

The Meaning of Morawa

– Rupert Gerritsen



*Aerial View Morawa, 1 March 1966
(courtesy of Aerial Surveys Australia)*

Morawa (population 600) is a picturesque town situated in the northern wheatbelt of Western Australia, about 370 km north of Perth. Over time a variety of derivations have been suggested for the name of the town,¹ which obviously originates from an Indigenous source. As is common in areas where there is ‘long-established dispossession’, sound ‘historical and philological reconstruction’² is required if one hopes to arrive at a valid meaning for the name of the place. While most of the derivations that have been proposed for Morawa have some rationale, they are all suspect for one reason or another.

The most frequently cited derivation for Morawa is ‘Morowa’³ or ‘Morowar’⁴, referring to the dalgite [dalgyte or greater bilby, *Macrotis lagotis*], the small, burrowing, rabbit-eared bandicoot formerly found in much of the arid and semi-arid parts of Central and Western Australia. But a number of other etymologies have been suggested, including ‘Marrova - the snake-wood tree which grows in the area’,⁵ ‘Morawa - which hand?’,⁶ ‘Moorawa - fog’,⁷ ‘Morawa’ - elbow’,⁸ and ‘Murowari-yanni - hut’.⁹

In many instances it is difficult to establish the credentials of these etymologies. Often they are unsourced, and where they are sourced, the quality of the information is highly questionable, as in the document, ‘Native Meanings of

Townships North of Gin Gin’.¹⁰ While the likely sources of a number of these derivations can actually be traced with some degree of confidence, such reconstructions tend to show they are based on highly superficial and erroneous linguistic analyses, associations or coincidences which lack any corroborative ethnographic evidence. This can be seen with the Morowa/Morowar - dalgite; Moorawa - fog; Morawa - elbow examples.

The dalgite reference appears to originate from a journal article published in 1904, which provided a random and undifferentiated list of nouns and supposed Aboriginal place names from the Irwin River area, 50 km to the north west.¹¹ With ‘fog’ and ‘elbow’, while they resemble ‘Morawa’ phonologically, no provenance is provided. But the structure of the name of ‘Morawa’ suggests such offerings are completely erroneous anyway. The word is a compound, wherein Aboriginal speakers from the region employed the suffix ‘-wa’ in reference to a location, meaning ‘in possession of, containing, etc., ... denoting a characteristic of that locality’.¹² Hence, one finds places such as Gullewa, Mullewa, Nabawa, Tenindewa, Nullewa Lake and Mount Muggawa in this part of WA. Consequently the root term is the morpheme ‘Mora-’, or similar, which was the attribute of this place or locality.

Part of the reason why these spurious etymologies arise is explicable if it is realised that 19th and 20th century recorders, because of their superficial understanding of Indigenous cultures and languages, often took attributes ascribed to a place by Indigenous informants as the derivation of its name.¹³ So, Morawa may be a place where dalgites used to be found, it may be reputed to be fog-prone, it may lie close to the bend (an ‘elbow’) of a creek, but the name may not derive from that. In other instances the derivation comes from some linguistic coincidence based on words recorded by amateur ethnographers from the colonial era. ‘Marrova’ - the snake-wood tree, is a prime example. The snake-wood tree (*Acacia xiphophylla*) never grew anywhere near Morawa, its distribution was in the north west of WA, from Shark Bay to the Pilbara.¹⁴ An Aboriginal term for this tree was recorded from the Buduna and Ngalooma languages from that region in the late 19th century, as ‘Marrawa’.¹⁵ So the proponent of this derivation of Morawa has simply plucked an Aboriginal word out of the air, so to speak, and claimed this as the origin of the name.

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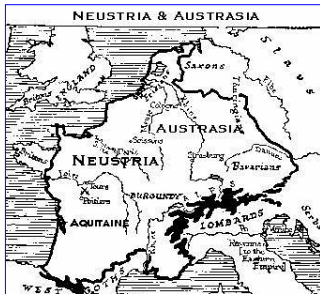
From the editor . . .

New Contributor



Welcome to new member and first time contributor, Keith Collicoat, who resides most of the time at Buderim in Queensland. Keith is a frequent traveller and expert photographer. We met last year on an overland trip from Sydney to Alice Springs. Keith's lively personality kept our group entertained. Never without his camera and tripod the photographs he shared with us are a wonderful record of our travels. This photo of Keith was taken at the Alice Springs Desert Park.

– Dale Lehner



One of our readers, Dr David Scienceman, wrote to me and asked whether there could be any connection between AUSTRASIA and NEUSTRIA to AUSTRALASIA and NOTASIA. The former two refer to Merovingian Frankish kingdoms in present-day France during the sixth to eighth centuries. AUSTRASIA means 'eastern land' (the country name AUSTRIA (in German *Österreich* 'Eastern kingdom/ realm') derives from it). NEUSTRIA means 'new [western] land' (the German word *neu* 'new' is a cognate). The name AUSTRALASIA is derived from the Latin root *australis* 'southern'; whilst NOTASIA is its Greek equivalent. So, there is no connection between the two pairs of words.

