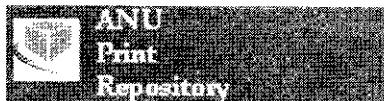


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Journal:  
Journal and proceedings of the Royal  
Society of New South Wales  
Vol: 28; Year: 1894

Issue: ; Pages: ~~353-358~~ 98-129

Article title:

Aboriginal Bora held at  
Gundabloui in 1894b†,

+  
plates 3 & 4

Article author:  
R. H. Mathews

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## KERARGYRITE.

The specimen figured on *Plate 2* is a particularly fine group of crystals of silver chloride from the Proprietary Mine, Broken Hill, made up of cubes and octahedra without any matrix or extraneous matter whatever. Collected by Mr. J. O. Armstrong.

## CUPRITE.

The cuprite crystals figured on the same plate are of unusually large size, the principal cube being 12 m.m. across and of a splendid transparent ruby-red colour with high lustre; the principal crystal is a cube with its edges replaced by the rhombic dedecahedron and its angles by the octahedron. It was found in the same boulder as the nantokite at the Broken Hill South Silver Mine.

## ABORIGINAL BORA HELD AT GUNDABLOUI IN 1894.

By R. H. MATHEWS, Licensed Surveyor.

[With Plates III. and IV.]

[Read before the Royal Society of N. S. Wales, July 4, 1894.]

FOR some years past this Society has taken a great interest in the manners and customs of the Australian aborigines, with a view of collecting and preserving authentic records of a race who are now rapidly passing away. It seems therefore, that no circumstances could be more appropriate, no time more suitable, no opportunity more fitting than the present to bring before our members an account of the Bora which has recently been held by the aborigines near the town of Gundabloui, in the parish of the same name, in the County of Finch, in this Colony. Gundabloui is on the Moonie River, about ten miles below where it is crossed by the Queensland boundary.

The Bora is a great educational institution for the admission of the youths of the tribes to the privileges, duties and obligations of manhood, and is the most important ceremony practised by the aborigines. The youths who are initiated, are carefully instructed by the old men in their traditions—their moral and religious codes—and the laws of consanguinity and intermarriage. The ceremonies are intended to strengthen the authority of the older men over the younger, and to impress in an indelible manner those rules of conduct which form the moral law of the tribe. This national rite partakes partly of a civil, and partly of a religious character, and is the great educational system by which the exact observance of the laws is inculcated. The games and dances of their forefathers are also taught by the old men who conduct the ceremonies. Meetings for the Bora are summoned at irregular periods as emergencies arise; they are generally held in the summer on account of the greater chance of having fine weather; but they may be held at any time of the year. The Bora mentioned by Mr. Glass, which will be referred to presently, was held during May, June, and July, which are winter months. The Bora which was held at the Mole, near Quambone, last year took place in April, May and June. The Kunopia Bora, referred to in this paper, was held in October, November and December, 1891. The time of full moon is generally selected for the commencement of the ceremonies, so as to have light at night, but this also depends upon circumstances. The ceremonial of the Bora is much the same in all parts of the colony; there are a few variations in the mode of assembling the tribes, in the form of the Bora grounds, and in the actual initiation, but so far as I have been able to learn, there is no very essential difference. It cannot be doubted, however, that the aborigines have left off some of their native customs, in consequence of their contact with Europeans, and it is every year becoming more difficult to obtain reliable information about the Bora.

I will now digress for a few minutes for the purpose of briefly drawing attention to descriptions of Boras by other writers many

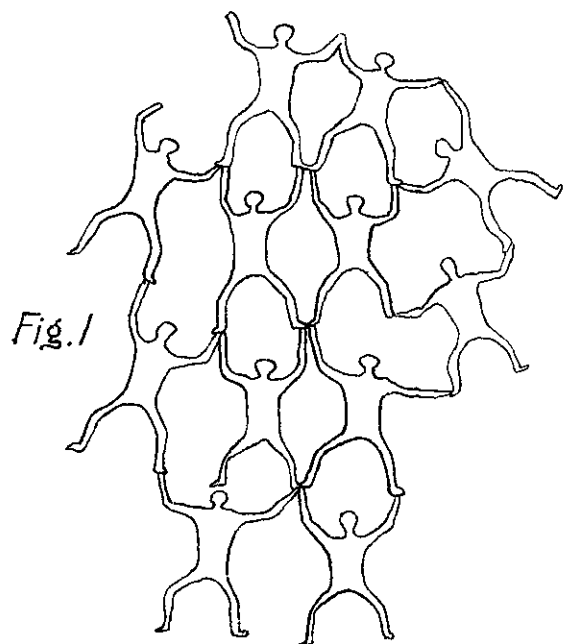


Fig. 1

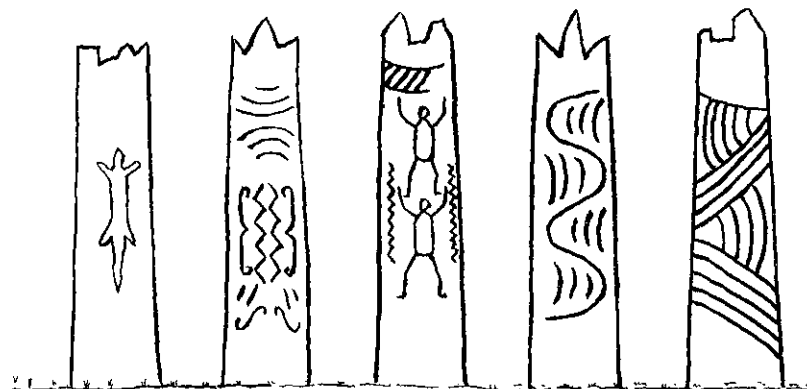


Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12



Fig. 2

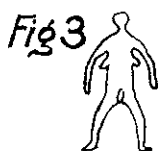


Fig. 3

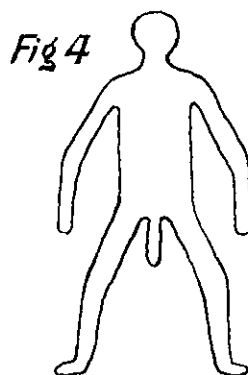


Fig. 4

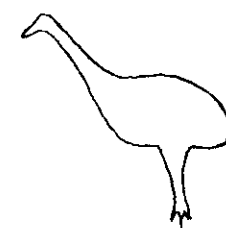


Fig. 13



Fig. 14

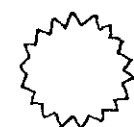


Fig. 15

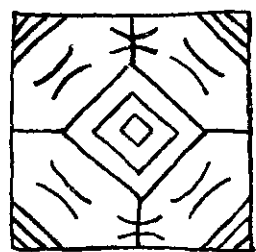


Fig. 5.

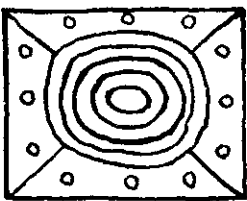


Fig. 6.

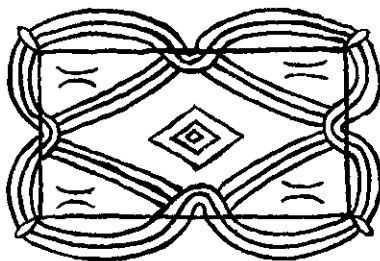
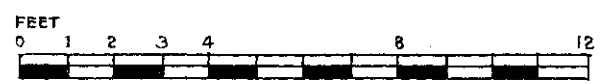


Fig. 7.

