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Editor's Preface and List of Contributors (LDD 1)

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Editor's Preface

Peter K. Austin

This volume arises from a two-day event of a public lecture and workshop held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London on 28th February and 1st March 2003 entitled “Endangered Languages: Charting the Way Forward”. The public lecture was presented by Professor David Crystal and was preceded by the launch of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) at SOAS by Lisbet Rausing. It is Lisbet Rausing’s support through the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund which has enabled the Endangered Languages project to be set up at SOAS. The all-day workshop on the following day featured presentations on language documentation and endangered languages by some of the world’s leading scholars in these areas and was attended by over 70 interested participants.

The papers for this volume are written up versions of the workshop presentations; I am extremely grateful to the authors for preparing them rapidly for publication. All the papers have been reviewed by an editorial committee associated with the SOAS Endangered Languages Academic Programme; I am especially grateful to Dr Lutz Marten and Dr Justin Watkins for their detailed and helpful comments on all the papers that have resulted in improvements in both content and presentation. Thanks also to Zara Pybus for her highly efficient administrative and organisational support.

The field of language documentation is a relatively new one in linguistics and these papers make significant new contributions to the theory and practice of this important new development, especially as it relates to the recording and documentation of endangered languages. We plan in future volumes to publish further ground-breaking research on these and related topics.

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