

# INTRODUCTION: LOOKING AGAIN AT WILLIAM BLANDOWSKI

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THE 150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY of William Blandowski's 1856–57 expedition to the Murray River provided the opportunity for the Royal Society of Victoria to hold a symposium to reassess the significance of Blandowski's life and career before, during and after his time in Australia. Despite Blandowski's significant role in the early years of the Royal Society, few of its members had heard of Blandowski and even fewer knew of his work as an artist and naturalist. This was part of the impetus behind the symposium. Another was to make information on the Murray River expedition available to residents of northwest Victoria and southwest New South Wales, the area where most of its collecting took place.

This symposium, 'Blandowski's Expedition to the Murray River: European naturalists and their contribution to Science in Australia between 1850 and 1859' was held on the 21–23 September 2007 at the La Trobe University Campus in Mildura. Sixteen presentations were heard over this time assessing the work of Blandowski, the expedition and our knowledge of northwest Victoria and southwest New South Wales during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It was one of a number of events associated with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Blandowski's expedition to the Murray. Other events included: a 'welcome to country' ceremony held at Mondellimin, (where the expedition camped from early April to end November 1857, now Chaffey Landing, Merbein), presented by Nyeri Nyeri and Ngintait Aboriginal people, in association with Rex Harradine, an elder of the Latji-Latji Munthalong Aboriginal Corporation (see Dugay-Grist, this volume); the unveiling of a memorial cairn, erected by the Merbein and District Historical Society at Mondellimin, by Councillor John Arnold, the Mayor of Mildura Rural City Council;<sup>1</sup> the premiere of a short film by Malcolm McKinnon titled 'Blandowski's Specimens' at the Merbein Citizens Club; and, finally, an exhibition on the expedition held at the Mildura Arts Centre, organised by Museum Victoria and the Mildura Arts Centre.

The symposium and this volume is one of a series on selected regions of Victoria run by the Royal Society of Victoria to make scientific knowledge

more accessible to the community. Other symposia on the Murray region include: Murray-Darling River System (*Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 1978 – Volume 90 Parts 1&2); Barmah-Millewa Forest: Indigenous Heritage, Ecological Challenge (*Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 2005 – Volume 117 Part 1); and a Special Issue on the Victorian Mallee (*Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 2006 – Volume 118 Part 2).

## BLANDOWSKI IN AUSTRALIA

William Blandowski was in Australia from September 1849 until March 1859. During that time he worked as a surveyor in South Australia, gathered specimens for German collectors and tried his luck on the Victorian goldfields. It is the period from the end of 1853 until his departure back to Germany in 1859, which is of most interest. Over this time, Blandowski was involved in the setting up of learned societies, including the Royal Society of Victoria, became the first employee of the Museum of Natural History (now Museum Victoria), organised four scientific expeditions, mostly within Victoria, and, finally, became embroiled in a series of conflicts and controversies that effectively ended his professional career. His achievements, taken singularly, were modest, their value being offset either through Blandowski's lack of means to bring them to full fruition, or else, through his personal actions, which were often self-defeating. His achievements taken as a whole, however, are impressive, and he deserves his place amongst those German-speaking immigrants to Australia who added greatly to the social and scientific life of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Victoria.

The significance of Blandowski's few years in Melbourne is revealed in the various societies and organisations he was associated with. He was a foundation member of the short-lived Geological Society of Victoria (Hoare 1967:9; Paszkowski 1967:151–2). He also gave lectures at the Mechanics Institute (*The Argus*, 25 October 1856). Blandowski became a Council member

of the Philosophical Society of Victoria when it was formed in 1855, which, following its merger with the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, in 1855, became the Philosophical Institute of Victoria, with Blandowski continuing on its Council (Pescott 1961:6-7). Certainly, Blandowski's appointment in 1854 as the first Government Zoologist with the newly formed Museum of Natural History (now Museum Victoria) was a factor here, as the collections of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science passed to the museum and the Philosophical Institute oversaw the museum's affairs (Finney 1993:83; Goodman 1999:260-2; Pescott 1954:7, 9; Paszkowski 1967:153). The Philosophical Institute of Victoria received Royal Consent to become the Royal Society of Victoria in 1859 (letter from the Duke of Newcastle to the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, 8 November 1859; Darragh, this volume; Pescott 1961:14).

