I. Carl Strehlow and the Aranda and Loritja of Central Australia

On the 23 December 1871 in a little village called Fredersdorf in Northern Germany, Carl Friedrich Theodore Strehlow was born as the seventh child of the village school teacher (Liebermeister 1998: 16). Carl grew up in modest circumstances that offered few opportunities. In the Germany of the late nineteenth century, clerical institutions were the only source of education for the talented poor. The Lutheran Seminary at Neuendettelsau where Carl trained offered a rich and intense intellectual grounding for the bright and gifted student. As Carl Strehlow was finding a calling that would take him to the remotest place on earth – as Europeans imagined it – the world in which he would spend 30 years was being uprooted.

At the time, the Overland Telegraph Line was making its way north traversing traditional Aboriginal countries in central Australia. In just a very few years, this initiative was followed by the Lutheran missionaries, A.H. Kempe and W.F. Schwarz. In 1877, they built a small mission settlement at Ntaria, a sacred site associated with the ratapa dreaming.¹ The missionaries called this mission ‘Hermannsburg’ in recognition of the seminary that had trained them. Their journey from Bethany in South Australia to the centre of Australia had lasted nearly 18 months because they had been travelling with an entourage consisting of 37 horses, 20 cattle and nearly 2000 sheep (Leske 1977, 1996; Scherer 1963; Harms 2003). Not long after their arrival Kempe and Schwarz were joined by Louis and Charlotte Schulze (nee Gutmann), and their future wives Dorethea (nee Queckenstedt) and Dorethea (nee Schulz), who were the first European women to settle in central Australia.

One year after the missionaries’ arrival in 1878 a group of Western Aranda men led by Nameia² returned from a long revenge expedition into the southern territories of the Matuntara and must have observed with great surprise and indignation ‘the first structures erected at Hermannsburg’ that ‘greeted their eye’ (Strehlow 1970: 125). These were not the only wary or hostile eyes trained on the missionaries. By 1879 the mission lease was surrounded by squatters who were backed by local police (Hartwig 1965; Donovan 1988: 60, 87). Both groups tended to disparage the missionaries.

¹ See Carl Strehlow (1907: 80–81; 1908: 72 f.3; 1911: 122–124) and T.G.H. Strehlow (1971: 758).
² Nameia was murdered in 1889 at constable William Willshire’s police camp on the Finke River. It seems the murderers were never identified with certainty (Nettelbeck and Foster 2007: 71–73). See also T.G.H. Strehlow’s Journey to Horseshoe Bend (1969).
At Ntaria, the newcomers immediately built pens for their livestock. They also began their crusade to evangelise the indigenous people who chose to stay temporarily at the new settlement. This proximity allowed the Lutherans to begin their study of language and culture. The missionaries called these people Aldolinga meaning ‘from the west’. However, the progress in spreading the gospel among the ‘Aldolinga’ was slow and life on the frontier incredibly harsh due to droughts, isolation, disease and the aggression of other white settlers. By 1891 the little mission was abandoned, the missionaries had been defeated by the challenges and the loss of their families (Austin-Broos 1994: 132).
The Aranda and Kukatja-Loritja peoples

Carl Strehlow’s ethnographic data relates mainly to two distinct groups whom he broadly labelled Aranda and Loritja in the title of his publication, although these names can also be used for other neighbouring groups. One was an Arandic group and the other was a Western Desert group that did not display all the typical features of a Western Desert culture due to social and environmental circumstances.

Carl Strehlow refers often to the Western, North-Western, Eastern and Southern Aranda in his writings, but he does not define exactly where their territories lie; and on his map (1910) he shows language and dialect distribution rather than territories belonging to particular groups. He placed the western Arandic language, Aranda Ulbma, on the upper Finke River, roughly between the MacDonnell and James Ranges (including Hermannsburg Mission), the Aranda Roara between the eastern part of the MacDonnell Ranges and James Ranges including Alice Springs, the Aranda Lada from approximately Henbury along the Finke River and the Aranda Tanka between Charlotte Waters and Oodnadatta along the lower Finke River. His son, T.G.H. Strehlow (1971: xx), wrote that Carl Strehlow’s information came mainly from the north-western and Hermannsburg sectors of the Western Aranda area.

The Arandic group whose culture Carl Strehlow documented in great detail identify themselves today as Western Aranda or Arrarnta. They call themselves sometimes ‘Tyurretyerenye’, meaning ‘belonging to Tyurretye’, and refer to their Arandic dialect as Western or ‘Tyurretye Arrernte’ (Kenny 2010: 6). Their ancestors lived in an area bounded roughly in the north by the Western MacDonnell Ranges (Strehlow 1907: 32, 42; T.G.H. Strehlow 1971: 670, note 19) that separates them from the Anmatyerr and Northern Aranda peoples. In the south, their country stretches along the Finke River past the James Range, to the countries of Southern Aranda and Matuntara peoples. To the west, it extends to the Derwent River and to the east it abuts the territory of today’s Central Arrernte people (see also T.G.H. Strehlow 1947: 59).

3 Tjoritja (Tyurretye) was not only the name for the MacDonnell Ranges, but also for Alice Springs which lies in the MacDonnell Ranges. Carl Strehlow also wrote that ‘Lately, Alice Springs has been called Kapmanta; kap is an abbreviation of kaputa = head, and manta = dense. Kapmanta literally means: dense head. What it refers to are the roofs close together (roof = head of the house) because here the natives had first seen roofs of corrugated iron’ (Strehlow 1907: 42).
3. Carl Strehlow’s map, 1910.

Source: Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.
For the Aranda, first contact with the newcomers occurred in the early 1860s when John McDouall Stuart was trying to find his way to the northern coast of the continent via the inland (Strehlow 1967: 7–8). Owen Springs was central Australia’s first pastoral station, and the indigenous people who resided between that station and Ntaria would certainly have encountered the cattlemen and other explorers who passed that way in the early 1870s (Austin-Broos 1994: 131). Ernest Giles, for example, seems to have recorded the first Western Aranda word, ‘Larapinta’, the name of the Finke River, on the 28 August 1872:

Soon after we had unpacked and let go our horses, we were accosted by a native on the opposite side of the creek. Our little dog became furious: then two natives appeared. We made an attempt at a long conversation, but signally failed, for neither of us knew many of the words the other was saying. The only bit of information I obtained was their name for the river — as they kept continually pointing to it and repeating the word Larapinta. (Giles [1889] 1995: 8)

The country of the Western Aranda is of a rare beauty, painted by Albert Namatjira (1902–1959), and other artists of the watercolour school of Hermannsburg, who still capture in their art the river systems, magnificent gum trees, gorges, rocky valleys and the creeks that emanate from the aged ranges. The area is one of the best-watered parts of central Australia. This automatically resulted in conflict between the indigenous people and the new settlers.

4. Image of central Australia.

Source: Shane Mulcahy, Desert Vision.
The majority of cattle runs in this region were established between 1876 and 1884, bringing thousands of cattle and horses onto the traditional lands. Naturally the local people reacted, as their waterholes were being destroyed and contaminated by these new animals. A kind of partisan war broke out. The cattle killings were answered by shootings. As the scarce desert resources were fouled by stock, droughts set in and the aggression towards the indigenous population increased, Aranda people drifted to the Hermannsburg Mission that offered easy rations and some safety (see also Morton 1992: 52). Life on the mission was fraught with difficulties for the Aranda. They were crowded into a small area that many of them once would have visited only occasionally, if at all. By the time Carl Strehlow arrived at the mission the Aranda had been largely pacified, although there remained pockets of resistance that annoyed the local police as well as Strehlow. The cattle spearing affected the mission by dragging Strehlow into court to address ‘partisans’ who lived on the mission lease, or mission cattle speared by these or other groups.4

The people living to the immediate west of the Western Aranda called themselves Kukatja or Loritja at the turn of the twentieth century. Today they call themselves Luritja or Kukatja-Luritja when referring to their ancestry and history.5 The Kukatja may have heard of the newcomers from their eastern and southern neighbours. We cannot know, but at the very latest they would have encountered Europeans when the exploring parties of Ernest Giles in 1872, and William Christie Gosse in 1873, pushed into the Centre and traversed parts of their territory.

