

SUSPICIONS OF THE SACRED

– AUSTRALIAN OBJECTS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTION OF THE
GEORG AUGUST UNIVERSITY GÖTTINGEN

Funded by the German Lost Art Foundation
Project ID: KK_KU02_2021
Duration: 01.08.2021 - 31.01.2022

Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology
and the Ethnographic Collection
Georg August University Goettingen
Theaterstrasse 14
37073 Göttingen

Project collaborator: Josefine Neef, M.A.
josefine.neef@uni-goettingen.de
Project Manager: Dr. Michael Kraus
mkraus@sowi.uni-goettingen.de
Date: 31.01.2022
Note on citation: Neef, Josefine (2022) Suspicions of the Sacred – Australian Objects
in the Ethnographic Collection of the Georg August University
Göttingen – Project Report.
Available online at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/663909.html>

Table of Contents

0. Summary	3
1. Introduction/project presentation.....	3
2. Brief presentation of the examined objects	4
3. Sacred, sensitive, secret — shifting perceptions	8
4. The collectors and (possible) chains of provenance	10
4.1 Clement	11
4.1.2 Kruger.....	13
4.2 Speyer	14
4.3 Kegel.....	15
4.3.2 Abarbanell	16
4.4 Krebs	17
4.5 Ströder	18
4.5.2 Yuwati.....	19
5. Final Remarks	19
Annex	22
Updated list of potentially sensitive Australian objects in the Ethnographic Collection of the Georg August University Göttingen based on index card and database entries	22
Unpublished Sources.....	28
Bibliography	28

0. Summary

The Ethnographic Collection of the Georg August University Göttingen includes almost 300 objects from Australia. Of these items, 15 are classified as "tjurunga" and others as potentially sacred and secret objects.¹ In the course of the present project, funded by the German Lost Art Foundation as a "short-term project," further "potential aspects of the sacred" of ten of these objects were examined more closely. For this purpose, both the files on these objects were viewed and their provenance examined while at the same time traditional categorizations and attributions as 'sacred' and 'secret' were questioned. The goal of this analysis was to bundle currently accessible information in preparation for an "informed dialogue" with members of the communities of origin and to obtain regional expertise in cooperation with Australian partner institutions.

Since Aboriginal tradition does not permit the public distribution of images of secret/sacred objects, the present report does not include any illustrations. An illustrated appendix was nevertheless compiled, which can be made available on request to legitimately interested parties.

1. Introduction/project presentation

Last year, the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen carried out research on tjurunga from Australia as part of a grant from the German Lost Art Foundation (KK_KU01_2020). Impetus for this research was an inquiry on the part of the Australian AIATSIS in 2019. Both our own research as well as discussions with external experts (including Olaf Geerken, PAESE project) made it clear that an examination of the objects identified on the basis of current (= traditional) Collection-immanent classifications as secret/sacred objects is insufficient. The existing classifications themselves must be critically reexamined.

Objects thus came to the fore that are categorized as bullroarers in the collection or whose attribution changed over time. The examined tjurunga match both the form and the original use of bullroarers. The problem of unrecognized, ambiguous or even incorrect categorizations became evident elsewhere as well, which is why other objects from Australia that were suspected of being "sacred" and thus subject to taboos were examined. These included two "messenger sticks", one of which was later categorized as a bullroarer, as well as a wood carving that served at least temporarily to house a spirit.

¹ Information on these holdings was communicated to Australia following a request from Lyndall Ley, Executive Director of AIATSIS (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) on 26 March 2019. Inventory catalogs for the Ethnographic Collection have been available in printed form since the 1980s. These catalogs were made available online as .pdf files in 2019 (<https://www.unigoettingen.de/de/stellungnahmen+%e2%80%93+transparenz/617641.html>). Within the scope of the available resources, files for objects from the Ethnographic Collection are also imported into the online collection portal of the Georg-August-University of Göttingen (sammlungen.uni-goettingen.de) and into the online database of the joint provenance research project PAESE in Lower Saxony (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>). A dossier on the tjurunga in the Ethnographic Collection is available online in both German and English at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/stellungnahmen+%e2%80%93+transparenz/617641.html>

In accordance with the project goals, existing attributions were verified and specified on the basis of a closer examination of collector and object biographies. The redetermination of the provenance of these objects aims to include well-founded information in the dialogue with Australian partner institutions.

Note: The following pages contain names and voices of deceased persons.

2. Brief presentation of the examined objects

The examination of the literature and the viewing of existing documents on the Ethnographic Collection led to the conclusion that significantly more potentially "sacred" objects, to which according to indigenous tradition only chosen individuals should have access, are to be found in Göttingen than previously thought. These items will be presented in the following. Their respective categorizations will also be discussed.

In the literature, the term bullroarer is understood to signify ritual objects made of wood with an elongated-oval to pointed form. One end has a hole so that a rope can be attached to the object, by means of which a bullroarer can be swung and thus create sounds. Bullroarers are widespread throughout most of Australia, with regional differences in whether and how these are engraved or painted (Schlatter 1985:128). The sounds produced when swinging the bullroarer are understood as being the voices of ancestors and spirits (Schlatter 1985:125). Bullroarers are used in various secret rituals, such as the initiation and circumcision of boys. The "voices of the ancestors" are used there to announce the presence of the men to women and the non-initiated and to discourage them from approaching the ritual site (Kolig 1995:36).

According to Gerhard Schlatter (1985:125), bullroarers are equal to tjurunga in their meaning as an embodiment of the ancestors. They are also classified in academia as so-called "secret/sacred objects," that is, as objects that are considered sacred by a certain group and whose use or even mere viewing is subject to strict regulations and taboos (Anderson 1995). The German Museums Association (2021:19) thus lists bullroarers as an example of culturally sensitive collection items. Eva Raabe (2018:136) distinguishes three classes of sanctity and secrecy for Australia, assigning tjurunga and bullroarers to the same class. Schindlbeck (2007:51) and Kolig (1995:30) point out that bullroarers and tjurunga do not form two distinct object categories, but rather tend to overlap in use, meaning and design. On the one hand, a tjurunga with a hole can be used as a bullroarer while on the other hand tjurunga exist that do not function as bullroarers and undecorated bullroarers exist that are not tjurunga. In any case, this group of objects are sensitive cultural goods the examination of which should be prioritized (cf. Deutscher Museumsbund 2021).

Seven of the objects considered here are classified as bullroarers in the collection's documents. The data recorded on the respective index cards is briefly presented in the following:

One object in the collection identified as a bullroarer was acquired from Arthur Speyer. The documented date of purchase is imprecise, i.e. "around 1930".

- The object with inventory number **Oz 1497** is a 64 cm long elliptical wooden board, the surface of which is decorated with engraved line ornaments and strings of beads in notched grooves. Black paint has been rubbed into the grooves. One end of the object is pierced with a string twisted out of – so the index card – human hair.

Four further objects classified as bullroarers were sold to the collection by Lore Kegel on 5 July 1955.

- The object inventoried under the number **Oz 2894** is 57.5 cm long, 16 cm wide and made of dark brown wood. Both sides bear rough grooves as ornamentation. Zigzag lines are painted on one side with reddish-brown paint. There is a hole in the object on one of the pointed ends. Hickmann, Mascher and Weiß identified a fracture at the lower end and a damaged tip in the course of their examination of the object on 13 August 1981. When this damage occurred is not known.

- **Oz 2895** is a 71.5 cm long and 3.8 cm wide board with tapered ends with ornamental engravings on both sides. According to the object's index card, the ornamentation was identified as Western Australian at some time after its purchase. Who made this classification and on what basis cannot be reconstructed based alone on the existing archival material. A label is attached to the object that bears the number 44 or 77. The object has a hole at the top for attaching a string.

- A shorter object made of dark brown wood was provided the inventory number **Oz 2896**. It is 41 cm long and 3 cm wide. One side of the flat wood is decorated with notched grooves. These form a striped pattern that runs in changing directions across the body of the object. In their examination of the object on 13 August 13 1981, Hickmann, Mascher and Weiß described the ornamentation as "colored blue". Photographs of the object that were taken later show no such coloring. The object has a hole on one of the tapered ends for attaching a string.

- The inventory number **Oz 2897** describes an oval-shaped object made of almost black wood, 27.3 cm long and 6.7 cm wide. One side features longitudinal grooves interrupted by decorative angular bands. One of the rounded ends has a hole for threading a string through it. During the musicological examination by Hickmann, Mascher and Weiß in 1981, a fracture at the lower end of the object was documented.

One object from this group was bought from Richard Krebs from Kassel on 9 August 1958.

- The item inventoried as **Oz 3097** is a dark brown piece of wood, 31.5 cm long and 6.7 cm wide. According to the index card, the engravings resemble those on a spear thrower acquired from Clement (see below) that can be attributed to the Ngarluma language group. It is unclear whether a similar provenance can be attributed to this object on this basis; nonetheless this is the case on the index card, where Kimberley is entered as presumed region of origin.