– Jan Tent

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Contact: Editor: David Blair
or Sub-Editor: Tricia Mack
c/- ANPS, Linguistics Dept.,
Macquarie University NSW 2109
Email: editor@anps.org.au

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A FLOUR MILL, A CINEMA AND A WELL DRESSED SHEPHERD

Manildra is a small town in Cabonne Shire to the west of Orange. At the 2006 Census it had a population of 503.¹ Nevertheless it has claim to fame on several counts. In 1904 a flour mill was moved from Cargo



to **Manildra** and now the Manildra Flour Mill is said to be the largest in the southern hemisphere and still expanding. The town is the home of the National Bread Show. In 1936 a travelling picture show known as The Amusu (pronounced Amuse You) settled permanently in **Manildra** and is reportedly the oldest continuously operating theatre in Australia.²

According to railway records, "the name **Manildra** was taken from Messrs. Towns, Steward and Furlong's pastoral property of 1800ha which is shown in the 1866 Gazetteer and is also the name of the parish nearby". The village was officially proclaimed in 1885.³ According to a local historian, this name could have come from the Aboriginal *Millidwa* 'junction of the creeks', or 'snake hole', a name given to a waterhole below the railway bridge.⁴ However, as is often the case with names of Aboriginal origin, yet another meaning is suggested – that of 'winding river'. Some say the town was called this because **Mandagery Creek** winds around **Manildra's** east side.⁵

At the opening celebrations of **Manildra's** bridge in 1879 a competition is said to have taken place to see if someone could throw a dog over the hotel roof.⁶

Flowing into **Mandagery Creek** is **Flash Jacks Creek**. It seems that the area had a shepherd who wore "flash" clothes and the original settlement was known as **Flash Jack's Flat** before it became **Manildra**. The creek is well named as it has long been notorious for its flash floods.⁷

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References

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 25 October, 2007
- 2 www.orange-nsw.com/Manildra.html
- 3 Hazel Stapleton, *Manildra on Mandagery – town and district*, 1982, pp.5-6
- 4 Stapleton, *op. cit.*, p.5
- 5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manildra,_New_South_Wales
- 6 Stapleton, *op. cit.*, p.5
- 7 *ibid.* p.5

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The assertion that Morawa actually meant ‘Which hand?’ did not surface until 1968. Presumably it is based on the word ‘marra’ or its cognates, the term for ‘hand’, which shows great consistency across many Aboriginal languages in Western Australia. In the region around Morawa, where the Amangu language was spoken,¹⁶ this term was recorded historically (i.e. pre-1910) as ‘ma’,¹⁷ ‘maa’,¹⁸ and ‘marrajee’.¹⁹ But the phonological divergence between ‘Mora-’ and ‘ma’ or ‘marra’, and the lack of any etymological explanation, would suggest the connection is fanciful.

The final suggestion, ‘murowari-yanni’ (hut) is unsourced. When British explorers first intruded into the Victoria District (Irwin River north to Hutt River) from 1839 onward they reported dwellings of ‘substantial construction’, capable of accommodating up to a 10 people.²⁰ But these were known as ‘middo’²¹ or ‘minda’,²² while less permanent habitations were generally known as ‘maia/mya/maya’ in southern WA. Consequently, there does not appear to be any sort of evidence supporting the ‘murowari-yanni’ derivation.

So what is the meaning of Morawa? I would suggest that it actually has a meaning associated with initiation, ‘the place where men are made/initiated’. This is based on linguistic evidence, supported by ethnographic data.

In vocabularies recorded in the 19th and early 20th century from this region,²³ the following terms can be found:

- moora moora – hair string worn around the head²⁴
- mooralba – keloid (raised) scars²⁵
- moora – keloid scars²⁶
- marrowa – young man²⁷
- moorawa – initiated youth²⁸

All these terms seemingly relate to ‘man-making’ activities, stages in initiation, primarily in regard to age-grade initiation, the transition from youth to manhood. In the south west of WA the ‘hair string’ was usually presented at age-grade initiation.²⁹ Scarring (cicatrisation) was a part of the initiation process leading to age-grade initiation.³⁰ Once initiated a young man assumed a new status, distinct from an uninitiated boy. They were now ‘marrowa’ or ‘moorawa’. From these examples, cognates of the root term ‘moora-’ can be inferred, conveying the sense of ‘acquiring manliness/manhood’. By extension, and allowing for English speakers altering the pronunciation of that morpheme slightly to ‘mora-’, ‘Morawa’ would then mean a place where manliness/manhood is acquired.