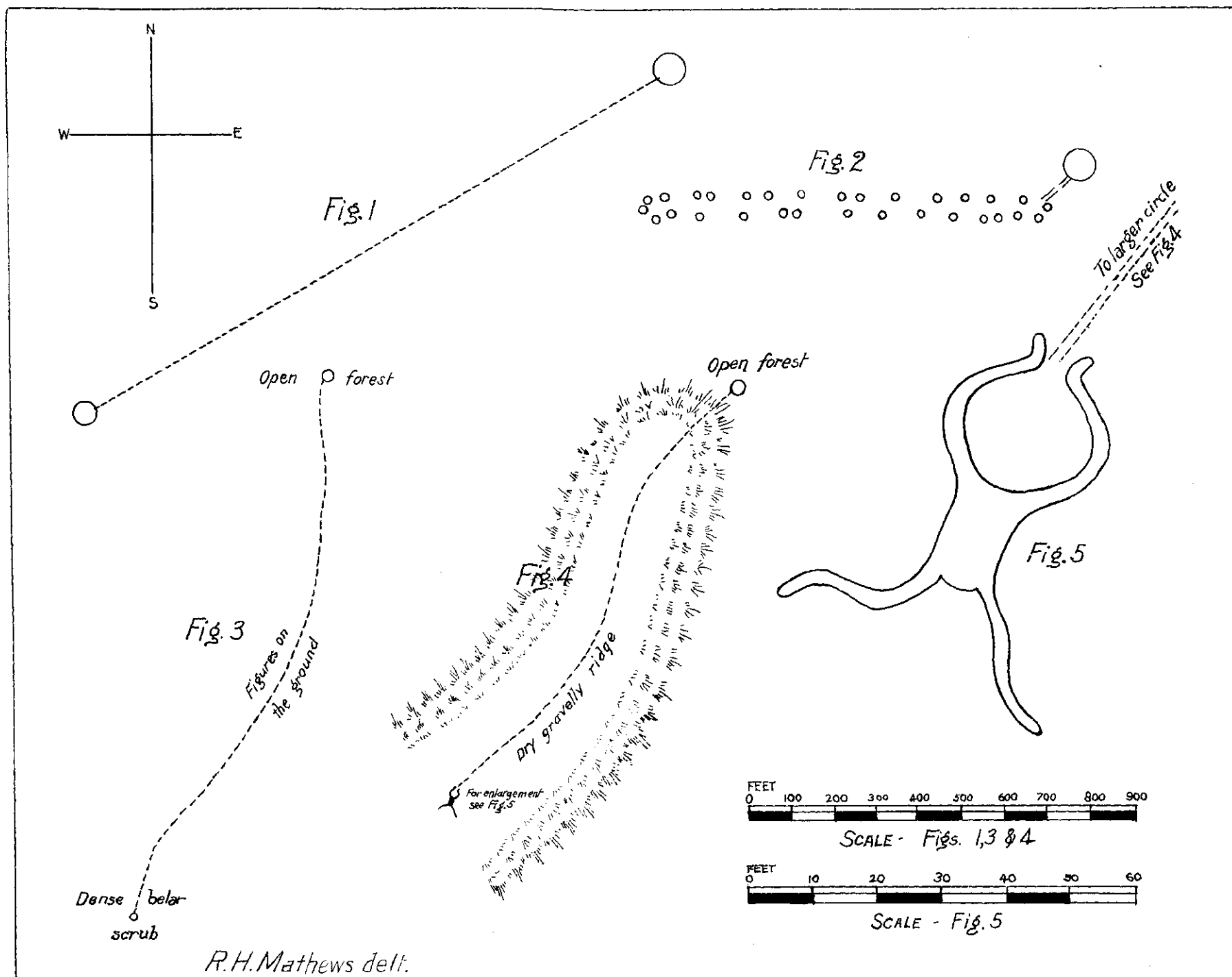


SCALE - Figs. 1-7



SCALE - Figs. 8-15

R.H. Mathews delr.



years ago. I do this because the books containing the narratives to which I will refer are now out of print, and can be found only in few libraries. I have introduced them here for the purpose of reference and comparison, and to give them publicity in our *Journal* for the benefit of all who may wish to study the subject.

The earliest description of the Bora with which I am acquainted is that given by Lieut.-Col. Collins, in his *Account of the English Colony of N. S. Wales*, published in 1804, pp. 365-374.—This Bora, at which fifteen youths were initiated, was held at the head of Farm Cove, Sydney, in February 1795, nearly one hundred years ago. The Bora-ground was oval in form, and measured twenty-seven feet in length by eighteen feet in width, and was cleared of grass and timber. In the evening the novices were placed sitting down, with their legs crossed under them, at one end of this ground, in which position they were to remain all night. Two *coradgies*\* then threw themselves prostrate on the ground, and rolled about in apparent agony. After a time each of them pretended to bring up a bone out of his mouth. It being by this time quite dark, Mr. Collins left the place for the night. On his return the following morning, the boys were placed at the head of the circle, while the operators, some twenty in number, paraded round it on their hands and feet, imitating dogs. Then two men appeared, one carrying on his shoulders a kangaroo, the other carrying a load of brush wood. After this, the boys were left sitting in their place in the circle for about an hour, during which time the actors went into a valley near the place, and fitted themselves with long tails made of grass, which they fastened to the hinder part of their girdles, and came jumping back to the Bora ground imitating a mob of kangaroos. They then threw off their grass tails, and each of them caught up one of the boys, and carried him on his shoulders to the last scene of this extraordinary exhibition, which was a short distance off. Here the boys were let down from the shoulders of the men, and after some further very secret preliminaries, the boys were led over the prostrate

\* The native name for wizard.

bodies of a number of blackfellows lying flat on their faces on the ground. Following this there was a spectacular display of native weapons, after which the ceremony of knocking out the front tooth commenced. The first boy to be operated upon was seated on the shoulders of one of the men, who sat on the grass. The boy's gum was lanced with one of the bones produced by the *coradgies*. A wooden peg was then placed against the tooth and hit by a stone, which forced out the tooth. After this a girdle was tied round his waist, in which was stuck a wooden sword; a ligature was put round his head, in which was placed slips of grass tree, which being white, had a curious and pleasing affect. The same operation was performed on each of the boys, after which the assemblage dispersed.

The next authentic account of the Bora is that contained in Mr. J. Henderson's work, *Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, published in 1832, pp. 145-148. This Bora was held near Wellington in this Colony, sixty or seventy years ago, and I will give the account of it in Mr. Henderson's own words:—"The portion of the valley selected for performing this sacred rite was beautifully situated in a secluded part of the forest, near the banks of the river Macquarie. A long straight avenue of trees extended for about a mile, and these were carved on each side with various devices, most of which were intended to represent serpents in all their different attitudes. On the upper extremity of this, the earth had been heaped up so as to resemble the gigantic figure of a human being extended on his breast, while through the whole length of this sylvan temple, a variety of other characters were observed rudely imprinted on the turf. The devices represented snakes, opossums, emus, kangaroos, the cockchafer, &c. The evil spirit seemed to be described under the form of an eagle; an imitation of his eyrie formed a conspicuous object at the upper end of the grove. At the lower extremity of the avenue, a narrow pathway turned off to the left, and soon terminated in a circle, which was enclosed by a wall composed merely of loose earth.

"The candidate was first taken to the upper end of the avenue, and was there instructed by the old men in their mythology; and while conducting him down the long line of trees the meaning of all the various symbols was particularly detailed. At the same time certain dramatic representations were performed, the principal one being the destruction of the eagle-hawk by Baiamai. The youth was then brought into the circular enclosure, where he had one of his upper front teeth knocked out with a stone, after which he was sent into the bush for a time. On his return to the tribe he was permitted to wear a slight girdle, composed of narrow stripes of opossum skin, and to carry the spear and other war arms like men."

