

ABORIGINAL GROUPS IN THE *STEFANO* MANUSCRIPT

Josko Petkovic

The *Stefano* castaways were in contact with at least two Aboriginal groups during their six-month ordeal on the North West coast of Australia, although the groups are not identified in the manuscript.¹ If we could identify these groups we would also identify the language they spoke, which is the overarching focus of this writing. Identifying these groups, however, is not such a straightforward task today as the North West Aboriginal people no longer occupy the same tribal country they did when the *Stefano* shipwreck took place, and they generally no longer exist as coherent tribal entities. Most North West Aborigines are now found in towns such as Onslow and Carnarvon, where they identify themselves with the umbrella name of Nulli – “All of us”.² The Nulli label accounts for a complex dispersion and intermingling that has taken place throughout this region since the onset of colonisation. This intermingling, in turn, makes the task of identifying the 1876 language groups implicated in the *Stefano* shipwreck somewhat complex.

The Preliminary Court of Inquiry that took place after the two survivors were brought to Fremantle by Charles Tuckey in 1876 did not name the two Aboriginal groups.³ The same can be said of the first commentators on the shipwreck. These include Walcott, Bush, Carter, Honniball, Smoje, the Hendersons and Rathe.⁴ It was only in the early 1990s and following the publication of Rathe’s book that the two tribes were named by the popular press as Jinigudira and Baijungu. These names were derived from the tribal distribution map compiled by the anthropologist Norman Tindale and published in 1974 – almost 100 years after the *Stefano* shipwreck.⁵ By juxtaposing the *Stefano* manuscript map (Map 1) with the Tindale map (Map 2) the identities of the two tribal groups seem readily apparent and straightforward. On Tindale’s map only two Aboriginal groups were implicated in the shipwreck story: Jinigudira were the northern Aboriginal group and Baijungu were the southern, and the border between these two groups was around Point B on the original *Stefano* map. These two Tindale-generated names were formally adopted by the staff of the Western Australian Maritime Museum in their Report on the presumed *Stefano* Wreck.⁶ I used the same names in my own initial writing on the *Stefano* story.⁷

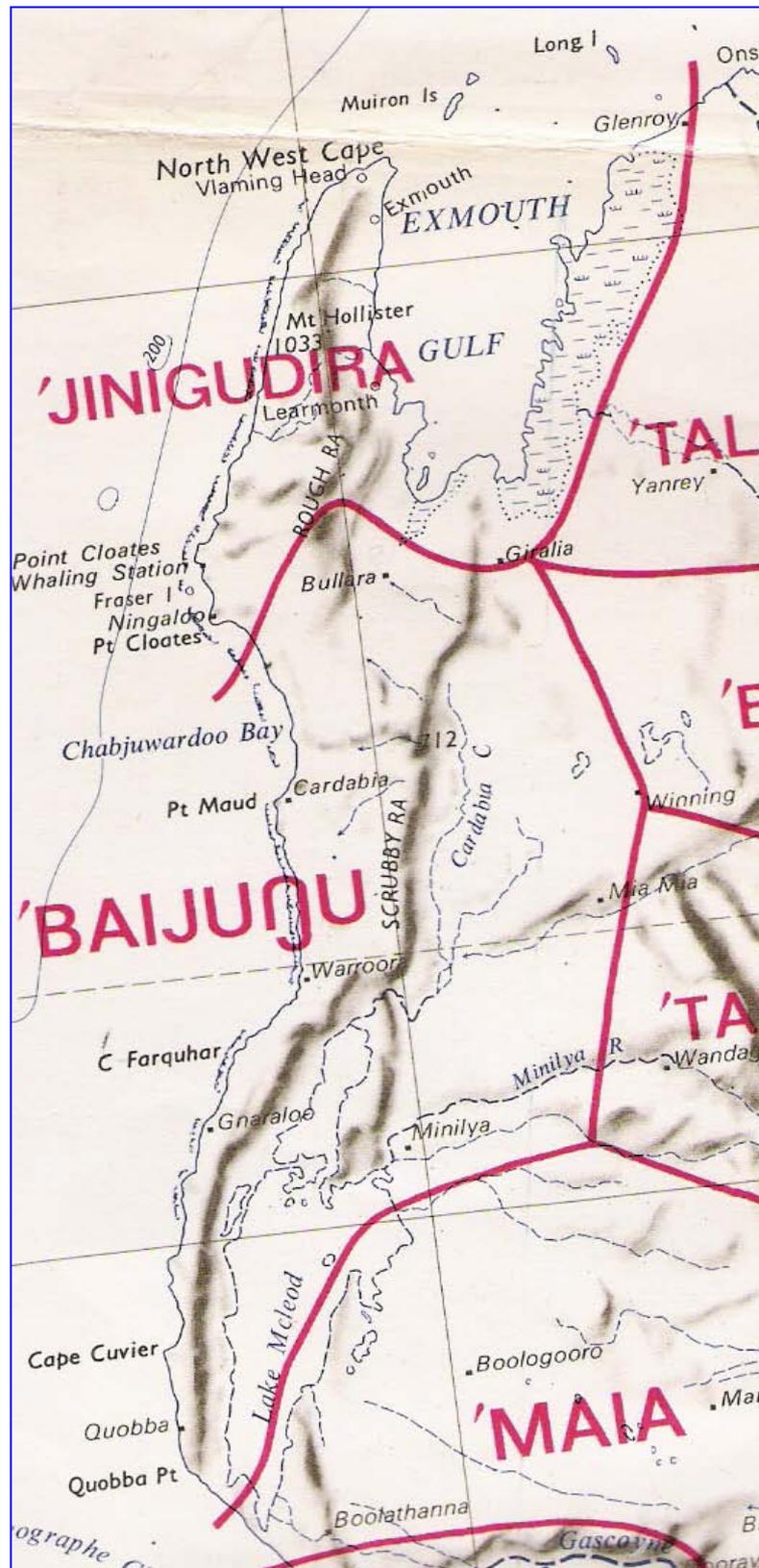
The writing below questions this seemingly straightforward identification of the two Aboriginal groups using the map produced a century after the shipwreck. I will argue that Tindale’s tribal boundaries contradict the earlier information we have on the tribal distribution and, more importantly, his boundaries contradict his own descriptions of the two Aboriginal groups. It is quite probable that both groups that helped the *Stefano* castaways were Yinikurtira–Talandji speakers (Tindale’s Jinigudira speakers). To show this it is first necessary to examine some aspects of the history of this North West region and to examine some details of Tindale’s map.



