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**‘Ask the right question, then look everywhere:
Finding and interpreting the old Aboriginal place-names around Adelaide and
Fleurieu Peninsula.’**

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ABSTRACT:

Basic principles in identifying pre-contact Aboriginal placenames in areas long settled:

- *face-to-face encounters with living culture at first contact.*

The main strategies for finding them:

detailed studies in 3 fields:

- *history (precise chronology of accurate readings of earliest records of the name).*
- *AND local geography (now and at settlement).*
- *AND language (local Aboriginal languages; traps in recording and understanding them).*

A few of the issues and problems which arise in trying to validate and interpret them:

- *hand-writing versus print.*
- *original misunderstandings.*
- *information from later sources.*

Context: knowledgeable local Elders contribute language, oral history and corrective insights, check the results and oversee their dissemination.

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INTRODUCTION:

As the current place-names researcher for Kurna Warra Pintyandi language group (KWP), I continue the Southern Kurna Place Names Project which originally found and evaluated names within the southern part of the Kurna Native Title Claim boundaries, with funding from four City councils. Strictly speaking, this covered the area from Adelaide south to about Delamere including the western fringes of the South Mt Lofty Ranges. In practice I have inevitably collected and analysed materials from the whole Fleurieu Peninsula east to the Lakes, especially when they involve Kurna language forms; and some north of Adelaide. The ongoing project is a collaboration of KWP and the Geographical Names Unit of the SA government (GNU), now occasionally funded by KWP itself. It aims eventually to discover and evaluate all the original Kurna place-names that are discoverable anywhere.

This paper is longer and more detailed than it might have been for the occasion, because I have used it as an excuse to continue my analysis of several place-names. However I hope that by consigning much of the detail to footnotes I have left the underlying principles and issues reasonably clear and digestible in the main text for the non-specialist. The ‘basic principles’ advanced here, and the language issues, are perhaps more particular to research in Aboriginal names; but the other issues and problems are common to most place-name research.

The results of my work will eventually appear on the project’s website kaurnaplacenames.com.

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BASIC PRINCIPLES IN IDENTIFYING PRE-CONTACT ABORIGINAL PLACE-NAMES IN AREAS LONG SETTLED.

The basic question we ask is this:

“What are the records of place-names given in face-to-face encounters with members of the local language group amid their living culture at the time of first contact?”¹

From this everything else flows.

The newcomers who needed and therefore recorded place-names were especially **the first explorers and surveyors**, whether official or amateur. Travelling on foot in country where the terrain, the routes and the waterholes were unknown beyond the simplest outlines as seen from a passing ship, they needed and obtained Aboriginal guides².

In some areas of Australia missionaries and amateur ethnologists arrived soon after the first settlers, often motivated by an ambition for publication. Some of them became amateur linguists and included place-names in their net.

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Part 1: THE MAIN STRATEGIES FOR FINDING and INTERPRETING THEM:

detailed studies in 3 fields:

Place-names (‘toponyms’) involve both a place and a name. They are not a branch of linguistics only: the place is at least as subtle and important as the name. Perhaps we should all spend every alternate week calling them ‘named *places*’ (‘nymotops’).

When we define these human imprints mainly as words, we are on an old and slippery slope which has so often resulted in names being shifted to places far from where they belong: such as Yankalilla town³. This is a loss to both our history and our identity on the land.

Both place and name need to be assessed thoroughly, with a detailed knowledge of the historical changes in each. We need geography for the place; linguistics for the name; and history for the context of both.

We might add archaeology, anthropology, and local residents’ knowledge of the land; but I will not be addressing those today.

¹ Our ideal source is a face-to-face encounter before about 1850, between a Kurna person who gave a place-name, and a settler for whom the communication mattered enough that he or she listened to the word intelligently, recorded it as accurately and unambiguously as possible, and asked enough intelligent questions to establish what it referred to.

Of course this did not happen very often, but we trace the fragments back as far as they allow towards this ideal. The further from this a datum is, the more sceptical of it we are. We are reluctant to grant Kurna credibility to any alleged information which lacks a context of living Kurna culture. Everything that does not record a face-to-face encounter at the right time between the right people must be doubted until proved consistent with earlier or more reliable testimony. We ask ‘Who said what to whom, when, and where?’, systematically back through the records as far as they will take us towards that early meeting with an Aboriginal informant who spoke the language and knew the place.

² Aboriginal place-names were bestowed by people who travelled light and on foot, living off the land as they went from one water source to the next. Any information is valuable that helps us to reconstruct their favoured routes, as this may help us to clarify the significance of the site or the interpretation of the name. Any place-name may refer to economic or ceremonial life, or to a Dreaming story about which we may know little or nothing. Every detail of our research must be considered with these things clearly in mind.

³ e.g. the Kurna name *Yernkalyilla* belongs – as close as we can find – at or near the mouth of the Yankalilla River 7 km away.

Strategy 1: HISTORY (a precise chronology of accurate readings of earliest records of the name).

History has to come first and permeate all our other work.

We need to learn the local history of settlement, in some detail with a focus on

- **Aboriginal history, first contact, and dispersal.**
- **the first surveys** and associated land sales in the contact period, when local Aboriginal place-names were often used briefly before English names were substituted.
- **the historical facts of place-name usage** in both Aboriginal and English languages in this period.

Around Adelaide the relevant period ended around 1850, 14 years after the foundation of the colony, so that this makes a convenient cut-off point for primary data in most cases ⁴.

We then compile a database incorporating a complete history of the earliest records – for each name, a precise chronology of accurate readings:

- when was it recorded first, by whom, in what circumstances, referring to what?
- all its records up to 1850 or until it had passed into common use.

Even when we have a place-name solidly rooted in early history in this way, there is much scope for inaccuracy, and it must be thoroughly questioned because the first record can be corrupted immediately by the next user, who was usually not present at the original encounter, and corrupted even by the original collector himself (as with surveyors who often transferred Aboriginal names to nearby trig stations).

In order to find these things, we need to search a very wide range of literature ⁵, primarily first-contact literature, especially of foot travellers; in the original manuscript wherever possible.

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⁴ The Adelaide area was settled rapidly from December 1836. By about 1847 the local people, who spoke a language now called 'Kurna' (a branch of the Thura-Yura group which extends north and west), had been decimated by disease and regularly outnumbered by visitors from other language groups, so that new information obtained in the immediate Adelaide vicinity after that date was almost certainly not from Kurna people. The same was soon true of the southern Kurna lands on Fleurieu Peninsula, as most Kurna survivors had been deported to Poonindie on Eyre Peninsula in 1850. After about 1860, with very few exceptions, any new Aboriginal information in the whole area was given by visitors from southeast of the range, speakers of the quite different Ngarrindjeri language (one of the Yaraldic group, represented on Fleurieu Peninsula especially by the Ramindjeri centred on Encounter Bay).

⁵ e.g. diaries, letters and reports of the first explorers and surveyors; maps; sketches and paintings (usually found in libraries and art galleries); very early newspaper articles written while new places and names still mattered to the colonists; and reminiscences of first-contact colonists in late-19th-century newspapers. Early official reports, such as Almanacs and Land Returns, often contain Aboriginal place-names and Section numbers of properties.

Local histories may contain *leads* (look for good ones such as Rob Linn's, with detailed source references and a good section on first contact; but check all the sources to see if the quotations are accurate and complete; the local historian is usually asking different questions from ours).

Such sources will usually be found in State libraries, State archives, and State Government Records. The National Library of Australia has on its website a very useful source of digitalized and searchable old newspapers nationwide: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Records of Aboriginal cultural history may be held in the State Museum.

Strategy 2: AND LOCAL GEOGRAPHY (now and at settlement).

Ideally, not the name only but also **the place – in its physical reality and human significance** – should be attested by someone who travelled on or near it and knew what it meant *then* (ideally from an Aboriginal informant at first contact; or a settler who knew something of the local Aboriginal people).

When reading old literature and maps, we stay alert for signs that the usage of a place-name, even an English one, has changed over time⁶. If it has, this will affect our assessment.

We will need to assess

- the topography and geology of the place; these remain constant, but now in this age of speed and momentary glimpses from highways and cars, we may not be aware of the details.
- its ecology, especially its hydrology and botany; remembering that the water sites and plant species have probably changed catastrophically since first contact, so that an early local *history* of them may be needed⁷.
- likewise its human uses, historically before and after settlement, including the actions of surveyors who planted features such as campsites and trig stations, and settlers with their crops, herds, and diversion or depletion of water supplies.
- sometimes even its astronomy, as when Tindale speculates about the autumn star *Parna* in *Parnangga* at Morphett Vale.

We will then have to compare these details with any locations, meanings and significances which have been given, deduced or alleged for the place-name. The geography might affect our assessment⁸. Early routes, tracks and roads may be important, and maps are the best way to understand them. Many of them were directly based on the routes shown to the first explorers and surveyors by Aboriginal guides⁹. Any place-name may refer to economic life including the favoured routes of the Aboriginal occupiers, and these may sometimes relate in turn to stories of the travels of a Dreaming ancestor.

⁶ e.g. ‘Glenelg’ and ‘Cape Jervis’. For most of the 19th century ‘Cape Jervis’ could refer either to the actual cape or to the whole of what we now call Fleurieu Peninsula (which was Baudin’s label, not adopted by Britain and Australia until 1913). Both of these affect my Example 4a *Kawandilla*.

Some English names were used for a while, especially in the almanacs, as casual short-hand for a larger and *very* general region. e.g. A heading ‘Yankalillah’ could include both Rapid Bay 15 km southwest, and ‘Wypinga’ (Waitpinga) 20 km away on the opposite side of the range (Allen, *SA Almanac 1844*, :237). So caution is needed when interpreting locations recorded in the almanacs.

⁷ e.g. the large Black Forest between Goodwood and Glenelg (almost completely obliterated within forty years of settlement) is shown in beautiful detail on an early map by Light, Finnis and Co. (‘Plan of the District of Adelaide... showing the property of the SA Company. Oct. 1838’, BRG 42/120/17, State Library of SA).

⁸ For example: I have long puzzled over the baldness or otherwise of the hill scarps south of Willunga, not only because I have loved those bald vistas all my life, but also because the Kurna place-name *Yarna*, ‘bald [thing]’, may be located there. They are now being revegetated, which implies one answer to the historical question.

