TJURUNGA IN THE ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTION OF THE GEORG AUGUST UNIVERSITY GÖTTINGEN

– PROJECT REPORT

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Table of Contents

0. Summary 2

1. Introduction 2

2. The Tjurunga in the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen 3

3. The Collectors 4

3.1 Clement 5

3.2 The Donation from Berlin 8

3.2.1 Wettengel 9

3.2.2 Bogner 11

3.2.3 Liebler 14

3.3 Petri 15

4. Closing remarks 17

Annex 19

Unpublished Sources 22

Bibliography 22

0. Summary

The Ethnographic Collection of the Georg August University Göttingen includes almost 300 objects from Australia.[1] These objects include 16 items classified as "tjurunga" (as of 2020). In the course of the present project, which was funded by the German Lost Art Foundation, these 16 objects were documented more precisely, the files dedicated to them viewed and their provenance traced. The aim of the project was to bundle currently accessible information and create the basis for an "informed dialogue" with representatives of the societies of origin.

Since the public dissemination of images of these objects is prohibited by Aboriginal cultural practice, no images have been used in this report. That said, an illustrated appendix has been created that can be made available on request to legitimately interested parties.

1. Introduction

The term tjurunga circumscribes for the most part objects from Australia made of wood or stone with a significant social, religious and political status for the societies of origin. The objects are often engraved or painted, the ornamentation being closely related to the wanderings of mythical ancestors and with totem or clan affiliation. The word "tjurunga" comes from the language of the Aranda (Arrernte/Arunta)[2] from the southern part of the state of Northern Territory, also known as Central Australia. The term originally referred to "everything that is related to sacred ceremonies, myths and songs" (Schlatter 1985: 123).[3] Schlatter uses more specific terms for the objects understood here as tjurunga: "talkara" for stone tjurunga and "tjungajunga" for those made of wood (1985: 123).

According to myth, stone tjurunga were created when the ancestors of the Aborigines descended into the earth after their wanderings and became stones. This also explains why every tjurunga is assigned to a specific location (cf. Schindlbeck 2007: 50). The wooden tjurunga are carved out of trees by human hands as an image of the stones:

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1 Information about this inventory was sent to Australia on 26 March 2019 following a request by Lyndall Ley, Executive Director of AIATSIS (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies). Collection inventories have been available in printed form since the 1980s. These inventories have been made available online in the form of .pdf files since 2019 (https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/stellungnahmen+%e2%80%93+transparenz/617641.html). Dependent on the resources available, objects from the Ethnographic Collection can also be found in the online collection portal of the Georg August University Göttingen (https://sammlungen.uni-goettingen.de) and the online database of the Lower Saxony joint provenance research project PAESE (https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/).

2 In the Australian context, different spellings for social groups are often preferred by different actors. In order to do justice to this fact, all common spellings and names should be understood here as being equally valued.

3 German-language citations have been translated by the translator.

> The objects are considered to be inside the tree, waiting to be released. The sculptor cuts away the surrounding wood to release the object within the trunk of the tree. The spirituality of the object is then realized and made manifest. (Palmer 1995: 22)

The spiritual meaning that Palmer describes here is embodied in the tjurunga. Through the ornamentation, the experiences of the mythological ancestors are passed on in coded form. The code can only be read by the initiated who have background knowledge of the associated myths, the place and the totem that the tjurunga embodies (Kolig 1995: 32). The tjurunga, the myths and the knowledge of their interconnections are secret knowledge of initiated men. In order to meet the wishes of the societies of origin to preserve their secret status, tjurunga and the symbols associated with them are no longer depicted publicly.[4] At the beginning of the 20th century especially, the sacred and secret ritual objects of Australia aroused much interest in European museums and collections. Jones (1995: 68–69) shows impressively how tjurunga became for Europeans a key element of Australian culture and indigenous religions in general.

For this report, archive materials and index cards from the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen were used as well as file material from the *Ethnologisches Museum* (Ethnological Museum) of Berlin and relevant literature.

2. The Tjurunga in the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen

There are currently 16 objects in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen that are referred to as "tjurunga" in files and on index cards. Four of them were additionally categorised as bullroarers (Ger: Schwirrholz) in 1981/82 in a study by the musicologist Ellen Hickmann.

Four of these are stone tjurunga (Oz 683, Oz 684, Oz 1955, Oz 1958) and eleven are made of wood (Oz 675-680, Oz 1956, Oz 1958-1960, Oz 3460). The tjurunga additionally classified as bullroarers are all made of wood. The stone tjurunga have engravings on one or both sides, the bullroarers have also been engraved, some of them with less complex patterns than the other tjurunga. Some of the objects have been painted as well (yellow, blue, red-brown or red-white). Four of the tjurunga and all of the tjurunga/bullroarers discussed here are provided with a hole at one of the tapering ends. The final tjurunga (Oz 681) is made of mother-of-pearl with red-coloured ornamentation. Since it differs greatly in both material and form from the other objects discussed here, it will be examined separately in the section on the collector Clement.

The stone tjurunga are round to oval in form with a length between 18.5 and 26.5 cm and a width of at least 6 cm and a maximum of 16.5 cm. The wooden tjurunga/bullroarers are on the

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[4] As early as 1988/89, for example, the curators of the exhibition "The Flight of the Boomerang - 40,000 Years of Australians" shown in the *Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum* in Cologne explained to visitors on a text panel their decision based on current developments in Australia not to exhibit any sacred Aboriginal objects (cf. Fenner 1990: 29).

whole longer and narrower (between 12.5 cm and 66.5 cm long and between 3 cm and 12.2 cm wide) than the stone tjurunga. The longest object is the wooden tjurunga Oz 1960 (66.5 x 6.3 cm) and the smallest object is the wooden tjurunga Oz 675 (12.5 x 3 cm).

