope or future (Woods 1879:xxxviii). Furthermore, the Ngarrindjeri Nation was seen by colonists to passively accept the colonisation of their *Yarluwar-Ruwe* and their people (see Jenkin 1979). In reflecting on the colonisation of New South Wales, English and Gay (2005:2) pointed out: ‘This idea of passivity was mirrored by settler inability to understand that Aboriginal people and their social systems had shaped the very structure of the landscape they moved into’. Similarly, Gammage (2011:17) argued:

> It might seem a small jump to think them [landscapes] man-made [sic] as in Europe. In fact the leap was so vast that almost no-one made it. Almost all thought no land in Australia private...To think otherwise required them to see Aborigines as gentry, not shiftless wanderers. That seemed preposterous.

As a result of this colonial mentality, *Yarluwar-Ruwe* was perceived to be a ‘natural’ resource waiting to be claimed, controlled and utilised, despite the existing and ongoing system of ownership and management carried out by the Ngarrindjeri Nation. In reference to the colonisation of Ngarrindjeri *Yarluwar-Ruwe*, Linn (1988:7) accurately observed:
...the land represented different hopes for the British...who came to the area [and] viewed the land in different ways. One group wrote of its scenic nature; the other saw how it could be used in practical ways by settlers.

Furthermore, Linn (1988:13) pointed out, ‘their [colonial] perception of the land as a place for flocks and herds, to be tilled by the farmer and to yield up its fruits, was the spirit behind their explorations and descriptions’. This perception commenced the abuse, misuse and mismanagement of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe.

Prior to this mismanagement, many early colonialists including J.F. Bennett, John Morphett, W.H. Leigh, Alexander Buchanan and Edward Snell described Yarluwar-Ruwe as resembling a beautiful English park, due to the treeless, perennial grassed plains that characterised the area (Gammage 2011:16,41). For example, Charles Sturt (1849:229-30) described one area of Yarluwar-Ruwe as:

...(belts) of scrub on barren or sandy ground, its character is that of an open forest without the slightest undergrowth save grass...In many places the trees are so sparingly, and I had almost said judiciously distributed to reassemble the park lands attached to a gentleman’s residence in England.

These plains were the result of the ongoing management by the Ngarrindjeri Nation, which included the deliberate and controlled use of fire. Gammage (2011:4) argued that such management provided similar resource yield as agriculturally based activities, even in times of drought and flood. As such, some of the first early colonists to occupy Yarluwar-Ruwe documented Ngarrindjeri Old People’s ability to control fire:

...a bush fire broke out between Nairne and Mount Barker; the natives [sic] were very active in subduing the flames, which, but for their assistance, would have destroyed a considerable quantity of crops.

(Sturt 1850)
Historical documents describing the early colonisation of areas including Waltowa Wetland also praise ‘gentlemen’ station owners, who bargained with Ngarrindjeri Old People to confine or cease their management of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* through the use of controlled fire:

In order to induce the natives [sic] to be careful not to burn the grass during the dry season, several gentlemen, stock-holders owning runs around the Lakes, have offered rewards to them to extinguish all bush fires that may occur on their runs...D.McFarlane, Esq. has promised the natives [sic] of the Peninsula (Lake Albert) several blankets and two fat bullocks, as soon as the rainy season sets in, when all danger of bush fires is past. The natives [sic] are now very careful not allowing bush fires to spread, knowing if they do, they will lose their reward. (Sturt 1850)

Ironically, the ease at which pastoralists were able to colonise *Yarluwar-Ruwe* was the result of the long-term and ongoing management they sought to cease. Consequently, the mismanagement of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* began with the arrival of *krinkaris* and the issues they faced following colonisation was due to their disruption of this long-term management (NLPA 2013:2).

The colonisation of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* resulted in the clearing of native vegetation that had provided resources and habitats for all living things including Ngarrindjeri people. Due to the minority of *krinkaris* within *Yarluwar-Ruwe* during early phases of settlement, Ngarrindjeri Old People were employed from the 1840s to assist with the clearing of this native vegetation, as well as harvesting crops, shearing and wool washing (Jenkin 1979:127–128; Kartinyeri and Anderson 2008:19, 97; Linn 1988:122; Sturt 1850; Tindale 1934; N. Gollan pers. comm. 2009). The late Elder, Doreen Kartinyeri (in Kartinyeri and Anderson 2008:7), stated, however, that Ngarrindjeri Old People ‘...didn’t want to cut the trees down because so much had been cleared and so much had been destroyed, but they had to do that work or they wouldn’t get paid or they’d get their rations cut’. Ngarrindjeri Old People were also employed to erect fences that separated and segregated *Yarluwar-Ruwe*, once again threatened with a suspension of rations if they refused to work (Kartinyeri and Anderson 2008:21–2). In an act of resistance, Ngarrindjeri Old
People secretly dismantled fences around Raukkan (Point McLeay) and Teringie, using the wire to dry rabbit skins that were later sold (Kartinyeri and Anderson 2008:10, 22). Despite being employed against their own will, Ngarrindjeri Old People made a significant contribution towards the establishment of pastoral communities that exist in *Yarluwar-Ruwe* today. As such, the pastoral history of *Yarluwar-Ruwe* is very much Ngarrindjeri history (cf. Harrison 2004).

Livestock, exotic pests and weeds were also introduced into *Yarluwar-Ruwe*, which impacted upon the soils, altered sedimentation and further depleted resources and habitats. The loss of native fauna and flora resulted in a loss of Ngarrindjeri *Ngartjis* (Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:13). Despite this, territory specific rights and morals of sharing continued to underpin Ngarrindjeri lifeways. Ngarrindjeri Old People were prepared to share *Yarluwar-Ruwe* and its resources with *krinkaris*, expecting them to share their resources in return (Trevorrow in Hemming and Trevorrow 2005:243–244); however, Ngarrindjeri procurement of sheep as a newly introduced resource was perceived through pastoral eyes as theft. For example, in August 1846 Ngulgoorunger (also known as Pelican) was sent to trial in Adelaide and prosecuted for ‘stealing’ sheep from the northern shores of Lake Albert (Linn 1988:36). In many cases, however, Ngarrindjeri procurement of sheep contributed to growing hostilities between Ngarrindjeri Old People and pastoralists. This hostility combined with the isolated nature of pastoral activities was a recipe for the fear and anxieties that resulted in conflict (Faull 1981:18; Linn 1988:36–37; Rogers and Bain 2016:86; Watson 2002:113–115). In reference to Waltowa Wetland, anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt detailed an account shared with them by Ngarrindjeri Elder Margaret (Pinkie) Mack:

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4 Recent studies suggest major depositional and geochemical changes occurred in the upper sediments of *Yarluwar-Ruwe*, which correlate with increased rates of erosion and sedimentation associated with European colonisation (Murdoch 2009:33). Broader diatom studies from Lake Alexandrina and the Coorong also highlight the impact of European colonisation, with a widespread increase in salinity in the area (Fluin et al. 2009).
Mack said, some Aborigines had killed a sheep on Tatiara Station and when this was discovered, members of the local group were shot and their bodies burnt. While these instances were undated, they nevertheless demonstrate that conditions had deteriorated and that Aborigines were justified, when they were able, in responding aggressively. (Berndt et al. 1993:293)

Whilst this information was recorded in the early 1940s, the date of this event is not known; however, the level of fear and anxiety these hostilities produced is demonstrated in an article by the South Australian Register (Anon. 1846), which details how 'one of the South Australian Company shepherds at a station near Lake Albert, hung [sic] himself, by means of a handkerchief'. Similar instances of conflict also occurred in the region south east of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe in 1848, where pastoralist James Brown allegedly shot Old People for stealing sheep. Brown made a court appearance in Adelaide in 1849, although the charge was dropped for an apparent lack of evidence (Anon. 1849; Smith 1880:62).

For the most part, however, episodes of violence by pastoralists are glossed over in many of the 'official' histories, whereas attempts by Ngarrindjeri Old People to defend their territory specific rights and responsibilities to Yarluwar-Ruwe are represented as unsolicited violence towards unexpecting pastoralists (Faull 1981:17). For example, the South Australian Register reported on the 17th of August 1844:

We understand that the outstations to the eastward are much annoyed by the natives [sic] and the utmost vigilance is unavailing to protect the flocks. It is easy to foresee that, unless some effectual protection is given to the settlers, the often recurring necessity for self-defence will create in them a feeling of hostility towards the natives [sic].
(Anon. 1844:3)

Given the ‘trials’ pastoralists felt they had to endure to establish successful properties in Yarluwar-Ruwe, many believed they were entitled to the Ruwe they had stolen (Linn 1988:120). As Linn (1988:118) described:
There is no doubt that...major pastoralists of the district fought tooth and nail to retain the land they felt they had won from the wilderness. That they were successful in this defence is evidenced by the small number of men retaining ownerships of larger pastoral holdings between 1851 and 1885...

These pastoral properties included Poltalloch Station (est. 1839), Wellington Lodge (est. 1845) and Campbell House (est. c. 1851), which remain prominent pastoral stations within Yarlurwar-Ruwe. As suggested by Burke et al. (2017:154; also see Linn 1988:118), these homesteads could be interpreted as symbols of the persistence of early colonists against the supposed ‘hostilities’ they faced from Yarlurwar-Ruwe and Ngarrindjeri Old People.

Western concepts of ownership that resulted in the surveying, subdividing and selling of Yarlurwar-Ruwe and the eventual establishment of these pastoral properties, ignored the territory specific rights and responsibilities of the Ngarrindjeri Nation that were supposed to be instated by the Letters Patent of 1836 (Berg 2010; Hemming and Rigney 2014; Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:14; NLPA 2013:67; Rigney et al. 2008). The Ngarrindjeri Nation (2006:14) believes the provisions of the Letters Patent could have been used to continue their rights and responsibilities for Yarlurwar-Ruwe in-line with the philosophy of Ruwe/Ruwar and the concept of Yannarumi; unfortunately, this document was ignored. As a result, krinkaris who set out to establish the Province of South Australia in 1836 did not acquire Yarlurwar-Ruwe in an honest and fair manner from the Ngarrindjeri Nation (Berg 2010:xvi). As lawyer for the Ngarrindjeri Nation Shaun Berg (2010:xvii) argued, ‘there is no denying that the land enjoyed and used by Aboriginal people for thousands and thousands of years was appropriated into a new system of land tenure without their consent’. Despite krinkari appropriation of Yarlurwar-Ruwe, Ngarrindjeri Old People wishing to continue caring, sharing and respecting Yarlurwar-Ruwe in-line with their philosophy and informed by a ‘non-exclusive ethic of care’ that invites all to share in caring for Yarlurwar-Ruwe (MacGill 2014), encouraged krinkaris to share the ongoing management of Yarlurwar-Ruwe. As the late
Ngarrindjeri Elder Tom Trevorrow (in Hemming and Trevorrow 2005:243–244) explained:

The Elders and the people said there was enough land: we will share with these newcomers because sharing is one of our strict laws. But unfortunately this culture did not want to share, and terrible uncivilised acts of violence were carried out against the people.

In short, Yarluwar-Ruwe was stolen from the Ngarrindjeri Nation (Ngarrindjeri Nation 2006:14). The ‘stealing’ of sheep by Ngarrindjeri Old People seems minor in comparison.

Consequently, sheep as well as cattle were left to roam around Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe, with the South Australian Company running cattle around the eastern shores of Lake Albert from the early 1840s following the establishment of Gile’s Station—a sheep (and later cattle) station was located at Bonney’s Waterhole\(^5\) on the western margins of Waltowa Wetland (Linn 1988:33, 39; Paton 2010:186; Sims and Muller 2004:7). This waterhole was also used for watering the large numbers of livestock that travelled through Yarluwar-Ruwe following the creation of an overland route between Adelaide and the eastern states in 1844, which travelled around the eastern boundary of Waltowa Wetland and followed the coast along the Kurangk (Linn 1988:31; see Figure 2). Once a ferry was established in 1848 at Wellington, a constant passage of livestock travelled along the overland route, overgrazing native vegetation, stirring up the soils and causing huge sand drifts of formerly stabilised perennial grassed plains and sand hills. By 1851, there was a significant increase\(^6\) in the use of the overland route with traffic to the goldfields, further impacting Yarluwar-Ruwe (Linn 1988:68; Mincham in McCourt and Mincham 1987:7).

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5 Also referred to as Bonney’s Wells or Giles’ Wells, the waterhole was first recorded in 1844 by artist George French Angas (1844, 1847:plate 44; see also Anon. 1868:2; see Figure 2; Linn 1988:33).
6 In the last quarter of 1851, 3688 passengers and 738 vehicles had crossed the ferry at Wellington. In February 1852 alone, 1234 passengers, 1266 horses and bullocks and 164 carriages had crossed, whilst between October and November 3000 passengers, 361 carriages and 3027 tonnes of goods crossed (Linn 1988:68).
In the 1860s the construction of a causeway between Waltowa Wetland and Lake Albert provided a more direct overland route, which in turn contributed to the establishment of the township of Meningie (Wilks 1936:1). For the most part, it appears cattle within this district were free to roam Yarluwar-Ruwe until the 1880s. Subsequently, a letter to the editor of the *South Australian Chronicle* in 1894 deplored the proposed leasing of Waltowa Wetland, stating:

> The fact of the Government declaring the ‘commonage’ of Waltowa Swamp open to applicant for lease in last week’s Gazette has raised considerable consternation in the neighbourhood. The whole township of Meningie will be greatly affected by the loss of the commonage.
> (Vox Populi 1894:22)

Accordingly, the un-leased land around Waltowa Wetland was supposed to benefit small land holders and widows, but larger landowners took advantage of the scheme and ran large numbers of their own stock that significantly depleted existing resources and habitats (Vox Populi 1894:22). Despite these objections, Waltowa Wetland was leased by April 1894 (South-Eastern Land Board 1894:3). By 1900 Tatiara Station had been established on Waltowa Wetland’s northern margins and the violent encounters that occurred some 50 years prior were now ‘under control’ and had—in one form— all but ceased.

**Cultural Memory and Material Traces at Tatiara Station**

Tatiara Station is today a cattle station that covers 8500 acres of *Yarluwar-Ruwe*; however, physical remnants of its history are scattered across the property, including a stable and/or shearing house with aperture features that members of the Ngarrindjeri Nation believe were used to discharge firearms at Ngarrindjeri Old People (Figures 3–5). Here, we discuss the evidence relating these apertures to frontier conflict and how Ngarrindjeri cultural memory has played a role in their association with early hostilities.
Research into the fortification of colonial buildings has advanced over the past several decades and includes the work of both architects and archaeologists (see Burke et al. 2017 for a review), contributing to a limited yet growing body of archaeological literature examining material traces related to frontier conflict (see Barker 2007; Burke et al. 2017; Grguric 2008; Litster and Wallis 2011). Much of the associated literature highlights that the function of many apparent ‘defensive’ features in colonial period buildings is marred by uncertainty, with the purpose being difficult to discern in the absence of archival records, oral history or other signs of use; however, exceptions exist, such as the rare reference to the use of a fortified structure in SA. Nalang Station owner Mr R.W.R. Hunt reminisced in 1946 how ‘there used to be a palisade at Nalang to keep off the wild blacks [sic], who periodically arrived to call away the domestic blacks [sic] assisting in the kitchen’ (Fry 1946:12). Whilst this account is undated, Nalang Station was established c. 1845 and is credited as one of the first stations near the present-day township of Bordertown located in the state’s lower south east.

The stable/shearing house building located on Tatiara Station includes three sets of apertures—two pairs located on the southern wall of the structure facing Waltowa Wetland and one pair located on an eastern wall, which are today found on the interior of the building due to the later addition of a wall on the eastern side (see Figures 3 and 4). These apertures measure 50 cm in height, 10 cm in width and are located at a height of 2 m above the ground. They probably served as ventilation, common in the English ‘Bank Barn’ design, where installation would mitigate heat accumulated from grain storage (Bell 1997; Grguric 2008:71); however, the height of the apertures, rough interior of the building and iron horse tie rings located on the southern wall below these features indicate this building functioned as a stable or a shearing shed (P. Bell pers. comm. 2018), which is consistent with historically known pastoral activities for the area.
Figure 3 Stable/shearing shed, (a) south wall and (b) east wall, 2018 (Photographs by Kelly Wiltshire).
More broadly, Grguric (2008) examined pastoral structures built in the 1840s and 1850s in SA, where he argued that similar apertures on one stone coach house located at O’Halloran Hill were used as defensive features, intended to discharge firearms, otherwise known as loopholes. Comparatively, these features appear superficially thinner than the Waltowa Wetland examples. The O’Halloran Hill examples are also located at a lower position on the building than those at Waltowa Wetland; however, the height of the Waltowa Wetland examples is consistent with known loophole features at Barrow Creek Telegraph Station in the Northern Territory. The Barrow Creek examples are smaller, square features with bevelled edges to increase the potential field of fire. Despite this, notorious Northern Territory police officer William Willshire (1891:21–3) believed the height of these features rendered them practically useless. On the other hand, the height of both the Waltowa Wetland and Barrow Creek examples may have provided a better vantage point to see anyone approaching these respective locations, with a prop or step required to use these features effectively. The position of the Waltowa Wetland examples, both

Figure 4 (a) Exterior and (b) interior close up of apertures on south wall, 2018 (Photographs by Kelly Wiltshire).
within the structure and in the landscape, may have also enabled surveillance of the movement of Ngarrindjeri Old People and their use of Waltowa Wetland (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5** Site plan of buildings at Tatiara Station in relation to Waltowa Wetland. Apertures found in the stable/shearing shed (Source: Karina Pelling and CartoGIS CAP ANU).
Whilst these apertures certainly had the potential to be used to discharge firearms, their location on one of the station's outbuildings and not on the main house suggests a non-defensive function (cf. Burke et al. 2017:159). Furthermore, given the building is constructed from locally sourced limestone, with a corrugated iron roof and a minimal use of bricks—features unpopular around the mid-19th century due to their cost—it is probable this building was constructed in the latter half of the 19th century (Bell 2001). The addition of cement features around windows and doorways also place the construction of these buildings to the late 19th century (Bell pers. comm. 2018). Whilst the construction of this building appears contemporary with the known date Tatiara Station was established, it falls outside the period when violent encounters were known to occur within the region. In fact, by the 1850s Linn (1988:37) suggests ‘even though stealing [of sheep] was rife...hostility between blacks and whites simmered’. In other words, the fear and anxieties underpinning early encounters between Ngarrindjeri Old People and pastoralists, which may have resulted in the fortification of this structure, had apparently subdued by the time it was constructed. This observation also seems to be supported by historical documents from the region, where accounts of conflict between Ngarrindjeri Old People and pastoralists disappear from the literature after 1850; however, the previously mentioned account by Ngarrindjeri Elder Margaret (Pinkie) Mack (in Berndt et al. 1993:293) describing Ngarrindjeri Old People being shot, killed and their bodies burnt in response to stealing a sheep from Tatiara Station—which was established c. 1900—challenges this understanding. In considering this account, we suggest two possible hypotheses; (1) It is possible Mack was referring to an event that occurred at the current location of Tatiara Station, but not necessarily the period following its establishment; and (2) Ngarrindjeri Old People were still enduring violent encounters with pastoralists when Tatiara Station was established.
Despite the uncertainties regarding the potential use of these apertures, Margaret (Pinkie) Mack’s account is but one example of cultural memory associated with these violent encounters; memories that have been passed down through the generations and shape the way the Ngarrindjeri Nation interpret these apertures. Given these features had the potential to discharge firearms coupled with Ngarrindjeri memories of frontier violence, interpretation of these features as evidence for frontier conflict has endured since this structure was recorded during archaeological investigations just under a decade ago (see Wiltshire 2010, 2017). In other words, these features have become a reference point that physically anchor cultural memories of frontier violence to Waltowa Wetland (Eyerman 2001; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004; Novak 2006; Trigg 2009). In doing so, evidence to suggest this building was not purposely fortified nor its features used to discharge firearms does not make their ability to provide such a reference point to these violent encounters any less meaningful. Similarly, Burke et al. (2017) describe how the story of fortification surrounding the Cambridge Downs homestead in north Queensland has been perpetuated in the present. In doing so, they contend:

The fact that there are stories about the homestead being fortified is perhaps of greater relevance to an understanding of frontier conflict than the physical structure itself [and] trying to determine whether or not such accounts are ‘true’ is...perhaps, in the end, not all that useful.
(Burke et al. 2017:166, 168)

Consequently, the interpretation of the Waltowa Wetland structure as fortified might not accurately inform us on its functional history, but rather shed light on how the complexity of frontier encounters between the Ngarrindjeri Nation and pastoralists plays out today. For example, Wiltshire (2017:120) described the following scene during her field work at Tatiara Station:
Barry is not like other station owners and his easy going nature puts me at ease...During one of his visits Barry asks if we are finding anything of interest, in which I replied: “Yes, we are finding a lot of really interesting artefacts”. “I always thought there was stuff out here”, Barry replies; “I just assumed [Ngarrindjeri] people didn’t know it was here or they weren’t interested”. Later in the day I relay this conversation to Uncle Tom, who gives me a knowing grin and replies: “Well, if we had asked to take a look around, we would have probably been met with a gun...” And in that moment this long history of hostility comes to the surface, influencing Uncle Tom’s reaction to Barry’s seemingly innocent comment; a reaction that is imbued with caution. Previous hostilities experienced by Uncle Tom...form part of this long history of hostility and influence his ongoing interactions with most station owners.

Such contemporary engagements are informed by Ngarrindjeri cultural memory as well as personal experiences of violence and hostility; memories and experiences that intersect with the material traces at Waltowa Wetland. These observations are echoed by Natalie Harkin (2014:5), who in paraphrasing the work of Jackie Huggins, states ‘Indigenous narrative memory held in stories and life experience is an organic process and a collective activity; like a map of possibilities of existence upon which people can draw to make sense of their lives’. Thus, at Waltowa Wetland these intangible memories and experiences converge with the tangible, or as Trigg (2009) articulated, these features become a ‘testimony’ to this often-invisible history. In challenging these silences, the interpretation of these apertures as evidence for frontier conflict becomes a modern form of Ngarrindjeri resistance; resisting colonial narratives that dominate both the historical and physical spaces of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe. In short, the interpretation of these features becomes less concerned with historical accuracy, instead focusing on what they represent to Ngarrindjeri today about early cultural encounters.
Conclusions

This paper explored early interaction between the Ngarrindjeri Nation and pastoralists at Waltowa Wetland. In an attempt to move beyond the colonial discourses and pastoral histories that dominate the historical and physical spaces of Yarluwar-Ruwe, we presented a detailed account of Ngarrindjeri management of Yarluwar-Ruwe in order to provide a wider philosophical and historical lens through which to examine early encounters at Waltowa Wetland. As such, the krinkari colonisation of Yarluwar-Ruwe that resulted in the historical mismanagement described above not only dispossessed the Ngarrindjeri Nation, but was also in stark contrast to the philosophy of Ruwe/Ruwar and the concept of Yannarumi that informs its ongoing management. These invisible systems of ownership and management provided a foundation for hostilities to grow on both sides, resulting in violent encounters.

With the exception of the Maria incident, previous attempts to describe frontier conflict between the Ngarrindjeri Nation and pastoralists in Yarluwar-Ruwe have taken a regional approach outlining a general pattern of anxiety, fear, violence, dispossession and resistance; however, we have reason to believe violent encounters were more complex and sustained. In challenging this, we explored frontier encounters with reference to Waltowa Wetland, where efforts to maintain control of the wetland’s important resources set the scene for early hostilities between Ngarrindjeri Old People and pastoralists. Whilst we presented a place-based focus, including a consideration of the cultural memory attached to the wetland, a detailed history of early culture contact is marred by the fact that many of the accounts included in this paper relate to areas adjacent to Waltowa Wetland, not to the wetland itself nor the overland route that relied on its resources; not least because many historical accounts dismiss the importance of this area and simply refer to it as a ‘swamp’.
Therefore, we suggest that a comprehensive study of archival records, oral histories and material traces relating to the overland stock route be undertaken. Such research would complement other investigations of a similar nature occurring elsewhere in SA (see Burke et al. 2016 for Central Murray), contributing to a more nuanced understanding of Aboriginal–European relations in the early years of SA.