Mr. Henderson gives a plan of this Bora-ground which is highly interesting and valuable, because it is the only plan given by early writers on this subject. This plan shows the position of the circle, the narrow pathway, and the avenue; also, the position of the trees along this avenue, and some of the devices which were carved upon them. I have thought Mr. Henderson's plan of sufficient importance to reproduce that part of it which shows the Bora-ground, omitting the carvings on the trees. (Plate 4, fig. 2.)

An account of a Bora held between the Lower Castlereagh and Barwon Rivers in 1862, more than thirty years ago is given by Rev. W. Ridley in his work, *Kamilaroi and Other Australian Languages*, pp. 154, 155. A place was cleared and surrounded with bushes laid as a fence, like a sheep-yard, but the dimensions of the enclosure are not given. Within this bush fence were three old men. After describing some preliminary ceremonies, Mr. Ridley says, "the old men called in the youths one by one, and as each came in, by leaping over the fence, one of the old men flogged him as hard as he could with a strip of bark two feet long and six or eight inches wide. Then, with two stones, one used as a peg the other as a hammer, they broke off, and knocked out one of his front teeth, leaving the root of the tooth in his jaw. During the next four days they were allowed to walk about within a short distance, and at the end of that time they were again brought

one by one into the enclosure, and compelled to eat the excrement of old women, mixed with *tao*, the root of a plant called pigweed. After this the young men were allowed to go away. White men have stated that this custom was observed in several parts, but it is only fair to state that some of the aborigines have strenuously denied the truth of it. From all I have heard, I conclude that it is actually observed by some tribes, but not by all." See also, *Anthr. Jour.* VII, p. 252.

With the view of testing the correctness of Mr. Ridley's conclusions, I have made enquiries of squatters and station managers who have lived in the back country and had opportunities of observing the customs of the blacks for many years. Mr. Jackson, now manager of Dulwich Estate, near Singleton, informs me that a Bora was held on the Namoi River near Wee Waa, about 1860 or 1861. He was at that time managing Mr. Quinn's station, on which a large number of blacks were employed, and was well acquainted with "Bunna Bunna Jack," the head-man at the Bora, who at Mr. Jackson's request, permitted him to be present at the ceremonies. There were about six or seven young blacks to be initiated, averaging about fourteen years of age. Some human excrement was collected on a sheet of bark, and each of the novices had to eat a small portion of it. This took place in Mr. Jackson's presence, so that he was an eye witness of what he relates.

Mr. James A. Glass, of Long Point, near Singleton, states that in 1862 a Bora was held on Eurie Eurie run, on the Barwon River, which at that time belonged to his father. A black boy named "Jacky," and a half-caste called "Billy Clark," who were both in Mr. Glass' father's service on the station named, attended this Bora for the purpose of being initiated; and on their return my informant states that "Jacky" had a tooth out of the front of his mouth, whilst the half-caste did not exhibit this mutilation. On being asked the reason of this, they stated that at the Bora they had been allowed the option of having a front tooth knocked out, or eating the excrement of an old gin; "Jacky" preferred the former, and "Billy Clark" the latter alternative.

Mr. George Gibson, owner of the Wullamgambone run, on the Mole, informs me that he has resided in that part of the country for more than forty-five years, and is well acquainted with the blacks and their customs, and can speak their language fluently. He states that the natives of the Bogan and Macquarie Rivers have admitted to him, in answer to his enquiries, that the custom of eating human ordure at the ceremony of the Bora was practised among them, and that their mode of eating it was to mix it with wild honey. He says he got this information from about half a dozen different blackfellows, at various times, and is quite satisfied of the truth of it. The Bora was called *bûrbûng* by these blacks.

Mr. A. Brown, the owner of a station on the Castlereagh River, informed me that the blacks had told him that the reason for eating human ordure at the Bora ceremonies was to impress upon the novices that if they did not strictly carry out the rites and ceremonies which they were commanded by Baiamai to perform, they would have to eat excrement "in the land of the hereafter."

From the enquiries I have made I am forced to the same conclusion as that arrived at by Mr. Ridley, that there can be no doubt the practice referred to was observed by some tribes, but was not general.

Mr. Ridley describes another Bora-ground near the junction of the Page and Isis Rivers. It was circular in form, about a hundred and fifty yards in circumference, and was bounded by a raised earthen path. In the centre of this circle was a large fire. There was the horizontal figure of a man, roughly modelled by laying down sticks and covering them with earth, so as to raise it from four to seven inches above the ground. This figure was twenty-two feet long, twelve feet wide from hand to hand, the width of the body being four feet. Around this spot were one hundred or one hundred and twenty trees marked, with a tomahawk in various patterns. While the young men were awaiting the ceremony of initiation they were made to lie flat on the ground, just in the posture of the figure above described. The candidates

were made to pass through an ordeal of pain, but there was no knocking out of a tooth, nor was the revolting custom above mentioned practised by the blacks of that locality.—*Anthr. Jour.*, VII., p. 255. *Kamilaroi and Other Australian Languages*, p. 156.

I will now state how I obtained the information respecting the Bora which forms the subject of this paper. Early in the present year I heard that the blacks were mustering at Gundabloui near Mogil Mogil, for the purpose of holding a Bora, and as I was very busy at home, and could not possibly get away to visit the place myself, I wrote to Mr. J. T. Crawley, the Police Officer stationed at Mogil Mogil, fifteen miles from Gundabloui, who is well acquainted with the blacks of that district, and in whom I knew I could place entire confidence, and asked him to collect the fullest details he could. I told him all the points on which I wanted information, and gave him an outline of the procedure at Boras generally. I also gave him exhaustive directions how to proceed in collecting the details.

This gentleman set about the duty in an enthusiastic manner, and wrote to me from time to time, communicating the results of his observations and enquiries; and in my replies I drew his attention to any points requiring further investigation. In one of his letters he says:—"Although the blacks were very reluctant and reticent at first, they soon put faith in me, and made me promise that any information they gave me would not be divulged to local people or be published in local papers. One would be reticent if another were present, so I had to question them separately and unknown to each other, and in this way I found that one corroborated the other, which gave me full confidence in the truth of their statements." In another letter he says: "they would not permit me to be present during their ceremonies at the sacred circle, for it was guarded day and night in turns, but as soon as the ground was abandoned, I visited it, and took full descriptions and made sketches of everything on it." A large quantity of correspondence passed between myself and Mr. Crawley, who displayed great zeal and industry in collecting details relating to



the numerous difficult points submitted to him. From the information thus obtained I have been able to prepare a full account of this Bora from its commencement to its close.

*Mustering the Tribes.*—About two years ago a Bora was held at Kunopia on the Boomi River, and after its conclusion two of the head-men of the aboriginal tribes of that part of the country who are known amongst the Europeans as "Billy Whiteman" and "Moogan Billy" arranged with the head-man of the tribes about Gundabloui, who is known as "Jack Bagot," that a Bora should be held in the last named district, for the purpose of initiating a number of young men who could not attend the Kunopia Bora, and also to finally admit some of those who had been there initiated. The Kunopia head-men gave Jack Bagot three boomerangs,\* according to custom, as tokens of their concurrence, and in due course he visited all the neighbouring tribes for the purpose of consulting the several head-men about making the necessary arrangements in regard to the best time and place for holding the Bora. These preliminary duties occupied him for a considerable time, and on his return to Gundabloui a few months before last Christmas, he despatched messengers† to all the places he had recently visited, to inform the blacks that a Bora would be held at Gundabloui, and requiring them to assemble there at a certain time. Some of the messengers were men who had been initiated, and who went on their mission alone; but two of the messengers were half-castes who had never been at a Bora, and in their case each was accompanied by an old man until the first camp was reached, when the old man returned to the camp he had left. From there the messenger was similarly escorted by an old man to the next camp, when he also returned to his own tribe. In this manner these half-castes were conducted from camp to camp

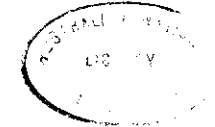
\* *Anthr. Journ.*, VII., p. 252.

