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MURRAY DISTRICT TOTEMS

(Yaburgurt's information)

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Ngagarnooks are wejuk (emu totem)

Descent of totems

Group totems of Yaburgurt's people and of tribes with whom they intermarried.

Law-breaking walja totemists

MURRAY DISTRICT TOTEMS

From Yaburgurt, who is the last Murray district (Murray R.) native, I gathered the following items concerning his people, together with the borungur, localised and hereditary, of the Mandura and Murray and other district natives. Yaburgurt speaks from his own side of the family, so to speak, and mentions all other phratries and classes in their relation towards his class, family and totem.

All Ngagarnook, according to Yaburgurt, are wejuk (emu totem). Their moyer (sister's sons) are also wejuk. Yaburgurt is Tondarup, but no Tondarup are wejuk, they are kootajoo-murnong or kootijkum to wejuk. The maangur of Tondarup and Didaruk are wejuk, also their ngooljarmat. Some wejuk are men borungur as well (men = edible gum).

There were no yongar borungur (male kangaroo) at Mandura. Yongar borungur were kongan to Mandura Tondarup. Winjitch, a Tondarup, was kongan to Yaburgurt, and was yongar borungur.

Yaburgurt's mother(ngangan) and her brothers and sisters were mungaitch borungur, for they belonged to mungaitch boojoor (jamwood country), but Yaburgurt could not take his mother's borungur. His maman (father) gave him waddarn, for waddarn was maman's borungur, and Yaburgurt and his brothers and sisters were waddarn (sea) borungur, for they were Waddarndi Bibbulmun (sea coast Bibbulmun).

Only Ngagarnook took their mother's borungur, and it must be given them by their kongan (mother's brother) and not by their mother.

Ngagarnook cannot give the wej to their Tondarup koolongur (children). A Ngagarnook and wejuk mother cannot pass her borungur to her children; their kongan must give it to them, and where there is no kongan the children take their father's borungur which is the localised borungur of the father's people. The children are however kootajoo-murnong to wejuk. Ngagarnook and wejuk men cannot give their borungur to their children, if these children are Tondarup they receive the borungur of their Tondarup kongan (mother's brother). Only Ngagarnook are wejuk.

Ballarruk, Ngagarnook and Ngogonyuk are koot warang (three bags or wombs - relations).

Tondarup, Didaruk and Mela-murnong are koot warang.

Tondarup and Didaruk are koot koojal (two bags or wombs - relations). Ballarruk and Ngagarnook are koot koojal, also Ballaruk and Ngogonyuk, or Ngagarnook and Ngogonyuk.

The koolongur must follow nganganing (mother's people) and moraning (father's fathers, son's sons) in Class (Tondarup, Didaruk, etc.) and borungur.

Yoornil was the last Jidalyuk. He was Tondarup and mungaitch borungur, and belonged to Kebidup, near Yoonderup, which was mungaitch boojoor. Some Jidalyuk were at Pinjarra and Mandura, but they had come from Kebidup, where all the Jidalyuk came from. (Jidalyuk was a term applied to tall and thin Tondarup people in this district, and was derived from jidal, a long grey insect of the dragon fly species.

Wej borungur were to be found at Donnelly River, Blackwood, Busselton and Bunbury. Jan koojij (name of an ancestor) gave the wej kuraa (a long time ago).

At Kooyalup and Moondap there were Tondarup and Ngagarnook who were mungaitch borungur; it was mungaitch boojoor.

Koomhungung's maman was mungaitch borungur, and before he died he told Yaburgurt all about the mungaitch borungur.

Yaburgurt's ngangan Kaller was mungaitch borungur, and dreamed the increase of her borungur. She lay in her maia (hut) and sang in her dream, and as she sang she saw the mungaitch garup (hole) where all the goomba (honey of mungaitch) was, and she took the honey and put it in the trees in her dream. Kaller remembered her dream next morning and told her moorurt in camp where she had put the goomba.

Borongur were given in janga nyitting times (janga = spirit, ghost, white man; nyitting = cold time, long, long ago, ancestors) and no persons of the same borungur can marry, nor can persons of the same borungur boojoor (localised totem ground) marry each other.