⁹ Sometimes we have to reconstruct the route of a settler journey in order to locate as precisely as possible a place which was named in the course of it. One name provides us with a classic geographical detective puzzle if we are serious about locating it accurately. It is attested in 1840 by Teichelmann and Schürmann (2 :75), “*Murtaparri - the last creek on the old road to Encounter Bay*” – which is authoritative for language but very obscure geographically. We are forced to examine not only the travel diaries of Schürmann and several others, but the topography of the lower Inman River, Hindmarsh Valley, and Hindmarsh Tiers; and what were the changing routes from Adelaide to the two whale fisheries at Encounter Bay between 1837 and 1839, which creeks they crossed and how far up, and which hills they passed. Evidence for this has to include both maps and literature; and perhaps to our surprise, a result is achievable. Then we also have to account for a host of conflicting details from Tindale and Berndt’s Ngarrindjeri informants much later, and for its position as a clearly Kurna name on land which nobody believes to be Kurna.

It is important to get any possible leads from the **Aboriginal knowledge of the land held by today's local Elders**. Sometimes the knowledge of their predecessors was recorded in settler family histories. Even Tindale's Ngarrindjeri informants, though two generations late and not Kaurna, sometimes have much to tell us about Aboriginal significances and stories of the geography of a Kaurna place as it was before the 20th century; and all these places would have had Kaurna names.

In order to understand and use the geography of a place-name and its surroundings, it is a great help if we ourselves are familiar with the land and can visualize what we read in an early diary or map. Field trips may help us avoid geographical blunders. Our personal memory may contain helpful leads.

In finding this geographical data we should begin with a very wide search of the earliest maps and plans both published and unpublished, and any surviving Field Books or other records by the first surveyors¹⁰.

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¹⁰ Any genuine local place-names will have arrived on published maps from earlier survey plans. These will sometimes contain more Aboriginal names that were not adopted and mapped and have therefore remained unknown. Published maps will often be found in libraries, but the surveyors' records will be in state government lands departments, e.g. SA's Geographical Names Unit. An important dimension of our project is access to the GNU's vast paper archives including Field Books; computerized database of early maps and plans; digital search facilities based on places (geographical Hundreds and Sections) rather than words. Current or 20th-century maps more often than not lead to dead-ends from our point of view (though not from that of the GNU, which deals with the official status of a name). They always contain many Aboriginal names which were put on the land by settlers and government committees long after settlement, often with no attempt at genuine local provenance or even local language (see section below on 'Information from later sources').

Strategy 3: AND LANGUAGE (*local Aboriginal languages; traps in recording and understanding them*).

It is very important to work alongside a **linguist – if there is one – who specializes in the local language(s)**, preferably **in collaboration with the Elders of that language group** ¹¹.

It is essential to any place-names project that we **become very familiar with the relevant local languages** ¹²: the surviving wordlists and their authors and variable spellings; and the phonology (sounds used) and basic rules of each language, especially how place-names are formed ¹³.

In order to do this we will also need to become very familiar with some basic general linguistic issues, such as these ¹⁴:

- There are many sounds used in Aboriginal languages which are not used in English ¹⁵.
- Some different spellings may not be linguistically significant ¹⁶.
- English spellings of unknown words are always dangerous to interpret because they are notoriously un-phonetic: such as our ambiguous written vowels (e.g. fat, fate, father, nut, put, mute). There are also hidden traps in spellings which have consciously or unconsciously used other English *words* as a referent ¹⁷.
- In the local languages word-rhythms (technically called ‘stress patterns’) will usually be different from our own instinctive pronunciations conditioned by English. English

¹¹ The ongoing work done in Kurna language by KWP is a strong model, with consultant linguist Rob Amery. Whatever linguistic expertise there is in my researches, I owe to Rob and to Mary-Anne Gale who works analogously with the Ngarrindjeri. For Kurna place-names see Amery 2002, especially the advice on :177-8.

¹² The Mt Lofty Ranges mark a major cultural boundary between the Thura-Yura language groups to the west and the Yaraldic and Ngaiawang groups to the east. At the southern extremity of the range, Fleurieu Peninsula is a borderland where place-names might (at least in theory) be in either ‘Kurna’ (the southernmost of the Thura-Yura group), or ‘Ngarrindjeri’ (i.e. Yaraldic, as represented by the Ramindjeri of Encounter Bay), or ‘Peramangk’ (the language of the hills people, scantily documented, possibly a variation of the Ngaiawang of the Mannum area). In the brief window of opportunity up to the late 1840s, linguistically trained German Lutheran missionaries (Teichelmann, Schürmann and Klose in Adelaide; Meyer at Encounter Bay) lived on Kurna and Ngarrindjeri lands and recorded and published both languages, very well by 19th-century standards. There were a few other sizable Kurna wordlists as well: especially those of interpreter William Williams, and interim Protector William Wyatt. So we now have a quite reliable base from which to judge place-names in our area.

¹³ For instance, in our case Kurna has only three significant vowels (*a*, *i* and *u=o*) and *r*, *l* and consonant clusters are not used at the beginning of a word; while Ngarrindjeri has five vowels and often uses initial *r*, *l* and clusters. These languages, though very different in most ways, share the habit of ending place-names with Locative suffixes meaning ‘at’. Ngarrindjeri names *always* include one of a number of Locatives such as *-angk* or *-uwar*; while Kurna names *often* (but not always) use one of the only two Locatives *-ngga* and *-lla*, the choice being determined by the number of syllables in the root word. This is often a crucial element in interpreting a name record.

¹⁴ For much detail on these matters in a Canberra context, see H Koch 2009, ‘The methodology of reconstructing Indigenous placenames’, in Koch and Hercus 2009.

¹⁵ – such as initial *ng*, and interdental or retroflex *r*. How did early settlers hear and spell them? Often they did not hear *ng* as a word-sound at all, and just left it out: e.g. ‘Aldinga’ = *Ngaltingga*.

¹⁶ e.g. in most Aboriginal languages *t* and *d* are variant pronunciations with the same significance (i.e. same ‘phoneme’).

¹⁷ e.g. ‘Yooungalilla’ – a variant of ‘Yankalilla’ found only in a published letter by Governor Hindmarsh – was probably a misprint for ‘Youngalilla’. It almost certainly refers to English ‘young’, and so represents the usual *Yangk-* not *Yungk-*. Tindale missed this point in his Kurna place-name card 512, ‘Ju:ngkalil:a’.

habitually accents the second syllable, as in ‘Wi-llunga’ (a place-name south of Adelaide); whereas most Aboriginal words accent the first, *Wi-llangga*¹⁸.

On Fleurieu Peninsula the researcher needs to be familiar with both Kurna and Ngarrindjeri languages – more familiar and far more rigorous than Tindale was. Which place-names were given at first-contact time as part of the culture of the language group which occupied the place? and which were outsider names given then or later by visitors? The latter are credible only insofar as their information is compatible with the former¹⁹.

This is an issue which will re-surface when we consider information from late sources.

Today I will not use examples which are attested mainly in the work of the early linguists, because in other areas of Australia it will be more usual *not* to have such direct and reliable authority in place-names or language.

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¹⁸ This has important implications. A stressed first vowel is more likely to have been heard correctly than an unstressed second vowel. For example, ‘Daringa’ and ‘Tarranga’ are probably versions of the same name at McLaren Vale, whereas nearby ‘Tu-run-ga’ and ‘Doo-ronga’ are probably versions of a different one (see my unpublished research).

¹⁹ The differences between Kurna and Ngarrindjeri languages are so great that it is fairly rare for us in KWP to find ourselves really uncertain about the language of the recorded place-names.

Kurna-language names on land occupied by Kurna speakers at first contact are definitive, whereas names obtained by Tindale from Ngarrindjeri-speaking visitors in the 1930s are not (see the discussion below in ‘Information from later sources’). The reverse is also true: Ngarrindjeri-language names on land occupied at first contact by Ngarrindjeri speakers obviously have more authority than the handful of names recorded then from Kurna people visiting Ngarrindjeri-Ramindjeri sites.

So we have the Kurna name *Wirramu’lla* given in 1837 for *Ramung*, the Ramindjeri heartland site at the Victor Harbor whale fishery attested in 1843. It is in the same boat with Ramindjeri *Kulkamaiwar* given in 1843 for ‘Adelaide’, a core Kurna-speaking place with several other Kurna place-names attached to it in the 1840s. See my research. Note also that the existence of these names does not (of itself) tell us much about territorial boundaries.

Part 2: A FEW OF THE ISSUES and PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE IN TRYING TO VALIDATE and INTERPRET THEM.

If we want to go beyond the premature conclusions which have dominated the field for so long, to find and assess as many genuine first records as possible, our foremost problem is likely to be **the sheer *volume* of what must be looked at.**

But I will confine myself to describing **three recurrent issues.**

One is technical (**hand-writing versus print**),

one is conceptual or cultural (**original misunderstandings**),

and one (**later sources of information**) arises out of the principle of first contact.

Issue 1: HAND-WRITING VERSUS PRINT.

A first principle in any historical research centring on particular words is that we must be as sure as possible that we have a **correct reading of the original record. An original hand-written manuscript by the author is extremely desirable**; but of course it has not always survived anywhere, and then we have to rely on other early evidence or assess the linguistic probabilities. Or it may exist somewhere else, and getting copies can be time-consuming and expensive.

Even when we do have an original MS there may well be problems of legibility, especially with cursive writing but even with plain script (see Examples 1. ‘Morialta’ and 3. *Tartatyilla*). With Aboriginal place-names in their first records, we usually cannot call on familiar English spelling to help us interpret a semi-legible character.

Some old documents survive only in **hand-written copies made by other persons** who were not present when the information was given. They, like we, may easily have misread the names in their source, especially in cursive writing²⁰.

Many early letters and diary extracts were **published** at the time, often as propaganda for the colony. But their editors and publishers were usually in a hurry. When publishing unknown words in unknown language they had no way of correcting their reading unless the original author was hovering, which was rare. They might easily **mis-read, mis-copy, or mis-print**²¹. **Kurna place-names occur often in the early Land Returns and Almanacs**, in which properties were often published with the Aboriginal name by which the surveyors were currently identifying an area. Many of these are not found anywhere else because the names quickly went out of use. These annual almanacs published in Adelaide were hasty productions and there are many obvious misprints even in English²². So an almanac spelling must be treated very cautiously, especially when it is the only evidence²³.

