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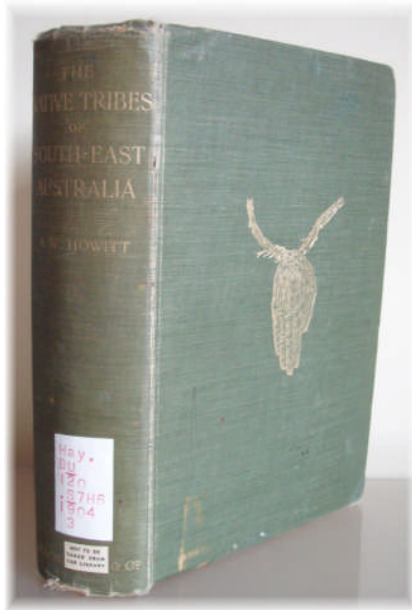
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## Native Tribes of South-East Australia

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THE  
Native Tribes  
OF  
South-East Australia

BY  
A. W. HOWITT, D.Sc.

HON. FELLOW ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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## CHAPTER II

### THE TRIBAL ORGANISATION

Physical features of the country—Climatic conditions—Definition of word “tribe”  
—Divisions of the tribe—The local and social organisations—Lake Eyre  
tribes—Darling River tribes—Murray River tribes—Tribes of North-Western  
Victoria—Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi—Queensland tribes—Coast tribes of  
South Australia and Victoria—The Kurnai of Gippsland—Tableland tribes  
—The Biduelli tribe—The coast tribes of New South Wales—Queensland  
coast tribes.

AS the title of this work implies, the area included within its scope is about one-quarter of the Australian continent. It extends on the north to near the tropic of Capricorn, and on the south is bordered by the Southern and Pacific Oceans connected by Bass Strait. This tract has a great range both of climate and temperature, from the dry continuous heat of Central Australia, to the severe winter climate of the Australian Alps, and the warm moisture of the coast lands. The most striking features of this part of Australia are the Dividing Range and the vast plains of the interior, through which the rivers, which rise on the inland fall of the Dividing Range, wind their tortuous course, in two great river systems, the one to the Southern Ocean, and the other to Lake Eyre, in Central Australia, where such water as can find its way there evaporates.

The sources of the Murray, which with its great tributary the Darling flows to the Southern Ocean, rise along the Dividing Range for a distance of over a thousand miles. Those of the Thomson and Barcoo, which lower down form Cooper's Creek, extend along the Dividing Range for a further distance of three hundred miles. The rivers which

## CHAPTER III

### SOCIAL ORGANISATION

As a general rule all Australian tribes are divided into two intermarrying moieties—Use of the terms “class,” “clan,” and “horde”—Tribes with two classes and female descent—Class names and rules of the Lake Eyre tribes—Tribes on the Darling River in Western New South Wales—The Wiimbaio, Ngarigo, and Wolgal—Tribes with four sub-classes and male descent—Kamilaroi, Wiradjuri, Wonghibon, Unghi, Wollaroi, Emon, Ungorri, Kuinmurbura, Wakelbura, and Buntamura tribes—Tribes with four sub-classes and male descent—The Kaiabara, Muruburra, Annan River tribes—Tribes with eight sub-classes and female descent—The Arunta and Urabunna—Tribes with anomalous class systems and female descent—The Wotjobaluk, Buandik, and Gournditch-mara—Tribes with two-class system and male descent—The Wurunjerrri and other Kulin tribes—Tribes with anomalous class systems and male descent—The Yerkla-mining, the Narrang-ga, the Narrinyeri, the Yuin—Tribes with no class system—The Kurnai of Gippsland—The Chepara of Queensland—The equivalence of class names—The two classes were evidently made by the segmentation of original, undivided commune—Totemism—Inherited and acquired totems—Sex totems—Totemism combined with exogamy at root of the social organisation—Views of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, Dr. J. G. Frazer, Mr. Andrew Lang, and Dr. Hadden—There is not sufficient data available to allow of a safe hypothesis as to the origin of totemistic names.

It may be laid down as a general rule that all Australian tribes are divided into two moieties, which intermarry, but each of which is forbidden to marry within itself.

For these two moieties the term “classes” used by Dr. Lorimer Fison and myself, and since adopted by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, and other writers on Australian anthropology, may now be regarded as the recognised term. The expression “tribe” has been used by some writers in this sense, but the “tribe” includes two organisations, the “local,” already described, and the “social,” to be dealt with now. The terms “clan” and “phratry” are both objectionable, because a definite meaning has become attached to

## CHAPTER IV

### RELATIONSHIP TERMS

The Classificatory system—Its significance—Table of Dieri relationships—The Dieri system—Its peculiar development—The *Nadada-noa* relationship—*Kami* and *Noa*—Anomalous cases—Kurnai relationships—Table of Kurnai terms—Archaic form of relationships.