As a museum officer and member of the Philosophical Institute, Blandowski was indefatigable, carrying out scientific explorations in eastern and southern Victoria and publishing accounts of them in the *Transactions* (Blandowski 1855a&b, 1856a&b; see Menkhurst, this volume). Blandowski arranged the geological and zoological specimens shown at the 1854 Melbourne Exhibition. These consisted of Victorian items sent to the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Blandowski received one of two silver medals awarded by the jury for this exhibit (*The Argus*, 17 & 29 October 1854; Darragh 1995:19, this volume; Finney 1993:162; Pescott 1954:2, 4; Tipping 1984:104).

As with much else about his career, Blandowski's position of employment during his period in Melbourne remains unclear. He is variously described as a Government Zoologist, Colonial Naturalist or Curator of the museum (Paszkowski 1967:153; Pescott 1954:6). However, his rank within Andrew Clarke's Surveyor General's Department,<sup>2</sup> was as an Assistant Surveyor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Class, with a salary of £400 per annum (Paszkowski 1967:159-60). Shortly after Blandowski's appointment, the Colony of Victoria went through a period of financial stringency. Amongst various cost cutting measures was the decision to transfer the Museum collections from the Assay Office to the University of Melbourne (Pescott 1954:9-10). This occurred in July 1856, at the instigation of Frederick McCoy, who was Professor of Natural Science at the University and Government Geologist, and was soon to be appointed Director of the National Museum (Carkeek 1998:25, 32-3; Wilkinson 1996). Loss of the collections made Blandowski's role ambiguous. He requested

that his position be clarified a number of times. However, the best that McCoy was willing to offer him was that of 'collector' (Wilkinson 1996:4).

As a way out of this impasse, Blandowski wrote to the Surveyor General proposing an expedition along the Murray to its mouth, a destination which was subsequently amended on McCoy's recommendation, to the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers (Darragh, this volume). A sum of £2,000 was approved, presumably including salary for Blandowski and other employees (Pescott 1954:11). Blandowski's orders were to,

...proceed to the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers, for the purpose of making investigations on the natural history of that district, and also, with a view of collecting as many specimens as possible for the National Museum, and marking the distribution of animal life along the route (quoted in Pescott 1954:10).

The expedition left Melbourne for the Murray on 6 December 1856.

### *The Murray River Expedition*

While aspects of the expedition to the Murray River are discussed in a number of the articles which follow (see especially Allen, Kean, this volume), there is, as yet, no recent discussion of the expedition available in print.<sup>3</sup> To assist readers, a map of the route of the expedition and tables showing the dates and places visited are provided below (Fig. 1, Tables 1 & 2). A detailed account of the expedition's progress to Lake Boga is available in Krefft's unpublished 'Narrative' (n.d.b). There was some limited publication of expedition results in the period immediately after its return to Melbourne (Blandowski 1857, 1861, 1862; Krefft 1866a,b). The subsequent loss of the sketch and notebooks, which Blandowski took to Europe, means that knowledge of activities during the expedition's long stay at Mondellimin (Chaffey Landing, Merbein, Victoria) can only be assembled using multiple sources of information; published and unpublished documents, illustrations, labels and museum collections, held in museums and libraries across both Australia and Europe.

There were significant periods when Blandowski was absent from the main camp at Mondellimin. This, together with the fact that he left the expedition to return to Melbourne, requires a separate chronology for Blandowski (Table 2). As can be seen from Table 2, Blandowski appears to have had trouble set-



Fig. 1. Route of Blandowski's Murray River Expedition from Melbourne to Mondellimin (Merbein) showing major places visited. Drawn by Peter Quin and Briar Sefton based on information in Krefft (n.d.b).

Table 1. Dates and locations for the Murray River Expedition from Krefft (n.d.b).