²⁰ For instance, the only extant copy of Dr Woodforde’s Rapid Bay diary of 1836 (he was surgeon to Colonel Light’s survey party) is an incomplete cursive manuscript made by his sister from the original which is lost. In it is the earliest reference to the name of Rapid Bay, recorded universally elsewhere with a ‘tt’ as ‘Yattagolunga’ or ‘Yattagolonga’. But she has written ‘ll’, ‘Yallagolanga’ – or is it ‘tt’ with the cross omitted? We have to compare her other ‘ll’s and ‘tt’s, and assess whether her ‘tt’s ever lack a visible cross, whether she made a mistake, or whether the other records come from the reverse mistake by the first draughtsman who added the name to a map (Woodforde 1836-7).

In some similar cases we have no other records for comparison, and will probably not be able to interpret the name if the Kurna linguistics are not obvious. Such (so far) are ‘Koulta Kourga’(?) and several semi-legible and otherwise unrecorded place-names in a cursive copy by another hand of Charles Mann’s 1837 journal of his trip to Encounter Bay. However, ‘Weta wertinga’ in the same MS is easily interpreted as *Wita-wattingga*, ‘in the midst of peppermint gums’, and is unusual early evidence for a name given elsewhere only by Tindale’s Ngarrindjeri informants (in several forms and three different locations: see Mann 1837 and my research).

²¹ e.g. An early letter from McLaren Vale pioneer CT Hewett was published in British Parliamentary Papers, which locates his block in ‘Doringo Valley’. But we know that he later named his house ‘Daringa’. The obvious explanation is that the publishers had misread his ‘a’ as ‘o’ twice.

²² e.g. ‘Finlessor’ [*sic: for Finlayson*] (Cotter 1844 *SA Almanac* :169); ‘Johnson’ [*sic for ‘Jones’*] (Stephens 1848 *SA Almanac* :xx). Or the print may be so bad, or the copy so old, that it is almost unreadable.

²³ Sometimes the name is confirmed or corrected in other reliable sources (see Example 2. *Kanyanyapilla*).

Sometimes there are enough variants in several issues to enable us to reach a fairly definite conclusion about the name, as with ‘Tootoocowinga’ (= *Tutto-kauwingga*, ‘lookout and water place’, in the Bald Hills).

But in many other cases the almanacs are the only source for the name, the location, or both. Even with only one record of the name there might be enough linguistic credibility for the name, and enough collateral evidence for the place, to carry the day as with *Parndalilla* (see note in ‘Original misunderstandings’).

Issue 2: ORIGINAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

Even when we have reliable record of an early encounter, there remains **the possibility that the collector misunderstood what the Aboriginal person meant.**

In SA in 1836-7 there were already a few Aboriginal people²⁴ who had a quite passable command of English from their interaction with the Kangaroo Island sealers. And within a year of arrival, a handful of the settlers had acquired a degree of Kaurna language²⁵. These were very important negotiators in the first two years of uncertainty and ignorance about the land. But most early conversations with Kaurna guides must have proceeded in Pidgin English, salted with signs and a bit of Pidgin Kaurna containing a few elementary words such as *kauwe* ‘water’. Place-names would have been an important element in the talk about routes, waterholes and campsites; but there was plenty of room for misunderstanding and we can be sure that only a small proportion of the meaning was communicated in either direction. So we have to ask whether **some items might not be place-names at all**; whether the inquirer had really understood what the word was referring to²⁶.

Sign language and body language can easily mis-communicate²⁷. **Compass directions** are a classic danger. It is unusual for Aboriginal languages to use them as place-names, but context must have made the error an easy one to make²⁸.

Sometimes a simple **description of a place – its topography or ecology** – could easily be mistaken for its proper name. Historical geography and a wide sample are needed in order to assess whether these were proper names, generic names (applied to any place fitting the description), or accidents of conversation with guides about where to camp²⁹.

A reference to human uses might be either a misunderstanding or the name of a place³⁰. Human uses and particularly body references might also be connected to Dreaming stories, but in areas

²⁴ – such as the ‘Sally’ associated with sealer George Bates.

²⁵ Bates, William Cooper, James Cronk, William Williams, Stephen Hack, William Wyatt.

²⁶ Stephen Hack (see under Example 1: ‘Morialta’) thought in early 1837 that ‘Wallinga’ was the Kaurna name for Adelaide. In fact it is clearly *wodlingga*, ‘at the wurlies or house(s)’. One may imagine that Hack pointed around at the peppermint scrub south of the Torrens and asked ‘What you call that?’, and the informant took him to mean the novelty: the mud and reed huts of ‘Buffalo Row’ peeping through the trees here and there.

In a similar way a couple of years later, the corrugated iron Nissan huts of the Iron Stores were called *Tinninya-wodli*, ‘rib huts’, but this was plainly not a place-name.

²⁷ One could amuse oneself by inventing a scenario for the unknown surveyor who collected the name ‘Echunga’ in the Adelaide hills (= *ityangga*, ‘nearby’): it probably involved pointing.

²⁸ Sail a ship just south of the Adelaide Plains, then point back at them and ask ‘What’s that?’; the answer may well be ‘north’. Is ‘north’ a place-name? (see Example 4a. *Kawandilla*).

²⁹ Strangways and Blunden (*Register*, 1/12/1838, :3C) thought that ‘Parry’ (= *parri* ‘river’) was the name of what we now call the Para River north of Adelaide. Hack thought that ‘Nooley’ (= Ngarrindjeri *ngurli* ‘hill’) was the name of Mt Terrible, the highest part of the journey south to Encounter Bay (Stephen Hack letter 20/7/1838, PRG 456/1, State Library of SA).

Other cases are ambiguous; the topography or ecology might be distinctive enough to be a memorable referent. This might be so with *Wita-wattingga*, ‘in the midst of peppermint gums’ at Seacliff Park; or with ‘Cowiemanilla’ (= *Kauwe-marnilla* ‘two good waters’) at the well-watered valley of Reynella; and with ‘Bungala’ River (= *Parngkarla*, ‘two lagoons’) at Normanville (see my unpublished research).

³⁰ There were some other ‘wurlie’ names which were probably contact names rather than traditional, but their collectors took them to be place-names: e.g. *Tukurru-wodlingga* at today’s suburb Glengowrie: ‘place of the ?small [or

which were settled early we usually know nothing about them. Only explicit testimony can establish these beyond reasonable doubt.

So the interpretation of a place-name can be debatable, even when we are sure of its spelling, its literal meaning and its place³¹.

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?mud] ?grasstree [or ?pot] wurlie(s)' (= surveyors' bell tents?). Perhaps it was a kind of temporary place-name. And perhaps for a few months the clusters of foreign 'wurlies' at both Adelaide and Glenelg, with their unusual number and style, were referred to as *Wodlingga*, as we might refer to a circus visit by saying 'Have you been to The Tents?'

³¹ We are teased by names like the following, but must not draw hasty conclusions:

(1) 'Pandulilla' (= *Parndalilla*, 'place of the lower spine'), the low seaward end of the ridge which includes the well-attested *Yurridla* 'two ears', Mt Lofty and Mt Bonython. Is it part of a giant body being embodied in the range as seen from the plains? – an idea popularized in the 1930s (and to a large extent invented) by Noel Webb, starting from Teichelmann and Schürmann's *Yurridla* and adding some other names interpreted with his own bad linguistics. The idea was taken up again by Tindale. (For Webb see also Example 1: 'Morialta').

(2) 'Yankalilla' (= *Yernkalyilla*, 'place where it kept falling apart': see Amery 2002). It is tempting to relate this to the story of Tjilbruki's journey along this coast carrying the smoked corpse of his nephew, as told by Tindale's Ngarrindjeri informants in the 1930s; it might be so, but there is no other known evidence of the tale from early times.

Issue 3: INFORMATION FROM LATER SOURCES.

To our early chronologies of geographical history we often have to add another **chronology of dubious later information**. These shoals of red herrings must be sifted from the net in order to find the good fish. As with first-contact data, this will involve lengthy searches of both written and map-based materials. But if the sources of errors and misinformation can be found, we are relieved of the need to keep on looking for evidence of them in the early records when they will not be there.

Many of these later sources are **casual settler folklore**, having only a distant or hypothetical link to a face-to-face encounter with speakers of the local language. Most items must have passed through many hands and years before being recorded, with many opportunities for corruption. Each case has to be decided on its merits by comparison with what is known from reliable earlier records.

On the other hand 19th-century newspapers published many **reminiscences of ‘old colonists’**. Some of these articles reported, or were written by, people with good memories who had taken an active part or interest in the events surrounding the collection of names ³².

The field has been badly muddied by the past excursions of enthusiasts. **In the 1890s a considerable interest in SA Aboriginal place-names** arose among the local newspaper correspondents ³³. This was probably related to the **demand which arose all over Australia** at about the same time for Aboriginal words to be used as names for properties, houses, railway stations and the like. There was a market for lists of handy and attractive Aboriginal words which is maintained to this day ³⁴. In turn the **local place-name enthusiasts (including SA’s Harris and Cockburn)** mined the new bedside booklets for ideas about the ‘meanings’ of their own *local* place-names – presumably on a ludicrous assumption that all Aboriginal languages in Australia were the same! – often failing to distinguish between original and transferred ‘native names’ ³⁵. This not-quite-innocent mentality was of its time but is still with us. It has left us with a maze of wrong or misleading information, recycled in each new publication ³⁶. This we now have to meticulously

³² In SA these included Deputy Surveyor BT Finnis with ‘Yankallyilla’ from 1836; and ‘A Native’ 1893 (Faith Lockwood, daughter of the McLaren Vale Hewetts) with at least 14 well-remembered Kurna names from her teenage years in the first 10 years of settlement, some of them unique. ‘A Native’ is reproduced in Manning 1990.

³³ Much of the SA folklore and folk etymology brought thus to light was compiled by second-generation surveyor CH Harris and incorporated into journalist Rodney Cockburn’s *Nomenclature* (1908), often without identifying the sources.