In support of this derivation I would point to the occurrence of a number of important traditional ceremonial sites and meeting places around Morawa. One is a series of stone arrangements linked to circumcision initiation ceremonies at Canna, about 37 km north west of Morawa.³¹ Another stone arrangement with a similar purpose can be found 19 km east of Morawa, in the Koolanooka Hills.³² Furthermore, Peterwangy Hill, 50 km to the north west, was also reputedly a major meeting place of Amangu, Wa[t]jarri, and Badimaya people,³³ while Morawa itself appears to be situated close to the intersecting boundaries of Amangu, Badimaya and Kalamaya country.³⁴ In this context the fact that Morawa lay very close to the “Circumcision Line” takes on added significance.³⁵ The Circumcision Line divided the groups who carried out circumcision as an integral part of initiation ceremonies from those who did not. In the southern part of WA the Circumcision Line ran from just east of Geraldton to around Bremer Bay on the south coast. Those to the east conducted circumcisions of novices as part of initiation, to the west they did not. According to Daisy Bates, it was formerly the custom for some boys from non-circumcising groups to be sent to circumcising groups to be initiated. This was a diplomatic gesture, intended to maintain good relations, alliances.³⁶

Given the presence of initiation sites close to Morawa, its proximity to the boundaries of several different groups, as well as its position in relation to the Circumcision Line, it is reasonable to infer that this locality was indeed associated with “man-making” ceremonies. This inference is strengthened if the meagre linguistic evidence is also taken into account. Such a conclusion is not certain by any means, and a definitive answer may never be found, but it is perhaps a more cogent explanation for the meaning of Morawa than any of the previous contributions.

Footnotes

- ¹ Gazetted on 13 September 1913.
- ² Hercus, L. and Simpson, J. (2002) Indigenous placenames: An introduction. In L. Hercus, F. Hodges and J. Simpson, (eds) *The Land is a Map: Placenames of Indigenous Origin in Australia*. Canberra: Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, p.5.
- ³ Western Australian Department of Lands and Surveys Nomenclature Index – Morawa: Western Australian State Records Office N/C File 279/66. See also <http://www.landgate.wa.gov.au/corporate.nsf/web/History+of+country+town+names+-+m>
- ⁴ Aboriginal Place Names – List No. 2, State Library of Western Australia: Accession 3778A/80-3.
- ⁵ Letter from Commission of Native Welfare to Surveyor-General, 24 December 1937, Uren Papers, State Library of Western Australia, Accession 3778A, Manuscript 1219.
- ⁶ What Aboriginal place names signify, *West Australian*, 22 December 1968.
- ⁷ Native meanings of townships north of Gin Gin: State Library of Western Australia: Ephemera - Printed Record 342.
- ⁸ *Ibid*
- ⁹ Holland, L. J. (n.d.) ‘The History of Morawa’, Teacher’s Higher Degree Certificate thesis, Claremont Teachers College, p.1.
- ¹⁰ Native meanings of townships north of Gin Gin: State Library of Western Australia: Ephemera -Printed Record 342.
- ¹¹ Colonial Secretary of Western Australia (1904) Western Australian Aboriginal place names (continued). *Science of Man* 7(1):10. It is actually recorded as ‘Murraraw’.
- ¹² Oldfield, A. (1865) The Aborigines of Australia. *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 3:291.
- ¹³ Hercus, L. (2002) Is it really a place name? In L. Hercus, F. Hodges and J. Simpson, (eds) *The Land is a Map: Placenames of Indigenous Origin in Australia*. Canberra: Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, pp.66-70. A typical example from this part of the world is “Bindoon”, 80 km north of Perth. It is often claimed Bindoon means “a place where yams grow.” But, while yams (*Dioscorea hastifolia*) did grow prolifically at Bindoon, the derivation is highly questionable. The word for yam was *warran* (with slight variations) wherever it grew in the southern part of WA.
- ¹⁴ Flora of Australia Online: <http://anbg.gov.au/abrs/online-resources/flora/stddisplay.xsql?pnid+1326>
- ¹⁵ Yabaroo [Alexander Cameron] (1899) *Aborigines of North West Australia – A Vocabulary etc.*, Perth, J. W. Barnard.
- ¹⁶ Thieberger, N. (1993) *Handbook of Western Australian Languages South of the Kimberley Region*. pp.70,74.
- ¹⁷ Perks, J. (1886) Irwin and Murchison Rivers, Cheangwa vocabulary. In E. M. Curr (comp.) *The Australian Race*, vol. 1, p.374. Melbourne: Government Printer; R. T. Goldsworthy (1886) *Champion Bay*. In *ibid* p.316.
- ¹⁸ ‘Native vocabulary compiled by Marratharra for Winjaroo of Dhoongara,’ Section XII Pt.2F.1 folio 54. Daisy M. Bates Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 365.
- ¹⁹ ‘Native vocabulary compiled by Goolaara of Dandaragan (Melbourne)’. Section XII Pt.2C.18 folio 47. Daisy M. Bates Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 365.