Another object from this group was sold to the collection by Emile Clement in 1928:

- **Oz 1494** is an oblong object made of wood, bored on one end and fitted with a thread. On the object's index card the thread is identified as "European thread" and therefore possibly added to the object later (e.g. by the collector). The flat wood is painted red and white and has line and circle ornamentations on both sides. It is 33 cm long and 5.2 cm wide. The files on the purchase of Clement's collection include a drawing of the object.

The aim of the project was to achieve a more precise classification for these bullroarers on the basis of collector and object biographies, since their particular importance is undoubtably high. Furthermore, the problem of ambiguous or even incorrect categorizations became also evident for other objects in the collection where the suspicion has arisen, that they might also be "sacred" and subject to particular taboos and therefore require additional investigation.

The two objects with the inventory numbers Oz 661 and Oz 662 represent a special aspect of the object group of bullroarers. Both are classified in the collection's inventory catalog as "messenger sticks". One of these (Oz 662) is moreover categorized in the musicological study by Hickmann, Mascher and Weiß as a "bullroarer/whirling aerophone". Although the two objects are very similar in shape and design, the other object (Oz 661) was not identified by the musicologists as such. Both objects were sold to the collection by Clement in 1928, together with the bullroarer with the inventory number Oz 1494.

- The wooden object inventoried as **Oz 661** is 15 cm long and 5 cm wide. It is colored red and has linear ornamentations on both sides. The collector reported that the object came from the language group "Gnalluma" (today's spelling: Ngarluma) from northern Western Australia. The collector dubbed the object a "passport" and wrote that it "serves as identification."

- The inventory number **Oz 662** refers to a wooden object, 18.5 cm long and 3.5 cm wide, which is also colored red. It has longitudinal and transverse grooves on both sides and is bored through at one end. The collector here also identified the object as coming from the language group "Gnalluma" (today's spelling: Ngarluma) from the north of Western Australia and he also described it as a "passport".

The distinction between messenger sticks and bullroarers is difficult to make in individual cases without knowledge of the context of the communities of origin. However, it is of some relevance for dealing with such objects, since messenger sticks can be considered publicly accessible, while bullroarers – as discussed above – belong to the realm of secret/sacred rituals. Messenger sticks – also called letter sticks – were once and continue to be widespread throughout Australia (cf. Kelly 2018) and are used for communication between groups often scattered over large parts of the country (Yolngu Nations Association 2016). They are hand-sized, made of wood, carved or branded and in part painted. The ornamentation is often not as detailed and ornate as with bullroarers, although there are exceptions here too. This means of communication can also take on special forms with a different cultural relevance:

Emile Clement (1903:9, plate IV), for example, describes objects that can be interpreted as messenger sticks that served as a kind of invitation to specific, sometimes secret, rituals. Some messenger sticks also play a prominent role in contemporary Australian politics: members of the Yolngu clans living in the region known as Arnhem Land in northern Australia presented a messenger stick to the Australian Prime Minister for the first time in 1998 (Trudgen 2011) as proof of their independence and their ties to the land on which they live. To further their efforts for recognition, four more Yolngu Nation messenger sticks were presented to various political institutions in 2016 (Yolngu Nations Assembly 2016). In addition to their historical significance, these four messenger sticks also stand out because of their coloring and the use of traditional patterns associated with the ancestors. The question of whether the items inventoried under Oz 661 and Oz 662 are messenger sticks and their potential relevance is discussed further in Section 4.1.

In the run-up to the project, one object in the Ethnographic Collection was also identified which was not classified as a bullroarer, but whose description in the available archive material suggested considerable cultural significance and might be suspected of a degree of sacredness. It was sold to the Ethnographic Collection by Karl Wilhelm Ströder on 1 September 1979.

- **Oz 3580** is a 45 cm tall wooden figurine of a person. The sculpture is painted with a dark brown base tone and patterns in white and two lighter shades of brown. A turtle is painted on the figurines neck. Brown human hair is glued on the figurines head, and the upper arms and abdomen are decorated with feathers in shades of red, white, and yellow. The collector stated that it came from Milingimbi in north-eastern Arnhem Land and that an individual named Yuwati made it. The documents show that Ströder acquired the sculpture before 16 June 1971. Furthermore, Ströder provided information on the meaning of the sculpture, as it was told to him in Australia:

"This carved human figure, capped with human hair, is to house the spirit of the deceased Birrkili person until the time of the hollow log mortuary rites. The painting recorded here (which is painted on the body prior to burial) is totemic design for rocks (cross-hatched triangles) and clouds (red and blue triangles)."

According to the collector, the ornamentation of this object is not only associated it with a clan and specific ancestral beings but the object itself was also temporarily the seat of the spirit of a deceased person — or at least was created for this purpose. Accordingly, it can very well be an object of great cultural significance not only for the relatives of the deceased, but also for all persons connected to the ancestral traditions represented by the rock and cloud symbols. The connection to the "hollow log mortuary rite" — a ritual that is in part secret (cf. Cole 1979:45–47) — suggests that this figure is also regarded as secret/sacred. According to Macario Garcia and Lee Bloch (2018:28), in Arnhem Land, sculptures like these are often used in rite of passage rituals — that is, a transition from one life status to a new one. In rituals that accompany the transition from life to death, clan-specific patterns are applied to the body of the deceased, to their coffin, and to sculptures to commemorate the deceased person.

Garcia and Bloch describe further that the clan designs used are very closely linked to the identity of a member of the Yolngu groups, so that they can even serve as "decoys for malicious wandering spirits" (Garcia and Bloch 2018:29). As cited above, Ströder and the source for this information describe the function of the sculpture as the temporary seat of a spirit, but unlike Garcia and Bloch, they refer to the spirit of the deceased itself. Keith Cole postulates that human figures in north-eastern Arnhem Land, where Yuwati is said to have carved this figurine, are regarded as secret/sacred objects (Cole 1979:47). However, he does distinguish between these wooden figures and the objects used in the hollow log ritual. Whether the description provided by Ströder is plausible and the use of the figure as a temporary seat of a deceased can be proven will be addressed again in section 4.5 of this dossier.

3. Sacred, sensitive, secret — shifting perceptions

After having described the selected objects and the criteria that have led to the suspicions of their sacredness the ambiguous categories 'sacred', 'secret' and 'sensitive' are to be examined more closely and the postulates developed in the course of the project will be presented.

Sensitive items in a museum collection form an overarching category that includes, among other things, human remains, objects of power and hegemony, honorifics, magical objects, as well as secret and sacred objects (Deutscher Museumsbund 2021:20). Objects whose acquisition context is unclear or unlawful can also be understood as sensitive (Brandstetter and Hierholzer 2018:13). It is important to note regional and culture-specific differences when defining or describing these broad categories more closely. The umbrella category of sensitive objects is distinguished from objects of everyday use, whereby this distinction must also be understood in culturally specific terms and as permeable as the individual object groups in them. In everyday curatorial work, sensitive objects should be treated with particular care (cf. Brandstetter and Hierholzer 2018:11-12).

Objects from Australia are generally considered sensitive if they have a connection to what is called 'dreamtime'² or to ancestral beings. Since in the world of many Aboriginal groups the origin of all objects, landscapes, natural phenomena and so on can be traced back to the migrations of ancestral beings, all objects of Aboriginal origin (strictly speaking, all objects of Australian origin) should therefore be considered sensitive (cf. Worms and Petri 1968: 136). While this, however, does not reflect the breadth of the reality of life among Australian Aborigines (cf. Erckenbrecht and Schindlbeck 2016:18), it does raise the principle question of whether objects from Australian Aborigines can be collected at all. So where should the line be drawn between sensitive and everyday Australian objects?

² The term *dreamtime* derives from a word in the Aranda languages spoken in Central Australia and is now widespread in both general and scientific usage. However, the term should be viewed critically as it tends to cast a concept from a small group of indigenous Australia over many very diverse groups. In the eyes of some Aborigines it represents a devaluation of their creation story (e.g. Garcia and Bloch 2018:4).

It should initially be noted that there exist significant regional differences among indigenous groups in Australia. For example, Christopher Anderson (1995:3) writes that many objects that are considered profane in large parts of Australia are considered sacred and secret to groups in Central Australia. Generational differences are also of particular importance. Both AIATSIS (Ley et al. 2020:19) and Helmut Petri (1966:346) among others report that many objects that were considered rather insignificant a decade or two ago now play a major role in consultations and return claims since their cultural relevance has shifted. As elsewhere, in Australia a revival of indigenous traditions can be observed; expressed, among other things, in the fact that certain groups of objects are viewed as identity-forming and as a result are sometimes reclassified as sacred and secret. With the beginning of the land rights movement at the end of the 1960s (Münnich 1996:32), many objects that show a connection to a specific area acquired a new, special status, since they could be used to underline land rights claims (cf. Peterson and Langton 1983a). Tjurunga aroused particular international interest in this context, even if their elevated status in Central Australia long predated the land rights movement. Other objects, such as bark paintings and messenger sticks, were given new meaning by the land rights movement — as already indicated in Section 2.