Dates	Locations
6-19 December, 1856	Melbourne to Mount Macedon, via Keilor, The Gap and Sunbury.
19-23 December, 1856	Lancefield to Campaspe River, via Spring Plains.
24-28 December, 1856	Along and across the Campaspe River to Gunbower Creek.
28 December, 1856, to 28 February, 1857	Gunbower Creek
January to 28 February, 1857	Krefft makes additional journeys to Mount Hope, Echuca, Forrest Creek (to secure impounded horses).
1-8 March, 1857	Gunbower Creek to Lake Boga via Campbell's station, Loddon River and Reedy Lake.
9 March to 7 April, 1857	Lake Boga to Mondellimin, via Swan Hill, Tintintyre, Coghill's Station, Hamilton's Station, Murrumbidgee Junction, McCallum's and Grant's Station, Euston, Kalkyne and McGrath's Station.
7 April to end November, 1857	Jamieson's Mildura Station, Mondellimin and surrounding districts on both sides of the Murray River.
End November to 15 December, 1857	Return to Melbourne and disbanding of the expedition.

tling to the routine of collecting and recording, and instead went on side-trips and left the expedition camp somewhat early. This left the organisation of the expedition largely to Gerard Krefft and assistants, such as James Manson.

The aftermath of the expedition, including Blandowski's attempt to name fish species after members of the Council of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria, and his refusal to provide the Government with the drawings and memoranda from the Murray Expedition, are well known (Allen 2001,

2006; Humphries 2003; Paszkowski 1967). Unfortunately, these events, at the end of Blandowski's period in Australia, have coloured all subsequent assessments of his achievements.

The disputes Blandowski had with McCoy before and after the expedition draw our attention to the part played by Gerard Krefft, both on the Murray River expedition and in the events which followed it. Krefft was responsible for the running of the camp, the illustration, collection and preservation of specimens and their subsequent lodgement in the collec-

Table 2. Periods of time that Blandowski was away from the main expedition locations from Krefft (n.d.b) and Blandowski (1857).

Dates	Locations
26 December, 1856 to 28 January, 1857	At Maiden's Station.
Early February, 1857	In Echuca.
3 March to 7 April, 1857	Rides on ahead to Jamieson's Mildura Station and arranges for the expedition to camp at Mondellimin.
April to May, 1857	Journey along banks of the Murray River from Mondellimin to Moorunde and return.
27 May to 19 June, 1857	Journey from Mondellimin along Darling River to Jamieson's Mount Murchison Station (near present day Wilcannia) and return.
6 August, 1857	Leaves Mondellimin on the steamer <i>Albury</i> to Goolwa, and then to Adelaide.
18 August, 1857	Arrives in Melbourne on the <i>Havilah</i> from Adelaide.

tions of the museum at the University of Melbourne, under the control of Frederick McCoy.

Slater (1857:244-5) provides a description of the Murray expedition specimens displayed at the University museum,

In this room, ... are the 18,000 specimens of shells, lately brought by Mr. Blandowski from the Murray; and sadly they disappoint the naturalist who has been attracted by the published notices of them; for the whole number only includes about half a dozen species, and the contribution might be roughly described as a bushel of mussels and another of periwinkles...

Slater (1857:245) also notes the presence of, '...bales of skins, singularly barren of variety and choiceness' and criticises Blandowski's failure to provide any information concerning the specimens he had collected. To rectify this omission, McCoy employed Krefft to compile a catalogue of the specimens based on his notes (Krefft n.d.a). Apart from Krefft's publications (Krefft 1866a,b), the labels, notes and lists of specimens compiled by Krefft remain the major sources for identifying the dates and localities of the species captured (Wakefield 1966a; see also Menkhorst, this volume). It was Krefft's association with McCoy, and Krefft's attempts to independently publish an account of the Murray expedition, which led to a rift between Blandowski and Krefft. Blandowski identified McCoy as behind most of his troubles (letter to McCoy, 7 August 1860, Museum Victoria Archives). Blandowski also got under McCoy's skin. In a letter to W.H. Archer in 1860, he referred to Blandowski as 'Mr Blandamski and his useless collection of colonial zoological specimens...' (McCoy 1860, University of Melbourne Archives, WH Archer, 2/115/4).