The country of the Kukatja-Loritja lies to the west of the Derwent River which marks broadly the language border between them and the Aranda. This language boundary sometimes determines how people perceive their country and often describe the border area as ‘mix-up’ country, referring to the fact that a number of places have both Loritja and Aranda names and that there is no clear cut border between them. Röheim (1974: 126) called these people ‘Lurittya Merino’, and noted that they were seen as ‘half Aranda’. People who belong to this border area are still today fluent speakers of both Aranda and Loritja and share ancestors as well as traditional laws and customs (Kenny 2010).

Carl Strehlow remarked that the people whom the Aranda called ‘Loritja’, referred to themselves as ‘Kukatja’ (Strehlow 1907: 57, Anmerkung 9). According to T.G.H. Strehlow ‘Loritja’ was the Aranda name applied to all Western speech groups (Strehlow 1947: 177–178). The people themselves refused this designation and used instead ‘Kukatja, Pintubi, Ngalia, Ilpara, Andekerinja, etc’. According to Tindale, the name ‘Luritja’ had a negative connotation with the result that

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4 Carl Strehlow’s letters to his superior Kaibel held at the Lutheran Archives, Adelaide often describe the court dealings and cattle killings which he grudgingly had to tend to. See Vallee (2006) and Nettelbeck and Foster (2007) on frontier conflict in this region.

5 There is a distinct group of people living at Balgo in Western Australia who are also called Kukatja.

Over the course of time Luritja has become a linguistic and cultural self-label despite its foreign origin for a number of peoples. By the 1960s people preferred to refer to themselves as ‘Luritja’ and today ‘Luritja’ remains a broad term that can be used interchangeably with other Western Desert labels (Smith 2005: 73). ‘Kukatja’ and ‘Mayutjarra’, for example, are recognised by middle aged and elderly speakers as being equivalent to the new label, ‘Luritja’ (Holcombe 1998: 217).

Additional confusion surrounding the language and group label ‘Luritja’ is a result of migration towards the south by Ngaliya Warlpiri, Pintupi, Jumu or Mayutjarra and Kukatja peoples (see Holcombe 1998: 217). Some of these groups refer to themselves as ‘Luritja’. The movements of ‘Luritja’ groups have been mainly caused by the disruptions of the past 100 years which included epidemics and environmental stress such as drought and starvation. According to Tindale, for example, a group called ‘Jumu’ or ‘Mayutjarra’ was decimated by an epidemic in the 1930s. Following their extinction Pintupi and Ngaliya Warlpiri people moved into their vacated country (Tindale 1974: 138, 227–228). Smith writes that the Kukatja were on the move to the east and south by the late 1880s (Smith 2005: 1). This chain migration of desert people into the settled districts took several generations to run its course.

During Carl Strehlow’s time, Kukatja-Loritja people belonging to the area immediately to the west of Aranda territory moved south-eastwards towards the Hermannsburg Mission (see Leske 1977: 26–27; Smith 2005). When the explorer Winnecke passed through the general area in 1894, he still encountered ‘sandhill tribes’ living west of Hermannsburg (Winnecke 1897: 37), who were presumably Kukatja. Their eastward migration intensified with the onset of a major decade-long drought in 1895 (Smith 2005: 29) and throughout the 1920s, the Kukatja people moved through the frontier to resume contact with relatives at the mission and on the outlying pastoral properties (Smith 2005: 51; Holcombe 1998: 26). The missionaries were aware of ‘a vigorous tribe just west of Hermannsburg’ with a large population, and in the late 1920s, plans for Aranda evangelists were made to take their message to these groups.

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The location of the ‘Kukatja’ area today is understood as being along the western edge of Western Aranda territory. T.G.H. Strehlow has maintained that Kukatja land stretched from the western border of Western Aranda westwards to Mt Liebig and Putati spring (1970: 110). Heffernan describes a current perception of the territory that was owned by Kukatja:

The Kukatja (as distinct from the people of the same title living at Balgo in Western Australia) lived in the country west of Glen Helen Station (Ungkungka) along the tail of the Western MacDonnell ranges through to Mt Liebig, south to Gosses Bluff, the Gardiner Range and then out to Mt Peculiar and Mt Udor. The country includes such prominent communities as Papunya, Haasts Bluff, Umpangara and Mt Liebig. (Heffernan and Heffernan 2005: 4)

Pre-contact, Kukatja-Loritja culture was strongly influenced by Western Aranda traditional laws and customs and vice versa (Strehlow 1947). When white settlement destabilised desert life, they moved into the Hermannsburg Mission and the Aranda influence on Kukatja ways would have become more intense. Heffernan and Heffernan write about the Kukatja:

Because these people lived on the fringe of Arrernte country, they moved into Hermannsburg very early on (for reasons that were important to them at the time – easy food is one most frequently given). A good number of their descendants today live in outstations west of Hermannsburg, and in the Papunya region. They instinctively refer to themselves today as Arrernte or Luritja and only as Kukatja on the basis of ancestry. (Heffernan and Heffernan 2005: 4–5)

Today the cultures of Western Aranda and Kukatja-Luritja people have many features in common. This is not surprising, given their close relationships that involve joint ceremonies, intermarriage and an overlapping land tenure system (Strehlow 1908, 1913; T.G.H. Strehlow 1947, 1965, 1970; Kenny 2010) as well as a shared environmental space – the well-watered range system. In more recent times, commonalities have been re-enforced not only at Ntaria but also at other settlements including Haasts Bluff, Mt Liebig and Papunya.

**Carl Strehlow’s life and work in Australia**

Carl Strehlow arrived in Australia in 1892, not long after graduating from the Neuendettelsauer seminary in southern Germany. His first posting was the

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7 Stirling had noted in 1894 that ‘the territory of the Lurichas marches on the western boundary of Aruntas, and comprises the country about Erldunda, Tempe Downs, Gill’s Range, Mereenie Bluff and Glen Helen’ (Stirling 1896: 11).
Bethesda Mission at Lake Eyre in South Australia. The moment he arrived at the mission, he showed interest in the language of the local people. Within six months he spoke Diyari (Schild 2004a: 55) and by the end of 1894, with J.G. Reuther, he had translated the New Testament into Diyari. It was called Testamenta marra, published in 1897.

In October 1894 at the age of 22 he was transferred from Bethesda to Hermannsburg in remote central Australia. He arrived at the abandoned mission station with two fellow missionaries, Reuther and Linke. His first impressions of the Hermannsburg Mission were not favourable because the small congregation had dispersed:

I was disappointed … It was very hurtful to see the jewels of a mission station, the little church and school, fallen into disrepair … There was not one Christian to welcome us like at Bethesda. Only a few naked heathens looked at us in amusement when we arrived.⁸

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⁸ Carl Strehlow, Kirchlichen Mitteilungen, No. 3, 1895: 19.
He stayed for nearly three decades at this place. He ran it as a mission and a cattle and sheep station, providing pastoral care for more than 100 Aboriginal people who became Christians, as well as a large number of their relatives who lived on the fringes of the mission. At the same time he was keeping aggressive pastoralists at bay and dealing with a range of social issues that had been caused by the forcing together of different Aboriginal groups. Some Western Aranda and Kukatja at Hermannsburg, for example, had been enemies for a long time (Strehlow 1947: 62).

These local arrangements were extraordinary. Hermannsburg was the largest settlement in central Australia, bigger than Alice Springs. The people living at the mission were not a group that traditionally would have lived there together for extended periods. The mission created a completely new setting for the indigenous population who were hunters and gatherers. They must have tried to accommodate this situation by activating, reconciling and adapting every imaginable tie to country and kin. It is likely that tensions emerged between the actual local group of Ntaria and other mission inhabitants from neighbouring or far-flung countries. The situation therefore would not have favoured traditional territorial organisation.

Administrative work for both church and state were also a part of Carl Strehlow’s duties. He became the postmaster, Justice of the Peace and contributed to the school by developing curricula, translating hymns to the music of Bach, and preparing lessons in Aranda. His work at Hermannsburg would bring him into conflict with pastoralists, the police, governments, the British anthropological establishment and even his own church.

