

THE ABORIGINAL DESIGNATIONS FOR STONE IMPLEMENTS.

BY FRITZ NOETLING, M.A., Ph.D., ETC.

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Quite in the commencement of my studies of the stone implements manufactured by the Tasmanian Aborigines, I noticed that the Southern tribes had a special word for that particular rock which is generally, though wrongly, called "Black Flint." Considering the popular, though wrong, use of the word "Flint," by which the word originally applied to the rock from which a stone implement is made is used to designate the implement made therefrom, the question naturally arose whether this particular native word meant the implement or the substance (rock) from which it was made. At the first glance this seems immaterial and hair-splitting; but on closer examination it will be seen that the question is a most important one. If this particular word is only used to describe a special implement, it would conclusively prove that the Aborigines intentionally manufactured implements of a certain shape, which they distinguished by a special name from all the others. If, on the other hand, this word represented the designation of a particular kind of rock only, the above inference cannot hold good, and the conclusions derived from the morphological study of the implements—namely, that they are devoid of all intentional shape—is fully confirmed.

The vocabulary of Aboriginal words is, unfortunately, very limited. Calder (1), whose compilation is

(1) Language and Dialects spoken by the Aborigines of Tasmania. Parliamentary Papers, 1901. No. 69.

probably the most comprehensive, does not enumerate more than 1135 words, some of which are unquestionably adopted (2). It is more than probable to assume that, however limited the vocabulary of Aborigines may have been, a fair number of words have not been handed over to us. However that may be, a combination of the results of mineralogical and morphological studies, together with a careful examination of the vocabulary, has led to some very interesting results.

In the first instance, however incomplete the vocabulary may be, it is certain that the Tasmanian language had no special word for some of the most important implements in the economic life of the human race. These implements are:—

1. Knife.
2. Axe or Hatchet.
3. Saw.

To which we may add

4. Bow.
5. Arrow.
6. Spear or Lance Head.

It may be taken as granted that the Tasmanian language had no distinguishing words for the above-mentioned six implements. Consequently it is certain that the civilisation of the Tasmanian Aborigines did not know these implements, because, if it had, there would have certainly been words to designate them, and if such words had existed we would find them in the vocabulary, because it is improbable to assume that those who compiled the vocabulary of the Aborigines could have overlooked the words for these all-important implements had they existed and been used by the Aborigines.

Scott, who was probably the first who made a study of the Tasmanian Archaeolithes, designates them as follows (3):—

Flint or a knife = teroona, trawootta.

(2) For instance it is obvious that the Tasmanian word "backalow" or "bacala" for bullock is derived from the English, considering that no cattle existed in Tasmania previous to the arrival of the Europeans.

(3) Letter on the Stone Implements of the Tasmanian Aborigines. Papers and Proceedings, Royal Society of Tasmania, for 1873-1874, page 24.

Plain and simple as this appears, it is by no means so. In what sense is the word "flint" used? Does it mean to express the mineral flint, or does it mean an object made from flint? I think that the latter view is the correct one, because Scott adds, "or a knife."

We may therefore conclude that any cutting implement manufactured by the Aborigines was called teroona or trawootta.

At the first glance it might appear that these are two absolutely different words, but I shall be able to prove that they are practically the same.

If we look up Milligan's vocabulary of the Tasmanian language, we find under the heading of flint the following words:—

Tribes about Mt. Royal, Bruni Island, Recherche Bay, and the South of Tasmania—North-West and Western Tribes.

Mungara (Flint).

Mora trona (Flint), black.

Tribes from Oyster Bay to Pittwater—

Trowutta (Flint).

It is obvious that the words trawootta (Scott) and trowutta (Milligan) are identical. We have, therefore, the following words to designate the Tasmanian stone implements:—

1. Trowutta.
2. Teroona.
3. Mungara.
4. Mora trona (black flint).

It is evident that the word "trona" is exactly the same as "teroona," and, if we write the word trowutta like this—

trowa-tta

we see that we have apparently the same root, because it can be taken as certain that the words

Teroona,

Trona,

Trowa,

are the same. The different spelling may be due to dialects or other reasons, but the main fact that they are identical remains.