Recognizing sensitive Australian objects turned out to be a complex learning process in the context of this project. While the above described category of sensitive object was initially used as point of departure, it soon became clear that often enough, criteria outside this standard category system used in many collections make Australian objects sensitive. For indigenous groups in Australia, the treatment of an object in the past, its ritual use, its connection to ancestral beings as well as its painting and ornamentation play an important role in determining its status. Some objects serve a specific purpose in a secret ritual, but subsequently lose their sacred status. Other objects are used in everyday life, but when rubbed with ochre become ritual objects. Once rubbed with ochre, they for a period of time become just as sacred as other ritual objects. Cara Pinchbeck, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby (2016:14) describe objects that were specially created for the art trade that has flourished in northern Australia since at least the 1960s. Reports from other regions indicate that certain objects were only created for sale to collectors and dealers. Some of these objects, despite the intention behind their creation, are decorated with clan-specific patterns or are connected to the land and myths through their decorations and can thus acquire new functions in political negotiations (Peterson and Langton 1983b:115; Garcia and Bloch 2018:28). Thus, an object may have been created for the international art market but still have considerable cultural significance in a particular region for particular clans or families.

It is, all things considered, insufficient to label tjurunga and bullroarers as sensitive and the rest of a given Australian collection as non-sensitive. Rather, a closer look at each individual object, its history and its ornamentation, is necessary. Ideally, this will involve consultations with communities or regional/national representative bodies such as AIATSIS or the Land Councils. Due to the large number

of Australian objects in German collections and museums, trying to address all 'suspicious' objects in such consultations is likely to be very lengthy and complicated.

The secrecy rules that in Australia are often associated with the sacred status of objects are another difficulty in implementing such consultation structures with representatives of possible societies of origin. As a scholar 'from outside', it is necessary to know where an object comes from in order to know whom to show it to and with whom to talk about it. In this context, Ian Keen observes that among Australian Aborigines, 'secrecy' is less an absolute category than a question of degree. An object is not either secret or public; it has, instead, different 'levels of meaning' (Keen 1994:242) known to increasingly large groups of people. These levels of meaning include knowledge of patterns and references to land and ancestry, as well as ability and authorization to impart knowledge about the object (1994:244). Keen describes different levels of meaning of an object, ritual or song as "inside" or "outside meaning": "[O]utside could apply to a form which men were willing to perform or to display in a public forum, or to an interpretation which they were willing to give [...]" (Keen 1994:194). Accordingly, objects with a public status, such as bark paintings created for the art market, can have both an obvious – "outside" – meaning, even to the uninitiated, as well as several "secret" – "inside" – meanings. These "inside" meanings are known to varyingly small groups of people and can and may only be fully understood and passed on by a few individuals. It should therefore be possible in most cases to initially discuss more public levels of meaning in such consultations. In this process it can be established, who has knowledge about and rights to the inner levels of meaning and thus belong to the 'traditional owners'³ of the object.

The ten objects considered here represent a small selection from the inventory of Australian objects in the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen. In the course of the project further objects were found that on the basis of the criteria elucidated upon here — their ornamentation, their treatment with ochre, their potential levels of meaning or their ritual use — could be classified as potentially sensitive. A list of these objects and their key data can be found in the appendix.

4. The collectors and (possible) chains of provenance

The objects from the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen being examined were part of five separate acquisitions. Nine of the ten objects were each purchased as part of a larger acquisitions and they should thus be considered at last briefly in this context:

- In 1928, over 30 objects were bought from E. Clement from England. This purchase included ten objects that were classified as potentially sensitive before the start this project. Seven of these

³ The term 'traditional owner' is used here to do the complex ownership of knowledge, objects and land in Indigenous Australia justice. This term covers both individuals and entire groups who have rights to objects/knowledge/land (AIATSIS 2020:6).

sensitive objects were examined in more detail last year in the project "Tjurunga in the Ethnographic Collection of the Georg August University Göttingen" (Neef 2021). For this present examination, three other objects purchased from Clement are of particular interest.

- One object relevant here was probably purchased around 1930 together with 68 other objects from the Speyer family of art dealers.
- In 1955 the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen bought 53 Australian objects from the art dealer Lore Kegel for a total of DM 2120. Four of these objects have been classified as bullroarers.
- In August 1958, Richard Krebs, an antiquities dealer from Kassel sold the Ethnographic Collection another bullroarer.
- In the years 1971-1979 the Ethnographic Collection bought more than 120 objects acquired by Karl Wilhelm Ströder in New Guinea and Australia. In 1971, the wooden figurine with a human form described above and classified as sensitive came to Göttingen.

In the following, the collectors and the contexts in which they may have acquired the objects will be examined in detail.

4.1 Clement

In 1928 the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen bought an extensive collection of ethnographic objects from Australia from E. Clement from Sussex, England. This included three objects that were denominated as bullroarers. Clement and his contact with the University of Göttingen has already been dealt with in detail in a previous project since the purchase also included eight objects said to be tjurunga or „churinga“.⁴ The purchase will thus only be described here in condensed form.

A letter by Clement offering the collection to the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen can be found in the Collection archive. Accompanying the list of objects are 22 pages of sketched illustrations. Hans Plischke, who would later become director of the Institute, chose 36 objects for the Ethnographic Collection, so a letter dated 19 December 1927, and paid a total of 24 pounds 40 shillings for them (ESG SM 12: invoice dated 28. December 1927).

It is not difficult to reconstruct the life of Emile Louis Bruno Clement from West Hove in Sussex, England. The art and antiquities dealer sold to many European museums between 1896 and the 1920s. One of his first successful transactions was with the British Museum (Coates 1999: 114, 131). Clement was born in Saxony in 1844, moved to Great Britain around 1870 and died in 1928. Between 1895 and 1910 he traveled to Australia several times together with his son Adolphe Clement and amassed extensive collections of ethnographic, zoological and botanical objects to sell to European museums (The British

⁴ The project report is available under <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/648562.html>

Museum n.D.). In 1920, after a hiatus of almost ten years, Clement resumed trading in ethnographic goods, this time acquiring them from intermediaries – whom he called "agents" – who lived in north-Western Australia (Coates 1999:123, 138).

In the context of this project, it is of particular interest where the objects sold by Clement came from and where and from whom they were collected by Clement and his contacts. Clement gives the first clues as to where he collected personally in a letter to the editor from 1899, in which he claims to have visited "every native camp within a hundred miles of Roebourne" himself (Clement 1899). Roebourne is an old mining town in the western Pilbara, a region in northern Western Australia, south of the Kimberley region. According to an AIATSIS⁵ map, Roebourne is in Ngarluma country.⁶ This coincides with Clement's explanation that some objects sold to Göttingen — including the messenger sticks — came from the "Gnalluma", as Ngarluma was often spelled in the past. According to AIATSIS, Ngarluma country covers a relatively small area when compared to groups of Central Australia, east of the Dampier Peninsula on Australia's north-west coast. Many Ngarluma speakers now live in Roebourne, but are also scattered across other Pilbara towns. It is estimated that only 20 "full Ngarluma speakers" are alive today, with additional members of the group having a passive understanding of the language or identifying as Ngarluma without speaking the language (Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Center 2021).

Clement's "Ethnographical Notes on the Western-Australian Aborigines," published in 1903, contains a map showing the itinerary of his first trip to Australia in 1896-98 and the areas of some of the "tribes" in the northern part of Western Australia. In the accompanying text, Clement describes the rituals and everyday culture of the "Gnalluma tribe", which he situates around Roebourne. The catalog of objects accompanying Clement's description includes bullroarers and objects with similar functions and others that look very similar to objects in the Ethnographic Collection.

Clement thus describes several objects as being a "devil scarer" (1903:26). These are used in the context of the circumcision ritual, but also in other rituals. Clement notes that they are: "not worn in the hair but violently swung" and subsequently refers to them as "bullroarers" (1903:26). According to Clement, the objects are called "*cora*" or "*bonangharry*" in Ngarluma⁷. They serve to drive away evil spirits/ancestors: "When a member of the tribe falls ill, the *boonangharries* [...] are set in motion. [...] The *boonangharries* are swung to drive the *djuno* [evil spirit] away, as he is the cause of death" (italics in the original, Clement 1903:8). No Ngarluma bullroarers can be found in the catalog of his collection, only of other groups, among them the neighboring Yindjibarndi and Martuthunira. Plate IV of his work shows

⁵ On AIATSIS, see footnote 1. The map mentioned is available at <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia> (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2020).

⁶ Country in this context means land and waters to which an Aboriginal group or individual has cultural and spiritual ties and of which they have or claim ownership (see Ley et al. 2020:5).

⁷ Clement uses the spellings "bonangharry" (1904:26-27) and "boonangharry" (1904:8) indiscriminately.

cora/bonangbarry from different areas of Australia. Some of the objects shown (Fig. 1-3,6,10,11,16-18) are very similar in form and design to the bullroarers and tjurunga in Göttingen.

There is also an equivalent to the objects sold by Clement as "passports" in his publication. An object called a *marben* in Ngarluma is described by Clement as "passport; consisting of a cylindrical piece of yellowish wood, at both ends pointed with burnt ornamentation" (1904:25). Among other things, these *marben* serve as a license to fish in certain places and each bear a different pattern of ornamentation.