The young man was soon left to his own devices by Reuther and Linke who returned south. Despite the desolate conditions of the mission, Strehlow started rebuilding it with great enthusiasm, not least motivated by the prospect that his young fiancée Friedericke Johanna Henriette Keysser would be arriving within the year. Their courtship is documented in endearing epistles that travelled between central Australia and Germany. The complete correspondence9 has survived and gives a unique insight into their relationship (Brandauer and Veber 2009: 113–127). From Hermannsburg, Carl wrote to Frieda about every detail that she would encounter. Her future home, the surrounding landscape and the palm garden behind the house – which he considered the ‘most beautiful place in the whole of the Northern Territory’10 – were familiar to her when she arrived at the mission. He wrote:

My dearest loved Frieda! … Now you may want to know more about Hermannsburg, where, so God will, we shall find our home. The area around the station is prettier than around Bethesda. Transpose yourself

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9 Held at the Strehlow Research Centre (SRC) in Alice Springs.
10 Carl Strehlow to Frieda Keysser, 10.10.1894.
in your imagination to Hermannsburg standing beside me and looking out of the window. Not far to the north you see a long, high range, with some mountains in its foreground, that is the MacDonnell Range. When you move to the next window with me, looking to the south, you can overlook our gardens that are quite big. You can see the date palms, the peppertrees and some pomegranate trees in bloom now, the red blooms are wonderful. … There is also a gazebo in which we will be sitting comfortably and chatting intimately in the cool evenings. Beyond the garden lies the Finke River, but no water is flowing in it, only some gumtrees are growing in it. Behind the Finke rise steep and high mountains, which are only sparsely vegetated with grass and flowers.\textsuperscript{11}

The young couple had only met once in a three-day encounter during Easter 1892 (Brandauer and Veber 2009: 114), just before Carl had left for his Australian calling. It was love at first sight. Three years would pass until they met again after a long and protracted battle with her guardians. Her letters to him shared his passion and enthusiasm. About their first meeting she writes:

When you looked at me with those blue eyes, I knew, that you loved me. When you had left that day, I just wanted to cry and cry, but I was not permitted to let anyone know… But now you are mine after a long battle. If it were only my decision, I would come sooner to you.\textsuperscript{12}

Frieda was looking forward to her new life and adventure in Australia, which her imagination clothed in a romantic haze. In her letters she discussed with her future husband her dowry which included measured curtains for their home. Travelling from Germany, Frieda, 19 years of age, joined Carl in 1895. The voyage to the Centre in the early summer was an ordeal. The heat, the flies and discomfort of the travel were unbearable. In addition she suffered from excruciating toothaches. Her luggage with the curtains for the house arrived months later leaving her without the essentials for her new life.

Despite the inconveniences, Frieda embraced her role as a missionary’s wife. She started to learn Aranda, teach the women household skills intended to improve health and elevate living standards, and had six children at the Hermannsburg Mission. Her first child Friedrich was born in 1897, her only daughter Martha in 1899, Rudolf in 1900, Karl in 1902, Hermann in 1905 and her youngest son Theodore, who would later become one of the most controversial figures in Australian anthropology, in 1908. Together Carl and Frieda made Hermannsburg a refuge for the local people and fought for their physical and mental survival. By 1912 the efforts of the Strehlows were obvious. Carl was able to report:

\textsuperscript{11} Carl Strehlow to Frieda Keysser, 12.11.1894.  
\textsuperscript{12} Frieda Keysser to Carl Strehlow, 22.7.1894.
1. that the number of deaths during the past years has steadily gone down; and therefore 2. the state of health of the blacks on our station has improved and as far as the inhabitants of our station are concerned, 3. the Aranda are not yet thinking of dying out (!). (Strehlow 1913: Preface)

7. Frieda Strehlow and her first child Friedrich, 1897.

Source: Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs (SRC 7762).
Frieda was one of the very few European women to know the unforgiving life of the desert frontier, becoming by default one of central Australia’s first female ethnographers, predating Daisy Bates and Olive Pink. She was not to know that her married life would include work on her husband’s ethnographic masterpiece.

8. Aranda girls with Frieda at Hermannsburg in the 1890s.

Source: Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs (SRC 5835).

Carl Strehlow started work on language and translation immediately. His fluency in Diyari and the bible translation facilitated his acquisition of the local languages, Aranda and Loritja. His previous experience is likely to have helped him grasp the intellectual concepts of the Aranda and Loritja at Hermannsburg. He was also able to draw on language materials compiled by his predecessor missionaries, Kempe and Schulze. He became fluent in Aranda within months and preached in the vernacular. In 1896 only two years after his arrival on Aranda territory, Strehlow’s Aranda was so good that Gillen, who had been living among Arandic peoples since 1875, used his services as a translator for his anthropological research in Hermannsburg (Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch [1997] 2001: 118–119). In 1899 Strehlow supplied some information on Aranda kinship terms and subsection systems to Otto Siebert and Howitt.¹³

In 1904 Carl Strehlow published an Aranda Service Book, Galtjindintjamea-Pepa Aranda Wolambarinjaka which included 100 German hymns translated into Aranda and some of them set to Bach’s church music. This work was partially based on that of his predecessor Kempe and the assistance of Aranda

¹³ Otto Siebert to A.W. Howitt, 22.4.1899 (Howitt Collection at Melbourne Museum).
men like Moses Tjalkabota who seemed to have embraced Lutheran teachings (Tjalkabota 2002: 237–300). On the other hand, Tjalkabota was one of the main informants for Strehlow’s ethnographic oeuvre and had been initiated. At the end of 1904, Strehlow’s future editor, von Leonhardi, who had some queries on religion, offered to publish anything that Carl might write. Although Strehlow had already collected some material on mythology\(^\text{14}\) and collated an extensive wordlist of Aranda, Loritja, Diyari and German, his ethnographic research only started seriously in 1905 after von Leonhardi expressed his interest in a publication (Kenny 2005).

\[\text{9. Loatjira, Pmala, Tjalkabota and Talku, 1906/7.}\]

Source: Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs (SRC 6196).

\(^{14}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 30.7.1907.
The building blocks were now in place: language fluency, a stable domestic life, growing ease with the people, increasingly engaged informants, a European contact promising publication and, most importantly, intellectual engagement. Carl Strehlow spent the following five years collecting ethnographic data from senior men at Hermannsburg and sending plant, animal and insect specimens as well as material culture to Germany. The specimens were widely distributed by his editor to museums and reputable scientists in Germany for research, classification and display.

Carl Strehlow collected his material mainly from senior men who were not Christians or still immersed in their traditions. From what we know about ownership of dreaming stories and country, he could only have gained his information from the appropriate owners of a certain age group. Four of his main informants, Loatjira, Pmala (Tmala), Moses (Tjalkabota) and Talku, are mentioned by him and his son (Strehlow 1971: xx–xxii).

Loatjira (c.1846–1924) was Carl Strehlow’s main informant on Western Aranda culture. He was the most important contributor to Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien. He was the inkata (ceremonial chief) of Ntaria, ‘the grand old man of Hermannsburg’, and an important ngankara (healer, doctor), who ‘had possessed full knowledge of the dreaded death charms’ and had taken part as a young man in avenging parties (Strehlow 1970: 116). He was not resident at the mission and resisted conversion. According to T.G.H. Strehlow, Loatjira was the main upholder of Aranda religion who ‘remained strongly opposed to Christianity throughout the lifetime of my father, and in fact came to Hermannsburg very rarely after the completion of my father’s book’. Loatjira chose to live outside Hermannsburg near Ellery Creek, which was on the eastern boundary of the mission-lease, and only came permanently into Hermannsburg after Strehlow’s death. Carl wrote that ‘the old heathen Loatjira’ had learnt the commandments despite of his old age and blindness, but left the station with his wife due to a death. That day in 1913, 20 people left the mission in accordance with mourning customs. There must have been lots of coming and going due to the deaths that occurred at Hermannsburg. It is not known if Loatjira returned to the mission before Carl’s death.

H.A. Heinrich noted that Loatjira was among a number of persons who had received pre-baptismal instruction from Reverend Strehlow. He was baptised in 1923 and christened Abraham. T.G.H. Strehlow reports that he died a broken

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15 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.6.1906. Strehlow sent von Leonhardi a letter on the 8.4.1906, in which he seems to have offered for the first time to send ethnographic objects to Germany.
17 T.G.H. Strehlow’s gloss for ‘inkata [ingkarte]’.
19 Carl Strehlow, Kirchen- und Missions-Zeitung, No. 5, 1914: 34.