Apart from the four stone objects that can be clearly identified as tjurunga, the distinction between bullroarer and tjurunga made in the archival documents of the collection to date remains imprecise. The two object types are similar in form and cultural meaning. Like tjurunga, bullroarers belong to the complex of secret/sacred objects. According to the literature, they largely have an equivalent cultural position. Schlatter even writes: "In general, one can say that a wooden tjurunga that has a hole in it can be called a bullroarer" (1985: 125). In addition to the objects examined here, the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen has a further seven objects currently classified as „bullroarers" whose provenance needs more detailed investigation. With regard to the 16 objects considered here, the current attribution as documented in the collection will be applied and the objects will therefore be addressed as tjurunga.

The regional origin of the objects (within Australia) was not further specified in ten cases at the outset of the project. Six objects were described as coming from Western Australia, for three of these more detailed information was available. Ethnic classifications were made in nine cases (including seven objects coming from the "Aranda", one object from the "Garadjari" and two objects with imprecise attributions, which will be discussed in more detail in the section on Clement).

A list with detailed descriptions of the individual objects can be found in the annex to this document.

3. The Collectors

The tjurunga in the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen could initially be identified as being part of three different acquisitions.

- In 1928 a total of 36 objects were purchased from a Mr. E. Clement from England for 24 pounds 4 shillings. This collection included eight objects called "schuringa".
- In 1939 the University of Göttingen was donated an extensive collection of objects above all from Africa and the Pacific region by the *Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin* (cf. Schindlbeck 2001: 96). Among these objects were six tjurunga, which according to the inventory list were from the Bogner, Liebler and Wettengel collections.
- In 1967 the collection finally acquired more than 60 northwest Australian objects from Professor Petri from Cologne for DM 600. Among these was a "wooden cult object (darogo)", which Petri had identified as a tjurunga in an accompanying document.

In the following the collectors and the contexts in which they may have acquired the tjurunga are examined in detail.

3.1 Clement

In 1928, the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen bought an extensive collection of ethnographic objects from Australia directly from an E. Clement from Sussex in England. The collection included seven tjurunga and a bullroarer. How the contact between the museum in Göttingen and Clement and ultimately the purchase came about cannot be reconstructed from the existing files, which include no personal correspondence about the exchange. That said, 22 pages of drawings that Clement made or had made of the objects and sent to Göttingen when he offered the collection for sale have survived.

From a document entitled "List of objects from the Clement Collection" it emerges that the Ethnographic Collection purchased, among other things, one "schuringa" from page 12, three "schuringa" each from pages 13 and 14 as well as a "mother-of-pearl churinga" from page 22. Between 8 and 18 shillings each were paid for the tjurunga. The 22 pages of drawings also include pencil tracings of the ornamented objects, so that the Ethnographic Collection was able to get a good idea of the objects before they bought them.

On 19 December 1927, the Göttingen Collection wrote to Mr. E. Clement, Rhosmaen Cottage, West Hove, Sussex, that his offer of a rebate would be taken up gladly and asked that items that had been personally selected by the later director of the institute Hans Plischke be sent to Göttingen with a detailed invoice. The invoice for 24 pounds 40 shillings is also on file in Göttingen.

It is not difficult to identify E. Clement, West Hove, Sussex: Emile Louis Bruno Clement was between 1896 and the 1920s a prolific seller of ethnographic objects to many European museums, the British Museum being one of his first clients (Coates 1999: 114, 131).

Clement was born in 1844 in what is today Bad Muskau in Saxony and probably moved to Great Britain in 1870. Throughout his life he tried out various professions, was an archaeologist, collector, mine manager, children's book author and antique dealer (The British Museum, no date). In 1895 he traveled to Australia for the first time to help in the construction of a gold mine. Presumably for the same reason, he also spent the years 1896-1898 and 1899-1900 in the area around Roebourne in the Pilbara Division of Western Australia (Coates 1999: 116). Between 1896 and 1910 he and his son Adolphe Emile Clement put together large collections of ethnographic, zoological and botanical objects, which he sold to museums on his return to England. After 1910 he seems initially to have devoted himself to other interests and published two children's books. It was not until 1920 that he resumed trading in ethnographic objects. This time, however, it was not

he himself who collected the objects in the field — even if suggested such in his letters to museums — but residents of northwest Australia who acted as his "agents" (Coates 1999: 123, 138). In this second phase of his sales career, he addressed smaller British regional museums and sold many ethnographic objects in, among other places, Germany. According to Coates (1999: Table 6.1), in addition to the Ethngraphic Collection in Göttingen, museums in Hamburg, Frankfurt, Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Stuttgart and Bremen also have objects in their inventories sold to them by Clement.

In the context of this project it is of particular interest where the objects that Clement resold came from or where and by whom they were collected by Clement and his agents. First indications of where he himself collected his objects can be found in a letter to the editor from 1899, in which he claims to have visited "every native camp within a hundred miles of Roebourne" (Clement 1899). He was familiar with the indigenous population of all camps and stations in the Pilbara Division — namely Cooya Pooya, Pyramid, Croydon, Little Sherlock, Mundabullangana — as well as the stations on the Turner and De Grey Rivers.

Pilbara is a region in the northern part of Western Australia, south of the Kimberley region. The region acquired renown, among other things, with the Pilbara Strike from 1946 to 1949 during which Aboriginal agricultural labourers stopped their work to fight for human rights and fair wages (Palmer 1983: 172). Roebourne is an old mining town in the west of Pilbara in, so an AIATSIS map,[5] the *country*[6] of the Ngarluma. This coincides with the statement by Clement that some objects sold to Göttingen (no tjurunga being among them) came from the "Gnalluma" - as Ngarluma was often written in the past.