³⁴ Other ‘bedside’ compilations of Aboriginal words and place-names followed in many states, each casting its net wider and more loosely than the last: Endacott 1923, Kenyon 1930, Tyrrell 1933. These publications, like Harris, mined those of the genuine old ethnographic wordlists which were easily available (interstate Curr 1886, Brough Smyth 1878, etc; and in SA Woods 1879 and Taplin 1879), but rarely identified the sources or even which state the name belonged to.

³⁵ Cockburn was not alone in working under another lazy assumption: that we cannot find out any more now and it doesn’t really matter (see Cockburn 1984, :277-280). Some of these issues are addressed by Kostanski, ‘Toponymic books...’, in Koch and Hercus 2009.

³⁶ – in popular publications such as HM Cooper’s (SA Museum 1949, and other editions up to 1969); in loosely-researched reference books such as Praite and Tolley 1970; in expanded reissues of Cockburn (1984, 1990); and even in more scholarly authors such as Manning (1986, 1990, 2006; and now on a website of the State Library of SA). Place-name collectors even of the recent past have found it much easier to accept the word of any published author (invariably white) with a half-plausible tale to tell, than to take up the challenge of finding genuine Aboriginal knowledge. Admittedly this has not had much access to publicity until the 1990s.

retrace, just in case it leads to some reliable information. It rarely does so with etymologies; perhaps a little more often with the names themselves; and the places are usually imprecise³⁷.

To this we have to add the mud originating from **enthusiastic amateur analysts** who, while slightly better informed, tended to rush into print with ill-considered and undebated guesses based on a superficial knowledge, in the confidence that there was nobody to dispute them. Their words often became accepted fact in the casual world of old Aboriginal place-name literature³⁸.

Much more serious work was done in the 1930s by the professional ethnologists engaged in cultural salvage with Aboriginal people in the settled areas of southern Australia; notably the hugely influential **Norman Tindale**. My research has included many days in the SA Museum trawling through his papers, journals and maps. Irreplaceable though his work is, his uncompleted retirement project – the Aboriginal Place-names Gazetteer for southern SA – has been sadly confused in its Kurna field by three things. Firstly, he was always looking for the ‘one correct version’ of everything, and sometimes his publications misrepresent his own data if it included competing versions. Secondly, he often failed to distinguish (even in his primary records) between his informants’ original data and his own interpretations of it; often it is hard even to decide which record is the original³⁹. Thirdly, his grasp of Kurna and Ngarrindjeri languages was shaky, and he often blurred them together⁴⁰. We have to question many of his interpretations, and search huge quantities of journals, maps, papers and cards to find the primary sources and re-assess them⁴¹.

Even when we have discovered what **Tindale’s informants** actually said and did not say, often it is not possible to grant final authority to these Ngarrindjeri speakers when they give allegedly Kurna data⁴².

³⁷ e.g. to tell part of a very long story: Cockburn’s 1908 book opined that ‘Myponga’ on Fleurieu Peninsula “*is corrupted from Maippunga, which in one vocabulary is stated to mean divorced wife*”. In Reed’s very popular book this became ‘Malppinga’ (Reed 1967); and in Manning it is ‘Miappungga’, quoted from a note in the GNU archives which was probably written by ex-surveyor Talbot (Manning 1990, :218; cp. an entry in GNU’s History Books Vol. 14, :44). ‘Divorced wife’ was retained in all of these, usually *as fact*; but Praise and Tolley replaced it with ‘*locality of high cliffs*’. This second gloss comes from a separate confusion about Myponga dating back to Lockwood 1893. I stopped chasing the ‘divorce’ trail when I learned that “*Myonga (Malpunga) – A divorced wife*” came from Western Australia (JR Tyrrell 1933 / 1944, :37). Meanwhile HM Cooper, with the implicit authority of the SA Museum, had iced the cake by quoting Lockwood’s “*cliff lookout place*” as the meaning of ‘Mypolonga’ on the River Murray (Cooper 1949, :18)! This gloss probably belongs to Myponga *Beach*: see my file ‘Cowealunga’ (Myponga Beach).

³⁸ In Kurna country they have notably included the lawyer Noel Webb in his newspaper columns of the 1920s, and a well-known publication by the Adelaide City Council (1931-6).

³⁹ Many examples have cropped up in my work. See also Knight 2003.

⁴⁰ See Amery 2000, :90-1, 101-2.

⁴¹ See Paul Monaghan 2009, ‘Aboriginal names of places in southern SA: placenames in the Norman B Tindale collection of papers’, in Koch and Hercus 2009.

⁴² The main informants in Kurna matters were Milerum (Clarence Long), Albert Karlowan and Reuben Walker. These were Ngarrindjeri speakers, all born around 1860, the time when the last Kurna family living independently on Kurna land (Ivaritji’s) was broken up by the death of her father; and their own memories were of the generation after that. It is accepted that *on their own land and in their own language* their knowledge was vast and their memories remarkable. But northwest of the range they were still newcomers and Kurna was an obscure foreign language; even their grandparents would have had connections with traditionally-living Kurna people only in their youth and as visitors. Few even of the nearest neighbours (the Ramindjeri) spoke Kurna language even in 1843 (according to Meyer 1843, :50). It is plain from the records in Tindale and Berndt that these three informants knew very little Kurna: e.g. it is doubtful that any of them knew the meaning of *parri* ‘river’ or the use of the common locative *-illa*. Their testimony must be taken case by case on merit. Though it is rare for them to have any authority in matters of Kurna *language and names*, often their historical knowledge throws valuable light on the ecology and Aboriginal uses of a Kurna *place*;

My research shows that many of the Kurna and Ngarrindjeri place-names published by anthropologist **RM Berndt**⁴³ suffer from the same problems (with the addition of vague small-scale mapping) and need the same scrutiny; but his notes are currently not accessible and I can speak only of his published material.

There is more! **Many Aboriginal names have been put on the map by government bureaucrats or committees** responding to the demand, mining the same sources as the popular books in much the same way. When a name has been on the map for a hundred years it can be very time-consuming to trace its origin in the Government Gazettes or dockets in State Records; and when we find the reference it rarely tells us where the committee found the name. But then at least we know we can discount it for our purpose. In SA some of these names have the extra plausibility of being local words taken from reliable wordlists⁴⁴.

And the same thing can happen with private property names bestowed by well-read settlers⁴⁵.

So we need to be very careful with names on maps!

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and they remembered a small amount of place-name material which originated earlier from people in the Yankalilla-Rapid Bay area, is identifiably Kurna, is not found elsewhere, and survived in their non-Kurna memory 90 years after first settlement (see my unpublished research on *Wita-wattingga* (*Rapid Head*) and *Watara-parringga*).

⁴³ Berndt and Berndt 1993.

⁴⁴ In SA this part of the work has been simplified for the period 1916-1955 by the preservation in GNU of the Minutes of the government's Nomenclature Committee, and the scrapbook compiled by a founding member of the Committee, Horace Talbot; and by the previous work of Geoffrey Manning in referencing a mass of such data as part of his books and website on SA place-names.

In 1916 a committee was formed by the SA government specifically to replace 'enemy names' with either names of patriotic British connection or local 'native names'. So 'German Pass' in the Barossa became 'Tappa Pass', taken from Teichelmann and Schürmann *tappa* 'path' (Report of the Nomenclature Committee on Enemy Place Names, 7/11/1916 reprinted in Cockburn 1984, :287). The group survived for 40 years as the Nomenclature Committee.

If Tindale had done homework there in the Department of Lands he might have avoided one howler. The locality 'Willyaroo', in Peramangk land two km SE of Strathalbyn, had been published on the Hundred of Bremer map to which he was adding new data, probably from Milerum (he admitted that he used map names to elicit interpretations of Peramangk names from Milerum: see Tindale, AA338/10/2, :114). Milerum reinterpreted it as "'Wiljau`a:r / 'scrub flat'" (Tindale map, AA 338/24/14). Tindale later checked this against Meyer's 1843 Ramindjeri wordlist, "*Willyauwar, heath or scrub*" (Tindale map, AA 338/24/121). "[`Wiljau`a:r]" appeared again, apparently as an authenticated name and part of the 'wanderings of Tjirbruki', in Tindale's well-known essay (Tindale 1987, *Records of SA Museum* 20, :5-13). Unfortunately it was as late as 1916 that the Nomenclature Committee had adopted 'Willyaroo: to invoke a good harvest' as a replacement for the 'enemy name' New Hamburg here (Nomenclature Committee Report, Cockburn 1984 :287). *Wilyaru* (youth at a certain stage of initiation) is common in languages from Kurna northward, but the strange 'harvest' gloss shows that they got it from Gason's Diyari (Cooper's Creek) wordlist in Woods 1879, :270.

Other examples: At some late date so far unidentified, the 'Long Marsh', flowing into Currency Creek many km outside Kurna territory, was renamed officially – and appropriately in terms of ecology – as 'Tookayerta Creek' ('muddy land', from Wyatt 1879). 'Taringa' railway siding was given to the Nomenclature Committee in 1947 by Tindale, who knew perfectly well that it belonged not here but at McLaren Vale 4 km north, as the early 'Daringa' (Nomenclature Committee Minutes, GNU, :111).

⁴⁵ e.g. 'Kerta Weeta' ('forest + peppermint gum') is a plausible Kurna name for the extinct Black Forest in the Adelaide suburbs, but seems to have been adopted by a landowner as vocabulary from Wyatt 1879.

Part 3: EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT:

Example 1: 'MORIALTA': an unresolved conundrum which hangs on hand-writing.

The Morialta Falls, Gorge, Recreation Area, Conservation Park, and historic 'Morialta' mansion which became a children's home, are beautiful and iconic places in the foothills of Adelaide between Rostrevor and Norton Summit. About this place-name scribes have spent much ink, and I have invaded the ether with many kilobytes.

It does not occur on any early map that I know.

The earliest source is Stephen **Hack** in a published letter of May **1837**: "*Onkeperinga, Oatbunga, Morialta, Aldinga, Yankudilly are all names of places in this neighbourhood*"⁴⁶. The locations 'in this neighbourhood' cover everywhere from Adelaide to Cape Jervis 70 km south.

There is another little-known record. The second owner of the mansion land was CDE Fortnum, who later sold it to Baker. In **1842** his letter to an entomologist in England (as published in 1999 by Elizabeth Warburton) claimed that "*the immediate spot is called by the natives 'Moriatta'*"⁴⁷.