Courtesy of Gustave Rathe

Map 1. The original map from the *Stefano* manuscript. The NB notation in Italian explains that the points on the map marked with letters are points of importance referred to in the narrative. The letters A–Z indicate sequentially the journey of the *Stefano* survivors.

According to Tindale the border between the Jinigudira (northern) and the Baijungu (southern) Aboriginal groups was around 22°52'S, just near Point B on the above map.



Map 2. An Extract from Normal B. Tindale's *Tribal Boundaries in Aboriginal Australia*, which shows the boundaries of the Jinigudira and Baijungu people.

EARLY NORTH WEST LAND EXPLORATION: We know very little about the culture or the languages of the North West Cape Aborigines prior to the *Stefano* shipwreck in 1875. This is because pastoral exploration of the Cape area did not start until 1876 – the same year as the castaways were rescued. In that year the first pastoralists, Charles Samuel Brockman and George Hamersley, travelled from the mouth of the Gascoyne River almost all the way to the North West Cape in search of good land.⁸ They may have met Aborigines along the way but left no record of any such meetings. Other colonial references regarding the North West Cape indigenous people for this period are limited. These come mostly from maritime sources and do not name the Aboriginal groups implicated in the *Stefano* story.⁹

R. E. BUSH: The first explorer to describe the Aborigines associated with the *Stefano* shipwreck was Robert Edwin Bush in 1879 – a mere three years after the *Stefano* shipwreck.¹⁰ On 22 November 1879 Bush and his party set out from Julius Brockman’s Boolathana Station. They travelled southwest around Lake McLeod, then north along the coast to what was most likely Bulbarli Well on the Warroora Station. Here, on 27 November 1879 Bush came across some 50 Aborigines who ran away when they saw him, and he “had great trouble to get them back”. When Bush finally managed to get these Aborigines to speak to him they told him something of the *Stefano* shipwreck story. He was also shown a grave of a *Stefano* mariner – most likely near the present Upper Bulbarli Well (Point F) where they “found a little water in a rock”. Afterwards they all went to the beach and to the principal ‘cave of death’ where a number of skeletal remains laid unburied – most probably those of Dediol and Bucich:

Nov.16th (1879) Sunday – 34th day. On again, taking on a young black fellow, and found a little water in a rock at about 5 miles, the country improves here a little.

The black fellows have a tale here, of a lot of white people having been wrecked here years ago, and showed us what looked like a grave of one, who had died from eating a poisonous berry that grew here, the way his mates buried him. We then made for the beach again, and we found the bones of his comrades, who I suppose were frightened of leaving the beach, for fear of the blacks, and the wreckage of a boat that had been drive over the reefs. Well, we buried these bones as decently as we could, in the sand, could find no clues as to who they were, from the bleached and rotten portions of dress laying amongst the bones. We found them in a bit of a cave, where they had crept to die from hunger, thirst, little thinking that white hands would ever give their remains some kind (however rough) of a burial. The wild dogs had carried away a lot of their bones. We covered their grave with fine big shells. If you only saw the fearful reefs that these poor fellows must have struggled to get over, they were fearful, the worst I ever saw.¹¹

Bush did not identify the Aborigines in his writing but from the location and the narrative context we can deduce that they were most likely members of the “southern” tribe that once helped the *Stefano* castaways.