The *marben* depicted on Plate V differ significantly in form and ornamentation from each other. Two objects (Figs. 4 and 5), which according to the description are of Ngarluma origin, are divided into sections by transverse lines and are so reminiscent of the widespread tradition of the message stick or letter stick. These decorated, carved or painted wooden objects served as a medium of communication between groups in Australia, some of them widely scattered, and in doing so they took on a variety of distinct forms and designs (cf. Kelly 2018). The "passports" held in Göttingen have transverse grooves and a zigzag pattern; in contrast to the *marben* mentioned by Clements, they have no burned holes and are not divided into sections. A letter from Clement to the director of the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover Jacob Friesen dated 10 January 1927 shows that Clement was familiar with the term letter stick and used it himself to market his objects (NLMH, FB Ethnologie, Schriftenarchiv, II.1.Nr.4 Serial Nr. 53, 54, l. No. 331). The fact that in his correspondence with Göttingen a year later he referred to the objects as "passports" but not as letter sticks might suggest that from Clement's point of view they were different object categories. However, a corresponding distinction was not found in the literature reviewed outside of Clement's own work.

Since the distinction between messenger sticks, bullroarers and tjurunga lies in the details of design, use and treatment, photographic comparisons can only provide more clues but no clear evidence. In the case of the objects Oz 661 and 662 held in Göttingen, the evidence collected here suggests that these are messenger sticks/passports/letter sticks and therefore not (or no longer) sacred or secret objects. Due to their regional reference, these "profane" objects can still have a prominent cultural status today, as the example of the Yolngu Nation Lettersticks (Yolngu Nations Association 2016) shows. Their specific significance would need to be addressed in consultations with Ngarluma.

4.1.2 Kruger

One of Clements' contacts was examined in more detail in the course of this study. Ian Coates pointed out that Clement worked together with a "Mr. Kruger" from Roebourne and goes on to state that according to the Post Office Directories from 1895-1899 — comparable to telephone directories today — he was a member of the town council, barber and merchant (Coates 1999:123).

Coates' comments lead to a William Christopher Kruger, who was born around 1860 in Ahrbergen in Germany (probably as Wilhelm Kruger). According to the Western Australia State Register, he immigrated in 1894 (AU WA S61, Naturalization cards, cons3442 K07); according to a genealogical

website (Hubert 2020), he married Marin Mary Zeddi in Roebourne in 1899 and died on 22 January 1937 in Carnarvon, Western Australia. He was survived by at least one daughter - Daisy Kruger. An article about a gold brooch owned by Daisy Kruger at the Cole History Centre mentions that her father was a gold prospector and later mayor of Roebourne (Cole History Centre 2021). William Kruger is also mentioned as being mayor of Roebourne in a newspaper article from 3 October 1908 (The Northern Times 1908:4).

As mayor of a community with a large Aboriginal population, William Kruger is likely to have had extensive contacts in the region. It is conceivable that due to his social position he had significant influence and could relatively easily facilitate purchase agreements or exchanges for ethnographic objects with the residents of Roebourne. The local Karratha Public Library, which also archives newspapers (City of Karratha 2021), does not currently have a digital archive, which is why a trip to Roebourne would be necessary to find out more about the life and work of William Kruger and his connections to the local population.

4.2 Speyer

The archival documents of the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen include two lists that reference the Speyer family of art dealers: "Sammlung Speyer I" and "Sammlung Speyer II". Sixty-nine objects from Australia, North America, West Africa and New Zealand are listed there, among them a bullroarer from Western Australia (ESG SM15 1927-1935: Sammlung Speyer II). No further information can be found on the two lists; it remains unclear what they refer to and when and by whom they were made. The inventory catalog of the Ethnographic Collection, which does not include all of the objects noted on these two lists, reveals that the bullroarer here was acquired around 1930 (Schlesier, Urban, and Raabe 1988:12).

For some of the Australian objects purchased from Speyer, Alfred, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha is given as the previous owner on the lists. Son of Queen Victoria and born on 6 August 1844, the Duke was the first member of the British royal family to visit Australia in his capacity as admiral of the Royal Navy (Wikimedia 2021). Duke Alfred compiled an extensive collection of objects from the British colonies he had traveled to (cf. Schäfer et al. 2008).

The Speyer family was a well-known and well-connected family of art dealers who bought and sold ethnographic objects since 1912 at the latest (Schultz 2016:5). Beginning in 1922, Arthur Max Heinrich Speyer – born in 1894 and also known as Arthur Speyer II – became involved in the family's dealings with ethnographic objects (Schultz 2016:7). Many of Arthur Speyer II records were lost during World War II (Schlothauer 2016:24). In 1993, his son Arthur Speyer III wrote a manuscript on the history of the family's collecting activities that has to date not been published. Markus Schindlbeck (2012) provides a detailed analysis of the family's history and business dealings, focusing on their relationship to the Ethnological Museum in Berlin.

It is unclear whether Arthur Speyer II collected the bullroarer himself or whether he acquired it through intermediaries — like Duke Alfred, for example. For this specific piece, neither the acquisition period nor the place and modalities of the acquisition can be reconstructed. If the bullroarer came to Göttingen with other Australian objects via Duke Alfred, it would most likely be the oldest bullroarer in the collection and a colonial context for its acquisition can be assumed.

4.3 Kegel

On 5 July 1955 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen bought 53 objects of Australian origin from Lore Kegel for DM 2,120, including four bullroarers, four throwing clubs and an axe, which are of particular interest here due to their design and/or treatment with ochre. In the course of 1955 further purchases of objects from Oceania and Australia which are of lesser interest here were made. The archives of the Ethnographic Collection include the correspondence between Kegel and the curator accompanying each purchase. Kegel sent a letter concerning the purchase of 5 July 1955 on 20 July in which the provenance of the objects is addressed. That said, the original letter is not in the files, only a note quoting from it (ESG Sammlerakte "1.4.1955-31.3.1956"):

"During my visit to London in 1951, a man came up to me at the Caledonian Market in Bermondsey and asked if I wanted to buy a collection of Australian weapons. He took them to my hotel and I had them sent here with some other things. The man's name was Abarbanell. He used to live in Berlin and lived in the southern province Victoria for a longer period. I can unfortunately tell you no more."

The art dealer and painter Lore Kegel was born on 9 October 1901 in Düsseldorf as Lore Lessing. She was married three times, each time taking the name of her husband, and is thus known under the names Gessner and Konietzko as well (Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste 2021). She had a son with her second husband Julius Konietzko - Boris Konietzko-Kegel, who was later to become her heir. Together with Konietzko she founded an art dealership specializing in African art and undertook numerous research and collecting trips. After marrying her last husband, Georg-Arthur Kegel, she assumed sole responsibility for art dealership in 1935 and continued to run it under the name "Lore Kegel - exotische Kunst" in Hamburg (Dorn n.D.). Due to her family's Jewish origins, Lore Kegel, who had by that time made a name for herself in the art world, was expelled from the Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste (Reich Chamber of fine Art) in 1943 and expropriated. Her house in Hamburg was bombed out in World War II and the family moved to Neustadt bei Coburg until the end of the war. After the war, Lore Kegel received compensation payments and resumed her art trade (Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste 2021). Kegel was also an artist herself (cf. Sieker 1971; Kegel 1966). She died in Hamburg on 20 October 1980. The art dealership she founded was initially continued by her son Boris and today operates under the name Kegel-Konietzko & Dorn – African Art Hamburg (Dorn n.D.).

4.3.2 Abarbanell

In her letter dated 20 July 1955 cited above, Lore Kegel mentions a Mr. Abarbanell as the previous owner of the objects she had sold to the collection in Göttingen. He was said to have been from Berlin and to have spent several years living in Victoria in southern Australia.

It is most likely that Kegel was referring to Hans Abarbanell, who gained some notoriety in Australia and Great Britain. Abarbanell was born on 10 December 1909 in Stettin/Szczecin in what is today Poland (The British Museum n.D). His family settled in Berlin at the beginning of the 20th century. As a child of a Jewish family he was also persecuted during the National Socialist period in Germany. He fled to Prague in 1936 and then to Great Britain after the outbreak of war in 1939. But even there he was not safe from persecution. The British government under Winston Churchill feared an imminent invasion by the Germans; and in order to prevent the invaders finding support from within, people of German and Austrian descent who had immigrated to Great Britain were classified as "enemy aliens" or "dangerous aliens" (National Museum Australia 2021), Hans Abarbanell among them (Clark 1940). On 10 July 1940 he was taken aboard the military transport ship *Dunera* along with around 2,000 others and deported to Australia. The British government itself later admitted that this treatment of those in need of protection was a serious mistake (Mares 2018). The *Dunera* became infamous for the horrible conditions on board, including poor hygiene, inadequate supplies, overcrowding, mistreatment and so on. The ship was en route for a total of 57 days before docking in Sydney Harbor on 6 September 1940. There, a doctor who documented the catastrophic conditions was allowed on the ship. His report eventually led to the conviction of the ship's captain and several officers (Tao 2020; National Library of Australia n.D).

