Top left: Mrs Mona Merrick, Port Augusta, July 1981.
Top right: Mr Johnny Reece.
Above: The tank at Alberrie Creek, July 1981.

Photographs by L.A. Hercus
AFGHAN STORIES FROM THE NORTH-EAST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Luise A. Hercus

The speakers of Arabana held the country to the west of Lake Eyre; the closely-related Wanggarjuru language was spoken in the Simpson Desert and on the lower Diamantina. The few remaining speakers of these languages nowadays live mainly in Marree and Port Augusta, South Australia. They remember many stories about the ‘Afghan’ camel-drivers who first entered their country in the nineteenth century. The men popularly known as Afghans were Urdu and Balochi speakers who came from what is now Pakistan, and were brought to Australia largely as a result of the activities of Sir Thomas Elder and the Beltana Pastoral Company. Drivers and camels arrived in large numbers — 124 camels were unloaded at Port Augusta in January 1866 — and had an early and particularly important impact on the arid areas of north-eastern South Australia. The Afghans and their camels provided the only efficient means of transport from Beltana and Marree to Alice Springs in Central Australia before the completion of the railway line. They also continued to provide transport for the pastoral stations along the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks until the 1920s.

The history of the Afghans and their camels has been recounted many times and need not be reiterated here. But there are few published records of Aboriginal reaction to the presence of the Afghans. At first these strangers roused fear, but soon Aborigines were able to make shrewd judgments about the different customs of these outsiders. The Afghan predilection for plump, fair-skinned women, the role of bride-price in their marriage arrangements, their burial practices, their food and butchering rituals, their jealous pride and fear of losing face, and their preoccupation with money were acutely observed and remembered by Aboriginal people, as these stories illustrate.

The Afghans, just like Europeans, were outsiders as far as Aboriginal society was concerned: Arabana people called them ‘Abigana’ or wudjiba mađimaŋi ‘white fellows with hair-string’ or gaďabu qara-qara ‘head tied up’, references to the turban that was invariably worn. The population of Marree was divided by the railway line; to the west lived the European Australians; to the east was Afghantown, with the Aborigines living on the outskirts. Yet the three groups knew a good deal about each other, and prominent individuals won respect from other townsfolk regardless of their ethnic identity. The stories recounted here reveal something of the relations between Europeans, Aborigines, Afghan camel-drivers and Syrian traders in the Marree district between the 1890s and 1930s.

The Afghans had come without women of their own and in the early days there was good reason to teach young Aboriginal girls to beware of them. Anyone noticing a few of the marriage advertisements in Indian newspapers will be familiar with the attitude that ‘fair’ is ‘beautiful’. As typical South Asians

1. See Barker 1964, McKnight 1969.
the Afghans also held this view and so they tried to marry Europeans or very light half caste girls, or the young daughters of other Afghans: for these they often had to pay large sums of money. Because European girls were scarce and part Afghan girls were even scarcer and expensive, the Afghans tended to pursue Aboriginal girls with strictly dishonorable intentions. Abigana-ru ɡaŋilira 'the Afghans might eat you' parents warned, just to make the girls wary. This fear was increased because the Afghans were culturally conditioned to prefer girls with well-developed figures: in their northern Indian homeland thinness was regarded as a sign of poverty and low status. The first two stories, told by Mona Merrick, describe the sentiments of three Aboriginal girls in the mid-1890s who imagined that they were being eyed as tasty morsels. Both stories came from Mona's mother, a woman of Arabana descent who married Mr Warren, owner of Finnis Springs Station. Mona herself is still part-owner of the station.

The stories told by Mona Merrick and by her brother Arthur Warren are in Arabana, those told by Ben Murray and Johnny Reece are in Wangaŋuru. Both languages are very closely related, although there are differences in both grammar and vocabulary. These differences account for apparent inconsistencies: for example camel is gamulu in Arabana, but usually gamuli in Wangaŋuru; the suffix — ɲa conveys the present tense in Wangaŋuru, but in Arabana it fulfils the function of an imperfect aspect marker. The texts are accompanied by an interlinear gloss, and an English translation follows. The translation is as close to the original as possible; when words or phrases must be inserted for clarity these are shown in brackets. The phonemes of Arabana-Wangaŋuru and the abbreviations used in the gloss are explained in appendices.
Places mentioned in 'Afghan' stories

Map drawn by Pam Millwood, Human Geography, A.N.U.
Getting a lift from Macumba

The girl in this story had come from the Simpson desert not long before and was staying on Macumba, only twenty miles from Oodnadatta. She was glad of a lift to save her walking in the hot weather. She had become familiar with the practice of laying a freshly killed bullock on a bed of leaves, ready for butchering, but she was not familiar with the European and Afghan use of beds for what was done ‘in the bush’ in traditional Aboriginal society.

1. Abigana-bula uljuulu badija -ŋa-yamu gamulu bargulu-nj
   Afghan -two woman travel Sp -REL camel two -LOC
   Magamba-ru, uga-ru gid -ma-nja Magamba. uljuula bidla
   Macumba-ABL, he -ERG leave-Vb-PRES Macumba. woman name
   Barada.
   Barada.

2. gala -ŋa guja maŋa, guja gira-ŋa, guja banja
   creek-LOC water new, water flow-PRES, water big
   ganda-ga.
   rain -PAST.

3. maga maba-ŋa, kerosene-tin banja gudni -ŋa
   fire make-PRES, big put down-PRES
   maga-ŋa.
   fire-LOC.

4. "maga mani -ŋa, maga bunda-da, njinda-galba
   "wood bring-PRES, wood break-PRES, tree -leaf
   mani -ŋa guja mani-ŋa, gudliya manda!"
   bring-PRES cane -grass get -PRES, bed get Sp!"

5. budluga gari-ri bida-ra, magiidi mani-ra njinda
   bullock they-ERG kill-PUNC, gun take-PUNC wood
   mani-ligu mangaŋa, bungudu, gudliya. baju-ŋa
   take-HIST wattle, cassia bush, bed. open-LOC
   clean 'm njinda-ŋa.
   wood -LOC.

6. uljuula njinda bunda-da mangaŋa, Ilgiwara gala -ŋa-nja
   woman wood break-PRES wattle, Ilgiwara creek-EL
   uga naŋa -na: "kerosene-tin banja, didi guga;
   she worry-IMPERF: big, tea much;
   budluga badni -ŋa, ibi badni -ŋa niŋa bulu-ru
   bullock nothing-LOC, sheep nothing-LOC what two -ERG

AFGHAN STORIES

Translation

1) Two Afghans and a woman had been travelling (that day) with two camels from Macumba, she was leaving Macumba. Her name was Barada.

2) There was fresh water in the creek (where they were going to camp), the water was flowing strongly, big rain had fallen.

3) They (the Afghans) made a fire, and they put a big kerosene tin (full of water) on the fire.

4) (They said to her): 'Bring some sticks and break the sticks into little pieces, bring some foliage from the trees, get some cane-grass, make a bed!'

5) (She began to think): 'When they kill a bullock they get a gun and put down sticks, wattle and cassia shrub to make a bed. Out in the open, on the bed of sticks they clean out (the carcass)'.

6) The woman went on breaking up sticks of wood, wattle and shrubs from the side of the Ilgiwara creek. She began to get worried: 'That's a big kerosene tin and a lot of tea: since they haven't got a bullock, and since they
haven't got a sheep, why are the two of them doing all this (getting a bed ready)? It's me they are going to eat; they want to eat me!'