## BLANDOWSKI IN MELBOURNE SOCIETY

Blandowski's contemporaries appear not to have known what to make of him. At different times he was lauded, as at the dinner given in his honour on his return from the Murray River (*The Argus* 4 September 1857), defended, in the attempts to prevent McCoy from removing the museum collections to the university (Wilkinson 1996); and, vilified, at the meeting discussing his attempt to name new fish species after prominent members of the Institute (Paszkowski 1967:156-9).

As a result of his limited professional qualifications and means, Blandowski depended upon the patronage of powerful figures to achieve his ends. Throughout his life, however, he appears to have had an uncanny ability to create enemies through intemperate statements and actions (Darragh, this volume). As individuals with very different interests in the museum, it was inevitable that Blandowski and McCoy would be competitors. A wiser man might have recognised that, as an outsider, Blandowski had little hope of besting members of the professional and social establishment, such as McCoy (Carkeek 1998).

The Melbourne press took a lively interest in Blandowski's career. *The Argus* reported his lectures, triumphs and the Institute meetings (*The Argus*, 17 & 29 October 1854, 25 October 1856, 4 September 1857, 15 April 1858), but also provided a long satirical editorial on the Institute and the fish scandal (*The Argus*, 27 March 1858, quoted in Paszkowski 1967:156).

Blandowski appeared occasionally in pages of the *Melbourne Punch*, where he proved useful in drawing together the magazine's prejudices regard-

ing foreigners, intellectual pursuits and the establishment. He was portrayed as a comical victim in regard to the loss of the museum collections (*Melbourne Punch*, 7 & 14 August 1856, 13 August 1857), included in its depiction of the members of the Institute as stuffed shirts, being referred to on one occasion as 'Count Nobblerwhiski' (2 July 1857, 28 April 1859); and, more cynically, as a German outsider (see *Melbourne Punch* 1856, volume 1:37, 43). The Aborigines also provided *Melbourne Punch* with the opportunity to simultaneously satirise Blandowski, local politicians and scientists (7 February & 30 October 1856).

Anti-German attitudes, however, were not restricted to Blandowski or to the satirical press. The *Australasian* (6 January 1872, quoted in Struve 1999:107) criticised von Mueller as slavishly pursuing overseas honours at the same time as it denied the presence of prejudice against Germans in Victoria. Similarly, the *Age* mounted a campaign against Ludwig Becker as a foreign spy on the basis of anonymous allegations and his poor command of English (1 to 13 July 1856, quoted in Tipping 1984:92-3).

It is not certain exactly when Blandowski conceived his plan to write an encyclopaedia of Australian natural history along Humboldtian lines. While he worked as a surveyor, and offered himself as a mining engineer in South Australia, and as a miner in Victoria, the first mention of wider ambitions came in a letter to Governor La Trobe, dated 21 May 1853. In that letter, Blandowski stated that he was preparing an 'Illustrated Natural History of the Colony of Victoria' for publication but needed financial support to complete the project (Darragh, this volume). In the end, Blandowski's disputes with the Philosophical Institute, McCoy and his employer, the Surveyor General's Department, convinced him to return to Europe. His decision to retain the notebooks, catalogues, and illustrations from the Murray River expedition and take these to Europe compounded the problems he experienced in bringing his work before the public. The same difficulties which dogged him in Australia, a lack of money, of recognised credentials and his inability to secure patronage, also prevented the realisation of these ambitions in Europe.

There was one further appeal to Sir Henry Barkly, in a letter from Gliwice, dated 5 October 1860, Blandowski stated,

'...I left a copy of 34 Plates being part of a work on 'Australia terra cognita' in the library of the Houses of Parliament (sic) in Melbourne...It was originally intended to contain 200 similar Plates

in one volume with about 4000 objects of Natural History of Australia for which I hold the Materials in readiness' (Gleiwitz, quoted in Paszkowski 1967:168).

The Chief Secretary of Victoria rejected Blandowski's project with the parochial comment that the intended publication concerned the '...whole of Australia and not merely this Colony' (Paszkowski 1967:168).