Clement's "Ethnographical Notes on the Western-Australian Aborigines" published in 1903 contains a map showing his travel route during his first stay in Australia in 1896-98 and the territory of several "tribes" of northern Western Australia. In the accompanying text, Clement describes the rituals and everyday culture of the "Gnalluma-tribes", which he also locates around Roebourne. While neither tjurunga nor bullroarers are mentioned explicitly in his descriptions or the attached catalog of objects, objects with similar functions and objects that look very similar to the tjurunga in the Ethnographic Collection are. He describes "tarlow" as being a stone object belonging to an individual family, passed down from generation to generation, that is associated with certain either plants or animals. Its meaning, kept secret from outsiders, is passed on as part of a circumcision

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5 On AIATSIS see footnote 1. The mentioned map is available at https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2020).

6 *Country* in this context refers to land and waters to which an individual or group of Aborigines have cultural and spiritual connections and to which they are entitled or claim entitlement (cf. Ley et al. 2020: 5).

ritual (Clement 1903: 10). The populations of the associated living beings can be positively influenced via rituals with the tarlow (1903: 6). That said, Clement does not provide an illustration of a tarlow. Another object category described by Clement — the "invitation-stick (*gilliana* or *gugina*)" — which, so Clement, has the role of an invitation card for the circumcision of boys (1903: 9), is illustrated on Panel IV in the same publication and shows similarities to the wooden tjurunga in the collection in Göttingen.

Other objects used in the context of circumcision, but also in other rituals — "*cora* or *bonangharry*" — are described by Clement as a "devil scarer" and a bullroarer (1903: 26). The cora/bonangharry from different parts of northern Western Australia shown on Panel IV are similar in shape and design to the bullroarers and also to the wooden tjurunga in Göttingen that were bought from Clement.

Panel V of Clement's publication shows two objects that are very similar to the mother-of-pearl object Oz 681 acquired from Clement. In the case of this object, it can be assumed that, considering its clearly different shape, material and design alone, and against Clement's claim, which was in turn adopted by the Collection in Göttingen, that it is not a tjurunga. Clement describes the objects in his publication as being a "*birra-birra* waist-ornament" and claims to have received them from the "Pidungu tribe" near Broome (1903: 19). That said, even if Oz 681 is not a tjurunga, based on its material, it is likely that it is a sensitive object from a secret/sacred ritual context (cf. Akerman 1995: 47). Like the wooden tjurunga/bullroarer Oz 680, the object Oz 681 in the collection in Göttingen was said to have been from the "Pidungu, near Derby".

Tindale (1974) has two matching entries: He lists "Pidungu" as an alternative, albeit derivative name for Ngaiawongga (1974: 251). According to AIATSIS, the Aborigines called Ngaiawongga by Tindale identify themselves today as Tjupany. Their *country* lies south of the Robinson Range in the Goldfield Region of Western Australia, bordering to the west on that of the Wadjari and Badimaya. In addition, there is an entry in Tindale (1974: 240) on the "Bidungu", a term that has the same derivative connotations. According to Tindale, the term was used by Wadjari speakers as a synonym for the Barimaia (according to AIATSIS: Badimaya). Badimaya c*ountry* is also in interior Western Australia in the Mount Magnet area. It is reasonable to assume that the derogatory term was used by Aborigines from the north of Western Australia as an umbrella term for groups from the Western Desert in the interior of Western Australia.

Admittedly, Clement's statement that the object was purchased "near Derby" runs contrary to the suggestion that it was of Badimaya, Tjupany or any other Western Desert origin. Derby is located further north, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and is, according to AIATSIS, the *country* of the Nyikina and Warwa. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is the historical

fact that the regions of Western Australia have been shaped by several domestic migration movements at least since the Pilbara Strike (cf. Palmer 1983: 172–174). Myths and secret/sacred objects from the Western Desert migrated north with the people (cf. Petri 1966). It is therefore quite conceivable that Clement's agents in the northern part of Western Australia encountered members of the Western Desert groups and traded with them, or — and the derogatory name used by Clement suggests as much — that the objects were not traded by the Badimaya or Tjupany themselves but by other Aboriginal groups who had previously acquired the objects from the southern groups.

The origin of the objects thus cannot be reconstructed solely on the basis of Clement's ethnic attribution. However, it is likely that Clement's agents acquired the objects in the Pilbara or Kimberley regions of Western Australia.

3.2 The Donation from Berlin

In 1939, the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen received an extensive donation from the *Ethnologisches Museum* in Berlin. This donation included 237 objects from the South Seas department and several others from the private collection of the curator of the Oceania Department Hans Nevermann, which were classified as "duplicates" in the Berlin collection. As Hoffmann (2010: 106) describes it, no clear guidelines existed for identifying an object as a duplicate — that is, as an object of which an equivalent or "better" piece exists in the collection. In the case of the *Ethnologisches Museum* and its predecessor institutions in Berlin, objects were also classified as duplicates when enough similar objects existed: "By classifying it as a duplicate, the affected piece was denied the character of being unique, and thus its object identity was negated" (Hoffmann 2010: 106). In the case of secret and sacred objects such as tjurunga — which also embody a very individual network of relationships, individual myths and legends and individual ancestors — the negation of an object's unique identity is all the more serious.

Since the archives in Göttingen contain little information on the objects from this collection, the files of the *Zentralarchiv* (Central Archive) of the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz* (Berlin State Museums - Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation) were consulted in the course of this study. This data shows that the objects were individually selected by Hans Plischke, director of the Institute for Ethnology in Göttingen, and then sent to Göttingen in six crates. Nevermann had previously obtained permission from the General Director of the museums in Berlin to donate 235 pieces with a value of 2600 Reichmarks. A document that can also be found in Göttingen includes a list of 237 objects from the South Seas Department, including 16 pieces from Australia. These latter pieces include the four tjurunga from the Wettengel collection and one tjurunga each from the Bogner and Liebler collections, each valued at ten Reichmarks.

3.2.1 Wettengel

The Wettengel collection was purchased by the *Ethnologisches Museum* of Berlin (then the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* - Royal Museum of Ethnology) in 1907, making it the oldest acquisition being considered here.