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Two unusual early names for the Australian Continent

– Paul Geraghty
– Jan Tent

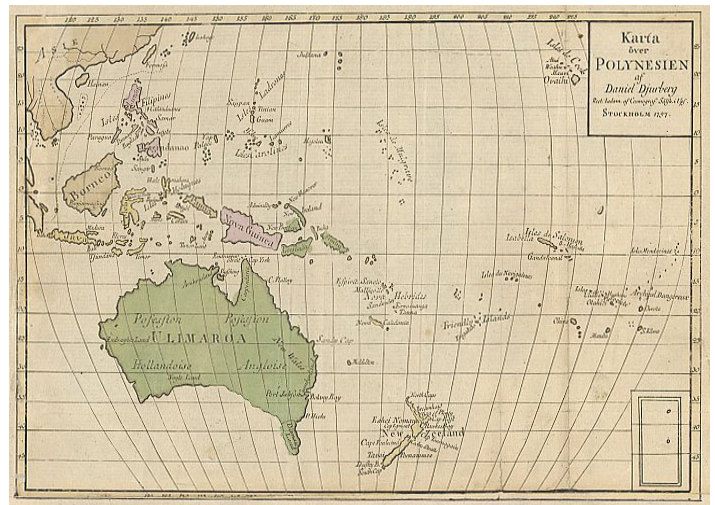
We have previously discussed the meaning and origin of *Notasia*. In this issue we now turn to *Ulimaroa*, the most enigmatic name ever applied to the continent of Australia.

In our search for the history of this apparent toponym, we discovered several other entities with this name. Firstly, it is a locality and railway station on the Darling Downs (southeast Queensland) approximately 320km WNW of Brisbane, just off the Warrego Highway. The nearest town is Miles, 27km away. The rail siding was at one time the pickup point for cattle from the large cattle station Jaydee, but now there are only disused wheat silos. The website of the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (the authority responsible for placenames in that State) declares: “[The name was] used from 26 September 1913, reportedly an Aboriginal word, language and dialect unknown, supposed to mean land beyond the sea? [sic]”.¹ When we telephoned some of the locals to see if we could obtain a photo of the location and any other information as to its naming, the initial *U-* of *Ulimaroa* was pronounced as “yew”, rather than a short “oo” (as in *hood*). This is probably due to the belief the name is of Aboriginal origin. Placenames of Indigenous origin with initial *u-* are regularly pronounced with “yew” (e.g. *Unanderra*, *Urunga*, *Ulamambri* etc.). How this lonely railway siding acquired its name is unknown.

Ulimaroa is also the name of a 19th century Melbourne mansion on St Kilda Road. It was built in 1889 by the Rev. Dr Edwin I. Watkin, whose father was a missionary in the South Island of New Zealand, and where he was educated. Edwin later returned to Australia where he became an authority on early Australian and Polynesian history, edited the Methodist magazine *The Spectator* and occasionally wrote articles in *The Argus* on Australian toponymy under the *nom de plume* ‘G.Y.D.’. He also published *Australian Native Names and Their Meanings*, and was Honorary Secretary of the Victorian branch of the Royal Geographical Society.² The name *Ulimaroa* possibly derives from Watkin’s extensive geographical and historical knowledge of Australia and Polynesia. In 1993, the mansion was purchased by the Royal College of Anaesthetists of Australia and New Zealand for its headquarters.³

Watkin himself never lived at *Ulimaroa*, but leased it to John Traill, who became the Chairman of Directors of the shipping company Huddart Parker Company. Traill bought *Ulimaroa* from Watkin in 1899, and his family lived there until 1946. Traill must have approved of the mansion’s name, because he christened one of his company’s ships *SS Ulimaroa*. This steamship was built in 1908 (gross tonnage 5,828, length 400.3 feet, beam 52.2 feet, draught 23.2) by Gourlay Sons & Co. Ltd., Dundee.⁴ Huddart Parker’s steamers ran to the principal ports of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania, as well as to various ports in New Zealand. Huddart Parker steamers, including the *Ulimaroa*, became household names. From 1916 to 1920 the ship was requisitioned by the New Zealand Government as a troopship. In 1934 she was scrapped in Osaka.⁵

Finally, the March 3 1903 issue of *The Adelaide Advertiser* reported that the racehorse *Ulimaroa* was to race in the Penola Handicap and the Flying Handicap at the Penola Racing Club.⁶ We have not been able to unearth any other details about this horse, its naming or its owner.



Daniel Djurberg, 1780:
(courtesy of NLA, map-t446-v)

Ulimaroa was first used as a name for Australia in 1776 by the noted Swedish geographer and cartographer Daniel Djurberg (1744-1834) in his *Geografi, sammandragen utur de nyste och tilförliteligaste auctoror* [Geography, summaries of the newest and most comprehensive authors]. He used the name in most of his subsequent publications. Djurberg was well known for the eccentric habit of giving his own names to already named places and countries, e.g. *Vingandacoo* for North America. He first used *Ulimaroa* on a map in 1780 (*Karta över Polynesien eller Femte Delen af Jordklotet af Daniel Djurberg Ledamot af Cosmografiska Sällsk I Upsala. Stockholm*).⁷ Subsequently, other cartographers and publishers used it on various European maps until approx. 1819, e.g.:⁸

German: Canzler (1795, 1806), Von Reilly (1795), Sotzmann (1798), Streit (1817, 1819), Swoboda & Hartl (1815), Schneider (1797), Plant (1793), Löhr (1795), Reinecke (1801), Anon. (1806)

Swedish: Djurberg (1780, 1789, 1790, 1797), Ackerland (1818)

Austrian: Mollo (1810)

Czech: Anon. (1815), Lindner (1815)

Interestingly, *Ulimaroa* was also used as the name for Australia by the Swedish novelist Carl Jonas Love Almqvist in his 1817 novel *Parjumouf. Saga ifran Nya Holland* [Parjumouf. A Tale from New Holland], the story of the adventures of a young woman, Parjumouf, in New Holland (Australia).