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‘THE MISSIONARY FACTOR’: FRONTIER INTERACTION ON COOPER CREEK, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, IN THE 1860s

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Abstract

The German Moravian and Lutheran efforts to establish missions at Lakes Kopperamanna and Killalpaninna in the far north of South Australia in the 1860s during a period of escalating conflict between pastoral settlers and Aboriginal Traditional Owners provides a classic case study of frontier interaction. It highlights particularly the importance and effect of missionary presence as a key factor in the survival of many Aboriginal groups throughout Australia, against the relentless impacts of colonisation. This paper describes and interprets the key events prior to, during and after the missionaries’ arrival at Cooper Creek, and the role they played in the clash of competing cultural, economic and world views of European pastoral settlement and the Dieri occupants of the contested land. Drawing on the author’s earlier research, this paper adds further detail to later works by other researchers that have described in part the events that took place in the Cooper Creek region in the 1860s. The available historical records indicate that Sir Thomas Elder, one of the leading colonial figures, in concert with his northern station managers, was advocating extreme measures to remove the ‘Aboriginal threat’ to his expanding pastoral enterprise. Had the missionaries not arrived in the district, forcing greater government engagement and providing a refuge, the Dieri may well have suffered similar decimation like other adjacent Aboriginal groups. The Lutheran missionary efforts at Killalpaninna and other locations, despite their often attributed negative impacts on Aboriginal cultural foundations, provided the means for the adaptation and survival of many language groups. In translating Aboriginal languages into written form they provided by far their most lasting legacy facilitating, in part, today’s cultural revival.
Introduction

In 1970, whilst translating early records of the Hermannsburg Mission Society in South Africa, I discovered that this same organisation had sent missionaries to South Australia (SA) in 1866. My interest was aroused as to how these stoic, pious Lutherans, who had spread Christianity to the warlike Zulu of South Africa, would fare with the vastly different cultures of Australian Aboriginal peoples. On further enquiry I discovered that copious records, letters and diaries from their endeavours in the far north of SA and Central Australia were held in an old villa in North Adelaide, which housed the original Lutheran Archives. This was a treasure trove of primary material, all written in old German Gothic script that had, to that time, never been subject to any major research. I was fortunate that my mother had taught me to read this old script and I became immersed in the unfolding story of one of the epic pioneering ventures on the expanding frontier of the South Australian colony.

The German missionaries were meticulous recorders providing a firsthand account of frontier interaction as the European settlement took over Dieri traditional lands. Unknowingly, they arrived in the middle of an escalating conflict between the pastoralists and local Aboriginal people, the Dieri, over the diminishing water and rangeland resources. Parts of this story have been referred to in various accounts, starting with George Farwell’s classic 1950 Land of Mirage, and, more recently, Foster and Nettelbeck (2012) (see also Bonython 1971; Clyne 1987; Mattingley and Hampton 1988; Schmiechen 1971, 2004; Stevens 1994). This paper, using original sources and the missionaries’ direct accounts, fills in gaps in this story and reveals some of the political, media, pastoral and religious manipulations of the main proponents in the ensuing events, including the role of Sir Thomas Elder, one of SA’s leading benefactors.
Historical Background

Much of Australia’s early exploratory efforts were driven by settlers and colonial entrepreneurs seeking new lands and pastures to further their economic interests. The first explorations into the Lake Eyre/Cooper Creek region (Figure 1) commenced in 1845, with Charles Sturt’s Central Australian Expedition (Sturt 1849). Local and overseas interest was aroused by the ill-fated ‘Victorian Exploring Expedition’ led by Robert O’Hara Burke and William John Wills, who departed Melbourne in 1860 in a race to be the first to cross Australia from south to north. Notable mainly for the deaths of Burke and Wills, and the miraculous survival of King on the banks of Cooper Creek, this tragic venture stimulated a spate of rescue expeditions. Experienced explorers and bushmen including Howitt, Walker, Landsborough and McKinlay led searches that opened up vast tracts of inland Australia. Their reports paved the way for a surge of settlers bringing hoofed animals, metal tools, guns and desirable items, such as flour, sugar, tobacco and alcohol, to the interior (Reynolds 1972:40). This added a new dimension to the country that was to prove largely detrimental to the original inhabitants and their ways of life. Howitt (as cited in Hankel 2010:53) commented:

The return of all the search parties terminated the episode of the Burke and Wills Expedition: the eastern half of the continent had been crossed and recrossed. It was no longer considered an unknown and desert tract, but a pastoral region of the greatest possibilities, to be occupied by adventurous pastoral pioneers.

In these earliest stages of settler-Aboriginal interaction, conflict and violent clashes were common occurrences on the evolving frontier (Bonython 1971; Davidson et al. 2004; Farwell 1983; Foster and Nettelbeck 2012; Foster et al. 2001; Gibbs 1959, 2013; Hercus 1990; Jones and Sutton 1986; Mattingley and Hampton 1988; Reynolds 1972, 1981; Roberts 1978; Schmiechen 1971, 2004; Stevens 1994). This proved to be the case in the far north of South Australia in the 1860s, as the first pastoral runs were established by Thomas Elder, following
Howitt’s initial exploration. The Dieri actively resisted the settlers’ invasion and many of the early squatters had to fight for the possession of their runs, with bloodshed on both sides (Farwell 1983:62).

Figure 1 Location Map of Lake Eyre/Cooper Creek Region showing Aboriginal Language Groups. Source: Aiston and Horne (1924).
The Dieri

The area around Lake Hope and Cooper Creek was occupied by the Dieri with four neighbouring tribes—Yandrawontha (Yandruwantha), Yarrawaurka (Yawarawarka), Ngamini and Wongkaaooroo (Wan gkangurru)—sharing similar languages and festivals (Gason 1879:257). A complex linguistic network was further linked by comparable social structures with a matrilineal moiety system, and similar but not identical kinship systems. Trade and exchange, as well as mythological and ritual associations, also connected different language groups across the region (Hercus 1990:151). The Dieri were fiercely independent people who had successfully adapted to the harsh and unpredictable environment. Early estimates placed their numbers at around 1030 to 3000 people, incorporating a number of distinct clan groups (Gason 1879; Howitt 1878; Jones and Sutton 1986). Similar to other desert peoples, the Dieri were semi-nomadic, moving in well-defined estates. They readily adjusted to the ‘boom and bust’ cycles, spreading out when rain filled the clay pans and ephemeral lakes provided plentiful game and native foods, and withdrawing to permanent waterholes in Cooper Creek in times of drought (Jones and Sutton 1986:22).

The explorer A.W. Howitt (1904:247), on his two exploratory journeys across the region in 1861–62, was amongst the first Europeans to encounter the Dieri (Figure 2). He commented on how they perceived the impending intrusion, recounting that Jalina, head of the Kunara totem, expressed his concern about the increasing number of ‘white men’ coming to their lands and asked Howitt to tell them that they should:

> Sit down on the one side of Pando (Lake Hope), and the Kana (people) would sit down on the other so that they would not be likely to quarrel.

This early attempt at a negotiated approach to settlement was a rarity in the frontier colonial landscape. Howitt reminisced that as part of Jalina’s request, ‘I promised to attend to if I saw the whitefellow on my way to Adelaide’ (Hankel 2010:53). Yet little came of this promise and it was completely ignored by the
subsequent actions of the pastoralists who followed to the lands of the Dieri. Police Trooper Samuel Gason (1879:258), the first police presence in the area, prophetically noted that occupying the Dieri territory would not be a smooth path:

The tribe is numerous, and if they knew (and it is feared they will eventually learn) their own power, the present white inhabitants could not keep them down, or for one day retain their possessions.

Figure 2 Explorer Howitt meeting with Dieri at Cooper Creek—early postcard. Source Lutheran Archive.

Conflicting World Views and Economic Imperatives

Early Aboriginal curiosity and tolerance of the newcomers soon changed as their ongoing presence and detrimental impacts on traditional life became increasingly apparent. Curr (1886–1887:104), an astute observer of the early colonial frontier, accurately summed up the ensuing interaction:

In the first place the meeting of the Aboriginal tribe of Australia and the White pioneer, results as a rule in war, which lasts from six months to ten years, accordingly to the nature of the country, the amount of settlement which takes place in a neighbourhood, and the productivities of the individuals concerned. When several squatters settle in proximity, and the country they occupy is easy of access and without fastness to which Blacks can retreat, the period of warfare is usually short and the bloodshed not excessive. On the other hand, in districts which are not easily traversed on horseback, in which the Whites are few in numbers and food is procurable by the Blacks in fastness, the term is usually prolonged and the slaughter more considerable.
The European economic system, based on stock grazing, placed serious stresses on Aboriginal ways of life, where survival depended on a fine balance with the environment. The deep spiritual connection to land which was apportioned amongst food gathering groups on a kinship and spiritual, as much as an economic basis, was a cornerstone of Aboriginal nations (Berndt and Berndt 1951:33). The seeming simplicity of the Dieri traditional material culture belied the complexity of its religious and social depth, and remained largely invisible to the Europeans who came into early contact with them (Jones and Sutton 1986:23). Their vastly different world views formed the basis of many misunderstandings, resistance and increasing clashes over the prime resources each group needed to sustain themselves.

Unlike in the foundation convict colonies on the eastern seaboard a more benevolent approach to race relations was enshrined in the Proclamation of South Australia, though made little practical difference to the outcomes of colonisation. Established as the only Australian free colony in 1836, SA was founded on strongly humanitarian principles with Aboriginal people placed under the protection of the rule of law as British subjects (Hemmings et al. 2008; Foster and Nettelbeck 2012:9). Governor Hindmarsh was given clear instructions by the British Colonial Office that Aboriginal rights were to be protected (Gibbs 1959:40). In practice this approach was never seriously implemented and most forms of protection were focused on the needs of the settlers pushing their economic advancement ever northwards, to the detriment of any Aboriginal groups in the way (Gale 1960:21; Gibbs 2013:408). Pearson (2015:24) put this even more forcefully:

I have always understood that protection worked in concert with frontier dispossession, and facilitated it.
Pastoral Expansion and Simmering Conflict

From the 1840s the expansion of the white settlement away from the colonial capital of Adelaide was creating increasing resistance by Aboriginal groups in the outlying districts. The settlers saw themselves as owners of the lands they took up and not as dispossessing the original inhabitants: increasingly they demanded government action to protect their rights and interests (Gibbs 2013:408). The police commissioners of the day consistently had to deal with ‘thefts by natives in the country’ and a general order was issued in 1844 by Finniss sanctioning the use of arms where police had a warrant of arrest. This was to have ongoing implications for years to come (Clyne 1987:93). In the Flinders Ranges the continual theft of sheep forced the government to establish regular food depots. Henry Minchin, Sub-protector of Aborigines in Pt Augusta (CSO1 1853:1253 and 1853) was dispatched with two constables to Mt Brown with the aim:

...to induce the wild natives from the hills to live at his station, and by keeping them some time in contact with himself and the police, so far to civilise them as to render them not only harmless but useful to the settlers.

The Burke and Wills expedition and subsequent relief efforts in 1860 aroused settler interest in the Cooper Creek region. In the same year, Thomas Elder established two pastoral runs, Lake Hope Station, managed by H. Dean, and Manuwaulkaninna, near Lake Gregory, controlled by B. Hack (Farwell 1983:140). Elder was a leading businessman, pastoralist and member of the SA Legislative Council and was knighted in 1878 for his services to the colony. His efforts to establish a pastoral economy around Lake Hope and the surrounding region soon aroused the anger of the Dieri, whose elders had already indicated their concerns to the explorer Howitt, and sought some accommodation with the settlers’ encroachment.

Adding fuel to the ensuing conflict Lakes Kopperamanna, Killalpaninna and Perigundi were of particular importance to the Dieri and their neighbouring groups, not only because they generally contained good water, a scarce

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1 See references for acronym details.
commodity at the best of times, but also for their ceremonial and traditional significance (Bonython 1971:5; Farwell 1983:150; McBryde 2004; Proeve and Proeve 1952:66; Stevens 1994:25—see also the Petition to CSO by Walder March 1867). It had already become apparent in the outer areas of the colonial settlements that pastoralism presented a massive challenge to Aboriginal society, altering ecologies and disrupting most aspects of traditional life (Reynolds 1981:130). Equally it was commonly accepted that Aboriginal people and the grazing of animals didn’t mix, and there was often a concerted effort by pastoralists to drive Aboriginal people away from key water sources (Reynolds 1981:129). This became even more acute in periods of drought, when the settlers’ herds decreased the native game and competed for diminishing water sources. Reynolds (1972:1) described the essence of frontier interaction as:

...good intentions and benevolent policies notwithstanding, the very act of settlement implied that whenever the Aborigines confronted the encroaching newcomer they would be crushed.

**Frontier War**

The many violent clashes between settlers and Aboriginal people that permeated the expanding pastoral frontiers throughout Australia were never seen as war in the traditional European sense, with clearly defined battle lines such as took place with the Zulus in South Africa, or the Native Americans in the United States. The skirmishes that took place in the Australian rangelands tended to be localised and more in the form of ‘hit and run’ guerilla tactics. Foster et al. (2001:8) described the pattern of violence as:

The undeclared war of the Australian frontier produced a culture of secrecy, ensuring that much of what happened would be clothed in euphemisms, and the knowledge transmitted with all the accuracy of a Chinese whisper.
The idea of dealing with troublesome Aboriginal people in a warlike manner, even if undeclared, certainly permeated colonial thinking and actions. When Police Commissioner Warburton in 1863 decided to increase police resources in the remote regions and issue his men with breech loading carbines, J. Walker, Protector of Aborigines, expressed his concerns about such ‘warlike preparations’, stating that Aboriginal people were British subjects and should be treated equally under the law. Warburton responded that he would rescind his ‘warlike preparations’ if Walker’s appeasement of the Aboriginal people proved successful (Foster and Nettelbeck 2012:112). Although the more sparsely occupied SA frontier did not have the extent of warfare experienced in the other colonies (Gibbs 2013:410), the ensuing skirmishes between the Dieri and Elder’s men had all the elements of frontier war.

The extended drought in the late 1860s severely impacted the Dieri’s normal hunter-gatherer lifestyle, with game ever more scarce and the last remaining waterholes now critical for both the Dieri and the settlers’ stock:

The natives themselves are wandering around about famished and have been driven by sheer starvation to kill settlers’ cattle. This, of course, been resisted, and an alternative of starvation or violence alone remained.

(Advertiser, 13 December 1865)

Reflecting the sentiments of the proclaimed edicts and showing some understanding of the Aboriginal links to land, the Advertiser (13 December 1865) went further to take a more humanitarian view on the problems in the north:

The natives have thus no refuge from direct want. Even if there were better country within their reach they could not safely avail themselves of it, for the boundaries of tribal territories are pretty sharply defined, and all trespass sternly and vigorously resisted. Starvation seems the doom of the poor creatures unless we do something to avert it. It is a call of positive duty as well as humanity.
We call the aborigines British subjects and therefore cannot consistently leave them to perish of want. We must not forget that we have brought upon them this suffering and starvation. It is true we could not avert the drought, but we brought the country into the state that made the drought so disastrous.

At Lake Hope the situation left little room for such fine sentiments and, responding to the increasing spearing of cattle, Dean retaliated by burning three Dieri camps:

To such an extent had the native plunderings gone, that it had become a question whether the settlers should drive the blacks away or the whether the blacks should drive away the settlers. Feeling compelled to defend the property entrusted to his care Mr Dean had burnt down three of the aboriginal camps; after which four men followed the aboriginals up the country until the neighborhood of Lake Hope appeared to be pretty well cleared of them. (Express, 29 December 1865)

These incidents escalated when Dean began moving stock to Lake Perigundi, a prime waterhole and important ceremonial site. The Dieri were incensed at this ongoing usurping of their hunting grounds without barter or negotiation. They saw Dean’s latest move as an attempt to seize their last water, and determined to make a stand.

The confrontation that followed, with fatal consequences, was extensively reported in the press of the day. Elder also provided firsthand information in Parliament as a member of the Legislative Council. In the process of taking over the area around Lake Perigundi, Dean and eight of his men were ambushed at night, with several speared and seriously injured and at least one Aboriginal reported killed (Express, December 1865). The Express and Advertiser sided strongly with the settlers, and gave extensive accounts drawn on information provided directly by Elder. The rival Register and Observer expressed a much more conciliatory view. The Register (13 December 1865) responding in part to the ‘affray in the neighbourhood of Lake Hope’ wrote:
...that we have not unnecessarily used our strength against the weakness of the blacks, that while we have appropriated their lands and are making a better use of them than they could have done we are at the same time not unmindful of their interests, we may point to recent acts of the Government in reply to the challenge. We want to act rightly towards them, and to give them compensation for that of which our presence has deprived them.

The Register and Observer’s (30 December 1865) reporting of the clash at Lake Perigundi was questioned by the Express on the same day as inaccurate and not properly acknowledged:

...the Register and Observer produced a garbled version of our article, disguised so as to avoid the necessity of acknowledgement, but blundered so as to lead to considerable misunderstanding.

The Express (30 December 1865) took particular umbrage at the accusation that:

Mr Dean and his party had committed an aggressive and wanton attack upon the aboriginals in the Far North, whereas the measures they adopted were dictated by absolute necessity, and were of the most purely self-defensive character.

This may well have been the case in the attack that ensued at Lake Perigundi, but certainly all the incidents leading up to this clash had been largely due to Dean’s earlier forcible methods which Farwell (1983:141) described thus:

...Dean resorted to force, determined—in the words of one historian—“to establish the authority of the white man.” This authority virtually took the form of military action, a declaration of war.

The government now became concerned that the situation in the area appeared to be getting out of hand and determined it was time to implement some protection; not so much for the rights of the Aboriginal people, who had just grounds for their actions, but rather for the settlers and Elder’s interests (Schmiechen 1971:34). In 1865 a request to parliament for more police protection in the region had been dismissed as unnecessary. The Police Commissioner was aware of the settlers concerns with
Aboriginal people killing cattle but did not think the remedy lay in shooting ‘the plunderers’, and felt the settlers should be taking more care to alleviate the situation. Only if this was ineffective would he recommend aid be given by the government (SAPP 1865:No. 134).

Letters to Elder from his manager and men on the frontline had a ready solution to resolve the issue with the Dieri. George Reynolds wrote:

Harry thinks you should come as soon as you can. We shall not be able to settle the country without more hands and he wants you to send Truman, and get some more good men for hire; also some Terry and Enfield cartridges—the Terries 30—core and the Enfields, the Government arm.

Dean made a similar plea:

We must have more men and more arms to defend our position and our property, otherwise the country will have to be abandoned by the settlers.

(Advertiser, 6 January 1866)

The Express (29 December 1965) also noted that Elder:

...with his accustomed praiseworthy promptitude, has determined to dispatch Mr. Hack and a party to the scene of the conflict.

It was not clear if the government’s subsequent intervention into Dean’s campaign was prompted by disagreement with his methods of shooting the so-called ‘plunderers’ or if it felt his precautions and efforts had been insufficient under the circumstances. The government’s actions were possibly hastened by a letter to the Chief Secretary from Elder requesting the loan of some rifles and revolvers for the use of his overseers at Lake Hope. Interestingly, this letter has disappeared from the official archives along with the scant reference in police reports of the earlier clashes prior to Lake Perigundi (Foster and Nettelbeck 2012:116; Schmiechen 1971:37). Although the government had often turned a blind eye to the treatment of the Aboriginal people on the frontier as a concession to the settlers’
interests, it could not sanction the supply of arms for a private war. The Chief Secretary's reply to Elder was adamant on this point:

The Government considers they would not be justified in supplying arms and ammunition for use against the natives to persons not directly responsible to the Executive. They have, however, taken prompt measures for ensuring the safety of the settlers at Lake Hope.

(CSO January 1866)

A police party under Inspector Roe, accompanied by the Protector of Aborigines, was sent to the area to investigate the situation and restore order (SAGG:720; Walker 1866). This show of force had the desired effect of temporarily curbing the Aboriginal people's active resistance to the intrusions of the settlers. Most of the Dieri had been cleared off the properties owned by Elder, and his managers saw their position as secured from any further threats. It seems that the Dieri had quickly discovered the futility of matching spears against guns. For the time being, the majority of Aboriginal people in the area had dispersed to avoid the possibility of a confrontation with the police troopers sent to punish those who had participated in the ambush at Lake Perigundi.

The Missionary Factor

In the founding years of the colony, the Lutherans played a major part in missionary activity amongst the local Kaurna inhabitants of the Adelaide plains. Along with financing the first wave of German immigrants to the colony, George Fife Angas supported Pastor Kavel, the leader of this band of Lutheran dissidents, in his desire to involve the Dresden Mission Society in working with the Kaurna. In 1838 C.W. Schürmann and C.A. Teichelmann arrived to start their missionary work (Proeve and Proeve 1952:14). Eduard Meyer followed to work with the Ramindjeri at Encounter Bay and ration stations along with government schools were established at Pirltawardli (in Adelaide), Encounter Bay and Port Lincoln. Schürmann was appointed as Deputy Protector of Aborigines (Proeve and Proeve 1952:19) and sent to Port Lincoln at the behest of the Governor where he found himself witnessing a bitter conflict, as the local Parnkalla
(Barngarla) people fiercely resisted the settlers and were subject to violent retribution (Clyne 1987:79; Foster and Nettelbeck 2012:44–49; Mattingley and Hampton 1988:41; Schürmann 1987). By the 1850s the schools had closed, all the mission stations failed and the Lutheran missionary effort at the local level was at an end (Proeve and Proeve 1952:19).

In 1862, after a brief hiatus, the urgings of J. Meischel, an ex-Leipzig Missionary in India now living in Adelaide, renewed interest in re-establishing a mission in northern SA (Proeve and Proeve 1952:24–25). It would appear that the circumstances connected to the search for the Burke and Wills expedition turned the Lutherans’ thoughts to the Cooper Creek/Lake Hope region (Proeve and Proeve 1952:31). Negotiations were undertaken with the Hermannsburg Missionary Society, founded by the charismatic Pastor Louis Harms in 1849 and, after some initial concerns, he agreed in 1865 to partner a new missionary effort on the colony’s northern frontier. In a letter to the South Australian Lutheran Synods he set out some of the premises that underpinned the Hermannsburg philosophy (Proeve and Proeve 1952:36):

Furthermore I should like to know whether the conditions over there favour the sending of mission-colonists, partly farmers and partly tradesmen, whose work would benefit the mission, and perhaps soon contribute towards making the station self supporting; and the natives could by these means be profitably employed.

The presence of a strong German emigrant community in the Barossa Valley provided the local support for the ensuing Hermannsburg missionary efforts to Cooper Creek at Lakes Kopperamanna and Killalpaninna.
At the same time the Moravian Brethren from Herrenhut in Saxony, a different Protestant movement to the Lutherans, were also attracted to the Cooper Creek region by news of the Burke and Wills expedition. Already engaged in missionary activities in Victoria in 1862, the Moravians determined they would extend their activities northward to:

...bring the blessings of the Gospel to the still numerous tribes of newly discovered Burke-Land and Albert-Land, before the white settlers arrive with their diseases and brandy.
(Proeve and Proeve 1952:62)

Both missionary groups provided a new factor in the evolving frontier interaction between the settlers and the Aboriginal inhabitants. In many cases the presence of missions offered Aboriginal people an additional alternative in their reactions to the settler intrusion. This becomes especially relevant when considering the impact of the European settlement on traditional ways of life, and illustrates how Aboriginal people exploited the missions to alleviate pressures on their traditional existence.

These pressures had already manifested themselves with Elder and Dean’s efforts to establish their pastoral presence at Lake Hope. Just prior to the first missionaries’ arrival the impact of the drought increased the already hostile reactions of the Dieri. Dean and Hack’s actions precipitated a series of violent altercations that may well have had disastrous consequences for the future survival of the Dieri had it not been for the fortuitous intervention of German missionaries.

Establishing the Missions

On 9 October 1866 the Hermannsburg missionaries, E. Homann and J.F. Gössling accompanied by lay-helper H.H. Vogelsang, fresh from Germany, and local Brother J.E. Jacob, set out with their goods and chattels from Tanunda on a three month journey into the interior (Figure 3) (Proeve and Proeve 1952:53). At the time of their arrival at Lake Hope, the interaction between the settlers and Aboriginal people following the altercations at Lake Perigundi, was in a state of simmering hostility (Schmiechen 1971:37). Lake Hope was seen as an unsuitable location to establish the mission, given a lack of Aboriginal people in the immediate area, and the impact of Elder’s cattle enterprise. The
Moravians, who had arrived earlier, selected Lake Kopperamanna (60 km to the south west). The Hermannsburg missionaries followed suit and decided on Lake Killalpaninna, c. 15 km to the west of Lake Kopperamanna (Proeve and Proeve 1952:68).

![Hermannsburg Missionaries setting out from Tanunda for Cooper Creek 1866. Source: Lutheran Archive.](image)

**Figure 3** Hermannsburg Missionaries setting out from Tanunda for Cooper Creek 1866. Source: Lutheran Archive.

Apart from the reportedly large numbers of Aboriginal people around Lake Killalpaninna, the Hermannsburg missionaries saw several other distinct advantages in this site for a mission. Gössling, in a letter from Manuwaulkaninna, had expressed the view that two such different enterprises as a mission and a cattle station needed their own areas if they were not to hamper each other. This made Killalpaninna a good site because it was well removed from the nearest cattle stations (KMZ 25 February 1867). Even more important to the missionaries was the fact that there were no other Europeans in the immediate vicinity (KMZ 21 January 1867).
The missionaries had not looked kindly on the settlers’ actions in the area and it appeared that the Hermannsburg missionaries’ fears about the evils of European colonisation among Aboriginal peoples had been well founded. In one letter Gössling (HM December 1866) was most outspoken on this point:

Christianity already had to make good two misdeeds, one being the fact that Europeans were destroying these people with their sins and the other that a mission had not been established earlier.