Gingin and part of Moore River was kooljak boojoor (black swan ground) and all the members of the local groups who were born

on kooljak boojoor were kooljak borungur. Maggai-yoo, a Moore River Ballaruk was kooljak borungur; his kongan also was kooljak borungur, and was Ballaruk, and all his Tondarup sons were kooljak borungur. Goomur, a Tondarup, and his mamman (father) a Ballaruk, and Goomur's sons, who were Ballaruk, were kooljak borungur. Their boojoor was Webiri, Moore River district.

At Beverley and York there were kooljak borungur, but they did not call the swan by that name in their district; they called it maale. Maali, a Wail-wil-yup (York district) Tondarup was the last maale borungur of his group.

There were walja (eaglehawk) borungur at Bulyagin and Mittering (Northam district). Neelup, a Tondarup, was the last pure-bred walja borungur. These walja borungur were moramun (morangur) and demmangur for Yaburgurt. Only Tondarup were walja borungur.

At Williams, Northam and York there were some Manitch (white cockatoo) borungur. These were all Tondarup and are now all dead. A ngau (mallee hen) borungur group were located at Ningarn, near Victoria Plains, but these are also long dead. Ningarn was ngau boojoor.

Beel borungur, or beelagur (beel = river) were both Manitchmat and Wordungmat. Beelagoo was the name of their boojoor. Nangin, a Tondarup, and his brother Moongalit were beelagur. Boorongirt and Ngirit were Moongalit's two sons, and were Ballaruk and beel borungur. All these are dead.

Boorbirdup was warrain (edible root, like a potato) boojoor and Ngalyart's ngangan (mothers) and morangur were warrain oobari (or borungur). All the warrain oobari are dead.

In the Donnelly River district there was a local group whose members were kolyung (wattle tree gum) borungur. Kolyungit, a Ballaruk was kolyung oobari, and his father a Tondarup was also kolyung oobari.

Kanyin or kaanyin (kingfisher) formed a local group borungur in the Northam district. If this bird was killed, his borungur must kill the murderer.

When a member of some borungur dies, his jammeruk (sisters and brothers, members of the same local group, who are blood relations) do not eat the borungur of the dead man for a winter and summer (meeruk = summer; mokur = winter).

There must be no marriage between members of the same local group borungur.

In the Northam district there were wan (digging stick) borungur. Wanuk, a Tondarup, his son Banjoo, a Ballaruk, and Banjoo's koolongur were all wan borungur. It was wan boojoor on which they lived. Banjoo's mother and mother's brother were Ballaruk and Koolyagoo (edible root of creeper) borungur; they came from the Northeast.

In the heavily timbered district of the Murray and other rivers of the Southwest, a species of edible fungus called ngook, or ngooga, grows at or near the roots of certain trees, coming up after the first winter rains, and remaining very plentiful throughout the winter and spring. All the members of the local groups where this fungus grew most abundantly were ngook or ngooga borungur, and were called Ngoogonyuk, or Ngogonyuk. Only in these districts were the Ngoogonyuk found; their ground was ngooga boojoor.

Didaruk, according to Yaburgurt, were named from deedara gab - deep water. All Didaruk were gab borungur, and the name Didaruk belonged to them only.

Tondarup were dornt (fish hawk) borungur, and only Tondarup could be dornt borungur. Some local Ballaruk in Yaburgurt's group were called Tonda-lung, by Tondarup whose fathers (maangur) they were (-ung = belonging to - the 'l' inserted for the sake of euphony).

Karder borungur were at Yoonderup, Vasse River, and Konningerdup. Doongunit is the last karder borungur (karder = iguana). If karder or any animal borungur be found dead without wound or hurt, a karder borungur will soon die. When a karder borungur dies, no one will eat a karder while the memory of the dead man holds.

In the Victoria Plains district there was a local group of jert or jirda (little bird) borungur, but the borungur members were Wordungmat only, the jerd being given to the koolongur of a jerd borungur woman by her brother who was their kongan, and was also Wordungmat and jerd borungur. All the jerd borungur were called jerdajuk, or Jirdajuk in the district where they belonged.

Ngwara (black opossum) borungur were south of Yoonderup (Vasse), but these have been long dead, as are also dang-ngail borungur who were Ballaruk in the Capel district, and ngarri borungur. All ngarri borungur were called mela-murnong (mel = eyes, murnong = like, the same as), because they had full eyes like the salmon.

The karrail (cobble fish) and kalgart (sea-mullet) borungur of Mooribirdup (Rockingham) have all died.