After ten years of missionary work in Australia, Wettengel wrote to the museum in Berlin for the first time on 6 July 1906, immediately after arriving in Bremen. He offered the museum his collection of ethnographic objects, which included many "inscribed wood and stone tablets". He had acquired the collection from the Aranda, who live in the MacDonnell Ranges.

Upon a request for more information from Felix von Luschan, the director of the Oceania Department of the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde*, Wettengel wrote that the panels contained "all the laws and customs of the natives there", but that they can only be deciphered in combination with certain legends, which are "a secret entrusted alone to the elders of the tribe" and therefore difficult to access (Wettengel to von Luschan, 14 July 1906). Von Luschan then arranged an appointment to visit Wettengel in the Bavarian municipality of Oberkotzau which is located near the city of Hof on 12 August 1906. He wrote to his colleague Bernhard Ankermann and the general administration that it was a tremendous collection without equal but that he could not assess its authenticity. After the visit, the collection of 449 objects, including 76 stone and 114 wooden tjurunga (Schindlbeck 2007: 56), was purchased for 1200 Marks. Von Luschan and Wettengel also agreed that the latter would transcribe the myths that he had written down during his missionary work and make them available to the museum for a further 300 Marks. However, the scholars in Berlin soon realised that the text of the myths alone was not enough to understand them, so they invited Wettengel to Berlin. From 1-16 November 1906, Wettengel revised his transcriptions in Berlin together with the linguist W. Planert. After Wettengel's early departure due to the illness of one of his children, Planert and Wettengel continued to communicate in writing until mid-1907, and Wettengel produced two dictionaries on the Aranda and Dieri languages for the museum, which were included in an essay by Planert on Dieri grammar (Planert 1907). Wettengel's spelling and grammar were thereupon harshly criticised by his missionary colleague Carl Strehlow (Strehlow 1908).[7] The myths in the Aranda language provided by Wettengel were never published.

A missionary named Nikolaus Wettengel appears in Schindlbeck (2007: 55); in Harms (2003) and Völker (1999: 25) he is named Nathaniel, in all three cases little to no further biographical data is mentioned. In the data published online by the regional church archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, a "Nicol Wettengel (1869-1923), Australia, USA" can be found, including

[7] As Moore (2019: 228) shows, Strehlow was not alone in criticising Wettengel's inadequate knowledge of the Aranda and Dieri languages.

the note that personnel documents and correspondence are archived (Hagelauer 2015). John Strehlow describes Nicol Wettengel in detail in his biography of his grandparents Frieda Keysser and Carl Strehlow: Wettengel was born in 1869 in poor circumstances and worked as a farmer after ending his schooling early. In 1892 he entered the Neuendettelsau seminary and graduated there four years later (Strehlow 2011: 758). In the same year he was sent to Australia to first work as a teacher among the Dieri in the Bethesda/Killalpannina mission station in southern Australia (2011: 759). In 1901 he was transferred to Hermannsburg/Ntaria in the western Aranda region to replace a sick missionary and work alongside Carl Strehlow (2011: 760).

Carl Strehlow and Wettengel differed not only on the already described issue of translation, but also on how the mission station should be run. According to John Strehlow, Wettengel was convinced that missionary work should also take place outside the station proper, only Christians should live in the station itself so his position, and every person who behaved in an unchristian manner should lose the right to live there and no longer be provided with rations or clothing by the mission. Strehlow, on the other hand, was willing to build a settlement with Christians and non-Christians in which Christian values and traditional Aboriginal values could coexist to a certain degree (2011: 876). This dispute ultimately led Wettengel to have to leave Hermannsburg/Ntaria in 1906 and he was ordered back to Germany by the Neuendettelsau Mission Society (2011: 777). After a short break from his missionary work and cooperation with the museum in Berlin, Wettengel was stationed to Texas in 1907. For the next 20 years, until his death in 1923, he preached in various churches in the United States.

From Wettengel's biography it can be concluded that his long stays in Central Australia provided him the opportunity to develop close relationships to Aborigines living on and around the missionary stations, which may have made it possible for him to collect sacred and secret objects.

The Hermannsburg/Ntaria mission station was founded in 1877, but was abandoned after a short time due to the "brutal attitude of the other white settlers towards the indigenous people" (Schindlbeck 2007: 52). In 1894 these missionary efforts were resumed, by Carl Strehlow in particular. No information is available on the number of Aborigines living in the station or in its vicinity during Wettengel's time there. In 1910 there were 170 Aranda living in the vicinity of the station (2007: 53).[8]

If one follows John Strehlow's remarks that Wettengel was a comparatively uncompromising and dogmatic missionary, it seems at least possible that Aborigines gave Wettengel their tjurunga

[8] Detailed histories of the Hermannsburg/Ntaria mission station can be found in Albrecht (2002) and Harms (2003).

and other sacred objects to affirm their Christian faith towards him or to continue to receive rations from the mission. Wettengel's letters to the museum in Berlin only reveal that from February to June 1904 he spent "all the remaining time" (Wettengel to von Luschan, 17 November 1906) collecting myths associated with the tjurunga, and in turn probably a large part of his collection came together during this period. Wettengel gives the MacDonnell Ranges as the place of origin of the collection. This is a mountain range also called Tjoritja north of the Hermannsburg/Ntaria mission station and delimits the western Aranda area to the north.

The records of the four tjurunga from the Wettengel collection that came to Göttingen in 1939 also include their indigenous names, but Wettengel's unreliable spelling makes it difficult to clarify conclusively, what the names refer to. Again, since the names or the totems assigned to the tjurunga are at least in part subject to rules of secrecy, these will not be mentioned here. The indigenous names are available on request to legitimately interested parties and can be viewed in the appendix (see above).