† I endeavoured to ascertain whether these messengers were of the same *totem* as Jack Bagot, the principal head-man who summoned the Bora, and also if the head-men of the tribes to whom they were sent were likewise of the same *totem*, but was unable to obtain satisfactory particulars.

until their respective destinations were reached. The initiated messengers, as before stated, went from camp to camp without any convoy.

The messengers went away separately, each having his own route, and before being despatched they were each provided with a piece of wallaby skin,\* as an emblem of their mission, which they had to keep hung in front of them by means of a string tied round the waist; and they were instructed to wear this badge all the time they were engaged in this duty. On the first evening of the arrival of one of these messengers at a camp, he would strip quite naked, paint himself with raddle, and appear with the piece of wallaby skin hanging in front as a covering. He then went through a ceremonial dance before the tribe, after which he delivered his message to the head-men. The same procedure was gone through at every camp visited by him until he reached his final destination. It may be mentioned that the messengers sent out to muster the tribes were considered persons of some importance by the blacks whom they visited. When a messenger at length arrived at the last of the camps he had been directed to summon, he remained with the blacks there until they were ready to accompany him, when the return journey to the Bora-ground was commenced, the assemblage being increased by a fresh contingent of natives at each of the places visited by the messenger on his way out. During the journey to the Bora ground, when the contingents camped at night, they sometimes had dances and songs at the camp fire. When this concourse neared the Bora camp, one of the chief-men went a-head and informed those already assembled, of the near approach of the visitors. All the men in that camp were then mustered with their weapons of war in their hands, and on the new comers approaching they were welcomed with volleys of joyous shouting, which they returned. Then the messenger who had escorted them thither, having now finished the task assigned

\* Ridley says, "The herald who summons the tribes to the Bora bears in his hand a boomerang, and a spear with a padamelon skin hanging upon it."—*Kamilaroi and Other Australian Languages*, p. 153.



him, was released from further duty. The same course was followed on the arrival of each messenger with his contingent at the main camp. These arrivals generally took place about night-fall, and appeared to have been so arranged. When all the contingents had arrived, the head-men fixed the day on which the great ceremony should commence.

*The Camp.*—The general encampment consisted of three sections; the blacks who had come from Mogil Mogil, Collarendabri and Walgett occupied one section; those from Kunopia, Mungindi and Welltown another; those from the Moonie and St. George forming a third section. The blacks who thus went into sections by themselves all belonged to the same tribe, therefore the whole concourse assembled in this camp represented three distinct tribes all belonging to the same community; and each tribe occupied that side of the main camp which faced the direction of their own *tauri*, or country.\* The blacks from Welltown and St. George had the farthest to travel to reach the Bora-ground—the distance being over one hundred miles. The Narran and Namoi tribes had been invited, but did not attend. The aborigines from the Moonie, St. George and Welltown belonged to Queensland. The blacks of all ages assembled to witness this Bora numbered about two hundred and three persons, comprising ninety-six men, fifty-eight women, and forty-nine children. This includes half-castes—the same privileges being accorded to them as to natives of full blood. The Aborigines Protection Board, on being informed that the Bora was to be held, authorised the issue of rations to the aged blacks and children; and on one occasion a special issue of a hundred half-rations was made to the able bodied natives.

*The Bora Ground.*—While the messengers were away mustering the tribes who had been invited to participate in the ceremonies, some of the head-men, assisted by young fellows who had been to at least one Bora, were employed preparing the ground, which was about half-a-mile westerly from the general encampment, and

\* *Jour. Roy. Soc., N.S.W.*, xxiii., p. 37.

was situated in a dense scrub of sandalwood and coolabah. The main camp was about half a-mile westerly from the town of Gundabloui, the latter being on both sides of the Moonie River, from whence water was obtained by the blacks for camp use. It is the custom for that section of the community which called the tribes together, to prepare the ground, and get everything ready for the arrival of the various contingents. The locality is situated in the country of the head-man who calls the assembly.—*Anthr. Jour.*, xiii., p. 440.

Two circles had been formed on the ground, very much resembling the rings seen at a circus (*Plate 4*, fig. 1). These circles were cleared of all timber and grass, and carefully swept; and the surface of the ground within them levelled, and slightly hollowed so as to obtain sufficient loose earth to form the outer walls, which were about a foot high. The largest of the circles was about seventy feet in diameter, most regular in shape, and in the centre stood a pole about ten feet high, with a bunch of emu feathers tied on top; in the western wall of this enclosure an opening about five feet in extent was left as an entrance. Around this circle on all sides except the opening mentioned, was a bush fence composed of a number of forks set in the ground, with rails from one to the other, and against these rails bushes were laid. From the opening referred to, an ordinary uncleared bush track ran about S. 60° W. for about twenty-three chains, connecting with another and smaller circle about fifteen yards in diameter. This ring was not so perfect in shape as the other, and the walls were roughly made; there was, moreover, no opening left for the purpose of ingress or egress, as in the other circle, but any one wishing to enter it had to step over the wall. Near the centre of this circle were two saplings which had been taken out of the ground by the roots; the branches were then cut level across, after which they were fixed in the ground with their roots upward. Although the surrounding country is level, the dense scrub prevented one circle being seen from the other.

On leaving the larger circle, and proceeding along the pathway, nothing was noticeable for about one hundred and forty yards, then for a distance of about three hundred and twenty yards numerous devices and figures were carved in the turf, extending about twenty feet back from the track on either side. In order to obtain a clean even space on which to work, the loose surface soil had been removed and piled into little heaps like ant hills, and the earth cut out in carving the outlines of the figures was disposed of in the same manner; every heap having a small stick stuck upright in the top of it, which had rather a pleasing effect.

The most interesting of these carvings in the soil was a group of twelve persons, life size, with their heads in the direction of the smaller circle, and were on the south side of the pathway. (*Plate 3, fig. 1.*) All the figures were joined together—the hands and feet of one joining the hands and feet of others. These figures were formed by cutting a nick or groove in the ground along the outline of each. They represented young men who were with Baiamai at his first camp.

A large number of devices, somewhat similar in character to those seen on trees about Bora grounds were outlined by a groove cut in the soil, about two inches deep, and from two to three inches wide, cut out with tomahawks and sharpened sticks. Three of the most representative of these are reproduced on *Plate 3, figs. 5, 6, 7.* There were about forty of these designs cut in the ground in various places and at irregular intervals throughout the space of three hundred and twenty yards before mentioned. Each one had a separate pattern, and some were on one side of the path, and some on the other; they are remarkable for their great number and variety. Some of the largest of these designs were from ten to fifteen feet square, but others were much smaller.

On the northern side of the path was a representation of a horse and parts of a vehicle, outlined by carving in the soil like the preceding; and near a stump which was naturally in that place, was the effigy of a blackfellow composed of sticks and old clothes, like a scare-crow, having round his neck a string from which was

suspended a crescent shaped piece of tin resembling the brass plate sometimes given by Europeans to aboriginal kings. The native artist who did this group said it was purely imaginary, and was meant as a humorous representation of an old king going to the Bora, and having a break-down on the road.

The foregoing comprise all the carvings cut in the soil, which I have distinguished from raised earthen figures formed on the surface of the ground, which I will next describe.