Yaburgurt's memory is now failing for he is well over seventy years of age, but the above is a summary of his own kalleepgur and their borungur, and of the borungur of the tribes with whom his kalleepgur intermarried. There were various districts, in which certain totems were localised, the totems alternating with the phratries in successive generations. The late Andrew Lang was of opinion that these localised totems were merely topographical designations, and were not totems at all, even though the same term - borungur - was applied to them as to the ordinary totem; but I can find no difference in the native mind between the localised borungur which alternated with the descent of the phratry, and the totem - like the emu of the Ngagarnooks - which belonged to one class only, or the ngooga which was the name-giving borungur of the Ngoogonyuk.

Also the sea totem (waddarn borungur) was the localised borungur of Yaburgurt's own local group, but it was not the borungur of the coastal group north or south of his people's territory; and beel - river - borungur formed a local group by themselves, and also living on the banks of the same river, were not beel borungur, but had some other localised borungur. Therefore although it is customary to speak in a European sense of a "coast

people" or a "river people", using the terms in a topographical sense only, this cannot apply to the sea totem and river totem or other localised totems of the local groups whose special localised totems they are. These totems belonged to both phratries in the local group, and no member of any of these localised borungur could marry another member of the same borungur, therefore marriage could not take place within the totem, hereditary or localised, nor within the local group of that totem.

Yaburgurt's kalleepgur obtained their wives either from neighbouring groups, or from groups some distance away, whose members were only associated with during the gatherings for beedawa and other ceremonies; but no members of the same totem, hereditary or localised, could marry each other, although the totems alternated with the phratries in the local group; a man must obtain his wife outside his local group and totem, when the totem is hereditary or localised in that group.

Amongst all the Southwestern people there was one borungur whose members appeared to have intermarried within their own group and totem, and who were in consequence stigmatised as dwerda (dogs) etc. These were the walja (eaglehawk) borungur, whose indiscriminate intercourse with each other supplied a term of reproach in the dialects of the Southwest. Walluk-walluk (or waljuk-waljuk - like the eaglehawks) was the term applied to certain irregular or wrong marriages, which sometimes took place, although the nearness of the blood tie, and the borungur relationship forbade such union.

"According to Dr. Howitt, promiscuity such as seems to have been the custom, though not the law, amongst the walja borungur, preceded group marriage amongst the Southeastern tribes, but apparently the promiscuity of the walja borungur did not extend to any tribe or group beyond their own, nor was group marriage the outcome of the waljuks' promiscuous intercourse with each other. Legend and tradition connected with the waljuk people show them to have been under the same laws as those of their more law-abiding neighbours, but defiant of these laws, and flouting them in pursuance of their individual desires, and according to all the tribes contiguous to the waljuk, this defiance led to their extinction. That these walja borungur had been for many generations pursuing the same "miltch" or irregular course, the many legends concerning them bear witness, but that the promiscuity which they followed in their marriage relations was never general throughout either the Southern or Southwestern tribes there is also ample evidence to show, legendary and traditional though it may be.

I may mention here that I came in contact with another local group in the Eastern Goldfields district who were also defiant of their marriage laws in a somewhat similar manner to the walja borungur group. This tribe or local group had, however, only recently developed their promiscuous tendencies, and become a law unto themselves. So much angered, however, were the tribes contiguous to them of their irregularity in this respect that "raids" were continually taking place, and during the last attack upon their numbers, eleven were killed. No avenging party could be sent from the group who were breaking their laws, as the punishment was recognised as a just one. The wrongdoers merely hugged the townships closer, and never ventured beyond the white settlements about them. Even this did not avail them in the last attack, as the "raiders" followed them up to the township and slew them before any white help could be forthcoming.

The hereditary and localised totem are exogamous, although they occur in both phratries; the fact that the persons are mem-

bers of the same hereditary or localised totem is a bar to their marriage, although they may be of opposite phratries. A Ngargarnook and wejuk could not marry another Ngargarnook and wejuk, but neither could a Ballaruk and kuljak borungur of Gingin district marry a Tondarup and Kuljak borungur, for both are members of the localised totem; nor could a dwerd borungur Ballaruk of the Victoria Plains district marry a dwerd borungur Tondarup from the same district. Hence the hereditary or localised totem appears to be the only exogamous bar, and that it is the strongest bar to marriage even at the present day, all inquiries tend to show.