3.2.2 Bogner

Somewhat fewer records can be found on the Bogner Collection, which the *Ethnologisches Museum* in Berlin bought a year after the Wettengel Collection. In the Central Archive of the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* there exist several letters written by von Luschan and Marie Bogner as well as the German Consul General for Australia Georg Irmer between 1907 and 1908. From these it emerges that Bogner was stationed as a missionary "in the interior of South Australia" and respited in Tanunda, a small town near Adelaide. The missionary Bogner was a poor man, but through his work he had access to Aboriginal religious objects that few others could acquire without difficulty (Irmer to von Luschan, 12 November 1907).

In a letter dated 12 November 1907, Consul General Irmer announced the delivery of two crates of ethnographic objects that Bogner had collected to the Museum in Berlin. While the crates were being transported to Berlin via Albury, Sydney and Bremen, von Luschan contacted Bogner directly and sent him instructions on how to collect ethnographic data.[9]

Four months after Irmer's letter, the two crates arrived in Berlin after "various to date unexplainable diversions" (von Luschan to Bogner, 18 March 1908). Compared to the larger Wettengel

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[9] In addition to a detailed documentation on the origin and significance of the objects Bogner collected and the relationships among the Aborigines with whom he had contact, von Luschan expressed great interest in „acquiring the largest possible number of native skulls and skeletons" (von Luschan to Bogner, 5 February 1908). No such documentation can be found in the archived material. Marie Bogner, the missionary's wife, replied to von Luschan's wish to acquire Australian skeletons, saying that the collection of bones was "hardly possible for a missionary" (Marie Bogner to von Luschan, May 20 1908).

Collection from the same region received a year earlier, von Luschan assessed this collection as of little value,[10] but wrote to Bogner that a scientifically satisfactory explanation of the use and meaning of the "Churinga", which Wettengel had also not succeeded in doing, would increase the value of Bogner's collection and enter the name Bogner "forever in gold letters in the annals of ethnology" (von Luschan to Bogner, 18 March 1908).

A letter from Bogner himself cannot be found in the files in Berlin, but there is a list of indigenous names and explanations of meanings for part of Bogner's collection. When and by whom this list was made is unclear — the handwriting suggests that it was Bogner himself. This list also includes the indigenous name for the object located in Göttingen today, but no further explanation of its meaning. Regarding tjurunga in general it says:

> Tjurunga are stones or woods that connect the individual to his totem, each individual is connected to such a tjurunga. They are kept in caves and must not be shown to women or children under any circumstances. The characters engraved on the wood indicate the totem. For example, if a man belongs to the snake totem, then a snake tjurunga belongs to him, etc. (List of indigenous names, no date)

Von Luschan commissioned his employees to divide the collection into so-called duplicate series and released them as donations for smaller museums. However, there are no tjurunga in the five duplicate series created, so it is likely that Berlin initially kept all the tjurunga from Bogner's collection. According to Schindlbeck (2007: 60), the collection originally contained 198 items; 103 of them being tjurunga. One of these 103 tjurunga found its way to Göttingen in 1939.

Little information about a missionary named Bogner was found in the literature on German missionary work in (South) Australia. Coates, whose dissertation from 1999 focussed on the aforementioned Emilie Clement, mentions that the Lutheran mission station Killalpaninna was sold in 1915 to a Johannes Bogner, who had worked at the station for several years, and a German farmer (Coates 1999: 189). In the files of the regional church archive in Nuremberg there is listed a "Johann Matthias Bogner (1860-1930), Australia" (Hagelauer 2015). John Strehlow writes a good deal about a "John Bogner", who was a close colleague of Carl Strehlow. The dates of birth and death given by Strehlow for John Bogner agree with those of Johann Matthias Bogner in the church archives. Johann Bogner was thus born as the son of a miller on 26 December 1860 in Obererlberg, a town

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[10] According to Schindlbeck (2007: 57), after purchasing the Wettengel collection, von Luschan attempted to establish the museum in Berlin into a centre for ethnographic materials from Australia. With this in mind he entered into negotiations with the missionary Reuther, who also offered a collection from Central Australia, but ultimately did not sell it to Berlin. The low value that von Luschan attached to Bogner's collection stands in contrast to this endeavour. Perhaps the lack of success in his negotiations with Reuther dissuaded von Luschan from his plan, but it is more likely that the large range of sacred Australian objects from 1908 onwards led to a decline in the value of the collections on the market for ethnographic materials (Schindlbeck 2007: 63).

neighbouring Neuendettelsau (Strehlow 2011: 513). He attended the Neuendettelsau mission seminary together with Carl Strehlow from 1887 and shared a room with him for most of that time (2011: 515). Bogner completed his training there in 1890 and followed a call to Australia a year later, initially to replace Pastor Flierl in Bethesda/Kilallpaninna (2011: 514). However, it did not come to that. What Bogner did in Australia for the first few years is not elaborated upon any further by Strehlow. In 1894, Bogner was transferred to Hermannsburg/Ntaria by the mission administration to support Carl Strehlow in the management of the mission station there. On 25 May 1895, Bogner, his wife Marie and their newborn son arrived in Hermannsburg/Ntaria after a four-month-long journey from Bloomfield (2011: 515). From then on it was Bogner's job to manage the financial fortunes of the mission station, to administer and direct the labourers and ensure the supply of the mission residents. At the same time, Carl Strehlow was responsible for religious training and the school at the mission station (2011: 545). During his time in Hermannsburg/Ntaria, Bogner carried out ethnographic research on the marriage classes of Loritja for Francis Gillen, co-author of the study *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* published in 1899 (2011: 549).