About two hundred and thirty yards from the smaller circle, and about six feet from the southern side of the path, and at right angles to it, was the horizontal figure of a man about fifteen feet in length and otherwise built in proportion, composed of logs covered with earth, the height of the chest being two and a-half feet from the ground, and the feet pointing towards the track; this the blacks said represented Baiamai, who presides over the ceremonies of the Bora. On the opposite side of the path, with the feet towards it, was a life-sized figure which represented Baiamai's female consort, whom the blacks call Gunnanbeely. (*Plate 3, figs. 3 and 4.*) They say that Baiamai gave them the country and all that is in it for their use, after which he and Gunnanbeely went away. A short distance from these, on the north side of the track, the figure of a man and woman were formed on the ground in the same manner; they were lying together behind a tree, and were partly hidden. The blacks said these represented the original parents of that tribe, whom they call *Boobardy* and *Numbardy*—meaning father and mother respectively.

On the northern side of the pathway was the life-sized figure of an emu formed with raised earth, with its head towards the smaller circle and a spear stuck in its body, the other end of the spear resting against a tree. (*Plate 3, fig. 13.*)\*

The figures of two snakes,† each about fifteen feet long, were formed of raised earth; they were lying beside each other, parallel

\* The figure of the emu on Bora grounds has been noticed by different writers. See *Anthr. Journ.* VII., p. 255, *Ib.* XIII., p. 452, and Henderson's *Obs. Col. N. S. Wales and V. D. L.*, pp. 145–148.

† Henderson says that snakes were delineated on the turf at the Bora he visited near Wellington in 1832.

to the track, and on the south side of it, with their heads in contrary directions. (*Plate 3, fig. 2.*) These represent a large snake called by the natives "mungan," and its flesh is preferred to that of other snakes.

The body of a bullock was formed by logs covered with earth, on one end of which was laid a dry skeleton of a bullock's head, with the horns on it, and a stick stuck in the other end of it for a tail.

There was a mound of earth, four feet long, representing a grave, on the north side of the pathway. On opening this it contained some old clothes placed in a sheet of bark, which was doubled round them and fastened by a cord to keep it from opening, showing the way natives are buried.

On the south side of the track was a life-size male figure cut out of bark, and placed on top of some raised earth about nine inches high, so as to resemble a man lying on the ground. On the other side of the path, opposite to this, was the figure of a female formed in the same way. These represented the men and women of the tribes.

Not far from the track were three small gunyahs made of bark, indicating the dwellings of the natives. Two of these were on the southern, and one on the northern side of the path.

At intervals along the track, some being on one side and some on the other, were sixteen bushes naturally growing there, containing representations of birds' nests, in which were placed stones and prickly pears for eggs. Dispersed along the track in the same manner were half a dozen imitations of caterpillars' nests, made of about a quart of sand tied up in cloths like puddings, and hung on trees; the caterpillars\* were represented by small leaves of the prickly pear threaded on a string by means of a hole through one end of them, and the string tied round the tree. These nests, the natives say, represent the gifts of Baiamai to them.

\* Representations of the cockchafer were shown on the Bora ground described by Mr. Henderson.

A short distance from the image of Baiamai was the imitation of an eagle-hawk's nest\* in a tree, twenty feet from the ground. The blacks said there was an eagle-hawk's nest near Baiamai's first home, and that he chased the eagle-hawk away.

Not more than a dozen trees were carved, none being marked higher than a man could reach from the ground. Five of the most representative of these are delineated in *Plate 3, figs. 8 to 12.* I may add that suitable trees for carving were scarce, the timber consisting chiefly of small scrub trees.

On the northern side of the track, near the effigy of the old king, was the figure of an iguana about three feet long, cut out of bark and fastened to a tree.

A figure of the sun two feet in diameter, and one of the moon eighteen inches, were cut out of bark, and hung on trees; the sun being at the eastern and the moon at the western extremity of the symbolical representations I have been describing—perhaps to indicate the sources of illumination by day and night. (*Plate 3, figs. 14 and 15.*)

Not far from the image of the sun were two male figures cut out of bark, and fixed up against trees, one on each side of the pathway. One of these had his head ornamented with emu's feathers, and the other held in his hand a *hielaman*, or native shield. These figures gave a visitor the impression that they were warriors who had been placed there to guard the entrance to the mystic silvan temple beyond. The natives said these figures represented the two sons of Baiamai—Cobbarailbah and Byalla-burra.

On the track, about forty yards from the figure of Baiamai, in the direction of the larger circle, was a big fire which was kept burning day and night, called "Baiamai's fire."

From the time the Bora was commenced until the ground was abandoned, two of the old men kept guard over it day and

\* See Henderson's remarks at p. 101 of this paper, in reference to an eagle's eyrie observed on the Bora ground described by him in 1832.

night; they camped at Baiamai's fire, and had dogs to give the alarm if any stranger approached. All the men of the tribes took their turn in watching the ground, and there were always two of them on this duty at the same time.

One of the natives told my informant that the Bora ground represents Baiamai's first camp,\* the people who were with him while there, and the gifts he presented them with; the figures on the ground and the marked trees are emblematical of the surroundings of such camp. They also state that Baiamai intended the larger circle for the recreation of the women and children—this is why it is greater in extent than the other, which is only intended to accommodate a few.

The Bora ground was ready for more than a month before all the mobs of blacks had mustered, and during this interval the head-men would go and sit around Baiamai's fire, and arrange matters of tribal concern, and discuss subjects in connection with the ceremonies which were shortly to take place. Sometimes these discussions would lead to warmth and unpleasantness, but would always terminate amicably. While the blacks already assembled at the main camp were waiting for the arrival of other contingents, the young men would go out hunting or fishing during the day. The women and children would find employment for themselves about the camp or in assisting the men. During this period there were songs and dances at the camp fire nearly every night. Mr. J. L. Gwydir, manager of Mr. J. Tyson's Gundabloui Station, close by, gave the blacks an allowance of beef free of charge, in addition to the Government rations before referred to.

*The Ceremonies.*—When at length the last mob of natives had arrived, the ceremonies of the Bora commenced. Every forenoon the initiated blacks went to the Bora ground, and walked about looking at the carvings and other imagery there displayed, spending some of their time talking about these things near Baiamai's

\* Ridley says, "the ground on which the Bora is celebrated is Baiamai's ground."—*Anthr. Journ.*, VII., p. 243.

fire, the gins and novices remaining at the main camp. In the afternoon, the mothers of the novices or their nearest female relatives\* who had them in charge, painted them with red ochre and grease, after which they decorated their necks with beads, and their hair with feathers. When the novices were thus ornamented, they marched in single file from the main camp to the larger circle, keeping their eyes fixed on the ground. The women who had charge of them, accompanied by the rest of the women in the camp, as well as the children, walked with the novices, watching that they did not raise their eyes from the ground. The mothers, or relatives who had charge of the boys, were naked to the waist, and were painted with raddle and pipeclay. On arrival at the large circle, the boys entered it through the opening previously described, and sat down on the raised border of the circle, their feet being within it. The Mogil Mogil, Collarendabri and Walgett boys sat on the southern side of the entrance of the circle; the Mungindi, Kunopia and Welltown boys sat in a similar manner on the opposite side of the entrance; and on the left of the last named, the boys of the Moonie and St. George tribes took up their position in the same way;—the boys of the three tribes thus sitting in that part of the circle which faced their respective districts. As soon as the boys had sat down, the women and children also entered the circle, and commenced to dance, sing, and play. During all this time the boys were required to keep their eyes cast down. About sun-set, the men, who had been at the Bora ground, as before stated, since the forenoon, joined the assemblage at the larger circle, and took part in a short dance. After this, all hands, with the exception of the two men left to guard the ground, before referred to, went back to the main camp, the boys being escorted on the return march in the same manner as on their way out. This concluded the ceremonies for the day, and nothing more was done on the Bora ground till the following morning.

\* When the mother of the novice is dead, or is unable to be present, it is usual for one of her sisters, *own* or *tribal*, who would therefore be the boy's "tribal" mother, to attend, and discharge the mother's duty.