#### BLANDOWSKI AND KREFFT: THEIR SCIENTIFIC AND ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTION

Over the past 100 years or so, Blandowski, Krefft, and the 1856-57 expedition have received only sporadic attention (Allen 2001, 2006; Darragh 1992; Humphries 2003; Iredale & Whitley 1932; Jahn 1994; Kerr 1993; McCann 2008; Paszkowski 1967, 1969, 1987; Pescott 1954; Wakefield 1966a,b; Whitley 1959).

The Royal Society of Victoria symposium on Blandowski and the Murray River expedition marks a sea change in research concerning Blandowski and Krefft. The papers from this symposium covered such diverse fields as anthropology, biography, history, conservation zoology, fish systematics and ecology, art history, the history of collections, Aboriginal place names, and photography. Taken together, these provide the opportunity to reassess Blandowski's and Krefft's contribution as naturalists and artists.

Tom Darragh's paper in this volume follows Blandowski's career from his time as a student in Prussia and Germany, through his career as a surveyor, gold miner and naturalist in South Australia and Victoria; his attempts to publish his Australian materials; and, finally, the steps he took to restart his career in his home town of Gliwicz (now Gliwice, Poland). This is the first major biography of Blandowski since Paszkowski's work (1967, 1969, 1987) and draws on considerable research in European and Australian archives. The article allows us to consider Blandowski's actions in the light of his entire career, and to reassess accounts, such as that by Krefft (n.d.b), which were critical of Blandowski. Blandowski appears in Darragh's account as the author of many of his own misfortunes, and, interestingly, outside of his own family, he appears to have formed few, if any, successful personal or professional relationships. While not always well judged, Blandowski appears to have had an affinity with outcasts and



misfits throughout his career. This is exemplified in his sympathy for the Aborigines and the efforts he made on behalf of the condemned prisoner John Goldman.

The results of the Murray expedition, in terms of mammals and freshwater fish, are discussed by Menkhorst and Humphries respectively. Menkhorst takes the opportunity to include the observations from Blandowski's earlier expeditions in southern and eastern Victoria (Blandowski 1855a,b, 1856a,b) to provide an assessment of the conservation status of the mammals recorded or collected. He shows that the Murray River expedition was significant as the first government sponsored wildlife survey in Victoria, and possibly in Australia. The Blandowski materials provide a base-line from which we can measure the decline in the range and prevalence of many of the mammalian species collected. Furthermore, Krefft's notes and drawings of the extinct pig-footed bandicoot, *Chaeropus ecaudatus* (Ogilby, 1838), represent our only observations from live specimens for this animal. Krefft (1866a:14) even observed that its flesh was tasty.

The expedition was also the first to survey freshwater fish in the Murray-Darling River system. Humphries finds that had Blandowski recanted his decision to name fish species after the members of the Council of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria (see Paszkowski 1967:158), it is likely that the expedition would today be credited with a number of new species. Humphries also documents Blandowski's descriptions of the distribution and ecology of these species providing a measure of the decline of many of them over the past 100 years.

Krefft's contribution to the Murray River expedition and the tensions between Krefft and Blandowski are discussed in detail by Kean, who makes use of Krefft's watercolours and woodcuts to throw considerable light on the day to day life of the expedition itself. Kean's is the first detailed assessment of Krefft's achievements as a natural history illustrator and as an artistic chronicler of the events and scenes around him.

How Blandowski and Krefft interacted with the Aborigines, who supplied many of the specimens and also considerable information about them, is the subject of Allen's paper. The use of letters and information from missionaries and settlers at the time of the expedition, together with the expedition illustrations, shows how much there is to learn about Aboriginal – White relations in Victoria during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Again, in the field of Anthropol-

ogy, the expedition provides unique historical information about the Nyeri Nyeri, a people for whom there are few other sources available. That the distribution of Aboriginal peoples and languages in the area around the Murray-Darling Junction was more complex than previously realised is discussed by Hope and Hercus, who make use of MacCabe's detailed survey maps to document languages for which few, if any, Aboriginal native speakers remain (Hercus 1986).

Krefft's later career as a distinguished zoologist and curator at the Australian Museum, Sydney, is discussed by Nancarrow. Despite his impeccable scientific credentials, Krefft too subsequently fell foul of the Anglo-Australian establishment and suffered through the arrangements which split responsibility for museum governance between the Government and a Board of Trustees.