#### THE CLASSIFICATORY SYSTEM

It has been long known that this system of counting relations, which occurs among the Australian tribes, also obtains among other savage and barbarous races. Since it was first brought under notice by the late Dr. Lewis H. Morgan, "the classificatory system" of relationships, as he called it, has been the subject of much controversy, and the opinions formed as to the origin and real meaning of the system have been various. It may be safely said that there are few, even of those who have been brought into daily contact during the course of a lifetime with the Australian blackfellow, who have taken the trouble to master the details of the system; or, if they have done so, they have not been able to form any true conception of the true foundation on which the system rests, or the root from which it has sprung.

How much more difficult, therefore, must the subject be for those who live in countries separated by thousands of miles from lands where they could become personally acquainted with savage life. They are compelled, if they desire to study the subject of relationships, to have recourse to second-hand information, superficially collected by travellers, or by local residents, who have brought to the investigation the ingrained beliefs as to relationships which almost form a part of the mental texture of civilised man.

the ordinary term in use among us. The terms will be considered in connection with the table given of marriages and descents in this tribe.

## DIERI RELATIONSHIP TERMS

Dieri Term.	Exact Equivalents in our Terms.	English Terms.
Kaia-Kaia	Mother's mother's mother	Maternal great-grandmother, great-grandchild
Nadada	Mother's father, M. <sup>1</sup> daughter's child	Maternal grandfather, grandchild
Yenku	Father's father, father's father's brother, M. son's son	Paternal grandfather, paternal grand-uncle, grandchild, grand-nephew or -niece
Kanini	Mother's mother, F. daughter's child	Maternal grandmother, maternal grand-aunt, grandchild, grand-nephew or -niece
Kadi	Wife's brother	Brother-in-law
Yimari	F. husband's brother, M. wife's sister	Brother-in-law, sister-in-law
Paicara	F. daughter's husband, M. wife's mother	Son-in-law, mother-in-law
Kalari	F. son's wife, husband's mother	Daughter-in-law, mother-in-law
Taru	M. daughter's husband, M. wife's father	Son-in-law, father-in-law
Ngaperi	Father, father's brother	Father, uncle
Ngata-mura	M. child, F. brother's child	Child
Ngandri	Mother, mother's sister	Mother, aunt
Ngatani	F. child	Child
Yibi	M. or F. mother's youngest unmarried sister	Aunt
Neyi	M. or F. elder brother	Elder brother, cousin
Kaku	M. or F. elder sister	Elder sister, cousin
Ngatata	M. or F. younger brother or sister	Younger brother or sister, or cousin
Kamari	Husband's sister	Sister-in-law
Noa	Potential husband or wife	
Tippa-malku	Those who are promised in marriage to each other	Betrothed
Pirrauru	Those who are in relation of group-marriage	
Kami	Mother father's, M. daughter's child, mother's brother's child, father's sister's child	Maternal grandfather, M. daughter's child, cousin
Papa	Father's sister	Aunt
Kaka	Mother's brother	Uncle
Tidnara	M. sister's child	Nephew, niece
Buyulu	Mother's sister's child	Cousin

<sup>1</sup> "M." means "male speaking"; "F." means "female speaking."

## CHAPTER V

### MARRIAGE RULES

The state of society among the early Australians was that of an Undivided Commune—The simplest existing form of social organisation is the division of a tribe into two intermarrying moieties—The Dieri as an example—The *Noa* relationship—The *Tippa-malku* marriage and the *Pirrauru* marriage—Intermarrying totems of the Yendakarangu tribe—Urabunna marriage rules—Class rules have been intentionally altered to meet difficulties arising from male descent in one tribe and female in another—Marriage rules of tribes in Western New South Wales—Female captives were the property of the captor if class rules allowed the marriage—Infant betrothal was the general rule, but elopements frequently occurred—Tribes with four sub-classes and female descent—The Kamilaroi—The “half-sister” marriage of the Kamilaroi—Table of anomalous marriages—Table of Wiradjuri marriages—Peculiar marriages of the North Wiradjuri—Marriage by capture at Wakelbura ceremonies—Tribes with four sub-classes and male descent in Southern Queensland—Tribes with anomalous class systems and female descent—Tribes with two-class system and male descent—Tribes without class systems—The Kurnai of Gippsland—Marriage by elopement—The Chepara of Queensland—All regulations were made to prevent near marriages and with intention to meet a sense of tribal morality—Female descent was an earlier form than male—Maternal descent and the Salic law.