Until now the earliest evidence known to most researchers has been the artist George French Angas, who painted all three of the Falls in **1844**. His big publications *SA Illustrated* and *Savage life and Scenes* (1846-7) contain only the spelling '*Moriatta*', occurring four times and applied to Fourth Creek on which the Falls are situated⁴⁸. No manuscripts from the publications are known.

The Baker family, the long-standing third owners of the property on which the mansion was built, named it '**Morialta**'⁴⁹.

Two sources each way. Which spelling (if either) is correct?

In cursive hand-writing the difference between 'lt' and 'tt' is slight, and either can easily be mistaken for the other. The Watson publisher may have misread a cursive 'tt' in Hack's letter; equally, Warburton may have misread an 'lt' in Fortnum's manuscript, perhaps influenced by the well-known Angas 'tt'. Only one early hand-written spelling is known: it is from Angas. The crucial characters are hard to determine, and need a forensic analysis⁵⁰.

Is this an impasse? Perhaps the linguistics may help us decide.

⁴⁶ Here some known names ('Patbunga' and 'Yankalilly') are misread or misprinted, so that we cannot place too much confidence in the 'lt' of 'Morialta' while the manuscript remains un-found. The letter was published by his Quaker friend in London as part of a propaganda pamphlet for the new colony (Watson 1838, :18).

Hack (brother of the more famous JB Hack) spent much of 1837-8 exploring country with Aboriginal guides: both Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri, to judge by the place-names he recorded. Around Adelaide he sometimes rode or walked in the company of CW Stuart, one of the first owners of land at the top of the Gorge.

⁴⁷ The quotation comes from Warburton 1999, :129 -147. The Fortnum manuscript is presumably in England, and Morialta historians will need to check it. I owe this reference to Owen Burgan who found it first, and to Phil Jones who emailed it to me.

⁴⁸ Angas 1847, *SA Illustrated* Plate XXIII and LVII; *Savage Life and Scenes* Vol.1 :224-5.

⁴⁹ John Baker bought it in 1847; it was first listed in the almanacs as 'Morialta' in 1851 (Murray 1851, :185).

⁵⁰ Original watercolour of 'Upper Falls of Glen Stuart', National Library of Australia; to be distinguished from the well-known lithographs of the Lower (first) and Middle (second) Falls in *SA Illustrated*, whose originals have not been traced. On the reverse side of this little-known painting of the Third Falls is the caption: "*Upper falls of Glen Stuart / adjoining the Moriatta Estate, the seat of CDE Fortnum*" – or is it '*Morialta*'? Forensic hand-writing analysis is needed. I owe my copy to an email from Philip Jones of SA Museum, arising from correspondence instigated by Morialta historian Owen Burgan.

The Bakers left an oral tradition that the name meant “*ever-running waters*” or “*ever-flowing*” or “*flowing water*”, as recorded on three different occasions⁵¹. By 1931 Noel Webb as usual had a linguistic theory: “*Water flowing in the East, or the Eastern Waterfall, would be ‘Mari-Yatala’, and it is not difficult to believe that this name would be altered by our English tongue into the pretty name, Morialta*”⁵². Both of these glosses are well-known; but what do Kurna linguistics tell us?

Firstly, the Baker derivations of ‘Morialta’ are unlikely as they stand⁵³. There are two doubtful glosses for this spelling, which both involve a little stretching of the evidence: *mari-yelta* ‘cool east’⁵⁴; or *mari-yertalla* ‘eastern flood or cascade’, as in Webb⁵⁵. If the MS sources are found to agree on ‘It’ the name might perhaps have been one of these; but there is no sure way of knowing which was correct (if either), or whether the name meant anything.

If the MSS are found to agree on ‘Moriatta’, there is a much more likely gloss: “*marri’erta, marri yerta*”, given reliably as synonyms for *marrarta*, ‘east country’⁵⁶. Containing an abbreviation of *yerta* ‘land, earth, country’, this is likely to be a large-scale identifier related to other compass names *Kawandilla* and *Patpangga* (‘in the north’ and ‘in the south’: see Examples 4a and 4b). The ready gloss is in itself an argument in favour of this spelling over the uncertainties arising from the ‘It’, but it cannot carry the day without backup from manuscript evidence.

Where was this ‘eastern country’, or ‘eastern flood or waterfall’?

The fame and long association of the beauty spots may have caused us to ignore the whole geographical context of the name. We find this from Fortnum about his specimens: “*The part of the country where most of these insects have been collected is the top of the Mount Lofty Range, on the borders of the Stringy Bark Forest... the immediate spot is called by the natives ‘Moriatta’ and as it is a great height above the plains, and the vegetation different, you will readily imagine, that the Insects will differ also*”⁵⁷. According to him the name applied to ‘*the immediate spot*’ (presumably with his block as the reference point), ‘*the top of the... Range*’, above the Gorge and near the stringybark.

This makes the downstream ‘*waterfall*’ sites less likely, while leaving open the possibility that it might refer to the valley just beyond Norton Summit, watered by the tributaries of Fourth Creek: was this notably subject to ‘*flooding*’?

‘East *country*’ might also be the same valley, a piece of semi-separate Kurna country; or a generic name for any such places (such as Coromandel Valley or Waterfall Gully). Or it might be the country of the ‘East-men’ (*Mari-meyunna*, the Peramangk) whose territory began somewhere very near this topographical and ecological boundary. Or it might signify something like ‘our eastern

⁵¹ Recorded by Edward Hallack in ‘The Toilers of the Hills: No. xviii’, in *SA Register* 10/7/1893 :7B; Cockburn 1908, :88; and Webb 1931; applied respectively to the creek on Baker’s, the ‘*locality*’, and ‘*the waterfall*’.

⁵² Webb 1931.

⁵³ They are linguistically impossible as literal *meanings* of the name, although they might be valid elements in *describing* the place – depending on where it was: Morialta Creek (= Fourth Creek) has always been intermittent. The tradition is obviously a loose one: did somebody misremember ‘*over-flowing*’ (= flooding) as ‘*ever-flowing*’?

⁵⁴ – *yelta* deduced from a recorded reduplicative: *yelta-yelta*, ‘cool, fresh’.

⁵⁵ In the early linguists *mari* ‘east’ is common, and *yertalla* means ‘water running by the side of a river; inundation; cascade; flood, cataract’. ‘Mari-Yatala’ (= *Mari-yertalla*) has some credibility if we grant that the first hearer may have understood *-tal-* as an abbreviated *-t’l-*, and reproduced it in reverse as ‘-lt’ (‘metathesis’).

⁵⁶ Teichelmann’s MS dictionary 1857, which relies on his work done in the 1840s. The linguistics of Kurna compass words requires more analysis.

⁵⁷ Fortnum letter 1842, as above.

borderland’.

Yet there would linger some doubts. Even if it was ‘Moriatta’, why did it pass on to the Baker family as ‘Morialta’ in 1847-51?

The name remains an impasse *unless* we find the MSS of both Hack and Fortnum *and* they all agree with each other; or *unless* new material turns up in the diaries of CW Stuart who bought land next to Fortnum’s block, or in the papers of the previous owner(s) of Fortnum’s; and *unless* we can decipher everyone’s hand-writing!

And its exact place-reference will probably remain uncertain in any case.

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Example 2: KANYANYAPILLA: a neat resolution from almanacs, a surveyor and a linguist.

Now to a totally unfamiliar name about 3 km southwest of McLaren Vale.

In October 1839 Louis Piesse (who later accompanied Sturt to Central Australia as Storeman) wrote a letter⁵⁸ from a survey camp during his time with John McLaren's Aldinga team. He had been collecting a small Kurna wordlist and some place-names in this context which was ideal because un-named Kurna guides were part of this team on equal pay⁵⁹. Because he was a surveyor he also knew the section number: "*Can-yan-ya-pel-la – section 203, district C*"⁶⁰. By consulting the surveyor's Field Books we can even see exactly where he was camped and when. We have meticulous evidence from a talented draughtsman on the team who was also an Assistant Surveyor: Richard Counsel, whose Field Books are marvels of pencilled craft which sometimes almost become artwork⁶¹.

The almanacs and land returns give '**Canyauapella**' for a farm on section 193: we are told that it had water "*from a tea-tree swamp in abundance*"⁶²; and another on Section 191 about a mile downstream is listed as '**Somerset House, Cananapella**' or '**Cananyapella**'⁶³. In these the name is being used to label an area rather than a particular farm. After 1842 it does not reappear: this small district had become known as 'Bay of Biscay'.

These erratic spellings might puzzle us linguistically but for Piesse's more careful records. In a tour guide for the *Adelaide Observer* in 1844⁶⁴ he spelled it '*Cunyunyapella*' and '*Cunyanyapella*'. Putting these alongside the others, it is clear that the first two vowels are both *a*, and that *ny* occurs twice, not once; the correct spelling is therefore *Kanyanyapilla*,

The earliest evidence of all clinches the spelling. The young missionary linguist Clamor Schürmann left a detailed diary in German which was translated recently for the Adelaide Lutheran Archives. In July 1839 – in the middle of McLaren's surveys – Schürmann made a journey on foot from Adelaide to Encounter Bay with the new Protector Matthew Moorhouse. They were guided by two Kurna people, Wattewattipinna and a boy, who no doubt gave or confirmed the name: "*24th July... We came to the pier at Ngangkiparringa [Onkaparinga River], where we were kindly welcomed by Mr McLaren, as he was about to leave for **Kanyanyapilla**. We put our bundles on his cart, which helped us for the next 7 miles. From **Kanyanyapilla** we should have reached Willunga on the same day, where the Governor had set up his tent...*". From other details in Schürmann's account it appears that *Kanyanyapilla* was a well-established campsite on the southward route⁶⁵.

⁵⁸ Piesse 1839.

⁵⁹ *SA Register* 10/8/1839, :6A. Piesse was presumably given the name and location on the site itself by one of these guides.

⁶⁰ This is the higher ground immediately south of a reed swamp in Maslin Creek on the east side of California Road.

⁶¹ Counsel's Field Books (94 :52, and 102 :25, GNU) mark a "*camp*" on Section 203, and also on 193 just north across the swamp on a low bluff overlooking it. His survey party had established a base there around June 24th 1839 (Field Book 94, :49).