Two papers deal with Blandowski collections held in European institutions. Blandowski's career as a studio photographer in Gliwice and his contribution to Polish photography are discussed by Jodliński. The article is based on materials previously available in Polish or German, and also makes use of Blandowski's photographs held at Museum in Gliwice. Jodliński provides independent evidence of Blandowski's artistic talents and also his concerns with ordinary people and the underprivileged.

Significant Blandowski materials, from the Murray River and his other collecting activities, are held in the collections of the Museum of Natural History (MNH), Humboldt University, Berlin. These are detailed by Landsberg and Landsberg, who note the scope of the materials held: including rock specimens, fossils, bird, mammal and fish specimens as well as a significant collection of drawings in the Historical Collection. In examining the drawings, Landsberg and Landsberg make use of the notes attached to the illustrations to throw light on the circumstances of their production. In terms of the Murray River collections at the MNH, the illustrations of birds, insects, frogs, reptiles, and Krefft's mammalian sketches, have yet to be analysed in detail. The MNH collections also contain folios of Blandowski's other Australian projects: including 'Sea Fishes of Australia', 'River Fish of Victoria' and 'Birds of Australia', which are evidence of the proposed encyclopaedia.

Surprisingly, apart from specimens lodged in the collections of Museum Victoria, the MNH and the Museum of Ethnology, Dahlem, Berlin,<sup>4</sup> most of the Australian materials that Blandowski took to Europe

survived together until after his death, when they were sent to Royal Library in Berlin (Darragh, this volume). The list of the materials given to the Royal Library demonstrates the wide scope of Blandowski's ambitions and allows us to consider what is still missing. The fact that the Historical collections of the Museum of Natural History, Humboldt University, Berlin, contain only natural history illustrations,<sup>5</sup> suggests that the overall collection was divided up between different institutions, with the natural history illustrations going to the Museum of Natural History.<sup>6</sup> Items missing, presumed lost, include Krefft's ethnological sketches, the registers for the zoological collections, the notes from the Murray expedition, including books of Aboriginal words and terms, and boxes of glass negatives. Some of Krefft's sketches of Aboriginal life were reworked by Gustav Mützel and published by Blandowski in the *'Australien in 142 Photographischen Abbildungen'* (Blandowski 1862; see also Allen 2006, this volume).

The scattered nature of these collections together with the loss of significant materials partly explains why Blandowski remains poorly known in both Australia and Europe. Other factors are also involved. One of these is Blandowski's identity. Paszkowski (1967:147-8) informs us that the Blandowski (Błędowski) name, bearing the coat-of-arms of 'Wieniawa' was of Polish origin and had been well known since 1610. Blandowski then was born into the Silesian minor nobility. He appears to have worked along side and managed Polish mine workers during his time as a mining cadet and manager (Darragh, this volume). In Australia he used the name 'William Blandowski', in the letters to British scientists, he signed himself as 'William von Blandowski' (Paszkowski 1967:166), and in works published in Europe, he signed himself as 'Wilhelm von Blandowski' (1861, 1862). Bjork (2008:2-3) documents that after the dissolution of the State of Prussia following World War 1, a substantial minority of 'civic Germans' voted for union with Poland and a substantial minority of 'ethnic Poles' opted for Germany, so Upper Silesian identity appears to have been always problematic. In Poland today, however, it is Upper Silesia which makes the clearest claim for Blandowski (see [http://www.gliwiczanie.pl/Biografie/Blandowski/Blandowski\\_eng.htm](http://www.gliwiczanie.pl/Biografie/Blandowski/Blandowski_eng.htm), fittingly available in Polish, German and English versions). Within Germany, previously German-speaking areas of Prussia are now regarded as Polish (H. Landsberg, pers.comm) presumably including the Blandowski name. Though this is now changing (Jodliński, this volume), the lack of a clear national identity, Australian, Polish, German, Prussian or Sile-

sian, probably contributed to a lack of interest in his work.