So, where does this name come from and what does it mean? It certainly is not an Australian Aboriginal name, as suggested by the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management and by Tooley (1985: 58). The word is of Polynesian origin, and its first appearance in print can be traced back to Hawkesworth’s 1773 account of Captain James Cook’s first voyage (1768 to 1771), a compilation of the journals of Cook and Joseph Banks. The following extracts (emphasis ours) are from the journal entries made during the *Endeavour*’s visits to Doubtless Bay (just north of the Bay of Islands on the northeast coast of the North Island) and Queen Charlotte Sound (the sound leading to Picton at the north end of the South Island).

Tupia (correctly spelt *Tupa’ia*), who is mentioned in these accounts, was a priest, chief and navigator of Ra’iatea. He was living on Tahiti when he met Cook, and was invited to accompany the *Endeavour* back to England and act as pilot and translator on the voyage through the Pacific. When they arrived in New Zealand, it was discovered that Tupa’ia could converse with the Māori “perfectly”, so he became indispensable as intermediary between Cook and his men and the Māori.

Two Unusual early names for the Australian Continent

Hawkesworth:⁹

9 December 1769, Doubtless Bay

[...] finding these people so intelligent, we inquired farther, if they knew of any country besides their own: they answered, that they never had visited any other, but that their ancestors had told them, that **to the N.W. by N. or N.N.W. there was a country of great extent, called ULIMAROA, to which some people had sailed in a very large canoe; that only part of them returned, and reported, that after a passage of a month they had seen a country where the people eat hogs.** Tupia then enquired whether these adventurers brought any hogs with them when they returned; they said No: then, replied Tupia, your story is certainly false, for it cannot be believed that men who came back from an expedition without hogs, had ever visited a country where hogs were to be procured. It is however remarkable, notwithstanding the shrewdness of Tupia's objection, that **when they mentioned hogs it was not by description but by name, calling them *Booah*, the name which is given them in the South-sea islands; but if the animal had been wholly unknown to them, and they had had no communication with people to whom it was known, they could not possibly have been acquainted with the name.**

Joseph Banks' version of the incident is as follows:¹⁰

9 December 1769, Doubtless Bay

[...] finding these people so intelligent desired him [Tupa'ia] to enquire if they knew of any Countries besides this or ever went to any. They said no but that their ancestors had told them **to the NW by N or NNW was a large country to which some people had sailed in a very large canoe, which passage took them up a month: from this expedition a part only returned who told their countreymen that they had seen a country where the people eat hogs, for which animal they used the same name (Booah) as is used in the Islands.** And have you no hogs among you? said Tupia.—No.—And did your ancestors bring none back with them?—No.—You must be a parcel of Liars then, said he, and your story a great lye for your ancestors would never have been such fools as to come back without them.

Notice how Banks does not refer to this land by name. Cook's journal does not mention this incident at all.

Hawkesworth:

5 February 1770, Queen Charlotte Sound

[...] our old man Topaa came on board to take his leave of us, and as we were still desirous of making farther enquiries whether any memory of Tasman had been preserved among these people, Tupia was directed to ask him whether he had ever heard that such a vessel as ours had before visited the country. To this he replied in the negative, but said, that **his ancestors had told him there had once come to this place a small vessel, from a distant country, called ULIMAROA, in which were four men, who, upon their coming on shore, were all killed: upon being asked where this distant land lay, he pointed to the northward. Of Ulimaroa we had heard something before, from the people about the Bay of Islands, who said that their ancestors had visited it; and Tupia had also talked to us of Ulimaroa, concerning which he had some confused traditionary notions, not very different from those of our old man, so that we could draw no certain conclusion from the accounts of either.**

Joseph Banks's account of the incident reads:

5 February 1770, Queen Charlotte Sound

[... they] **have a tradition of 2 large vessels, much larger than theirs, which some time or other came here and were totally destroyed by the inhabitants and all the people belonging to them killed'. This Tupia says is a very old tradition, much older than his great grandfather, and relates to two large canoes which came from Olimaroa, one of the Islands he has**

mentioned to us. Whether he is right, or whether this is a tradition of Tasman's ships whose size in comparison to their own they could not from relation conceive a sufficient Idea of, and whom their Warlike ancestors had told them they had destroyed, is difficult to say. Tupia all along warned us not to believe too much any thing these people told us; For says he they are given to lying, they told you that one of their people was killed by a musquet and buried Which was absolutely false.

James Cook's account reads:¹¹

6 February 1770, Queen Charlotte Sound

[...] The old man seeing us under sail came on board to take his leave of us, amongst other conversation which passed betwixt him a[nd] Tupia he was asked if either he or any of his ancestors had ever seen or heard of any Ship like this being in these parts, to which question he answered in the negative, but said that **his Ancestors had told him that there came once to this place a small Vessel from a distant land called *Olhemaroa* wherein were four men that were all killed upon their landing and being asked where this distant land lay he pointed to the North, intimated that it would take up a great many days to go thither. Something of this land was mentioned by the people of the Bay of Islands who said that their Ancestors had been there. But it is very clear to us that their knowledge of this land is traditionary.**

Note that the first sentence in Banks' account from Queen Charlotte Sound refers to '2 large vessels', so is more likely to be a recollection of Tasman's visit in 1642.