Quite significantly was the baptism of the old blind Aranda chief and sorcerer, Loatjira (Loatjira), who only three years before has called Christianity ‘rubbish’. Already in 1913 as reported above, he had joined Strehlow’s class of instruction, but this was disrupted when he left Hermannsburg in 1914, returning only in the early 1920s. With longing joy he announced his desire to be baptised. In answer to the question ‘why’, he said: I believe that Jesus is my Saviour. Tjurunga (the sacred objects of the Aranda and the ceremonies connected therewith) is of the devil and a lie. I desire with all my heart to become a Christian. I believe that Jesus is able to save even me… (Lohe 1977: 37 cited in Rowse 1998: 82)

I doubt that Loatjira really converted. He wanted to die on his own country. One of the main features of Aranda belief is ‘becoming country’, going into the country and becoming part of it – all songs end with the ancestors growing tired and longing for their home and returning to their place of origin. Loatjira wanted to die at Ntaria. It was on his father’s and father’s father’s country as well as in the vicinity of his conception site where his spirit-child (called ‘ratapa’ in Carl Strehlow’s work) had come from and where his ‘iningukua’, his spirit-double, usually dwelt.  

Not much is known about Pmala (Tmala), the second person on the photograph of Strehlow’s main informants. Pmala (c.1860–1923) was a Western Aranda man with his conception site at Ndata belonging to the euro dreaming, north-west of Glen Helen Gorge (Strehlow 1971: xxii, 599, 760). Pmala married Annie Toa in 1890. He was baptised ‘Silas’ on the 16 April 1900 by Carl Strehlow. According to T.G.H. Strehlow Silas often chopped firewood for the Strehlow home, and normally brought down on his head the large bread-setting dish with the fat and innards from the killing pen. He died on the 24 June 1923 suddenly of heart failure. He had been blind from youth.  

Moses Tjalkabota (c.1873–1950) is the best-known contributor to Strehlow’s oeuvre. He became a famous evangelist in central Australia, despite his blindness, and thus was well documented by the Finke River Mission. He had been baptised on the 26 December 1890 by A.H. Kempe when he was about 12 or 13, but had been nevertheless initiated. He was married on the 25 January
1903 to Sofie and had 12 children, only one of whom survived. Interestingly, Moses also had his sons initiated, despite being a staunch Christian. According to his autobiography, he was among the first to shake Carl’s hand at his arrival in 1894 and taught Carl Aranda (Tjalkabota 2002: 272).

The fourth man in the picture is Talku (c.1867–1941), Carl Strehlow’s main Loritja informant on myth and song (1908, 1911). While he was able to collect a substantial amount of kinship terminology (1913) from him, he was not able to complete Talku’s family tree. He remarked:

Unfortunately, I could not gather sufficient data to complete [the family tree], for my informant, Talku, who also supplied most of the Loritja myths and cult songs, has once more left our station, and his other tribal companions residing here have married local women and have therefore already been included in the family trees of the Aranda.

The man sitting at the end of the row on the right is Talku. He used to make it his task in life to spear the cattle belonging to the whites. An attempted escape during his arrest resulted in him being shot through the abdomen. He was then brought to the Mission station and remained there until he ran away one day to enjoy his golden freedom. (Strehlow 1913: 85, and note 2)

Talku was also an important informant for his son, T.G.H. Strehlow (1970: 137; 1971: xxi, 768), who knew him as Wapiti, Talku’s name in old age. ‘Wapiti’ means yam. T.G.H. Strehlow made some biographical notes on Talku, aka Wapiti, as well:

Talku, like Loatjira, was not a resident of Hermannsburg. He was the ceremonial chief of the Kukatja yam centre of Merini. Born about 1867, he organised raids upon cattle belonging to Tempe Downs Station at the beginning of the century. A police party surprised these raiders one day south of Ltalatuma, and fired upon them when they sought to evade capture. Talku was hit by a bullet from a police tracker’s rifle which passed through his body and emerged again without apparently injuring any vital organs. His upper thigh bone was, however, shattered. He was carried on the backs of his friends across the ranges to Hermannsburg, a distance of some twenty-five miles. His tough constitution and unconquerable courage carried him through this ordeal. After being nursed back to health at Hermannsburg, he showed his gratitude to my father by providing him with detailed information on Loritja totemic rites, sacred songs, and social organization. And then he disappeared again one day into the free wild life of his own country. (Strehlow 1971: xxi)
Talku must have left the station at the very latest in 1909. By 1929 he was back at the mission. On his research trip to Hermannsburg, Norman Tindale made a data sheet of Wapiti which also confirms his identity. He died at about the age of 70 on the 14 January 1941.

Other informants of Carl Strehlow seem to have included Hezekiel’s father, a western quoll man, and Nathaniel Rauwiraka, a main man of Ellery Creek.

Carl Strehlow’s methodology was rigorous. He sat with his informants who sang and dictated word by word their songs and myths and described ceremonies and performances. Their dictation allowed verbatim recording of songs along with their accounts of the choreography and meaning of the sacred ceremonies and artefacts used in them. Strehlow’s records were not an eyewitness description of performances. His language proficiency allowed detailed, accurate recording of the descriptions, explanations and interpretations that Aranda and Loritja people themselves provided for their ceremonies and cultures.

He seems to have spent as much if not more time between 1905 and 1909 on his ethnographic project than on his missionary duties. The Lutheran hierarchy criticised Strehlow for the amount of time and energy he devoted to his research and writing. As far as his superiors in the Barossa Valley were concerned, he was wasting his time. We can only imagine what kind of impression he made on the Aranda. Certainly it seemed to elicit respect. Strehlow’s Aranda informants may have read in their engagements with him a form of exchange they were not unfamiliar with. Here perhaps was a man bent on building a portfolio of knowledge concerning both his own law and the Aranda’s (see also Austin-Broos 2004: 61). Of course, the emplacement of Christian knowledge would have been an issue, especially for Loatjira and other custodians for Ntaria. Carl Strehlow had become a form of inkata (ceremonial chief) regarding Christian law and ceremony. In the course of his stay, Carl became the inkata of Altjira (Aranda word used for Christian God; this word was also used around the turn of the century for beings significant in indigenous religion). For the Aranda it appears not to have been difficult to extend these meanings. Strehlow junior also suggests that his father was seen as a form of inkata.22

In the last few months of 1909, before leaving central Australia for Germany, Carl Strehlow was working on the conclusion of Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien, which was concerned with material culture and language including sign language. By the time he left Hermannsburg in mid-1910 also his dictionary was completed.

22 The meaning of inkata [ingkarte] has changed significantly over the past century. Today it is used for Lutheran pastor. It is likely that the shift started to occur during Carl Strehlow’s period, because he seems to have been their first white inkata.
The trip was intended as a well-deserved break for Carl and Frieda, and to secure an education for the eldest five of their children who had, by all accounts, adopted the ways of the bush. During his stay in Germany his editor von Leonhardi died. After von Leonhardi’s death, staff members of the Frankfurt museum, B. Hagen and F.C.H. Sarg, took on the arduous and time-consuming work to complete the publication of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*. Von Leonhardi’s anthropological library and Strehlow’s unpublished material had been bequeathed to the museum. Sarg prepared five family trees out of 20 that Carl Strehlow had sent von Leonhardi for publication and completed the editing of the fifth volume on social life, which had been proof-read by Marcel Mauss (Strehlow 1913: Preface). Mauss was also going to help with the publication of the sixth volume, but he dropped out at the beginning of World War I, keeping some of Strehlow’s material in Paris. Mauss had been on friendly terms with von Leonhardi, whom he had visited in Gross Karben, and had taken great interest in Strehlow’s work. After von Leonhardi’s death, Mauss travelled to Frankfurt specifically to find out what was going to happen with the remaining manuscripts and offered to correspond with Strehlow in place of von Leonhardi.\(^{23}\)

It is not quite clear who finalised the editing of the sixth volume (Strehlow 1915) as Sarg and the museum had fallen out with each other\(^{24}\) and further communication with Carl Strehlow or Marcel Mauss was not possible due to World War I. Hagen was involved and possibly Dr Ernst Vatter, a young and talented geographer.\(^{25}\)

After Hagen’s death, the seventh and final volume on material culture was published by Ernst Vatter in 1920, just after World War I. He added an index and wrote in his preface that further research may follow by Carl Strehlow, as his work had raised new questions and aspects, which were of great scientific interest. He expressed the optimistic and enthusiastic hope that Carl would continue his ethnographic investigations, because:

> This comprehensive, indeed in many ways singular, observation and report concerning the Aranda and Loritja constitutes a challenge to further study and scientific preoccupation. The publication of the concluding part from Strehlow’s pen will finally open the door to further debate. The Ethnological Museum of Frankfurt intends to devote one of its forthcoming publications to a continuing scientific study of