In the first days of the Killalpaninna mission, relations were tentative on both sides. Aboriginal people soon showed a desire for European food and goods, particularly tobacco. The missionaries did not hesitate to take advantage of this by giving ‘hand outs’ in return for services. This pattern was to become well established as the mission developed. In many cases this system of rewards became the main inducement for Aboriginal cooperation and Homann (KMZ March 1867) wrote how the Aboriginal people had helped in building the station in return for bread, tea and tobacco. However, a serious misunderstanding arose almost immediately when, as was customary among the tribes in that region, Aboriginal men offered women to the missionaries as a gesture of friendship. This custom was widespread and common to many Aboriginal groups throughout Australia, forming an important part of traditional protocols to welcome and establish peaceful interchange (Reynolds 1981:57). The missionaries, unlike many settlers, reacted with extraordinary hostility. They looked on the custom as further proof of the Aboriginal peoples’ sinful, animalistic state and drove the hospitable men away with whips (HM April 1867). Gössling (KMZ April 1867) reported that this led to much noise in the Aboriginal camp and the tribesmen became very threatening. There is little doubt that this outright affront to the Aboriginal peoples’ traditional ways led to increased feelings of hostility and placed the missionaries at serious risk.
Forced Withdrawal

Not long after this incident an even greater threat to the Moravian and Lutheran missions was posed by a large corroboree at Lake Perigundi, attended by Aboriginal from all parts of northeast SA. Tribes from hundreds of miles away began to congregate at Lakes Perigundi and Kopperamanna to attend one of the periodic festivals held at these locations. On this occasion, the gathering of the tribes was to have a more sinister purpose than just conducting the traditional ceremonies: ‘the Aborigines intended to kill all the whites and those blacks who worked for them’ (Gössling in KMZ March 1867). The earlier clashes with the settlers, especially Dean and Hack, had not been forgotten and the adverse pressures of the European economy on the Aboriginal way of life further fed growing resentment towards the white intruders. Led by the Perigundians, the tribesmen decided to renew hostilities, driven by the above-stated intentions. The missionaries had been informed that one of the main purposes for this corroboree was to organise the death of all whites. Gössling (KMZ April 1867) took these events very lightly:

We have been told that the blacks around here like us but others at Perigundi would lead the massacre. However, threatening and doing are two different things. The blacks are as cowardly as rabbits.

He was soon forced to revise his opinion.

Despite the missionaries’ hopes of being spared from the Aboriginal peoples’ anger, it was apparent that the missions were to be the first subjects of the gathering tribes’ hostility. As yet Aboriginal people could see little difference between the motives of missionaries versus those of settlers. The fact that the missions occupied places which were important trade and ceremonial centres would have only aggravated the situation. Initially the Aboriginal peoples’ renewed outbreak of hostilities was directed against the missionaries. This was prompted by the missionaries’ apparently weak reactions to the Aboriginal peoples’ first hostile probing that did not engender the usual
response with firearms. Unlike the settlers, the missionaries believed that shooting Aboriginal people in self-defence was contrary to their Christian principles; any such action would have ended any hope of successfully carrying out their mission work. This attitude proved extremely frustrating to the local police, causing Police Commissioner Hamilton to question the very presence of missionaries in such remote and dangerous areas (CSO April 1867:692/67).

The missionaries’ situation became more tenuous as growing numbers of people gathered in the area and the movement of tribesmen between Lakes Perigundi, Kopperamanna and Killalpaninna increased. The infrequent police patrols did little to avert the growing threat. The tribesmen had even informed the police that they would not rest until they had cleared the whites from Kopperamanna and Killalpaninna (KMZ April 1867).

The Moravian missionary H. Walder (GRG 5/1867) drafted a petition on behalf of both mission groups to the Chief Secretary seeking a grant of an Aboriginal reserve of 100 square miles:

> Reason for recommending so large a block is, the numerousness of Natives, which would prevent Stockholders to settle at this very place, as the Settlers about here themselves say, of which the S. Protector Mr Buttfield is also aware.

The simmering hostility of the Aboriginal people soon became apparent to the missionaries and Walder added that the circumstances were now so dire that they feared for all their lives:

> Most of the Natives, who hitherto showed but friendship, have, with great numbers from all quarters, forged the indeed black design to kill all the "Whitefellows."

This prompted an earnest plea for ongoing police protection, ‘the Government might be pleased to place under police protection, as speedily as possible’, and at the very least consideration of shifting the existing police station from Lake Hope to Kopperamanna. Pre-empting the additional costs and likely negative reaction of this request in some circles, Walder closed by stating:
True, the Government do not get return from us in the shape of rent; but here are seven lives at stake of the same value as Settlers’. And indeed Government will get returns from us, if we do succeed in carrying out our Mission, for, I am sure the country would round about soon be taken out, of other benefits not even to make mention.

Walder’s request predicted that a successful mission would alleviate the ongoing tensions and hostilities that had been generated by the Dieri reaction to the settlers’ pastoral expansion. It would provide a secure refuge and focus for the Aboriginal people in the region, and bring peace to this part of the frontier. First, however, the evolving threat to the establishment of the two missions had to be dealt with. Several hostile encounters with the gathering tribesmen forced the Moravians to join the Lutherans at Killalpaninna. This postponed the sending of the petition allowing for a more urgent post-script detailing how colonist Vogelsang had only just managed to escape being speared and the Moravians’ reaction:

And now, seeing again plainly, that the Natives are still devising mischief, & that through the growing concourse the danger was growing, — we resolved to flee to our Lutheran friends.  
(GRG 5/1867)

As the besieged missionaries contemplated their situation, missionary Homann decided that under the circumstances the establishment of a mission was not worth ‘being killed and devoured by these savages’ (KMZ April 1867). He concluded that very little could be achieved by martyrdom as the Aboriginal people had not even been made aware of the Gospel and ‘death in such a case would be comparable to being killed by bandits’.

In the face of this ongoing hostility both missionary groups withdrew. They presented the point of least resistance in the wave of European intruders, and for the moment at least, the Dieri succeeded in driving the missionaries away. The settlers, who had been the original cause for their resentment, remained firmly entrenched. It is ironic that the very people the missionaries had come to save had succeeded in driving them
away—the one group who were to champion their ongoing survival.

The departure of the missionaries defused the buildup of hostile intentions and, in 1867, John Butfield, Sub-Protector of Aborigines in the Far North, summed up the situation in his report:

I have the honour to inform you that having accompanied Sergeant Wauchope and eight Troopers to Lake Hope, Kopperamanna, Killalpaninna and Lake Gregory I am now on my way to Headquarters. The Natives that had collected in large numbers at Perigundi, including the Deerea Koonaree, Ominee Yarrawarraka Cuddibirie, Yandrawandra and Pilladappa tribes have dispersed. It appeared from information I gathered that an unusually large concourse assembled at Perigundi—had a very grand Corroboree in the month of March and then and there devised a plan for exterminating the whole of the Settlers as far south as Blanchewater. It was their intention to murder the Missionaries first of all. The timely and unexpected arrival of three Police Troopers from Lake Hope prevented the execution of their diabolical intentions.

(Tolcher 1996:130)

Reviving the Mission

The gathering at Lake Perigundi was to be the last concentrated effort by Aboriginal people to repel the European intruders around Lake Hope. The Government reacted swiftly to the missionaries’ requests. Despite Police Commissioner Hamilton’s (CSO 1867:625) concerns at the pacifist approach of the missionaries, making them easy targets for retribution and the drain on the public purse, police protection for the missions was secured with the shift of the police station from Lake Hope to Lake Kopperamanna (CSO 1867:233). Furthermore each mission group was granted a 100 square mile reserve for Aboriginal people and the approval for an official ration depot (Proeve and Proeve 1952:88–91). The distribution of rations was to prove a decisive factor in the pattern of European-Aboriginal interaction. Without this function it seems likely that the missions would have been largely ineffective in attracting Aboriginal people. The Protector of Aborigines (Protector Aborigines Report March 1868) argued in favour the government continuing the supply of stores to the missions:
The denial of these stores will, it is to be feared, break up an establishment that promises to be of the greatest advantage to the Aborigines in the Far North.

After a break of some seven months, the Hermannsburg missionaries were once again ready to return to their missionary field. This second attempt in 1867 was to be better equipped than the first as a result of negotiations with the government. Led by Missionary Homann, along with colonists Vogelsang and Jacob with their respective wives and children, ten Germans returned to re-establish the mission at Lake Killalpaninna, now named Bethesda. The Moravians also returned to the field but their presence at Lake Kopperamanna was to be short-lived, and they returned to Victoria in 1868 (Jones and Sutton 1986:33).

Accommodation and Adaptation

For the Dieri there followed a growing acceptance that resorting to force was futile against the Europeans’ superior armaments, and they would have to find new ways of accommodating the pressures threatening their existence. The settlers and now missionaries with their flocks and herds became permanent factors in the environment. The Dieri soon realised that the settlers were dependent on them for labour, and in some cases sexual partners, for which they could obtain some of the settlers’ prized goods, such as tobacco, sugar, tea, flour and iron (Reynolds 1972, 1981; Rowse 1998). Once peaceful relations were established, pastoralists often tolerated some Aboriginal people as cheap labour to solve the chronic shortage of manpower (Reynolds 1972:40). In most cases the stations did not provide enough food and material goods to meet the demands of extended family groups. The missionaries soon realised that providing an agrarian working environment and preaching Christianity was a poor inducement to attract people, and used the distribution of the official government rations as a key means to engage the local population. The Dieri probably did not understand the missionaries’ motives but noticed the difference in attitude to those of the settlers, who generally saw their presence more of a hindrance than an asset.
Increasingly dispossessed from their traditional lands and hemmed in by the pressures of the settlers’ activities, the mission at Lake Killalpaninna provided a refuge from, and alternative means of responding to, these pressures. The distribution of rations now became a major factor in the pattern of adaptation that evolved. Both parties had something the other wanted; the missionaries hoped to save these people by converting them to Christianity, and the Dieri needed the Europeans’ food and goods to survive in the changing environment. This pattern was to become well established as the mission developed. In many cases this system of rewards became the main inducement for Aboriginal cooperation and an ongoing source of missionary frustration. This was to be the case for the duration of the mission and even as late as 1899 the missionaries reported that:

> Usually there are around 60–70 heathens in close proximity to the station, especially in times of drought when there is little natural sustenance in the land...however as soon as the rains set in then many leave the station to return to their unbound life and practice their heathenish ways.

(KMZ 1899)

Things became progressively worse as the settlers forced Aboriginal people from their stations, particularly the aged, sick and infirm. This was to be the case Australia-wide as the missions increasingly became havens for the various groups of Aborigines forced to gather there as a result of the settlers’ pastoral expansion (Durack 1979:15; Reynolds 1981:155; Rowse 1998:7). Most Aboriginal people drawn to the missions shared common characteristics: a need for European food and goods, accommodation of the missionary demands as best it suited, preservation of their traditional movement patterns and retention of their ceremonial practices despite the active efforts of the missions to stamp these out. As summed up by Jones and Sutton (1986:37): ‘This co-existence of authorised and unauthorised behaviour, characteristic of most Australian mission stations, endured at Killalpaninna until its closure’.
Conclusions

In the annals of frontier interaction it is apparent that the disruption and most brutal treatment of Aboriginal people was in areas that had no strong missionary presence; areas such as mid-west Queensland, Cape York, the Gulf Country and Victoria River District come readily to the fore (Hercus 1990:157–158; Lewis 2012; Reynolds 1972; Roberts 1881, 2005; Rose 1991). Pearson (2014:24–27) provided a most, eloquent account of the value the Lutheran mission at Cape Bedford in Queensland, and particularly missionary George Schwartz, had in the survival of the Guugu Yimidhirr. This Christian safe haven was in stark contrast to much of the frontier without the missionary factor:

For the other side of Queensland’s frontier had been and still was a charnel house; consisting of moments when the pitiless logic of colonialism ended in genocidal doom for some groups.

This could well have been the case around Lakes Hope, Kopperamanna, Killalpaninna and Perigundi had Elder’s pastoral ambitions and the Dieri resistance taken their full course uninterrupted by the arrival of missionaries. The possible outcome for this was implied in the messages coming through from the station about having ‘good men’ and enough ‘guns and ammunition of the right sort’ would resolve the ‘native problem’ (Advertiser, 6 January 1866).

Without the mitigating influence of the Moravian and Lutheran missionaries the settlers’ actions would have possibly doomed the Dieri to a similar fate as the Yawarrawarrka (Yawarrawarrka) in the nearby Innamincka/Coongie Lakes region of Cooper Creek. Hercus (1990:158) stated that the oral tradition of a large scale massacre of Karangura, Dieri, Yarluyandi and Ngamini along with Yawarrawarrka (Yawarrawarrka) at Cooncherie waterhole has been vividly recalled for over a century.

Against this savage backdrop the missions proved to be a refuge in the sea of settler encroachment and police harassment for any Aboriginal people who interfered with the pastoralists’ economic interests. They also proved to be one of
the best places for procuring the material goods and food which Aboriginal people now needed and desired. It could be said that many Aboriginal people never became incorporated into the mission; rather the mission became a part of the Aboriginal way of life. Both on Cooper Creek and later in Central Australia, the Lutheran missions played a pivotal role, both good and bad, in how the many displaced Aboriginal groups could accommodate the pressures on their existence. This was a pattern that was repeated in many other parts of Australia and with other missionary groups. In most cases missions proved fundamental in preserving Aboriginal presence on and near their lands against the relentless tide of settler expansion that often had little time, understanding or patience in dealing with the impacts they generated on the traditional inhabitants.

The effect the missions had has often been portrayed in a negative sense as hastening the demise of Aboriginal culture and depriving groups of their land and future (Jones and Sutton 1986:38; Reynolds 1981; Stevens 1994). Stevens (1994:2–3) acknowledged the role the Killalpaninna Mission played in providing a refuge of physical safety for Aboriginal people, yet saw it as greatly facilitating their cultural disintegration, loss of spiritual foundations and the loss of their identity. Reynolds (1981:155–158) felt that the missionaries, more than any other group of Europeans in colonial Australia, mounted by far the most deliberate and consistent intellectual challenge to Aboriginal society. However, he acknowledged their role in providing sanctuary from the worst depredations of the European settlement and noted how Aboriginal people adapted to appease the missionaries, extract their prized goods, continue seasonal movement patterns and, for the most part, resist attempts to proselytise them (Reynolds 1981). Durack (1979:15), in her work on the history of the Kimberley missionary endeavor, took a more positive view, concluding that:

...it seems clear to me at the conclusion of my task that the work of the missionaries, sometimes inspired and sometimes blind, was the only evidence the Aborigines had of anything in the nature of consistent altruism within an otherwise ruthless and self seeking economy. It provided a ray of hope in the prevailing gloom of their predicament. It was for many their only means of survival and their sole reason for regeneration.
Pearson (2014:25) summed it up succinctly:

The attitudes of the churches towards indigenous cultures, languages and heritage—and the conviction and vigour with which they sought to deracinate their charges—varied widely, according to the proclivities of particular denominations, individual missions within denominations, the personalities of key missionary figures, and the period of history. Therefore, while many missions and government settlements destroyed indigenous cultures and languages, others actively preserved them, and unofficially (and later sometimes officially) allowed Christianity to coexist with native religious beliefs.

All these views have some relevance as to how the missionary presence was an important factor in the evolving pattern of frontier interaction between Aboriginal people and the European intruders on their ancestral lands. If the intellectual and spiritual destruction of existing Aboriginal cultures was a deliberate or inadvertent missionary aim, in most cases it only succeeded in part. In the case of the Lutheran missionary effort, first in Adelaide and surrounds, then in the far north at Cooper Creek, and lastly at Hermannsburg on the Finke River in Central Australia, their translations of the Kaurna, Ramindjeri, Barngarla, Dieri and Arrernte language was perhaps their most lasting legacy. These works created the foundations for a resurgence of these languages that are the cornerstone of cultural regeneration and preservation today.

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my Honours History thesis in 1972. My mother’s diligence in teaching me the gothic German script in my early years proved invaluable to allow me to read first hand their prime source accounts. Dr Lohe, then President of the Lutheran Church in South Australia, and Pastor E.H. Proeve were enthusiastic supporters of my research work and generously allowed me free access to a treasure trove of private letters, journals and accounts held in an old North Adelaide villa that then served as the Lutheran archives. In revisiting my original work and updating the information to take into account subsequent research, I owe a special thank you to the invaluable and authoritative inputs of Dick Kimber and Margaret Friedel from Alice Springs and the late Dr Luise Hercus. Last but not least the many Dieri, Wangkangurru and Yandruwantha-Yawarawarrka people I have come to know in my ongoing work in their lands, where this account forms just a small fragment of their post contact history.

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**Lutheran Archives South Australia**

*Hermannsburg Missionsblatt* (HM) 1867—This was the official monthly publication of the Hermannsburg Mission Society and it was first published in Hermannsburg, Germany, by Louis Harms.

*Kirchen und Missions—Zeitung* (KMZ)—This was a bimonthly publication first published in 1862 and it became the official organ of the two Lutheran synods involved in the initial missionary venture at Lake Killalpaninna.

**State Records of South Australia**

*Aborigines Department*: Ingoing and Outgoing Correspondence of the Protector of Aborigines, 1860–1895; Reports to the Aborigines Department, 1860–1895

*Colonial Secretaries Office*: Ingoing and Outgoing Correspondence of the Chief Secretary's Office (CSO), 1860–1895

*Parliament*: South Australian Parliamentary Papers (SAPP) 1865 No 134; South Australian Government Gazette (SAGG) 1860–1895
KOELER AND THE DRESDNERS: CONTRASTING VIEWS OF FIVE EARLY GERMANS TOWARDS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

The earliest Germans to record observations of Aboriginal cultures and languages in South Australia were Hermann Koeler (late 1837–early 1838) and the Dresden missionaries Clamor Schürmann and Christian Teichelmann, who arrived in October 1838, followed in August 1840 by Samuel Klose and Eduard Meyer. This paper analyses the publications of these observers with respect to their comments on Indigenous peoples in South Australia and their associated societies, languages and cultures. Examined together, the observations of Koeler and the so-called ‘Dresden Four’ reveal a number of similarities but also some striking differences. A comparative reading of observations from different sources produced at a similar time and place offers insights into the state of German anthropology at an important point in its development. It also points to the emergence of differing paradigms whose contours would become clearer in the decades that followed.

Introduction

A strong German presence was established very early in the colony of South Australia, founded in 1836. Some of these Germans observed and described the colony’s Indigenous population. Among them were missionaries (Clamor Schürmann, Christian Teichelmann, Samuel Klose and Eduard Meyer [the so-called ‘Dresden Four’]) who sought contact with Indigenous populations with the aim of converting them to Christianity. They invested great energy and effort in becoming acquainted with them and their cultures, and leaving a record of their observations. At an almost identical time a German ship’s doctor, Hermann Koeler, set about recording his own observations of
the Indigenous people of Adelaide and surrounding districts, but in quite different circumstances and for different reasons. This paper analyses the publications and writings of these observers with respect to their comments on Indigenous peoples in South Australia and their associated societies, languages and cultures.

A careful reading of the anthropological observations of Koeler and the ‘Dresden Four’ is useful for two main reasons. Firstly, the missionaries and Koeler were making, recording and publishing their observations during a period when the discipline of anthropology was still establishing itself in Europe. By contrast with other European powers, it wasn’t until the late 19th century, following the unification of the German states in 1871, that Germany gained colonies and established its short-lived colonial empire from 1883 up until the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 following World War I. Prior to this colonial period, Germans were primarily explorers and collectors often working at the behest of other colonial powers, but somewhat critical of English and French colonialism and their treatment of Indigenous peoples. The German version of ethnology, free of colonial vested interests, is often seen as more benign and a product of the Enlightenment of the 18th century, which promoted freedom, democracy and reason (the German Enlightenment was embodied in the philosophers Herder and Kant and explorers Alexander von Humboldt and Georg and Johann Reinhold Forster). As summarised by Bunzl and Penny (2003:1):

...nineteenth-century German anthropology was neither characterized by colonial concerns, nor interested in organizing the world’s peoples according to evolutionary sequences. Instead, it was a self-consciously liberal endeavour, guided by a broadly humanistic agenda and centred on efforts to document the plurality and historical specificity of cultures.

Furthermore, they argued that the ‘liberal humanism’ of 19th century German anthropology ‘stood in marked contrast to Anglo-American or French variants’ (Bunzl and Penny 2003:1). However, while English, American and French anthropology liberalised and adopted pluralistic frameworks in the 20th century, German anthropology went in the opposite direction, culminating in complicity with Nazi interests and the holocaust

In the early to mid-19th century, anthropology (or ethnology as it was then known) lacked firm professional and institutional foundations, and as it struggled to distinguish itself from other disciplines, its theoretical and methodological underpinnings were still being debated and negotiated. Most literature on the origins of German anthropology (Evans 2007; Gingrich 2005; Penny and Bunzl 2003) focuses on the second half of the 19th century, whilst its antecedents in the early 19th century have been largely ignored, though Gingrich (2005:68-75) does provide a scant coverage relative to other periods concluding that ‘a weak and dispersed Enlightenment legacy lingered on’ (Gingrich 2005:75). An examination of the work of Koeler and the Dresdners, which they conducted and published before the middle of the century, thus opens a new window into the state of a discipline in its infancy.

Secondly, a comparative analysis of the texts produced by these men at very similar times, in response to their observations of people living in the same locations, can help to identify different strands in the development of the discipline. In a number of regards the approach to anthropological observation adopted by the medically-trained Koeler reveals some striking and even surprising similarities with that of the missionaries. Just as revealing, however, in an assessment of their writings are the differences which suggest that, even as early as the 1830s, German anthropology was moving in at least two quite different directions.

**Hermann Koeler and the Dresdners in South Australia**

Hermann Koeler was the first German visitor to South Australia to record his observations of Aboriginal people, their culture and language. A 24 year old ship’s doctor from Celle near Hanover, Koeler arrived in South Australia in October 1837.

Koeler was followed 12 months later by two German missionaries, 23 year old Clamor Schürmann from Osnabrück and 31 year old Christian Teichelmann from Dahme/Mark in
Brandenburg. They in turn were followed a year later by their missionary colleagues, Samuel Klose (then 37) from Löwenberg, now Lwówek Śląski in Poland, and Eduard Meyer (27) from Berlin.

Little is known of Koeler’s background, education or early employment (Amery and Mühlhäusler 2006:2). It is known that he travelled extensively between 1837 and 1848, visiting all five continents. Koeler submitted unsolicited manuscripts to Professor Carl Ritter, founder of modern German geography, and a founding member of the Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin (Berlin Geographical Society) (Amery and Mühlhäusler 2006:2). Ritter read, and subsequently published, Koeler’s reports. However, there is no evidence that he was ever in the employ of a scientific organisation or university.

Engaged by the South Australian Company as a surgeon aboard Solway, which sailed from Hamburg via England to Australia, Koeler arrived at Kangaroo Island on 16 October 1837 crossing over to Pathawilya (Glenelg) on 21 October. Koeler’s observations are in two parts, published in 1842 and 1843 respectively. His initial intention was to spend just two months in South Australia, but his stay was prolonged due to the wreck of Solway a day or two after it left Encounter Bay for England in December 1837. Subsequently he returned to Adelaide and remained another four months in South Australia. Koeler’s writings came to light in the late 1990s and were subsequently translated and analysed (Mühlhäusler 2006).

Clamor Schürmann and Christian Teichelmann arrived at Yartapuulti (Port Adelaide) on 14 October 1838, almost one year after Koeler’s arrival. A considerable amount is known of the early life of the four Dresden missionaries and their training. Brief profiles of each appear in Rüdiger (2014:12, 14, 16, 18). Teichelmann was the son of a clothmaker from Dahme-Mark south of Berlin who initially trained as an apprentice carpenter. He travelled to Berlin in 1829 for private tuition in mathematics prior to enrolling at the Royal Institute of Building Trades. Schürmann was the son of a farmer from Schlederhausen near Osnabrück. They both undertook their early missionary training at the Jaenicke Seminary in Berlin. Teichelmann was accepted there in 1831, whilst Schürmann commenced on 23 July 1832, following in the footsteps of his older brother Johann Adam, a missionary in India. Meyer also commenced his training at the
Jaenicke Seminary on 1 July 1833, whilst Klose made his first contact with a mission society in Basel in 1829. The Jaenicke Seminary was established in 1800 to train German missionaries for the London Mission Society, Basel Mission and Dutch mission fields. Germany did not have its own Protestant overseas missions in the early 19th century. A major focus of the Jaenicke Seminary was training in languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English and, at least in Schürmann’s case, some Chinese. In addition to theology and church history, they were also instructed in geography (Rüdiger 2014:12).

However, in 1836 the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands ruled that missionaries working for the society must be ordained Anglicans and accept the Church of England’s 39 Articles (Lockwood 2014:11). Teichelmann and Schürmann were offered positions in India, but refused to accept the Anglican doctrine and declined the offer. This forced the hand of the Dresden mission auxiliary, who seeing their plight, decided to form the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society of Dresden (DMS) with the Lutheran Confessions central to their beliefs. The DMS established a seminary in 1836 with Teichelmann and Schürmann among their first graduates, and on completion of their training, accepted a passage to South Australia under the patronage of George Fife Angas in order to establish a mission among the Kaurna (Aboriginal people of the Adelaide Plains) at the behest of the DMS.