In sum, the above accounts indicate that Māori in two different places had knowledge of a distant land to the north heard as 'Olimaroa' by the visitors, which was changed by Hawkesworth to 'Ulimaroa'. We now consider what this place name might have been in Māori.

Borrowing of a noun with its article

It is not an unusual practice of languages when borrowing a noun from another to include the article. Examples include:

- Portuguese *o Porto* 'the port' is borrowed in English as *Oporto*.¹²
- Arabic *al* 'the' has become prefixed to many toponyms of Arabic origin in Spain and Portugal, e.g. *Algarve* 'the west', *Almeria* 'the watch tower', *Algeciras* 'the green isle'.¹³ The nouns *algebra* and *alcohol* are also examples of this phenomenon.
- French *l'auto* 'the car' is borrowed in Bislama (the pidgin of Vanuatu) as *loto* 'car'.
- Fijian *na qīō* 'the shark' is borrowed in Fiji Hindi as *nagio* 'shark'.
- Tahitian *'o Tahiti* 'Tahiti' is borrowed in English (18th century) as *Otaheite*.¹⁴
- Tahitian *'o Ra'iatea* 'Ra'iatea' is borrowed in English (18th century) as *Ulietea*.

We believe that this affixation of the article to the noun (in this case a toponym) also occurs in Cook's *Olhemaroa* and Banks' *Olimaroa*, and that this represents the Tahitian article 'o plus a place-name Rimaroa, in the same way that 18th century English Otaheite represented the Tahitian article 'o plus the place-name Tahiti. The article is Tahitian rather than New Zealand Māori because the information was conveyed to the Englishmen by the Tahitian-speaking Tupa'ia.

Why Hawkesworth changed the initial *O* to *U* is unknown. Maybe he was influenced by the initial 'U' in Ulietea. Vrbecky and Kabat (1964: 465-466), who wrote what is probably the most scholarly study to date on *Ulimaroa*, speculate that it may have been due to "Hawkesworth's own carelessness [in] a badly formed 'O' in his manuscript, a printer's error and inadequate proof-correction or a wish to improve on his original [...]." As they conclude, "Why he spelt it with a 'U' is anybody's guess".¹⁵

Two Unusual early names for the Australian Continent

The 'o *Ra'iatea* > *Ulietea* example also highlights another common error Europeans made when transcribing Polynesian words. The main reason Polynesian /r/ and /l/ have often been confused and transcribed variously with English /r/ and /l/ is simply that they sound similar. Moreover, Polynesian languages have either an /r/ or an /l/, never both. Hence, both Cook's and Banks' transcriptions of the name are incorrect. Neither Tahitian nor Māori has an /l/ so, the correct form in both Tahitian and Māori is *Rimaroa*.

It is not surprising that none of the authors on the subject of *Ulimaroa* recognised *U* as an affixed definite article. None of them were linguists, let alone familiar with Polynesian grammar or phonology.¹⁶ Vrbicky and Kabat (1964: 466) are the only scholars who have attempted to analyse the word, suggesting it is composed of *uri* 'offspring, descendant, race', *ma* 'white', and *roa* 'long'. However, they, together with Arrousseau (1973:6), do recognise that /l/ is not a sound occurring in Māori, which uses /r/ instead. Plischke (1960: 296) oddly enough suggests *Ulimaroa* is a German transliteration of *Olhemaroa*. This is not tenable, because Hawkesworth used the spelling *Ulimaroa* in 1773, well before any German publications.

So, where is *Rimaroa*?

Now that we have determined that the name of the place the Māori were referring to was probably *Rimaroa*, we examine all the relevant facts to attempt to determine which place the name referred to. What we know is as follows:

1. The name of the island is *Rimaroa*.

We know of only one island named *Rimaroa*, and its identity is uncertain. Tupa'ia drew a chart of islands that he knew, and the name *Oremaroa* appears on this chart, apparently somewhere in the Tuamotus. It is also mentioned by J.R. Forster (the scientist on Cook's second voyage) as being in the Tuamotu group, but has never been positively identified. If it exists, it cannot be a large island, and it is on the far side of Tahiti, not NNW-N of New Zealand. Both Plischke (1960) and Beaglehole (1968: 245n) speculate that *Ulimaroa* could refer to Tupa'ia's *Oremaroa*.

2. The possible meaning of *Rimaroa* is 'long arm' (*rīma* 'arm/hand', *roa* 'long').

This suggests a long narrow island, e.g. Grande Terre of New Caledonia, or Kadavu (Fiji). Arrousseau (1973:5-6) has suggested *Ulimaroa* may refer to New Caledonia.

3. *Rimaroa*'s direction from New Zealand is NNW-N.

New Caledonia is NNW, Kadavu N, Vitilevu (the main island of Fiji) N-NNE.