A STUDY of the evidence which has been detailed in the last chapter has led me to the conclusion that the state of society among the early Australians was that of an “Undivided Commune.” Taking this as a postulate, the influence on marriage and descent of the class division, the sub-classes and the totems may be considered on the assumption that there was once an Undivided Commune. It is, however, well to guard this expression. I do not desire to imply necessarily the existence of complete and continuous communism between the sexes. The character of the country, the necessity of moving from one spot to another in search of game and vegetable food, would cause any Undivided

## CHAPTER VI

### TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

The aborigines obeyed their laws and customs from fear of tribal as well as supernatural punishment—Executive power of tribal councils of old men—Jalnapiramurana, Headman of the Dieri—Old men and women both instruct the young people in laws of conduct—Powers and qualifications of Headmen of various tribes—In all tribes men were recognised as having control over their tribes-people and who were obeyed—In some tribes there was a tendency for the office to become hereditary—The term “Headman” is to be preferred to that of Chief—The tribal councils—Punishment of offences—Blood-feuds between the Kurnai clans and with neighbouring tribes.

WHEN an Australian tribe is looked at from the standpoint of an ordinary observer, the conclusion that there is no recognised form of government seems to be justified. Apparently no person, or group of persons, has the right to command, under penalties for disobedience, or who is obeyed by the community. There seems to be no person to whom the whole community yields submission, who has peculiar privileges which are patent to observation, or who is surrounded by more or less of savage pomp and ceremony. All that is seen by a general superficial view of an Australian tribe is, that there is a number of families who roam over certain tracts of country, in search of food, and that while they appear to show a considerable respect to the old men, all the males enjoy such liberty of action, that each may be considered to do what seems best to himself.

A more intimate acquaintance with such a tribe, however, shows that there must be some authority and restraint behind this seeming freedom, for it is found that there are well-understood customs, or tribal laws, which are binding on the individual, and which control him, as well as regulate his

## CHAPTER IX

### INITIATION CEREMONIES, EASTERN TYPE

First accounts of ceremonies—Eastern and Western types—Discovery of use of Bull-roarer—Headmen summon the people for ceremonies by accredited messengers—*Kuringal* of the Yuin—Extent of the *Kuringal* ceremonies—Those of the Geawe-gal, Gringai, and Chepara tribes—The Wiradjuri *Burbung*—The Wonghibon ceremonies—The Ta-tathi *Burbung*—The Kamlaroi *Bora*—The Turrbal ceremonies—*Dora* ceremonies in Queensland—The Wakelbura *Umba*—The Kulin *Jibauk*—The Kurnai *Jeraiil*—Influence of the ceremonies.

ONE of the very earliest works on Australia, that of Collins, describes parts of the ceremonies practised by the natives of Port Jackson. Since that time travellers, missionaries, and residents in the Australian bush have become aware of and reported the existence of certain ceremonies—the “making of young men” as the practice has come to be called. Fragmentary accounts are to be found in works describing Australia and its inhabitants, but so far as I am aware no one has attempted to give any authentic, detailed description of the ceremonies themselves, from the observation of an eye-witness accustomed to scientific methods of investigation, until I published an account of the *Kuringal* and *Jeraiil* ceremonies in 1884.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps worth recording here that I discovered the bull-roarer in the Kurnai tribe, and was, I think, the first to draw attention to the important part it plays in the ceremonies of Australian tribes. I had been for some time obtaining particulars from my friends among the Kurnai as to their ceremonies at which boys were made into men. I

<sup>1</sup> *Journal Anthropol. Institute*, May 1884 and May 1885.

## CHAPTER X

### INITIATION CEREMONIES, WESTERN TYPE

Location of the two types—The Kadri-pariwilpa-ulu, a Dieri legend—The Malku-malku-ulu, a Ngameni legend—The Yuri-ulu, a Urabunna legend—The Dieri ceremonies—The Karaweli-wonkana—Giving the “Man’s name”—The Wilyaru ceremony—The Kulpi ceremony—The Wilpadrina ceremony—The rites of the coast tribes—The Yerkla-mining—The Parnkalla—The Warrara ceremony—The Parnappa ceremony—The Wilyalkinyi ceremony—The Narrang-ga ceremonies—The ceremonies at Encounter Bay—The Narrinyeri ceremonies—Ceremonies of the Itchumundi—Comparison of the eastern and western ceremonies.

### LOCATION OF THE TWO TYPES

FOR convenience I have taken a line, drawn from the mouth of the Murray River to the most southern part of the Gulf of Carpentaria, as defining the common boundary of the eastern and western types of initiation ceremonies. There are, however, between those of the *Bora* and those of the Dieri ceremonies which have a resemblance to both, but are more like those of the western type, and are therefore taken with them.

### THE BANAPA AND BIDA TRIBES

A line drawn about east and west, some three hundred miles from Adelaide to the north, will separate the tribes who are circumcised from those who are both circumcised and subincised. The former are called Banapa, that is, circumcised, and the latter Bida, being both circumcised and subincised. The Bida are to the north of the said line. There also a marked change takes place in the language.



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