

"Banoni from Bougainville to Berlin to Auckland"

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The oldest known audible sample of spoken Banoni was recorded in south Bougainville onto a wax cylinder by the German ethnographer Ernst Frizzi in 1911. The speaker was Pater Grisward a Marist missionary from Luxembourg who read or recited three Catholic prayers in the local Austronesian language. The original recording has spent nearly one hundred years in the Phonogramm Archiv in Berlin. In May 2008, I visited the archive and obtained a digital copy of that two minute recording. I am now transcribing and analyzing the wording and sounds of those prayers. I will be presenting my observations at COOL-8 in Auckland NZ in January 2010.

In addition, I want to report on the visit to Berlin itself and to discuss my use and the usefulness of other depositories of archived material. Particularly useful has been the on-line access through the Australia National Library to the 70 page book of prayers and catechism in Banoni produced at the mission to Banoni started in 1912 by Pater Chaise and Pater Grisward.