

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.03.02/06

LUKAR and LUKI

(last edited: 23.3.2016)

See also PNS 3/10 Krildung

Abstract

Lukar is one of a number of Ngarrindjeri words which have been used by Ngarrindjeri people as place-names on territory which at first contact was Kurna land. These names have been publicized through the publications of Tindale and Berndt, who obtained them in the 1930s-40s.

Lukar is a word in the Ngarrindjeri language meaning 'tears'. It is primarily a common noun, not a place-name. However, in the 1930s the Ngarrindjeri Elder Albert Karlowan seems to have applied it generically to the spring sites created by Tjirbuki's tears along the coast from Kingston Park to Port Willunga. For the locations of these sites see PNS 2/23 Tulukudangk, 3/10 Krildung, 4.03.02/01 Purditilla-Potartang, 4.03.02/02 Tirranangku, 4.03.02/03 Ruwarung.

Such an element in the *story* of a place is not a *name*, though ethnologist RM Berndt mistook it for one. *Lukar* and *Luki* do not fulfil the linguistic requirements for a place-name. It would have to be *Lukangk* or *Lukuwar*, etc, using one of the Locative suffixes, because in Ngarrindjeri language the Nominative is never used for place-names.

Coordinates	Latitude -35.26550331, Longitude 138.45441626 [nominally at Port Willunga (Ruwarung) springs]
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Language Information

Meaning	Both words mean 'tears'.
Etymology	<i>luki</i> (singular), <i>lukar</i> (plural)
Notes	
Language Family	Yaraldic: 'Ngarrindjeri'
KWP Former Spelling	
KWP New Spelling 2010	
Phonemic Spelling	
Syllables	
Pronunciation tips	<i>u</i> as 'oo' in 'look'. <i>i</i> as in 'pin'.

Main source evidence

Date	1935
Original source text	“[at] [ˈRu:warung] (a few hundred yards south of Port Willunga jetty)... [Tjirbuki] sat down on the beach and cried some more. The [ˈlu:ki] (tears) dropped on the sand , causing a spring to appear.”
Reference	Tindale 1936, ‘Story of [Tji:rbuki], a legend of the people of Rapid Bay’, in Tindale and Mountford 1936, ‘Results of the Excavation of Kongarati Cave’, <i>Records of SA Museum</i> Vol. 5 (4): 501.
Informants credited	Karlowan
Informants uncredited	

Date	1987
Original source text	“[at] [ˈRuwarung] (several hundred metres south of Port Willunga jetty)... [Tjirbruki] sat down on the beach and cried some more. The [ˈlu:ki] (tears) dropped on the sand , causing a spring to appear.”
Reference	Tindale 1987, ‘The Wanderings Of Tjirbruki: a tale of the Kurna people of Adelaide’, <i>Records of SA Museum</i> , No. 20: 8b.
Informants credited	General credits to Milerum, Karlowan, etc.
Informants uncredited	

Date	c.1940
Original source text	- “He went on... to Putatang (Red Ochre Cove) where he cried... He continued on to Lukar (Luki, place of tears, Port Willunga) , and yet another spring was formed.” {p234} - [map] “9 spring” [marked <u>north</u> of Pt Willunga] – [legend] “9 Luki spring ” [p330-1]. - [plus other texts: see Discussion]
Reference	Berndt & Berndt 1993, <i>A World That Was</i> .
Informants credited	Karlowan
Informants uncredited	

‘LUKAR’ AND ‘LUKI’: TEARS AND PLACES: Discussion:

Tjirbuki made his grieving journey southward with the corpse of his beloved nephew. In the early part of it – the stretch of coast between Kingston Park and Port Willunga – the details and the place-names were almost certainly given only by Karlowan, separately to Tindale and Berndt.

Tindale published two accounts, 1936 and 1987,¹ which in this part of the story are almost word-for-word most of the way from Kingston Park down to Sellicks Beach. Karlowan was credited as the informant for most of the 1936 essay; while the much-quoted 1987 essay is a hybrid based on Milerum with Karlowan's version added in, along with much independent material from Tindale's other research. Berndt's version is taken only from Karlowan, an independent record dating from around 1940.

Of the Ngarrindjeri place-names attributed to this coastline, Karlowan gave "*Ka'reildung*" to Tindale; "*Lukar*" and "*Mulgali*" to Berndt; and "*Potartang*" to both. Each of these is considered under its own file.²

Lukar or 'Luki Spring' is given as a place-name only in Berndt.³ Tindale's versions both speak simply of "the *luki* (tears)".⁴ It is not in Kurna language but is a Ngarrindjeri word still used today by the Elders. Kurna words never begin with an *l*, and the Kurna word for 'tears' is *mekauwe*.

There are also some other problems.

In his own summary of the story,⁵ Berndt himself wrote that at Kingston Park Tjirbuki "prepared [*the body*] for carrying. He took it to a place nearby, put it down and cried. His tears made the spring at Hallet's Cove". Then in the following lines "Putatang (Red Ochre Cove)" *precedes* "*Lukar* (Luki, place of tears, Port Willunga)", and he weeps at both places.

Karlowan provided a narrative text in Yaraldi,⁶ and Berndt's translation of the same episode is given as follows. Immediately following the preparations at Kingston Park,

Wonyili-an thupung ika tepang-ga wonyili-an throthan
Then he carried it close then-he put it down

lambula prapuramb ngalakind k'relkundin Lukar.
for crying (mourning) down there wailing at Luki.