7) She broke up sticks, picked them up and picked them up, further and further she went back (in the direction where Macumba was), right in the creek, amongst the trees — they weren't coolibah trees, but a completely different looking tree.

8) She heard the two men swearing and cursing as she stood behind a tree, in the Ilgiwara creek, in the water. She (crept) further away to (stand behind) another tree, she stood (hidden) in the water.

9) She didn't go back near them, she didn't travel on — she got away and returned to Macumba.

10) She kept thinking: 'Those two whitefellows, those Afghans, are cursing and swearing because they haven't got any meat now, they are hungry!' She was a woman with brown skin (not jet black) and she had lots of fat on her. That's what my mother said.

The train was late at Alberrie Creek

Alberrie Creek is about 60 kilometres on the Oodnadatta side of Marree. There is a small building there, which used to house a railway gang, but there were no other habitations anywhere in the vicinity. In the daytime during the working week the place would have been deserted. Now of course, with the closure of the railway, the railway cottage is permanently uninhabited. Even before the Warrens took over Finniss Springs Station, to which this whole area belongs, Aborigines, mainly Guyani but also some Arabana, camped by some of the springs, some distance to the north and west, and the two girls has presumably been there visiting relatives.

1. Alberrie Creek Railway Station was late. woman man nothing. woman bargulu, Arabana uljuła-Jimmy and Leslie's mother-bula two Arabana woman both miğa-(g)a-nda traina-gu. wait -TR -PRES DAT.

2. traina manda-ŋa gangi waga baŋa-baŋa-ŋa bula delay -IMPERF tank black long -LOC two ganga-agura Mariri-riugu giga -iugu bula, bula sit -ANC Marree-ALL return-PURF two, two ganga-ŋa. sit -IMPERF.

3. The 'different' tree, unknown in Arabana country, is Acacia cyperophylla, the Red Mulga, which grows along creek-beds from the Oodnadatta area northwards. Waŋganjurru people from the desert side of the Dalhousie area referred to the tree by its Aranda name abmuna. It is a slender tree with striking red bark and thin foliage.
3. Abigana-bula yuga-nda-na • damu-rugu gamulu-bu\u015fu
Afghan -DI go -Sp -IMPERF dam -ALL camel -having

guda mani-ligu. bula yamba-a -lugu-straightaway they
water get -PURP. two ask -TEMP-HIST

asked! njiba \u0160afi -ma-nda, \u0160ama gargi-gargi,
clothes fly up-\u0160b-PRES, breast display,
\u0160ama \u0160ani-na!
breast see -NP!

4. bula \u0160ama gargi -nda bula!
two breast display-PRES two!

5. bula \u0160uma-nda, balgu miraga, maldja a\u012ba waga,
two like-PRES, flesh red, not true black,
bula mani-nuga.
two fat -much.

6. bula gadla-ra wa -nda, "mara maldja gudni-nda,
two fear -CAUS want-PRES, "hand not put -PRES,
dani-ligu waya-nda! traina ungulu yuga-nda,
eat -PURP want-PRES! train when go -PRES,

wedjibala -bula \u0160ama gargi-la -gira!
whitefellow-two breast show -ALT-ACT PUNC!

7. "njiba \u0160afi-ma-nda, \u0160ara \u0160ani-na! show\u00f9\u00e9 leg!
clothes fly -\u0160b-PRES, thigh see -NP!

8. \u0160ama gargi-na \u0160ara gargi'-argi-na, bula
breast show -IMPERF, thigh show -show-IMPERF, both
garg'-argi-na \u0160uma-nda. bula-guna traina
show -show-show-IMPERF like-PRES. two -POS train
galgawa-l -da!
hurry-TR-ALT-PRES!

9. bula garg'-argi-na, bula gadla-ra wa -nda:
two show -show-IMPERF, two fear -CAUS want-PRES:
"bula-ru mi\u00e0a-mi\u00e0a yamba-ya\u00e9jira?"
"two -ERG what-what ask -TR-POT?"

10. "maldja \u0160ama gjimba -\u0160a nigi-bula, \u0160uma-nda,
"not breast tamper with-PRES this-two, like-PRES,
maldja mara yadla gunda, bula \u0160ani-nda -gi!"
not hand close put Sp, two look-PRES-EMPH!

11. \u0160ina-gu bula-ru \u0160ani-nda \u0160ama \u0160afi -ma-\u0160a-\u0160a,
what-DAT two -ERG see -PRES breast fly up-\u0160b-NF-LOC,
ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1981 5:1

12. balgu nani-ligu ngifi-ma-ŋana njiba, bulu-ru
flesh see -PURPT fly -Vb-PT IMPERF clothes, two -ERG
ŋurga-ŋana nigi-ri ŋani-li -baru arimba -ŋa,
know -P IMPERF this-ERG eat -PTC-FUT we INCL-ACC,
traina galga-ŋnda yuga-ŋnda!
train hurry-PRES go -PRES!'

13. aŋal yuga-ŋnda traina! bulu traina-ŋa wanga -da
at last go -PRES train! two train -LOC get up-PRES
giga -lugu Maŋiri-rigu, Abigana-bula maldja waya-ŋda
return-PURPT Marree-ALL, Afghan -two not like-PRES
traina, gamulu-ŋa yuga-ŋda Oodnadatta-rigu.
train, camel -LOC go -PRES Oodnadatta-ALL.

14. Abigana-bula maldja waya-ŋda train, they only wanted
Afghan -two not like-PRES
girl-friend.

Translation
1) It was at Alberrie Creek Railway station — nobody was there; only two
women, Arabana women, — Jimmy's mother and Leslie's mother4 (they
were just young girls then) — they were both waiting for the train.
2) The train was running late and so they sat down by that long black water-
tank, they were sitting there waiting to return to Marree.
3) Two Afghans came past with their camels on their way to the dam (which is
near the tank) to get water. They asked — they asked straight away! —
'Undo your clothes and show us your breasts — we want to see your
breasts!'
4) The two of them showed their breasts.
5) The two Afghans liked what they saw: the girls had brownish-red bodies,
not absolutely black, and they were both very plump.
6) The girls were frightened: 'they haven't touched us with their hands, they
(just) want to eat us! When is this train coming — these whitefellows are
making us show our breasts!'
7) 'Lift up your clothes so we can see your thighs — show'm leg!'
8) They went on showing their breasts, they showed and showed their thighs, oh how they went on showing and showing! If only their train hurried along!

9) They both went on showing, they were frightened: ‘what will these two ask us next?’

10. ‘They are not patting our breasts, these two, they are not even putting their hands anywhere near — they are just looking!’

11) ‘Why do they keep looking at our breasts, while we’ve undone (our clothes) — they are not laying a hand on us: now we know they want to eat us’.

12) ‘They made us undo our clothes so they could see our flesh’. They were quite sure now ‘those two want to eat both of us, you and me! If only the train hurried and came!’

13. At last the train arrived. The two girls got on it to return to Marree. The two Afghans didn’t want that train (to come). They went off with their camels to Oodnadatta.

14. The two Afghans didn’t want that train (to come) — they only wanted a girlfriend.

Reflections on a television program

In late 1980 Mona Merrick saw a television program dealing with Afghan camel-drivers and the history of the Ghan railway line. It was one of the programs shown to mark the closure of the Ghan, and it caused her to reflect as follows:

Only praising old Afghan — no praise for Aborigine!