\(^{24}\) B. Hagen to Carl Strehlow, 10.9.1913.  
\(^{25}\) Vatter wrote a book on Australian totemism (1925) and a classic German monograph called *Ata Kiwan* (1932) which pre-empted post-modern ethnography (Kohl 2001: 498). He had to leave Germany in the late 1930s as his wife was Jewish and became a poultry farmer in Chile.
Strehlow’s vast material, enriched and enlarged by further inquiries from him, and to make up for lost opportunities due to the war. (Vatter in Strehlow 1920: Preface)

However, Carl Strehlow did not pursue any further ethnographic research. After an extended stay in Germany and placing his five eldest children with relatives and friends, he returned in 1912 to central Australia, with his wife Frieda and only with their youngest son Theodor. Instead, he started the first translation of the New Testament into Aranda with Moses Tjalkabota, Nathaniel Rauwirarka and Jacobus in 1913.\textsuperscript{26}

**Carl Strehlow’s magnum opus**

Carl Strehlow’s magnum opus \textit{Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien} was published in Germany between 1907–1920 in seven instalments by the Ethnological Museum of Frankfurt. It is a very dense and difficult text that presupposes knowledge of the existing literature on indigenous Australians and some ideological standpoints common at the turn of the century. Although the exact transcriptions of indigenous myths and songs in Aranda and Loritja are accompanied by German interlinear and free translations, his unpublished Aranda-German-Loritja dictionary is required to study his work in its full richness.

First and foremost, Strehlow’s ethnography documents the mythology and cosmology of the Aranda and Loritja, which occupies volumes one to four. In his letters he employs various terms including \textit{religiösen Anschauungen} (religious views), \textit{Religionen} (religions),\textsuperscript{27} \textit{religiösen Ideen und Traditionen} (religious ideas and traditions) and \textit{Religion der Schwarzen} (religion of the blacks) to refer to this corpus.\textsuperscript{28} He uses these terms in the style of his time with a range of interconnected references. There is little evidence that he saw religion as a functionally integrated phenomenon of cosmology and ritual practice geared to particular ends. Nonetheless, he and his editor were asking the right questions, such as:

> The Aljeringa half animal, half human [like the Mura-mura of the Dieri] lived before the present human beings and left a large number of ceremonies behind which are still performed. Spencer and Gillen’s accounts give no indication of the purpose of these ceremonies; is it a kind of cult?\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{26} Lutheran Herald, 16.2.1925: 54; Carl Strehlow’s letter to the Mission Friends, 9.1.1920 (Albrecht Collection Acc. No. AA662, South Australian Museum Archives). He writes that he worked on it between 1913 and 1919.
\textsuperscript{27} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).
\textsuperscript{28} Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
\textsuperscript{29} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 9.9.1905.
Given the times, it is significant that Strehlow and his editor understood these indigenous beliefs as ‘religion’ whereas Spencer and Gillen did not and Spencer’s mentor Sir James Frazer perceived the same system as ‘magic’. For Frazer, magic was a ‘false science’. In this he followed E.B. Tylor who argued that magic belongs ‘to the lowest known stages of civilization, and the lower races’, practice based on a false ‘Association of Ideas’ and the ‘antithesis of religion’ (see Lawrence 1987: 22–24).

Carl Strehlow’s myth collection focuses on the ancestral beings, called in Aranda ‘altjirangamitjina’ and in Loritja ‘tukutita’, who created the central Australian landscape and its laws, and play a crucial role in ceremonial life. The stories concerning these mythological ancestral beings are referred to in today’s literature as ‘dreamings’. It has often been claimed that Carl Strehlow’s view of Aranda and Loritja cosmology was flawed, because he was a missionary and ascribed indigenous high gods to them. Despite his data on the supreme or high beings, Altjira and Tukura, he maintained that ancestral beings were the main protagonists in the sacred life of the Aranda and Loritja. As subsequent discussion will reveal, the positioning of high gods in different cosmologies can vary considerably. The subtlety of this ethnographic issue was not grasped by Spencer, or by later anthropologists in Australia (but see Hiatt 1996).

His remaining three volumes (1913, 1915, 1920) describe aspects of social life and material culture. Initially, Strehlow had written a piece called ‘Land und Leute’ (land and people) that had been intended as an introduction to his work on myth and song. However, in the course of his correspondence with von Leonhardi, aspects of ‘social life’, i.e. social classification and organisation, became an additional area of interest, especially as they studied relevant English and Australian anthropological works and engaged with contemporary debates and hypotheses. Marriage classes and kinship terminology31 were topics raised regularly in their correspondence. Von Leonhardi believed that the views of Australian researchers on kinship topics were still hypothetical.32

All volumes of Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien also contain data relating to language and material culture. The word lists and comments that Strehlow included in his published work were a supplement to the major dictionary and an Aranda grammar that he had compiled. Additionally he collected data on the natural environment, often seen from an Aranda and

30 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 13.12.1906 (SH-SP-7-1).
31 Strehlow’s collection of kinship terms, for example, is still current and a take-off point for modern kin-studies. Further detail in his unpublished dictionary (1909) exceeds the supplements of what was published in Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien.
32 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.6.1906.
Loritja perspective, and specimens that were classified in Germany by leading scientists of the time. In sum, the project of these two committed scholars came close to being cosmographic.

**The original manuscripts**

Unlike Strehlow’s scientific letters to his editor that have only survived in draft form and shorthand, the original handwritten manuscripts of *Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* have survived. The only previously known manuscripts, destroyed in World War II, were duplicates provided to von Leonhardi. Strehlow had copied his original manuscripts meticulously for his editor, sending it in segments to Germany for publication. The bombing of the Ethnological Museum of Frankfurt buried 47 people sheltering in the vaults. It also destroyed much of Strehlow’s research collection and correspondence.


Source: Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main.

The original manuscripts consist of three volumes called *Sagen*, *Cultus* and *Leben* and run to 1224 pages. *Sagen* (myths/legends) contains the Aranda and Loritja myth collections. In *Cultus* (cults) Carl Strehlow collated many sacred songs connected to myths that were sung during ceremonies and describes the choreography and paraphernalia of these rites and ceremonies. *Leben* (life) describes aspects of social life.

Source: Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

These manuscripts had been in the possession of Carl’s son, T.G.H. Strehlow. They seem to have sat most of his life on his desk alongside his father’s unpublished dictionary. The manuscripts were among the items confiscated from the house of K. Strehlow, T.G.H. Strehlow’s second wife, in the 1990s. Their existence was known only to a handful of people. Notes found with these manuscripts and FitzHerbert’s letters of the 1930s held at the Strehlow Research Centre and the Special Collection of the Barr Smith library indicate that T.G.H. Strehlow had owned them since the 1930s. In the light of these original manuscripts it is clear that von Leonhardi kept largely to his protégée’s original, which refutes Spencer’s allegations that an educated editor had changed Carl Strehlow’s work. The original is even richer than the published version. Were there ever a republication of the German text, possibly the original manuscript with critical annotations should be considered.