⁶² 'Statement of the Extent and Cultivation... for 1840', in 'Papers Relative to ... SA', *British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies: Aust: Vol. 7 (1841-4) :118-9*. The spelling clearly includes a mis-transcribed 'n'.

⁶³ SA almanacs: Bennett 1841, Country Directory :127; and Bennett 1842, Country Directory :127.

⁶⁴ 'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], *Observer* 13/4/1844 :8A-B.

⁶⁵ Schürmann, *Diaries*, 24-5 July, 1-2 August 1839.

Probably both Sections 203 south of the swamp, and 193 as a lookout, were part of the Kurna site. Piesse described it: “*The next gully is Cunyanyapella, in which the large tea tree (Melaleuca linariifolia) and reeds at once show that the water is permanent*”⁶⁶. Fortunately this still survives today. On section 192 (half a km NW of 203) in the middle of farms and vines, we still have the California Road Wetland with dense tea-trees surrounded by dense reeds as well as a few gums further west. We are justified in locating this precious little site here, one of the few on the McLaren Plains to survive (in part) the ecological disasters of the first 20 years of settlement⁶⁷: a well-watered Kurna campsite halfway between others named on Pedler Creek near McLaren Vale⁶⁸, and at Willunga⁶⁹.

The name fits Kurna linguistics, but in several possible ways. The *-illa* could be either a Locative ‘at’ or a Dual ‘two’. It could mean ‘place of many earth ovens’, or ‘two heaps’, or ‘two lots of rocks’, or ‘a crowd of eagles’. We have no hint of which is correct except perhaps from the location and ecology. The first two might be credible, the last two not likely at this location (unless ‘eagle’ could refer to an eagle-hawk in the 1840s). They might be once-familiar Kurna functions of the site, or connected to an unknown Dreaming story, or both.

However, the story cannot stop there. On Tindale’s annotated Hundred of Willunga map – which has been used as an authority by researchers such as Manning – what are we to make of this?⁷⁰ – a place-name annotation, “*‘Kunanjapilba ‘dung earth place’*”; a general credit for the whole map, “*‘Details from Karlowan Dec. 1935. March 1939 / 1941’*”; and an unattached note, “*‘Maundaril:a = / Cunyanyapella salt water creek / Ref. Adelaide Observer 13 Apr 1844’*”.

This all looks authoritative. But it is not self-evident how many of the annotations on this map come from Karlowan, nor which they are. The reference to the *Observer* essay makes it quite unlikely that Karlowan volunteered this name unprompted, especially when we know that Tindale used published names on another map as a source for Milerum to interpret⁷¹.

It seems reasonably clear that he and Karlowan both considered ‘Kunanyapilba’⁷² to be a correction of L.P.’s ‘Cunyanyapella’. But this word and its gloss are very unlikely⁷³.

From his maps and cards we deduce that Tindale knew the two *Observer* essays by ‘L.P.’ but not Piesse’s name nor his 1839 letter. Therefore he was unaware that a precise location on Maslin Creek had been given for ‘Can-yan-ya-pel-la’. According to the map and card, ‘Kunanyapilba’ is near the mouth of Willunga Creek at Port Willunga. This name in this location is a package with

⁶⁶ By 1844 he, like the almanacs, may have generalized the name to the whole length of the creek, though the ecological detail suggests something more particular.

⁶⁷ For the disasters see Linn, 1991, :78-80, 100, 108, 168n1-2.

⁶⁸ *Tarniyandingga*: see my unpublished research.

⁶⁹ *Willangga* and *Piltangga*: see my unpublished research.

⁷⁰ Tindale annotated map Hundred of Willunga, AA 338/24/97. Later (probably 50 years later) Tindale transferred this information to a card (Kurna place-name card 548).

⁷¹ Tindale, ‘Placenames: drafts for text’, AA338/10/2, :114.

⁷² Tindale’s Continental ‘j’ is the consonant ‘y’.

⁷³ It could only be a hybrid. Certainly ‘human excrement’ is *kudna* in Kurna and *kuna* in Ngarrindjeri; but as we have seen, the early sources indicate *a* as the first vowel, not *u*; and the consonant is *ny*, not *n*. The third syllable *nya* is not explained. *Pilbi*, not *pilba*, is ‘dirt’ in Ngarrindjeri. Karlowan did not know that *-illa* can be a Locative in Kurna (see Example 3: *Tartatylla*).

little linguistic or geographical credibility: as we have seen above, there is solid evidence for what and where it really was. It looks very much as if Tindale showed the name from the *Observer* essay (or spoke it ⁷⁴), and then Karlowan invented an explanation in his own Ngarrindjeri terms.

However, the location given is close to the real ‘Tartachilla’ (see next Example 3). Did Karlowan draw on some knowledge of that old waterhole site about a km away? We cannot know.

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⁷⁴ – as he must have done for Milerum when interpreting place-names on maps. Milerum could not read (Tindale, ‘Vanished Tribal Life of Coorong Blacks’, *Advertiser* 7/4/1934, :5).

Example 3: TARTATYILLA: surveyors 1, Tindale 0.

By contrast, the Tatchilla Road stretching west from McLaren Vale towards Maslin Beach, and on it the old Tatchilla winery which is now a college, are familiar on today's maps. And older residents still remember the local place-name 'Tortachilla'.

Their names originated from another of the place-names recorded during the 1839 McLaren surveys, in the variant spelling 'Tartachilla' (presumably others unknown had once written 'Tatchilla'). Its first traceable appearance on a map is as the 'Tartachilla' trig station. A small sketch of Section 378 in Henry Ide's Field Book 28 (undated but probably 1839) shows a triangle marked '**Tartachilla**' at the tip of Blanche Point (the spectacular sandstone cliff promontory just south of Maslin Beach) ⁷⁵.

However, the name did not belong originally at Blanche Point. Piesse's letter in 1839 was once again quite specific: "**Tar-ta-chil-la – section 399, district C**". Section 399 is two km south of the trig station, and again mapped beautifully by Counsel. His sketch map of this area ⁷⁶ shows Willunga Creek as a "**Valley, water brakish** [sic]" near the mouth (Port Willunga); Section 399 (now opposite the Arts Eco Village at the west end of Aldinga town ⁷⁷); and upstream from it a "**Well brakish**" about 400 metres from a track which is now Old Coach Road. Two other dotted tracks follow the creek east and west, joining at the Coach Road intersection. Northeast from this is a "**present track**", almost obscured by "**proposed road**" written over it; and we know from the published McLaren map ⁷⁸ that this road was a "**native track**", about to be transformed into a road for bullock drays.

Piesse wrote about it again in 1844, generalizing the name onto the whole creek including "**the boat harbour of Tartarchilla... Returning [from Mt Terrible] and keeping more towards the coast... four miles brings us to the grassy gully called Tartarchilla. There is no surface water in this gully in the summer, but there is a considerable underground drainage which may be demonstrated by the fact that on a well being sunk it overflowed, and kept full to overflowing even during the drought of last year**" ⁷⁹.

Here is the real 'Tartachilla': a campsite on a Kaurna travel route, useably watered in case of need, receiving traffic from the Onkaparinga River ford northeast, and from Ochre Cove north, and south from the skin-preparation sites at the Blue Lagoon past Aldinga Scrub. Clearly the surveyors wanted a name for their trig station and transferred this, the nearest one, over to it. No doubt Tatchilla Road ⁸⁰ got its name because it led from McLaren Vale to the vicinity of the trig point.

The trig station and survey beacon are still there now, but seem to have changed both the name and its location a few times in between. '**Tortachilla**' has appeared as a trig station on published maps since about 1870, to judge by those available, and it became a semi-official name for the surrounding area of flat high paddocks above the cliffs, shown additionally as a place-name on

⁷⁵ Ide, n.d., (?1839) Field Book 28, GNU, (no page numbers, :[3b]). This trig station appears on several maps in the following few years; e.g. '**Tartachilla**' on 'Forrest Origl' plan 1/7, November 1843 (GNU).

⁷⁶ Counsel 1839, Field Book 102, GNU, :37.

⁷⁷ The name 'Aldinga' belonged originally to the plains south of the town.

⁷⁸ McLaren 1840, 'Country South of Adelaide', Arrowsmith, in State Library of SA.

⁷⁹ 'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], *Observer* 16/3/1844 :8A.

⁸⁰ This old spelling of the road represents the same pronunciation. It is probably an independent tradition, and though I have not traced its origin, we can be sure that it is not as old as the trig and Piesse records.

some⁸¹. A probable reason for the spelling is that somebody had read an old ‘a’ as ‘o’. But not always did it stay with the ‘o’. On at least two of the Hundred maps the trig station reverted to ‘Tartachilla’⁸², suggesting that around 1910-20 someone in the Survey Department may have revisited old plans and revived the old spelling. But it seems that this knowledge did not become part of the military survey in the 1930s, as ‘Tortachilla’ still remains on the GNU’s website both as the trig point and as a historical name for a clifftop area now incorporated into Maslin Beach.

The original name fits easily into Kaurna linguistics as *Tartatyilla*⁸³. Because the site is on Section 399 where the McLaren map labels Willunga Creek as a “swampy valley”⁸⁴, the word might perhaps be related to *tarto*, ‘low swampy country’, despite the ‘o’; but ‘place of low swamp’ would be *Tarto-ngga*⁸⁵, and the third given syllable *tyV* is not explained.

So *Tartatyilla* is a valid Kaurna place-name whose meaning we do not know but whose location is well-attested. However, once again Tindale and Karlowan have muddied the waters.

On the same Willunga map with annotations credited generally to Karlowan, we find the printer’s ‘Tortachilla’ at Blanche Point annotated thus:

“*Turto`tjalanga*⁸⁶
earth ending
red earth”.

Again Tindale explains this on a much later card: “*Lit. ‘Red earth ending’. Deriv: [turto] red earth + [tjala] end + [ngga] at*”. The first morpheme here has some Kaurna plausibility as *turto*, ‘clod of earth’. But there are fatal flaws. Although on the basis of this map note Tindale believed (or at least wrote) that ‘tjala’ was Kaurna for ‘end, ending’⁸⁷, the word is unknown in both Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri; and the gloss sounds like a retrospective invention, even a misunderstanding of his own old note where ‘ending’ could simply mean ‘*ngga* is a locative suffix’.