¹ Tindale 1936, 'Story of [Tji:rbuki], a legend of the people of Rapid Bay', in Tindale & Mountford, 'Results of the Excavation of Kongarati Cave', *Records of SA Museum* Vol. 5 (4): 500-1; Tindale 1987, 'The Wanderings Of Tjirbruki: a tale of the Kurna people of Adelaide', *Records of SA Museum*, No. 20: 5-13.

² See also PNS 3/10 Krildung; 4.03.02/05 Mulgali; 4.03.02/01 Purditilla.

³ Berndt & Berndt 1993: 234.

⁴ Tindale 1936: 501; Tindale 1987: 8b.

⁵ Berndt & Berndt 1993: 234.

⁶ *ibid*: 446.

We are not told where this incident happened. Following immediately in Karlowan's text, the next stop is "Putatang" (Ochre Cove), and then "Ruwuru" (on the beach at Port Willunga). Neither Hallett's Cove, nor "Ka'reildung" as in Tindale, have been mentioned; but it looks as if *Lukar* applies to the first of these stops, not the third. What happens at the second and third stops is "*k'relkundenang*" and variants (translated as 'wailing'). Tjirbuki was "*k'relkundin lukar*" ("wailing at Luki", according to Berndt's translation on that page) *before walking further south to Ochre Cove and then further still to Ruwuru*, there also 'wailing'. This would put the 'Luki' *north of both Port Willunga and Ochre Cove*.

Berndt's map⁷ is no help. It places "Luki spring" *between* Port Willunga and Ochre Cove to the north of it (the map is too small to be more precise); and it locates *Ruwuru* at a different place immediately *south* of Port Willunga (as in Tindale, where "Ruwarung" is the spring site).⁸ This is compatible with Berndt's own version on p.234, but incompatible with Karlowan's actual narrative.

Finally, in his main text Berndt gives two vague and doubtfully-consistent locations for Ruwuru: "near Aldinga", and "a point located south of Port Willunga".⁹

The inconsistencies leave much doubt about how well Berndt knew the geography of the area, and some doubt whether he was told at all where the alleged place 'Luki' actually is. Perhaps Karlowan attached it to Port Willunga (or seemed to) in conversation in English independently of his formal narration.

In Karlowan's text (above) *lukar* cannot mean 'at Luki'. In a different sentence it could perhaps mean 'to Luki', and this would then imply that *luki* is a place-name;¹⁰ but here this would not make sense, because Tjirbuki has just put the body down and is not walking *to* anywhere. We might have had a previously unknown form of the Locative *-war*, an abbreviation of *Lukuwar*; but there is no reason to take *lukar* in this sentence as a place-name at all unless Karlowan said so explicitly. More likely it is a simple Ngarrindjeri plural common noun: so that "*k'relkundin lukar*" uses neither a Locative ('at') nor an Allative ('to') nor a place reference, but a simple plural: "he was wailing tears".¹¹

⁷ *ibid*: 330-1.

⁸ Tindale 1936, 1987.

⁹ Berndt & Berndt 1993: 234, 312; cp. map p.330.

¹⁰ See Meyer 1843, *A Vocabulary of the Language spoken by the Aborigines...*: 18 on suffixes.

¹¹ This is a Transitive use of the verb *k'relkundin*, which has an Object 'tears', and needs an Ergative Subject which could be *wonyili-an* (translated as 'then he') earlier in the sentence. We have no evidence about the nature of this verb apart from Karlowan's texts about Tjirbuki. See PNS 3/10 Krildung. Also cp. "*luka-luki* or *lukun* 'bitter, with a sting'" (Berndt & Berndt 1993: 117).

In Tindale 'luki' is evidently not a place-name, and his version of these events also comes from Karlowan. And on the evidence which Berndt has given, if *lukar* were a Locative then it would more likely refer to Hallett's Cove than to Port Willunga (and we know Karlowan told Tindale that Tjirbuki cried there).

Did Karlowan use *Lukar* or *Luki* as a place name anyway, despite the improbability?

Linguistics are strongly against it. In the early 1840s Meyer noted that in place-names "the simple nominatives appear not to be used": i.e. the root *always* has a suffix appended to it (-*angk* and others meaning 'at'; -*ungai* 'to'; -*mant* 'from', etc).¹² The place would always have been referred to as *Luk-angk* or the like, not simply *Luki* or *Lukar*.

But might *Luki* still be possibly be used as a place-name, since Karlowan similarly uses a common noun for 'ochre' and (according to Berndt again) *appeared* to attach it to Ochre Cove without using a Locative suffix?¹³ If something like this did happen in conversations with Berndt, most likely *luki* / *lukar* was used the same way as in Tindale: a general indication of the most significant thing which happened at *all* of those places.

Stepping back from these doubtful particulars, and taking all of Karlowan's data together, one thing remains movingly clear: Karlowan made a special theme of those tears along this beautiful stretch of our metropolitan coastline. Kingston Park, Hallett's Cove, Ochre Cove and Port Willunga were places both of deep grief and of the healing springs which came from it.

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End of Summary

¹² Meyer 1843: 13.

¹³ – though it is also quite doubtful there whether *Mulgali* was actually being used as a place-name (see PNS 4.03.03/05 *Mulgali*).