All four missionaries maintained frequent communication and received their direction from the DMS for the duration of their work with the South Australian Aboriginal Kaurna, Barngarla (Eyre Peninsula) and Ramindjeri (Fleurieu Peninsula) peoples. Both Schürmann and Teichelmann recorded observations within their journals. Teichelmann, Schürmann and Meyer published descriptions (grammar, vocabulary and illustrative sentences) of Kaurna, Barngarla and Ramindjeri (Meyer 1843; Schürmann 1844; Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840), as well as brief ethnographies of their associated cultures (Teichelmann 1841; Schürmann 1846; Meyer 1846). Further observations are found within correspondence sent to and from
Dresden (see Graetz 2002). They also contributed to reports (for example, Teichelmann and Moorhouse 1841). The journals and correspondence were written in German, but the published grammars, ethnographies and reports were written in English.

An abridged translation of Schürmann’s journals was published by his great grandson, Edwin (Ted) Schurmann (1987). Klose’s correspondence was translated and published by the Friends of Lutheran Archives (Graetz 2002), while the translation of Meyer’s and Teichelmann’s correspondence awaits publication, but is available for perusal at the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide.

**Terminology**

Koeler (1842, 1843) uses a variety of labels for Aboriginal people. Most often he uses the term *wilder* ‘savage’ or *wilde* ‘savages’ and often *schwarze* ‘blacks’. For Koeler, *wilder* ‘savage’ is clearly the unmarked term being used. He also uses *Süd-Australier* ‘South Australian’, especially when drawing comparisons with Indigenous peoples elsewhere in Australia and throughout the world. *Eingeborene* ‘Aborigines’ is used much less often but is found in headings and introductory paragraphs. He also refers to the ‘Adelaide Tribe’ a number of times, and to ‘New Hollanders’ and ‘original inhabitants’ occasionally.

Whilst for Koeler, the term *wilder* is his default, he seems to set himself apart from the English colonists and their use of the term ‘black brutes’ (Koeler 1837–38:53; translated by Zweck 2006:91):

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1 Zweck’s mistranslation of Koeler’s (1843:48) ‘*wenn er die Spur eines Wildes oder eines Menschen verfolgt*’ as ‘when he is tracking a savage or a person’ (Zweck (2006:86) instead of the correct translation ‘when he is tracking a wild animal (ie game) or a person’ initially led me astray in my analysis of the use of the terms *wilder* ‘savage’ and *mensch* ‘person’. This correction should be noted.
Unter den Colonisten der niedrigen Klassen herrscht überhaupt im Allgemeinen eine grosse Abneigung gegen die "black brutes," wie man sie oft nennen hört, und sie sind nur zu gern bereit, bei den geringsten Anlässen und bei Vergehen aus Unverstand oder Furcht, die man den Schwarzen nicht anrechnen kann, zur Selbsthilfe mit dem Gewehre zu schreiten.

Among the colonists of the lower classes great antipathy is generally prevalent against the ‘black brutes’ as one often hears them called; and they are only too ready to reach for their weapons in self-defence on the slightest pretext and when wrongs are committed out of ignorance or fear, for one cannot hold the blacks responsible.

Furthermore, as in the quote above, he seems to come to the defence of the Aboriginal people in their dealings with the English, reflecting German attitudes of the times which were critical of British treatment of Indigenous people in their colonial ventures at a time before Germany had colonies of its own.

The Dresden missionaries too used a variety of terms. In the introductory preface to the grammar and dictionary published in English, Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840:iv–vii) most often use ‘the Aborigines’ (six times), but also refer to ‘colored fellow-men’ (once) and ‘South Australian natives’ (once) or simply ‘natives’ (twice). ‘Aborigines’ and ‘natives’ are used elsewhere in the publication. In their English translations of Kaurna sentences, they also use ‘black men’, but that is a literal translation of the Kaurna term *pulyuna miyurna*, used by Kaurna people themselves. The Dresdeners never use the term ‘blacks’ in the same way that Koeler does, and they certainly never use the term ‘savages’, though the term ‘savages’ is used at least once in correspondence from the Dresden Mission Society to Klose (20 January 1844).

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Observations of Indigenous Peoples

Koeler was an interested observer of the Aboriginal peoples he encountered in Adelaide and Encounter Bay (Fleurieu Peninsula) (Gara 2006:15) and spent considerable time interacting with people in the camps in Adelaide and nearby Glenelg (Gara 2006:20). The Dresden missionaries made and recorded observations of Aboriginal peoples in and around Adelaide, Encounter Bay and in and around Port Lincoln on the Eyre Peninsula. Both Koeler and the missionaries made observations which ranged widely from physical attributes, questions of race and intellect, culture, religion and morality, and, last but by no means least, language. While in both cases it is apparent that they sought to make comprehensive descriptions, it is also apparent that Koeler and the missionaries attached greater importance to different attributes and reached noticeably varying assessments.

Physical Description

Koeler (1842) gives a rather lengthy description (approx. 1600 words) of physical details of the Aboriginal people he encountered in the Adelaide, Port Adelaide and Holdfast Bay districts. It is sprinkled with derogatory adjectives such as ‘the relatively thin, unsightly calves’ (Zweck 2006:56), ‘the legs of the women, particularly the lower thighs, are repulsively thin and stick-like; the women’s bodies are on the whole very lean and disfigured’ (Zweck 2006:56), ‘a sack-like appearance’ (Zweck 2006:57), ‘the South Australian, together with the other New-Hollanders as a whole, is to be seen as one of the ugliest human races’ (Zweck 2006:57).

There are just a few more positive references such as Zweck (2006:54):

...some physiognomies, namely those of the children, are attractive because of their unmistakeable expression of innocence, friendliness, trust and a certain intellectual mobility, just as some of the men take on a special character through their wild boldness and proud impervious earnestness...
Even this more positive picture is immediately followed by a very negative statement (Zweck 2006:54–55):

In other and indeed the majority of cases, the ugliness of the physiognomy, accentuated by savagery, deceitful cunning and intellectual lifelessness, and even more by artifices or by the overall impression of their whole figure, is truly repellent.

In his very negative description of older women, Koeler uses what would normally be taken as very positive terms to denigrate further, as in (Zweck 2006:56):

...in old age they become a terrible sight because of their wrinkles and their mummy-like shrinking, an impression which can only be made more repellent by their good-natured, friendly grinning.

Koeler (in Zweck 2006:53) makes frequent comparisons to animals in his physical description: ‘the colour of their skin is a brownish-black (with a deceptive similarity to the facial colour of some species of ape)’ and:

...the downy hair of the children is always brown and proliferated so long and luxuriantly that the back of a 5–6 year-old boy, seen from the side and with the sun shining directly on it has—to put it bluntly—a pelt-like appearance and is reminiscent of the fur of a young donkey.

Physical appearance was not particularly important for the Dresdners, though they did record some observations, especially in the context of official reports. But these are brief by comparison with Koeler’s lengthy description, and are far less judgmental. Schürmann (in Schürmann 1987:30) notes in his diary on the day he arrives in Adelaide on 14 October 1838:
Not far from the church we saw our first natives, one man and two women, and then another group with one man, two women and a child. I spoke to them, and found the men less willing to talk than the women. They are of medium height, and the men have a high chest and strong limbs. Their hair hangs down in thick curls, and is often smeared with red ochre to keep off the heat. The women seem to wear their hair the same length (a hand's width) as the men, but the curls and the pigment are missing. Their skin is not black as a Negro's, but rather brown. The men can be quite handsome, but the flat nose can look unpleasing to us. To our eyes, the women are less attractive than the men, with lower foreheads and with thin flat hair covering their cheeks.

Several years later in his ethnography of the Barngarla, Schürmann is much more forthright in his judgments (both positive and negative) of physical appearance, referring to their ‘large ugly mouths’ and as being ‘disfigured’ etc. without qualification as previously in his initial descriptions of the Kaurna:

The height of the Port Lincoln Aborigines is considerably below the European standard; a tall-looking black will seldom be found to exceed the height of a middle-sized white man, and with regard to size, the comparison is still more against them, so that one may safely venture to say that the tallest and strongest of them would present but a poor figure among a regiment of grenadiers. If it were not for their thin arms and legs, deep-set eyes, large ugly mouths and flattened noses, the Port Lincoln natives might be called a well-proportioned, compact race of men. They certainly have good foreheads, fine shoulders, and particularly high chests. The male sex exhibit a great deal of unstudied natural grace in their deportment, their walk is perfectly erect and free, motions of body easy, and gestures natural under all circumstances, whether speaking, fighting or dancing; and with regard to agility, they throw the white man completely into the shade. Of the women, however, one cannot speak so favourably, their persons being generally disfigured by very thin extremities, protruding abdomen, and dependent breasts, a condition that may perhaps be sufficiently accounted for by their early marrying, inferior food, and long suckling of children, it being by no means uncommon to see a child of three or four years still enjoying its mother’s breast. Although to a passing observer the Aborigines of this district may appear all of the same stamp, yet, upon a longer acquaintance with them, considerable difference will be found to exist, not only with regard to size and make, but also in the colour of their skins; while the northern tribes, who inhabit a scrubby country, generally exhibit very dark and dry-looking skins, one often
meets among those from the south and west, with faces that might be almost called copper-coloured. Whether this be owing to the influence of climate or food I will not venture to determine; but I think I have observed that the strongest and best fed natives are always of the lightest colour. (Schürmann 1879:209–210)

Teichelmann hardly mentions physical appearance in his journal and correspondence, except in an early letter to Dresden, when he counters the prevailing racist ideology he was exposed to in Germany:

Instead they are much more very beautifully and strongly built people and some have very good physiognomy, which we call beautiful. Of course there is no rule without an exception. (Letter to Dresden, 8 December 1838)

More than 12 months later, however, perhaps after he had become a little jaded at his failure to win converts, he comments ‘...in my view we, here, are among a people which of all the people on earth appears to be on the lowest stage of mankind in outward bearing as well as from the aspect of morality’ (Teichelmann Diary 27 January 1840). His publication *Aborigines of South Australia* (Teichelmann 1841) makes no mention of physical appearance. A ‘Report on the ‘Aborigines of South Australia’ to which Teichelmann contributed was presented to the Statistical Society (Teichelmann and Moorhouse 1841). It begins with a half-page paragraph on physical appearance commencing with the words, ‘[t]he physical appearance of the South Australian natives presents little to please’ (Teichelmann and Moorhouse 1841:40), but these words could well be those of Moorhouse, who, like Koeler, was a medical doctor by training.
Klose makes no reference to physical appearance in his correspondence, except to comment on the state of cleanliness: ‘...even though they bathe often and gladly’ (29 December 1840 in Graetz 2002:14). As a postscript to his discussion on the children’s intelligence (see below), Klose comments, ‘[o]ften, as a matter of fact, their faces appear so familiar, as if I had seen them as whites in Europe’ (29 December 1840 in Graetz 2002:14). Physical appearance is of no concern to Meyer either in his ethnography of the Ramindjeri (Meyer 1846).

**Views of Race and Intellect**

For Koeler, Indigenous Australians occupied the lowest strata of humanity:

If one wishes to subsume them under one of the commonly accepted human races, these South Australians (whom one could call the *Adelaide tribe*) have to—like all the original inhabitants of the mainland of New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land—be counted among the Ethiopians. And if this entire race occupies the lowest rung of the human race in both physical and intellectual aspects, then these South Australians in turn represent the lowest of them all, and in some ways are backward even in comparison with other New Hollanders. (Zweck 2006:53)

Ritter, who read and published Koeler’s reports, did not approve of the overt racism in Koeler’s writing, adding question marks and exclamation marks in his own writing when referring to Koeler (Kremer 1981:149 in Amery and Mühlhäusler 2006:2).

Whilst Kant identified four races in 1775: 1. white; 2. Negro; 3. Hun (Mongol or Kalmuck); 4. Hindu or Hindustani, later revised in 1777 to: 1. noble blond (northern Europe); 2. copper red (America); 3. black (Senegambia); 4. olive-yellow (Asian-Indians) (Zammito 2006:42), it was Blumenbach who put forward Ethiopian as a category at one end of a spectrum with white at the other (Zammito 2006:47)—and it was those who followed Blumenbach who introduced a more rigid hierarchy, that Koeler seems to be appealing to here, in the categories Blumenbach had introduced.
By contrast to Koeler, the Dresdners were quick to point out the mental capabilities of the Aboriginal peoples with whom they worked as being on a par with Europeans. Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840:iv) argued early in their introductory preface:

...that a race of human beings possessing a language so regular in its formation and construction as that of the South Australian natives, cannot be incapable of either [Christianisation and civilisation]; and to refute premature and unjust detractions concerning the mental capabilities of the Aborigines of Australia.

In an early letter to Dresden, Teichelmann makes the following observation (Teichelmann, letter to Dresden, 8 December 1838):

The heathen are included in the promise to Abraham. No matter how far down the scale they stand in their external culture, they are still human beings created in the image of God and therefore have the same talents and abilities which the Gospel of Christ offers to them to understand and to take on board. They are not, as I remember reading in Germany, on a par with orangetangs3 [sic]. Instead they are much more very beautifully and strongly built people and have very good physiognomy, which we call beautiful. Of course there is no rule without an exception. However in every way this report which I read in Germany was a thoroughly untrue statement. In it the basis for distortion appears to lie in reality. Come and see what must be seen. Believe what can only be accessible through faith.

In his ethnography of the Kaurna, Teichelmann (1841:5) begins with the words:

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3 Despite its Malay origins, the term orang outang in 18th and early 19th century Germany did not refer to the orangutan great ape from South East Asia as we know it today, but rather to primates from Africa, most likely chimpanzees or bonobos (Barnard 1995:95).
The Aborigines of South Australia have generally been represented by those who have reported of this land, as a race of beings differing little from the higher animals. If the statements are intended to apply to the mental endowments of the Aboriginal inhabitants of South Australia, they are incorrect, and most likely not resting upon personal enquiry and experience; as these will meet in them with the same gifts and talents as in Europeans; for in instructing their children the same faculties are observed as in others, so that there is comparatively no difference between a European and an Aboriginal child.

It is not clear what reports Teichelmann had read in Germany during his training between 1831 and 1838, but it is evident that he was aware of the emerging theories of scientific racism that were just beginning to take hold in Europe at that time.

Klose too, in his second letter sent from Adelaide dated 29 December 1840, within five months of his arrival remarks:

...for they are not so lacking in intelligence, as is generally believed, that they are not able to comprehend such things [Biblical stories]. Not at all! I find no difference whether I am among European children or among these, other than they are black and not clothed.

Views on Culture

Koeler says little of his own views on the culture of the South Australian Aboriginal people, though he records his observations of many cultural practices from firsthand experience. However, under his entry on korrobora ‘dance’, Koeler says, ‘[t]he dance can hardly be given any other name than Convulsa coitus pro parte virile imitatio’ (Zweck 2006:64) [Latin translation ‘an imitation of the sexual act’ (from the male perspective)].

The Dresdners regarded the Aboriginal peoples as ‘uncivilised’ and saw it as their duty to bring Christianity and civilisation to them, but readily accepted many aspects of Aboriginal culture. They were largely unconcerned by outward appearance, much to the annoyance of the English colonists. Education and the introduction of literacy were the starting point. The outward vestiges of civilisation would come later. They wished to introduce Aboriginal people to a sedentary
existence and saw animal husbandry as the first step in this process. Teichelmann (Diary, 28 November 1839) writes:

I scolded them for the laziness and indolence, urged them again to lay aside their nomadic life-style and settle like Europeans and not live like the wild animals.

Klose writes of his disapproving response to Kaurna people travelling to Gawler for tattooing (cicatrisation) (Letter to Dresden, 29 August 1845, in Graetz 2002:42):

I told them that was not right, since Jehova had given them a good healthy skin, why should they now pierce it. The response was: 'Yes, we know all that; the whites do not do it, but that is what the blacks do.'

Religion

Koeler is very dismissive of the possibility of any kind of religion among the Kaurna:

Among the South Australians one finds no trace of customs or ideas which point to a religious cult, unless one wished to interpret as the slightest and most rudimentary trace of a concept of a higher mysterious power the childlike sort of fear that the darkness of night induces in the savage. (Zweck 2006:81)

Furthermore he claims that 'neither sun nor moon, neither rainbow nor thunder or lightning seem to be able to elevate the South Australian to ideas of anything supernatural' (Zweck 2006:82–83).

It seems that the Dresdners, like Koeler, did not recognise these beliefs as religion. Klose notes the inability of the Kaurna to grasp the notion of grace: ‘They cannot grasp it because they do not feel like sinners and do not believe in the punishment of sins’. Within two months of his arrival in Adelaide, Teichelmann writes:

...they have no concept of creator. They are not idolatrous, but rather without God so much as I have had occasion to discover...
(Letter to Dresden, 8 December 1838)
As they got to know Kaurna people better, however, the Dresdners came across the word *munaintyarlu*, which Schürmann tried to use for Jehova (Letter, 12 June 1839 in Schurmman 1987:46–47):

> Munaintyerlo, who of old lived on earth, but who sits now above, has made the sun, moon and stars, the earth and the visible world in general. As soon as I got this name, I substituted it for the hitherto used Jehova, which they could scarcely pronounce...If further discoveries do not show that they combine too pagan and absurd ideas with the name Munaintyerlo, I mean to retain it for the name of God.

As Schürmann became better acquainted with the word, however, he abandoned any attempt to use it as a substitute for Jehova (Letter 3 April 1840 in Schurmman 1987:91):

> The munaintyerlo is not a Noun proper of a person, as I was then led to believe, but meant only a very ancient being, so that it can be justly said, that the Aborigines have an idea of creation, or that the universe has in very remote times been made by some being, but that they have no distinct notions of that being.

In fact, *munaintyarlu* is a time word, meaning ‘in the beginning’. Neighbouring languages, Nukunu, Adnyamathanha and Ngarrindjeri, all use a time word to encode the notion of ‘the Dreaming’. Similarly, *munaintya* ‘the beginning’ has been used in Kaurna to encode this notion (see Amery 2016:143–145).

The Dresdners, first Schürmann and then Teichelmann, were taken into the confidence of the Kaurna, and told men’s secrets on the promise that they would not divulge this information to others, specifically women and children. Teichelmann knew of the significance of the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies to the Kaurna (Teichelmann 1841:9). Religious beliefs were the subject of many arguments between the Aboriginal people and the Dresden missionaries, Teichelmann graphically reports many such arguments in his diary and in his correspondence to Dresden. They had little to no success (no converts), but eagerly looked to every little sign that their preaching was having some impact.
Morality

Koeler seems to have nothing to say about morality. He reports instances of violence against women by their husbands, ‘...but it is not rare for her husband to break this staff in two on her head, in annoyance and anger, but without causing any further damage other than screaming and crying’, polygamy, the ‘stealing’ of a child by Captain Jack and the attempt by the man from whom the girl was ‘stolen’ to kill the girl, but he does not take issue with such practices. He merely describes the events that he observes (Zweck 2006:87-89).

The Dresdners had particularly strong views on questions of morality. In line with their Lutheran beliefs, they saw all humankind (themselves included) as fallen and bedevilled by original sin. As Lockwood (2014:38) observes:

Lutheran theology...teaches that human nature was corrupted by rebelling against God in the fall into sin...Before God there is no difference between the ‘primitive savage’ and the most refined European or committed Christian. All are equally fallen and dependent on the grace and mercy of God.

On the very day Schürmann arrived in Adelaide and likely on his first meeting with Kaurna people, he took issue with polygamy as follows:

I asked one where his wife was and, after he had pointed her out, I asked him how many wives he had. He showed two fingers, and I shook my head and showed one finger, whereupon he gave a hearty laugh and indicated that others had three or four wives.
(Schurmann 1987:31)

In a letter from 27 January 1840, Teichelmann writes:

In my view we, here, are among a people which of all people on earth appears to be on the lowest stage of mankind in outward bearing as well as from the aspect of morality, which also among all the heathen peoples requires a special targeting of God’s grace on whose appearance we must wait and hope with patience and faith.
Further, Teichelmann (1841:5), having just praised the intellect of the Kaurna people, remarks:

…but regarding their moral state, they are, in many instances, almost upon a lower scale than the beasts, doing and performing considerately, what beasts will instinctively do...

Despite Lockwood’s proposition above that in Lutheran theology all are equally fallen, Teichelmann does seem to have bought into the notion that some peoples have fallen further than others. He records his frequent arguments with Kaurna people over the immorality of the promise system, polygamy, fornication, adultery, wife lending, prostitution etc. In doing so he is very critical of the destructive influence that predatory English colonists were having on the Kaurna people.

**Views on Language**

Koeler took a keen interest in the Kaurna language, recording a wordlist of about 140 words, 34% of which are body parts and 29% verbs (see Amery and Mühlhäusler [2006] for a full analysis). This wordlist is an independent and valuable primary source on the Kaurna language, but it is just a wordlist.

Koeler (see Zweck 2006:57) makes the claim that ‘...the language of such a lowly-ranked people cannot be other than limited and undeveloped’. He goes on to describe various ‘deficiencies’ in the language, such as an absence of different forms of the verb (for example tense, aspect) and the inability to differentiate between ‘I am going to Adelaide’ and ‘I am coming from Adelaide’ etc. Koeler, however, failed to recognise that he was listening to and documenting a Pidgin Kaurna, not the true Kaurna language. Furthermore, he commented on the sound of the language in typically negative terms (Zweck 2006:59–60):
Although the language itself is not lacking in euphony (except for a certain monotony because of the constant sameness of accent), it tends to lose a lot of this because of the peculiar singing, almost weeping and whining sounding way in which it is spoken...and the voice, which is anyway shrill and rough as in all tribes of savage peoples, is forced up into higher tones; a characteristic which makes an unpleasant impression because of the howling, pathetic shrieking which it produces.

The Dresden missionaries had the utmost respect for the languages that they learnt and documented. For them, as Lutheran missionaries, conversion and salvation was to be achieved by conveying the word of God in the people's own language. Their objective was first to understand, document and analyse the language to enable translation of Biblical texts, hymns and liturgy into Kaurna. As a result, they gained a much deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Kaurna than any other observers (Amery 2016:86–88). By contrast with Koeler, Teichelmann and Schürmann did document the true Kaurna language, whilst others recorded a Pidgin Kaurna. Teichelmann was fully aware of the existence of Pidgin Kaurna. Six months after their arrival in South Australia, and following the execution of two Aboriginal men, he writes:

...they want to keep the Europeans in ignorance of their language and speak in broken English to the Europeans just as the Europeans speak brokenly in their language...
(Teichelmann, 21 April 1839)

Within just a few months, Schürmann and Teichelmann knew far more of the Kaurna language than any other colonists, some of whom (e.g., William Williams and William Wyatt) had been in the colony for several years and had been in frequent contact with the Kaurna. They published a sketch grammar, vocabulary of about 2000 words and a collection of 200 or so Kaurna sentences translated into English in just 18 months (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840). Teichelmann continued his documentation with more detailed glosses, derived forms and rich example sentences as he progressed deeper into the language (see Teichelmann 1857, 1858).
The Dresdners quickly recognised that the Kaurna people were able to express their thoughts about anything and everything, including introduced items. Klose remarked:

We are not yet capable of creating or forming new words as we do not have sufficient command of the language, but it could well be possible, because they will give any and everything a name even though they may have never seen it in their lives before.  
(Klose Letter, 29 December 1840 in Graetz 2002:14)

Teichelmann was searching for abstract concepts in the Kaurna language. He wrote:

In the discussion with us there arose what was self-evident. His Excellency [Gov. George Grey] to speak about the natives. He expressed his favourite idea, to speak to the natives only in English. Br. Meyer agreed and said to my no small amazement that the language is so lacking in abstract concepts that it would be more advisable to use the English language even in religious instruction because one could never express anything in their language. In order not to start an argument I simply said that our Adelaide language had enough abstract concepts for them to be instructed in christendom; that in no way was I opposed to teaching the children in the English language in everything except religion...Br. Meyer's reasoning goes like this: because I have not the necessary abstract concepts ergo they are not in the language ergo it is better to give up using the language altogether. Later I gave him a host of important expressions for the teaching of the reconciliation in our dialect and outlined on them how the natives apply them...  
(Teichelmann Diary, 30 December 1844)

Collectively the Dresdners documented and preserved three Indigenous languages (Kaurna, Barngarla and Ramindjeri), providing an enduring legacy that has enabled language revival movements that have gained local, national and international reputation. Without their record, little would be possible today in Kaurna and Barngarla and the revival effort in Ngarrindjeri would be very much diminished.
Discussion

An examination of the writings of Hermann Koeler and the Dresden missionaries reveals similarities and differences in the observations they made of Indigenous peoples in South Australia in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

They approached their work with very different interests. Koeler was a sojourner, interested in Aboriginal people, their physicality, their illnesses, their language and their cultural practices and recorded his interactions and firsthand observations in some detail. Koeler seeks to present himself as a dispassionate observer much of the time. The Dresdners, on the other hand, were here to stay, on a specific mission to Christianise and ‘civilise’ Aboriginal peoples. They wished to set up a mission some distance from European settlement where Aboriginal people would continue to speak their own language and continue their own way of life on their own terms, but at the same time come to know the will of God. This would then result in the abandonment of many sinful or immoral cultural practices, but others would be allowed to continue. For instance, they did not immediately insist that Aboriginal people wear clothes, but hoped that once they knew and understood the word of God, they would become aware of their nakedness and aware of their sin and change their cultural practices accordingly.

