

Rezensionen

Jauncey, Dorothy, 2004. *Bardi Grubs and Frog Cakes. South Australian Words.* Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Clemens Fritz, Freie Universität Berlin

'Bardi Grubs and Frog Cakes' is a short encyclopedia of more or less regionally restricted Australian words. Not all the words covered are exclusive to South Australia (SA), but all bear a special relation to it.

The five hundred entries are divided into seven chapters which cover (1) words from Aboriginal languages, (2) nineteenth century vocabulary, (3) special mining terms, (4) German loans, (5) vocabulary from primary industries, (6) Outback vocabulary, and (7) modern and city terms.

The book follows a trend discernible in current research into Australian English (AusE). Whereas earlier studies have emphasized AusE's remarkable phonological homogeneity, today's studies look deeper into regional variation, be it phonological, lexical or grammatical. Recently, a number of book-length publications of vocabularies of different Australian states have been published, e.g. Brooks and Ritchie (1994; Western Australia), Brooks and Ritchie (1995; Tasmania) and Robertson (2001; Queensland). All of the latter, as well as Jauncey's book on South Australia, originated in the Australian National Dictionary Centre (ANDC) and are published by Oxford University Press (OUP). This is no coincidence, since the ANDC was founded for the dual purpose of research into AusE and providing the OUP fleet of dictionaries with lexicographical knowledge. The project's initial publication was Ramson (1988), the first and foremost dictionary of Australian National Dictionary (AND) on historical principles. Whereas Brooks and Ritchie used mainly selective readings of newspapers between 1950 and 1991, Jauncey's sources are mostly the ANDC database and Ramson (1988). Newspapers, interviews and various museums were also used. However, no specifics are given, neither the size of the corpora nor the method of investigation. From the point of view of a scholarly user, this is disappointing.

The dictionary is divided into seven chapters. Each is preceded by an informative introduction followed by the entries in alphabetical order. The chapters are very heterogeneous. Two deal with contributions by specific languages (Aboriginal languages and German), others concentrate on historical or occupational domains. The last chapter has current South Australian (SA) terminology from mixed fields.

The policies for counting a term as 'South Australian' differ from chapter to chapter. But compared to 'Words from the West', they are spelled out more clearly. Not all words seem to have been cross-checked with the AND and other sources. For instance, 'wurley' is said to be first recorded in Kaurna, an Aboriginal language, in 1840. But the AND and Knight (1988) both have English quotes from 1839. Important linguistic research, e.g. by Bryant (1989, 1997), has also left few traces in the book and the list of works cited in the reference section is not very long. An

example where an entry could have been improved is 'stobie poles'. These are poles carrying electricity and telephone lines. Jauncey mentions that the poles are always made of concrete with sides of steel and that this is due to SA's lack of suitable timber. Bryant (1989:311), however, documents that only older Adelaide speakers stated that wooden poles are not true Stobie poles. A third of the Adelaide residents questioned used the term indiscriminately.

The first chapter is entitled "The People Before" and contains words from Aboriginal Languages. The policy for this chapter was to include words current or historical in AusE that come from Aboriginal languages found or extinct in South Australia. In this sense the words can be called 'South Australian', despite the fact that not all etymological histories of the entries are waterproof. For example, some words, like 'mulga' (several kinds of acacia), 'malka' (a shield) and 'euro' (a kangaroo, not a currency), are documented in several Aboriginal languages which are totally unrelated, linguistically and geographically.

Short Histories of the twenty-five Aboriginal languages looked at and some notes on non-English sounds precede the chapter. The histories are very informed, but make a rather wily introduction. The representation of sounds aims at amateurs using spellings like 'Ker-NOO-ek Low-END-a' for 'Kernewek Lowender' rather than IPA. Each entry in the book has the head word(s) in bold face followed by one or several illustrative quotes. Some go back as far as to the establishment of the colony, 1836, others come from the third millennium. After the quotes there is, in most cases, a discussion of the term which also gives historical details. For example, we learn that the royal family were served 'witchetty grubs', a wood-eating larva of a certain moth, during a visit to Australia in 1987. What they thought about that particular hors d'oeuvres is, however, not recorded. Most entries in the first chapter, naturally, describe fauna and flora, people, and implements. Cultural practices are surprisingly few, the phrase 'Secret women's business' not being found here, but in the last chapter.

The second chapter 'No Convict Taint' deals with nineteenth century vocabulary particularly relevant for. The early settlement history is extensively documented in the introduction. Some entries have become extinct, e.g. 'secondary town', i.e. a town of lesser importance, others have become part of general AusE, like 'Croweater', a derogatory term for a citizen of SA. Few have kept a genuine SA touch, like 'hundred', an area of one hundred square miles of surveyed land.