1. traina-ŋa ŋawi-ŋa yani -mäŋa -agura: Abigana-ru
   LOC hear-PAST speak-RECIP-ANC: Afghan -ERG
gari-ri ŋunda-agura, Abigana pigi waduwa -nda-agura,
they-ERG show -ANC, Afghan here travel about-SP -ANC,
Birdsville way gari, yuga-ŋa Abigana-di, Abigana
they go -PAST Afghan -EMPH, Afghan

gamulu-ŋa yuga-ŋda!
camel -LOC go -PRES!

2. maldja nala gari-ri ŋunda-da aŋu ŋani-ɡa
   not Aborigine they-ERG show -PRES I ERG see -PAST
nala warga-diya nala yuga-ŋda, wargayi-ŋda
Aborigine work -EMPH! Aborigine go -PRES, work -PRES
diga -ŋda gari, money yuga gari.
return-PRES they, much they.

3. This Hector Bossicot, his grandfather gagidi -'guma
   mother’s father-his
gagaga nudi -mara Willie gamulu-ŋa
unale elder brother-having camel -LOC
wargayi-ŋda, gari yuga-ŋda wara -rugu? Finnissi-rigu
work -PRES, they go -PRES where-ALL? ALL
4. Mañiri-ŋa wargayi-ŋda gamulu-ŋa nala nuga
Marree-LOC work -PRES camel -LOC Aborigine many
wargayi-ŋda Abigana malijja gari-ŋa -du nunda-da,
work -PRES Afghan not they-ACC-EMPH show -PRES,
Abigana malaru nunda-da.
Afghan however show -PRES.

5. anda guya banda wargayi-ŋda Mañiri-ŋa nala
I girl big work -PRES Marree-LOC Aborigine
gumbira mobu, Oodnadatta-ŋa mobu njuçu, gari
dead mob, -EL mob also, they
wargayi-ŋda diga-ŋda Oodnadatta-rugu Abigana-ru -di
work -PRES return-PRES -ALL -ERG-EMPH
money gari-ŋa nunu-ŋda!
they-ACC give-PRES!

Translation

Only praising old Afghan, no praise for Aborigine.

1) I heard them talking to each other on that train (in the television program). They only showed (pictures of) Afghans: the Afghans used to travel here and there, the Afghans went on the Birdsville track, the Afghans went with their camels!

2) They didn’t show any (pictures of) Aborigines. But I’ve seen Aborigines working (with camels), the Aborigines used to go off working and come back and get lots of money.

3) Hector Bossicot’s maternal grandfather and his two uncles, (mother’s brothers), they worked with camels, and they went all over the place, they came back to Finnis Springs and went off to Birdsville.

4) Many Aborigines from Marree worked with camels, as did the Afghans, but they never showed these Aborigines (in the film), only the Afghans.

5) When I was a big girl a lot of Aborigines from Marree were working (with camels), they are all dead now, just like those from Oodnadatta; they used to work (with camels) and then go back to Oodnadatta: the Afghans just paid them money (but stayed in town)!

Sher Khan

Ben Murray, himself of part-Afghan descent, has a vast store of knowledge regarding the history and oral traditions of the Lake Eyre basin. He related a number of stories connected with Afghans, some of which are given here. His main languages are Wangaŋuru and Diyari. The texts which follow are in Wangaŋuru.

The Indian dowry system was never popular among Moslems; they tended to have a system of bride-price, but on a minor scale in the form of relatively small presents in money or kind given by the groom. The Afghans, however, were not lacking in business acumen and the great scarcity of eligible girls in the north of South Australia led to an escalation of price far beyond what would have been the norm in India.

1. Musā, he bought that girl off Salim Khan for £200!

2. (Salim Khan said) "adu 'na qunī-ra."

3. Musā yugā-nda, uga-ru qunī-ra £200, "all right"!

4. nayi Sher Khan uga gāngā-ṇura gāṇāṇaga Broken Hill this he stay -CONT there
garū-ṛa gi-γa -lugu.
there-EMPH return-HIST.

5. (Somebody told him) "That girl, old Khan's daughter, Musā been buy'm for £200!"
(Sher Khan said): "Oh!"

6. uga yugā-nda traina-ṇa; nari -di -ligu traina-ṇa he go -PRES -LOC; descend-INC-HIST -LOC
Musā-gi -di! bula yadja widji -ligu. Sher Khan -EMPH-EMPH! two close become-HIST,
mara bāqā-ṇda (and shot him).
hand hold-PRES

7. garū-ṛu uga gi-γa -ḥa īrgaṭi-gadi-ṇa
there-EMPH he go back-PRES īrgaṭi-gadina
towards Mundowdana garu gidna-ra wadni -ṇa
there foot -CAUS follow-PRES
gaja -ṇa, gidna-waiga-buFu gidna-ra.
creek-LOC, foot -shoe -having foot -CAUS.

8. Musā they put'm in pub, no hospital those days,
nurgu-ma-γu minbaru uga-ṇa nani-γu yugā-ndo:
good -Vb-PURP doctor he -ACC see -PURP go -PRES:
oh nara-gara nurgu awaqa gāngā widji -ṇa gaduru.
ah heart good that one alive become-IMPERF slowly.
9. yulja tracker gidna-gari-li Jacky Nalbili-ŋa policeman foot -see -HAB Nalbili-PROP
bula-ru wadni -ŋa gala -rugu yuga-ŋa, iliŋa two -ERG follow-PRES creek-ALL go -PRES, thus
nani-ligu Mundowana siding yulja yani -ŋa see -HIST policeman speak-PRES
"I'll ring from here yulja Farina-ŋa, your bloke policeman -EL
is still going that way."

10. "uga ŋudi -rigu-l' -gi." yulja diga -ŋa
"he dead end-ALL -EMPH-EMPH policeman return-PRES
Maŋiri-rigu.
Maree -ALL.

11. Tracker carry on, uga gidna-gari-li. First double dam,
he foot -see -HAB
yuwu badni, yuga-lugu 人大常委 rugu. yuwu ganaŋada, man nothing, go -HIST dam other-ALL. man there,
bambi-li guda railway
pump -HAB water

12. (The tracker said) "Ah good day, see bloke come here?"
"Yeah." "ah! giyarugu?" "awada." Farina yulja and
"ah! where to?" "there." policeman tracker bula garga-nura gamu-ŋa.
both stand-CONT dam -LOC.

13. "Ah, good day! Can you do something about my camels? I come
a long way, they get away!" "You come to my place, I give
you tea, boil some egg for you."

14. uga-ru gada-ru boy "Help you look for camel!" Tracker
he -ERG send-NAR
say "Ai boss you got the right one, that's him aŋu
ŋurga-ra uga-ŋa warada!" I ERG
know -FUNC he -ACC there!"

15. digi -ligu. Give'm a feed first. "Take your boot off"
take back-HIST.
gidna ŋuna withi-li. "I know you!" "You know me, boss?"
foot POS sore-EMPH.
"You're Sher Khan!"
AFGHAN STORIES

16. "I come back kill'm Müsä, kill'm woman too."
   ilîna uga yanda "You might get ten or twenty years!"
   thus he speak Sp.

17. djayila-ŋa gudni-nda gada-ru uga-ŋa
goal -LOC put -PRES send-NAR he -ACC

Western Australia, warîga. uga-guna time up, maîga
afar. he -POS not

ŋurga-ŋa. He travel up and put a hat on, not like rag
know -PRES.

they used to, 6 dîga -jugu uga Broken Hill, bagu
return-HIST he empty

gânga-da, gâduru.
sit -PRES quiet.

18. Some say "why don't you go see that Müsä?" "No, me finished!"

Translation

1) Müsä, he bought that girl off Salim Khan for £200! But first Sher Khan
   bought her from the old man. He gave Salim Khan £150.