At the main camp during the early part of nearly every night, one of the masters of the ceremonies would go alone into the bush a short distance from the camp, and for about two hours would sound a wooden instrument which these blacks call *murrawan*, which is supposed to represent the voice of Durramoolan,\* their native name for the evil spirit, who rules in the night.

During the time the instrument referred to was being sounded in the adjacent forest, the men of the tribes would dance, yell, and make hideous noises, and all the gins would sing in a monotonous chant, and beat time; those of each tribe singing their own peculiar song. The gins sat down in a line on one side of the camp fire, having on their laps a piece of thin dry bark with a cloth thrown over it, on which they beat time with both hands. Such of the old men who were too infirm to dance, also beat time with two boomerangs or time sticks, one in each hand. The dancers were on the other side of the fire, retiring into the darkness, or advancing to the light as the sentiment seemed to require. The various contingents danced alternately, being in turn performers and audience. The uninitiated youths did not take part in these dances, but will be allowed to dance with the men at the next Bora they go to. These performances were gone through for the instruction as well as the amusement of the novices.

The ceremonies I have been describing were gone through from day to day with slight variations, for upwards of three weeks. At

\* Howitt says:—"Daramulun was not everywhere thought to be a malevolent spirit, but he was dreaded as one who could severely punish the trespasses committed against their tribal ordinances. He, it is said, instituted the ceremonies of the initiation of youths; he made the original *mudji*, (bull-roarer) and the noise made by it is the voice of Daramulun."—*Anthr. Journ.* XIII., p. 192 and 446.

Wyndham states, that among the blacks of the western parts of New England, "the principal man who presided over the Bora personated the Devil, and he made a most terrific noise with a bull-roarer."—*Jour. Roy. Soc., N.S.W.*, XXIII., p. 38.

Greenway says:—"Among the Kamilaroi tribes about Bundarra, Turramulan is represented at the Bora by an old man learned in all the laws and traditions, rites and ceremonies, and assumes to be endowed with supernatural powers."—*Anthr. Journ.*, VII., p. 243.

the end of this time, one morning about sunrise, all the blacks, men, women and children, assembled adjacent to the larger circle. All the males, including the novices, then stripped naked, and painted their bodies with red ochre and grease. The men then formed into a group and danced in front of the women and children. The mothers of those to be initiated, or their female relatives discharging the parental duty, stood in the front row of the women during this dance, and at its conclusion they commanded the novices to enter the circle, thus relinquishing their authority over them. Up to this time the women retained possession of the youths, but now surrendered them to the headmen of the tribes. The youths then walked into the circle through the opening before described, the members of the three tribes keeping by themselves, thus forming three distinct sections within the ring.

Each novice had a guardian or sponsor assigned him by the headmen, or masters of the ceremonies, this guardian being selected from among the initiated men of the class and totem with which he was, by the tribal laws, entitled to intermarry.\*

As soon as all the novices were inside the circle, the women and children were made to lie face downwards on the ground on the outside of the ring, on that side of it farthest from the pathway, and their heads were closely covered up with rugs and blankets to prevent them from seeing what was to take place. Some of the old men were deputed to see that this formality was strictly carried out. When the gins and children were securely covered up, the guardians or sponsors entered the circle, and each caught his novice by the hand and led him to a convenient place within it, and painted him with pipeclay, those of each tribe using a distinguishing pattern. The guardians also adorned each of the

\* Howitt says:—"The novice is taken from among the assembled women by the initiated men of that part of the community to which belong the women, as regards whom he has inherited potential marital rights. The men who especially instruct him, and watch over him during the ceremonies, are the brothers—own or tribal—of those women."—*Trans Aus. Assoc. Adv. Sci.*, III., p. 345.

youths with a kilt of wallaby skin suspended in front by means of a girdle tied round the waist; these badges must be kept by the recruits till they have passed through another Bora.\* Such of the adult males as were not engaged in the ceremonies also entered the ring if they chose, and stood with the people of their respective tribes.

As soon as the novices, who are called *wommarois*, were thus ornamented, their guardians took them by the arm above the elbow, and led them towards the smaller circle, with their eyes fixed on the ground, care being taken that they did not look at any of the figures as they passed along the track. Each guardian and his novice walked abreast—one pair following the other—thus forming a file of two and two. Each guardian gave his boy instructions as to his duty while on the Bora ground. When the procession of novices started the men who were present as spectators raised a shout. This shouting is kept up to cover the noise made by the departing guardians and their novices; the women not being supposed to know what has become of them.†

When the men and novices got out of sight of the larger circle, the women and children were permitted to rise from the prostrate position in which they had been placed, and were escorted back to the main camp by the old men left in charge of them. This was the last appearance of the women on the Bora ground.

On reaching the smaller circle, the *wommarois* were made to lie face downwards on the ground with their heads resting on the raised earth forming the boundary, and their feet from it. They were allowed to vary this posture by resting on their knees and elbows, with their heads bent to the ground—when they got tired of one position they could adopt the other—and during all this time they were forbidden to look up.

\* These kilts and girdles were similar in every respect to those worn by the messengers when summoning the tribes, as stated in an earlier part of this paper. Sometimes these kilts are made of kangaroo-rat skin.—*Anthr. Journ.*, XVIII., p. 321.

† *Anthr. Jour.* XIII., p. 442, note 3.

There were amongst the assemblage a number of young men who had been to one Bora before, and attended this one for further instruction; these are called *tuggabillas*, and had no guardians, but walked unrestrained with the old men all over the Bora ground, and everything on it was fully explained to them, so that when they become old men they may be able to produce similar figures and explain their meaning to the young men of the tribe, so that their customs and traditions, rites and ceremonies, may be handed down from one generation to another.

After the *wommarois* had been lying down as before stated, for about two hours, the *tuggabillas* were brought and placed standing round the outside of the ring. Two old men\* then entered it, and showed them Bora dances, after which the old men each ascended one of the saplings before referred to, and sitting on the roots sang traditional Bora songs in a low monotonous chant. These performances continued for about an hour, when the old men retired, and two of the most accomplished of the *tuggabillas* took their places within the circle. The *wommarois* were now allowed to rise, and were placed in a standing position around the outside of the ring, while receiving from the two *tuggabillas* similar instruction to that imparted by the old men. When this was concluded the *wommarois* resumed their former prone position around the circle. The *tuggabillas* then withdrew, and went over the Bora ground again with the old men.

About one o'clock in the afternoon, the head-men and guardians called the novitiates out of the circle, and took them away about six miles to a place called Mungaroo. This was the last scene enacted at the Bora ground, which was now finally abandoned. The journey to Mungaroo from the Bora ground was performed at a leisurely walk, during which the catechumens were not allowed to gaze about them, nor to show any levity of manner. As they walked along their guardians were explaining to them the signifi-

\* These old men have sometimes been described as "wizards," and their performances have been called "magical dances."

cance of what they had gone through at the smaller circle. On their arrival at Mungaroo, the old men formed a camp on the edge of a scrub near water; and about one hundred and fifty yards from it in the scrub a separate camp was made for the boys. The latter consisted of a partial enclosure in the shape of a horse-shoe, the open end being that farthest from the men's camp. The width across the open end was about thirty feet, and the depth from there to the back wall about twenty feet,—the walls being about four feet high, and were formed of boughs. Across the open end small fires were kept burning, and when in this yard, the youths were never without a few of their guardians, who furnished them with food, and attended to their wants. Whilst in the yard they were not allowed to look up, but when out hunting or playing with the men they were allowed greater liberty. On leaving this yard in the morning or returning to it in the evening, the novitiates had to keep their eyes on the ground while the camp was within sight. Women were not permitted to approach either of these camps.