In 1900 Marie's steadily deteriorating health forced the Bogner family to leave Hermannsburg/Ntaria (2011: 723–724). In 1902 John Bogner took over the management of the mission station in Bethesda/Killalpaninna (2011: 782). Strehlow also describes how the Bogner Collection came to Berlin:

> In July 1907 John Bogner was on one of his trips between Tanunda and Bethesda when he found himself unexpectedly in the company of the German ambassador to Australia, Georg Irmer. Bogner mentioned that he too had a collection of artefacts for sale which he had acquired in the course of his work. [...] Irmer asked Bogner to supply 'a quite precise inventory of each object giving where it came from, its function and its religious ceremonies 'and sent the goods to Berlin promising that payment would be forthcoming (Strehlow 2011: 979).

The mission station Bethesda on Lake Killalpaninna was established in 1866 as the first mission station in Central Australia by missionaries from Hermannsburg in Lower Saxony (Schindlbeck 2007: 51). The station had to struggle for years with droughts and other adverse circumstances that led to it being sold to Johann Bogner and the farmer Johannes Jaensch in 1915 (Coates 1999: 189). Three years later the station was abandoned completely and taken over by ranchers (Schindlbeck 2007: 52).[11] In the dry season of 1899, around 60-70 Aborigines lived around Bethesda/Kilallpaninna, with the number steadily decreasing outside the dry season and over the years until Bogner's arrival (2007: 53). The station was in South Australia, east of Lake Eyre in the *country* and *native title*[12] area of the Dieri.

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11 The history of the mission station Bethesda/Kilallpaninna can be found among others in Stevens (1994).

12 On *native titles* see http://www.nntt.gov.au/nativetitleclaims/Pages/default.aspx

Strehlow writes about Bogner's character that“ [f]rom all accounts he was very sociable: he liked people, and they liked him. He was fascinated by their life stories and not judgmental about their morals ”(2011: 514). Bogner seems to have chosen a different approach to his colleague Wettengel when dealing with the Aborigines.

Since no letters from Bogner himself have survived in the archive in Berlin and his wife Marie refrains from describing in the above-mentioned letter when and where the missionary started his collecting activity, we can only speculate about the exact origin of the objects. Bogner spent five years at the Hermannsburg/Ntaria mission station in the western Aranda region and a further six years at the Bethesda/Killalpaninna mission station in South Australia in the *country* of the Dieri before selling the collection. In addition, Bogner could have had the opportunity to collect objects in the vicinity of his retreat in Tanunda. According to the AIATSIS map, Tanunda is in Kaurna and Ngadjari territory.

The list of indigenous names and explanations of the cultural meaning of the objects provided by Bogner provides further information: the names given can also be found in the same or very similar spelling in a revised version of a dictionary of the Aranda language published by Carl Strehlow in 1909 (Kenny and Inkamala families and members of the Western Aranda community 2018). Since Carl Strehlow also takes up individual divergent terms from the Dieri language there, which in turn do not match the names given by Bogner, it is reasonable to assume that Bogner came to his collection during his time in Hermannsburg/Ntaria among the western Aranda and not after his transfer to Killalpaninna/Bethesda, where he lived among the Dieri. Why Bogner kept a collection that he must have created before 1900 until 1908 to then sell it in a very ad-hoc manner without even agreeing on a price remains unclear. Even if it is likely that the objects originate from the western Aranda around Ntaria/Hermannsburg, it cannot be completely ruled out that the missionary only mentioned Aranda names because these were better known to him, while the objects actually came from other groups.

3.2.3 Liebler

In 1912 the *Ethnologisches Museum* in Berlin acquired another collection from a German missionary from Australia. Oskar Liebler and his wife Luise personally donated a number of ethnographic objects from the interior of Australia to the German Kaiser. In the files that are kept in the Zentralarchiv of the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* there can be found no direct correspondence with Liebler but only a short correspondence between the Imperial Foreign Ministry and the German Consul in Australia H. Muecke, in which it was determined that the gift to the Kaiser was to be accepted and added to the Oceania collection of the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde*. Later, Liebler sold

his collections to other German museums, partly through middlemen such as Walter Schmidt or Egon Hintz (Olaf Geerken, personal communication on 21 December 2020). Extensive collections from Liebler can thus be found in the *Museum am Rothenbaum. Kulturen und Künste der Welt* in Hamburg (MARKK), in the GRASSI *Museum für Völkerkunde* in Leipzig and in the *Linden-Museum* in Stuttgart. These include a number of tjurunga. In addition to the object acquired from Berlin, the collection in Göttingen includes a piece (Oz 684) with the inscription "Aranda, W. Schmidt". That this tjurunga from Walter Schmidt was effectively collected by Liebler appears probable.

According to Schlatter (1985: 24), Oskar Liebler was born in Kitzingen am Main in 1884. He attended a school for weavers and began in 1901 to work as a salesman in Augsburg. In 1905 he joined the Neuendettelsau Mission and attended the mission school until 1909. After his marriage, he was called to Hermannsburg/Ntaria in 1910 as a vacation replacement for Carl Strehlow. Liebler was in charge of the station until 1912; after Strehlow's return, Liebler worked as a teacher in the station school. After only four years, Liebler left Australia and the mission society. He worked in the Bavarian regional church until 1920, after which he worked as a freelance missionary in Palestine, where he was interned in 1939. He died in an internment camp in 1943 (Schlatter 1985: 24).

It is remarkable that Liebler collected such a large amount of ethnographic material in his comparatively short time in Hermannsburg/Ntaria. Schlatter, who worked on the Liebler collection in the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, also noted the fact that the objects sold by Liebler include above all sacred and ritual objects as well as highly aesthetic objects. Schlatter did not find a satisfying explanation for this fact, citing alone Liebler's "missionary enthusiasm for the sacred" (1985: 37) and the possibility that by "collecting […] pagan" objects, it was possible to make the practice of non-Christian rituals more difficult."

A detailed examination of the person of Oskar Liebler and the tjurunga he collected is currently being carried out in PAESE[13] subproject "Provenance of Tjurunga in the *Landesmuseum Hannover* (Lower Saxony State Museum of Hanover) and in the Hermannsburg Collection" by Olaf Geerken and will be available on the project homepage in the near future.