It is clear that Koeler and the Dresdners were all exposed to and informed by ideologies of race that placed Aboriginal people on the very bottom rung of humanity, or even lower. We observed previously that Koeler (1842:43) writes of the ‘angenommenen Menschen-Racen’ or ‘commonly accepted races’ and places Aboriginal people at the bottom of the ‘Ethiopians’ (Zweck 2006:53 translation of Koeler 1842:43). However, the Dresdners totally rejected this notion in relation to intellect and the ability of Aboriginal people to learn and become ‘civilised’. In a letter to Dresden, Teichelmann (Letter to Dresden, 21 April 1839) wrote:
There [in Europe] they were portrayed as a race of people who were totally akin to the great apes. Here we saw that the people were formed like all people. In those reports we read that they had the least capability of being taught of all people on earth and were on the lowest rungs for the education of the spirit. Here, however, their natural liveliness and their motivation were revealed and that they must be endowed with the same talents and ability as any other nation on earth. Later experiences have only confirmed this, but have widened the first impression that in every regard they are a capable nation for upbringing and education.

While the Dresdners were more positive than Koeler in the description of physical appearance, they too found certain physical features ugly, while Koeler for his part was able to recognise the physical prowess\(^3\) and visual acuity of Aboriginal people within his negative schema. Moreover, when it came to assessing belief systems, the Dresdners were more inclined than Koeler to express their disapproval of Indigenous beliefs and their perceived lack of morality.

All were able to form close relationships with Aboriginal people and gain their confidence. Despite the apparent pejorative or distant tone in much of Koeler’s writings, he does appear to have made close friendships with Aboriginal people, especially of a boy named Williammi (Zweck 2006:91–92), and gained the confidence of others. He was invited to accompany Kaurna people into the hills where they met with a more numerous group who had never seen white people before. He participated in a panpapanpalya meeting ceremony.

\(^3\) Koeler was exposed to the notion of ‘noble savage’, referring somewhat dismissively to the ‘savage à la Rousseau’ (in Zweck 2006:99), pointing out that they too were subject to illness and frailty.
Key differences lie in the Dresdners’ view of intellect and the ability of Aboriginal people to learn and become civilised, which underpinned their mission. Koeler sees Aboriginal people as being incapable of learning and being ‘civilised’. His views of intellect and impoverished language were confirmed by his observations of Pidgin Kaurna, whereas the Dresdners’ views were reinforced by the regular and complex structures they found within the Kaurna, Barngarla and Ramindjeri languages.

The final page of Koeler's writings is difficult to process and seems to present a number of contradictory positions. Despite believing that Aboriginal people were subhuman, were of inferior intellect and mental capacity, he recognised a superior acuity of vision, extraordinary agility and dexterity. He also sees an equality of humanity in some respects, despite the outward differences:

...the spirit, with all its inclinations and passions, all its poetry and efforts, is the same in the educated person, who makes his own ego the subject of his studies, as in the most primitive natural man who views his surroundings with purely material eyes alone and is hardly aware of more than the lowest rung of social interaction...which knows no other goal than the maintenance of his species...But only the heart, in its moral and in its passionate instincts, beats to the same measure across the whole human race...
(Zweck 2006:100)

Koeler believed that different races had different possibilities for development and civilisation. Aboriginal people might develop so far in accordance with their position on the lowest rung of humanity. However, Aboriginal people were doomed to extinction and would die out before they reach their potential:

It [the lessons of history] also teaches, in constant change, that there is a 'So far and no further!' for each race, and introduces each one to us at its height: but how different this is in each case! The South Australian will have disappeared before he has had an opportunity to reach his height, and history will recall him as a people which did not outlive its childhood.
(Zweck 2006:100)
Conclusions

The anthropological observations examined here are illustrative of a phase of German engagement with the world outside Europe which preceded German colonisation by several decades. One is of a ship’s doctor employed in the service of German emigration, while the other is of German missionary activity. In both instances, the individuals concerned devoted themselves to the task of describing and understanding the non-European peoples they encountered, but they came to this task with varying backgrounds, motivations and approaches.

Koeler and the Dresden missionaries shared an interest in studying what in German had been labelled a *Naturvolk*, a people of nature. The term can be traced back to the 18th century and to Gottfried Herder, who coined the term. Working and writing in the 1830s and 1840s, Koeler and the Dresden missionaries can be situated in a German intellectual tradition which reaches from Herder in the 18th century to the Humboldts in their own time. All are devoted to the detailed observation and recording of the lives of a *Naturvolk* across a range of categories, from physical and intellectual attributes through to language, morality and religion. All are concerned to establish as comprehensive a record as their capacity to observe and to collect relevant data allow. Their approach is primarily inductive, that is, dedicated to the collection of information with the goal of establishing a detailed record of a particular people.

At the same time it is evident from a close reading of the written outcomes of their anthropological observations that within the tradition in which they operated there were significant variations at play. The medically-trained Koeler placed particular emphasis on physical description and as a consequence was more inclined than the missionaries to posit the existence of essential and therefore unbridgeable differences between Indigenous peoples and Europeans. The Dresden missionaries were willing to question what they had read on the basis of what they observed, whilst Koeler seems to have been unable to move beyond his preconceptions.

While the missionaries did not avoid physical descriptions, their most concerted efforts in their observations of Indigenous peoples were with language. This had been a central component of their training, and it was also entirely...
consistent with the tradition of anthropological inquiry in Germany dating back at least as far as Herder. However, the intensity of the missionaries’ efforts in this regard indicate a key point of difference with Koeler. While Koeler himself described Indigenous languages and indeed collected vocabulary, he was not as concerned as the missionaries were to gather linguistic knowledge for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the mental world of the people he observed. For the missionaries, a necessary precondition for the performance of their task of converting Indigenous people to Christianity was to understand their existing beliefs. They believed that knowledge of language and of abstract concepts would enable them to grasp the belief system of Indigenous peoples, with the ultimate goal of changing it. Indigenous languages were key to their mission with their emphasis on the inner world, the intellect, rather than the outward vestiges of civilisation. Unfortunately for Koeler, he had unwittingly collected elements of a Pidgin Kaurna which only served to reinforce his preconceptions of Aboriginal people belonging to a primitive race.

While Koeler and the Dresdners accepted the notion that a common humanity united all peoples, in Koeler’s case there is a more pronounced sense that the variety of peoples could be interpreted hierarchically. In his estimate the Indigenous Australians he observed represented a lower form of humanity, with inevitable consequences for their future, as he foresaw their ultimate extinction with prolonged exposure to the superior civilisation of the Europeans. The Dresdners, in contrast, assumed the survival of Indigenous peoples, albeit having taken the step of embracing Christianity.

Both Koeler and the Dresdners were trained in an era when theories of scientific racial categorisation were first formulated. The first ethnographic museums were established from 1836 onwards (Vermeulen 1995:41) followed shortly after by the appearance of ethnological societies. Vermeulen (1995:55) claimed that ‘the foundation of the ethnological societies in the years 1839–43 implied a shift away from a geographical, historical and linguistic type of ethnography, towards a physical and racial type of ethnology’. But it is evident
from the writings of both Koeler and the Dresdners that this physical and racially based ethnology already had currency some years earlier as they had read reports that put forward hierarchical notions of race prior to 1837–38 before they left Germany.

Koeler and the Dresdners are practitioners of anthropology at an early stage of the discipline’s development. Although popular interest was expanding, it was some time before German anthropology established firmer institutional footings, leading ultimately to the establishment of a university chair of anthropology (Veit 2015:82). It is no coincidence that Koeler’s observations in the 1840s were published in a journal of geography, at that time a discipline closely related to the emerging discipline of anthropology.

While it is possible to find much common ground in the works of Koeler and the Dresdners, the distinctions identified above point to some fundamental differences. Koeler’s more objective, empirical approach, with its heavier emphasis on physical appearance, anticipates the later growth in importance in Germany of physical anthropology, largely under the guidance of Rudolf Virchow, the dominant figure in the discipline until his death in 1902 (Massin 1998:96–106). It also heralds what Andrew Zimmerman (2001) has characterised as a turn to antihumanism in German anthropology, that is, an abandonment of the humanist project of achieving intersubjective human understanding in favour of an objective, empirical approach to the study of the ‘other’.

Moreover, while the physical anthropology of Virchow and others in Germany was typically liberal and Herderian in positing a humanity which was common to all variations of human physical and cultural identity, Koeler’s racism foreshadows a development in German anthropology which became pronounced decades later. Unlike the missionaries, Koeler was inclined to essentialise difference and to accept racial theories which ranked humanity, placing the Indigenous people at the very lowest rung or even subhuman. In the view of Benoit Massin (1998:80), this kind of racialised thinking came to dominate the discipline in Germany in the 1890s and beyond. The approach Hermann Koeler took to the study of Indigenous peoples in South Australia in the 1830s and 1840s suggest that this shift was a long time in the making.
As for the Dresdners, they were ultimately frustrated in their mission—restricted by government policy, lacking support and overtaken by events, confronted with a rapidly plummeting population and subsequent dispersal. Their efforts totally ceased within 15 years without securing a single convert, but their legacy lives on today in the form of three vibrant language revival movements (Amery 2004).

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CAPTURING HISTORIES AT THANTYI-WANPARDA: COMPARING EARLY AND LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY ETHNOGRAPHIES IN ARABANA TERRITORY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

This paper deals with the original field diaries and notebooks of Walter Baldwin Spencer during his brief fieldwork endeavour amongst the Arabana of northern South Australia in 1903. The information recorded by Spencer reveals a relatively accurate, although abbreviated and fragmentary, assemblage of Arabana mythologies and language that can be compared with information recorded by Luise Hercus with Mick McLean and other Arabana and Wangkangurru people, over 60 years later. In this paper we describe and contextualise what is an overlooked episode in Spencer and Gillen’s fieldwork career, provide an analysis of their work with Arabana informants, and compare their findings with more recent ethnographic information collected in the latter half of the 20th century. Interrogating this historical information and rereading it in light of far more recent and thorough research, we demonstrate the benefits of combining the sets of information from two radically different periods in Australian ethnography, linguistics and anthropology.

Introduction

The work of late 19th and early 20th century anthropologists still looms large in the consciousness of central Australians. Not only are the major ethnographies that were produced at this time still read and referenced, but also their contents are often critical to cultural and linguistic reinterpretations and revivals and are used in native title and land claim research. In this paper, we take a close look at the work of arguably Australia’s most influential anthropologists, Francis James Gillen and Walter Baldwin Spencer, and assess the contemporary value of a small portion of their ethnography. Our analysis is made by comparing
the field notes made by Spencer during his time with Arabana people in 1903, with the vast amount of material collected by Luise Hercus many years later in the same region. We take a closer look at the information documented by Spencer and ask how the linguistic and anthropological information contained in his field notes compares with the far more extensive documentation created by Hercus with a number of Arabana people and the exceptionally knowledgeable Wangkangurru/Arrernte man, Mick Mclean (Gibson 2015; Hercus 1977; Walkington 2004). The audio, film and textual recordings McLean and others made with Hercus between 1966 and 1977 included many of the songs, stories and Histories (Dreamings) of the Wangkangurru and Arabana people. These recordings are now highly valued by members of these communities.¹

Spencer and Gillen’s fieldwork amongst the Arabana was extremely brief and only Spencer’s notebook and photographs from this time survive. They did not make any sound or film recordings (as they had previously with the Arrernte in 1901) and Gillen’s notes from the Arabana fieldwork, if he did indeed take any, have yet to be found.² Collected over an intensive ten days of fieldwork, Spencer’s notebook titled ‘1903 Urabunna Old Peake Station’, does however contain over 90 pages of hurriedly scrawled notations. The content covers Arabana mythologies, placenames, incomplete song texts and snippets of information on the Arabana informants themselves.³ As such, this notebook provides us with a very concise record of a concentrated period of fieldwork and gives us an idea of Spencer and Gillen’s methodological approach when working in

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¹ Mclean also recorded important material with T.G.H. Strehlow in the late 1960s. There is also an important interview with McLean concerning the Spencer and Gillen collection that was produced by the then Curator of Anthropology at the Melbourne Museum, Alan West.  
² Our archival research included Spencer and Gillen’s distributed manuscript collections at the Barr Smith Library, the Mitchell Library, the Melbourne Museum, the South Australian Museum, the State Libraries of Victoria and also South Australia and the Pitt Rivers Museum.  
³ Spencer’s notebook, item XM5863, Museum Victoria. In addition to this central document are two supplementary pages of notes, which given the dated entries appear to have also have been created in the field, and a further ten pages of notes added to the end of Spencer’s second journal from the ‘Spencer and Gillen Expedition’ journal of the previous year. See items XM5990 and XM5857 in the Spencer Collection at Museum Victoria.
situations where they lacked familiarity. Unlike the bulk of their work, which concentrated on the Arrernte people with whom Gillen had long and close relationships (Gibson 2013; Morphy 1997), amongst the Arabana Spencer and Gillen were largely unfamiliar with the local community, the language and the surrounding totemic geography. While the pair had had some practice studying cultural groups that were new to them from the previous year—when they crossed the continent from north to south gathering ethnographic data on various cultural groups (Gillen 1968; Spencer and Gillen 1904)—the Arabana fieldwork was not part of a longer expedition but a brief foray into a new region. Their time at Thantyi-wanparda (see Figure 1), Gillen’s last fieldwork trip before falling ill and becoming increasingly sick before dying in 1912, has subsequently been largely overlooked in the telling and analysis of their careers.

In analysing Spencer and Gillen’s time amongst the Arabana we are not looking to evaluate the comprehensiveness of their work, but rather consider its quality and limitations. Critiques of Spencer and Gillen’s work have tended to focus upon their lack of linguistic skills (Moore 2016; Strehlow 1947:6–10; Wolfe 1991), while others have defended their pioneering achievements in ethnographic description (Batty et al. 2007; Gillen 2001; Jones 2005). In our analysis, we focus on both their capabilities as ethnographers in dealing with Aboriginal languages but also their abilities in identifying and noting important information on placenames, songs and mythology. We were also particularly interested in Spencer’s hearing of Arabana (a language he was completely unfamiliar with).

We began our analysis by firstly producing an annotated transcription of Spencer’s document, paying particular attention to the Arrernte and Arabana Histories/Dreamings and language material contained in the text.4 We were then able to correlate this material with Hercus’ own considerable corpus of fieldwork data (gathered between 1965–1975), which, although focused on language documentation, also contains biographical data,

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4 In this part of northern South Australia, Aboriginal people often use the English term ‘History’ when referring to the narratives/events that are more commonly known as ‘Dreamings’ (Luise Hercus pers. obs.).
social histories and collective ancestral mythologies. Building linkages between Spencer’s notebook and this later material we were then able to assess the worth of Spencer’s raw data in helping future generations gain a better appreciation of Arabana traditions.

Figure 1 The Thantyi-wanperta area, northern South Australia.

To Peake Station

Between 1894 and 1903, Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860–1929) and Francis James Gillen (1855–1912), collaborated on extensive studies of Aboriginal groups in central and northern Australia. When in the field they collected a vast array of artefacts, took hundreds of glass plate photographs, produced detailed field diaries and created some of the earliest ethnographic sound and film recordings (Gibson and Batty 2014). Their published works had a decisive influence on the early development of anthropology in Australia and Britain, and their legacy continues to be the subject of considerable debate and interest.
Spencer first met Gillen when he arrived in central Australia as part of the Horn Scientific Expedition in the winter of 1894. Spencer, then a professor of biology at Melbourne University, was immediately attracted to Gillen’s charismatic persona but also his deep familiarity and knowledge of the Arrernte people. As Gillen had lived on Arrernte lands for close to 20 years, he had acquired a detailed understanding of local Aboriginal traditions and had already begun to document the languages, traditions and rituals of the Arrernte people. Following an initial two-year period of correspondence, Gillen shared much of his accumulated ethnographic observations with Spencer, and the two later collaborated on fieldwork during the summer of 1896. Descriptions of the ceremonies they witnessed at this time formed the substance of *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899). Spurred on by an overwhelmingly positive reception to this book, the two men again collaborated on the aforementioned ‘expedition’ through central Australia that saw them identify and study the Aboriginal peoples living between Oodnadatta in the far north of South Australia and Borroloola in the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1901–1902, which they published as *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (1904). Before finalising this book though, one more collaborative fieldwork journey was required into Arabana territory in 1903.

Exactly why Spencer and Gillen decided to make their return to the field so soon after their cross-continental expedition has its roots in debates in anthropological theory and requires explanation. Spencer and Gillen’s earlier work had cast them as advocates of the Scottish anthropologist J.G. Frazer’s interpretation of religious origins and their work was widely referenced by other ‘armchair social theorists’ in the United Kingdom (see Kuklick 2006). These writers used Spencer and Gillen’s work on the Arrernte in ways that either contested or provided nuance to Frazer’s theories of human social and spiritual development (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:214–215). But it was Andrew Lang’s particular suggestion that the Arrernte were not a ‘survival’ of a ‘primitive’ society that particularly
annoyed Spencer. 5 Lang argued that it was the Arabana, and not the Arrernte, that exhibited more ‘primitive’ traits, such as counting descent in the female line, rather than the paternal and having totem affiliations linked to rules of exogamy, indicating an understanding of reproduction (Lang 1903:70). What Frazer and Spencer had taken as proof of the Arrernte’s truly primitive character—their belief that individuals’ totemic identities were conferred by the spirits who impregnated their mothers—were in Lang’s assessment a later development.

Frazer wrote to Spencer and alerted him to Lang’s views. Almost immediately Spencer began planning an expedition to Arabana territory to counter the armchair hypothesis and defend the theories of Frazer (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:214–215). The objective of the 1903 trip was to record as much information as they could from a ‘tribe with a maternal descent’ to see if they—like the Arrernte and other central and northern groups—also had similar social and religious ideas, such as increase ceremonies, and believed in reincarnation from totemic ancestors. If they did, then Lang’s (1903:70) theory that such things were a relatively recent invention or ‘sport’ in more recent patrilineal societies could be squashed. Spencer believed that if he and Gillen could observe and document these practices they would be able to show that the Arrernte and Arabana were essentially at the same stage of development. Spencer wanted to show that if Arrernte totemism was the rule and not an exception, Lang’s hierarchy was incorrect.

Spencer was, according to his biographer D.J. Mulvaney, ‘using evidence obtained by a field sortie’ to assault theoretical speculation (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:215). It is important to point out here that as much as fieldworkers like Spencer and Gillen were positioned at the peripheries of colonial influence and power, they were not simply suppling information to the theorists ‘back home’ to interpret. As Morphy (1996, 1997) has argued, Spencer and Gillen defended their own fieldwork based observations and theoretical opinions and as more recent scholarship on early Australian anthropology has suggested those in the colonies openly questioned the perceived wisdoms

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5 Spencer to Frazer Letter 49, 13 June and Letter 50, 6 July 1903. Pitt Rivers Museum Box 5.
of their intellectual mentors in the United States and the United Kingdom (Gardner and Kenny 2016: Gardner and McConvell 2015). The ‘southern’ anthropologists from Australia and the Pacific therefore often pressed those in the ‘north’ to question their assumptions, make changes to their theoretical models and rethink their methodologies. Spencer and Gillen’s decision to embark on the Peake Station fieldwork was not just about defending their chosen theoretical alliances with Frazer but arguing for the value of ethnographic information over further speculation.

Spencer wrote to Gillen, urging him to use his local contacts in central Australia to arrange for the appropriate field site. Gillen had already spent some time travelling through Arabana country and his friend, Ernest Courtenay Kempe, at Old Peake Station was soon called upon to assist (Figure 2). Described by Gillen as a man that had ‘always been good’ to the Aboriginal people on both the Peake and Macumba Stations, Kempe’s assistance was critical to setting up an impromptu fieldwork foray.6 Having worked on the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line as well as partnering with the pioneering cattle entrepreneur Sidney Kidman, Kempe had considerable experience in the region.7 Kempe’s current residence at Peake Station was located in the heart of Arabana territory and Gillen had periodically called upon his friend to

6 E.C. Kempe was the father of Wangkangurru elder George Kempe, whom Luise Hercus worked with in the 1960s and 1970s. George Kempe’s mother was a young Wangkangurru woman, daughter of Warrpili, the main elder for the ‘grinding stone tradition’. He was born in the 1890s or possibly 1900 under a tree by the spring near the old Telegraph Station. He asked us to take a photo of that tree (Hercus L16, Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Hercus Tape Collection). We tried, several times, but he was not satisfied that we had got the right tree.
7 Kempe died in Adelaide in 1905. He had a property in Somerton, an Adelaide suburb near the sea between Glenelg and Brighton and his brother, Gerald Stuart Kempe, a very well-known ‘sheep man’ at the time, and who introduced sheep dogs to Australia, also owned a large property at Kapinka which is 20 km due west of Tumby Bay on Eyre Peninsula (Northern Territory Library, Peake Telegraph Station. Retrieved 6 November 2003 from http://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/handle/10070/19939).
provide clarification on Arabana matters. A month before their arrival Gillen wrote to Kempe asking him to ‘get together a few of the old men and form a Camp somewhere in his run’ to act as informants (Gillen 2001:459). On the 5th of August 1903 the anthropologists arrived at Peake Station ready to begin their work. They brought with them a few items intended to communicate their credentials to the Arabana, including a copy of their first publication *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899), and various Arrernte *tywerrenge* (sacred ceremonial objects of stone and wood) that they had previously collected from the Arrernte.

In anticipation of their arrival, Kempe prepared six chosen men to help with the enquiries, some of whom had previously been acquainted with Gillen. When they arrived Gillen claimed that the group had ‘an inkling’ of their intentions and knew of their interests in ritual and mythology (Gillen 2001:459). The anthropologists figured that the site could not be too close to the railway line as any Arabana contact with Europeans might taint the authenticity of their informants. They also required a site where the informants might be located far enough away from the Arrernte that they would not have been ‘modified by contact’ with them (Gillen 2001:455). Peake Station was ultimately chosen as a place where Arabana had less contact with outsiders. Further to this, a separate anthropological camp was set up a short distance away from the Station amongst the gidgee scrub and close by to a naturally occurring outlet of artesian water (a ‘mound spring’) nearby. Known as Thantyi-wanparda to the Arabana this site was also at the centre of the primary ‘rain history’ in the region (Figure 3).

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8 Edward Charles Stirling, A.W. Howitt and the explorer John Walter Gregory also called upon Kempe for ethnographic insights into the Arabana (Gillen 2001:140, 184–185, 192).
Figure 2 Some residents of Peake Station (February 1899). Mr Ernest Kempe beside ‘Ranger’ in back. ‘Smart’ sitting in front, Bobby (Robin) in front of Mr Kempe with strap over his shoulder and ‘Telegraph’ kneeling in front of Bobby (Gillen Collection, South Australian Museum AA 108/36/1/6).

Figure 3 The camp at Thantyi-wanparda in August 1903. Gillen is pictured sitting at the rear of a wagon next to one of the Arabana informants. Two other Arabana men can be seen in the background (Spencer Collection, Museum Victoria, detail of XP9998).
Analysing the ethnographic writing and collecting that occurred at Peake Station at this time provides us with a unique vignette of Australian anthropological fieldwork practice at the beginning of the 20th century. In the ten days Spencer and Gillen spent camped at Thantyi-wanparda they produced over 30 glass plate photographs—fourteen of which capture sacred ceremonial performances—and collected Arabana throwing sticks, clubs, stone knives and ritual objects. Although these objects are important in their own right, it is Spencer’s notes—taken down whilst carefully listening to the men that hosted him and Gillen at Thantyi-wanparda—that provide extremely important insights into Arabana traditions.

The Informants

Although Spencer and Gillen have been criticised for not recording the names of their informants (Bradley et al. 2014), closer analysis of their field diaries has revealed otherwise. While it is true that they rarely published these names in their publications, they did nonetheless record personal information about their informants in their notes (Gibson and Batty 2014). The Arabana men present at Thantyi-wanparda were recorded by Spencer as ‘Wantjalli’ (Wantyali) (also known as ‘Ilimmeri’ or ‘Donkey’), Charley ‘Purula’ (Perrurle), an Arrernte rainmaker who had moved into Arabana territory where his wife came from, and two men from the Macumba area, ‘Merkilli’ (Marrkili) and ‘Matjilli’ (Matyili) (another man with Arrernte familial connections who was also known as ‘Pakinki’). We know virtually nothing about the informant identified as ‘Utapinji’ (Utapintyi) or their sole Wangkangurru informant, ‘Katipuka’ (see Figure 4).