4. *Rimaroa* is a large island.

New Caledonia and Vitilevu are large islands, Kadavu is not.

5. *Rimaroa*'s distance from the northern extremes of both the North and South Islands of New Zealand is about a month's sail.

All three suggested islands are approximately equidistant from New Zealand.

6. *Rimaroa* had pigs.

There were no pigs on New Caledonia before Cook introduced them on his second voyage in 1774. However, they were present on Vitilevu and Kadavu.

7. These pigs are called *Booah* (probably from Tahitian *pua'a*).

Pigs are called *puak*, or something similar, on New Caledonia now, but the terms are believed to have been borrowed from Polynesian languages in relatively recent times. They are called *vorē* on Kadavu, and *vuaka* on parts of Vitilevu. However, it is possible that the New Zealand Māori term *poaka* was used, and Tahitianised by Tupa'ia as *pua'a*.

Conclusion

We believe *Rimaroa* most likely referred to one of three places:

- *New Caledonia*. The direction for this case is right (NNW), as is its shape (long and narrow). The problem with it is there is no evidence, either from oral traditions or archeology, of pigs existing on New Caledonia prior to their being introduced in 1774.
- *Kadavu*. Its shape is right, but the problem with this place is its small size and its direction from New Zealand (NNE).
- *Vitilevu*. It is a large island, but its problem is its shape (round) and its direction from New Zealand (NNE).

Whichever is correct, the implications are:

- that the New Zealand Māori had intentionally sailed to, and returned from, New Caledonia, Kadavu or Vitilevu some centuries before Cook, and that people from one of these places has sailed to New Zealand.
- that this meshes with claims made by Tupa'ia of extensive sailing by Tahitians, e.g. as far west as Rotuma, as well as similar claims by Tongans, as far as Malaita (Solomons) and Tarawa (Kiribati).
- that there was a decline in inter-island voyaging in centuries before Cook.

Djurberg's idea that *Ulimaroa* was the Māori name for Australia is therefore untenable. His belief that the name meant 'big red land' is also misguided.¹⁷ None of the elements in this name mean 'red' or 'land' (Māori 'red' = *kura*, 'land' = *whenua*). Moreover, there were no pigs in Australia prior to 1788 and its position relative to Doubtless Bay and Queen Charlotte Sound is due W to NW, not NNW.

Like many of our investigations into the origin and meaning of placenames, this story does not yet have a satisfactory conclusion. We will need to conduct more research before we can write the last chapter on the history of *Ulimaroa*. As Arrousseau wrote back in 1973, "The file 'Ulimaroa' therefore remains open in the records of Polynesian scholarship."¹⁸

Footnotes

- ¹ Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management. <http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/property/placenames/detail.php?id=35741>
- ² *The Argus*, Saturday 2 December 1916, p. 18. <http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/1630014>
- ³ Peterson, R. (2005). *A Place of Sensuous Resort: buildings of St Kilda and their people*. Balaclava, Vic.: St Kilda Historical Society.
- ⁴ Lawson, W. (1909). *Steam in the Southern Pacific: the story of merchant steam navigation in the Australasian coastal and intercolonial trades, and on the ocean lines of the Southern Pacific*. Wellington: Gordon & Gotch.
- ⁵ TheShipsList. *The Fleets—Huddart, Parker & Co. 1876-1961 and associated companies*. <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/huddart.htm>
- ⁶ *The Adelaide Advertiser*, Tuesday March 3, 1903, p. 7. <http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/4929299?searchTerm=penola+racing+club>
- ⁷ Du Rietz, R. (1961). *Daniel Djurbergs namn på Australien*. Särtryck ur Ymer, h. 2. Stockholm, p.84; Tooley, R.V. (1985). *The mapping of Australia and Antarctica*. Second Rev. Ed. London: The Holland Press Ltd. p. 58.
- ⁸ See: Tooley (1985).
- ⁹ Hawkesworth, J. (1773). *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and Successfully Performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Carteret, Captain Wallis, and Captain Cook, in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour: Drawn up from the Journals which were Kept by the Several Commanders, and from the papers of Joseph Banks Esq.* Vol. II. London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell. http://southseas.nla.gov.au/index_voyaging.html
- ¹⁰ Banks, J. *The Endeavour journal of Joseph Banks : 1768-1771 / edited by J.C. Beaglehole* (1963). Sydney: The Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales in association with Angus and Robertson. http://southseas.nla.gov.au/index_voyaging.html.