TOM CARTER: We can be reasonably certain that Warroora is the place where many of the *Stefano* mariners died because this location is visited again and named, some 10 years after Bush, this time by a noted ornithologist Tom Carter. Carter first came to the Gascoyne area as a young man in 1887 to work as a jackeroo for Julius Brockman

on his Boolathana Station and then for George Gooch on the nearby Wandagee Station.¹² Wandagee Station is on the Minilya River, which is the border of the Baijingu country and it is likely that Carter came to know many Baijingu people in the vicinity of the station. In 1889 he travelled in a horse cart from Wandagee Station westward to Warroora on the coast. In his diary Carter recites a version of the *Stefano* shipwreck story which he must have heard along the way – perhaps from Brockman himself whom he mentions:

At Warroora was a limited supply of water – a soak, in a sort of basin surrounded by rocks – and water had to be carried up to the horses in bucket and emptied into a trough above, so watering took some time. Brockman had been shearing there one year, but loading the wool bales through the surf was so difficult that boats would not call there again. In a cave on the beach were the skeletons of some of the crew of the Australian [sic] ship *Stefanie* [sic], which was wrecked at the Black Rock Channel at Point Cloates. Some of the crew wandered to Warroora, and no one ever knew if they died of starvation – which is most unlikely as the sea swarmed with turtle and fish, and there were turtle eggs and quantities of oysters all along the beach – or if the natives had killed them.¹³

After Warroora Carter stopped at Bulbarli where he encountered what was most likely the same group of Aborigines that once had helped the *Stefano* castaways and had previously ran away from R. E. Bush. He does not indicate that he recognized any of these Aborigines as Baijingu. From Carter's perspective they were "a big lot of semi-civilized blacks" who were "living in quite wild state", although they did not run away from him as they did from Bush.

In 1889 Carter purchased 135,000 acres of land around Point Cloates from Julius Brockman.¹⁴ His property included the initial *Stefano* camp site and extended as far south as the present Cardabia Station. Not long afterwards he purchased other leases north of Point Cloates which later became Yardie Creek Station. He lived on these properties for thirteen years until 1903 when he sold out and departed for England. His Point Cloates experience makes him potentially the best source of information on the North West Cape Aborigines. Carter's importance is greater still given that this Aboriginal group disappeared from the Cape region by the time he departed.

DAISY BATES: It was not long after Carter sold his North West pastoral leases that Daisy Bates began her anthropological and language survey of the Western Australian Aboriginal population. This was a major undertaking that began around 1904 and involved an impressive list of colonial informants including Tom Carter. The survey booklet sent out by Bates, *Native Vocabulary*, consisted of nearly 100 pages of English words for which indigenous equivalences were sought, along with 33 additional anthropological questions.¹⁵ It is from this survey that a broad picture of the North West indigenous groups first began to emerge. Arguably this survey, along with Tom Carter's contribution to it, is the main source of information we have on the language of the North West Cape Aboriginal groups from 1875 to 1900, even if the survey methodology is somewhat questionable. Some time after 1907 Bates inscribed these tribal boundaries on a map from which an extract (Map 3) is reproduced below:



Courtesy of Adelaide University/ Australian National Library

Map 3.

1907 Geographical Distribution of Tribes by Daisy Bates (Extract)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Tallinjee + Mulgarnoo | – | Orange-Brown Colour |
| Baiong (Baijungu) | – | Light Blue Colour |
| Maia | – | Light Green Colour |

Bates compiled the results of her survey in *The Native Tribes of Western Australia*, which was subsequently edited by Isobel White and published in 1985.¹⁶ From the information provided in this book we can discern that three Aboriginal groups may have been implicated in the *Stefano* shipwreck – Talandji, Baijungu and Maia:

The habitat of the Maia was the country between the Gascoyne and Minilya Rivers, the latter river forming the northern boundary. They were found eastward towards Kennedy Range. North of Maia were the Baiungu, whose country lay between Minilya and Lyndon Rivers, and eastwards towards Joolabroo Pool.

..(..). North of Baiungu and west of the Burduna were the Thallainji or Tallainji (*tallain*, Bibbulmun word – tongue?), a coastal tribe occupying the country between the Ashburton and Lyndon Rivers at their mouths. On the east the Tallainji were separated from the Burduna by the Yannarie River (corruption of Henry River)¹⁷

Bates then immediately names the extinct Mulgarnu people who occupied the North West Cape and were primarily responsible for the rescue of the *Stefano* castaways:

The peninsula whose apex is the North West Cape appears to have been occupied at one time by some Tallainji who were called Mulgarnu (turtles) probably from the fact of the turtle forming their chief food in the turtle laying season. There are no Mulgarnu now living.¹⁸

YINIKURTIRA: According to Bates, Talandji were coastal people who traversed the land between the Ashburton and Lyndon rivers. These Mulgarnu/ Talandji boundaries established by Bates are consistent with a number of contemporary references. Peter Austin, who has worked extensively on the North West indigenous languages, has suggested that “Yinikurtira is the name of a local group of Thalanyji speakers living on *Yinikurti* (Cardabia Creek) and Giralia Range (-*ra* is a suffix for naming people after places)”.¹⁹ Cardabia Creek runs into the Lyndon River close to its mouth which is more or less the boundary for Talandji established by Bates. From this information it is reasonable to conclude that at least the northern Aboriginal group described in the *Stefano* narrative were Mulgarnu–Talandji–Yinikurtira speakers.