Many of the men unconnected with the ceremonies accompanied the men and catechumens to Mungaroo, but the women and children, and any of the men who were infirm or did not care to go, remained at the general camp. Mungaroo, which is on a warrambool of the same name, is a great place for marsupials and native game of all sorts. During the daytime the men and youths would strip and paint themselves with raddle and grease, and ornament themselves with kilts made of wallaby skin suspended in front by girdles round the waist, when they would all go into the bush and hunt. The old men taught the novitiates how to play the native games, to sing the songs of the tribe, and to dance certain corroborees which neither the gins nor the uninitiated are permitted to learn. They were also instructed in the sacred traditions and lore of the tribe; to show respect to the old men; and not to interfere with unprotected women.

On some of the days spent at this camp the men and boys cut grass and reeds, and tied them up so as to resemble kangaroo's

tails\*—these they stuck in their girdles and danced a corroboree, imitating kangaroos.†

At night the courage of the novices was tested by making them lie on the ground in the yard in charge of some of the men, who were instructed to observe them, while the old men would each take a youth who had been to at least one Bora before, and would thus go in pairs in different directions some distance into the adjacent scrub, where they would make hideous noises, and raise a terrific din, sounding the wooden instrument called *murrawan*, previously referred to, and during this time the youths were not allowed to exhibit any alarm. During the daytime these instruments were hidden away in great secrecy by the old men. This was carried on every night for about a week, at the end of which the secret wooden instruments were shown to the novices, and their mysterious significance was fully explained, after which they were placed on the camp fire and burnt.‡

On some days the novitiates would be ranged in a line in the bough yard before described in front of the old men, and those who had lately been admitted as men of the tribe, all of whom would go through many obscene gestures for the purpose of shocking the young fellows; and if the latter had shown the least sign of mirth or frivolity, they would have been hit over the head with a nullah nullah by an old man appointed to watch them. This pantomimic representation was enacted for the purpose of teaching them to abstain from masturbation, and from those offences which

\* The blacks told my informant the following legend about Baiamai and his two sons in regard to these tails.—They were out hunting one day and caught two kangaroos, and cut their tails off. The next Bora they went to Baiamai's sons danced with these tails tied behind them like kangaroos, and this custom has been followed by the tribes at all Boras ever since.

† At the Bora described by Collins, referred to at p. 100 of this paper, he mentions a similar dance.

‡ E. Palmer says, that "in the Bellinger River tribe, the humming instrument (bull-roarer) is called *yeemboomul*, and when the ceremony of the Bora is over, they burn it."—*Anthr. Journ.*, XIII., p. 296.



have been called "the abominations of the Cities of the Plain."\* During these performances, which took place in the day time, the men and novices would be naked and painted, and one or two of the men would act as guards to see that no one came upon them unawares.

The extraction of a front tooth was not practised by any section of the tribes assembled at this Bora, but while at the Mungaroo Camp the novices had their hair cut short, and a few of them who had beards had them cut off. The guardians and other men who accompanied them also had their hair and beards cut short in a similar manner. The cutting off of the hair was probably intended to take the place of knocking out a tooth, or the eating of human ordure, practised by some tribes as stated in previous pages of this paper.

The ceremonies at the camp at Mungaroo occupied between a week and ten days, at the conclusion of which they washed the red paint off their bodies and painted themselves white, and then started back to the camp at Gundabloui.

During the absence of the men and catechumens at Mungaroo, the women and children, assisted by such of the men who remained with them, had shifted the main camp about half a mile southerly from its former position.† About two hundred yards westerly from this new camp, a bough yard was erected, similar in size and shape to the one used by the novitiates during their stay in the

\* *Anthr. Journ.*, XIII., p. 450.

† A long and heated discussion took place with regard to the locality where the new camp should be erected. The Mungindi, Kunopia, and Welltown tribe wished to have it erected at Collybidgelah, seventeen miles from Gundabloui in the direction of Kunopia, and therefore seventeen miles nearer their respective districts. To have put the camp there would have caused great inconvenience to the other two tribes after the ceremonies were finished, their *tauri* being in the contrary direction. Eventually the arguments of the two latter tribes prevailed, and the new camp was formed in the place above stated.

It is customary at these ceremonies to remove the camp during the time the men and boys are away.—*Anthr. Journ.*, XIII., p. 454.

bush. The entrance to this yard was on the side farthest from the camp, and faced the direction of Mungaroo. When the men and boys started to return to the main camp one of the men went ahead, and announced that they would shortly arrive. All the children, and all the gins—with the exception of those next mentioned—lay down outside of the convex end of the yard, and were covered with bushes by the old men who had remained at the main camp. The mothers, or female guardians, then entered the enclosure, and formed into three groups according to their tribes, each group having a flag\* of their own, and taking up their position on that side of the enclosure nearest their own district. As soon as they were settled in their places, they were blindfolded by tying handkerchiefs over their eyes and round their heads. When all was ready, the messenger above referred to, went back and met the men and boys coming from Mungaroo, and they all came on and marched into the bough yard. Each guardian led his catechumen to his mother, or female relative discharging the parental duty, who felt the boy's hands and face till she was satisfied that he was the same person who was handed over to the men at the larger circle on the Bora ground. During this manipulation neither the women nor the boys were allowed to speak. The mothers then had their eyes uncovered, and the boys went through a short dance before them. During this dance the guardians withdrew, and a great smoke† was made by burning green bushes at the entrance to the yard. At the conclusion of the dance the catechumens plunged through the dense smoke, and proceeded with their guardians to a separate camp which had been provided for them in a sandalwood scrub about one hundred and fifty yards southerly from the new camp. They were not allowed to look back at the enclosure which they had just left; and as soon as they were out of sight, the women and children who had been lying down were allowed to rise and join the other women, after which they all returned to the main camp from which they had

\* The use of a flag is probably copied from the whitefellows.

† *Anthr. Journ.*, VII., p. 252; *Ib.*, XIII., p. 455.

come. The neophytes and their guardians remained in their own quarters until the tribes finally dispersed, and during this time the former were not allowed to speak to the women or children. This seclusion was enforced lest the young men, while the excitement of the Bora was fresh upon them, might divulge any of the mysteries in which they had been instructed.

This concluded the whole of the rites in connection with this Bora, and the tribes shortly afterwards dispersed and returned to their own districts. According to what could be gathered from the blacks, these novices will be under the surveillance of their guardians for about a couple of months longer before they will be allowed to associate with the women of the tribe.

The rites conducted on the Bora ground itself commenced about the 12th of February and continued till about the 10th of March. But from the time of the arrival of the first mob of blacks at the general encampment till the commencement of the ceremonies upwards of two months elapsed, owing to the non-arrival of some of the tribes who had long distances to travel.

The number of youths who had never been to a Bora before and attended this one for the purpose of initiation, was about twenty, three of whom were half-castes. They were not permitted to see any of the symbolical figures described in previous pages, or to have their significance explained to them. In order to obtain this knowledge they must attend another Bora, when they will be shown all that may be on or around the Bora ground where they may assemble. Until then, also, they are forbidden to eat certain of the choicest kinds of food; amongst the animals which they are forbidden to eat may be enumerated the cod fish, the porcupine, the yellow iguana, the black iguana, &c.\* The ages of these twenty recruits ran from about twelve to twenty years, but three or four of them, whom circumstances had prevented from attending previous Boras, were between twenty-five and thirty years of age. Besides these, there were about twenty-three young men who had

\* These animals are probably *totems*.

been at one Bora previously, and attended this one to be further instructed or admitted as full men of the tribe. As stated before, these young men were allowed to see everything upon the Bora ground, and had all the devices explained to them. Five or six of these were half-castes. It will therefore be seen that in all about forty-three young men attended the Bora I have been describing.