The passengers were disembarked in Sydney and transported by trains to internment camps in Hay, New South Wales. The prisoners there were mainly Jewish artists, musicians and intellectuals who became known in Australia as the 'Dunera Boys' for their influence on the country's culture. Most internees were released in early 1942. Some of them — including Abarbanell — then returned to Britain. The experiences of the Dunera Boys are remembered today by institutions such as the Dunera Association⁸ and the portal Internment and Beyond: Stories from the Dunera and Queen Mary.⁹ Hans Abarbanell is not mentioned in either of these sources by name.

Back in Great Britain, Abarbanell began work as a decorator in a London department store in 1945 and, together with his wife, dealt in ethnographic objects and antiques (Ben Uri Gallery and Museum 2021). In the 1960s in particular he sold several objects to the British Museum. He died in a fire in his London home in 1997. To commemorate Abarbanell and his family *Stolpersteine* were placed at Knesebeckstraße 32 in Berlin (Arns 2013).

⁸ <https://www.duneraassociation.com/dunera-boys-museum/>

⁹ <https://www.dunerastories.monash.edu>

The objects that Abarbanell sold to Kegel must therefore have been acquired during his time in Australia or through contacts established in the years after the Second World War. Kegel wrote that Abarbanell lived in Victoria and some of the objects he collected appear in fact to have come from there. The provenance of others cannot be identified and are limited a more general "Southwest Australia". As such the provenance of these objects cannot alone be clarified based on Abarbanell's biography.¹⁰

In the course of this project, it was possible to contact a distant descendant of Hans Abarbanell. However, he was only able to reconstruct the family relationship and knew little about Hans Abarbanell as such (email correspondence, 17 October 2021). In order to trace the origin of the objects that came to Göttingen from Abarbanell via Kegel independent of biographical markers, contact was made with Museums Victoria. Various museums in Melbourne, including the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, which specializes in the culture and history of the Aborigines of South Australia (Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Center 2021), have joined together there under one administrative roof. Photographs of the corresponding objects were sent to Melbourne in order to determine regionally or ethnically specific patterns and ornamentation. Due to the long lockdown in the state of Victoria and the backlog of work caused by restrictions, the colleagues from Melbourne were thus far unfortunately not able to provide any more detailed information about the objects (Nancy Ladas, email correspondence, 6 December, 2021). The cooperation will be continued and hopefully can provide further important insights in the future.

4.4 Krebs

Richard Krebs (1909-2004) was a longtime proprietor of the „Kunstkabinett“, an art and antiques dealership in Kassel. In the 1950s and 1960s the Ethnographic Collection regularly bought objects from him. Records of these transactions can be found in various files in the collection archives. That said, no record could be found for the bullroarer which according to the index card was bought on 9 August 1958 (cf. ESG Sammlerakte "1.4.1958-31.31959"). Any personal correspondence (insofar as it took place) has not been preserved. In the course of a student project, the author managed to get in touch with one of the antiques dealer's grandsons several years ago. He kindly provided the Ethnographic Collection three of his grandfather's ledgers for study and digitization, which proved to be invaluable for this present project. There one can find information on purchases and sales made by Richard Krebs in the period 1952-1991, as well as other business expenses.

For present purposes, ledger entries between 1952-1959 were examined. After 1956, non-European objects increasingly appear in the inventory of antiques, jewelry, and pewter in the dealership. Five entries related to Australia were found in the period examined. All five of these objects are listed as being

¹⁰ Especially since it is unclear how long and where Abarbanell stayed in Australia after his internment and to what extent he stood in contact with local Aboriginal groups.

"Australian bark paintings". On 13 October 1957 one object was sold for DM 350, on 31 October 1957 two objects were sold for DM 483.87. The fourth bark painting is listed as number 20/1958; the listing shows neither a sales price nor a date. In contrast to the other four paintings, however, a previous owner is given: someone named Bartmann from "Niedermarsberg"¹¹ sold it together with four European objects to Richard Krebs on 9 May 1958. Krebs sold the fifth bark painting on 20 November 1959 for DM 400. A bullroarer — or an object with a similar function — could not be found in these records.

According to the ledgers, Krebs had numerous contacts with dealers and collectors in The Netherlands, Germany, France and Austria who may have served as intermediaries or middlemen. Since Krebs did not document any direct contacts with Australia in the years prior to these sales, it can be assumed that the object passed through his business via his European trading partners. The previous owner named for the fourth bark paintings could not be identified in the course of this project. How the object came to Göttingen, where it came from and why the documentation in Göttingen and in the ledgers of the antiquities dealer is so fragmentary remains a mystery.

4.5 Ströder

Karl Wilhelm Ströder, born in Gelsenkirchen in 1936, sold more than 120 objects from Australia, Papua New Guinea and the island of Timor to the Ethnographic Collection between 1971 and 1979. The Collection archives contain numerous letters from Ströder that provide a background for the objects he sold as well as his own biography (ESG: Sammlerakte "Ströder 71-79"). Since Ströder is still alive but has not yet responded to attempts to contact him, for reasons of data protection, solely the information regarding the provenance of the objects can be addressed here.

In 1971, Ströder acquired artworks in Arnhem Land, a region on the northern coast of Northern Territory. According to Ströder's letters, he acquired several objects from the indigenous artists themselves and others through intermediaries. The names mentioned by Ströder show that he had connections both to the art trade, which was growing rapidly, especially in the former missionary station of Milingimbi, and to the early land rights movement in Arnhem Land. It is not clear to what extent Ströder spoke or understood the dialects of the Yolngu language that were predominant there or how intensive the relationships with the local population were. In the course of the project, the collector's current address could be identified, but attempts to contact him have so far remained unsuccessful. As mentioned, of primary interest for this project is a human figurine made of wood. Ströder bought it directly from the artist named Yuwati in Milingimbi (letter from Ströder to Urban dated 16 June 1971).

¹¹ In the document, the town is spelled "Niedermusberg", but this appears to be a mistake in spelling as it does not exist.

4.5.2 Yuwati

Tony Yuwati (Yirritja-moiety, Gupapuyngu clan)¹² was born in 1931 and was part of the artist community in Milingimbi (The National Gallery of Victoria n.D). The cross-hatched triangles painted on the figurine in Göttingen as well as red and black triangles are "the totemic design for rocks [...] and stormclouds" (letter from Ströder to Urban on 16 June 1971); the turtle painted on the figure's neck indicates Yuwati's affiliation with the Birrkili group. These sacred, clan-specific designs are called *mandayin minytji* by the Yolngu of Arnhem Land to which Yuwati's clan belongs (Pinchbeck, Allen, and Hamby 2016:21).

Along with other artists from various Yolngu groups, Yuwati collaborated on the 1965 Milingimbi Easter Panel – an artwork that combined Christian motifs with traditional Arnhem Land motifs and achieved international recognition (Pinchbeck, Allen and Hamby 2016:86). His works of art can today be found in the National Gallery of Victoria, among other places, and are traded online.¹³ In an exhibition catalogue, the Kluge Ruhe Art Collection presents a figurine created by Yuwati that closely resembles the sculpture held in Göttingen (Garcia and Bloch 2018:28).

In the course of the project, contact was established with Max Moon, the coordinator of the collection of the Milingimbi Art and Culture Centre/Djalkiri Keeping Place. He was sent photographs of the wooden figurine and the bark paintings from Arnhem Land that Ströder had also bought so that they might be included in the local database and thus (again) be made available to the community. It was hoped that information from the artist community might answer, among other things, the questions raised about the sculpture, its possible function as a seat for a dead spirit and its cultural significance. Unfortunately, the ongoing pandemic and the rainy season in Arnhem Land, which fell in the project period, made the collaboration difficult, so that no feedback on the works has yet been received. The Milingimbi Arts and Culture Center has made assurances that the images would be made available to the community as soon as possible and that reactions would be forwarded to Göttingen.

5. Final Remarks

The aim of this project was to scrutinize, based on the analysis of ten selected objects from Australia, museal object categorizations and attributions of status such as 'secret' or 'sacred' and in doing so identify them more precisely in preparation of further analysis. To this end, both the cultural background and the provenance of the objects were examined. In order to assess the cultural background, an attempt was made to establish contacts with Australia and to obtain information from Aborigines/First Peoples and their representative organizations. The Milingimbi Arts and Culture Centre and the First Peoples Department of Museums Victoria, among others, were asked for assistance as part of the project. In

¹² For an explanation of the complex structure of indigenous groups in Arnhem Land see Louise Hamby and Dr. Gumbula (2015:190–91) and Keen (1994:68–85).

¹³ For example: <https://www.finevintagedesign.com/product/yuwati-ancestral-figure>

addition, research was conducted into the meaning of the categories 'sacred' and 'secret' in specific regions in Australia. The research in this sphere was intended to focus the categories as used in collection practice and to augment them with specific regional knowledge.

