Fitzherbert 2

Native Camp, Ooldea, E-W Line, 12/8/31

Dear Professor Fitzherbert,

I am forwarding with this note a few more vocabularies, fragmentary these, as poor Benilya was old and blind and mentally weak. I think you will find interest even in these small portions in the study of group dialect affinities.

I have found a more comprehensive book of Fowler Bay-Yuria-Bight- (and Eucla here and there) dialects and will transcribe it as soon as possible. I don’t think I sent you what I have noted as ‘Uleru’ wongga but? which is the usual ‘merged’ wongga of C.A.. Some of the men from whom I obtained it, included ‘Mt Sir Henry’ and Ayers Rock in their group waters. Uleru is as far as I remember the native name of either Ayers Rock waterhole or Mt Sir Henry. I shall find out which later on in the MS. I think it is Ayers Rock. The water there was forbidden to be approached by women tho’? its legendary origin is attributable to a woman who killed her son and making a bag of his skin carried water in it and put the water forever into Uleru (sometimes called “Ulerunya”, the ‘nya’ being a general terminator).These two books that I shall transcribe for the University are as complete as the first vocabulary I sent to Dr Cleland. I am glad I found them in my deedbox.

Those I am sending (9 pages) herewith are Wirongu Wongga (“Tarkula Road”, (Tarcoola)) from Binilya; Waldadhu or “Mula” (straight) Wongga by I-bari (m.) or Wongarri, his second name. 9 pages; Badu Wongga by Bunjerin (one page; Yulbari (Coast) Wongga by Ngindilya, Minbunga and Manjunya. 3 pages. And a page of ‘information’ from Ibari. These were obtained in one or other of my Fowlers Bay Camps in 1914-18. Bunjerin deserted his woman, who died of horrible disease at my Wirilya Camp in 1917, whose grave I had to dig and whose body I carried unaided to her grave. My other patients were all old and blind, Binilya amongst them.

I shall take Minjia’s ‘Yulbari Wongga’ next, some eighty or more pages it seems to promise, also the Uleru Book. As the days lengthen I can give more hours to the work of transcription. It is my hearty desire to show my appreciation of the Council’s kindly recognition of my work by giving of my best.

Yours faithfully

Daisy M. Bates

p.17 Ibari’s information, also part of package sent to Fitzherbert 12.8.31

Umaji’s father was Ngallia wongga (Wandunya Water). Umaji was stolen from Amungurra by Bunjerin. Her daughter came down with a new mob in 1929-30 and some months later joined the mother at Kalgoorlie. Ugumari was Ibari’s woman and was Wonggaii Wongga. She called ‘boy’ “badu turnga” and ‘girl or woman’ “Karrba”. Bima (m) and Jurdabi (f.) were also Wonggaii. Win-ngarri (Big Jimmy, now on the W. Coast) is Ngallia Wongga but he is such a plausible liar and is so ‘innocent’ in his lying that I accepted no information from him that was not corroborated in another place and camp. He is a German Mission Native, or was. His present woman Nyulongga was brought up at the Mission and they have sent two of their boys there. Ibari’s father’s name (or one of his names) was Dora. Wombaji with broken mouth and teeth – the result of a gun accident – is partly Ngallia (Wandunya Water) and so are Jujubaing (m.) and Kadajiding (m.). The last two may be dead. Tharnduring was ‘mula’ (‘mula’ means ‘straight’) Wongga. He died two years ago. Jujubaing (m.) is Yulurijja (is this Luritcha?). Kalbari, Tharnduring’s woman, was Munjinja (or as she called it, Munjinda) Wongga. She is now at German Mission (Kuyirba, white man’s name Koonibba).

Thanguna was Guyama’s woman but Guyama ‘picked up’ Umaji’s daughter and Thanguna lost her reason. I believe she was sent from Fowlers to an Adelaide asylum. Guyama’s new ‘wife’ ran away from him. He will not live long. On his last visit to me he looked very frail, but they must wander when the spirit moves them and I never try to curb their wanderlust.

These are just scrappy notes in the books of Ibari, Bunilya etc. You may visit Fowlers Bay district or Ooldea or Tarcoola and all these little items are worth knowing. But as I stated previously, many deny their group names, especially if there are few men in their group.

Minjia ‘picked up’ Bima at Fowlers in 1918. He was a ‘grandson’. Old Jundabil, whose grave is south of my camp (Ooldea) had Nalbin’s mother as his ‘first’ wife. Nalbin was his daughter (not own I think). He took Nalbin to wife and later took her daughter (his granddaughter) Windilya or Bildabi to wife. After his death Nalbin and Bildabi went to Fowlers. Windilya has some native man in that area.

Pray don’t mind these random notes. I take down every little item and later I can elaborate upon it through further inquiry etc. Nothing respecting the daily ways etc. of these dying people comes amiss.