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SALVAGE STUDIES OF WESTERN QUEENSLAND
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

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PREFACE

This volume contains salvage studies of a number of extinct languages formerly spoken in western Queensland. In two cases I was able to work briefly with the last speaker of the language, and the material thus obtained is supplemented by lists of words collected by non-linguists at various periods between the 1880s and the 1940s. Three other chapters concern languages that were already extinct when Barry Blake and I began fieldwork in the second half of the 1960s, and are based solely on older sources. Some aspects of Breen's (1971a) classification of the languages of western Queensland are re-examined, but no attempt is made to revise and update it, overdue though this be.

The various chapters, apart from the first and the last, were written originally as unconnected papers, at various times and in fits and starts, over a long period; that on Yanda grew out of the appendix entitled 'The classification of Janda' in Breen 1971a. The paper on Guwa had its beginnings in 1975 when Peter Sutton produced a very useful compilation of most of the sources. He withdrew as a co-author some time later, because of the pressure of other work. Similar pressures on the remaining authors are just part of the reason why it has taken so long to prepare this material for publication; another is the remarkable ability of this type of work to consume time (Barry Blake commented in a letter in 1987 that, 'The Guwa paper took more person hours than any book I've ever written').

I am grateful to the informants, the late Arthur Winkers (the last speaker of Kungkari) and the late Albert Upperty (the last speaker of Pirriya); to Barry Blake who, as well as co-authoring Chapter 5, made useful comments on some others (also a couple of paragraphs he wrote as part of the original Guwa paper have been incorporated with little or no change into 'Sources and Conventions'); to Thomas S. House, whose notebook and memory made a substantial contribution to the little we know about Pirriya; to Mr and Mrs Frank Murray (Belombre Station) and Mr and Mrs Fred Nissen (then of Keeroongooloo Station) for permitting and facilitating my fieldwork on their properties; and to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies for its generous support of my fieldwork and follow-up work. Barry Blake and I wish to thank Norman B. Tindale for allowing us (per R.M.W Dixon) to use his unpublished material on several of the languages included in this publication; we also thank Peter Sutton for his contribution to the Guwa project. Thanks also to the many typists who contributed, especially Rosalie Breen who typed the major portion of the final drafts, to the map-makers, especially Brenda Thorley of the Institute for Aboriginal Development, to John Henderson for hours of help with the formatting, and to the School of Australian Linguistics and Monash University which both contributed substantially to the costs of typing and map-making.

Gavan Breen

SOURCES AND CONVENTIONS

Names of languages referred to in the text or vocabularies are listed below; double inverted commas are used to mark those spelt as in the early sources. Some languages are grouped according to their genetic relationship, insofar as it is known. Sources of data on the languages are also given (the bibliography can be referred to for further details on these sources). Where no source is given, data come from Breen's fieldnotes and unpublished vocabularies. Sources of data on languages described in this book are given in the appropriate chapters. The languages which have been described or whose vocabularies have been given in this volume are:

Pirriya (Chapter 2)
Kungkari (Chapter 3)
"Koonger" (Appendix 3.2)
"Kungarditchi" (Appendix 3.2)
Dharawala (Chapter 4)
Yandjibara (Chapter 4)
Wadjabangayi (Chapter 4)
Yiningayi (Chapter 4)
Guwa (Chapter 5)
Yanda (Chapter 6)

Other languages:

Palku group includes:

Mayawali (H.S. Dutton 1901; J.S. Dutton 1906; Lamb 1899, 1904)
Ngulupulu
Pitta-Pitta (Blake 1979b; Breen fieldnotes)
Ringu-Ringu (Collins 1886; McLean 1886)
Wangkamanha
Wangka-Yutjurru

Karna group includes the Palku group and (among others):

Diyari (Austin 1981; Trefry 1970)
Karruwali (Anonymous 1886; W.H.W. 1912)
Mambangura (Sullivan and Eglinton 1886)