Two Unusual early names for the Australian Continent

- ¹¹ Beaglehole, J.C. (ed.) (1968) *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery. The Voyage of the 'Endeavour' 1768-1771.* Cambridge: CUP. http://southseas.nla.gov.au/index_voyaging.html
- ¹² Richardson, W.A.R. (2006). *Was Australia Charted before 1606? The Jave la Grande Inscriptions.* Canberra: National Library of Australia. p. 63.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ ' is the orthographic symbol used for a glottal stop in Polynesian languages.
- ¹⁵ Vrbicky, Z. & Kabat, J. (1964). Ulimaroa. *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 49, 6, pp. 459-472.
- ¹⁶ See: Arousseau, M. (1973). The name "Ulimaroa". *Newsletter of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, No. 126 (June), pp. 5-6; Du Rietz (1961); Langenfelt, G. (1954). 'Ulimaroa', in *Särtryck ur Festskrift Tillagnad Elias Wessén.* Lund. pp. 133-137; Plischke, H. (1960). Ulimaroa, eine alte Erdteilbezeichnung für Australien. *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*, Vol. 4, pp. 296-7; Vrbicky & Kabat (1964).
- ¹⁷ Djurberg, D. (1811-1813). *Geografiskt Lexicon.* Vol. II, p. 414.
- ¹⁸ Arousseau, M. (1973) p. 6.

Continued from page three - The Meaning of Morawa

- ²⁰ Gerritsen, R. (2002) *Nhanda Villages of the Victoria District, Western Australia*, p.3. Canberra: Intellectual Property Publications.
- ²¹ Letter from Dr Foley to E. R. Parker, *Perth Gazette*, 31 January 1851.
- ²² 'Native vocabulary compiled by Marratharra'.
- ²³ There do not appear to be any remaining speakers of Amangu (Thieberger p.74) and the only available language material was recorded in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. Two salvage linguistic studies in closest proximity, of Nhanda (Blevins, J. 2001 *Nhanda: An Aboriginal Language of Western Australia.* University of Hawai'i Press Honolulu. *Oceanic Linguistics Special Publication No.30.*) and Badimaya (Dunn, L. 1988 Badimaya, a Western Australian language. *Papers in Australian Linguistics* 17: 19-149. *Pacific Linguistics Series A-71.*), add nothing further to the historical materials in this regard.
- ²⁴ 'Miscellaneous vol. 3 - Notebook 23A,' p.100. folio 75. Daisy M. Bates Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 365.
- ²⁵ 'Sundry notes on weapons, ornaments, scarring etc.' Section IX Pt.4d folio 31. Daisy M. Bates Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 365.
- ²⁶ Oldfield p.295.
- ²⁷ Perks p.372.
- ²⁸ Oldfield p.295
- ²⁹ Bates, D. M. (1985) *The Native Tribes of Western Australia.* p.156. Canberra: National Library of Australia.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, p.153.
- ³¹ Serventy, V.N. and White, S.R. (1958) Stone arrangements at Cannan, Western Australia. *Western Australian Naturalist* 6(4):85-90.
- ³² *Ibid*, p.90.
- ³³ Attended by Amangu from Carnamah and Irwin River, and people from Gullewa and Yuin (Bain, M. A. 1975 *Ancient Landmarks: A Social and Economic History of the Victoria District of Western Australia 1839 - 1984.* Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press. p.325n4). Peterwangy is reputedly a corruption *pedawangi* (all day - talk).
- ³⁴ Horton, D. R. (1994) Map: Aboriginal Australia. Both Tindale (N. B. 1974 *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia: Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits and Proper Names.* Canberra: Australian National University Press, Maps: Australia SW Sheet) and Dunn (1988:22) differ to some degree in this respect and the area may be 'disputed' (Dunn, p.20).
- ³⁵ Tindale (1974) Maps: Australia SW Sheet.
- ³⁶ Bates, D. M. (1938) *The Passing of the Aborigines.* London: John Murray. p.148



Placenames Puzzle Number 34

The Ecclesiastical Quiz

The clues reveal some ecclesiastical placenames (disregard spelling)

E.g. (VIC) Enclosed ground attached to a monastic building Abbeyard

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (NSW) Building for Christian worship; sharp end of a pencil 2. (NSW) Second gospel; shaft for obtaining oil 3. (NSW) King who was victorious over Goliath, male offspring 4. (NSW) William's New Testament was the first English translation to be printed 5. (QLD) Mount from which Moses viewed the Promised Land 6. (QLD) Small private church; small mountain 7. (TAS) Suggests the first man had a meadow 8. (TAS) The heads of the dioceses, past tense of bear 9. (TAS) A religious house often dependent on an abbey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. (WA) London Abbey used for coronations etc. 11. (WA) Major Minster, commenced in 1230 in northern England 12. (SA) Originally Crusader Knights who guarded pilgrims 13. (SA) The disciple who doubted; aircraft 14. (SA) European home of Notre Dame and the Sacre Coeur; small stream 15. (VIC) Said to be the resting place of Noah's Ark 16. (VIC) Peter was generally considered to be their leader 17. (NSW/SA) Rome's major church 18. (NSW/VIC) Its archbishop is Primate of all England 19. (NSW/VIC) Shallow crossing place for heads of abbeys 20. (QLD/TAS/VIC) Allegedly its walls fell down at the shout of the army |
|---|---|

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Answers: 1. Church Point 2. Markwell 3. Davidson 4. Tynedale 5. Nebo 6. Chapel Hill 7. Adamsfield 8. Bishopscourne
 9. Priory 10. Westminster 11. York 12. Templers 13. Thomas Plains 14. Paris Creek 15. Ararat
 16. The 12 Apostles 17. St Peter's 18. Canterbury 19. Abbotstford 20. Jericho

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