

# CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN • RELIGION •



Personal Monototemism in  
a Polytotemic Community

T. G. H. STREHLER



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*M. Curack*  
*2000*

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T. G. H. STREHLOW

 AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
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CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN RELIGION

Personal Monototemism in a Polytotemic Community  
by T.G.H. Strehlow

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## PREFACE

The Australian Association for the Study of Religions is privileged to have the opportunity to reprint a work by Professor T.G.H. Strehlow as the second of its Special Studies in Religions series. This study first appeared as a major article in the Festschrift für Ad. E. Jensen (1964) under the title "Personal Monototemism in a Polytotemic Community". Since that time the article has been acknowledged as a significant contribution to the study of aboriginal Central Australian culture. Unfortunately, it has not been accessible to most students and has not had the impact it deserves. By making this study available, our Association aims to remedy that situation.

Professor Strehlow was born at Hermannsburg in Central Australia and spent his youth among the Aranda people. His famous study on Aranda Traditions was published in 1947 after years of personal service and anthropological research in Central Australia. His monumental work on The Songs of Central Australia appeared almost 25 years later. During the intervening years his extensive field work and other scholarly publications established him as an international scholar of great stature. His knowledge of the Religion of the Central Australian tribes may not be equalled. He has personally witnessed and recorded hundreds of sacred ceremonies, many of which are no longer practised but which lie at the heart of Aboriginal totemism among the Central Australian tribes.

The present study represents his mature thinking about the core of Central Australian Religion and hence stands as a formidable contribution to Anthropology and Religion Studies in this area. We are proud to assist in its dissemination.

The maps included in this volume are the original sketches provided for the Festschrift article in 1964 and do not represent exact cartography. They do provide, however, a basic guide to the sacred sites and journeys of the totemic ancestors typical of Central Australian myths.

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Strehlow Research Foundation which has been formed to promote and preserve the research of Professor Strehlow. Full details of his work and that of the Foundation are available through the Foundation (Da Costa Avenue, Prospect, South Australia).

I wish also to express my personal thanks to Professor Strehlow and Mrs. Kathie Strehlow for their cooperation and assistance in this venture. I have learned much from my association with them.

Finally, the Association expresses thanks to Dr. Victor Hayes for his editorial labours. The development of the publications programme of the Association is due largely to his energy and skill.

Dr. Norman C. Habel  
President, A.A.S.R.  
Adelaide College of Advanced  
Education

May, 1978

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