2) (Salim Khan said to him): 'I give her to you'.

3) Then Müsä came, and he gave Salim Khan £200 (and so Salim Khan said to
   him) 'all right (it's a deal)'.

4) Now Sher Khan was living in Broken Hill and he had gone back there.

5) (Somebody told him): 'That girl, old Khan's daughter, Müsä been buy'm
   for £200! Sher Khan said 'Oh!'

6) He went to by train (to Marree), but Müsä too had gone down to the train
   (he had heard that Sher Khan was likely to come and wanted to get away).
   The two came close to one another and Sher Khan moved his hand forward
   (and shot him).

7) He got away going along the Irgadi-gadina Creek towards Mundowdna
   ( siding) there he walked along the creek-bed, although he had boots (he
   took them off and) he went barefoot.

8) As for Müsä they put him in the pub to fix him up (there was no hospital in
   those days): a doctor came to have a look at him and he said: 'his heart is
   good and so he will slowly recuperate'.

9) That Marree policeman and his tracker, the one who looks at footprints,
   Jackie ɲalbili (a Simpson desert Wangajuru) they both followed (Sher
   Khan) along the creek till they could see Mundowdna siding. Then the

6. This sum represented about 4 years wages for the average working man.
policeman said 'I'll make a call from here to the Farina policeman, your bloke is still going that way'.

10) (The tracker said): 'Yes he'll finish up there (at Farina)'. The policeman returned to Marree.

11) The tracker went on, he was watching the tracks. At the first double dam (north of Farina) there was nobody. He went to the other dam (right next to the railway line). A man was there who had the job of pumping water for the railway.

12) (The tracker said): 'Ah, good day, see bloke come here?' 'Yeah' (said the railway man). 'Ah, where did he go to?' 'Just over there'.

The Farina policeman arrived and both he and the tracker stood by the dam (in front of Sher Khan).

13) (Sher Khan said) 'Ah, good day! Can you do something about my camels? I've come a long way, they got away from me!'

(The policeman said): 'You come to my place, I give you tea, boil some egg for you'.

14) (He signalled the tracker, pretending) to send him out: 'He'll help you look for the camels'.

The tracker said (secretly): 'Ai boss, you've got the right one, that's him all right, I know that's him just there'.

15) The policeman took Sher Khan back with him (to Farina). He gave him a meal first. Then he said 'take your boots off!' His feet were all blistered. 'I know you' (said the policeman). 'You know me boss?' 'You're Sher Khan' (said the policeman).

16) 'I come back kill'm Müsä, kill'm woman too' — that's the sort of thing (Sher Khan) started saying. 'You might get ten or twenty years (in gaol)' (said the policeman).

17) He put Sher Khan in gaol and he was sent far away to Western Australia. When the time was up (for him to be released) he didn't want to think any more about it (about that matter of Müsä and Salim Khan's daughter). He travelled up (from Western Australia) and he put a hat on, not a rag (turban) like the Afghans used to. He went back to Broken Hill, and he stayed there, without doing anything further about it, he stayed there quietly.

7. Farina 'the great granny of the north' was apparently named facetiously (Fuller 1975:82), but at the turn of the century it was still a thriving small township serving the railway, trade, and the pastoral industry. A high proportion of the population was Afghan. It is now a ghost town and even the main road has been diverted away from it. For many years Ben Murray was the only inhabitant: he was quite happy because he could always 'jump on the rattler' and visit friends and relations at the only other settlements in the area, Marree (60 km), Lyndhurst (90 km) and even Port Augusta. But now (since November 1980) the 'Ghan' no longer passes through and Ben has moved to Marree.

8. The policeman was aware of the fact that Afghans would not eat meat offered to them because the beasts would not have been traditionally slaughtered.

9. Ceasing to wear a turban was a highly symbolic act by which Sher Khan broke away from his past life as an Afghan.
18) Some people said to him: 'Why don't you go to see that Mūsā?'
(But he answered) 'No, me finished'.

'Azim Khan, 'Archie Kangaroo'

The events related in this story took place around 1910-1912 when Ben Murray as a young man was working a camel train for the Lutheran mission at Killalpannina. When picking up loads at Marree he often called on 'Azim Khan, as did many other camel drivers. 'Azim Khan was in the employ of Abdul Qadir, who was the wealthiest of the Marree Afghans. Qadir had leased land in the area, and had planted date palms; he also kept goats.

1. Archie Kangaroo - he call himself that, he was really 'Azim
Khan. guba-buFu ganga-da. uga-ru mağabuda-ru
wife-having sit -PRES. he -ERG old man -ERG
loadaga wanna-da-ru Froma-rugu, mayuña wandi-nda
carry-SP-Nar ALL, master wait -REFL
warana-gu.
what -DAT.

2. Abigana guru from Broken Hill Wasım Khan uga
Afghan other he
yuga-qi'inaru ala đa gamulu-ra.
go -Šp -PLUP ready camel -CAUS.

3. uga-guna nannygoata yaga-da-na ganga-nura ganañaça
he -POS yard -LOC stay -CONT there
Mañana-na Abdul Qadir down the bore-drain bidu-lugu
Marree-LOC kill-PURP
gani-čigu.
eat -PURP.

4. mağabuda yuga-nda loada-buFu, gadna-ndu loading
old man go -PRES -having, leave-PRES
ganañaça, where the bore-drain is, gidna-ra -du
there, foot -CAUS-EMPH
giga -ga to store ganañaça giga -lugu madi
return-PAST there return-HIST string
mani-čigu he was short of twine.
get -PURP

5. wanna-giga -lugu, uga giga -nura nannygoata
run -return-HIST, he return-CONT
ganañaça yuga-na thirty-two uga giga-ga
there go -IMPERF he return
wandi-nda-lugu-1 -gi!
wait -Šp -PURP-EMPH-EMPH!
6. anda garidji -ya-nu anari gamulu-na, mission camel. 
I come down-Tr-REL this way camel -LOC 
"ah, mayi giyara uga?" nuba uga-guna yani-nda, 
"oh, now then, where he?" wife he -POS say -PRES 
"ungulu wabayi-nda?" "He must have left early, he left 
"when finish-PRES?" 
a load."

7. uga late diga -nda, djardja uga-guna gubmari-nguna. 
he return-PRES, shirt he -POS blood -much. 
"Oh, what's wrong with your shirt?" "I been killing goat 
down there, boss's place, kill'm couple of goats," 
uga yani-nda. 
he say -PRES.

8-9. (Told in English.)

"pull-HIST there-ALL side -LOC put -HIST, dead. 
ah diga -lugu garu." They might come with drag 
oh return-HIST there."

gigi -la -gudi-ligu. take back-ALT-pull-PURP.

11. uga yanda: "ah yuga-nda nani-ligu! yambayi: 
he say SP: "oh go -PRES see -PURP! ask:

12-13. (Told in English.)

14. ilipa yanda, walu widji-na diga -nda 
thus speak SP, jealous become-PRES. I return-PRES 
Mission load mani-ligu, diga -nda Killalpammina, 
get -PURP, return-PRES 
maiga yada nawi-ligu. 
not more hear-HIST.

Translation

1) Archie Kangaroo, that's what he called himself — his name was really 'Azim Khan. He was a married man. One day he took a (camel) load out to the Frome (crossing) and waited there for his master Abdul Qadid for some reason or other.

10. The Frome crossing on the Birdsville track is only 6 kilometres from Marree — the bed of the Frome is the only area with small timber and bushes in an otherwise totally desolate landscape. There is always water about, on account of the bore.
AFGHAN STORIES

2) Another Afghan Wāsim Khan from Broken Hill — he had gone there because he was ready to set off back home with his camels.