Another significant factor is that a full appreciation of the work of Blandowski, and of Krefft's contribution to the Murray River expedition, really only comes through multi-disciplinary study of the kind attempted here. Despite his personal failings, Blandowski's vision was clearly wider than that of his contemporaries and, as stated above, taken as a whole, his achievements are impressive. While one of the aims of the Royal Society of Victoria's symposium was to stimulate discussion of Blandowski's work, another was to draw the attention of researchers to the wealth of materials that remain unstudied. It has been a successful exercise on both these counts.

To conclude, it might be useful to draw the reader's attention to an assessment of Blandowski's unpublished portfolio of prints (Blandowski n.d.) published in a recent major survey of Australian colonial prints,

Visually the most important scientific publication to use intaglio techniques is 'Australia Terra Cognita', the unfinished magnum opus of the Prussian natural history scientist and amateur artist William Blandowski, who worked in Victoria between 1849 and 1859 and led an expedition investigating the Darling and Murray Rivers. The proposed publication was to include 200 engraved plates covering subjects as diverse as geological features, fossils, fishes, birds and bird's eggs, as well as portraits of South Australian Aborigines. While only twenty-nine plates were completed, their quality is outstanding. Blandowski's vision was as much to present an extraordinary book of visual images as to produce a scientific publication (Butler 2007:81).

## NOTES

1. Mildura Rural City Council has recently named a track 'Blandowski Walk'. This runs from a significant Canoe Tree, near Whiting Street at the back of the old Mildara Winery, to the Murray River Bank at Chaffey Landing (Mondellimin), following a request from the Merbein and District Historical Society (*Sunraysia Daily* 30 May 2008).
2. As far as the museum is concerned, Blandowski's involvement with Andrew Clarke deserves further attention. Clarke was the Vice-President of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, and President of Philosophical Society of Victoria and the subsequent organisation, the Philosophical Institute of Victoria (Pescott 1861:6, 9). He was secretary of the committee organising the Victorian Exhibits for the Paris Exhibition

of 1855 (Finney 1993:78-9, 162). In addition, as Surveyor General, he was Blandowski's immediate employer and the museum's collections were housed in a wing of the Crown Lands Office in the Assay Building (Pescott 1954:4-5). Subsequently, however, Clarke played a part in the transfer of the museum collections to the University of Melbourne at the instigation of Frederick McCoy (Finney 1993:86). Clarke, at the Victorian Institute meeting 15 April 1858, moved the vote of no confidence in findings that charges against Blandowski in the fish naming affair were not justified (Paszowski 1967:156). Finally, as Surveyor General, he demanded the return of the memoranda and drawings from the Murray River expedition, and questioned Blandowski's failure to report for work in the time between the expedition's return and Blandowski's return to Germany (December 1857 to 12 March 1859) (Allen 2006:25-6; Paszowski 1967:159-62).

3. Museum Victoria is planning a volume on Blandowski and the expedition for 2009 (Kean, pers.comm). Krefft (n.d.b) provides an unpublished account of the expedition's progress, between Melbourne and Lake Boga (6 December 1856 to 8 March 1857). Other original materials have been lost.
4. The materials in the Museum of Ethnology include fibre and netting examples, a small fishing net, vials of edible seeds, a small piece of possum skin rug with incised designs, two rectangular pieces of prepared possum skin with pieced holes around their margin and billets of tree root used to provide water. I acknowledge the assistance of Dr Markus Schindlbeck, curator of the Pacific collection at the Museum of Ethnology in gaining access to these materials (see also Lally 2002).
5. The sole exception to this is Krefft's illustration of *Hapalotis conditor*, *Building Hapalotis*, "Koehl" YY. (Bl.) (now *Leporillus conditor* (Sturt, 1848), the greater stick-nest rat), illustrated by Menkhorst, Allen and Landsberg and Landsberg, this volume. This illustration includes a sketch of Aborigines using nets to capture these rats.
6. A number of searches have been made for additional Blandowski materials in Germany. Tom Darragh in 1985 attempted to locate these and discovered that the British Anthropologist, N.W. Thomas, had looked for them without success in 1908 (Darragh, pers. comm). Thomas used a number of Blandowski illustrations in his published work (Allen, this volume). It appears, however, that the trail was already cold in 1908, well before the destruction of World War 2.

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