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33 Spencer to Frazer, 10.3.1908 (Marett and Penniman 1932: 110).
Aranda myths

Carl Strehlow’s first publication of 1907 is a collection of Aranda myths labelled *Mythen, Sagen und Märchen* (myths, legends and fairy-tales) and arranged into seven sections. A preface by von Leonhardi contextualises them and their main protagonists, the ancestors:

In primordial times the “totem gods” (altjirangamitjina) walked this earth and eventually entered the earth, where they are still thought to be living. Their bodies changed into rocks, trees, shrubs or tjurunga made of stone or wood. (Strehlow 1907: Preface)

Following von Leonhardi’s short preface, Carl Strehlow’s brief account of Altjira, a high god, follows in Section I. Altjira is thought to be ‘ngambakala’ (eternal) having emu feet, many wives, sons and daughters. They live in the sky which is imagined as an eternal land with permanent water, trees, flora and fauna. Altjira and his family live much like the Aranda, they hunt and gather (1907: 1–2). Here Carl Strehlow makes an important remark on the meaning of the word ‘altjira’, which pre-empts Róheim and T.G.H. Strehlow:

The etymology of the word Altjira has not yet been found. The natives associate the word now with the concept of the non-created. Asked about the meaning of the word, the natives repeatedly assured me that Altjira refers to someone who has no beginning, who did not issue from another (erina itha arbمامakala = no one created him). Spencer and Gillen’s claim (Northern Tribes of Central Australia p. 745) that “the word alcheri means dream” is incorrect. Altjurarama means “to dream”, and it is derived from altjira (god) and rama (to see), in other words, “to see god”. The same holds true for the Loritja language. Tukura nangani = “to dream”, from turkura (god) and nangani (to see). *It will be demonstrated later that altjira and tukura in this context do not refer to the highest God in the sky but merely to a totem god which the native believes to have seen in a dream.*

After introducing Altjira, Section II, ‘Die Urzeit (Primordial Time)’, delivers a general account of the conditions on earth, or more precisely of the territory of the Aranda, in primordial times (Strehlow 1907: 2–8). The earth is described as an eternal presence in which undeveloped humans, who were already divided into moieties, called ‘alarinja’ and ‘kwatjarinja’ (of the earth and water respectively), and an eight-class (subsection) system. Here the anthropomorphic ancestors called ‘altjirangamitjina’ are introduced, emerging in their primeval state from
their underground dwellings (Strehlow 1907: 3). The ancestors wandered over the as yet formless land, shaping the landscape as it is still seen today, performing and transforming themselves, establishing the world’s structure.

Section III deals with *Putiaputia und andere Lehrer der Aranda* (Putiaputia and other teachers of the Aranda) who came from the north and taught the Aranda about certain institutions such as initiation (Strehlow 1907: 9–11). The ‘erintja’ (evil beings), and ‘rubaruba’ and ‘wurinja’ (bad winds) are mentioned in Section IV (1907: 11–15) and *Die Toteninsel* (The Island of the Dead) (Strehlow 1907: 15–16) is the subject of Section V.

Section VI, the largest, is called *Sagen über die Totem-Vorfahren* (Myths about the Totem Ancestors) (Strehlow 1907: 16–101). It contains 64 narratives of the individual mythical beings, the altjirangamitjina, who populated and created the Aranda landscape and its particular places. They are associated with celestial bodies (sun, moon, evening star, Pleiades), animals, plants and other natural phenomena (including fire and rain). These narratives are roughly arranged in three groups: ‘dead objects’, animals and plants, and female ancestors.

The myths on the celestial bodies tell about the mythical beings associated with the sun, the moon, Tmålba-maraléna (The Evening Star), Kuralja (Pleiades), and are followed by a water dreaming story linked with the site Kaporilja. The second group concerns the majority of ancestors who are associated with the plant and animal world of the central Australian landscape. He wrote that ‘most of their myths are local myths, that belong to particular places’ and specific ancestors or ‘totem gods are associated with certain places where they have lived and generated their totem animals’ (Strehlow 1907: 4). The Aranda myths are concerned with the actions, travels, places, petrifying, going into the landscape, place names, the proper way to do things, interaction with other beings from other places and even from other language backgrounds, as there are place names, words and even songs in languages other than Aranda. Nearly all of these stories end with the ancestors turning into tjurunga or metamorphosing into natural features.

The third group of stories in Section VI are about female ancestors who are usually called alknarintja meaning ‘eyes look away’. These narratives tell of women who reject advances of men. They too are connected to particular places on Aranda country and ceremonies. The last Section VII contains four narratives classified as fairy-tales.

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35 Tmålba-maraléna means Evening Star. A contemporary spelling can not be found, because the etymology is not certain, although Carl Strehlow indicated that tmalba means ‘flame’.

36 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
Loritja myths

Strehlow’s collection of Loritja myths is not as extensive as his Aranda collection. While it is organised in a similar fashion, only one myth is reproduced in Loritja, called ‘Papa tua, Knulja ntjara (the dogs)’ (Strehlow 1908: 12–16), as well as in Aranda. In the fourth volume we are informed that its ceremony is part of Loritja as well as Aranda initiation (Strehlow 1911: 15). Von Leonhardi appended six additional Loritja prose texts (Strehlow 1911: 59–75) to this volume, which Strehlow had recorded during research on Loritja song.

Section I of this volume is called Tukura, after the highest being of the Loritja. Like the account of Altjira, it is rather short. Here I quote the entire passage on Tukura to illustrate how the so called ‘high gods’ feature only in passing in this work:

The Loritja call the supreme being Tukura. Linked with Tukura is the concept of the Non-created One, the eternal. I am unable to provide an etymological derivation of the word. One envisages Tukura as a man with a beautiful red skin, long flowing hair and a long beard. The Western Loritja believe that he has emu feet – like the Altjira of the Aranda – but the Southern Loritja accredit him with human feet. Tukura has only one wife, by the name of Inéari (A: tnééra meaning the beautiful), and one child which always remains a child. The latter is called Arátapi (A: ratapa; i.e. offspring). The Western and Southern Loritja agree that Inéari has human feet. Tukura’s residence is the sky ilkari (A: alkira). The Milky Way, called merawari, i.e. wide creek, or tukalba, i.e. winding creek, by the Loritja, is lined with gum trees (itára), mulga trees (kurku) and other trees and shrubs. In their branches live parrots and pigeons, while kangaroos (mallu), emus (kalaia) and wild cats (kuninka) roam through Tukura’s realm. While Tukura amuses himself in his hunting ground, his wife and son are out gathering edible roots called wapiti (A: latjia) and tasty bulbs (neri), as well as grass seeds which grow there in abundance. Tukura sleeps at night, but during the day he conducts ceremonies to which he calls the young men (nitaii) living nearby. The stars (tjiltjana) are the campfires of Tukura. As is the case with the Aranda, the women and children also know of Tukura’s existence. The Loritja imagine the sky, which has existed from eternity (kututu), to be a vault-like firmament, resting on “legs of stone”. One fears that some day the vaulted sky could collapse and kill everybody. (Strehlow 1908: 1–2)

The following pages on Loritja myths relate to the scene at the beginning of time when the tukutita, the eternal-uncreated ones, emerged out of the earth that, like the sky, had always been in existence (Strehlow 1908: 2–5).
Section III concerns *Die bösen Wesen* (The evil Beings) and Section IV, *Die Toten-Insel* (The Island of the Dead) (1908: 5–7). Again the largest Section V, *Sagen über die Totem-Vorfahren*, is ‘about the Totem Ancestors’ (Strehlow 1908: 8–48). It includes 42 narratives about the earth-dwelling ancestors, the tukutita, who are associated with celestial bodies (moon, sun, morning star, Pleiades), and the animal and plant world. The stories of how the travels of the tukutita and the events surrounding them create the landscape and constitute society are prominent in this volume as well.

In his discussion of Loritja myth, Strehlow began to note differences between the Aranda and Loritja (Kukatja) mythologies. The Loritja concept of what it was like at the beginning, that in primordial times the earth ‘was not covered by the sea’ but was always dry, contrasts with ‘the views of the Aranda’ (Strehlow 1908: 2). This account of ‘primordial times’ outline a number of differences between the Aranda and Loritja:

There is a marked difference between the Aranda and Loritja legends. According to the tradition of the Aranda, most of the meandering altjirangamitjina were changed into tjurunga-woods or stones and only a few became trees or rocks. According to the tradition of the Loritja, however, the reverse is true. The bodies of the tukutita were mostly changed into rocks and trees. Naturally, this results in the lessening of the religious meaning and importance of the tjurunga. Among the Dieri living in the South-East, all the bodies of the Murra-murra are changed into rocks, trees, etc. and the tjurunga do not occur at all. (Strehlow 1908: 3–4)

He also began cross-referencing Loritja myths with each other and with Aranda myths published in volume one, because story lines connected or intersected with each other at particular places and identical songs and terms appeared in two different myths indicating borrowing. Sometimes the Loritja ancestors, the tukutita, interacted with the Aranda ancestor, the altjirangamitjina. The myth of a Loritja wallaby man (Strehlow 1908: 28), for example, is cross-referenced with the Aranda possum myth (Strehlow 1907: 62, Anmerkung 15), because at a place called Tunguma the wallaby ancestor joins some possum ancestors for a ceremony and go together into the ground there creating a water-source. Or a Loritja myth on emus (Strehlow 1908: 18–20) is cross-referenced to the Aranda one on emus (Strehlow 1907: 42–45), because at the end of both myths the emus coming from Aranda and Loritja country end their travels at a place called Kalaia-tarbana, meaning in Loritja ‘the emu go in’.