The goal of the clarification of object provenance was only in part successful. It was again shown here that the verification of provenance depends to a large extent on the quantity and quality of the existing documentation in the storing institution. In one of the cases examined here, the provenance of a human-shaped wooden figurine could be traced back to the artist who created the object on the basis of the extensive correspondence between the collector and the staff of the Ethnographic Collection. In other cases, such as the objects acquired from Speyer and Krebs, it was alone possible to reconstruct from the incomplete or missing documentation that the protagonists were very probably not the direct collectors of the objects but acted through intermediaries. In the case of Krebs, it can be assumed that he acquired the object via at least one European middleman.

Once again it became clear that contacts to regional representatives and experts are indispensable for the reconstruction of the cultural meanings of objects from a field as diverse as indigenous Australia. However, the problem of incomplete documentation also has an impact here, because without any more specific indication of origin it is difficult to narrow down where regional expertise might be obtained. Despite these fundamental difficulties, the project succeeded in presenting possible and probable paths of provenance for the objects under consideration, establishing new contacts with Australian partner institutions and laying the groundwork for future cooperation. Another result of the project is that further objects could be identified in the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen where a reclassification as "secret/sacred" might be appropriate and should be addressed in the event of future consultations with experts from the societies of origin.

More than two years after its outbreak, the Covid 19-pandemic continues to have effects on international scholarship. Australia made headlines with its radical response to increased incidences with a very long and strict lockdown as compared to other countries. This lockdown led to a massive backlog in the institutions contacted in the course of this project that does not seem to have been fully resolved to this day. The rainy season that fell during the research period made things all the more difficult for our colleagues in northern Australia, affecting local travel conditions significantly. Under such conditions, project timelines must be planned all the more carefully and long term.

The need for further research is evident, particularly with regard to the regional classification of the objects as initiated here. The question of the significance of the sculpture created by Tony Yuwati also remains unanswered. Clarification of these points could result from the cooperation initiatives taken here or from further research in local communities and archives.

In order to put future consultations with Australian partners on as broad a footing as possible, knowledge gained in the course of this research was also applied beyond the ten objects investigated here.

An extensive list of potentially sensitive or "sacred" items in the collection in Göttingen could thus be made.

Another goal of this project complementing the research on object and collector biographies, was to reconsider ambiguities of object categories and status classifications such as 'secret', 'sacred', and 'sensitive'. A number of challenges for the Ethnographic Collection in Göttingen and other museums and collections emerged in the course of these considerations. The question remains how the ambiguities of 'sensitive' objects can be depicted in the museum context and communicated internally and externally. It is in this context also important to consider which 'levels of meaning' – to use Keen's term – should (not) or must necessarily be made clear in databases, depots and exhibition texts.

Annex

Updated list of potentially sensitive Australian objects in the Ethnographic Collection of the Georg August University Göttingen based on index card and database entries

Objects likely treated with ocher:

- Oz 654: Shield; Acquired through purchase from Emile Clement in 1928; the collector provided a derogatory term applied to various groups from the Western Desert as society of origin; dyed red, the front and back show incised patterns, the handle is carved from the piece; the shield bears no obvious marks of having been used in battle; Material: wood; Length: 68 cm; Width: 13 cm
- Oz 655: Spear thrower, indigenous term: *woomera*; Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; Society of origin: Ngarluma; Material: wood, dyed red, a spur is attached with putty to the lower end. Ornamentation of the throwing surface show signs of wear; Length: 86.50 cm
- Oz 666: Club; Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; Society of origin: Niol-Niol; Material: wood; colored red, flat and wide in shape; Length: 82 cm; Width: 8 cm
- Oz 1499: Spear thrower; Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; Society of origin: Ngarluma; Material: wood, stone; wide, flat wooden surface with line ornaments on the tip; Spur is a cemented wood splitter; The wooden cone is cemented with a pitch-like mass and is additionally held in place by an animal sinew strap; Length: 72 cm; Width: 12.50 cm
- Oz 1737: Fishing spear; Acquired from company Umlauff 1938; Region of origin: Cairns, Queensland; Material: bones, plant parts; with four barbs (attached by wrapping and cementing), a bone barb on the tip, the lower end of the shaft and the base parts of the barbs are reddish-brown in color; Length: 261 cm
- Oz 2887: Axe; Acquired through purchase from Lore Kegel in 1955; Previous owner: Hans Abarbanell; Material: stone, wood; Blade of flat black stone, dyed red, beveled on one side; Length: 22 cm; width 3.50 cm; Blade length: 11 cm
- Oz 3434: Boomerang, indigenous term: *woraga*; Purchased from Helmut Petri in 1966; Place of origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Julbari-dja (also: Yulbaridja); Material: wood; unequal-sided, one side slightly convex, rubbed with ocher; The collector stated the purpose as follows: hunting and war weapon, also sacred object (taboo object for non-initiated); Length: 72cm; Width 6.50 cm
- Oz 3435: Boomerang, indigenous term: *woraga*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of Origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Julbari-dja (also: Yulbaridja); Material: wood; unequal-sided, one side flat, the other slightly convex, five parallel grooves run lengthwise, the entire piece is rubbed with

ocher; The collector stated the purpose as follows: hunting and war weapon, also sacred object (taboo object for non-initiated); Length: 73 cm; Width: 6.50 cm

- Oz 3436: Boomerang, indigenous term: *woraga*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of Origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Julbari-dja (also: Yulbaridja); Material: wood; unequal-sided, both sides convex, 5 parallel grooves incised on one side at the end of the long shank, the entire piece is rubbed with ocher; The collector stated the purpose as follows: hunting and war weapon, also sacred object (taboo object for non-initiated); Length: 70 cm; Width: 6 cm

Objects made in part from human hair

- Oz 670: Necklace, Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; Society of origin: Niol-Niol; Material: human hair, kauri snail; 12 brown-patterned snail shells hang from a cord made of six twisted strings of brown human hair, the shells were pierced and tied on with a thin thread; length of the snail shells: 4.50 cm
- Oz 671: Chest ornament, Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; Society of origin: Niol-Niol; Material: human hair, snail; seven bluish snail shells are attached to a round disc of black, glassy putty, the disc hangs from a short cord twisted from brown human hair; the previous owner stated the intended use as follows: worn by women on the chest; diameter: 3.80 cm
- Oz 673: Chest ornament, indigenous term: *dibby-dibby*; Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; Society of origin: Niol-Niol; Material: human hair, mother-of-pearl; an elongated, oval mother-of-pearl disc with three fish carved on the front and a turtle in reddish brown on the back, one end of the disc is pierced and carries a short cord twisted from brown human hair; the previous owner stated the intended use as follows: worn around the neck; length: 12 cm; width: 4.50 cm
- Oz 674: Chest ornament, indigenous term: *dibby-dibby*; Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; Society of origin: Niol-Niol; Material: human hair, mother-of-pearl; a boomerang-shaped plate made of mother-of-pearl, both sides decorated with reddish-brown incised ornaments, the plate has been pierced through and carries a cord twisted from brown human hair; length: 18 cm
- Oz 682: Jewelry belt; Acquired through purchase from Clement in 1928; as society of origin the collector provided a derogatory term which may refer to various groups from the Western Desert; Material: human hair, shell; belt twisted from human hair, a large shell disc hangs from the front and back, the discs bear engraved, red-dyed ornamentations; diameter (belt): 35 cm; length (shell discs): 19 cm; width (shell discs): 13 cm
- Oz 2899: Decorative cord; Acquired through purchase from Kegel in 1955; almost black, twisted cord made of human hair, the two ends are tied together by wrapping, they each carry a

tassel of white-reddish hair (probably kangaroo hair), the tassels consist of narrow strips of fur wrapped around a wooden stick; the previous owner stated the intended use as follows: either tied around the head, so that the tassels hang down into the face, or looped around the neck, so that the tassels fall down the back; length: 72 cm

- Oz 3465: Belt, indigenous term: *narere*; Acquired through purchase from Petri 1966; Place of origin: Bidyadanga/La Grange; Society of origin: Julbari-dja (also Yulbaridja); Material: human hair; belt twisted from the hair of deceased persons, the collector stated the intended use as follows: "in pre-European times the only article of clothing of the men and partly also of the women, today generally only put on during cultic activity over European clothing"
- Oz 3466: Belt, indigenous term: *narere*; Acquired through purchase from Petri 1966; Place of origin: Bidyadanga/La Grange; Society of origin: Julbari-dja (also Yulbaridja); Material: human hair; belt twisted from the hair of deceased persons, the collector stated the intended use as follows: "in pre-European times the only article of clothing of the men and partly also of the women, today generally only put on during cultic activity over European clothing"

Objects used in ritual contexts (as indicated in the records):