3.3 Petri

In 1967 the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen bought one final tjurunga. This piece was part of a larger collection from northern West Australia that Helmut Petri, professor at the University of Cologne, had put together a few years earlier. How the purchase came about is not documented in the archive in Göttingen. From those documents available, however, it can be concluded that

[13] On PAESE (Provenance Research in non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony) see https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/

Petri and his wife Gisela Petri-Odermann visited the Göttingen collection personally in 1968 or 1969. On 7 May 1969, the curator in Göttingen, Manfred Urban, wrote to Petri asking him a few questions about his collection. The letter from Urban cannot be found in Göttingen, but the response is, namely a letter written on 13 May 1969 by Kurt Tauchmann, a colleague of Petri, who informed him that the latter was currently in Australia and that answering the questions could therefore take some time and will probably occur straight from Broome. A letter from Petri to Urban cannot be found, but Urban's questions appear, so a handwritten note in the file, to be on the origin of glass tools and are therefore of no further relevance here.

More important for this project is the detailed list that documents the receipt of the Petri Collection and the allocation of inventory numbers. The 30th entry on this list is Oz 3460, described as a "wooden cult object (darogo) from La Grange by the Garadjara". In addition to this "cult object", the Petri collection includes over 60 other objects from La Grange and Lombadina that Petri attributed to a total of seven different ethnic groups. In addition to Oz 3460, 13 other objects (including boomerangs, dance shields, throwing clubs and much more) were assigned to the Garadjari.

The extensive background information that Petri provided in a 19-page document is a rarity in the context of this investigation. Petri described the use of every object he sold and commented on its manufacture. On Oz 3460 he wrote:

> (darogo, La Grange, Garadjari)
>
> Tjurunga, a wooden, elongated cult object, flat on one side and curved on the other, also provided with conventional engraved patterns (concentric circles and parallel line arrangements) on both sides. It belongs to a complex of traditions and cults maintained throughout the western desert, which became known under the name "wandji-kurangara" (cf. Petri in Baessler Archiv 1966). It is the mythical history and the mythical tradition, brought to life in cult, of a group of totemic ancestral beings who emerged in the dreamtime from the coastal areas of today's city of Broome and crossed the interior in a south-easterly direction to arrive in the legendary land of "dinari". The conventional patterns on the object mark the travels, the cult acts and the watering places of this group.

In an essay published in 1966, Petri elaborated on the term "darogo":

> The [...] term 'darogo' or 'darugu' is like 'tjurunga' of the Aranda of Central Australia, a broad term that includes sacred objects, sacred acts, cult chants, etc. Darogo [...] can be understood in a broader sense as a synonym for the secret (closed to the uninitiated) sacred. (Petri 66: 332)

Helmut Petri (1907-1986) was director of the Institute for Ethnology at the University of Cologne from 1958 to 1973. He received his doctorate in 1935 for his work on "Forms of Money in the South Seas" and he later carried out his first field study in the Kimberley region in northern Western Australia from 1938-39 and completed his *venia legendi* in 1949 on "The Australian Medicine Man".

He completed a second research phase together with his wife Petri-Odermann in 1953-54 in the same region. They concentrated on the groups "Nyangomada, Garadjeri and Yilbaridja" (Michel 1988: VI). According to Petri's student Michel, Petri and Petri-Odermann visited northern West Australia regularly after this first research trip, continued their research and made contacts in the region. Petri documented the existence of Aboriginal sacred places and participated in age assessments in order to support individuals and groups in their struggle for land and pension rights (Michel 1988: VI). Intimate relationships developed between Petri and the groups he studied and he was "integrated increasingly and finally adopted completely" (Michel 1988: VII). The close relationships in the field probably provided Petri the opportunity to acquire valuable and sacred objects.

According to the overview of alternative spellings of indigenous group names by AIATSIS, the indication "Garadjari" suggests the Karajarri, whose *country* extends south of Broome in the Kimberley region. In the heart of this region can be found the Bidyadanga community, also known as La Grange. Petri's information is therefore identical to that of AIATSIS.

4. Closing remarks

The goal of this project was to shed light on 16 Australian objects from secret and sacred ritual contexts, to evaluate the archival material associated with them and to bundle the information on their provenance. Before the project was carried out, five collector names were known for whom biographical data could be collected. In the case of the eight tjurunga acquired from E. Clement from England, only little information on the provenance could be elicited based on the documents available in Göttingen. As a result of Clement's international activities and his renown as a dealer in ethnographic objects, biographical data could be added from the literature. It became clear that Clement no longer collected himself in the 1920s, but acquired ethnographic materials from northern Western Australia through intermediaries.

Few documents were available in Göttingen on the objects received as a donation from Berlin in 1939. Therefore, as part of the project, the files relating to the acquisitions in the central archive of the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz* were examined. With the help of the documents and relevant literature held in Berlin, the collectors Wettengel, Bogner and Liebler could be identified as missionaries of the *Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk*. For the six tjurunga, the time and place of acquisition could be narrowed down using the missionaries' biographical data. In addition, one tjurunga whose year of acquisition and collector was previously unknown could also be attributed with a high degree of probability to the missionary Liebler.

For the objects acquired by Helmut Petri in 1967, the information provided by the collector could be traced and verified. The information available allows for a regional and ethnic specification that can now be processed by the Australian side. For the tjurunga Oz 683, which was taken up in the collection without any data on date of acquisition, collector or place of origin, no sufficient evidence of its provenance could be found in the course of this project.

Overall, the data on the tjurunga held in Göttingen could be improved and in some cases the origin of the specific tjurunga could be more precisely identified regionally, ethnically and chronologically. The present report and the associated appendix of images, which can be viewed in case of legitimate interest, form the basis for further discussions with cooperation partners in Australia and representatives of the societies of origin. In addition to contact with AIATSIS (see footnote 1), proactive contact was made in 2020 with the Central Land Council and the Strehlow Research Centre in Australia in cooperation with the joint provenance research project of Lower Saxony PAESE (see footnote 11).