Marrulha (?=Mithaka)
Mithaka
"Murunuda" (?= Mithaka) (Campbell 1904)
Ngamini
Punthamara
Wangkangurru (Hercus personal communication; Breen fieldnotes)
Wangkumara
Yandruwandha
Yawarrawarrka

Mari group includes (among others):

Baradha (Beale 1974)
Bidjara (Breen 1973 and field notes)
Biri (Tindale 1938-39; Beale 1974)
Gangulu (McIntosh 1887)
Gugu-Badhun (Sutton 1973)
Gunggari
Gunya (Breen 1981a)
Margany (Breen 1981a)
Wadjigu
Yagalingu (Lowe 1887)
Yirandhali (Armstrong 1886; Christison 1887; M. Curr and E. Curr 1886; Dalhenty 1887; J.S. Dutton 1906; Tindale 1938-39; Anonymous 1900)

Mayi group includes:

Mayi-Kulan
Mayi-Kutuna
Mayi-Thakurti
Mayi-Yapi
Ngawun
Wunumara

The source for this group is Breen 1981b.

Pama group includes (among many others):

Kok-Nar
Kukatj
Kurtjar (Paul Black fieldnotes)

Other languages referred to are:

Alyawarr (Institute for Aboriginal Development 1989a)
Anmatyerr (Institute for Aboriginal Development 1989b)
Badjidi (Mathews 1901, Breen fieldnotes)
Bitharra (Sullivan 1886)

Bularnu
 Dyirbal (Dixon 1972)
 Kalali
 Kalkutungu (Blake 1969, 1979a)
 Kaytetye (K.L. Hale and H.J. Koch unpublished wordlists)
 Pertame (=Southern Arremte)
 Wakaya
 Wargamay (Dixon 1981)
 Warlpiri (Warlpiri Lexicon Project)
 Warluwarra
 "Wonkomarra" (= old form of Wangkumara) (Myles 1886)
 Yalarnnga (Blake tape transcripts, Breen tape transcripts and fieldnotes)

The following list gives abbreviations of names referred to in several chapters; some others that are used in only one or two chapters are introduced in those chapters, in the introductions to the vocabulary lists.

B	Bidjara
Dh	Dharawala
Gn	Gunya
Gu	Guwa
Kd	"Kungarditchi"
Kg	"Koongeri"
Kl	Kalkutungu
Kn	Kungkari
Mg	Margany
Pi	Pirriya
PP	Pitta-Pitta
Wb	Wadjabangayi
Wm	Wangkumara
Yb	Yandjibara
Yi	Yiningayi
Yl	Yalarnnga

No attempt has been made to give cognates of vocabulary items in the lists except where this is necessary or helpful in working out the likely form of a word or identifying it. If cognates are given for an item, no attempt is made to give an exhaustive list; the purpose of giving cognates is to give a guide to the likely phonemic form, and one reliable cognate from a neighbouring language is sufficient for this if there is no contradictory evidence from other sources.

Vocabularies are arranged semantically except that all verbs are grouped together. Order of semantic fields is: human classification, kinship, body, inanimate nature, fire, animals, birds, reptiles, fish (including crustaceans, mussels), insects, plants, camp, artefacts, food, qualities, numbers, (verbs), time, place, yes/no, pronouns (if not dealt with elsewhere). Ordering of verbs is: motion, stance, nature, bodily states and functions, senses, vocalisation, transfer, work, violence.

Ordering of terms within semantic groups is not necessarily the same for each chapter. Vocabulary items in some chapters are numbered for ease of cross-reference; the numbering systems do not match up from chapter to chapter.

We have used a practical orthography with, for example, digraphs such as *th*, *nh*, *lh* (for dental consonants) instead of diacritics; this not only makes for ease of typing but is also handy in cases of uncertainty since we can write, say, *n(h)* for a phoneme that could be dental or alveolar, *(r)n* for a phoneme that could be retroflex or alveolar or *n(a)y* for what might be *ny* or a sequence *nay*. (Note, however, that *(h)* and *(r)* are used sparingly.) *ng* represents a velar nasal, while *NG* is indeterminate; it could be /ng/, /ngk/, /nk/, /rnk/ or sometimes /nyty/ or /nty/. The symbol *R* denotes an indeterminate rhotic – /d/ (where this has a tap allophone) or /rr/ or /r/. In some languages *d* is a stop after a nasal and a tap elsewhere; in others it represents a stop while *rr* is the tap. *V* is used for an indeterminate vowel.