Another emu myth of the Loritja (Strehlow 1908: 32) is also connected to an Aranda myth (Strehlow 1907: 44, Anmerkung 6), because the site Apauuru, north-west of Hermannsburg, features in both narratives. This Loritja dreaming
story has a number of interesting ‘foreign features’ incorporated into its narrative. It begins in Loritja country and travels east. At Iloara, a salt lake on the southern edge of Anmatyerr country, the emu’s wife hurts her foot and cannot follow her husband. He sings a threat song which inserts Loritja words into an Ilpara (believed to be today’s Warlpiri) song, additionally mentioning Kulurlba, a famous Aranda native cat ancestor, who had thrown a boomerang at his disobedient wife. This treatment of myths went as much towards particularism as refined diffusionism.

In sum, Loritja myths like Aranda myths tell about the ancestors’ epic journeys over country visiting places and metamorphosing or going into the landscape. These narratives end with the mythic beings turning into natural features, tjurunga or kuntanka stones and rocks. The last two narratives in Carl Strehlow’s Loritja myth collection are designated as fairy-tales.

The second part of volume two deals with the totemic concepts of the Aranda and Loritja (Strehlow 1908: 51–70) and tjurunga (Strehlow 1908: 71–83). Strehlow explains that the belief systems of the Aranda and Loritja were very similar, but that the difference lay in the fact that the myths were ‘local myths’ and each connected to particular places in the landscape.

Cultus: Songs and ceremonies

The manuscript Cultus was published in two instalments in 1910 and 1911, called Die Totemischen Kulte der Aranda und Loritja Stämme. It contains songs connected to myths he had recorded in prose as well as sacred ceremonies. Carl Strehlow documented 59 Aranda ceremonies and their associated songs and 21 Loritja ceremonies which included some relating to female ancestors acted out by men. He found that two types of ceremony were performed:

The Aranda and Loritja today still regularly hold the cult rituals according to the instruction of their altjirangamitjina. However, there is one significant difference. In primordial times one ceremony was intended to serve two purposes, now two distinct performances are held, each with its own name, and each serving a specific purpose. When the young men undergo the various initiation rites, a series of ceremonies are performed for them which are identical to the real cult rituals, except for certain very special and characteristic details, but do not serve the purpose of increasing and enhancing the growth of the respective totem. Their only aim is to show those who are about to become men or have become men how these ceremonies should be

37 Like tjurunga, kuntanka is polisemic. Kuntanka describes to a lesser degree a sacred object, but rather particular features of a landscape that represent dreaming beings or parts of them.
performed. In view of their purpose these ceremonies are therefore known as intitjiuma (L. tintinpungañi) i.e. to initiate into something, to show how something is done. However, when the same ceremonies are performed at the particular totem place which an altjirangamitjina called home in primordial times, or where he had spent some time, and if their purpose is to care for the increase and growth of the totem, then this performance is called mbatjakatiuma (L. kutintjingañi), i.e. to bring about, make fertile, improve the conditions of. (Strehlow 1910: 1–2)

Carl Strehlow also wrote ‘that in primordial times the altjirangamitjina travelled about with their novices and that they performed certain ceremonies at their “eternal camps” as well as at other locations during their journeys’ (Strehlow 1910: 1). These accounts of songs and ceremonies are accompanied by drawings, descriptions of who performs what, at which places in the Aranda landscape it is performed, how it is performed, what ceremonial artefacts are used and their purposes. The letters between Strehlow and von Leonhardi discuss and analyse these ‘cults’ in detail whereas the publication is a descriptive and empirical account.

Leben: Social life

The remaining volumes, based on Strehlow’s manuscript called Leben, are not as well structured and presented as his previous publications, because they were not edited by von Leonhardi. After von Leonhardi’s death, staff members of the Frankfurt museum, B. Hagen, F.C.H. Sarg and E. Vatter, completed the publication of Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien. Volumes five and six describe a number of important facets of Aranda and Loritja life around 1900, some of which are still practised. These volumes cover subjects such as birth, name giving, games, initiation ceremonies, the marriage system, kinship terminology, marriage customs (Strehlow 1913), the political and legal system, death, burial, blood revenge, illnesses, magic, terms for numbers and time, secret language registers of men (Strehlow 1915) and sign language (Strehlow 1915: 54–78).

These instalments include Carl Strehlow’s kinship data. It appeared in the fifth volume in 1913, called The Social Life of the Aranda and Loritja Tribes. Compared to his four volumes on myth, his kinship material appears deceptively slim. However, he managed to condense into 26 pages an incredible amount of empirical data. He published substantial accounts on the section and subsection systems of people living at Hermannsburg at the time, extensive lists of kinship terms (Strehlow 1913: 62–89), five extensive family trees and a list of all names occurring in the family trees with their linguistic and technical explanations (Strehlow 1920: 15–39).
The chapter ‘Birth, Smoking and Name-Giving’ in Carl Strehlow’s fifth volume is almost certainly based on information collected by his wife, Frieda Strehlow (Strehlow 1913: 1–5). The relevant part in the handwritten manuscripts is in Frieda’s hand; it is the only passage in these manuscripts written by her. She may only have copied her husband’s notes. However, the topic relates to birth and women’s ritual. It is unlikely to be mere chance that this part of the manuscript is in her hand. Only with great difficulty and coercion would Carl Strehlow have been able to obtain this kind of data from women. It could of course be second hand information from Aranda and Loritja men, but this seems unlikely. Another indication of Frieda’s involvement in the production of Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien is a remark by Sarg, one of Strehlow’s later editors. He asked Carl to indicate which data his wife had collected, because in his view it was very important to be able to say that ‘this I observed’ or ‘the observation was made by my wife’. However, World War I intervened and communication with Australia broke down.

Both Frieda and Carl had an excellent understanding of indigenous kinship systems. Carl Strehlow had been classified as a Purula (Aranda subsection associated with Ntaria, Hermannsburg and surrounding area) and his children therefore as Kamara. He used his knowledge of indigenous kinship, which determines conduct and obligations towards particular kin, when engaged with his congregation. It is likely that some of the genealogical material was obtained by Frieda, if the current situation can be taken as indicative. During field research in the past 20 years, I have generally found that the majority of central Australian Aboriginal men have a hard time reproducing a significant list of lateral relatives in their own and proximate generations. Aboriginal women tend to be more able to provide a kin universe. A reference to Frank Gillen’s method of data collection also provides some insight. Ernest Cowle, a policeman in the 1890s in central Australia, remarked once to Spencer on Gillen’s genealogical work with one of Cowle’s Aboriginal prisoners:

Gillen got at him in his den and unfolded a papyrus as long as himself and started to trace his descent through endless aunts, and great great grandfather’s mothers he fainted away completely! … even a Sub-Protector has no right to invent tortures, surpassing those of the Inquisition in general fiendishness… (Mulvaney, Petch and Morphy 2000: 91)

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38 Sarg to Carl Strehlow, 18.11.1912.
39 According to T.G.H. Strehlow ([1950] 1997: 47), he was classified as a Kamara (Kemarre) by reason of his conception site Ntarea (Ntaria). It is just as likely that T.G.H. Strehlow simply received the right subsection through his father’s classification which was probably Purula (Perrurle). (Garry Stoll thought that Ted was a Kemarre (pers. comm.).)
40 Strehlow’s letters to Kaibel (1899–1909) held at the Lutheran Archives, Adelaide (LAA).
41 Gillen was probably also asking about people with tabooed names which is likely to have caused some distress.
Material culture

Images, descriptions and interpretations of material culture are interspersed throughout Strehlow’s work to illustrate and enhance the text. Only the last volume (Strehlow 1920: 8–14) contains a few pages on material culture although the data on his collection could have filled an entire volume. He had sent artefacts and objects of varying quality to his editor in Germany. Interestingly many of these items were commissioned, not originals. Strehlow remarked, for instance, about stone knives: ‘I regret, that I cannot send you better stone-knives. These ones are not at all well worked; only steel knives are in use now.’

On his own initiative, Carl Strehlow had started in 1906 to send indigenous artefacts and tjurunga to von Leonhardi as well as samples of flora and fauna. He initially sent material culture to his editor to illustrate his written data and that ‘maybe better drawings could be made’ because ‘I am a bad drawer’, but it soon became a separate project. Strehlow may have been inspired by Spencer and Gillen’s plates in their publications and by Siebert and Reuther, who had been collecting material culture for their own research on the peoples of the Lake Eyre basin, as well as by Eylemann (1908) who had been in Hermannsburg collecting artefacts and ethnographic data.