Identifying the southern Aboriginal group is not as straightforward, as this group was active near the southern Talandji border established by Bates – namely west of the Lyndon River mouth and near Bulbarli Well. This is also likely to be near Point E and F on the *Stefano* map, where the *Stefano* castaways first encountered the southern tribe. How can we tell what Aboriginal group helped the *Stefano* castaways when this locality is so close to the tribal border? From which side of the border were the *Stefano* benefactors?

As it turns out we don’t have to guess the identity of the Aboriginal group: we can work it out from the *Stefano* text itself. The manuscript tells us indirectly that the group in question were Yinikurtira/ Talandji speakers. We can deduce this by knowing that the tribe at point F came from much further north and therefore from Talandji country. We know this because this Aboriginal group rescued Perancich, one of the *Stefano* mariners, a few days after the shipwreck. The rescue took place near Point B, which is very much Talandji country according to Bates. Perancich was then taken to Point F where he told his story to his startled companions who had thought him dead. The geography of his narrative is important and for this reason is recounted below:

[77] *Perančić* told them as follows: As he was trying to loosen one of the *Stefano*'s life boats from its moorings, a heavy wave swept over him carrying him into the ocean. The boat was, of course, smashed to pieces but the drifting boards were seized by the drowning man who clung to them with the strength of wild despair. This greatly uneven battle of life against death lasted the whole day when towards evening he was cast ashore at a point about ten miles south of the spot where his other companions had been thrown. A low cave near the beach sheltered the unfortunate for two days, but not a drop of water had cooled his parching thirst since the sinking of the *Stefano*. He just barely kept up the spark of life with a herb which grew near the shore and which bore a small sweet and somewhat watery berry. The third day, while on one of his reconnoitring expeditions for food and water he met the band of Aborigines who, instead of harming him any way, graciously provided for him, keeping him with them and sharing whatever little food they had with him. The same spirit of whole-hearted generosity was true of all these wild sons of Australia's desert.²⁰

Shortly after Perancich narrated his story at Point F, his *Stefano* comrades took him to Point E which was only a mile or two south-west. As these localities are very close to one another we can reasonably assume that the Aborigines at both localities were from the same group – namely Yinikurtira/ Talandji. The meeting between this group of Aborigines and the *Stefano* castaways was repeated a few months later in January 1876. Once again this Aboriginal group came from the north:

[112] A few days later (17 January) towards evening, while the few remaining unfortunates were resting near the cave, there suddenly appeared coming from a northerly direction, a tribe of Aborigines, the same probably who had befriended them twice before.²¹

A few days afterwards Aborigines returned again, this time heading northwards:

[115] The next day, 19 January, the Aborigines resumed their continual march, always northward. They passed the cave, men leading, women following, but not one turned around towards or stopped near our men.²²

In just over a week's time, on 27 January 1876, the two remaining and starving castaways became members of this Aboriginal group and in doing so saved themselves from a certain death. For the next month we know exactly where this group of Aborigines went. On 3 February they briefly travelled southwards before resuming their march northwards again on 5 February. On 15 February, we find all of them at Point L on the *Stefano* map. The group was still at Point L on 4 March 1876. We thus have multiple reports of this "southern" group of Aborigines in the *Stefano* manuscript that indicate that over the period of four months they travelled up and down the coast from the vicinity of Point B all the way to points E and F. As this is primarily Talandji country, according to Bates, it is then appropriate to identify this Aboriginal group as the (southern) Mulgarnu/ Yinikurtira/ Talandji group.

The above description is consistent with the information given by Tom Carter to Daisy Bates in her 1904 language survey. Carter named his Point Cloates natives as *Tallangee*, which he sites on the North West Cape, Exmouth Gulf and the Lower Ashburton. The other tribes Carter identifies are the *By-yung*, which he locates on the Lower Minilya River and *Ing-gar-rer*, which he sites on the Lower Gascoyne River.

This geographical arrangement is repeated in his diaries published in 1985 under the title *No Sunday in the Bush*:

The natives of the Gascoyne Lower River were of the Inggarda tribe and spoke a quite different language from the By-oong tribe of the Minilya River, only eight miles distant. The natives at Point Cloates on the coast, one hundred miles North of the Minilya River, were the same tribe as the natives of the North West Cape peninsula, and of the Ashburton River, namely Talandjis ... (...).²³

The coast is not mentioned anywhere in relationship to Baijungu and no one else identifies Baijungu as a coastal tribe. Furthermore, access to the coast from the Baijungu country on Lower Minilya is not easy as it is blocked by Lake McLeod, which Tom Carter describes as follows:

A vast area of salt marsh extend from the North bank of the Gascoyne River, not far from the sea, up to Cape Farquhar, about ninety miles North. It is mostly level and bare, with a hard baked crust a few inches thick covering unknown depths of salt mud ooze. In places the marsh is twenty or more miles in width; at any rate it is so wide one cannot see across it, even from the summit of considerable hills.