Sequences of dentals, palatals and retroflexes have been written with only one *h*, *y* or *r* not two. Thus /punytyu/ ‘body hair’ is written *puntyu*. We have assumed these sequences to be homorganic. Again, this has the advantage on occasions that it is not necessary to commit oneself; thus *lth* leaves the question of whether the lateral is /lh/ or /l/ unanswered. *NT* could be /nth/, /nty/ (not necessarily homorganic), /nt/ or /rnt/.

Spelling of Bidjara words in the notes differs from the system used in Breen 1973 in that *k* is used instead of *g* and *d* instead of *rr*, initial *nh* is replaced with *n* (see Breen 1974). Margany and Gunya words are written, as near as possible, in the same orthography; however, as these have a voiced/voiceless stop contrast *k* is used for the voiceless velar stop and *g* for the voiced, while *p*, *th*, *ty*, *t* and *rt* are used for the other voiceless stops. A hyphen is used in writing the cluster of /n/ and /g/, thus *n-g*, to distinguish it from the velar nasal, *ng*. This does not apply to the retroflex nasal /rn/ plus /g/; *mng* can only refer to a cluster of /rn/ and /g/ because /r/ plus /ng/ does not occur. *rr* is a trill. Items from Mayi languages are spelt as in the vocabulary in Breen 1981b. Spelling of items from other languages is in a practical orthography using the same symbols as in the languages described in this book; voiced or voiceless stop symbols are used as in the sources for these languages, except that *k* is used in preference to *g* for the velar stop.

In referring to words from other languages, minor differences such as a difference between a voiced and voiceless stop or between *r* and *rr* may be ignored; thus, for example, we have “*manggu* ‘arm’ in Mg, ‘wrist’ B” (Chapter 5, Notes to the list) although we would actually spell it *mangku* in the latter. When a word is found (perhaps with such minor differences) in more than one dialect in both the Karna and Mari groups it is referred to as ‘regional’ or (if found throughout Australia) ‘widespread’.

The putative phonemicisations of words which have not been heard from a speaker of the language have been determined by a comparison of the sources for the language and from our expectation based on our knowledge of neighbouring languages. We will not describe the details of how one determines the phonemic shape underlying a series of amateurish attempts at representation except to say that we have had considerable opportunity to compare imperfect attempts at notation of Australian languages with recordings and one becomes familiar with the ways in which untrained or semitrained Europeans might notate various sequences of phonemes. For example, a written sequence “*utta*” as opposed to “*udda*” in the same source will indicate a probable dental stop /th/ rather than an alveolar /t/, and an initial “*u*” before a double consonant in a language that is not likely to be one of the initial-

dropping languages is likely to result from someone having failed to hear an initial velar nasal /ng/ before an /a/. This means that a sequence “*utta*” could represent *ngatha*. (See also Breen 1980 and Breen 1981b:10-13.) However, it is not always easy to phonemicise amateurs' notations and in a few cases we have declined to make an attempt or have put a bracketed question mark after the entry to indicate our uncertainty. In some cases we have given an alternative in the notes.

Where a number of alternative phonemicisations present themselves, we have often narrowed the choice on the basis of knowledge of neighbouring languages. For example, in a word “*murra*” for ‘hand’ the *r* could indicate a tap, a retroflex glide or a trill. However, since other languages of the area have the glide, we represent this word with a glide, *mara*. It should be noted that this method could obscure a sound change.

Abbreviations used for grammatical morphemes:

abl	ablative	incho	inchoative
abs	absolute	loc	locative
alla	allative	op	operative
caus	causative	pot	potential
du	dual	pres	present
fut	future	purp	purposive
hith.imper	hither imperative	redup	reduplication
imper	imperative		