Additional information on each of these men is hard to glean from the archival material. Nonetheless, it appears that Marrkili, whom Spencer describes as ‘the rainmaker’ was the great-great-grandfather of members of the Gepps family,9 because, according to McLean, the site of Thantyi-wanparda was in fact ‘Alf Gepp’s grandfather’s country’. The man identified as

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9 Hercus met his grandson Alf Jepp, aka ‘Alf Pudden’ who was a friend of Mick McLean (pers. comm. Luise Hercus 13th September 2013—this information is contained in the genealogy of Alf Jepp that was collected by Hercus).
Wantyali or ‘Donkey’ (of the Kararru moiety) was also noted as being ‘in charge of rain place’, which was most probably Thantyi-wanparda where they were camped. Arabana elder Maudie Lennie told Hercus in the 1960s that she was in fact the daughter of a man named Wantyali ‘Donkey Jimmy’ and when Hercus asked Mick McLean about Wantyali in 1970 he explained that his name referred to a yarirda (a powerful song/spell). According to McLean this song/spell was associated with rain and was used as a ‘drying out song’, to stop the rain. Spencer’s notes also record the name ‘Wantjili’ alongside an associated annotation which refers to ‘drying up water’ but he does not make any reference to the yarirda (spell/song) associated with the name. The Wantyali yarirda was considered such a powerful rain-arresting song that it, if used unwisely, could result in a very serious, long-term drought.

Figure 4 Spencer’s photograph of ‘Katipuka’, a Wangkangurru man (Spencer Collection, Museum Victoria, XP14495).
Language and Placenames

Spencer never obtained a sound grasp of the Arrernte language, although after a number of weeks amongst the Arrernte in 1894, a longer period of fieldwork in 1896, followed by a number of months in 1901, we can expect that he was relatively familiar with key terms and phrases. Nevertheless, Spencer most certainly relied upon Gillen to act as interpreter in the conversations had with Arrernte men and a number of Arrernte informants also used a combination of simple English and rudimentary Arrernte to communicate (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:174). The fact that Gillen had lived among Arrernte people since 1875 (see Gillen 1995), published an early word list of the Lower Arrernte language spoken at Charlotte Waters (Gillen 1886) and had kept a detailed record of the Arrernte spoken in the MacDonnell Ranges district, suggests he had reasonable facility in spoken Arrernte. It is likely, though, that an interpreter would have been needed to capture rapid or esoteric language.

In Arabana territory, then, Spencer and Gillen had to rely upon the English abilities of their informants, but also their understanding of the neighbouring Arrernte language. Fortunately for them, their ‘chief informant’, Charley Perrurle, had originally come from the Lower Arrernte region, and Matjili, whose father was Arrernte, could also communicate using Arrernte (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:216). Arrernte was thus apparently used as a kind of bridging vernacular, or ‘inter-language’ (Moore 2016), and Spencer’s notes are peppered with Arrernte words and phrases which are then often compared with their Arabana equivalents (see Table 1). For example, key concepts pertaining to Arabana cultural and religious beliefs were translated into the familiar Arrernte terms, such as ‘oknanikilla’ [aknganeke-arle] and ‘alcheringa’ [altyerrenge] (see Table 1). Spencer also regularly translated the Arabana moieties, Mathari and Kararru, into the Arrernte subsection classifications such as Bultahra [Peltharre], Kumara [Kemarre], Purula [Perrurle] and Pananga [Penangke]. He also made note of the Arabana terms for their ancestral stories, ‘Ularra-aka’ (Ularaka). This is probably the earliest record of this term, although Spencer was wrong to simply equate it with the Arrernte term alcheringa (altyerrenge) with its connotations of ‘Dreams’ and ‘Dreaming’ (see Green 2012). Arabana people never made these
associations with ‘Dreams’ or ‘Dreamtimes’ although they certainly regard the Ularaka as referring to ancestral stories or ‘Histories’ (Arbon 2008). The Ularaka or ‘History-time’ was not time-less, it had its own internal chronology and described the happenings of Ancestors as they made the landscape.

Table 1 The Arrernte bridging vernacular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spencer's Arrernte</th>
<th>Contemporary Orthography</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quabara</td>
<td>Ngkwapere</td>
<td>Ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alchera / Alcheringa</td>
<td>Altyerre / Altyerrenge</td>
<td>Dreaming, Eternal times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oknirabata</td>
<td>Akngerrepate</td>
<td>Senior man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritja</td>
<td>Irretye</td>
<td>Eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obma</td>
<td>Apmwe</td>
<td>Snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui-ia</td>
<td>Kweye</td>
<td>Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiya</td>
<td>Aweye</td>
<td>Boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unkulla</td>
<td>Ankele</td>
<td>Male cross-cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unkurta</td>
<td>Ankerte</td>
<td>Central Bearded Dragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oknanikilla</td>
<td>Aknganeke-arle</td>
<td>That which was manifested in the Dreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcheringa</td>
<td>Altyerrenge</td>
<td>Of the Dreaming, eternal creation times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In his ten days at Peake Station, Spencer nevertheless noted a remarkable number of Arabana words. He recorded over 75 placenames and often noted the optional proper noun marker in Arabana and Wangkangurru, the final –nha, written as ‘na’ or ‘nna’ (see Table 2). Most of these places would have been utterly unknown to Spencer and Gillen, who had spent little or no time in this area, and except for a few of the sites around Mt Kingston, Spencer’s notes do not contain any specific information on the geographical location of these places. Apart from a rudimentary pastoral map, there were also no maps for this part of Australia readily available at that time. Most of the site names recorded here by Spencer are only recognisable today due to the more recent documentation work carried out by Hercus with McLean and others in the 1970s (see for example Hercus 2009a, 2009b).
The following table lists the place names noted by Spencer, their location (where known) and their later identification by Hercus.

**Table 2** Place names recorded in Spencer’s notebook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Names Recorded by Spencer</th>
<th>Place Names Recorded on Maps or Otherwise Known</th>
<th>Place Names Recorded by Hercus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bunga wallinna</td>
<td>Location unknown</td>
<td><em>Punga-warli</em> = ‘shade-humpy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katapithirallina (another rainman’s rocks were there)</td>
<td>Location unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulkararula ‘Bald Hill’</td>
<td>Location unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Tantanai willinna ‘Shag Camp’</td>
<td>Location unknown</td>
<td><em>Thantani</em> = ‘shag’, <em>wila-wila</em> = ‘many’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irkilarinna</td>
<td>Location unknown, but the alternative reading could refer to Sandhill Waterhole north of Loudon Springs.</td>
<td><em>Irkilanha</em>, Sandhill waterhole, an Urumbula ‘Native Cat’ site and a vast camp site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waranthunna</td>
<td>Location unknown, probably on lower Macumba</td>
<td><em>Warantha</em> = ‘pelican’ in Arabana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Creek (mentioned re Mosquito tradition, misheard for ‘Boy Creek’)</td>
<td>Boy Creek</td>
<td><em>Utaka Karla</em>, <em>yuwinya Karla, yuwinya</em> = ‘mosquito’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Turaturanna</td>
<td>Brinkley Spring</td>
<td><em>Thurru-thurrunha</em> = ‘the hard one’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadni intjalkirra, Kadni untjalkera</td>
<td>Coppertop Hill</td>
<td><em>Kadni Tyarkarnda</em> = ‘lizard standing up’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘karingala is the name of bush which the cloud men found at Karingalinga’, other spellings are Korungalla, Karingadlinga Kurangulla</td>
<td>Curanulla Spring, adjacent to Peake Creek</td>
<td><em>Karingala Spring</em>, a major site in the Rain History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurlatjatjurari</td>
<td>Diamantina River</td>
<td><em>Karla-tyuwari</em> = ‘the long creek’ usually just called <em>Karla</em> ‘The Creek’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wurntalrugu</td>
<td>Fountain Spring</td>
<td><em>Wantalanha</em>, <em>Wantala-ruku</em> = ‘to fountain spring’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wurpunga</td>
<td>Keckwick Springs</td>
<td><em>Ngurpanha</em> = ‘tail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilara</td>
<td>Lake Callara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurityina</td>
<td>Lake Coorichina</td>
<td><em>Kurityinha</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wobmadingalina ‘warmed themselves in grass’</td>
<td>Claypan adjacent to this lake</td>
<td><em>Wabma-thingkilinha</em> = ‘snakes sun-bathing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katitunda</td>
<td>Lake Eyre</td>
<td><em>Katithanda</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Names Recorded by Spencer</td>
<td>Place Names Recorded on Maps or Otherwise Known</td>
<td>Place Names Recorded by Hercus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mudla mudla karinga</td>
<td>Lesbridge Springs</td>
<td>Madla-madla-karinha = 'little dogs'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akundana</td>
<td>Levi Spring</td>
<td>Akanta = 'head-gear', word borrowed from Arrernte into Arabana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kini katjarnia</td>
<td>Little Depot Springs</td>
<td>Kidni Katyirinha = 'twisting its tail'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadni kumamia</td>
<td>Lizard site on lower Diamantina</td>
<td>Kadni-kubmori = 'lizard blood'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marakatthinna</td>
<td>Marakata, Simpson Desert site listed by Reuther</td>
<td>Marakata = 'rainstone', Eastern Simpson Desert site, no exact location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karkuramana?</td>
<td>Mt Denison</td>
<td>There is an adjacent kalku 'Acacia seed' site, Kalku-kardi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadnoui</td>
<td>Mt Dutton, name preserved in Cadna-Owie Trig, and big and little Cadna-Owie Springs on Mt Dutton</td>
<td>Kadnyawi = 'rock-water', Kuyani name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Charlotte</td>
<td>Mt Charles (This is close by to Levi Springs, there is no Mt Charlotte in the far north of South Australia)</td>
<td>Wadna-kanhakanha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurara murkaru</td>
<td>Mt Kingston</td>
<td>Kurawarra-markarnda = 'cloud creeping up'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurara merkuna 'Cloud rising'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wirintjina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirintjina</td>
<td>Wirintyinha sandhill on the side of Mt Kingston</td>
<td>Wirintyinha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tjiripinunna</td>
<td>Tyiripanha camping site, close to Wilparoona Springs at Mt Kingston</td>
<td>Tyiripanha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadna warru</td>
<td>Mt Margaret 'White Rock'</td>
<td>Kadnha warru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karilinna</td>
<td>Mt Margaret, the double peak</td>
<td>Karilyanha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munduana</td>
<td>Mundoorina spring 'the Two (Springs)'</td>
<td>Manduranha = 'two'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Names Recorded by Spencer</td>
<td>Place Names Recorded on Maps or Otherwise Known</td>
<td>Place Names Recorded by Hercus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muramurana</td>
<td>Murra-Murrana spring</td>
<td>Marra-marranha = 'getting singed'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anunta</td>
<td>North of Tieyon, site</td>
<td>Ananta&lt;sup&gt;10&lt;/sup&gt; where the Two Snakes history starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘...sat down outside springs’ (Spencer didn’t realise it was a placename)</td>
<td>Outside Springs</td>
<td>Yakarra irililanha = 'loose teeth'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantina</td>
<td>Pantinha waterhole above Kurlachidna on northern branch of Macumba</td>
<td>Pantinha = ‘fighting’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jadianna</td>
<td>Peake Springs</td>
<td>Yardiyanha = ‘spindle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putjellana</td>
<td>Pultyarla, hill unmarked on maps, south of Petrina Yard, on the Macumba</td>
<td>Pultyarla = ‘gibber-bird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdlabuntakani</td>
<td>Small creek near railway line, immediately north of the Peake Crossing</td>
<td>Mudlu-puntaka = 'it broke through the sand-dune'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuntuwardina</td>
<td>Spring on this small creek,</td>
<td>Unthu-wardu = 'little tail'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tjantjiwanperta</td>
<td>The main site in the Arabana Rain History, marked by a collection of rocks</td>
<td>Thantyi-wanparda = 'Lifting up his grandson'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minkariri-wankuna</td>
<td>Spring near Thantyi-wanparda</td>
<td>Minkariri wankanha = 'he rises from the grave'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>10</sup> Arrernte women have suggested that this place may be what Spencer and Gillen cite when they recorded an ‘Uninha’ corroboree (song and dance) in 1901 (see Gibson 2015:173–74).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Names Recorded by Spencer</th>
<th>Place Names Recorded on Maps or Otherwise Known</th>
<th>Place Names Recorded by Hercus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kudna Tjuraka</td>
<td>Rockwater Hill, Spring</td>
<td>Kudna Tyuraka = ‘they (emus) had diarrhoea’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulatana</td>
<td>Smithfield, Cliff Waterhole on Neales</td>
<td>Mudlarda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungawarina</td>
<td>Strangways Springs</td>
<td>Pangki-warrunha = ‘white ribs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipungapunga</td>
<td>Teepacnuppa Creek</td>
<td>Thipa-ngapa = ‘beetle-water’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaltikaltuija</td>
<td>Thirty Mile Spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbunga</td>
<td>Umbum Creek</td>
<td>Ngapa-Murirla = ‘water dried out’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurintiltjina</td>
<td>Waterhole on Macumba opposite Alcuchina waterhole</td>
<td>Kuriniltyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiarinna</td>
<td>Wirriarrina waterhole on the Neales</td>
<td>Wigaranha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuntnurua</td>
<td>Wuntanoorinna Waterhole</td>
<td>Unthu-nyurinha = ‘foreskin’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ularaka/Histories

The amount of cultural and mythological information that Spencer was able to collect in such a short period of time is quite significant. While many of the traditional stories and ceremonies that he and Gillen noted capture only fragments of information, these fragments nevertheless provide important insights and fill gaps in the ethnographic record. For example, the traditions of the eastern side of Lake Eyre can be found in the almost contemporaneous (and far more detailed) work of the Lutheran Reverend Johann Reuther (1981 [1904]) but his work contains very little information pertaining to the west of the Lake. In contrast Spencer’s notes shed light on traditions from the western side of Lake Eyre.

Fourteen mythological traditions are mentioned in Spencer’s notes and they all belong to a network of stories that explain this much-favoured area. During her extensive fieldwork in the area Hercus came to understand that the area surrounding the Peake Telegraph Station was noted for its excellent, permanent waterholes dotted along the Peake Creek.¹¹ Standing not far from Spencer and Gillen’s camp Mick McLean explained the cultural significance of these waterholes to Hercus in 1967:

There’s two waterholes down there, Inthunintyunha¹² one this (south) side, and the one other side is Palku-kudnanha, ‘Mass of Cloud descending’ and right outside (to the East) is Kata-katatatharranha ‘Budgerigar waterhole’...kutha idhili, malyka malyka kathara wityili pitarunga. Water stays there, it never ever dries out in drought time’.¹³

All around, but mainly to the east and south, was the spring country where water could be more readily sourced. In this region, there was a tremendous density of cultural sites. The 16 different traditions mentioned by Spencer are recognisable from Hercus’ later work in the region. These include the origin of the Wilyaru Ceremony, Rain History, Eaglehawk Ceremony, a Rainmaking ceremony, the Carpet Snakes at Panti-nha (Lower

¹¹ See Hercus Collection at AIATSIS, Tape L11, Archive no.001265A.
¹² Both Mick McLean in 1967 and Laurie Stuart (1991) named this site while we were at the location (Hercus Collection, AIATSIS, Tape 124). It is called Warrarawoon Waterhole on modern maps.
¹³ Luise Hercus Collection at AIATSIS, Tape L16-002124A (September 4th 1967).
Macumba), Crow and Kestrel, Kadni the Bearded Dragon, the Two Snakes, the Ancestor Thudnungkurla, Kanmarri the Rainbow Snake, the Rain from Karingala, the Two Men of Initiation at Oontanoorina, Swan and Fire, Maka thakapa the Fire-striker, The Fish and Crane, as well as the Mosquitoes and other noxious insects.\(^\text{14}\) The following discusses only four of these traditions in order to demonstrate how these traditions can be better understood after having analysed Spencer’s notebook.

The Ancestral Birds and the Origin of Wilyaru

The story of the Man-eating Black-breasted Buzzard and his mate, the Eaglehawk, is well documented in Spencer’s Notebook and was later published in Across Australia (Spencer and Gillen 1912:24–28).\(^\text{15}\) The version presented in the notebook is significant because not only does it present a more lively version of the narrative but it also confirms a link between the Wilyaru myth (linked to the practice making cicatrices on a man’s back) and the Rain myth that was only hinted at in information provided by Mick McLean.\(^\text{16}\)

In Aboriginal story-telling the main participants are very often not named and it can be hard to know who is doing what. Thus, in the notes that Spencer made for this story, he cleverly achieved a way of circumventing this issue by labelling each of the characters with numbers. The main participants are:

1) Wantu Wantu, the Man-eating Black-breasted Buzzard (\textit{Hamirostra melanosternon}); 2) Irritye or \textit{Irretye} (Wedge-tailed Eagle, \textit{Aquila audax}) the friendly ‘Eaglehawk’; and 3) ‘Kutta Kutta’ or \textit{Akwete Akwete} who is described as a small ‘hawk’ but is in fact the Spotted Nightjar (\textit{Eurostopodus argus}).

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\(^{14}\) These mythologies are recorded in Hercus’ field recordings held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. See Tapes L11 and L16. Hercus has also self-published booklets on a number of these traditions which have been lodged with the National Library of Australia.

\(^{15}\) Spencer’s Notebook (XM5863) pp.49–55.

As an example of how the notebook compares to the printed version we have chosen a dramatic moment in the story. Little Kutta Kutta had refused to run away from Wantu Wantu, but he has just changed his mind. The notebook continues the story as Irritja helps Kutta Kutta hide in plain sight in a manner that matches the behaviour of the Spotted Nightjar, by camouflaging itself amongst fallen bark and leaf litter.

No too late now you can't run away now. Oh well all right me lie down & change himself into bark or rather Irritja chucked dust over him to make him look like bark. Wantu came up. Hallo where you been put 3. Irritja said I don't know which way him go. Wantu run about all over to look out track. Can't get him.17

The story in the notebook is told mainly in dialogue form, presumably as recounted by the informant in English. The published version has maintained most of this but has also added some explanations and elaborations:

“No, it is too late now, you must stay where you are". “Oh well” said Kutta Kutta, who was terribly frightened, "I will lie down on the ground and look like bark." Irritja, to try and help him, threw some soil over him, though he knew Wantu Wantu had caught sight of him. Wantu Wantu came and said: “Where is Kutta Kutta?” though all the time he knew quite well where he was. Kutta Kutta lay low and said nothing. Irritja said “I do not know which way he has gone”. Wantu Wantu pretended to search for his tracks...

The situation, as described in the notebook, is of the kind that usually causes much laughter, when someone runs all over the place looking for something that is under his nose. It reads like an exact transcription of what the informants are likely to have said. But, by removing the vernacular, the published version is more complex and formal and a new element is introduced, that of Wantu pretending to look, so the story loses some of its impact.

There was a parallel Wangkangurru story centred on a site in the Simpson Desert. In his work on placenames Reuther (1981, Volume 7) lists numerous places named by 'Godagodana', his spelling for Kuta-kutanha i.e., Kutta Kutta the Spotted

17 Spencer's Notebook (XM5863) p.51. This probably is written for the pidgin 'can't get'm', meaning 'he can't find the track'.
Nightjar, but they do not refer to this story. There are a number of references also to the eagles. Some deal with the orphaned children of Wantu Wantu, an aspect that is different from the account given to Spencer in 1903. As an example, a site in the Simpson Desert, numbered 1471 in Reuther’s listing (1981, Volume 7) of places included the site of Ngamungamuru, deriving from ‘ngamuru’, an orphan (the reduplication denoting the plural number).\(^1\)\(^8\) This site is recorded as being the place where Karawora adopted Wonduwondu’s four orphaned children. The place therefore acquired this name. Karrawara is the Arabana-Wangkangurru name of the Eaglehawk, called Irritja/Irretye (the Arrernte name) by the elders speaking to Spencer and Gillen. In their version Wantu’s children are killed too.

Spencer’s notes on this story help us make the links between the Wilyaru mythology and the History of the Rain. The Wilyaru ceremony was not as widely practiced among Wangkangurru people as it was among the Arabana, and Arrernte people did not practice it at all (Spencer and Gillen 1904:451–54). In what is a final ceremony marking male initiation, the Wilyaru features the making of a series of cicatrices on a man’s back and neck (Howitt 1904:658–661). Mick McLean was not a Wilyaru man and therefore did not tell the detail of the story to Hercus or others, and he only knew the songs from the moment they entered into the Rain History where the blood from the wing of the wounded Eaglehawk brought Rain to the Peake Station area. He sang the Eagle’s lamenting song for example, ‘the vein in my arm is broken’.\(^1\)\(^9\)

Significantly, Spencer’s notebook confirms this link between the Wilyaru myth and the Rain myth simply by noting the ‘Rain Karara Ceremony of Tjantjiwanperta’.\(^2\)\(^0\) ‘Karara’ is Spencer’s variant spelling for Karrawara (Eaglehawk) and he is

\(^1\)\(^8\) Reduplication in a noun in all the languages of this area does not imply number, on the contrary it is a diminutive, and so the name means ‘(poor) little orphans’.


\(^2\)\(^0\) Spencer’s 1903 Notebook XM5863 p.17 in the Museum Victoria collection.
clearly grouping together the Rain and Eaglehawk Histories in the way he has titled this material. There is a connection. Speaking of the Wilyaru myth in general Mick McLean explained:

That Pakupaku 'Bellbird' comes from my country too, this way from Midlarku (Midlargunna Creek, now called 'Baker's Creek', a southern tributary of the Macumba), and from Ngamungamuru, 'Little Orphans' way out in the Simpson Desert. [...] It is always the same story, Wilyaru and that Pakupaku in it. The Pakupaku belonging to Wilyaru in them places I tell you the name, this one Thipa-ngapanha and that same story up in my people's country that is Midlarku, that bellbird is in that too...way out in the Simpson Desert, he is in there too, Ngamungamuru, all same song they tell me.22

The Rain History

The next-best documented History in the Spencer notebook concerns the Rain. This is perhaps unsurprising as Spencer and Gillen were camped near Thantyi-wanpanda, the main Rain site, and some of their informants were custodians of local Rain mythologies. It is one of only three stories from Peake Station for which there is a published version in Spencer and Gillen's (1912) Across Australia. The information about the Rain tradition in the notebook is, however, more fragmented than the Wilyaru story. Mick McLean knew the songline but was reluctant to sing it, because he had his own Rain songs from Wangkangurru country around Parra-Parra Well in the Central Simpson Desert. Nonetheless, as McLean had taken part in Arabana Rain ceremonies and as knowledge of this material have attenuated amongst the Arabana, he ultimately did record these traditions with Hercus.23 Included in his rendition are aspects of the story that are absent from Spencer's notebook as well as close to 30 song verses.

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21 Teepacnuppana Creek, near Nilpinna Springs to the southwest of Peake.
22 Luise Hercus Collection. AIATSIS Tape 125, September 1967.
The notebook contains some data that are missing from Mick McLean’s aforementioned, much more detailed version, and vice versa. The notebook tells of a *tywerrenge* (ritual object) stolen by an Arrernte ancestor and McLean certainly sung of the stolen rain-stone and how the Arrernte rainmaker returned to his home at Ilpwere on the Finke, causing havoc with floods along the way.  

Spencer records a brief summary of a Rain History connected with a site called Marakatthina (Rainstone) that is also mentioned by Reuther (1981, Volume 7 No. 1175) as Marakata, but is otherwise unknown in the literature.  

The notebook adds the depth of history and the authority of the most senior elders to what we can learn of the Rain History and the Rain ceremonies: their voices are much more audible here than in the published version of this Rain History (Spencer and Gillen 1912:21). The Rain verse recorded by Spencer is also reminiscent of verse 18 of the Rain verses taped by Luise Hercus and is recognisably similar to the main verse of the Thantyi-wanparda song.  

**The Carpet Snakes from Pantinha**

Additional material is also revealed about the main ritual centres for Ancestral Carpet Snakes in Arabana-Wangkangurru territory at Pantinha. This site lies approximately 100 km northeast of Peake Station, close upstream on the northern branch of the Macumba from Kurlachidna (Karla-tyidli = ‘Creek-branching’) waterhole and is unmarked on modern maps. During fieldwork to this region in 1970, Mick Mclean explained that the word *panti* means ‘to fight’, and the place name refers to a fight between two pairs of Ancestral Carpet Snakes which resulted in the flattening of the ground here. Regarded as an important ritual centre, Pantinha is said to have once hosted a great
ceremonial string cross known as a *pirritiya*. Part of the ritual at Pantinha consisted of an increase ceremony involving the use of a pointed wooden stick or bone used for ritual bloodletting referred to as *pa(d)nyi* (Spencer’s *paiidni*). The ceremony also featured men reciting song verses that referred to the activities of the Carpet Snakes at Pantinha. As Mick McLean pointed out: ‘They have to sing all that when they *thakarnnda*, *panyira thakarnnda* (when they do the piercing with the *panyi*) they use that (song) in that place there, Pantinha.’