Annex

The following objects were sold by E. Clement to the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen in 1928 without providing any additional information on their regional or ethnic provenience:

- Oz 675: A 12.5 cm long, oval-shaped, red-brown coloured object made of wood, classified according to the index card as a tjurunga and bullroarer (rotational aerophone) with ornamental incisions.
- Oz 676: A 37.5 cm long, 3 cm wide object made of almost black wood with engraved ornamentation classified as a tjurunga.
- Oz 677: A 25 cm long, 4 cm wide object made of light wood, one side of which is coloured brown-red and the second side is yellow provided with red-brown ornamentation. According to the index card, it was classified as a tjurunga and bullroarer (rotational aerophone).
- Oz 678: A 46 cm long, 5 cm wide object made of wood with red-brown ornamentation on a dark brown background, classified according to the index card as a tjurunga.
- Oz 679: A 34.5 cm long, 3.7 cm wide object made of black-brown wood with engraved, red and white coloured ornamentation. It was also classified as a tjurunga.

The origin of these objects remains unclear after the completion of this project. It is possible that Clement acquired them in northern Western Australia (i.e. in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions) through unknown intermediaries.

Two of the objects acquired from E. Clement in 1928 were attributed by the collector to the area around Derby and to an ethnic group called "Pidunga" near Derby:

- Oz 680: A 66 cm long, 6.2 cm wide object made of red-dyed wood with engraved ornamentation classified as a bullroarer (rotational aerophone) and a tjurunga.
- Oz 681: A 15 cm long, 4.5 cm wide, oval-shaped object made of mother-of-pearl with red-brown coloured, incised ornamentation on one side with a thread attached. The index card initially classified the object as a tjurunga, but includes the note: "According to the collector, more correct: necklace".

The ethnic term provided by Clement is not a proper name, but, so to Tindale (1974: 215, 240), a derogatory appellation for groups from the Western Desert (Western Australia). In the case of these two objects it is also unclear from whom Clement acquired them. Presumably he acted through intermediaries in the north of Western Australia or near Derby.

The Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen received the following tjurunga in 1939 as a donation from the *Ethnologisches Museum* in Berlin:

- Oz 1955: A 26.5 cm long, 16.5 cm wide, rounded tjurunga made of stone, painted red with engravings. The index card states that it belonged to the "Liebler Collection" and that it came from the Aranda.
- Oz 1956: A 28 cm long, 5.6 cm wide wooden tjurunga, painted red with engravings. It is part of the "Wettengel Collection" and also from the Aranda. An associated indigenous name is noted on the index card, which can be made available on request to legitimately interested parties.
- Oz 1957: A 21.5 cm long, 12.5 cm wide, red-painted stone tjurunga. According to the index card, it bears the figure of a frog as an engraving on both sides and was also acquired by Wettengel from the Aranda. An associated indigenous name is noted on the index card, which can be made available on request to legitimately interested parties.
- Oz 1958: A 49 cm long, 12.2 cm wide, red painted tjurunga made of wood. Like the ones mentioned above, it is part of the "Wettengel collection" acquired from the Aranda. Here, too, an associated indigenous name is noted on the index card, which can be made available on request to legitimately interested parties.
- Oz 1959: A 50 cm long, 10.5 cm wide, red painted tjurunga made of wood. According to the index card, it is part of the "Wettengel Collection" and acquired from the Aranda. An associated indigenous name is noted on the index card, which can be made available on request to legitimately interested parties.
- Oz 1960: A 49.5 cm long, 9.3 cm wide, red painted wooden object. On the index card, Aranda is noted as the ethnicity of origin and Bogner as the collector. The object is classified as a tjurunga and a bullroarer (rotational aerophone). An associated indigenous name is noted on the index card, which can be made available on request to legitimately interested parties.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Bogner, Liebler and Wettengel were all stationed as Lutheran missionaries in Hermannsburg/Ntaria in the Northern Territory in the western Aranda region (Western Arrernte/Arunta). There they had the opportunity to collect secret/sacred material. Bogner and Wettengel also have a connection to the Bethesda/Killalpaninna mission station in Dieri *country* in South Australia.

Two other Tjurunga are attributed to the Aranda, but these do not contain any information about their collector:

- Oz 684: A 18.5 cm long and 10 cm wide tjurunga made of stone with red coloured ornamentation. According to the files, the note "Aranda, W. Schmidt" can be found on the object. As could be shown, this is a reference to Walter Schmidt, who acted as a middleman and intermediary for the missionary Oskar Liebler. Accordingly, it can be assumed that Oz 684, like Oz 1955, was acquired by Liebler in the context of the Hermannsburg/Ntaria mission station among the western Aranda.
- Oz 683: A 23.5 cm long, 6 cm wide tjurunga made of stone, with red-coloured engraved ornamentation. Further information on how and when it was acquired and from whom is not available. In the inventory catalog of the Ethnographic Collection, "before 1936" is the only entry (Schlesier and Urban 1988: 7).

In 1966 a tjurunga was bought from Helmut Petri:

- Oz 3460: A 27 cm long, 7 cm wide tjurunga made of wood, curved on one side, flat on the other with engraved ornamentation on both sides. According to the index card it was collected by of Prof. H. Petri in La Grange from the Garadjari. It was purchased by the Ethnographic Collection in 1966, making it the most recent addition to the collection being considered here.

The object comes from the Bidyadanga community/La Grange in the Kimberley region of Western Australia from the Karrajarri living there.

Dr. Michael Kraus has prepared an appendix with photographs of the tjurunga as part of this project. This appendix can be made available upon request by the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen to legitimately interested parties.

Translation: Andreas Hemming

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