A great part of it is absolute ooze, or quicksand, and quite impassable even for dogs, as once anything gets down into the tenacious mud it cannot get out again. The natives are much afraid of venturing on any part that is not know to be hard, and declare huge snakes or monsters inhabit the mud, seize one's legs and drag one down.²⁴

The difficulties of getting across Lake McLeod suggests that the best way for Baijungu to reach the coast was by going to the mouth of Lyndon River, which according to Bates was very close to Talandji country. From Julius Brockman's diaries we learn that in subsequent years inland Aborigines did go to the coast.²⁵ However, if Baijungu did visit the coast we cannot assume from these incidental visits that they were also the group which helped the *Stefano* castaways. The southern tribe in the *Stefano* manuscript did not just visit the coast. As indicated earlier we first hear of the southern tribe as early as 30 October when they rescued Perancich (near Point B) which, according to Bates, is Talandji country.²⁶ We know from the narrative in the *Stefano* manuscript that members of this tribe were going up and down the coast for the next four months – until 4 March. If Baijungu were not a permanent coastal tribe then the most reasonable explanation for the prolonged stay on the coast by the southern tribe is that this tribe was Talandji as well.

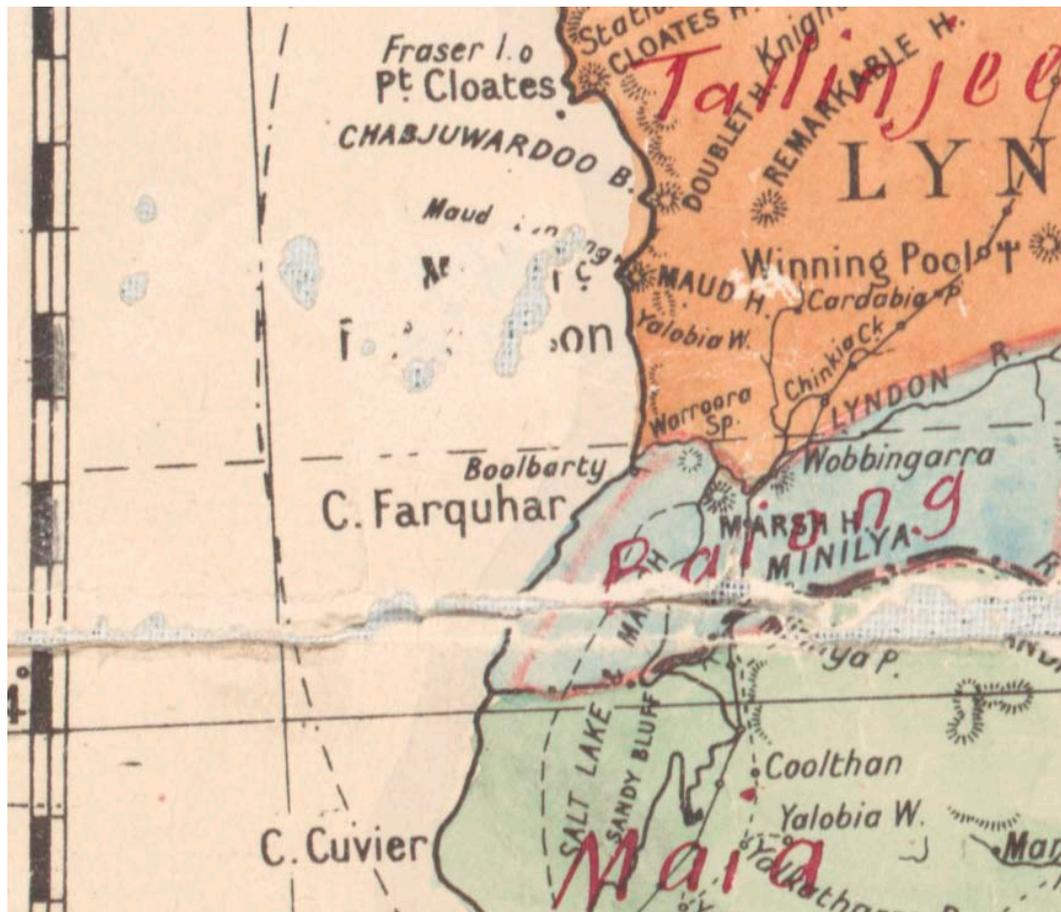
What about the country south of Point E and Point F?

