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**The Language of the chosen view: the first phase of graphization of Dieri by
Hermannsburg missionaries, Lake Killalpaninna 1867- 80**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the documentation of the Dieri language by Lutheran missionaries in the years 1867-1880, at Hermannsburg (later known as Bethesda) mission station, Lake Killalpaninna SA.

It is based on hitherto unexamined primary sources including the first Dieri primer (Homann & Koch: 1870), mission reports published in the mission journals (both in Australia and Germany), and on a large quantity of unpublished materials including the first Dieri Grammar and Wordlist manuscripts, and unpublished correspondence. These materials have been retrieved from archival sources, and in many cases have required transcription from old German handwriting and translation from either German or Dieri or both. Some of the most valuable materials include early samples of Indigenous writing.

In contrast to descriptive work on the Dieri/Diyari language, this thesis focuses the system of description developed by the mission and used to develop literate practice in the mission community. The vast body of documentation we have as legacy of the Lutheran mission includes language documents which are the products of linguistic practice of the missionaries, which in turn are informed by the systems of metaphoric reference embedded in the Lutheran Faith and the training given to missionaries by their particular mission institute. As such the thesis seeks to contextualize the Dieri language and its scripted form.

The thesis also seeks to demonstrate that modern work on the Dieri language, incorporating linguistic advances in collection techniques (phonetic transcription and phonemic analysis), relied heavily on mission data and connections.

A major aim of the thesis is to make accessible to the Dieri descendants now living in communities across South Australia, an important early collection of Dieri language and contact-history materials, so that in turn it may promote awareness of this period of history and also the unique legacy of Lutheran documentation, and inform and enrich future revival work with the Dieri language.