While Spencer and Gillen photographed this ceremony and collected the bloodletting instrument used, the site name of Pantinha is not mentioned in their publication (Spencer and Gillen 1904:286–288). Instead, in their later book, the reader is simply told prior to the description of the ceremony that ‘...the old headman of a snake group called Wadnungadni (i.e., *Wadnangkani* ‘Carpet Snake’)’ showed it (Spencer and Gillen 1912:23). In Spencer’s original notes, however, this ceremony is introduced with the term ‘Palpara’ without explanation. Although we have since learnt from Arabana-Wangkangurru speakers that this word means ‘open ground, good for ceremonies or fights’, it appears that Spencer simply recorded the word without understanding its relevance. Had this word been cited in the published version it would have alerted us to the fact that here was the ceremony from Pantinha, as the flat ground on the north side of the Macumba at Pantinha is referred to as Palparra. Moreover, Spencer’s additional notebook comment, ‘Wadnungadni of Pantina [in blue pencil.] ^obma big carpet snake’, confirms these associations. This emphasis leaves no doubt whatsoever that Spencer had documented what Reuther (1981 volume 10:70) and others have noted as one of the main Histories of the Arabana-Wangkangurru people.

Whilst recording the song of Pantinha, however, Spencer appears to have lacked an ear for the complexity of verse. His rushed transcription of the verse, ‘*lirri wat thai umpai, lara nalari tjinta*’, is not really able to be analysed, except that *umpa* might be interpreted as *unpa* (you), and *tjinta*, might be

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27 It is not clear whether Spencer's *pariltja* (p.34 of the notebook) represents this word.

28 This is one of only few places in the notebook where Spencer uses a blue pencil: he had realised that this was important information.
tyintha (cut). The sequence ‘wat thai’ is, however, reminiscent of verse 5 of the Pantinha section of the Carpet Snake line, the main verse for the major snake ritual centre at Pantinha, as sung by Mick McLean. It was the best-known verse of the whole cycle. This lively section of the Snake History starts from a sandhill named Pula-yalthi-yalthi (two coming down [from the sandhill]). Mick Mclean recited this song in May 1971 whilst in the vicinity of the Snake History country, at Tuppana Waterhole.

Pánantinhá yurkú watái
Pánantinhá yurkú watáya
La pretáya Pánantinha prita
Yáya Pánantinha yurku watáya

Yurku is the neck of a snake, raised when they are fighting and thus refers to the snake at Pantinha (the Snakes) with their necks held high. As noted above, palparra ‘the Cleared Ground’ is the dancing ground belonging to the Pantinha ritual centre: the ground has been cleared and flattened in the History Time by the two female Snake-ancestors fighting ‘rolling around like centipedes’, as it says in the following verse, and in Mick McLean’s words were ‘smoothing the ground like two big steam-rollers’.

Marpámarpantíi thimpá marpantíi thimpá
Marílye wá marilyé marilyé yepá
Marpánti thimpánti thimpá marpántí má
(Like giant) centipedes, centipedes coming together
Over there, over there indeed
(Like giant) centipedes coming together (they roll round fighting) (like giant) centipedes

29 It includes the story of the main female Snake Ancestor swallowing a whole camp full of people, as well as their grinding stones. She falls ill as a result but is cured by the male Ancestor who finds the magic healing plant called wakimpa. The detail of Reuther’s version is different, but equally dramatic. See Luise Hercus Collection, Tape 400B at AIATSIS for McLean’s recitation of the song as Tuppana Waterhole.
30 Luise Hercus Collection, AIATSIS, Tape 400B.

Volume 42, December 2018
This verse and a following were also known to Reuther (1981 volume 10:70), who writes ‘Marpantimarpantimarilimarillinka’. Here it is clear that the main words marpanti (centipede) and marilyi (yonder) are exactly the same: it is only the padding that is slightly different between the version heard by Reuther and Mick McLean’s version. Another much loved verse is given by Reuther (1981 vol. X:70) as follows, this and the preceding verse have been discussed by Hercus and Koch (1997:89):

...on reaching the top they slid down again on the other side of the sandhill. Again, they sang:
'Kantityataakantirulanilantanpurkauiwilla'

In January 1972 Mick McLean sang as follows:31

*Kantíyityatá káyá puruká
Yáriwé vélá
Ayá kantí wityatá káyá puruká
Yáriwé welá
Ayá kantí wityatáka puruká yariwé

This was explained (in Wangkangurru):

Just like kanti, heavy throwing sticks, they slide
down the sandhill as they crossed over. puruka
is just for purka, crossing over. They went
straight down instead of wriggling down.

So, far from being a lone description of a snake ceremony, the additional information it contains puts Spencer's notebook right into the centre of Arabana-Wangkangurru traditions. The example of this particular ceremony described in the notebook shows us that the published version contains an item of additional information (about the performer) from Spencer and Gillen’s memory of events. However, this version omits vital matters, names and site information. Before exploring the contents of this notebook, Mick McLean’s recitals of the songs and Reuther’s information appeared to have no links to Spencer’s published data. With this additional material our understanding of the Snake ritual is greatly improved: in fact, we now have an actual description of the ceremony, associated

31 Hercus Tape 447, archive number 002560A, in the AIATSIS Hercus Collection.
photographs and objects collected relevant to the ceremony as well as the details of its myth and songs.

**Kadni the Bearded Dragon**

Spencer’s notes also shed new light on the History of Kadni, the Bearded Dragon from Coppertop Hill (Figure 5). As it was the first entry in Spencer’s notebook we might assume that the Coppertop History was a topic that the informants felt comfortable beginning with. Coppertop Hill, known in Arabana as Kadni tyarkarnda or Kadni-tyarka-arkarnda (Lizard standing up), is a spectacular copper-coloured rocky hill that stands out at the eastern edge of the Denison Range, only about 20 km from Spencer and Gillen’s camp. At the foot of the hill, a small rocky outcrop represents the female Kadni Ancestor (Figure 6).

The story told in the notebook differs in some points from Mick McLean’s longer and more detailed version. The Kadni stands on top of the hill making boomerangs and throwing them further and further afield. Mick McLean showed us the female Kadni at the foot of the hill, but only Spencer’s notes make it absolutely clear that he is in trouble because his wife has changed from a different type of lizard into a *kadni*, thus transgressing marriage rules. Moreover, only the notebook includes the, otherwise unknown, Lizard Increase song and gives us more valuable incidental information. It mentions a site that the Kadni once travelled to called Kudna-tjuraka, i.e., Kudna-tyurrara (they had diarrhoea), and also Kudna-tyurra-apukanha, where ‘they had diarrhoea long ago’, telling us that it is a small mound spring. In the Emu History it is a main site with green rocks on Rockwater Hill. With this additional information we should be able to locate it. On the other hand, only Mick McLean was able to locate and explain the site called Kadni-Kubmari (Lizard Blood) on the Lower Diamantina, a long way to the east of Peake Station, where the Bearded Dragon Lizards killed each other in battle and hit each other so much with heavy clubs that they all now have flat triangular heads.

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32 Spencer’s notebook pp.11–13.
Figure 5 Coppertop Hill, Kadni-tyarkanha (the Bearded Dragon standing up). Photo: Pamela MacDonald.

Figure 6 The female Kadni, at the foot of Coppertop Hill, which is further to the left. Photo: Pamela MacDonald.
Notable Omissions

There are, however, two significant Arabana traditions that are surprisingly absent from Spencer’s work. The first is the Kangaroo tradition, one of the most important ceremonial song lines and well known for its association with Lake Eyre. In this History it is a kangaroo skin that ultimately forms the large salt lake of Lake Eyre (see for instance Howitt and Siebert 1904:109; Elkin 1964:245). The verses of this Kangaroo tradition, which were mainly sung in the Antakirinya language, had also become the main song-line sung at initiation ceremonies in the Arabana region. Antakirinya people were regarded as owning these very important verses, most of which were secret. Mick McLean, who had played a senior part in some of these ceremonies, complained that they had to sing and perform the ‘Kangaroo line’, because nobody else now knew ‘his’ main ‘initiation line’ from the Arabana-Wangkangurru territory, the Fire History. Mick certainly knew the Kangaroo verses but felt that he was not properly permitted to sing them. His ‘cousin’ George Kempe was, however, anxious to see the tradition preserved and so he joined with Mick McLean to record a section of them. The late Arabana elder Laurie Stuart (b. 1911) also recorded some verses and told parts of the story.33

In Spencer’s notebook, though, there is no mention of this Kangaroo story, or of the songs and ceremonies connected with it. Even though he and Gillen were camped very close to some major sites associated with the Kangaroo tradition, such as Intunintyunha Waterhole and Pigeon Rocks, it appears his informants failed to disclose this important story. As McLean, Kempe and Stuart later revealed, rocks very close by to Thantyi-wanpanda represented the ancestor Wilkuta who thought he had spotted the ancestral Kangaroo but upon realising that it was only a possum said thangkanharra, ‘let it be’.34 According to this tradition, the Kangaroo had in fact been hiding behind another rock and hopped away. From the evidence of these more

33 See Luise Hercus Tape no. 170, restricted.
34 The Rain from Peake, section 2, MS in preparation by Luise Hercus.
recently deceased elders, it seems highly likely that the Arabana elders of 1903 who worked with Spencer and Gillen observed even tighter restrictions than these men of the 1960s in their handling of restricted men’s business. It appears that they simply did not tell Spencer and Gillen anything about the Kangaroo History nor its related sites. It is also possible that these ‘Histories’ were held back because they were more precious or revered by Arabana people. As Spencer and Gillen lacked familiarity or any bonds of trust with this community, the informants may therefore have been reluctant to share.

Even more surprising is the absence of the Urumbula story in Spencer’s notes. The story of the Urumbula (the Western Quoll ancestor and his followers) northward journey, from Port Augusta and to the northern coast, was/is a very popular mythology known to all in the southern Lake Eyre Basin, probably more so than any other tradition (Ellis 1964; Gibson 2017; Hercus 1991:13–16; Strehlow 1947:154; Strehlow 1971:561). Fifty years ago the older men and some women could still sing many verses, which were all composed in Arrernte. The nearest site for this songline is about 50 km from Peake Station, but there are several traditions cited in Spencer’s notes that derive from sites of a similar distance from Thantyi-wanpanda. We simply do not know why there is no mention of the Urumbula story.35 Another songline with sites in the vicinity of Peake is about the ancestral Emus. The reasons for the absence of these and some other traditions may be quite simple, the opportunity for talking about them may not have arisen, or the leading elder for them may not have been among those chosen to work with Spencer and Gillen.

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35 The more northerly path of the Urempele Atyelp (Achïlpà/Tjilpa) from Akarre (Okira) on Anadado Station, is mapped by Spencer in The Arunta (Spencer and Gillen 1927:390). The term is also discussed in Gibson’s (2017:149–50) PhD thesis.
Of the remaining myths and songlines that are mentioned in the notebook, most have modern audio-data and geographical information, particularly ‘The Two Men of Initiation at Oontanoorina’, and the ‘Maka-thakapa and the Fire History at Storm Creek’. There are only brief mentions of these stories in the notebook. Nevertheless, in every single case the modern version has something to gain from the notebook, for example a more detailed description of the fight to grab the Fire in the story of the Swan from Mt Anna, or a suggestion of remedies against mosquitoes and march-flies, slightly different interpretations of stories or references to additional placenames.

Conclusions

Untangling what actually occurred between Spencer and Gillen and their informants is perhaps an impossible task. With careful analysis of Spencer’s notebooks, however, we hope to have shed some light on these questions as well as revealing something about Spencer’s methods of ethnography. The notebook reveals just how carefully Spencer listened to men like Wantyali aka ‘Donkey’, Charlie and their cohort, even though he was limited by his linguistic abilities and local knowledge. His notebook stands as a testament to his efforts and a record of an interaction in time. What the Arabana informants made of these exchanges is far more difficult to ascertain. Writing to Spencer one month after the Thantyi-wanparda investigation, Gillen (2001:469) reported some news from Kempe that gives us only the slightest clue:

He says Donkeys fame has extended far and wide...The poor Old Chap misses us dreadfully and says our visit will ever remain a red letter time...It’s gratifying to Know that he enjoyed himself for we certainly did. I am thinking of writing an Ode to Tjanji wanpirit! and dedicating it to Donkey.

36 There is also information on the Crow and the Kestrel. The story of Workala and Kerikki is told briefly in the notebook. As neither Reuther nor Mick McLean documented this narrative, this is our only record of this story. Mick McLean did, however, record a long, but different, myth about the Kestrel and the Rainbow serpents, pertaining to the Charlotte Waters area (Hercus 1993).
While Gillen’s prose is typically light-hearted and humorous, the consequences of participating in this fieldwork may have been far more problematic for ‘Donkey’ and his associates than suggested. In 1967 Mick McLean took Luise Hercus to the site where he recalled that Spencer and Gillen had camped 64 years earlier. McLean was about 14 years of age when Spencer and Gillen arrived at Peake Station but he remembered stories of the two men using Arrernte to communicate with the Arabana men, and he also recalled the misgivings of some of the elders when they had left. The revelation of deeply held cultural material, Mclean stated, had apparently led to bone-pointing and ‘a lot of deaths’ (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:217).

As a record of fieldwork Spencer’s notebook is extremely useful. It is not a frantic scrawl as one might expect with so much new information but reveals an ability to listen closely and operate comfortably in an unfamiliar environment. The notes also do not start hesitatingly and gradually improve but maintain a high quality throughout. This does not make it easy to follow, as many items are written down as single words, mainly nouns, and it requires knowledge of both the Arabana and Arrernte languages, as well as the ethno-historical material associated with both groups to interpret them.

Although Spencer and Gillen did excellent work at the Peake Station, their linguistic work does not measure up to current standards or even the work of some of their contemporaries working in the region. Because they did not know Arabana there is practically no sentence material. Their spelling is based on English and it is not much different from the methods of spelling of Gillen’s first wordlists almost 30 years earlier (Gillen 1886:416–417; Gillen 1995:81–91)—a far cry from the work of their linguistically talented, German contemporaries Carl Strehlow and to a lesser extent J.G. Reuther (Ferguson 1987; Gillen 1995:81–93). It is clear, however, that Spencer was hearing the Arabana language well at the time of his fieldwork and there are a number of errors in the glossary
entries for Arabana words (Spender and Gillen 1899, 1904), which are not present in Spencer’s original notebook.\footnote{For example, in their earlier publication, Spencer and Gillen (1899:654) had \textit{thunthunnie} as the equivalent of the word totem in the Urabunna tribe. \textit{Thanthani} is the word for cormorant in Arabana-Wangkangurru and is the name of merely one of the totems. The notebook reflects this information and has ‘\textit{tantanni}’ (presumably ‘\textit{thanthani}’) as one of the totems (p.9). Moreover, although Spencer and Gillen record ‘\textit{kurdaitcha}’ as being used amongst the Urabunna tribe to refer to the ritual assassin (Spencer and Gillen 1899:654), Spencer’s notebook features the actual Arabana word, ‘\textit{kutyu}’ (p.64).}

During their expedition in 1901, Spencer and Gillen made some of the earliest recordings of Aboriginal speech using wax cylinder technology. We can only presume that this technology was omitted from the Peake Station expedition because their interests there were primarily theoretical. Their intention was to record as much as they could about the Arabana in this short space of time so that Lang’s theories about human development could be confronted by ethnographic detail. While these antiquated debates about degrees of primitiveness have long since receded from anthropological concern, the material collected by ethnographers like Spencer and Gillen now assumes a new role in making sense of cultural traditions. Spencer’s Arabana material provides an informative record of placenames and mythologies that helps us better understand the person-land-myth nexus that we now know characterises Aboriginal ontologies (Rumsey 2001). Moreover, the significance of what is in this notebook is greatly enhanced, and in some cases only made relevant and comprehensible, by the information more recently gathered with far more active Aboriginal participation and involvement.
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65,000 YEARS OF ISOLATION IN ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA OR CONTINUITY AND EXTERNAL CONTACTS? AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EVIDENCE WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE QUEENSLAND COAST

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Abstract

Recent dating of archaeological sites across northern Australia suggest that Aboriginal Australians may have arrived on the continent by 65,000 years ago or earlier though other general reviews propose a more conservative arrival date of around 50,000 years. Regardless of when they actually arrived, the people of the late Pleistocene landmass of Sahul (mainland Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea), which were only separated by rising sea levels approximately 8000 years ago, likely shared some aspects of a common history over a period of perhaps as much as 50,000 years. It would seem unlikely that this shared community of culture and ideas would have ended abruptly with the rise in sea level. Early commentators, operating within social evolutionism and diffusionism frameworks, argued that much of Aboriginal culture was developed through external contact since Aboriginal culture was too ‘primitive’ to have developed higher level cultural traits. Subsequent reaction to this negative view has tended to limit further enquiry. More recently, it has been recognised that transformations occurred in Aboriginal societies across Australia particularly in the mid to late Holocene which have been attributed to population growth and internal social change (‘intensification’), environmental change and/or external contacts. This paper reviews evidence for external culture contact with an emphasis on the Queensland coast via the Torres Strait and Cape York. It is apparent that contact did occur though the timing and extent of impacts on the development of Aboriginal culture has yet to be fully understood. It is important to periodically review what innovations might have reached Australia from external sources (and vice versa) as new evidence and theories develop. This will enhance an understanding of how Aboriginal peoples coped with and adapted to the substantive transformative processes of the contact and post-contact eras which is the theme of this volume.
Introduction

Australia may have been first occupied 65,000 years ago (Clarkson et al. 2017) though caution has been recommended in accepting such early dates and an alternative short chronology of 47–48,000 years ago has been proposed (O’Connell et al. 2018). Whether the short or long chronology prove to be correct, Australia and New Guinea shared as much as four-fifths of their human history as part of the enlarged Pleistocene continent of Sahul. Recent research highlights the possibility of multiple colonisation events from various entry points (Norman et al. 2018) achieved by purposeful and coordinated marine voyaging (Bird et al. 2018) thus questioning the view that Australia was a long-isolated continent.

Australia and New Guinea were only separated by rising postglacial sea levels across Torres Strait about 8000 years ago (Woodroffe et al. 2000), although surprisingly genetic evidence suggests that Papuans and Australians may have diverged ~37,000 years ago (Malaspinas et al. 2016:210). In a recent review McNiven (2017) has argued that Torres Strait Islander history on a timescale measured in thousands of years reveals a series of significant transformative impacts resulting from external contacts. Like McNiven, I review the evidence for continuity and external contact across northern Australia with a particular focus on contact via Torres Strait on to the Queensland coast after 8000 years ago. Watercraft and items associated with maritime exploitation were introduced through Torres Strait and travelled far down the coast of Queensland. Contact did occur, though the extent and impact of this contact has yet to be fully understood. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Aboriginal peoples had experience in dealing with outsiders from 65,000 years ago though on a much more limited scale than experienced following the arrival of Europeans.
Culture Contact—Migration, Innovation and/or Diffusion

Migration and diffusion are key features of the broad sweep of human history but are rarely discussed by contemporary Australian archaeologists (Bellwood 2013:113). Nevertheless, the extent of outside contact has been debated since the arrival of Europeans and a divergence of views remains today. Some (e.g., Elliot-Smith 1933; Rivers 1926) argued that most elements of Aboriginal culture came from outside Australia in recent times, while others (e.g., Kenyon et al. 1924) proposed that most cultural differences could be attributed to local causes. In an influential review of material culture items McCarthy (1940:314; see also 1970, 1974) interpreted Aboriginal culture as ‘indissolubly bound up with that of Oceania’. Archaeologists argued that the presence of backed artefacts in both Sulawesi and Australia implied a significant link between the two areas (Glover and Presland 1985) but more recent evidence no longer supports the arrival of backed artefacts and points, along with the dingo and plant detoxification, as part of a ‘cultural package’ (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:258; Hiscock 2008:145–161).

In fact, Bellwood and Hiscock (2006:278) have suggested that the southern Sulawesi microliths might have been transferred from Australia to Sulawesi though none have been recorded on intermediate islands like Timor or the Lesser Sundas. Other researchers (e.g., Irwin 1992:100; Keegan and Diamond 1987:72–73; Rowland 1987, 1995) have thought it paradoxical that people moved so widely throughout the Southeast Asian region and into the Pacific, yet these movements are considered to have had limited impacts on Australia. More recently it has been argued that the material culture and linguistic signature of Austronesian canoes in Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait suggests direct contact was made with Austronesian speakers (Wood 2018).

McNiven (1998, 2006a), noted that research on diffusion has been all but abandoned by the younger generation of Australian archaeologists, while senior members of the discipline have continued to investigate the impact of external influences. McNiven argued that while external influences...
cannot be ignored there is a need to redefine and revitalise such studies without encouraging anachronistic diffusionist scenarios based on colonial tenets. For example, McNiven (2006a:103) noted that early research focused on the selective diffusion of higher cultural traits of ‘advanced’ Papuans to their ‘primitive’ Aboriginal neighbours across Torres Strait (e.g., McCarthy 1940, 1970) but, critically, diffusion cannot be a one-way process. Ideas, like material culture in exchange systems, move between groups in reciprocal arrangements. Thus, a decolonised external influences agenda, must move beyond diffusionism and examine interchanges (McNiven 2006:103). Emphasis must be on dynamic communities who accepted, rejected, modified and invented rather than ones that developed in isolation. The study of invention/innovation and diffusion/migration must play complementary roles (Rowland 1995:15). Unlike migration, diffusion simply means there is enough human movement for circulation of goods, ideas and genes and this movement may be quite small. However, testing for diffusion is difficult. Researchers search for similarities in cultures between two areas and when they find them, assume that movement has occurred. The hypothesis is then often ‘tested’ by compiling an additional list of similarities. But the theory is in fact not ‘tested’ and additional evidence of the same kind is simply added in support (Rouse 1986). While it may be easier to detect evidence of invention/innovation in an archaeological sequence, diffusion/migration does need to be considered as an alternative explanation so that internal development is not simply accepted by default (Rowland 1995:8–9). Innovations that did enter Australia could have been diffused quite easily through Australia via complex networks of trade or exchange systems. Ideas and objects could have been passed from one neighbouring group (with little obvious on ground movement) to another as part of reciprocal gift giving before and after ceremonial events. For example, the Baler shell (*Melo diadema*) which is found in the Gulf of Carpentaria travelled over 1600 km to South Australia (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:97).
Figure 1 Northern Australia. Places mentioned in the text.
The Evidence for External Contacts

Macassans
The strongest evidence for external contact is with Macassan trepang fishermen in northern Australia though the duration of contact was limited in time and space and its impact on Aboriginal societies is yet to be fully understood (e.g., Ganter 2006, 2018; Macknight 1976, 2013; McIntosh 1999; Mitchell 1996). The degree of contact was substantial. For example, Matthew Flinders was told that 60 praus and over 1000 Macassans were working on the Arnhem Land coast when he mapped the area in 1803 (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:408).

Initial Macassan contact is dated to before 1730 AD from the burial of two Indonesian men at a Macassan site in Anuru Bay (Theden-Ringl et al. 2011); before 1664 from a rock art panel (Taçon et al. 2010); and 1637 from a Macassan trepang-processing site in Arnhem Land (Wesley et al. 2014 2016). Macassan influence extended east to the South Wellesley Islands (Oertle et al. 2014) but there is currently no archaeological evidence for Macassan voyaging further east to the Torres Strait or beyond (Grave and McNiven 2013).

Macassan interactions with Aboriginal people have been associated with changes in economy as well as social activities and material culture (e.g., Rosendahl et al. 2014) and their visits are recorded in ceremony, song and stories of the Yolgnu people of Arnhem Land (Trudgeon 2000). Mitchell (1996) noted that dugout canoes and metal harpoon heads were introduced by Macassan visitors to the Cobourg Peninsula and this may also have occurred on the Kimberley coastline (O’Connor 1999:113-117). Small dugout canoes, termed lepa-lepa were carried on the praus for collecting trepang and the Aboriginal word lippa-lippa is considered to have been adapted from the Macassan language (Thomson 1952; Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:412-413). Further, Schrire (1972) described j-shape pearl shell fishhooks similar to the Macassan metal ones from a site at Port Bradshaw.

Indigenous Australians were not passive participants in contact with Macassans but active agents who negotiated conditions (Wesley and Litster 2014) and Indigenous men sometimes worked on the boats and even sailed back to Indonesia with them (Macknight 1976, 2013). Macassans were seasonal itinerant visitors on northern Australian beaches,
trading, collecting and living and working with Aboriginal people, but never stayed permanently (Walters 2000:77) and there is little or no evidence of hostilities that marked the later arrival of Europeans. Nevertheless, impacts may have been more broadly transformative. For example, the disease yaws may have been introduced by Macassans and is likely to have had a wider impact on Aboriginal communities than just those of northern Australia (Webb 1995:147). Before Macassan contact the Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land depict in their songs the visitation of pre-Macassans (Baiini or Baynini) who came from the islands beyond the Arafura and Timor Seas. Today, pre-Macassan time is seen as occurring in the Ancestral Dreaming Period when the great Spirit Beings, who are the inspiration of clan tradition and religion, walked the earth (McIntosh 2008). While the Macassan trepang fishery was prohibited in 1906 ‘the connection has been resumed in a way that both asserts and reclaims new forms of Aboriginality that are no longer premised on social isolation and racial purity’ and ‘what is already known about the Macassan contact history undermines the idea of an isolated continent and the untenable notion of a once pure race of isolated people’ (Ganter 2018:256, 275).