It is debatable whether all the terms included are worth being recorded in such a book. 'Adelaidean' obviously refers to residents of Adelaide and there is nothing of linguistic or historical interest in this word. Other questionable entries are 'Destitute Asylum' and 'Destitute Board'. Of course they refer to particular institutions in early SA, but these can be found in many places in the world under the same name. Moreover, there is nothing special noted about the 'Destitute Asylum' and the 'Destitute Board'. They are just there and one wonders why they have been selected when many others, like 'Parliament', 'Supreme Court', etc. are missing. Another strange entry is 'no convict labour'. This was certainly not a common phrase in nineteenth century SA and is rightly not portrayed as being one. What the entry refers to is the fact that SA was a colony that received no convicts and was proud of this. The information as such is

worthwhile giving and in a cultural dictionary it should be included (though under a different headword). In a 'Dictionary of South Australian Words' it seems out of place.

'The Copper Kingdom' is the title of the third chapter. It is concerned with Cornish and mining terms. These two go together quite well since immigrants from Cornwall made a large contribution to nineteenth century copper and general mining in Australia. Much of the language listed is only of historical (old-fashioned mining practices/implements) or folkloristic (Cornish customs defunct or revived) interest. The collection is not as systematic and thorough as, for instance, Moore's (2000) 'Gold! Gold! Gold!' which is an excellent dictionary of the specialized terminology of the nineteenth century Australian gold rushes. Again, some South Australian proper names and toponyms are included. Curiously the important article by Fielding and Ramson (1971) of the English of Australia's 'Little Cornwall' is neither listed in the bibliography nor reflected in the entries.

Another linguistic minority are covered in chapter four, German Lutheran settlers. These had emigrated to Australia in the middle of the nineteenth century in order to escape religious persecution. Like the Cornish, who lived in 'Australia's little Cornwall', they lived in 'little Germany', a close-knit society. The chapter's introduction provides an excellent history of these German settlers, with a minor historical detail going wrong. Jauncey speaks of the unsuccessful 1848 revolution in Prussia which resulted in emigration. But there were rebellions also in all other German states and the Austrian Empire. Thus these 'forty-eighters' do not only come from Prussia and they did not only go to South Australia. The Germans suffered from a wave of xenophobia during the first World War, when the Australian government tried to eradicate some German and toponyms in the 1917 'Nomenclature Act', a decision reversed in 1935. It was also tried to change the term 'fritz', a German sausage, into 'Austral', much like 'Freedom Fries' recently in the US. Fortunately, language use often proves stronger than decrees. Apart from words like 'Liedernacht', a night of songs, and 'streusel cake', names of well-known wines, like the 'Barossa Pearl', are included.

Next Jauncey moves to primary industry words, mostly to do with wheat, wool and wine. She admits that not all the terms are unique to SA, but claims that they have special importance there. Again, some of the entries are odd. 'Air snips are pneumatic pruning snips that can be used with grape vines for hand pruning' (p. 137). This piece of information in itself is unrevealing. Only if the term 'air snips' had a regional distinction of some kind, it would warrant an inclusion. But no explanation of the choice is given, no study mentioned that could prove its importance. The entry also mentions manual snips and electric snips, but they do not come up as headwords.

'The Outback' chapter contains names of animals ('Lake Eyre Dragon'), proper names (the 'Ghan' train), toponyms ('AP Lands') and opal mining ('kopi') terms. Needless to say, Gunn's (1971) Opal Terminology is neither cited nor does it appear to have been consulted. The encyclopedic information given is interesting and sometimes exhilarating. For example 'computers' were young women working at the 'Woomera' rocket range in the 1940s and 50s. Apparently these unmarried computers created some disturbances as 'the haunt of lean and hungry single males' (p. 174).

The final chapter is a heterogeneous mix. Jauncey uses 'The Lifestyle State' as a cover term. Unlike the previous sections it contains current terminology not restricted historically or by speech community. Entries range from 'Adelaide Cup', a horse race, to 'homette', a single storey small house, and 'Tantanoola tiger', a certain tiger who had escaped from a circus in 1883 and had captured many people's imagination.

Surprisingly there is an entry for 'at' since 'South Australians have a reputation for using the preposition 'at' when referring to place names, rather than using 'in' as most other Australian speakers would do' (p. 202). From the point of view of a linguist, proof or even references for this claim is sadly missing, from the point of view of an amateur reader, the one and only entry referring to a grammatical phenomenon comes rather unexpectedly.

The book finishes with a bibliography and an index. Jauncey's book is certainly not a dictionary but a short encyclopedia of select words and things South Australian. Her choices are sometimes surprising and do not make a coherent or strictly logical book. The lack of references and scholarly evaluation is certainly owing to the intended audience. The blurb says: "Learn what links a sausage, a boggler and a noodler and be both informed and entertained throughout this journey through South Australia's peculiar lexicon." This shows that the book is meant for people interested in the history, society and language of South Australia. For amateurs the information provided is exhaustive. For professionals it is a starting point.

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