"Black" flint is designated as "mora trona," and, of course, if "mora" would mean "black," the interpretation would be quite simple. But this does not seem quite certain.

Milligan states that the eastern tribes used the word "mawback" or "mawbanna," the southern tribes the word "loaparte" for black, and, though there is perhaps a certain likeness between "mora" and "mawbanna," I would not consider this as an established fact. However that may be, we have therefore a—

1. Trona (teroona),
2. Mora trona,
3. Trona-tta (trowutta).

If my interpretation be correct, the rock or the mineral from which the implements are manufactured was called

Trona (=teroona=trowa),

and a special kind of this rock, the fine-grained, dark blue, or black variety, was called "mora trona."

The implements manufactured from this "trona" were called

trona-tta=trowa-tta, and, if my interpretation is correct, the suffix "tta" or "ta" means "made from" or "manufactured from."

There still remains the word

Mungara,

as used by the Southern tribes. For the present I am unable to offer an explanation for this word, which, for all we know, may be only a corrupted mora trona.

So far everything seems plain enough, but Ling Roth publishes a vocabulary compiled by the Rev. Norman, in which neither the word "flint" nor "knife" is mentioned. But under the heading "stone" the following words are enumerated:—

1. Teewartear.
2. Larnar.
3. Peurar.
4. Noeenar.

It is a peculiarity of this vocabulary that almost all the words end either "er" or "ar," and that, though the spelling is very curious, the first word is no other than the word "trowutta," of Scott and Milligan. We have therefore the well-known word for stone implement; but, besides this, three new words, of which it is impossible to say whether they may mean different types of implements or different varieties of rocks.

Now, if we refer to Ling Roth's second vocabulary, Appendix B, we find under the heading "a stone" the following words:—

1. Loine (Dove, Jorgen-Jorgensen, and Brain).
2. Lenn-parena (Gaimard).
3. Peoora (Scott).
4. Nannee (Dove, Jorgen-Jorgensen, and Brain).
5. Nami (M'Geary).
6. Loine (Peron).
7. Lennicarpeny (Dove, Jorgen-Jorgensen, and Brain).
8. Longa (dO).

That is to say, quite a number of words, among which we can only identify "peoora" with Norman's "peurar." As it is, however, certain that "loine" and "loine," as well as "nami" and "nannee," and "lenn-parena" and "lenni-carpeny" are identical, the above list is reduced to four new words, and we would therefore have, including Normans three new words, seven words for "a" stone.

A reference to Milligan's vocabulary proves, however, that this list is less formidable than it appears. Under the heading "stone" he gives the following words:—

Tribes about Mount Royal, Bruni Island, Recherche Bay, and the South of Tasmania—North-West and Western Tribes.

Loinah, Louna, or Loine, Noanyale.

Tribes from Oyster Bay to Pittwater.

Loantennina.

This proves that the words

Loinah, loine, loine, louna, longa,

and probably also larnar, are identical, and simply meant a stone of any kind in the dialect of the Southern tribes.

Further, it may be taken as pretty certain that the words

Loan-tennina,

Lenn-parennna,

Leni-carpeny,

are identical, and that these words meant "a stone" in the dialect of the Eastern tribes. The relationship between this word and the word "loina" is unquestionable, inasmuch as "loan," "lenn," "leni" represent probably the same word. Could we prove that in the dialect of the North-West and Western tribes the "l" is turned into "n," the word "noanyale" would more correctly spell "loanyale," and therefore contain the same root, "loan" or "loina," as the other words.

