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A heritage dictionary

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Carl Strehlow's comparative dictionary manuscript is a unique item of Australian cultural heritage: it is a large collection of circa 7,600 Aranda, 6,800 Loritja [Luritja]¹ and 1,200 Dieri to German entries compiled at the beginning of the twentieth century at the Hermannsburg mission in central Australia. It is an integral part of Strehlow's ethnographic work on Aboriginal cultures that his editor Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, a German armchair anthropologist, published as *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* (Strehlow 1907–20) in Frankfurt. Strehlow and his editor had planned to publish a language study that consisted of a comparative dictionary and grammar of the languages, both for their linguistic significance and to facilitate more sophisticated readings of the many Aranda and Loritja texts they had published.

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1 'Loritja' is Carl Strehlow's rendering of this language name and 'Luritja' is the preferred contemporary spelling. The spelling 'Loritja' is used in the context of Strehlow's heritage dictionary and 'Luritja' when referring to this Western Desert language in a contemporary context.

Source: Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

At the turn of the twentieth century it was common for German scholars who were interested in philology, such as Carl Strehlow and his editor, to collect original texts and compile grammars and dictionaries for the comprehensive documentation and description of languages. Strehlow's comparative Aranda, Luritja and Dieri to German dictionary is the only vocabulary among many attributed to him that has a clearly identifiable purpose. Its primary functions were to describe the Aranda and Luritja languages and to interpret the Indigenous textual materials he had elicited from his Aboriginal informants.

Its comparative component was to illustrate theoretical points made by the emerging *Kulturkreislehre* (culture circle theory), and to demonstrate that Aranda and Luritja were two different languages and as complex as any other languages in the world (see Chapter 4).

The Aranda and Luritja terms and derivatives relate to mythology, flora and fauna, kinship, ceremonial proceedings, material culture and social life. Although Aranda was the core language, the body of Luritja terms reaches circa 90 per cent coverage of the Aranda terms, while the circa 1,200 Dieri words seem simply to have been added on, because he knew the Dieri language from his previous posting at Lake Killalpaninna in South Australia. The dictionary contains a substantial amount of vocabulary, but it does not encompass all the words collected by Carl Strehlow. Not included are hundreds of place names, personal names and some specialist ceremonial terms that he recorded in his ethnography, held at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs, and, it appears, some terms that he recorded after the completion of the dictionary manuscript.²

Strehlow's linguistic work is of great significance for the conservation of language as well as historically and anthropologically, because it probably represents the largest and most comprehensive wordlist compiled in Australia during the early stages of contact. It is a unique documentary record and an important primary source for Luritja and Aranda speakers of whom there are several thousand today. Both languages are spoken in homes and taught in schools in central Australia, but they are nevertheless quite vulnerable.

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2 Carl Strehlow's materials are held at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs, as well as in the Lutheran Archives and Barr Smith Library in Adelaide.

The reasons for presenting this work as a heritage dictionary—that is, as an exact transcription of the original form of the handwritten manuscript—are to follow the Western Aranda people's wishes and to maintain its historical authenticity (Kenny 2017b: 278). There is a history of reworking parts of this dictionary, extracting from it and updating its orthography without indicating who made these changes and why. Some of these versions, in particular the attempts by P.A. Scherer (1940s or 1950s) and G.O. Liebchen³ (1980s), have fed into contemporary work without being referenced. To clarify these previous uses and make this early work available as a reliable resource that can be reworked transparently, the original form is likely to prove indispensable for future projects.

Thus, this transcription has been kept as close as is possible to the original handwritten manuscript—no amendments have been made to spellings, stresses or diacritics, even if they seemed inconsistent. The only additions to this dictionary are English glosses for the Aranda, Luritja and Dieri entries. Most words in Kempe's first collection of Aranda words with circa 1,750 words (Kempe 1891a), the *Western Arrarnta Analytical Dictionary* with circa 2,000 entries (Oberscheidt 1991), the *Introductory Dictionary of Western Arrernte* (Breen et al. 2000)⁴ with circa 2,000 words and the *Western Arrarnta Picture Dictionary* (Roennfeldt 2006)⁵ with circa 580 words have been crosschecked with Carl Strehlow's information, because the words in these dictionaries are in the public domain and have been confirmed and illustrated by contemporary speakers. This process of crosschecking also contributed to making sure that restricted words have been excluded.