We can accept that Karlowan gave the name ‘Turtotjalangga’, no doubt as an interpretation of the printed name ‘Tortachilla’. But clearly he was not aware that *-illa* is a standard Kaurna locative, for he added a second locative *-ngga*, the Kaurna locative that he knew (at least sometimes). A double locative has no credibility in either language.

When we add all this to Tindale’s lack of caution about names printed on maps, we see why researchers will have to treat his place-names, and his Ngarrindjeri informants’ opinions about Kaurna words, to some very careful scrutiny.

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⁸¹ Hundred of Willunga 1:63,360, July 1873, and others (in H830bje maps, State Library of SA). On some maps both the place-name and the trig point migrated north of Blanche Point: Military Survey maps, ‘Mount Barker, 2nd Edition’, 1942; and ‘Echunga, Series R741, [n.d.] (in H830bje maps, State Library of SA).

⁸² Tindale annotated maps ‘Southern portion of SA’, AA338/15/2 (printed 1912); and ‘Central SA’, AA338/16/2, /3, /4 ([n.d., printed ?pre-1920).

⁸³ As always with a three-syllable root word, it uses the *-illa* locative *TartatyV* (‘V’ meaning that we do not know what the third vowel is).

⁸⁴ e.g. McLaren 1840, ‘Country South of Adelaide’, Arrowsmith, in State Library of SA.

⁸⁵ A two-syllable root word must use the locative *-ngga*.

⁸⁶ *ŋ* is the phonetic symbol for ‘ng’.

⁸⁷ Kaurna vocabulary card ‘tjala’; where he adds “*Tindale ms from Karlowan*”, as though Karlowan had told him this.

Example 4a: KAWANDILLA: a compass direction can be a place-name.

Cowandilla is today a suburb of Adelaide 2 km west of the CBD. Much attention has been paid to the alleged meanings and locations of this name, but rarely to its historical origin: the circumstances of its entry into settler usage. We will begin there.

The name is first on record almost immediately at the arrival of the first settlers at Holdfast Bay (Glenelg) in December 1836; and in the next 12 months when exploration of the unknown ‘interior’ of this coast was in its early stages. In those days the settlers were intensely interested in whatever they could learn about the place, and no doubt very quickly heard the results of Colonel Light’s surveys up the coast leading to his choice of the site for the capital. The name of the place where they had landed would have been a prime item. It is extremely likely that it had been obtained by Light’s survey party in September and October of 1836, from the ‘Cape Jervis tribe’ whom they employed at Rapid Bay, and ‘Doughboy’ who was their guide as they worked up the coast in the ‘Rapid’ seeking a site for the capital⁸⁸. The exploring travellers Hack⁸⁹, Wade⁹⁰ and Mann⁹¹ (on foot and with Aboriginal guides) recorded variants of the name, and so did settler Mary Thomas⁹² and visitor Dr Hermann Koeler⁹³. Light and Finnis included the name on their first substantial map of the whole area⁹⁴, but this was not published until May 1838.

The literary sources all spell it in four syllables, ‘Cowandilla/Kowandilla’⁹⁵. But Light’s map spells it ‘Cowiandilla’, apparently adding a fifth syllable. It was probably at this same time that new Protector Wyatt⁹⁶ recorded ‘Kouandilla’, which represents the same sounds as ‘Cowandilla’.

⁸⁸ Light’s Aboriginal informants in 1836 will make an interesting historical study. We even know the names of some of them (as bestowed by the whites). Light left Finnis surveying at Rapid Bay with the group of Aboriginal people who tended the first European garden there – called the ‘Cape Jervis tribe’ by Light’s party, which means in our terms ‘the tribe of Fleurieu Peninsula’; and it is almost certain that they were Kurna speakers. Among them was ‘Peter’ whose country was ‘Yankallyilla’ where he and Finnis were surveying. But on board the ‘Rapid’ were the Kangaroo Island sealer Billy Cooper and his Aboriginal wives ‘Sall’ and ‘Doughboy’. We know that ‘Doughboy’ was a Kurna speaker, and she is the most likely source of the name ‘Cowandilla’. Cooper and ‘Doughboy’ (now renamed ‘Sarah’) continued on for 18 months as interpreters in Adelaide (a core Kurna -speaking area), but Cooper could not interpret at Encounter Bay (a core Ramindjeri area) when he accompanied Mann and Wyatt there in September 1837, possibly with ‘Doughboy’ as well. One of the Rapid Bay ‘gardeners’ was her son. She had not been as far north as the Port estuary before (William Hodges, *Observer* 26/4/1902, :4F), but alerted Light to the existence of the Onkaparinga River. Some of the history of Light’s Aboriginal guides is found in Amery 1998, and more in my unpublished research.

⁸⁹ Watson 1838, :18.

⁹⁰ Gouger 1838, :24.

⁹¹ Mann 1837, :2.

⁹² Thomas 1836 / ?1865, :90.

⁹³ Mühlhäusler 2006, :82.

⁹⁴ “The maritime portion of South Australia...”. This and its variants are the only known very early maps which have any version of the name. The first known version dates from late 1837 or early 1838: ([no author; n.d.], ‘The maritime portion of South Australia from the surveys of Cap^t Flinders and of Col. Light’, C 1023, State Library of SA). It is a lithograph and so not the original; but it must be an earlier version than what I have called Version 2, which appeared on 11th May 1838; this version and its variants up to about 1840 contain extra inset maps.

I have not found any version of the name in Field Books or on early unpublished maps or plans; but that is true for all the names in the immediate vicinity of Adelaide.

⁹⁵ – if we allow Hack’s ‘Corrandilla’ and Koeler’s ‘Korrandilla’ – both available only in published form – to contain a misreading of ‘w’ as ‘rr’.

⁹⁶ Wyatt published in 1879, but probably recorded most of his data in 1837-9.

These early records apply the name in several ways:

1. ‘Glenelg’ or ‘Port Glenelg’ or ‘Holdfast Bay’ (Light, Hack, Koeler).
2. The plains adjacent to Glenelg (Thomas).
3. ‘Plains’ in the vicinity of Adelaide (Wade, Mann).
4. A ‘district of the Adelaide Tribe’ (Wyatt).

In these documents ‘Cowandilla’ and ‘Glenelg’ both refer to the plains, not to a village. It would be wrong to assume that in 1837 ‘Glenelg’ and ‘Adelaide’ meant the same restricted areas as on a street map now. To the occupants of the infant settlement when the landing place at Holdfast Bay was first named ‘Glenelg’ and the capital ‘Adelaide’, ‘Glenelg’ could refer to the whole plain south of the River Torrens⁹⁷, and for a year or two it could mean anywhere between the Sturt River and the sea. ‘Adelaide’ was a tiny cluster of huts in a scrub; but this name too could briefly be used for anything on the plains, or as short-hand for the general area.

In March 1838 John Oakden, exploring land to the immediate north, even applied ‘Cowandilla Plains’ to the entire plain from *‘the pine forest’* (today’s Enfield) up to Gawler. But because 1838 is a late-ish date for this name and it is unclear whether he had Aboriginal guides, his usage is rather doubtful⁹⁸.

We conclude that when the name ‘Cowandilla’ was collected the settlers thought of it as referring to the Adelaide Plains in general: at least those south of the Torrens, and possibly some way north as well.

In the 1890s an ongoing spate of correspondence in the *SA Register* about place-names included this:

“In your interesting article this morning on ‘Origin of Adelaide Names’ you quote Mr. C. H. Harris’s paper, in which he says that the native name of Adelaide was ‘Tarndanya’ and of Glenelg ‘Cowandilla’. Allow me to state that this point is disputed by some of our oldest colonists, who claim that ‘Cowandilla’ is the native name of Adelaide, not of Glenelg. In a recent conversation with a colonist of fifty-nine years and a man possessed of a remarkable memory, the late Mr. John Brock, J.P., Tanunda, who died on the 19th ult., he told me that when in Adelaide in the early days he was talking to the king of the Adelaide tribe of blacks, and on mentioning the name Adelaide the king in an indignant tone replied. ‘What for you call him Adelaide? no Adelaide— Cow-an-dilla.’ The king was surely an authority on the subject... I am Sir, andc, E. LUCAS. Gawler, January 12 [1899]”⁹⁹.

The ‘king of the Adelaide tribe’ was presumably one of several well-known identities who had ‘king’ attached to their English names¹⁰⁰. What he and Brock meant by ‘Adelaide’ is less clear: most likely the whole vicinity. The long-running dispute among old colonists about ‘Adelaide’ versus ‘Glenelg’ had forgotten the early context of the names. But the incident recorded here is

⁹⁷ – as originally intended by Hindmarsh and Light: “*The Governor has named the town Adelaide, and the plains in the neighbourhood, Glenelg plains*” (BT Finnis, letter to Sir Willoughby Gordon... [n.d., before Apr 1837], Finnis Papers, PRG 527/2 Vol. 1, State Library of SA, :9-10). The settlers had no other place-names between ‘16-mile Creek’ (the Port River) and the Sturt River, and left no record of other local Kaurna place-names until 1839.

⁹⁸ John Oakden, ‘Notes of an excursion to the Murray’, *Register* 17/3/1838 :3C.

⁹⁹ *Register* 13/1/1899 :6H. I owe this reference to clippings in the archive of surveyor and place-name enthusiast CH Harris (bound volume, :141, PRG 1112, State Library of SA).

¹⁰⁰ – probably Ivaritji’s father ‘King Rodney’, who died around 1860; or possibly ‘King John’ (who died in 1845), if Brock turns out to have been in Adelaide before about 1843; he was in the Barossa by 1848 (*Register*, Wednesday 5 July 1848, :3B). Both ‘Rodney’ and ‘John’ originated from country further south, but to most settlers they would have been identified with Adelaide because of their high visibility there; they were two of the main informants for Teichelmann and Schürmann at the Native Location.

specific, early, face-to-face, authoritative, and fairly conclusive evidence that the word was used by the Kurna as a place-name.