Carl Strehlow’s collection included well over 1000 sacred objects and mundane artefacts. He sent hundreds of tjurunga, a large number of ceremonial objects, carrying dishes, boomerangs, spears, spear throwers, clubs, shields, hair

42 Other letters by women from Hermannsburg make interesting remarks on the life of Aranda women. Maria Bogner for example talks about a women’s ceremony one night in the creek in 1896.
43 F.C.H. Sarg (1911) and Vatter (1915) used his collection for their publications.
44 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably on 3.12.1906 (SH-SP-8-1).
45 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
46 Siebert had collected objects by 1904, which the new Völkermuseum of Frankfurt (called Museum der Weltkulturen today) exhibited in the same year at its opening (Nobbs 2006: 12). Reuther collected approximately 1300 artefacts including ceremonial objects, nearly 400 toas and a large collection of ethnobotanical specimens (Nobbs 2005) between 1903 and 1906. Reuther’s collection was purchased by the South Australian Museum in 1907 for £400 (Nobbs 2005: 42).
47 Carl Strehlow wrote to von Leonhardi that ‘there are nearly no Tj. left in most stonecaves in the vicinity’, probably 10.12.1907 (SH-SP-15-1).
49 F.C.H. Sarg (1911) described in ‘Die Australischen Bumerangs im Städtischen Völkermuseum’ some of Strehlow’s boomerangs.
strings, stone knives and axes, digging sticks, chains made of native beans, and many other items that he documented in his unpublished dictionary. His collection also included some hybrids: ‘As a curiosity without scientific value I include tied up rabbit tails that the blacks have started to make since the rabbit plague has reached the interior of Australia’.\(^{50}\) His editor in Germany greeted Strehlow’s collection with great enthusiasm and became his agent for the distribution of these objects.\(^{51}\) In fact, von Leonhardi seems to have become nearly addicted to these consignments. Much of Strehlow’s collection did not survive the bombing of Frankfurt in World War II.

Strehlow used his collection to illustrate and explain aspects of traditional Aboriginal daily life and sacred ceremonies. He described each artefact’s form and function, but does not seem to have recorded the names of the indigenous artisans or suppliers. Information on how the artefacts were made and where they were used and traded among the different groups, make interesting reading:

Because the natives have no concept of money, they engage in lively trade. Important living places along the borders of befriended tribes are also important trading places, unbunba. At Ingodna on the lower Finke, for example, the Aranda-Tanka barter with the Aranda-Lada and the Aranda-Ulbma; and at Utnádata on the southern border of the Aranda Tanka, they conduct their trade with the Arábana.

The Southern Loritja, as well as the Southern Aranda, bartered with the Aranda-Ulbma here at Hermannsburg. On the other hand, the trading place for the Aranda Ulbma and the Western Loritja is at Apanuru, situated on Loritja territory. The Aranda-Ulbma also trade with the Aranda-Roara at Alice Springs, with the Ilpara at Ilóara in the north, and with the Katitja and Imatjera at Tnimakwatja in the north.

The Aranda trade the following items with other tribes: shields, spears, spearthrowers, small boomerangs ulbarinja lubara, strings ulera, nose-bones lalkara, pitch nobma, stone knives karitja, trays made of para wood, etc. With the northern tribes, however, they trade trays made from ininta, headstrings kanta, necklaces gulatja, breaststrings tmakurka, neck decorations matara, shells takula and sticks wolta; while from the south-eastern tribes they receive the large boomerangs and pubic coverings. (Strehlow 1920: 13)

\(^{50}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 10.12.1907 (SH-SP-15-1).

\(^{51}\) Bastian’s salvage anthropology had trigged an international run on the world’s existing indigenous material culture. The German and international collecting frenzy before everything was lost forever seems to have reached every corner of the globe. Strehlow also saw it as a source for some extra income for his ever financially suffering congregation.
After the death of his editor, Strehlow continued to collect for the Cologne\(^{52}\) and Frankfurt museums,\(^{53}\) and to distribute artefacts, when he returned from Germany on the 5 April 1912 with his wife and youngest son Ted to central Australia. However, once the Great War (1914–1918) overshadowed international relations, it became impossible to export Aboriginal material culture.

When World War I broke out Strehlow suffered greatly for leaving his children in Europe. He had left them in Germany, so they would be properly educated. He was not to see them again. This guilt and loss may have driven him to increase his efforts for the people at Hermannsburg and the bible translation into Aranda; completed in 1919. Although an Australian citizen, he was hounded by the South Australian Government to register as an alien. With the support of Sergeant Robert Stott who was known as the ‘Uncrowned King of Central Australia’ Carl Strehlow was able to continue his and Frieda’s work. However, the mission was permanently threatened by financial ruin. In 1917 Hermannsburg lost its 300 pounds per year government subsidies, largely due to anti-German prejudice, which flourished during the Great War (Rowse 1998: 84).

\(^{52}\) Letters between Carl Strehlow and Fritz Graebner between 1912 and 1913, held at the city archives in Cologne.

\(^{53}\) Correspondence between Strehlow and his second editor Sarg. Letters at the Strehlow Research Centre (SRC) in Alice Springs.
With war’s end and word that his children had survived, Strehlow attempted to get a replacement so he could leave for Germany to see his children. As he waited at Hermannsburg for his superiors in the Barossa Valley to organise his replacement, he made a last effort on his still unpublished dictionary of over 6000 Aranda and Loritja words that included thousands of derivations. Finalising his linguistic work appears to have been the ultimate proof that indigenous languages can express the gamut of human cognition, including the bible’s revelations. However, 30 years of effort had taken their toll on Strehlow. The desert, the battles with state and church bureaucracy and pastoralists as well as his limited success with conversion, had weakened his body and spirit.

Mid 1922 Strehlow was struck down by a mysterious illness which he himself diagnosed from his medical books as dropsy, and for the first time he did not take the service on Sunday. His youngest son wrote in his childhood diary about this service:

I played the organ because Mum and Dad stayed at home. ... The congregation remained completely silent during the first liturgy, so Herr Heinrich started singing the responses himself fairly in the wrong tune, until some men took over and ended the verse in a strangely off melody.

All attempts to treat him locally proved fruitless and his ‘Journey to Horseshoe Bend’ began. As he was taken away his Aranda friends sang Kaarrerrai worlamparinyai, a hymn he had translated for them to the music of Bach. The journey down the bend was agonising and his youngest son, who accompanied him on this last journey, was to write that ‘Horseshoe Bend is a place whose shadows I can never escape’. Carl Strehlow died on the 20 October 1922. Some years after his death the Lutheran Herald reported:

Not long after the death of the late Rev. Strehlow, it was indeed perceptible how a spiritual awakening stirred not only our natives at Hermannsburg, but all Aranda people. All seemed to feel and realise, that by devoting his whole life to it, even laying down his life in the service, there must be something great and true in what Rev. Strehlow taught, to thus enable him to unselfishly work for them, in contrast to most other white folks they knew.

On the 4 November 1923, one year after Strehlow’s death, something like a mass-baptism seems to have occurred at Hermannsburg (Strehlow 1969–70: 178–180). Moses Tjalkabota and H.A. Heinrich had continued Strehlow’s pre-

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54 The Register, 1921; C. Strehlow’s dictionary 1900–1909.
55 T.G.H. Strehlow’s childhood Diary III, 30.7.1922. Translated by Lisa Wendtlandt.
57 Lutheran Herald, 1926: 75.
baptismal instructions that resulted in the baptism of 26 adults and 14 children on that day. Carl Strehlow had baptised only 46 adults at Hermannsburg in nearly three decades.\textsuperscript{58} As already mentioned among these converts was Carl Strehlow’s main informant Loatjira who had been christened Abraham that day, and died shortly after his ‘conversion’. There are no reliable records of Carl Strehlow and Loatjira’s state of minds towards the end of their lives. Both men had been devoted to their faiths, but were troubled. They had both reached the edge of knowing and doubted. Loatjira had obviously wavered in his faith, and, according to T.G.H. Strehlow (1969: 174–179), so had Carl.

\textsuperscript{58} Carl Strehlow, \textit{Kirchen- und Missionszeitung}, 9.1.1920.