In all likelihood much of the coastline between Bulbarli Point and Point I on the *Stefano* map was uncontested due to a lack of water and its proximity to Lake McLeod. Tom Carter describes this stretch of the country as follows:

There is no sand water between Cooranderra and Boolbardi, North of Cape Farquhar, and the heavy sand, high hills and scrub made travelling difficult ...(...). Natives do not camp along this strip of coast – except after heavy rains when they get a supply of water for a few weeks out of cavities in the rocks filled by rain.²⁷

This description fits what took place on 3 February 1876 when the two surviving *Stefano* castaways accompanied their adopted Aboriginal group on a journey south of Bulbarli Well. The journey had to be very short as the only water available was what the Aborigines could carry with them. On the first day they got as far as Point I on the manuscript map – likely to be around Gnaraloo – before quickly turning back when the water supply became depleted.²⁸ If this group was Yinikurtira–Talandji, as I have argued above, then this part of the coastline could also be considered as Talandji country, or at least it was accessible to Talandji group. The proposition that the coast was largely uninhabited is supported by R. E. Bush, who travelled along this coast in 1879. He commenced his journey on 22 November from Boolathana (Brockman’s Station) on Lower Minilya and got to Bulbarli on 27 November without encountering any Aborigines along the way.²⁹

It is thus a little surprising to find that it is exactly this largely uninhabited part of the coast that Bates attributes to Baijungu tribe in the map that she completed some time after 1907. Or did she? On closer inspection of her map we can discern a clear red line around her “Baiong” (Baijungu) boundary and this line excludes the coastal area as indicated on the Map 4 extract below:



Courtesy of Adelaide University/ Australian National Library

Map 4. 1907 *Geographical Distribution of Tribes* by Daisy Bates (Extract)
The red boundary line around “Baiong” country excludes the coastline to the west.

Two questions arise from these considerations:

1. Was the initial coast attributed to Baijungu in blue colour, on the above map, the simplest way for Bates to account for an uninhabited and infrequently visited part of the coast for which she had little, if any, information?
2. Was the red line drawn by Bates around the Baijungu country which excludes the coast an intentional correction?

In my opinion the answer to both question is yes, for all the reasons that have been outlined above. Firstly, the Baijungu people were not described as a coastal group by anyone and, in any case, the group that helped the *Stefano* mariners at Point F (Warroora on the map) came from Yinikurtira–Talandji country much further north. To think otherwise we would have to accept that Baijungu Aborigines were a coastal tribe who spent as much as four months of a year on the coast and who travelled north all the way to the proximity of Point B on the *Stefano* map. Furthermore, we would also need to assume that Yinikurtira and Baijungu groups got on so well that the boundary between them was no barrier to their travel. While we cannot categorically exclude these possibilities, they seem highly unlikely and inconsistent with what we know of these Aboriginal groups.

Yet another possibility is that this coastal area was accessible to Maia speakers. According to Bates, Maia country stretched from the Gascoyne River and upwards to Minilya River.³¹ It is possible that Maia people may have ventured along the same coastal route taken by R. E. Bush in 1879, even if this coast was inhospitable for much of the year. According to Branderstein, Maia and Baijung may have been the same Aboriginal group.³² In this perspective Maia/ Baijung groups occupied much of the coast from the Gascoyne River all the way to Bulbarli. Likewise, while we cannot categorically exclude these possibilities, they also seem highly unlikely and inconsistent with what we know of these and other Aboriginal groups.

It could be argued that the manuscript itself tells us that the two Yinikurtira tribes were sister tribes and were in fact travelling together up and down the coast. We are told as much on pages [215-216] of the manuscript which describe how on 15 April and somewhere near the Bay of Rest the *Stefano* mariners came across a boat carrying about thirty Aborigines – members of yet another, third tribe:

[216] These men were a part of a third tribe, hitherto unknown to the whites. In a few minutes they unloaded the cargo of turtles and deposited these on the bank. Meanwhile the other two sister tribes, which generally travelled together, also arrived at the same spot and they too were putting all the food in common in preparation for another huge feast.

If the two Yinikurtira tribes travelled together this only begs the question: Why were the two *Stefano* castaways handed from one tribal group to the other? But this is another story.

TRIBAL DISPERSION: In the years following the *Stefano* shipwreck, the Aboriginal population of the North West suffered a great deal of coercion, disease, dislocation, death and displacement, which has been documented by many writers.³³ The dispersion of the Yinikurtira groups is a good case in point. They seemed to have disappeared from the North West Cape at the same time as Tom Carter left his Point

Cloates Station in 1903. In *Gascoyne Days*, Jack Valli quotes Carter's perspective on this disappearance, which dates as far back as 1895:

Thomas (Birdman) Carter, in a letter to his friend Donald Scott in 1895 complained that the Aborigines of the district were developing a liking for the lights of Carnarvon. He said the few left were content to concentrate in the Bay of Rest area, awaiting handouts from the pearling crews in exchange for their women. The murder of a blackbirding pearling skipper by avenging Aborigines at the Bay of Rest saw an acceleration of this exodus.³⁴

The explanation for the dispersion of the Yinikurtira group is likely to be much more complex. Some of this complexity is documented in Brian Clark's *Yammatji: Aboriginal Memories of the Gascoyne* published in 1992.³⁵ Not one of the 65 Aborigines recorded in this book identified themselves directly with the North West Cape country. Two possible exceptions were Dolly Butler, the daughter of Talandji and Syd Dale, who was born in a bush camp near Giralia Station Homestead, which is Yinikurtira country. Aboriginal informants in *Yammatji* recall many acts of brutality, rape and murder that would have contributed to the vanishing of the North West tribal groups. Not only were they taken away from their country and left destitute but their ability to have progeny was greatly reduced. In the Introduction to *Yammatji* we learn that for the period of 10 years between 1908 and 1918 a total of 635 admissions were made to the venereal disease hospital set up on Dorre and Bernier Island near Carnarvon. Of these 162 deaths were recorded during the same period.³⁶