3) Abdul Qadir — he lived in Marree — he had goats11 there in a yard down by the bore-drain: they were kept there to be (ultimately) killed and eaten.

4. Wāsim Khan went there (to the yard) with his load, he left his load there where the bore-drain is and went back on foot to the Marree store; he wanted to go and get some string because he was short of twine.

5) He came hurrying back to where the goats were, he almost got there on his way back, just to find a thirty-two (calibre rifle) waiting for him.

6) I came down this way (to Marree) with camels, mission camels. (I went to ‘Azim Khan’s place) ‘Where is he right now?’ I asked. ‘(I don’t know) when he will finish work’, his wife said. ‘He must have finished early’, I said, ‘because he left his load at the Frome’.

7) He arrived late, with his shirt covered in blood. (I asked), ‘Oh, what’s wrong with your shirt?’ ‘I been killing goat there, down there, boss’s place, kill’em couple of goats’, he said.

8) A young bloke who had come from Broken Hill that morning he went straight there where his mate Wāsim Khan had left his load. ‘Afghan lying there on the other side of the road! It’s him, my friend Wāsim Khan’. He went back to Marree to tell the yula (policeman). The yula locked him up (in gaol as a suspect).

9) ‘We’ll get a tracker’ (he said). ‘We’ll get Anaŋa Johnny’. The tracker said: ‘I seen’em track. I know this fellow, he’s shepherd’s goat for Quadir. He been here, this bush, shoot’em from here, thirty-two’.

10) ‘He pulled’em from here to over there and put’em down, dead, by the side (of the road). ‘They might come with a drag (i.e. a horse-drawn vehicle) to pull up and take back (the body)’, the policeman said.

11) He (the policeman) said as he was going ‘I’m going to see him (‘Azim Khan’). He asked:

12) ‘Where are his clothes?’ ‘That’s where he left’em, he left and I never watched! I did know there was something wrong — look more like human blood’. That’s what I said.

13) He (‘Azim Khan) was jealous. (When caught he said): ‘Wāsim Khan reckon he was going back to my place, but he never come near me, he went to the store, he had a set on me’.

14) That’s what he said, he was jealous.12 I went to take the mission load, I went back to Killalpannina, and I never heard anything further.

11. The word ‘nannygoat’ is used as a general term for ‘goat’ in Aboriginal English: this change of meaning was brought about by the fact that only relatively few billygoats were kept.

12. ‘Azim Khan felt that his hospitality was being slighted: being of lowly social standing (as an employee of Abdul Qadir) he was very sensitive.
The aged Afghan

The events in this story took place around 1933-34 while Ben Murray was working on the vast and desolate Murnpeowie station which comprises the country immediately to the north and north-east of the Flinders Ranges: the ranges fall away suddenly to a treeless plain going down to Lake Blanche. Only small hills near the aptly named Mt Hopeless rise prominently out of the plain. Many Aborigines were employed on Murnpeowie including Mick McLean and Murtee Johnny. Ben Murray spent much of his time on the most remote parts of the station, checking the boundary fence. Mulligan Spring, where he came across the old Afghan, is not far from Mt Hopeless, and close to Lake Callabonna. The story is of particular interest as it shows the tenacity with which the older generation of Afghans adhered to their beliefs.


AFGHAN STORIES

5. uga diga -ga, ẓulba widji -ga uga mağabuda
   he return-PAST, ill become-PAST he old man
Abigana, ẓuyu ẓanga-da uga anda yuga-ga garu -guda
Afghan, one stay -PRES he. I go -PAST there-ALL
Mulligan Spring  Manbi -awi -na.
   Pigeon-water-LOC.

6. uga yuga-ga  Manbi -rigu maiju mayi mani-ligu,
   he go -PAST Pigeon-ALL, food get -PURP,
mayi ẓananda  giga -nda  ganga-lugu; anda yuga-ga
then there return-PRES stay -PURP; I go -PAST
fence-ru uga-na nani-ligu.
   -ABL he -ACC see -PURP.

7. adu nani-ga warbi-nagga -gura, ilina yanda: "Oh me,
   I ERG see -PAST lie -CONT S-CONT, thus speak:
   I thought I'd die, got nothing to eat! Me sit down here."

8. ẓanga-ga uga cooky wandi-nda, "cooky come, me get'm
   sit -PRES he wait -REFL,
gun, we want'm two, brother," bargulu biđa-lugu,
   two hit -PURP,
wagni-ligu.
   cook -PURP.

9. anda yani -nda: "ah ibi gari giga -nda
   I speak-PRES: "ah sheep they return-PRES
Gunuwanda Springa-ņa ibi-ibii!" "Which way you come?
   -LOC sheep
   Water in spring?" "I come from that way, guđa bunda-garu!
   water drink-PLUP!

10. "Ah, me go!" anda yuga-nda, uga-inda wandi-wandi-nda
    I go -PRES, he -DAT wait -wait -REFL
ibi biđa-lugu he'd be coming with a camel, camel been
   sheep kill-PURP
watering there, wandi-nda alađa-na biđa-lugu.
   wait -REFL ready-EMPH kill-PURP.

11-12. (Told in English.)

13. anda diga -nda manager nani-ligu awađa nani-ga
    I return-PRES see -PURP there see -PAST
   "Old fellow's done, ẓulba widji -nda."
   sick become-PRES."
14. ani yuga-nda mani-na-diga -lugu, Manbi -rigu we EXCL go -PRES get -Sp-return-PURP, Pigeon-ALL
gigi -lugu uga-na. take back-PURP he -ACC.
15. "Which way you want to go" uga-na. yambaga-na. he -ACC ask -PRES.
16. minbaru napi-na, ganaqada wandja-da. doctor see -PRES, there die -PRES.
17. iilina gari-ri gudni-nda, uga iliina warbi-nanga -da thus they-ERG put -PRES, he thus lie -CONT S-PRES
muyu-wanga-na undu napi-ligu muyu widni-qura, sun -rise -LOC you ERG see -PURP sun set -CONT,
gidna gudnangari, gadabu gidnangara. foot south, head north.
18. unba yuga-ga Farina cemetery gari-na ganaqada you go -PAST they-ACC there
napi-ligu iliina anari anari napi-gura Mrs Mahomet, see -PURP thus this way this way see -ANC
aluwa uga-guna, Musa, all north-south, at Marree too. child she-POS

Translation

1) The old man was staying on Murnpeowie; he used to cart things driving camels to Kanowana, driving them on to Innamincka, and travelling by camel along the Cooper down this way, to Marree, and then up again to Nappa Merry station (all over) Yawarawarga and Yandruwanda country.

2) You know the explorers Burke and them, they died there (near Nappa Merry). They went back there and they didn't have any food at all. The Aborigines were getting them some and used to bring some for them; they (Burke and the others) died very close to that place (Nappa Merry). That old man (who used to take camels up to Nappa Merry) he was really ancient.

3) He had been travelling about everywhere, but now he had come back to stay on Murnpeowie, he just sat there, and his camels just walked around, yes! He had become a sick man. He had seven camels.

4) Then I came there as I was travelling around (working on the netting fence). I was a grown man then. He wasn’t working, he was just sitting there, doing nothing.

5) He had come back and he had been taken ill, the old Afghan. He was there all alone. I came there to Mulligan Spring, on Murnpeowie.
6) He used to go to Murnpeowie Station to collect supplies of food and then come back to stay (near the Mulligan Spring). I went from the (dingo) fence to see him.