However, the most important factor to be able to bring this work into the present was the detailed collaboration with senior Aranda and Luritja people, to both inform them about their heritage and to include

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3 G.O. Liebchen was a prisoner of the H.M. Prison in Brisbane. He grew up in Germany and offered to translate Carl Strehlow's work, because he was a German speaker and had gone to a 'Gymnasium' (a demanding German secondary school). He wrote to T.G.H. Strehlow that he had been a 'proprietor of an Artefact Shop in Surfers Paradise Qld., dealing in aboriginal and Papua New Guinean artefacts. On the 26. Sept. 1977 I was sentenced to 4 ½ years imprisonment for burglary which gives me the time necessary to undertake the translation' (Letter from G.O. Liebchen to T.G.H. Strehlow, 26 November 1977). After T.G.H. Strehlow's death, his widow took the offer up.

4 Among Breen's main informants were Pastor Eli Rubuntja (now deceased) and Gregory Armstrong Senior as well as Sylvester Renkeraka (now deceased); Breen generally worked with senior Western Arrernte people from the Iwupataka Aboriginal Land Trust and Alice Springs town camps.

5 Roennfeldt worked with members of the communities of Ntaria, Ipolera, Gilbert Springs, Kulpitarra, Undarana, Red Sand Hill, Old Station and other outstations.

their knowledge to at least some degree. After I had transcribed and to some degree translated most of the German glosses in the handwritten manuscript, I worked with a small group of speakers who are fluent in both Aranda and Luritja on the translation into English. We worked through the list discussing approximations for the meanings of both the Aranda and Luritja terms that they recognised. People working with me on Carl Strehlow's unpublished dictionary manuscript (1909) call its content *ankatja*⁶ *inguia* 'old language',⁷ *ankatja ekarlta* 'strong language' that has 'heavy' words and *ankatja ekarlta* 'hard language'—meaning the language of the 'old people', their ancestors. This 'real old language' is distinguished from 'church language' and 'modern language', which is sometimes called *ankatja lyartinya* 'today's language'.

It was often difficult to find an English gloss, because some words were not known, others seemed familiar or similar to known words but the specific form of the word was unclear or the spelling did not provide an accurate pronunciation guide due to under- or over-differentiation of sounds that made words unrecognisable. Although Strehlow tried to systematically and consistently employ an orthography that he called 'continental'⁸ (Kenny 2013: 98), unsurprisingly, he was unable to capture all sound distinctions adequately. It takes quite some work to interpret this resource, as Rhonda Inkamala remarks, but at the same time the very process of working through this type of material can enrich people's understanding of their culture and heritage.

On those occasions when no meaning could be worked out, I was asked what the German gloss meant; often it was decided to use the direct translation from the German as the English gloss or it was slightly altered. The German glosses provide sometimes only part of the semantic range of a word that may be specific and/or metaphorical in the context it is used in Strehlow's publications (Strehlow 1907–20). Some of the English glosses are therefore also incomplete, while others are more extensive than the German glosses. It is a difficult task to find a one-to-one translation from one language to the other, and even more so when the underlying cultures are very different, such as are Arandic and English cultures. During the

6 See in this dictionary *ankatja* (Wort [word], Sprache [language]; auch 'Märchen, Fabel, Mythe' [fairy tale, fable, myth]).

7 *Ngketye* (language, word, speech), *ingkuweye* (old), *ikerlte* (strong, hard) in common Arandic Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) orthography (Breen et al. 2000).

8 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 13 December 1906 (SH-SP-7-1).

search for English glosses, the risk of publishing words that might have been gender restricted and what the old people might have meant were often discussed, and consequently some words have been taken out.

The orthography of Western Aranda was discussed at length, indeed it was more often discussed than aspects of meaning during group consultations. The spelling system of Western Aranda has undergone more changes than any other Arandic language variety and is highly politicised (see Kenny 2017b). This is, for example, reflected in the many spellings of the name of this Arandic dialect that became known as Aranda and more specifically today as ‘Western Aranda’ or ‘Tjoritja Aranda’. Over the past 130 years of the Western Aranda’s contact history the spelling systems of their Arandic dialect that were developed by the Lutheran missionaries and T.G.H. Strehlow have been taught in at least seven different variations due to frequent revisions and additionally by the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in a phonemic system called the common Arandic orthography. In the contact history of the Aranda, the Lutheran missionaries played a significant role. Their colonial involvement included, among other changes, a Lutheran inscription on the Aranda language that they achieved by (i) codifying this language in multiple orthographies, (ii) semantic changes to key terms (e.g. *altjira*, *kutungulu*) and (iii) the reduction of vocabulary (also partly the result of the sedentarisation at the mission due to the pastoral encroachment) by discouraging and limiting many cultural practices. For example, while Strehlow recorded over 40 terms for different types of spirits, nearly all of them are not used and instead these spirits are referred to with the general term *pmara kutata*,⁹ meaning spirit of the land (Kenny 2004a, 2004b).