- Oz 3442: boomerang, indigenous term: *jilbirin*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Garadjeri (also: Karrajari); Material: wood; ornamented, painted over on both sides with non-indigenous white paint; on the curved side the personal *mani* symbols of the artisan, on the flat side in the center a depiction of a water hole, at the two ends figures of two mythical heroes — *bagadjimbiri*, the collector stated the purpose of use as follows: tool for sport, play and for making sounds, in part cultic, in part profane songs, isosceles form; Length: 64 cm; Width: 7 cm
- Oz 3446: Battle shield, indigenous term: *garbina*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Julbari-dja (also: Yulbaridja); Material: wood; Fluted convex outer surface, reverse side bears motifs generally interpreted as *mani*, i.e. the maker's personal 'totem' symbol; the handle is carved out of the wood; the collector stated the intended use as follows: to ward off javelins and boomerangs, in addition various cult uses: beaten rhythmically on the ground during initiation ceremonies, hollow of the grip also used to catch up the blood of circumcised boys; Length: 70 cm; Width: 11 cm
- Oz 3506: "Cult object"; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: Lombardina; Material: sandstone; made of polished, light yellow sandstone; the collector stated the purpose as follows: use in rain ceremonies (considered to be the petrified body of an ancestor).
- Oz 3083: Bark painting; Acquired through purchase from Richard Krebs in 1957; Artist: Johnny Daignanan (also: Daynganan); Region of origin: Buckingham Bay, Arnhem Land; Society of origin: Yolngu (probably Gupapuyngu clan); Material: plant parts, bark; square form, painted in

yellow, white and reddish brown tones, a label attached to the back reads: "Ninimbur, Liagabugmiri People. Salt water oyster motive. Two types of oyster. Used in increase ceremony"; Length: 83 cm; Width: 37 cm

Objects with ascribed medicinal and "magical" contexts¹⁴

- Oz 648: Previously indexed as „ornamental nose rod" and "marker of office", but probably magical instrument; Acquired by unknown means before 1936; Region of origin: Central-Northern Australia; Material: bone, feathers (emu feathers?); Long bones with one end cemented, the other end bearing a tuft of feathers; Total length: 18.50 cm; Length of feather tuft: 7 cm
- Oz 1504: Ornamental peg or magic instrument (?); Acquired through purchase of Clement in 1928; Material: wood, plant fibers; made of light wood, wider on one side; Length 9.80 cm
- Oz 3462: Shaman's device, indigenous term: *bindja-bindja*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of Origin: La Grange, Material: pearl; Elongated-oval pearl shell, covered at one end by spinifex pitch for attaching a (missing) cord; Means to put oneself in trance and send ones soul on a journey to heaven or the afterlife. To do so, the meditating shaman presses the *bindja-bindja* against his forehead or temple; Length: 11.50 cm
- Oz 3463: Shaman's device, indigenous term: *bindir-bindir*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of Origin: Lombardina; Material: pearl; oblong, slightly curved object made of pearl; serves the shaman as a means of putting himself in a trance. To do so, he presses the piece against his forehead or temple while meditating; Length: 16 cm; Width: 1.70 cm
- Oz 3464: Staff, magical tool, *pointing bone*, indigenous term: *wadanari*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Mangala, Material: cloth; cigarette-shaped stick pointed on both ends with branded ornamentation in a geometric arrangement; in a blue and white patterned cloth cover; Means of "imbal" or "bulga", i.e. practice of black magic to kill or make people sick; Length: 15.80 cm
- Oz 3472: Shaman's stone, indigenous term: *wangu maban-mele*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Njanomada; Material: stone; carrier of magical powers; smooth, rounded, dark brown stone, with traces of spinifex pitch; served the *maban* shaman as a carrier of magical power with the help of which he carried out rain-making ceremonies (*djaramara*) accompanied by specific songs
- Oz 3474: Circumcision knife, indigenous term: *djimare*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: La Grange, Society of origin: Njanomada; Material: White quartzite; made out of soft quartzite with freshly retouched cutting surface; former owner: Mingo. Used in circumcisions

¹⁴ The investigation of the items listed in the appendix was no longer part of the proposed project. With a view to future consultations, however, the aim here is to be as complete as possible. The partly antiquated terminology at this point results from the reproduction of available archive material.

throughout the entire area of the western desert. This piece was last used in early August 1966 at a circumcision ceremony in La Grange; Length: 5.50 cm; Width: 4 cm

- Oz 3475: Circumcision knife; indigenous term: *djimare*; Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: La Grange; Society of origin: Julbari-dja (also: Yulbaridja); Material: Stone; green, porphyry-like rock, roughly semicircular; import from central western desert; former owner: Moko (Njanidjara); Length: 7.50 cm; Width: 5 cm
- Oz 3520-3527 Microliths (knives); Purchased from Petri in 1966; Place of origin: near Perth; Society of origin: Waljana; Material: Stone; used for taking blood during ceremonies and as surgical knives for subincisions, attached to war spears as barbs, made by stone chipping

Elaborately designed objects that may have clan designs that could well be secret/sacred:

- Oz 1961: Spear; Received as a gift from the *Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin* in 1939; Collector: the missionary Hey, date of collection: 1903; Region of origin: Batavia River in North Queensland; Ethnicity of origin: Ngerikudi; Material: wood, plant parts, bone; Spear with four points, each bearing a bone point fixed by wrapping and cementing. The end of the shaft is painted white and red, as is the part where the points is attached; Length: 261 cm; Width: 47 cm (points)
- Oz 1962: Spear; Received as a gift from the *Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin* in 1939; Collector: Missionary Hey, Date of Collection: 1903; Region of Origin: Batavia River in North Queensland; Ethnicity of origin: Ngerikudi; Material: bamboo wood, plant parts, bone; The end of the bamboo shaft and the wooden as well as the upper shaft are painted red and white, a bundle of 11 small stingray spines is attached to the tip. The barbs of the upper shaft are held by plant fibers and cemented. The bone tips are also held in place by tying and cementing. Four points are fixed to the sides in a wring; Length (total): 223 cm; Length (bamboo shaft): 169 cm; Length (wooden upper shaft): 41 cm
- Oz 2859: Throwing club; Acquired through purchase from Kegel in 1955; Previous owner: Abarbanell; Region of origin New South Wales; Material: wood; Carefully crafted from heavy brown wood, cross-section round-oval at the top, becoming flat-oval at the bottom, ending in a point on both sides; painted with red and white paint in the lower third; Length: 79 cm
- Oz 2865: Throwing club; indigenous term: *waddi*; Acquired through purchase from Kegel in 1955; Previous owner: Abarbanell; Region of origin: Victoria; Material: wood; Red-brown wood, richly decorated with dot and line ornaments and other carvings, flattened at the front (possibly through use); Length: 71 cm
- Oz 2866: Throwing club; indigenous term: *waddi*; Acquired through purchase from Kegel in 1955; Previous owner: Abarbanell; Region of origin: Victoria; Material: wood; Red-brown wood, richly decorated with dot and line ornaments and other carvings, flattened in front; Length: 71.50 cm; Width (tip): 5.50 cm

- Oz 2880: Spear thrower; Acquired through purchase from Kegel in 1955; Previous owner: Abarbanell; Region of origin: south-eastern Australia; Material: wood; Curved and painted red and yellow, a spike is fixed perpendicular to the shaft by binding of plant material and glue; Length: 79 cm; Width: 5 cm
- Oz 3578: Bark painting; Purchased from Karl Wilhelm Ströder in 1971; Place of origin: Maningrida (Arnhem Land); Ethnicity of origin: Jinang; Material: bark; Slightly curved, colors: dark brown, light brown, white and black. A label is attached to the back of the painting ("Two hunters with speers (sic) and woomeras come upon a sacred spirit place for babies"); on the back of the painting the following label: "Artist: Mick Magani 55yrs. Tribe: Jinang. His photo in 'Quest under Capricorn' and A. Wells 'Milingimbi'"; Length: 71 cm; Width: 31 cm
- Oz 3579: Bark painting; Purchased from Ströder in 1971; Place of origin: Umbakumba (Groote Eylandt); Artist: Trevor Ngekangana; Material: bark, wood; Slightly curved, 'framed' by split wood on the short sides, held together at the protruding ends by wrapping with plant material. Colors: the ornaments and the main motif — a fish ("*iljanga*") — are applied in yellow-brown, medium brown and white on a black background; Length: 44.50 cm; Width: 26 cm
- Oz 3581: Bark painting; indigenous term: *naku* or *nako*; Purchased from Ströder in 1971; Place of origin: Milingimbi (Arnhem Land); Artist: Billy Wilinginjindi (aged 22); Material: bark; curved; Colors: tawny, light brown, dark brown, white and black

Unpublished Sources

Ethnologische Sammlung der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (ESG)

Sammelmappe 12: „Vermischtes 1880-1936“

Sammelmappe 15: „Sammlungsankäufe 1927-1935“, Liste „Sammlung Speyer II“

Sammlerakte „1.4.1955-31.3.1956“: Kauf 9: Lore Kegel

Sammlerakte „1.4.1958-31.3.1959“

Sammlerakte „Petri 1966“ NW-Australien, Gesamtverzeichnis + Erwerbsunterlagen

Sammlerakte „Ströder 1971-79“

Hickmann, Ellen, Ekkehard Mascher und Christine Weiß (1981/82) Erfassungsbögen

National Archives of Australia

NAA: A1225, 1964 NSW December 8-9, Incoming passenger card (aircraft), Karl Stroeder

Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover

NLMH, FB Ethnologie, Schriftenarchiv, II.1.Nr.4 Laufende Nr. 53, 54, I.No. 331.