7) I saw him lying there, and he spoke like this: ‘Oh me, I thought I’d die, got nothing to eat! Me sit down here’.

8) He sat there, waiting for cockatoos to come ‘cocky come, me get’m gun, we want’ m two, brother’, (he was waiting there) to kill and cook two cockatoos.

9) I spoke like this ‘There are sheep around Gunuwanda Spring, they are coming back there all the time’. ‘Which way you come? Water in spring?’ ‘I came that way, and I had a drink of water (from the spring)’.

10) ‘Ah, me go!’ I went and waited and waited for him so that we could kill a sheep, he was going to come with a camel — his camels had been drinking there (at the spring), I was waiting ready to kill a sheep.

11) ‘Me shoot’ m cut’ m throat and you carry the meat, I’ll have plenty now’, he said, ‘but no, Sayyid (a Syrian hawker) didn’t come, cut’ m throat’ — they pray when they cut’m throat, Afghan way.

12) (So he started saying): ‘Me eat’m if you cut’m throat you say same as me Bismala wala akuba [i.e. Bismallâh wallahu Akbar ‘in the name of Allâh who is great’]. ‘All right, but you’d better kill for yourself after this when I’m not here’, I said.

13) I went to see the manager (at Murnpeowie station); I saw him there and said: ‘That old fellow is done for, he’s become very sick’.

14) We went to get him, to bring him back to Murnpeowie station.

15) ‘Which way do you want to go?’, the manager asked him. ‘Adelaide’, he said. He went to Adelaide to stay there.

16) He saw the doctors there, and he died there.

17) They put them into the grave like this, they lie like this, that from the sunrise side they look towards the sunset; their feet are to the south, their head to the north.14

18) You’ve been to Farina cemetery, you’ve seen them there lying this way, you’ve seen them, Mrs Mahomet and her children, and Müsâ, all north-south, and at Marree too.

Comments on the customs of the Afghans

a) Mona Merrick and Arthur Warren

The following remarks were made at various stages in conversations with Mona Merrick and her brother Arthur Warren. These remarks reflect what were considered the most interesting features of the behaviour of Afghans. Frequent topics of conversation were food, money and the cruel practice of over-loading camels.

14. ‘The graves of the Muhammadans are so dug as to allow the body to lie with its face towards Mecca, consequently in India they were dug from north to south’ (Hughes 1935, s.v. ‘graves’). It is interesting to note that the Afghans simply carried on this Indian tradition in Australia and did not adapt it in the southern hemisphere so that the body should face Mecca.
1. They used to eat chapatty. Then we start eat chapatty.
   maga banda maba-nda, maga-bila nuga, waya nigi
   fire big make-, fire-coal much, wire there
   gudni-nda waigarara ala damper wagni-nda. Abigana-ru
   put -PRES light very cook -PRES. Afghan -ERG
   nunda-ga show -PAST.

2. gari curry wagni-nda, curry waru -naga madlangi,
   they cook -PRES, long ago-EL bad,
   fire-having mouth-pierce-HAB, tongue bite -bite -HAB.

3. Abigana maidja dangga bagu -ru nunji-li, Salaam
   Afghan not things empty-ABL give-HAB
   mani -gu mani mani-ligu, mani -gu wadlara.
   money-DAT money get -PURP, money-DAT hungry.

4. mani namba-ga gari-ri, waigi-nda-ya-ru
   money bury -PAST they-ERG, sick -Sp -Tr-PLUP
   gambabina banda-na, gambabina shuta-ma-nda, dugulu
   camp-oven big -LOC, camp-oven shut -Vb-PRES, hole
   baga-nda-lugu gamba-da-lugu. anandara
   dig -Sp -HIST bury -Sp-HIST. we mother and us children
   badni nani-ga waba-nda-na.
   nothing see -PAST hunt -Sp -NP.

5. gari-guna nuba maidja nigi dangga-gura, garri mani-gura
   they-POS wife not here stay -CONT, they take-CONT
   nignida wadlu -naga uljula uljula wařu uljula
   here country-EL woman, woman white woman
   waga mani-nda.
   black take-PRES.

6. bundju gari-ri wadili biđa-nda, ungu djindja-da
   meat they-ERG own kill-PRES, throat out -PRES
   Abigana-ru undu biđa-nda gari-ri maidja gani-ra,
   Afghan -ERG you ERG kill-PRES they-ERG not eat -PUNC,
   gari-ri ungu djindja-da nanygoata, budlugu,
   they-ERG throat out -PRES bullock
   rabbitti, mulabara gudna-djildi gari-ri ungu
   rock pigeon, waterhen they-ERG throat
   djindja-da: they didn't worry about fish, they got their
   cut -PRES:
   throats cut anyhow! Ha!
b) Comments by Ben Murray.

Because of their itinerant lifestyle many of the Afghans took their personal responsibilities lightly and some completely ignored their part-Aboriginal children. This is brought home by Ben Murray.

1. 

anguna anja Bejah, ilina gari: never look after us my father thus they: when we were young, bagu ani ganga-ga, empty we EXCL sit -PAST.

2. 

uga malga Maariri-na, roada-na gaga -libana, he not Marree -LOC, -LOC travel-ANC, undu jurga-ra uga-guna story, Northern Territory, you ERG know -PUNC he -POS Mt Isa gari yuga-nda. they go -PRES.

3. 

gadi gari yuga-nda: Jack Bejah, I call'm brother, empty they go -PRES uga yuga-nda diga -lugu, wandja-diga -lugu, he go -PRES return-HIST, die -return-HIST, dropped dead on the Marree racecourse. I was already working camel when he, my father, got married ...(to a part Afghan woman).

4. 

gari-ri namba-na Farina-na dugulu baga-na dini, they-ERG bury -PAST Farina-LOC hole dig -PRES tin, milk-tin, coffee tin gudni-nda waña -gi -gi! put -PRES night-EMPH-EMPH! mağabuda Maariri-na that old Khan mağabuda-ru old man Marree-LOC old man -ERG namba-na ilina nayi toilet, washing clothes line, bury -PAST thus here fence-post gananaga namba-ga: "Can't keep'm in my there bury -PAST: house, everybody looking" guldji banda pebble(i.e. money) big gold too, can't find'm now.
Translation

a) Mona Merrick and Arthur Warren:

1) They used to eat chapatties. Then we started eating chapatties. We used to make a big fire, with a lot of hot coals, and we put some wire netting on top, and cooked some really light dough. The Afghans showed us how to do it.

2) They used to cook curry. In the olden days that curry was horrible, it burnt like fire, it cut into your mouth and it bit your tongue!

3) An Afghan will never give anything away for nothing. 'Salaam' they say for money, they want to get hold of money, they're hungry for that money.

4) They used to bury their money: if they got sick they'd put the money in a camp-oven, they shut the camp-oven, dug a hole and buried it. My mother and my brothers and sisters, we were always looking for it, but we never found any.

5) Because they didn't have their own wives with them, they took women belonging to this country, white women and black women they took.

6) They always killed their own meat; they cut the animal's throat. If you killed meat for them they wouldn't eat it. They cut the throats of goats, bullocks, rabbits, rock pigeons and even waterhens: they didn't worry about cutting the throat of fish, because they've had their throats cut anyhow, ha!

7) They usually put four bales on a camel, on its back so that the camel couldn't even stand up (unaided), it was pressed down by that enormous load.

b) Comments by Ben Murray:

1) My father was Bejah;16 that's how they were: they never looked after us when we16 were young, we had nothing.