The Dingo

The presence of the dingo on mainland Australia and its absence from Tasmania provides compelling evidence that Indigenous Australians engaged with people beyond Australia between about 3000 to 4000 years ago. The dingo (*Canis dingo*) arrived in Australia approximately 3500 BP (Balme et al. 2018) although the exact timing is unknown (e.g., Greig et al. 2018). Its arrival coincides with a period of increased Austronesian and Oceanic maritime activity leading to suggestions that dingoes may have been introduced through contact with seafarers from New Guinea/Torres Strait, Taiwan, or Indonesia (Balme and O’Connor 2016; David et al. 2004; Fillios and Taçon 2016) with arrival across the Torres Strait likely (David et al. 2004; Greig et al. 2018; McNiven and Hitchcock 2004; Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:260). Recovery of dog remains within the last 3500 years from the Aru Islands to the west of Torres Strait (O’Connor et al. 2018).
lends support to the view that 3500 years ago may have been a critical time for the movement of dogs in the Australasian region and parallels Lapita colonisation (with dogs) in the western Pacific, linking Australia to the Melanesian maritime expansions at this time (Lilley 2000; Rowland 1987).

**Genetics**

Genetic and morphological evidence is equivocal on both pre- and post-8000 year external contacts with Australia. Australian and New Guinean populations share a common ancestry but they diverged ~37,000 years ago (Dortch and Malaspinas 2017; Tobler et al. 2017; Malaspinas et al. 2016:210). Some genetic evidence suggests isolation over a long period with no evidence of secondary gene flow into Australia during the Holocene (Nagle et al. 2016), while Pugach et al. (2013) detected gene flow between Indian populations and Australia which they estimate to have occurred around 4230 years ago, but this has been dismissed by more recent studies incorporating complete genomes (Malaspinas et al. 2016:212). The arrival of microlithic tools in Australia as part of a package with the dingo through contact with Indian populations is considered unlikely (Hiscock 2008; Brown 2013). Importantly, Malaspinas et al. (2016:212) found evidence for continuous but modest gene flow, mostly unidirectional from Papuans to Aboriginal Australians but geographically restricted to northeast Australia. Additional genome studies from the Queensland coast and offshore islands recovering ancient genomes from archaeological contexts will undoubtedly be more helpful for improving our understanding of the extent of Holocene contacts.

**Linguistics**

Linguistic evidence for external contact is also ambiguous. As expected, loanwords from Macassan contact are found around the northern coast of Australia from Bathurst and Melville Islands to the Vanderlin Islands (e.g., Evans 1997; Walker and Zorc 1981). However, there is no evidence for a substantive contact-induced language shift in any Australian language (Hunter et al. 2011:22). A recent study supports a Pama-Nyungan language origin around 5700 years ago in the south of the Gulf of Carpentaria and its spread as part of a cultural package of new ideas and technologies (Bouckaert et al. 2018),
but it is unclear if this was the result of external contact. Clendon (2006:56-57) considered Australia was effectively isolated from significant outside linguistic influences for 60 millennia with existing languages moulded over time only by gradually shifting climatic and ecological barriers. However, contact is apparent in the languages of Eastern and Western Torres Strait (e.g., Wurm 1972). Hunter et al. (2011) argued that the Western Torres Strait language is a genetically Papuan language, though with substantial Australian influence but claim the case for intense contact has been overstated. The Kalaw Lagaw Ya dialect of the western and central islands of Torres Strait, which may have started its formation as early as 2600 years ago, is an Australian language but has been heavily influenced by both Papuan and Austronesian languages (Mitchell 2011). David et al. (2004:74–75) have provided a number of examples of Torres Strait cultural traits named and shared with Austronesian languages.

Agriculture/Horticulture
An apparent absence of agriculture practices in Australia has also proved contentious evidence for a lack of external culture contact during the Holocene. Farming appears to have been introduced to island southeast Asia around 4000 years ago by Austronesian language speakers from Taiwan (Bellwood 2005) and was independently developed on New Guinea (Golson et al. 2017), while arguably Australia remained largely a continent of hunter-gatherers (Hiscock 2008; Lourandos 1997).

Why Aboriginal Australians did not become gardeners as did some New Guineans prior to the formation of Torres Strait is unresolved (Gosden and Head 1999). Jones (1980:138–42) argued that conditions in northern Australia were not ecologically favourable for horticulture citing the constraints of the savanna zone, with its long dry season and poor laterised soils. Despite this long-held perception, there is evidence for a gradient of manipulation of plants through Torres Strait (Harris 1977; McNiven and Hitchcock 2004) and evidence that some Aboriginal plant exploitation practices included forms of cultivation (e.g., Chase 1989). Denham et al. (2009) suggested
that nascent horticultural practices may have developed in northern Australia and that experimentation may have occurred before the Torres Strait was formed or subsequently through maritime interactions across the Arafura Sea and the Torres Strait. Denham (2017:185; see also Florin and Carah 2018) further argued that rather than seeing island south east Asia, New Guinea and Australia as cut-off from one another, they had long and dynamic histories of interaction that enabled the transfer of animals, plants and ideas, however the archaeological evidence remains elusive.

Figure 2 Papua New Guinea, Torres Strait and the Queensland Coast. Places mentioned in the text.
Contact Through the Torres Strait

External contacts did occur during the Holocene. The Torres Strait island archipelago stretching for 150 km between mainland Australia in the south and New Guinea in the north is a logical entry point and it is here we can best glimpse evidence of such contact (Rowland 1987, 1995). The Torres Strait comprises more than 250 islands and 750 coral reefs (McNiven 2015a:40), providing a complex pathway for human movement north and south and east and west. Until recently research focussed on recording the selective diffusion of so-called higher traits of ‘advanced’ Papuans to their ‘primitive’ Aboriginal neighbours (e.g., McCarthy 1940, 1970). McCarthy (1940) identified over 100 material culture traits/items that he believed were introduced into Australia. Haddon (1904) identified three types of trade occurring across Torres Strait: inter-insular trade, trade with New Guinea, and trade with Cape York. Alliances were established between neighbouring islands enabling the widespread movement of items and ideas throughout the area but in general Haddon emphasised the ‘north-to-south’ cultural flows. Linguistic evidence and oral traditions point to both ancient and more recent contacts throughout the area. Both ‘Light-skinned Pacific men’ and Papuans are said to have settled in the Torres Strait (e.g., David et al. 2004) and oral accounts suggest Chinese and possibly Indonesian fishermen visited the area long before the arrival of Europeans (Shnukal and Ramsay 2017:34).

At the time of European contact, a well-linked trade network between Australia and New Guinea existed (Moore 1978:343). Aboriginal people at Cape York traded spears, spear throwers and red and white ochre with the Western Islanders and were involved in a wider network of trade through Muralag (Prince of Wales Island). The Islanders traded pearl shell, conus shell, turtle shell artefacts and human heads to Papua New Guinea and received in return canoes, drums, various items of ceremonial adornment and weapons from the Fly River (Moore 1984:35–6). Moore (1978:324, 1979:323) argued that Torres Strait influences resulted from inter-tribal contacts and not by
extensive Islander visiting and thus he did not see a significant extension of watercraft into the Australian realm. Certainly, there are no equivalent references in Australia to the 50 ft double outriggers observed by Flinders in the Torres Strait and at contact, at least, exchange between Papua New Guinea and Cape York was not direct but through a series of interrelated exchanges. The trade in canoes in particular seems to have been highly controlled (Lawrence 1994:262, 265). However, recent reviews indicate people in canoes travelled far down the Queensland coast.

The extent of southward voyaging by Torres Strait Islanders was reviewed by Rowland (1987, 1995) and again by McNiven (1998) in relation to obtaining stone for the manufacture of stone club heads (*gabagaba*). McNiven’s (1998) study of *gabagaba* overturned the notion that these items came from the ‘advanced’ north to the ‘less advanced south’. Rather people from the Central Islands obtained stone for the manufacture of clubs from islands off the east coast of Queensland. Men from the Central Island group canoed up to 300 km south to the Forbes Islands and around 600 km south to Lizard Island for ‘clubstone’. Movement within the reef system was therefore substantial and it is likely that there were changes in watercraft types and use along the Queensland coastline within the last few thousand years allowing greater mobility (Rowland 1987, 1995). Language similarities, especially relating to watercraft and agriculture, between Torres Strait Islanders and Austronesian speakers have been noted and further study of connections with languages on the Queensland coast is an ongoing priority (Barham 2000; David et al. 2004; David and Mura Badulgal 2006; Wood 2018).

Until recently, the Torres Strait was thought to have been permanently settled during the late Holocene by colonisers from the north around 2500 BP (Barham 2000; Barham et al. 2004; David and McNiven 2004). More recent dating of the Badu 15 site, on the western island of Badu, to 8000 BP has required a revision of the sequence of occupation in Torres Strait. In Phase 1 (8000–6000 BP), ‘Ancestral Cape York’ was connected to the Australian mainland and was permanently occupied by mainlanders. In Phase 2 (6000–3500/3000 BP), the sea level had stabilised and the newly formed islands were visited occasionally by Australian mainlanders. In the final phase, Phase
3 (beginning around 3500/3000 BP), the islands were ‘colonised’ by people from the north and northeast (David et al. 2004:75). This late colonisation of the islands by marine specialists was seen to result from the direct or indirect appearance of people with new, long-distance seafaring technologies (outrigger canoes), possibly the dingo and marine-oriented cultures, associated with expansionist Austronesian influences from further to the east (Brady 2010; David et al. 2004:73). McNiven et al. (2006:73) proposed a dual demographic model of colonisation involving local Australian settlement expansion 3800 years ago followed by Papuan influx 2600 years ago. After 2600 years ago, McNiven et al. (2006) propose that more cultural similarities developed between the emerging Torres Strait Islanders and their northern neighbours than with those in the south. The revised interpretation by McNiven et al. (2006) thus favours ‘migration’ by Papuans around 2600 years ago. The discovery of pottery in the Torres Strait (e.g., Carter et al. 2004; McNiven et al. 2006, 2011; Wright and Dickinson 2009) has added a new dimension to proposed connections around 2600 BP. The discovery of Lapita pottery at Caution Bay on the southern Papuan coast between 2900 and 2500 cal BP (David et al. 2011; McNiven et al. 2011, 2012) and approximately 250 km (by sea) to the west of Caution Bay in the Gulf of Papua region, strongly indicates long-distance post Lapita westward expansions by c. 2600 cal BP (Skelly et al. 2014) and raises the question of the western extent of these migrating peoples.

Research on Torres Strait rock art (e.g., Brady 2010; Brady et al. 2013) provides further understanding of regional interactions. Brady et al. (2013:27) suggested that the art of the Kaurareg of the islands of western Torres Strait has links with islands to the north in terms of motifs and design elements, but also with mainland Australia in relation to the ratio of figurative to non-figurative art, painting techniques and colours used. Rock-art styles/images at Wagedoegam suggest late Holocene connections between Torres Strait Islander and Papuan communities although in which direction is uncertain (Wright et al. 2016). Brady (2010: 163, 255) suggested similar comparisons
between rock art from the Pulu Kod and material culture objects from New Guinea. On Dauan there is a rock painting of possible ‘claw-sail’ canoe, ethnographically unknown from Torres Strait, but present among Hiri raiders of the Papuan Gulf over 200 km to the east. There is also a painting of a line of dancers stylistically akin to artistic conventions from Goaribari on the Aird River delta, 290 km to the northeast (McNiven et al. 2004).

It must be noted that not all changes in the Torres Strait occurred around 2500 years ago, but rather emerged historically in response to internal social changes. McNiven (2006:10) indicated that broad scale cultural changes in settlement, demography, mobility, rituals, seascape construction, social alliances and exchange relationships occurred at 600-800 years ago and also about 400 years ago there appears to have been major transformations in Western Torres Strait Islander ritual practices, as evidenced by the onset of new bu shell arrangements and dugong bone mounds (David and Mura Badulgal 2006).

Evidence of Contact on the Queensland Coastline

Watercraft, Fishing Equipment and Other Items
Research on external contacts through the Torres Strait has focused on the movement of cultural traits into Australia such as outrigger canoes (e.g., Brady 2010; Beaton 1985; Lourandos 1997:47; Rowland 1987, 1995) and fishing equipment (e.g., Lourandos 1997:48, 210–211; Walters 1988). Outrigger canoes in particular were thought to be responsible, in part, for intensified use of the Queensland coast during the late Holocene (Beaton 1985; Rowland 1986:83, 1987). However, this technology was not essential for people to reach offshore islands as they were already being used prior to 5000 years ago (e.g., Barker 2004; McNiven et al. 2014; Rowland 1996:198).

It is widely accepted that the concept of outrigger canoes diffused across northeast Australia from Melanesia (e.g., Barker 2004:146; Beaton 1985; Brady 2010; Lourandos 1997:7; McCarthy 1940; McNiven, 2006b; O’Connor and Veth 2000:131; Rowland 1987, 1995). Canoes entered the eastern, central and western islands of the Strait through three separate trade routes (McNiven 2015b:151) but the antecedents of this system are difficult to determine. Evidence indicates that outrigger canoe
use in Torres Strait dates to at least 2500 years ago and watercraft use back to 9000 years ago (McNiven 2015b:130). The large sea-going canoe hulls used in Torres Strait during the 19th century were imported from the Fly River mouth region, as suitable large trees were not available on the Torres Strait islands. While it is possible that such large canoe hulls were imported into Torres Strait 7000 years ago, lack of information on the early trade systems at this time make it impossible to know what canoes might have been like (McNiven 2015b:130). Recent evidence suggests migration of pottery-making peoples into Torres Strait from eastern New Guinea around 2500 years ago with likely ancestral Austronesian linkages (David et al. 2011; McNiven et al. 2006, 2011). This may coincide with the introduction of double-outrigger canoes to the region (McNiven 2015b:132). More recently Wood (2018) has argued that the single outriggers of southeast Cape York Peninsula may derive from the Massim area of the Papuan Tip while the double outriggers of northern Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait are from mixed sources with an initial form derived from island South East Asia via the south coast of west New Guinea.

McNiven (2015b:193 and Table 6) summarised European observations on the number of canoes travelling together in a fleet in the Torres Strait between 1792 to 1849. These observations ranged from two to ten canoes, with 16 the largest flotilla recorded. Considerable distances were travelled between islands and from islands to the adjacent mainland of New Guinea and Australia (McNiven 2015b:Table 7). Most voyages were undertaken by the Kulkalgal of the central Islands and were confined to Torres Strait, but voyages were also undertaken nearly 600 km southwards along the northern sections of the Great Barrier Reef. McNiven (2015b see also Rowland et al. 2015) provided accounts of Torres Strait Islanders on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands 170 km, and Restoration Island 240 km south east of Cape York respectively. These accounts included: 17 canoes with 95 men 25 km southwest of the Sir Charles Hardy Islands heading south (The Australian Thursday 17 December 1846, p.4), and two canoes with outriggers in the vicinity of the ‘Three wooded Islands’ off
Cape Flattery located nearly 560 km south of Cape York. Haddon (1935:88, 394) was informed that Central Islanders used to travel and barter south during the dry-season along the Great Barrier Reef and the east coast of the Cape York Peninsula. The Central Islanders from Torres Strait obtained stone artefact raw materials (e.g., for club heads), stones for zogo shrines and ochre which they also used to trade with the Eastern Islanders. Torres Strait Islanders (as noted above) also sailed 550 km southeast of Cape York to Lizard Island to obtain ‘club stone’ (McNiven 2015a). The extent to which the Kulkalgal interacted with Aboriginal people during these southern sojourns is poorly documented. Haddon (1935:88, 394) specifically mentioned that ‘barter’ and ‘trade’ took place during these trips which indicates that interactions took place. Whether or not Aboriginal people undertook special trips to meet visiting Torres Strait Islanders, or that such meetings were scheduled during known regular use of these islands by Aboriginal people from the adjacent mainland coast is unknown. Whatever the case, ethnohistorical and ethnographic evidence reveals that sites on islands located along the nearly 600 km of coast from Cape York south to at least Lizard Island may represent the activities of Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islanders (McNiven 2015a:51). Tantalising evidence of contact with the Pacific region was initially considered likely on the basis of pottery sherds discovered on Lizard Island but further analysis and dating of the sherds are required (Tochilin et al. 2012). Nevertheless, recently, Fitzpatrick et al. (in press) have demonstrated through a comparative stylistic analysis of stone arrangements constructed on the Lizard Island Group that while most are predominately of Aboriginal authorship, some arrangements exhibit cultural influences from neighbouring areas such as Torres Strait and the southwest Pacific.

The maximum southern distribution of outrigger canoes has been variously put at the Endeavour River, Fitzroy Island, and just to the north of Dunk Island. However, they were sighted as far south as the Whitsunday Islands and Cape Hillsborough (see Rowland 1986, 1987 for discussion) although they did not displace bark canoes in these areas. It is possible that they may have been distributed further south, but this is difficult to confirm. In the areas that they were recorded, it is not clear whether they were made and used locally, were obtained by
trade, or represent occasional visits by Papuans and/or Torres Strait Islanders along the coast (Rowland 1986, 1987). The extent that outrigger canoes travelled from Papua New Guinea into Australia is of obvious importance since other types of material culture would have been transported on them. However, at present we do not know the extent of such penetration. Rowland (1986, 1987) proposed that outrigger canoes may have aided the transfer of items of material culture as far south as the Whitsunday Islands and perhaps even to the Keppel Islands (Rowland 1987:41). Maritime technologies cited by Rowland (1987:42–43) as indicating possible southwards transfers via the Torres Strait included harpoons with detachable heads (found as far south as the Keppel Islands), fishhooks and the stone drills used in their manufacture, stone-built fishtraps and the hourglass technique of knotless netting. Barham (2000:233) noted that other items included cooking ovens, shell scrapers, stone and coral files, spear points and fishhooks. Barham (2000) identified these as distinctive features of the Torres Strait archaeological record occurring as a major cultural change at 2500 BP which he called the Torres Strait Cultural Complex (TSCC) and which has since been dated closer to 2700 BP (Brady and Ash 2018). Torres Strait Islanders used five major fishing technologies: lines and hooks; scoop baskets; spears; tidal traps; and stupefaction (Weisler and McNiven 2016). No archaeological evidence for fishing technology such as shell fishhooks has yet been recovered from the Torres Strait (Weisler and McNiven 2016) which raises the question of how the idea of shell fishhooks could have diffused into Australia through Torres Strait when no evidence exists for use of these items by Torres Strait Islanders (McNiven 2006:104). It should be noted, however, that worked shell artefacts and ground and perforated shell ornaments have been recovered dating to less than 1200 BP on Mabuiag. These artefacts were produced primarily on taxa such as *Conus, Pinctada, Hippopus* and *Tridacna*, ethnohistorically known to have been used for fishhook manufacture elsewhere in the western Pacific (Harris and Ghaleb Kirby 2015; McNiven et al. 2015).
At Nara Inlet on Whitsunday Island, first occupied prior to 8500 BP, there is an increase in occupation intensity about 2500 years BP and new items of technology appear including pieces of ground turtle shell (possibly fishhook blanks), a dugong harpoon barb, and shell knives (Barker 2004). A fishhook from the Keppel Islands has been demonstrated to be marginally older (i.e., greater than 1000 years) than those from the Sydney area (Attenbrow 2010), which might allow for the possibility of their rapid diffusion down the coast (Rowland 1982). However, the likelihood that fishhooks were independently invented in a number of localities is also possible (Gerritsen 2001, Walters, 1988). An investigation of names for fishhooks and lines has suggested to Walters (1988:Table 2, 105) at least some borrowing and diffusion of linguistic terms throughout the region from an Austronesian source. In avoiding diffusionary scenarios altogether, White and O’Connell (1982) note fishhooks are related to certain kinds of shorelines and their fish.

The late and nearly contemporaneous appearance of fishhooks and other fishing technology in Australia and their limited distribution throughout Cape York, across the northern coastline, and down the east coast allows for diffusion to be considered a possibility in explaining their origins. This may not have involved any significant population movement and could have occurred almost instantaneously. The great trading systems and networks of local exchange combined with the frequent gathering together of groups for ceremonies and other purposes provide a simple mechanism whereby new ideas could have moved throughout Australia. The concept of fishhooks and other items might then have been adapted and modified in particular areas dependent on materials available, types of fish targeted and types of coastal environments. Furthermore, items could be accepted or rejected in various areas depending on the role of fishing in particular communities and the nature of their socio-economic systems. None of the above negates the possibility that in some areas local invention of fishhooks did occur. Much further archaeological research needs to be undertaken along the extensive east coast of Australia to test these various scenarios.
Discussion

Contact did occur through the Torres Strait after the separation of Sahul into New Guinea and Australia. This would have been by people who were predominantly coastally orientated and thus would have achieved contact across water. While evidence of the types of watercraft they used are elusive, there are nevertheless exciting opportunities to investigate the development of associated items such as fishhooks, harpoons and other fishing gear.

Bowdler’s (1995) suggestion that watercraft use diminished in importance after colonisation and was not accelerated again until after 4000 years ago needs to be investigated further. On the one hand, this is a reasonable expectation in some areas, in that colonisers tend to lose their abilities to colonise when they achieve their objective. On the other hand, this apparent reduction in watercraft use may be the result of the vagaries of archaeological preservation (and at least for the period 65,000 to 7000 years ago the majority of the evidence both direct and indirect would now be submerged). Furthermore, it is proposed that in northern Australia, at least, where seas are calmer and more protected, the water is warmer, islands more numerous and clustered and more resource rich, there does not appear to be a major reduction in watercraft use. Nevertheless, at around 4000 years ago outriggers and dugout canoes were introduced which did enable, at least in the north of Australia, a greater use of the sea and offshore islands and enabled the development of groups of marine specialists with a broad-spectrum fishing technology probably introduced with the canoes (Rowland 1995). The timing of the apparent ‘recommencement’ of watercraft use noted by Bowdler (1995) is more than coincidentally related to an expansion of people in the Pacific at around c. 3500 BP. There remains in my view then a connection between world-wide environmental changes at this time (Rowland 1983), expansion of Austronesian people into the Pacific (Rowland 1987, 1995) and the transformations that began to occur in Aboriginal Australian societies. This does not, as some might suggest, deny these societies their own internal
dynamics. It simply shifts the focus from the population in isolation to one that was part of a larger universe of ideas and impacts. This makes the dynamics of such societies all the more interesting as they accepted, rejected or modified ideas (Rowland 1995).

Undoubtedly archaeologists and others will continue to investigate what innovations reached Australia from external sources and were taken up by Aboriginal people. This is worth doing from time to time as new evidence and ideas emerge. Equally, research will continue into why many of the adaptations and inventions in areas to the north of Australia did not reach Australia. In particular, why innovations made in New Guinea did not reach Australia through the Torres Strait with a pathway of many intervening islands over a distance of only 150 km. It is also important to note that Torres Strait Islanders were very selective in what entered their islands from the north. For example, the pig may not have reached Australia from New Guinea because islanders did not want pigs destroying their gardens (see McNiven 2008 for a fuller discussion). In a recent review McNiven (2017) argued that Torres Strait Islander history on a timescale measured in thousands of years reveals a series of significant transformative impacts. In each case, the Torres Strait was incorporated into these ‘ancient globalizations’ that emerged at c. 4000 years ago (with Aboriginal Australia), c. 3300 years ago (with Melanesian New Guinea), and c. 500 years ago (with Southeast Asia). How far these transformations infiltrated more broadly into Australia has yet to be understood. Further research is required but old diffusionary views that innovations moved from an ‘advanced area’ to a ‘backward area’ must be avoided. In consideration of this, new research should also focus on what concepts or artefacts might have moved north from mainland Australia and some archaeologists are now considering such possibilities (Brumm 2018).

Archaeological research has so far contributed little to defining areas of possible culture contact. It may be possible to do so by establishing chronological and stylistic controls on possible introduced items such as fishhooks and stone artefacts. However, contact may have occurred over such a long time period and at irregular intervals, making it difficult to define a chronological sequence. Such contact may also have originated from a number of points at different time periods and extended
at different rates and directions across Australia. Much of the evidence for such contact, in the form of perishable items of material culture, would be unlikely to survive over long periods of time. Indeed, most of the present evidence for culture contact is based on observations of material culture during European contact, where it is difficult to separate traditional cultural items from those influenced by possible earlier contact (Rowland 1995).

Conclusions

Aboriginal people experienced some cultural continuity with people throughout Sahul from 65,000 years ago. However, following the establishment of modern sea levels at approximately 8000 years ago that continuity may have come to an end. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that Aboriginal people had contact with outsiders at approximately 3500 BP when the dingo was introduced into Australia and with Macassans in the last 1000 years. Contact may also have occurred at other times and places to the north of Australia and from the Pacific Basin. There is evidence that contact did occur through the Torres Strait onto Cape York and down the Queensland coast throughout the Holocene. However, nothing could prepare Aboriginal people for the transformative and traumatic changes associated with arrival of Europeans which is the theme of this volume.

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