State Records Office of Western Australia

AU WA S61 – Item K07, Wilhelm Kruger, Naturalization Cards

Bibliography

AIATSIS (2020) Return of Cultural Heritage Projekt 2018-20. aiatsis.gov.au

Anderson, Christopher (Hrsg.) (1995) Politics of the secret. Sydney: University of Sydney. (Oceania monograph)

Arns, Eckart (2013) Biografie Hans Abarbanell. <https://www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/de/biografie/8782> [28.12.2021]

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2020) Map of Indigenous Australia. <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia> [12.04.2021]

Ben Uri Gallery and Museum (2021) Hans Abarbanell – BURU database. <https://www.buru.org.uk/record.php?id=468> [28.12.2021]

Brandstetter, Anna-Maria und Vera Hierholzer (Hrsg.) (2018) Nicht nur Raubkunst – Sensible Dinge in Museen und universitäten Sammlungen. Göttingen: V&R unipress. (V&R Academic)

Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre (2021) First Peoples. <https://museums victoria.com.au/bunjilaka/whats-on/first-peoples/> [29.12.2021]

City of Karratha (2021) Local History. <https://karratha.wa.gov.au/city-history> [10.01.2022]

Clark, Kenneth (1940) ‘Document listing artists supported by the Artists’ Refugee Committee who have been interned and deported’ – Tate Archive. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive/items/tga-8812-1-4-182-6/clark-document-listing-artists-supported-by-the-artists-refugee-committee-who-have-been> [28.12.2021]

Clement, E. (1903) Ethnographical notes on the Western-Australian Aborigines. Leiden: Brill.

- Clement, Emile (1899) The Native Question. Reply to Mr. Slaughter's Allegations. *West Australian*, 20. Juni: 3
- Coates, Ian (1999) Lists and letters: an analysis of some exchanges between British museums, collectors and Australian aborigines (1895-1910) The Australian National University (Hrsg.). <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/10741> [27.02.2021]
- Cole History Centre (2021) Daisy's Gold Brooch. <https://collections.wa.net.au/node/32618> [29.12.2021]
- Cole, Keith (1979) The Aborigines of Arnhem Land. First published. Adelaide Sydney Melbourne Brisbane Perth: Rigby.
- Deutscher Museumsbund (2021) Umgang mit Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten Leitfadens.
- Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste (2021) Kegel, Lore – Proveana. Datenbank. <https://www.proveana.de/de/person/kegel-lore> [28.12.2021]
- Dorn, Alex (o. J.) Our Story. <https://www.kkd-gallery.com/about-1/> [28.12.2021]
- Erckenbrecht, Corinna und Markus Schindlbeck (2016) The (Im-)Possibilities of Exhibiting the Sacred/Secret. *Baessler-Archiv: Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 63:18–20.
- Garcia, Macario und Lee Bloch (2018) Songs of a Secret Country – The Stephan and Agatha Luczo Gift. Charlottesville: Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia.
- Hamby, Louise und Dr. Gumbula (2015) The Development of Collecting at the Milingimbi Mission. In: Peter Toner (Hrsg.), *Strings of Connectedness: Essays in Honour of Ian Keen*. S. 187–214. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt183q3jp> [13.01.2022]
- Hubert, Michelle (2020) Individual Page – William Christopher Kruger. <https://wc.rootsweb.com/trees/146593/I5413/williamchristopher-kruger/individual> [29.12.2021]
- Keen, Ian (1994) Knowledge and secrecy in an Aboriginal religion. Oxford: Clarendon. (Oxford studies in social and cultural anthropology)
- Kegel, Lore (1966) Lore Kegel, Hamburg: Pastelle und Kreidezeichnungen. Hamburg.
- Kelly, Piers (2018) The Australian Message Stick Database. Datenbank. <https://amsd.cld.org/> [03.01.2022]
- Ley, Lyndall u. a. (2020) Return of Cultural Heritage Project Report 2018-2020. <https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/return-cultural-heritage/project-reports> [18.02.2021]
- Mares, Peter (2018) Remembering the Dunera - A shared experience of wartime internment created an enduring „fictive kinship“. *Inside Story*, 13. Juli <https://insidestory.org.au/remembering-the-dunera/> [29.12.2021]
- Münnich, Lutz (1996) Landrechte der Ureinwohner Australiens: Geschichte und Gegenwart. Münster: Lit. (Münsteraner Studien zur Rechtsvergleichung)
- National Library of Australia (o. J.) Dunera – Digital Classroom. <https://www.nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-10/internment-world-war-ii-1939-45/themes/dunera> [29.12.2021]
- National Museum Australia (2021) Defining Moments - Dunera Boys. <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/dunera-boys> [29.12.2021]
- Peterson, Nicolas und Marcia Langton (Hrsg.) (1983a) Aborigines, land, and land rights. Canberra: Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies ; Sold and distributed in North and South America by Humanities Press. (AIAS new series)
- Peterson, Nicolas und Marcia Langton (Hrsg.) (1983b) „Now you understand“: An Analysis of the Way Yolngu Have Used Sacred Knowledge to Retain their Autonomy. In: Aborigines, land, and land rights. S. 110–133, *AIAS new series*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.
- Petri, Helmut (1966) „Badur“ (Parda-Hills), ein Feldbilder- und Kultzentrum im Norden der westlichen

Wüste Australiens. *Baessler Archiv* NF 14:330–353.

Pinchbeck, Cara, Lindy Allen und Louise Hamby (2016) *Art from Millingimbi: taking memories back*. Sydney, N.S.W: Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Raabe, Eva (2018) *Secret/sacred: Die tjurunga aus Australien im Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt am Main*. In: Anna-Maria Brandstetter, Vera Hierholzer, und Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (Hrsg.), *Nicht nur Raubkunst! sensible Dinge in Museen und universitären Sammlungen*. S. 135–146, *V&R Academic*. Göttingen: V&R unipress.

Schäfer, Bernd u. a. (Hrsg.) (2008) *Ein Prinz entdeckt die Welt: die Reisen und Sammlungen Herzog Alfreds von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha (1844 - 1900) ; Sonderausstellung 18. Mai bis 26. Oktober 2008 Stiftung Schloss Friedenstein Gotha, Schlossmuseum*. Gotha: Stiftung Schloss Friedenstein Gotha.

Schindlbeck, Markus (2012) *Gefunden und verloren: Arthur Speyer, die dreissiger Jahre und die Verluste der Sammlung Südsee des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin*. Bönen: Kettler. (Veröffentlichungen des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin ; Fachreferat Südsee und Australien)

Schlesier, Erhard, Manfred Urban und Eva Raabe (Hrsg.) (1988) *Verzeichnis der Völkerkundlichen Sammlung des Instituts für Völkerkunde der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen*. Teil 1: Abteilung Ozeanien: (Australien, Neuguinea, Melanesien, Polynesien, Mikronesien). Göttingen, 1988.

Schlothauer, Andreas (2016) *Arthur Speyer und das Völkerkundemuseum Burgdorf (1919–1960)*. *Kunst&Kontext* (2):21–30.

Schultz, Martin (2016) *Arthur Speyer – Drei Generationen Sammler und Händler*. *Kunst&Kontext* (2):5–8.

Sieker, Hugo (Hrsg.) (1971) *Lore Kegel: Wege, Wagnisse, Werke*. Hamburg: Hartung.

Tao, Kim (2020) *Behind barbed wire: Remembering the Dunera boys*. <https://www.sea.museum/2020/09/06/behind-barbed-wire-remembering-the-dunera-boys> [29.12.2021]

The British Museum (o. J.) *Dr. Emile Clement*. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG122209> [13.02.2021a]

The British Museum (o. J.) *Hans Abarbanell*. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG83823> [28.12.2021b]

The National Gallery of Victoria (o. J.) *Artists | NGV*. <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/artist/11283/> [29.12.2021]

The Northern Times (1908) *Municipal Roebourne*. 3. Oktober: 4

Trudgen, Kendall (2011) *Yolngu Diplomacy*. *Arena Magazine* (113). <https://arena.org.au/yolngu-diplomacy> [12.01.2022]

Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre (2021) *Ngarluma*. <https://www.wangkamaya.org.au/pilbara-languages/ngarluma> [29.12.2021]

Wikimedia (2021) *Alfred I, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha*. <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q158143> [30.12.2021]

Worms, Ernest A. und Helmut Petri (1968) *Die Religionen des Australischen Festlandes*. In: Hans Nevermann, Ernest A. Worms, und Helmut Petri (Hrsg.), *Die Religionen der Südsee und Australiens*. S. 136–287. Stuttgart u.a.: W. Kohlhammer.

Yolngu Nations Assembly (2016) *First YNA Letterstick delivered to Legislative Assembly*. <https://www.yolngunationsassembly.org//post/first-yna-letterstick-delivered-to-legislative-assembly> [12.01.2022]

Yolngu Nations Association (2016) *Yolngu Nations Letterstick*.

https://parliament.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/379175/30.-Yolngu-Nations-Letterstick.PDF [12.01.2022]