Many of the blacks who attended this Bora could speak fairly good English, and were able to understand the purport of questions and give suitable replies. Some of them were very intelligent men who could give a clear and progressive account of all that took place. This was a very great advantage to me in collecting my information, because most previous writers have either found that they could not fully understand the blacks, or that the latter could not properly understand them. Henderson, in his able work before quoted, complains of this disadvantage.

*Other Bora Grounds.*—In conclusion I wish to refer to the form and position of Bora grounds generally, and the direction of one circle from another, because this part of the subject has received little or no attention from previous writers, and what little has been said is of a misleading character, owing to conclusions having been formed without sufficient investigation.

In the Boras described by Collins and Ridley respectively, referred to in this paper, they mention only one circle, and their descriptions of the grounds are likewise too meagre and indefinite to be of much value in that respect.

In the plan given by Henderson (*Plate 4, fig. 2*) which I have accurately copied from his work previously quoted in this paper, he does not state the direction of the pathway, but he shows that it was not straight. His plan does not appear to be drawn to scale, but it gives a good general representation of the Bora ground described by him.

Dr. Fraser, in a pamphlet published by him in 1892, gives a plan of a Bora ground showing a straight pathway running east from

the first circle to the sacred one, the latter being represented as the larger of the two; although at p. 16 he speaks of the "smaller or sacred circle,"—this being the description which his plan, facing that page, is supposed to illustrate.

Last Christmas time I visited a Bora ground near Wilpinjong Creek, in the Parish of Wilpinjong, County of Phillip, and took accurate measurements and bearings. In that instance the direction from the larger circle to the small one on some rising ground is S. 35° W., and the distance between them is seventeen chains. The track is not straight, and winds about as shown on *Plate 4*, fig. 4, following along the top of a spur which runs in the direction mentioned. The larger circle which was on sandy soil was almost obliterated, but I gathered that its diameter was about fifty feet. The small circle which is on a gravelly, well wooded ridge, is fairly well preserved. What appears to have been intended for the representation of a human figure on a very large scale is formed on the ground by means of raised earth, and is in the attitude assumed by blackfellows when dancing the corroboree.\* The body is fifteen feet long, ten feet wide, and two feet six inches high now, but was probably higher at the time it was used by the blacks. The arms are about twenty-four feet long; and the legs which would be twenty-six feet long if straight, are bent in such a manner as to enclose an oval space twenty-six feet by twenty-two feet, the heels approaching to within about four feet of each other. The space thus enclosed by the legs was used as the smaller or sacred circle of the Bora ground, and the track leading to the large circle emerged from between the heels. There are a few marked trees still standing around this figure and along the track, and the devices upon them are of the ordinary kind appearing at these places. Mr. Wm. Carr, who was with me, and who has resided

\* As stated at p. 101 of this paper, Henderson mentions a "gigantic human figure" as being moulded in the soil at one end of the Bora ground visited by him, which was perhaps such a figure as I am now describing. On one of the Bora grounds described by Ridley, quoted by me at p. 104, there was a rude figure of a man, twenty-two feet long, formed of sticks covered with earth.—*Anthr. Journ.*, VII., p. 255.

in the district since he was a boy, told me there were formerly numerous trees marked, but most of them have been burnt down by bush fires. He says he has known this Bora ground for more than thirty years, and that several Boras have been held there.

Mr. J. A. Glass told me that after the Bora which was held on the Eurie Eurie run, referred to at p. 103 of this paper, he frequently saw the Bora ground and took a good deal of notice of it. In answer to my enquiries he told me there were two circles cleared of timber, and enclosed by a narrow wall of loose earth about nine inches or a foot high. The larger circle was situated in some moderately open country about half a mile from the Barwon River; and in a belar scrub about a quarter of a mile south-westerly from this was a smaller circle, where the secret ceremonies were performed, with a track connecting them. This track was not straight, but was bent something in the way shown in *Plate 4*, fig. 3, following some high ground between the river and a watercourse. About half-way along this track, on each side of it there were delineated on the ground a few figures of men, iguanas, dogs, &c., and also some markings on trees. About three hundred yards southerly from the small circle, there was a gigantic figure of an iguana, about twenty feet long, composed of pieces of bark covered with earth, its head pointing towards the smaller circle.

I would also like to draw attention to the statements of some writers, which would lead us to suppose that Bora grounds were always formed on the tops of hills or mountains. Saddleir, at p. 12 of his *Australian Aborigines*, speaks of having seen such places on the "tops of hills"; and Dr. Fraser in his pamphlet before quoted speaks of having seen one on a "mountain spur"; and he says, "as usual the path from the lower to the sacred circle leads up hill."

The Bora referred to by Collins took place where the Botanical Gardens are now situated. Henderson says, the Bora ground he visited was in "a valley," and the sacred circle in which the tooth was knocked out, was at the lower end of it. Ridley describes a Bora ground which was situated in a "pleasant glen."

The one I have described in the parish of Wilpinjong, was on undulating country, surrounded by high hills, within less than a mile distant, which could have been selected if the natives had had any particular fancy for such a site. The Bora ground described by Glass was on level country, and the track from the larger to the sacred circle led about a quarter of a mile *down the creek*.

From the facts stated in the last few paragraphs it appears to me that the direction of one circle from the other is entirely dependent on the conformation of the country within which the ceremony is being held, and its fitness as regards a well-timbered and isolated spot for the location of the sacred circle with reference to the position of the main encampment. If the district is everywhere hilly, the Bora ground must be selected somewhere within it, but if the country consists partly of hills and partly of level country, the natives select a site easy of access and fit for camping purposes. It would seem that it is immaterial which circle is the higher of the two; and the track connecting them is likewise subject to the suitability of the ground; if the space between the two circles is all of the same character, the track runs straight, but if a better path can be obtained by going along some high ground, or for any other reason, the track is flexuous accordingly.

The circle at which the initiatory ceremonies commence, and at which the women and children are permitted to be present, is the larger of the two in all Bora grounds which have been brought under my notice, and has throughout my descriptions been taken as the starting point from which the direction of the other circle is given. But in order to prevent any possible ambiguity, it would perhaps be desirable to call the ring at which the women are allowed to appear, the "First," or "Public" circle, and the other one the "Second," or "Sacred" circle.

Earth is generally used in forming the boundaries of the circles, but one of those described by Mr. Ridley was bounded by "bushes laid as a fence," and I have heard of circles which were defined by logs and bushes, and others by logs and earth. Wyndham

mentions circles marked by stones, and others by sheaves of grass, &c., laid around.\* If the ground were easily worked, using the earth scraped from the surface in levelling it would be the best way of forming a boundary; but if the ground were hard and compact, as it generally is in dry seasons, enclosing the circle by boughs or small logs would be the easiest way of doing it. If stones were plentiful, laying them round the margin of the ring would be a convenient way of defining it. In any of these cases an enclosure is made, which is all that is required.

There must be a number of gentlemen living in the interior of the country where the natives are still numerous, who could furnish us with valuable information in regard to Bora ceremonies. If any of these gentlemen would take the trouble to collect all the information within their reach on this subject, and send it to me, their efforts will be suitably acknowledged.

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## OBSERVATIONS AND ORBIT-ELEMENTS OF COMET GALE, 1894.

By JOHN TEBBUTT, F.R.A.S.

[Read before the Royal Society of N. S. Wales, July 4, 1894.]

THE object of this paper is to furnish the Society with a statement of the Windsor observations of the comet recently visible here, and of the orbit-elements derived from them. Seeing that the comet itself was discovered in New South Wales and by a member of our Society, I thought it would be well that a record concerning it should appear in our Proceedings. On the evening of April the 1st, Mr. Walter F. Gale of Paddington, F.R.A.S., while scanning the heavens about the constellation *Horologium*, picked

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\* *Journ. Roy. Soc., N.S. Wales*, xxiii., p. 38.