We have therefore ten words, viz.:—

1. Loine.
2. Loiné.
3. Loinah.
4. Louna.
5. Longa.
6. Larnar.
7. Loan-tennina.
8. Lenn-parennna.
9. Leni-carpeny.
10. Loan (noan)-yale.

There can be no doubt that the first six words are identical, and simply mean a stone (of any kind). It is difficult to say whether the last four words have the same general meaning as "loinah." To me it seems more probable that they represent certain kinds of rocks. We know that the Aborigines called freestone "ponin-galee." The iron glance from which they made the red ochre was called "latta-winne," and the red ochre was "lalla-winne." These composite words seem to prove that the four words above-mentioned represent certain kinds of rocks, and this view is generally strengthened

by the fact that in the word for freestone the last word, "galee," is the same as that in l(n)oan-yale. The most conspicuous rock of Tasmania, even more so than the freestone, is the Diabas, and, if there existed a word for freestone, it is more than probable that there was also a word for Diabas, and that one of these four words stands for Diabas. Next to the Diabas comes the mudstone, and for the Eastern tribes the granite. If freestone was "ponin-galee," is it too rash to assume that the closely-connected mudstone was "l(n)oan-galee (yale)"? The other words stand either for Diabas or for Diabas and granite.

There remain, therefore, three words—

1. Peurar=peoora,
2. Nannee=nami,
3. Noeena(r).

If we consider the very different spelling of Norman's words, I only need to refer to a comparison of the words teewartear (Norman) and trawutta (Milligan and others). It is not very improbable that the word "noeena(r)" really means "loina," and, if we further consider what has above been said about the change of the letter "l" into an "n," the words "nannee" and "nami" originally spelt "lannee" and "lami." These last two words have therefore most probably to be included under the above list, meaning nothing else but "a stone."

We have therefore arrived at a probable very accurate view as to the meaning of all these words except the word

Peurar=peoora.

Mr. Ritz has kindly told me that in his opinion this word should represent something spherical. In many languages, as Mr. Ritz tells me, the "bll" or "pll" means something round or spherical (1). There is no doubt that the word "peura" can be pronounced in such a way as to closely resemble the primitive root, and I think that Mr. Ritz's suggestion is probably correct. We can practically divide the whole group of Tasmanian implements into two classes—the chipped tronattas and the spherical pebbles—represented by the

(1) For instance the word "ball."

sacred stones. It is not only probable, but pretty certain, that the water-worn, rounded-off pebbles, which were turned into sacred stones, were distinguished by a different word from the ordinary tronatta, and Mr. Ritz's hypothesis comes probably very near the truth.

The result of these somewhat lengthy considerations may be condensed as follows:—

The words

1. Loine, loine, loinah, louna, longa, larnar, noenar mean a stone (of any kind).
2. Loan-tennina, lenn-parenna, leni-carpeny, noan-yale probably represent special kinds of rocks, such as granite or Diabas.
3. Peurar, peora probably means a pebble, perhaps a sacred stone.
4. Trona, teroona is the word for the rock from which an implement is made.
5. Mora trona means a peculiar variety of trona, distinguished by a bluish black colour and a fine conchoidal fracture.
6. Tronatta, throwutta, trawootta, teewartear is the name for the implements which were manufactured from trona or mora trona.
7. Mungara, meaning unknown; perhaps corrupted from mora trona.

The main and most important result of this investigation is the establishment of the fact that the Tasmanian language knew perhaps two, but most probably only one, word for the implements which were produced by working certain classes of siliceous rocks.

I particularly wish to point out that the fact is fully corroborated by the results of the morphological examination of the tronattas. These examinations proved that the tronatta is a kind of universal implement which was indiscriminately used for chopping, cutting, scraping, boring, and hammering. The Aborigines did not manufacture an implement which, for instance, solely and exclusively served the purposes of a knife, or a chopper, or a scraper. Any suitable fragment of rock could be used for any of these actions above-mentioned, and we must take it as granted that the Aborigines never manufactured special implements to serve special purposes only.