We should also note that the Yinikurtira Aboriginal group was not the only group that was deemed "extinct". The Maia group also became "extinct" around the same period as did most other coastal North West groups. It would seem that wherever land was needed to be bought and sold for pastoral leases the Aboriginal groups conveniently became "extinct". Around the turn of the twentieth century the local Aboriginal populations along the entire coastline from Gascoyne to Onslow and arguably all the way to Roebourne had become conveniently "extinct". Unfortunately this was true of many North West Aboriginal languages. Most of the languages that straddle the North West Cape all the way to Roebourne have few if any full speakers still alive.³⁷ With the demographic shifts of families and communities that accompanied the so-called "extinction", the old languages were modified and at times replaced with new ones. How exactly these different language groups interacted with one another within the Nulli culture is difficult to ascertain, as serious study of Aboriginal languages and Aboriginal cultures began only eighty years after the *Stefano* shipwreck.³⁸ Around this time the Mulgarno Aborigines, once proclaimed extinct by Daisy Bates, were resurrected as Jinigudira by Tindale. In his 1974 *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, Tindale describes the Jinigudira as follows:

Jinigudira

Loc.: North West Cape and its peninsula to a line between the bottom of Exmouth Gulf and Whaleback Hills. At Point Cloates. Coast-frequenting people, they ventured out to sea on rafts of sticks. They also lived among the mangroves that line the eastern shore of the gulf as far north as Glenroy. Most of their food come from fish traps set in tidal estuaries. They spoke a language close to Talandji and were sometimes considered only to be western Talandji, but informants were sure that they had separate identities for a long time.³⁹

The difference between Bates' and Tindale's map is that on Tindale's map large portions of unoccupied Yinikurtira land are designated as Baijungu country and as a consequence the Yinikurtira territory is dramatically reduced. On Tindale's map the Baijungu Aborigines are a coastal tribe whose coastal territory stretches from Quobba all the way to Whaleback Hill. Tindale's tribal boundaries most probably reflected the situation as it existed at the time he did his survey (ie. in the 1970s) when the Yinikurtira and the Maia were no longer on their land. Presumably the coast continued to be used by Baijungu tribe, who subsequently claimed the land as their own. This may be what happens when a vacuum is created in the country: someone else comes and looks after the land. It may also be that the Nulli members of Yinikurtira descent were happy to identify with the Baijungu tribal boundary. For example, in Bryan Clark's *Yammatji* book Dolly Butler tells us that her parents are Talandji but she is Baijungu.⁴⁰ Other reasons may be offered for the tribal distribution in the Tindale map. However, all these factors do not change the circumstances that existed at the time of the *Stefano* shipwreck.

More importantly, these territorial changes are inconsistent with Tindale's own descriptions. Tindale's map presents Baijungu as coastal people, but Tindale himself does not describe Baijungu as coastal people; nor does anyone else:

Baijungu

Loc.: On Lower Lyndon and Minilya rivers. Southwest of the salt marshes to Quobba; east to Winning Pool; north to Giralda and Bullara but not to the seacoast and Exmouth peninsula. Von Brandenstein combines them with the Maia and thus includes in their territory country south to the Gascoyne river.⁴¹

The above description tells us nothing about the coastal area from Whaleback Hill to Quobba, although Tindale's map assigns this coast to Baijungu. Even if there were no objections to this redistribution from the "extinct" Yinikurtira people, this is an insufficient reason to identify the coastal people that helped the *Stefano* castaways as Baijungu. Rather, all earlier accounts suggest that both Aboriginal groups implicated in the *Stefano* story were Mulgarnu–Yinikurtira–Jinigudira–Talandji speakers.

The only inconsistency in these accounts is the map that comes to us from Daisy Bates. However, I have argued that this inconsistency may not be real, as further analysis shows it is possible to conclude that Bates did exclude the coast from Baijungu country by her red line boundary. Tindale does something similar in his own description when he tells us, in the above quote, that Baijungu country goes nearly all the way "north to Giralda and Bullara but not to the seacoast and Exmouth peninsula". However, there is no easy way of reconciling the contradiction between his written description and his map boundaries for the western coast. Since he compiled his map some seventy years or more after the Yinikurtira people vanished from the North West Cape region, the validity of Tindale's map for this region of the coast is highly questionable and, in the light of all the other available evidence, it should be rejected. Accordingly we should conclude that the two Aboriginal groups that helped the *Stefano* castaways were most likely Mulgarnu–Yinikurtira–Jinigudira–Talandji speakers.