The early Lutheran missionaries at Hermannsburg A.H. Kempe (between 1879 and 1891) and then Carl Strehlow (between 1894 and 1922) used a fairly uniform orthography and interpreted the sound system of the Aranda language, which resulted in some spelling inconsistencies caused by over- and under-differentiations of sounds; also, later orthographies for this Arandic language variety tried to capture these sounds accurately. Despite its limitations, Carl Strehlow’s orthography was used into the 1970s, as is evidenced in letters and postcards written by Aranda people that have survived. They are read by Aranda speakers today although some older words are not recognised, but these can be looked up in this dictionary.

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9 This term may also be spelled *tmara kutata* or *pmere kwetethe*.

Harmanburg August 20 1911
 Mr. Strehlow
 Djina hankinjai Nona (pipa)
 kala enaka pipa nananga ta
 ngana dankilama Inkakainukai
 Kuna knara ukabuma hina biluka
 brandilama kurka ntjara Endura
 n. Kuna sala ukabuntja mara onlara
 ma ndakina katja unkuariga narira
 ma etna ~~erari~~ ar kamanapia tunga
 tla lenala Kuna lata kala wuri
 tala narirama sama itja kwatja
 kurka wara elbanda Etnema ta
 wuda Endalelana Inkata hankintja
 * Kukai lata Exilla * kala nari
 rama ntjara endura itja etna Anka
 tja tltjiraka etja kaljtirama etna
 wara ukabuma wara Mana ilku
 ma ta wuda indalelana Kungskaka
 wura eluka era menda kakala
 na Kando enkaxaka tjua endura
 Narirama
 Lidia Maria tarala
 Nanikuta Enainama
 jinga ~~sa~~ nama Jakobus

Figure 5: Letter written by Jakobus to Carl Strehlow using the phonetic Mission Orthography for the Aranda language, 20 August 1911.

Source: ARA 1911-21-1, Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

There are a number of Arandic orthographies in use currently. The development of the orthography of Western Aranda is atypical within those of other Australian languages, because it is the result of its unique historical circumstances. Most languages that were documented in the early contact period are not spoken or written anymore, and most of those that are spoken and written today were codified when modern phonemic systems had become the standard. The Western Aranda people, unlike many other groups, have continued to speak and write their language since contact and have been exposed to three quite different orthographies within this short time period that are associated with different ideologies.

Figure 6: Aranda children and Carl Strehlow at the Hermannsburg mission school, circa 1902/03.

Source: SRC 07791, Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

Initially it was proposed to include two of the commonly used modern phonemic orthographies in this dictionary. The use of modern Arandic orthographies by some young Western Aranda who were and are taught the common Arandic orthography at the Yipirinya School in Alice Springs and others who are exposed to Roennfeldt's recent version of the Finke River Mission Orthography at Hermannsburg suggested an inclusive approach. Such an approach would have allowed people who are familiar with one of the modern phonemic orthographies to move between the

different spelling systems. However, after many discussions since 2012 with the Western Aranda, they decided that they wanted a heritage dictionary with only Carl Strehlow's spellings that reflects their history and identity, rather than converting to or adding spellings in the modern orthographies. This avoids the issues that communities face when having to devise modern spellings for the many words of Aranda and Luritja in the dictionary that are not recognised today, and the exact pronunciation of which cannot be accurately determined from Strehlow's spelling. It also avoids having to tackle the fraught politics of orthography, which are mainly the result of the colonial involvement of the Lutheran mission at Hermannsburg and that cause some conflict in the community.

The present volume is both a valuable heritage item and a linguistic resource for the Aboriginal community as well as for those involved with teaching and developing dictionary projects. Comprehensive dictionaries for Western Aranda and some Luritja language-varieties are yet to be produced—and this document can be of great assistance in their development. At the same time, it is of considerable interest to linguists, particularly those interested in language change. Strehlow often makes remarks about words in footnotes of his published work indicating that already in his time his informants considered some terms as 'old'. Often when words were not recognised during consultations and the German translation was considered, I was offered alternative ways of how people express that particular concept. Some words are still used, but in different contexts or have made semantic shifts (Austin-Broos 2010; Green 2012; Kenny 2013). There are also further sets of vocabularies (e.g. Kempe 1891a; T.G.H. Strehlow n.d.) that were collected before and after Strehlow senior's time that can be compared with this collection of words and allow the development of an extensive Western Aranda dictionary.