2) He was never in Marree, he was always on the road, he travelled about, you know the story, they went to the Northern Territory, they went to Mt Isa.

3) But it didn't do them any good: Jack Bejah, I called him 'brother'17 he went off (with father) he came back, he came back to die; he dropped dead on the Marree racecourse, I was already working with camels when my father got married . . . (to a part-Afghan woman).

4) The buried (their money) at Farina, they dug a hole and put (the money) in a tin, a (powdered) milk tin, or a coffee tin, and they put it in the hole at dead of night. An old man at Marree, that old Khan, he also buried (his money). They buried it there under toilets, clothes lines and under fence-posts: 'Can't keep it in my house, everybody looking' (the old man said). It was big money and gold too, but nobody can find it now.

15. Bejah Dervish was a most highly esteemed and deeply religious man. When he retired from camel driving he lived at Marree. He had been a member of the Calver-Wells expedition of 1896 in Western Australia and distinguished himself by saving Wells when he got lost. A photo of Bejah and a lively description of this fine old man were published by Farwell (1950).

16. Ben Murray is referring not to himself and his brothers, but also to other children of Afghan camel drivers.

17. He was a half-brother, of part European descent, who had been acknowledged by Bejah.
AFGHAN STORIES

Travelling with an Afghan camel string

This account was given by Johnny Reece of Marree, the oldest Warjgarjuru man now living. He was born in about 1901 at Gudnugu, Koonakoo waterhole, on Alton Downs, in Nuuluulu country: his parents had just left the Simpson Desert. He fled from the cruel conditions at Alton Downs and in about 1915 went to Andrewilla, where there was a large Aboriginal camp. They were mainly Warjgarjuru people who lived there, but also remnants of the Yaluyandi, Yawarawarga, Garajaruru and Njaman. In 1917-1918 he came down the track to Marree. He was at first frightened of the Afghans, then worked for them. He clearly remembers how hard the Afghans — and he — had to work. He describes a journey in which they averaged 35 miles a day up the Birdsville track and beyond; this was quite normal for a camel-string.

1. magidi-buru Abigana gari, gadji-nda wadlu-na
gun -having Afghan they, turn -PRES land -LOC

bigi-bigi bardjaña magidi-ri wadni-nda, anda
pig all gun -INST hunt -PRES, I

gadiara apa njdu wadni-lira bigi-bigi will.
frightened me too hunt -POT pig like.

2. "Azim Amra anduna mayu; didna-ra yuaga,
my master; foot -CAUS go -PAST,
yuaga-nda luda yigi -ligi Kidmaniu-qa, didna-ra
go -PRES load shift-PURP -DAT, foot -CAUS
yuaga-nda gamulu gudi-nda, nandara-ta-na-nda gamulu.
go -PRES camel pull-PRES, tired -Sp-PRES camel.

3. ani -guna nura Clayton, Claytona-ru yuaga Etadienna,
we EXCL-POS camp -ABL go -PAST
myyu nuyu-qa yuaga-naru Manurani Manurani -ri
day one -LOC go -PLUP Mungeranie, Mungeranie-ABL
Garawaña gudnala-nda awanda-gi, Garawaña -ru
Kirrawadinna sleep -PRES there -EMPH, Kirrawadinna-ABL
yuaga-ga Waluru -rugu
go -PAST Mt Gason-ABL.

4. gamulu gudi-nda didna-ra Gandiriga-rugu yuaga
pull-PRES foot -CAUS Gandiriga-ALL go -PAST
Gandiriga-ru Njaraawili-rigu myyu nuyu-qa gudnala-nda
Gandiriga-ABL Andrewilla-ALL day one -LOC sleep -PRES
yuaga-nda -gi wapa-waña Digiri -rugu, yuaga-lugu
go -PRES-EMPH early Dickeree-ALL, go -HIST
Digiri -ri WiFari -rugu
Dickeree-ABL Birdsville-ALL.
5. muyu gudnala-nda, anda malga garabila-nda
day sleep -PRES, I not rest -PRES
Dandabidi-rigu Dandabidi-ri Duri -rigu, awanda-ru
Bluff -ALL Bluff -ABL Durie-ALL, there -ABL
Mt Leonard.

6. gala wandila-nda wadlu warida -rugu Monkira-rugu.
creek follow -PRES country distant-ALL -ALL.
gamulu-na diga -nda nigri MaFiri-rigu ganga-şà
camel -LOC return-PRES here Marree-ALL stay -PRES
niginda.
hereabouts.

7. anda məyuu, bargulu Abigana, mayuqə, diriga-guna, bula
I one, two Afghan, master, oven -POS, two
yuga-şda, bula wanba-şda
go -PRES, two ride -PRES.

8. ağu wad -ma-nda gari-şna madli-ma-nda
I take off-Vb-FEES they-ACC cool -Vb-PRES
mudlu-walbu, gari madli-şna nuba-şna-nda gari
back -bone, they cool -LOC lie -Sp-PRES, they
marga-nda njinda gani-ra, gabulu gudni -şda
crawl-PRES grass eat -PUNC, hobble put on-PRES
ildingildinga gudni-şna ńawi-şna irdja-irdja-ra
bell put on-PRES hear-NP noise-noise-CAUS
yuga-şura.
go -CONT.

9. gulbari-li gani-şna curry, gudnala muyu widni-şura
three -ADV eat -PRES sleep sun set -CONT
waña -lı wanga-şna, yuga-şna nuFa-li, malga
early-ADV rise -NP, go -PRES hard-ADV, not
şəfəbili-nə piginda şəfabili-nə, fifty camel, loading
rest -NP hereabouts rest -NP
Kidman stores.

10. Camel get away from us too, gamulu gari şada-şna
camel they send-PRES
Waluru -ru yuga-şnda ani yuga-şnda all day,
Mt Gason-ABL go -PRES we EXCL go -PRES
şarga -şna digi -şna, uga yani-şnda: gamulu
evening-LOC take back-NP, he say -PRES:
uga yuga-şnda warida-rugu malg1 anda prayer
he go -PRES far -ALL not I
widi -rinaru.
become-PLUP.
AFGHAN STORIES

Translation

1) The Afghans always carried guns, they travelled around the country shooting down all the pigs, I was scared in case they shot me down too like a pig.

2) 'Azim Amir was my first boss. I went on foot, taking a load up for Kidman.\(^{18}\) I walked and walked leading the camels, but when I got tired I rode on a camel for a while.

3) Our (first) overnight camp (out from Marree) was Clayton. From Clayton we went to Etadunna in one day and then went to Mungeranie. From Mungeranie we went to Kirrawadinna waterhold. We slept there overnight and went on to Mt Gason.

4) I led the camels, travelling on foot, and we went to Gandirića waterhole (just 4 miles on from Clifton Hills), and from Gandirića waterhole we went to Andrewilla. We slept there for one night and setting off early we went to Dickeree waterhole (near Pandie Pandie). We went on from Dickeree waterhole to Birdsville.

5) We slept there for one night, I never had a chance to have a bit of a rest there. We went to the Bluff (now Rosebeth Station), from the Bluff to Mt Leonard.

6) We followed the creek, the Diamantina to that distant land, to Monkira. We then came back by camel to Marree and stayed around here.

7) I was on my own, and there were two Afghans, the boss and the 'oven-man' (the cook). They both walked and rode (at intervals).

8) I was the one who took off the loads and let those camels cool down their backs. They lay around in the cool of the evening, they moved about slowly eating grass. I put hobbles on them and I put bells on them so that we could hear the noise of them moving about.