Notes and References

1. All references to the *Stefano* manuscript refer to the publication Baccich, M. & S. Skurla, *The Wreck Of The Austro-Hungarian Barque Stefano On The North West Coast Of Australia*, translated into English by Angelina Baccich (1920), edited with analysis by Josko Petkovic (2007). *IM: Interactive Media* e-journal, No 3:2007.
2. The Nulli Native Land claim (WC97/28) is substantial and covers the entire coast from Gascoyne River to Onslow.
3. State Records Office of Western Australia (SROWA). Evidence given by Michael Baccich (J. Vincent translator) at the Preliminary Court of Inquiry into the wreck of the *Stefano*, at the Custom House, Fremantle, 8 May 1876, C.S.R. 844, fol. 78.
4. These references include:

Walcott. P. to R. J. Sholl, 21 June 1876, SROWA 844, fol. 105.

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5. Tindale, Norman B., *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1974.
6. Green, J. & M.McCarty, *Wreck Inspectors Report: Stefano (1873–1875)*, Report Department of Maritime Archaeology, W.A. Maritime Museum No:132, 1997.
7. Petkovic, J., "The *Stefano* Shipwreck of 1875: An Introduction", *IM: Interactive Media* e-journal, No 3:2007.
8. Other North West explorers such as Francis Gregory (1858), T.C. Murray (1865) and T. Hooley bypassed the North West Cape area. For details see *The history of the North West of Australia : embracing Kimberley, Gascoyne and Murchison districts /* edited by Jas. S. Battye ; with descriptive and biographical information compiled by Matt J. Fox, Carlisle, Hesperian Press, 1985.
9. Early North West maritime explorers included Captain P. P. King (1818 – east coast of Exmouth Gulf), Captains Wickham and Stokes (1838 & 1841 – mouth of Ashburton River), Lieutenant George Grey (1839 – mouth of Gascoyne River). None of these explorations established contact with any of the North West Cape Aborigines. It is likely that the first serious contact came with the onset of pearling as far back as 1867. Charles Tuckey may well have been the first pearler to establish such contact. In his various reports he does not identify the Aboriginal groups he came in contact with. See Henderson, G. and K. J., *Unfinished Voyages: Western*

Australian Shipwrecks 1851–1880, Perth, UWA Press, 1988, p. 69. There is also a very general description of indigenous people from North West Cape to thirty miles south of the Gascoyne River in E.M. Curr, “The Kakarakala Tribe” in *The Australian Race*, pp. 302–305, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1886.

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18. Bates, *ibid.*, p. 57.
19. See Jinigudira entry in “4.4 North of the Gascoyne River to Port Hedland” http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/AborigPages/LANG/WA/4_4.htm (accessed May 2009)
20. Baccich, M. & S. Skurla, *op. cit.*, Manuscript page [77]
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22. Baccich, M. & S. Skurla, *ibid.*, Manuscript page [115]
23. Carter, T., *op. cit.*, p. 30.
24. Carter, T., *ibid.*, p. 19.
25. Brockman, Julius, *He Rode Alone*, edited by Joan Brockman, Perth, Art Books, 1987, pp. 119–120.
26. Baccich, M. & S. Skurla, *op. cit.*, Manuscript page [77].
27. Carter, *op. cit.* p 24.
28. Baccich, M. & S. Skurla, *op. cit.*, Manuscript pages [151–156].
29. Bush, R.E., *op. cit.*, p. 22.

30. Baccich, M. & S. Skurla, *op. cit.*, Manuscript page [75]
31. Bates, Daisy, *The Native Tribes of Western Australia*, Canberra, *op. cit.* p. 56.
32. See Baijung entry in Tindale, N., *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, *op. cit.* p. 239.
33. The troubled history of the North West can be discerned in the following works:
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34. Valli, J., *Gascoyne Days*, Perth, St Georges Books, 1983.
35. Clark, B., *op. cit.*
36. Clark, B. *ibid.* p. xii.
37. See Sharp, J. & N. Thieberger, *Bilyabara*, p.139 for details.
38. See Talandji vocabulary in O’Grady, G.N. 1957–58. Material on suffixing languages of Western Australia. Manuscript. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. [AIAS reference MS 320]. Also O’Grady, G.M., Voegelin C.F. & Voegelin, F.M. Indo–Pacific facsimile six. *Anthropological linguistics* 8(2). 1966. Other early language studies include those by Carl von Brandenstein, Norman Tindale and Peter Austin. For an extensive Bibliography of North West languages see Austin, P., “Aboriginal Languages Of The Gascoyne–Ashburton Region” www.latrobe.edu.au/linguistics/.../Vol%2001/3Austin.pdf (accessed January 2009).
 Also 4.4 North of the Gascoyne River to Port Hedland
http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/AborigPages/LANG/WA/4_4.htm
 (accessed May 2009)
39. See Jinigudira entry in Tindale, Norman B., *op. cit.*, p. 243. Whaleback Hill is just south of Point B on the *Stefano* map and on the Tindale’s boundary of the two tribes.
40. Clark B., *op. cit.* pp. 23–24.
41. See Baijung entry in Tindale, Norman B., *op. cit.* p. 239.