To assist communities, and other readers, in the ongoing task of interpreting the document, this volume includes a brief guide to finding pronunciations from Strehlow's spelling and a more extensive discussion in David Moore's chapter. Following the essays that contextualise this comparative work ethnohistorically and linguistically are the user guides to the pronunciation of the Arandic and Luritja words in Carl Strehlow's orthography and the dictionary entries. In Chapters 2 and 3, Rhonda Inkamala and Mark Inkamala write about the contemporary significance of this dictionary for Western Aranda people. In Chapter 4, I outline

the contact history of the Aranda and Luritja, Carl Strehlow's life in central Australia, and the content of his ethnographic manuscripts, their philosophical and theoretical setting and some of their linguistic aspects.

John Henderson's linguistic analysis in Chapter 5 shows the linguistic work and thought that went into this comparative dictionary and what potential it offers for the study of these languages today, including more wide-ranging historical dictionaries for both Arandic and Western Desert languages. He discusses the lexicographical achievement in Strehlow's work outlining the coverage, the balance of detail, the morphology (i.e. derivation, compounding, inflection) and semantics of this compilation, and discusses some of the limitations of Strehlow's dictionary.

David Moore addresses in Chapter 6 the difficulties of developing writing systems for Arandic languages and Carl Strehlow's use of what he has coined the 'Mission Orthography' that was first used by A.H. Kempe. Moore explores how the early Lutheran missionaries at Hermannsburg mission interpreted the sound systems of the Indigenous languages and produced a practical orthography for community use. He shows that the missionaries took a considered approach, which was informed by the best practices of that time, but which by modern standards resulted in spelling inconsistencies. Finally, he shows how the modern orthographies of these languages emerged to capture sounds in a more sophisticated way and discusses the phoneme in detail. A phoneme expresses the sound differences in a given language that are significant because they differentiate the words of the language, abstracting away from minor sound differences that do not. In an ideal phonemic orthography, there would be a one-to-one correspondence between the graphemes and phonemes.

The dictionary manuscript has remained unpublished until now due to a number of complicated historical and personal circumstances of the main characters involved with the dictionary.

hpa gopa bagiastru sabu-luasakmal) L. G., 1-46)
(nou sar bagiastru)
wasabangulu sarini

~~x~~ wottilberama Opaw spigaw (Günz, Kfar.)	~~x~~ wottilberama
wulakawulerama gatanbau (ou arian)	~~x~~ wianururingani
~~x~~ wulbarollama inkotaiyau (in Okepi)	~~x~~ turbiturbiini
~~x~~ wulama ungfinin, pifaw (int)	ura kulini
wulonja Gafifi	urakulenta
~~x~~ wulmura mawu Göt.	wolbmara,
wulja hi mit istt lufayfau (Kfar.)	ma kulini
~~x~~ wulgankura = 10000 (Kfar.)	ma kulini
~~x~~ wulja - penunja - Isanaw - Gufpawitar.	ma kulini
wurbaunga jallot, wofa, (winge)	nauwunguka,
~~x~~ wuma joraw	~~x~~ kulini
wunama joraw	ma kulini
~~x~~ wupawama joraw	~~x~~ kulini
~~x~~ wulontmanama joraw	~~x~~ kulini
~~x~~ wumbea joraw, jorawitar, wumbe,	~~x~~ aranka
wumbetama joraw maraw	arantasiini
~~x~~ wumbuma bamanau	~~x~~ ngara kambani
ura wumbuma oas urambiama	wara kambani
inb biniar bamanau.	
wungaua jallot (joraw), jallot (joraw) joraw	purca
wurjilba ringafallau (joraw) joraw	kebula
(joraw)	
wura joraw, joraw	mai!
nga wura erai! in joraw joraw	nuntu mai nauce
wurba flat, nift hif (Kfar.)	julka
wuranwilama wufpaw, Isanaw (Kfar.)	gingani
~~x~~ wurinja Wint.	~~x~~ wolba.
~~x~~ wirupungerela lama joraw	~~x~~ patanpatantat
(joraw) joraw	
~~x~~ wurinjalawuka joraw	~~x~~ wolbapuru.
wumbaunga joraw (joraw) joraw	okirokiri
(joraw) joraw	
wurinjalawuka joraw	wolbapuru,
(joraw) joraw	

Terra Kiri bamanau 15. Dec. 1909.

Figure 7: Last page of handwritten dictionary manuscript, 'Beendet am 23. Aug. 1906' (Completed on 23 August 1906) and 'Korrektur beendet am 15. Dec. 1909' (Corrections completed on 15 December 1909).

Source: Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs.

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