In 1840 the name was adopted for a new village on Section 92 where the suburb is now. An advertisement for the subdivision was headed “*Cowandillah – so called on account of the great facilities of obtaining water*”¹⁰¹. **Other early records also asserted that the name meant ‘plenty of water’**¹⁰² or ‘good water’¹⁰³. Glenelg had plenty of water in its lagoons and soaks; likewise the plains; so ‘water’ may be correct as a description of the place. But it is almost certainly wrong as a literal meaning. For these newcomers, ignorant of the land and its bounty, the Kurna word to be learned most urgently was *kauwe*, ‘water’. This has a certain plausibility as a derivation for any word beginning ‘cowi’, such as ‘Cowiandilla’ on Light’s map. But the etymology does not hold water linguistically!¹⁰⁴ On the other hand the common and equally early spelling, implying a three-syllable root, is actually attested by the linguists: ***kawandilla*, ‘in the north’**. The map version has to be an error, and the early folk etymologies must have been based on someone’s hasty assumption.

But now we have arrived at a compass direction, with the accompanying doubt whether it is a place-name at all. The early linguists did not cite *kawandilla* as a place-name. Did the travellers misunderstand their Pidgin conversation, as hinted before?

In this case probably not, since Brock recorded that Rodney (or someone of equal authority) insisted on using ‘Cow-an-dilla’ in the same way as ‘Adelaide’, as some kind of place-name. This might be unusual among Aboriginal languages. But it makes sense because ‘Doughboy’ and the ‘Cape Jervis tribe’ were southerners; the ‘Glenelg Plains’ were the ‘north place’, further north than they usually travelled. For Brock’s ‘king’ too, those plains were a ‘north place’¹⁰⁵. It is significant too that both sources used ‘north place’ rather than another more specific local name for Adelaide such as *Tarndanyangga*.

If *Kawandilla* was used to name country (i.e. was really a place-name), then what was *Kawandilla* north of, and how far north did it reach? The area from Adelaide to Gawler is not the northernmost part of Kurna territory as defined by Tindale and the Native Title Claim; this reaches to Crystal Brook 150 km north of Gawler.

Other uses of *Kawandilla* may help us. By 1838 settlers were also using the word as the *name* of the ‘Adelaide tribe’¹⁰⁶. This may well be valid, and confirms the idea that it referred to a wide area of the plains near Adelaide. In this context we can surmise that the *Kawanda Meyunna* (‘north men’), mentioned by missionary Klose without identifying their location, may perhaps have been the ‘Adelaide Tribe’ under another name, one applied by the southerners¹⁰⁷; and if so, *Kawandilla*

¹⁰¹ *Register* 1/8/1840 :2d. Section 92 is about 7 km from Glenelg. This more specific location has no previous authority (with the possible exception of Mann who is ambiguous): the land agents merely used the name and its folk etymology.

¹⁰² Mary Thomas.

¹⁰³ Hack.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Water place’ would be *Kauwi-ngga* (following the rule about two-syllable root words). ‘Cowiandilla’ must represent something like *Kauwi-yandilla*; but this would have a four-syllable root and would therefore have to be *Kauwi-yandingga*, unless the *-lla* is not a Locative but a Dual (‘two’).

¹⁰⁵ Rodney’s country was “*from Onkaparinga to Willunga, and south of it*” (Wyatt 1879, in Woods 1879, :179). King John was associated with Onkaparinga, Sellick’s Hill and Myponga Valley (Gara 1998, ‘Life of King John’, :93-5).

¹⁰⁶ See *Register* 20/10/1838 :2C; G James in *JW Bull* 1884, :67; Thomas Day 1902; Gara 1998, :124-5. There are complications with this ‘tribe’ application. The ‘Adelaide Tribe’ could also be known as *Wito Meyunna*, ‘reed men’, and *Taralye Meyunna*, ‘stockade men’ (see Klose 2002, :35).

¹⁰⁷ A group who lived north of Adelaide Plains were called not ‘north men’ but *Wirra Meyunna*, ‘forest men’.

would likely be the name of their territory. Moorhouse thought the ‘Adelaide Tribe’ extended from Mt Terrible (at Sellick’s Hill) to “10 miles north of Adelaide” (Salisbury and the Little Para River). Perhaps *Kawandilla*, ‘north place’, was a collective name for lands and peoples everywhere in this large tract, or one of the competing tracts in other fragmentary records of the supposed extent?

It may help if we find other Kurna place-names which use compass points. We already seen ‘east country’; we also have ‘south place’.

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Example 4b: PATPANGGA: can a compass direction be a place-name?

We have a similar set of doubts with the records of another alleged place-name *Patpa-ngga*, and with the usage of the word. The early linguists recorded the word as ‘in the south’¹⁰⁸, but not as a place-name. The suffix *-ngga*, like *-illa*, can be interpreted also as ‘place of’. *Patpangga* never appeared on any surveyor’s map or field book in any spelling, as far as we know, but it was recorded at least five times from 1836 to 1839, four of which were almost certainly obtained from Aboriginal informants; but as the name of three different places¹⁰⁹.

For John Morphett in 1836¹¹⁰ and his correspondent Samuel Stephens in 1838¹¹¹ it was ‘*Pat Bungar*’, identifiable from Morphett’s landscape details as the cape at Cape Jervis.

For Charles Robinson interviewing Kalloungoo in Tasmania in 1837, “*the country where she came from was called BAT.BUN.GER YANG.GAL.LALE.LAR*”. The topographical detail represents Rapid Head and Bay (allowing for Robinson’s ignorance of SA geography) and Yankalilla Bay¹¹². Kalloungoo may have meant ‘Yankalilla in the south’, or perhaps ‘southern place [clan territory?]

at Yankalilla’. Wyatt recorded “*Patparno, Patpungga: Rapid Bay*”¹¹³; and this, being a readily available source, has thereafter been taken as fact by most writers.

Between them these sites cover a 25-km stretch from the cape to Carrickalinga, with several bays separated by rugged hills. It is not likely to be a duplicated local site name.

By 1840 close observers such as second Protector Moorhouse had recorded the word as a name for the southern ‘tribe’ “*from Mt Terrible to Rapid Bay*”¹¹⁴: Clearly the word was used as a collective reference to the *Patpa-meyunna*, ‘southern peoples’¹¹⁵. The earlier sources seem to show that it could likewise be used¹¹⁶ in referring collectively to the ‘southern lands’ including the remote and

¹⁰⁸ Teichelmann and Schürmann’s publication glossed it incorrectly as ‘*to the south*’.

¹⁰⁹ In one of them only the name was included, ‘Patbunga’ misprinted as ‘Oatbunga’ (Hack 1837 in Watson 1838, :18).

¹¹⁰ “*A small and safe boat harbour, a little to the NW of Cape Jervis, called by the natives ‘Pat Bungar’*”, Morphett 1836, :6.

¹¹¹ “*The Boat Harbor between Patbunga and Rapid Bay*”, Samuel Stephens letter to John Morphett 14/5/1838, in ‘Reports Of Country Lands’, BRG 42/51, State Library of SA.

¹¹² “*It is situate at the west point of St Vincents Gulf..... It is on the sea coast; there is a long sandy beach with three rivers*”: Amery 1996, :40.

¹¹³ Wyatt 1879, :179.

¹¹⁴ Moorhouse Report 14/1/1840.

¹¹⁵ This usage of *Patpangga* was later picked up by Tindale as what he called a ‘clan’ or ‘horde’ name.

¹¹⁶ – perhaps as a synonym for *Patpa-yerta* (= Teichelmann’s *padbayata*)?

scantily-used Cape. But it was not a specific site name; all of the untrained collectors had misunderstood the subtleties of their dialogues.

Despite Kalloongoo and Brock's 'king', the case remains rather indecisive whether *Patpangga* or *Kawandilla* were place-names, strictly speaking¹¹⁷. And even if they were, we cannot be completely sure of the clan boundaries, nor that the place referents coincided with them; so the extent of both will also probably remain both large and imprecise.

.....

¹¹⁷ There is here a linguistic area needing clarification. Were Kaurna compass points with locatives normally used in this way? Could they be used to refer to both place and people? We have already seen how *marrarta* (= *Mari-yerta*) may have referred to the land of the *Mari-meyunna*. Were the *Kawanda-meyunna* sometimes called *Kawandilla-meyunna*? and the *Patpa-meyunna* sometimes *Patpangga-meyunna*? *Padbaarta* was *padbayata* (= *patpa-yerta*). Was *kawarta* (glossed as 'northerly') actually a similar abbreviation of *Kawanda-yerta*, 'north country', and usable as a synonym for *Kawandilla*, 'north place'? For *marrarta*, *padbaarta*, *padbayata* and *kawarta* see Teichelmann MS 1857.

SUMMARY:

Keeping in mind the many traps and difficulties I have outlined, we will not expect to achieve certainty about many of the surviving place-names in the long-settled areas of Australia. Their validity in the original culture, the exact location and significances of their *places*, and the range of meanings and referents (in language, geography, society or story) of their *names*, may very often have to remain uncertain or unknown.

My project area – from Adelaide to Encounter Bay – is fortunate because it has two very good linguistic sources and a relatively well-documented history. But even here we have to be very careful to avoid old assumptions and question the misinformation of the past, some of which may have entered into contemporary Aboriginal discourse.

There is no way to do this but by rigorously pursuing the ideal as far as the records will allow: the elusive historical ideal in which a good listener spent time with an Aboriginal informant who was speaking *the relevant* language and living *that* culture on *that* land; and by questioning with equal rigour the authority of all records which cannot demonstrate or imply the ideal, whether they come from settler analyses or from later or ‘foreign’ Aboriginal sources.

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POSTSCRIPT 1: politics.

Place-names tend to be used as evidence in the politics of Native Title disputes. This paper should give some idea how fragmentary and debatable the evidence can be in these regions which were settled early, quickly and densely; and therefore how shaky the grounds may be when the names are used as evidence for those European-style lines on the map. Around Adelaide many Aboriginal people talk about ‘shared border-country’ instead of neat lines.

POSTSCRIPT 2: giving it back.

In this work on a patch of land which I love because I grew up walking and bicycle-riding on it, I am trying to

- rediscover its ancient truth;
- give back to its first people whatever I can retrieve of what they lost;
- and encourage them in both reclaiming and sharing their connection with it.

Maybe in a future together we will deface and obliterate this land a little less than in the past.

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