9) The three of us then ate curry and went to sleep as the sun set, so as to rise at first dawn. We went all in one go, we were not to have a chance to rest anywhere on the way, we only had a rest when we got back here to Marree. We had fifty camels, laden with Kidman's stores.

10) A camel got away from us too. They had let the camel go at Mt Gason. We went all day looking for it and got it back at night time. He ('Azim Amir) said: ‘That camel went a long way off because (that night) I hadn't said my prayers'.

Syrian Traders

Muslim and Christian traders\(^{19}\) from ‘Syria', i.e. Syria and Lebanon, came to the north of South Australia much later than the Afghan camel drivers. Most of them came in the first decades of the present century, particularly before World War I, in order to escape from Turkish oppression. They were classified as ‘Abigana' by Arabana people who were nevertheless well aware of

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\(^{18}\) Sir Sydney Kidman (1857-1935) was a major owner of pastoral properties, particularly in central Australia (see Idriess 1935).

\(^{19}\) From various comments made it appears that the cruel Syrian and Sayyid Ali were both Muhammadans, while Mansoor was a Christian.
the difference between these new ‘Abigana’ and the camel drivers; it was the commercial-mindedness of these traders — greater even than the commercial-mindedness of the old-style Afghans — that above all caught the attention of Arabana people. Mona Merrick and her brother Arthur Warren recalled the days in the twenties when these traders visited Finniss Springs. The traders fulfilled a valuable function: they brought ‘luxury’ goods that did not form part of the usual provisions.

a) The Cruel Syrian

1. Abigana wādlu nūru-ŋaŋa mugāḍi guba-guba, uga yuga-ga Finnissi -ŋa soap, handkerchief comb sella-maŋa: Finniss Springs-LOC "I got nice little comb for hair-style."

2. gamulu nuyu-ŋa uga yuga-ga. anī wiḍi-ga camel one -LOC he go -PAST. we EXCL buy -PAST handkerchief, soap, comb, one shilling.

3. gamulu-ŋa ganjari bandā gudni-ga, railway chain. camel -LOC chain big put -PAST gamulu wūgq ganjari bandā gudni-ŋa didna-ŋa. camel sore many chain large drag-PRES foot -LOC.


6. gamulu maldja buFA-ɡa yulja -ru mani-ɡa. camel not die -PAST policeman-ERG take-PAST.

b) Mansūr

1. Mansūr qurgu aļa, danga mugāḍi, photo mani-ɡa; good very, clothes, hat, take-PAST; anda guya galgawalda gani-ɡa. waru Mansūr I girl sometimes see -PAST. long ago mugāḍi, njiba wiFa-ŋa. hat, dress sell-PRES.
AFGHAN STORIES

2. Working-man 
ganga-ga 
Beltana-na Mansür.
sit -PAST 

Shearing time 
yuga-ga 
uga mani guga mani-li,
go -PAST 
he money much get -HAB,

anandara 
njiba, mugadi, 
ganga 
we(our mother and us children) 
dress, hat, 
clothes,

comb 
wi-Fi-nda, anuña abidji-ri djarđa wi-Fi-ga.

buy -PRES, my 
father-ERG 
dress buy -PAST.

3. Working man 
nuba mani 
badni anuña abidji-ri 
wife money nothing my 
father-ERG

njiba wi-Fi-la -lugu.
dress buy -ALT-HIST.

4. Mansür motorcar 
banda, njiba nurgu.
big, dress nice.

c) Sayyid Ali.

1. Sayyid Ali had a van, two camels dragging it.

2. Sayyid Ali mani 
banda, didna-walga 
njiba, mugadi,

money big, shoe 
dress, hat;

ganga. 
clothes.

3. abidji-ri 
wi-Fi-nda 
prints njiba mani-ri garba-na-na.
father-ERG 
buy -PRES 
dress self-ERG make -NP-LOC

anandara 
wi-Fi-nda 

we(our mother and us children) 

4. Abigana 
wadj,u guru -gana, mugadi guba-guba. 

Afghan country other-EL, hat little. 
girl

bargulu, 
guya 

two, 
girl pretty.

5. (Told in English.)

Translation

a) The Cruel Syrian

1) An Afghan from a different country (not India), wearing a small hat (a fez), 

he came to Finniss Springs selling soap, handkerchiefs and combs: 'I got 
nice little comb for hair-style' he said.

2) He came with just one camel, and we bought handkerchiefs, soap and 

combs, for one shilling (everything he had cost one shilling).

3) He had put an enormous heavy chain on this camel, a railway chain. The 
camel was covered in sores and it dragged this big chain on its foot.
4) Crows were sitting on this camel, on its back, it had a rough bullock hide (in lieu of a saddle) and the crows were devouring the camel where its back was full of great sores from this saddle.

5) He went back to Marree and the Marree policeman took him and put him in gaol because of the camel: ‘Cruelty to animals!’

6) The camel didn’t die, the policeman took it (and looked after it).

b) Mansür

1) Mansür was a really good man, he had clothes and hats for sale and he took photos for people. I used to see him (at Finnis) occasionally when I was a little girl. It was a long time ago; Mansür sold hats and dresses.

2) Mansür was a working man at Beltana, but he came at shearing time (when there was plenty of money about) and he used to get a lot of money; all of us, my mother and us children bought dresses, hats, clothes and combs, and my father bought shirts.

3) If the wife of one of our working men didn’t have any money, my father would buy a dress for her.

4) Mansür had a big motor-car, and he sold pretty dresses.

c) Sayyid Ali

1) Sayyid Ali had a van, two camels dragging it.

2) Sayyid Ali had lots of money, he had shoes, dresses, hats and other clothes for sale.

3) Father used to buy prints from him so that we could make our own dresses. Mother and all of us used to buy almonds and peanuts.

4) He was an Afghan from a different country (not India), wearing a small hat (a fez). He had two daughters, pretty girls they were.

5) He’d had a wife, but she ran off, and in the end those two girls ran off too, they went and got married in Queensland.

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APPENDIX 1

The Phonemes of Arabana-Waggaŋuru

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stops</th>
<th>labial</th>
<th>interdental</th>
<th>alveolar</th>
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<th>palatal</th>
<th>velar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>dj</td>
<td>g</td>
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<td>nasals</td>
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</table>

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Note

Certain nasals and laterals in Arabana-Warjgapuru have pre-stopped allophones: -bm- corresponds to -m- at the beginning of the second syllable, -dn- to -n-, -dn- to -n-, -dl- to -l-, and -dl- to -l-. In order to make the spelling approximate as closely as possible to the pronunciation these pre-stopped consonants have been included in the orthography.

For simplicity the cluster -njdj- has been written -ndj-.

APPENDIX 2

List of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>ABL</td>
<td>ablative</td>
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<td>ACC</td>
<td>accusative case</td>
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<td>ACT</td>
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<td>adverb</td>
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<td>ALL</td>
<td>allative case</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>ancient, distant past</td>
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<td>CAUS</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONT</td>
<td>continuative participle, -ŋura</td>
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<td>CONT S</td>
<td>continuative stem-forming suffix</td>
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<td>HAB</td>
<td>habitual participle</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIST</td>
<td>historic past, used generally in an account of a series of events.</td>
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<td>IMM</td>
<td>immediate past tense</td>
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<td>purposive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sp</td>
<td>speed form, implying action performed hastily or before departing</td>
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<td>TR</td>
<td>transitory aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vb</td>
<td>verbalizing suffix</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the translation brackets are used to enclose phrases that are not in the original, but have been added by way of explanation.
ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1981 5:1

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