

The Chameleon
Edition # 9
June 2007

Changes to Management Committee and Newsletter Editorship

Peter Hendriks is now Director of the CRLC, replacing Cynthia Allen after two terms in this role. Cynthia will take over the editorship of *The Chameleon*. Thanks to outgoing editor Harold Koch for his fine work on past editions and for co-editing this edition.

New members

Full members:

Jutta Besold, PhD student, School of Language Studies, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University

Dr. Tamsin Donaldson, Visiting Fellow, School of Language Studies, Australian National University

Thy Nguyen, PhD student, Southeast Asia Centre, Australian National University

William Steed, PhD student, School of Language Studies, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University

Associate members:

Professor Dr. Stefan Engelberg, Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim

Dr. Alex François, Langues et Civilisations à Tradition Orale, CNRS

Dr. Eugen Hill, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

Dr. Robert Mailhammer, Institut für Deutsche Philologie, University of Munich

Professor France Martineau, Lettres Françaises, Université d'Ottawa

Professor William McGregor, Afdeling for Lingvistik, Aarhus Universitet

Professor Dianne Jonas, Harvard University

Dr. Heidi Quinn, Post-doctoral fellow, University of Canterbury

News of members

Mark Donohue has accepted the position of professor in the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, Monash University. He has begun a new project Investigating the layered history of the Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages of insular eastern Indonesia, and their mutual influences. Special lectures, seminars or conference presentations recently given include:

- 'Language, locality and lifestyle in New Guinea'. Invited paper at the workshop Historical Linguistics and Hunter-Gatherer Populations in Global Perspective, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, August 10-12 2006.
- 'The end of Papuan'. Papuanist workshop. October 27-29 2006. Organised by the University of Sydney.

With Simon Musgrave, he has prepared a paper Typology and the linguistic macro-history of island Melanesia to be published in *Oceanic Linguistics*.

Stefan Engelberg has accepted a chair for German linguistics at the University of Mannheim. He will be working on a project on German language contact in the former German colonies in the South Pacific and Africa which will be hosted at the Institute for German Language in Mannheim, Germany. The focus during the first stage of the project will be on the former South Pacific colonies (German New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, Northern Solomons, Carolines, Palau Islands, Marianas, Nauru, Marshall Islands, and Western Samoa). Two topics connected to German as a contact language which will be given special attention are the influence German had on the indigenous languages and the influence of English, English-lexifier Pidgins, and local Austronesian languages on the settler varieties of German.

Luise Hercus has been elected to life membership in the Linguistic Society of America.

Harold Koch has written an article on "Morphological change" for *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the language sciences*. Ed. Patrick Hogan. To be published in 2008.

Robert Mailhammer will be a Humboldt Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne with a Feodor-Lynen Research Grant 01 April-30 September 2007, working on a new project 'Amurdak—Grammar and Text' in cooperation with **Nicholas Evans**. His forthcoming book *The Germanic strong verbs: Foundations and development of a new system* is to be published in 2007 in Mouton de Gruyter's Trends in Linguistics series (vol. 183). He plans to present a paper 'The role of ablaut in the nominal system of Proto-Germanic' at the 18th International Conference for Historical Linguistics in Montreal.

Paul Sidwell has received an NEH grant to fund his "Mon-Khmer Languages Project" from mid 2007 to mid 2009. The project will create three primary resources:

- a **Mon-Khmer languages database** will make all language reference materials, including phonetic transcription, glosses, and citations, freely available.
- a **Mon-Khmer etymological dictionary** will provide an on-line hierarchical reference that puts the data in context. It will be based on – and ultimately extend greatly, with ten times as many reflexes, and a dozen intermediate branch reconstructions – the late H.L. Shorto's much-anticipated *Mon-Khmer Comparative Dictionary*, which Paul is editing for publication. For details, see <http://pacling.anu.edu.au/catalogue/579.html>.
- a **collaborative worksite** for Mon-Khmer language research. This on-line resource will provide an architecture for extension, comment, and correction of language and etymological data, and will maintain a peer certification system on behalf of the Mon-Khmer scholars' community.

Paul will continue to be based at RSPAS as a Visiting Research Fellow.

Ghil`ad Zuckermann has been appointed Associate Professor at The University of Queensland. He has been awarded a 5-year ARC Discovery fellowship for a project entitled 'Revival' in the Middle East: The Genesis of Israeli (a.k.a. 'Modern Hebrew') - Lessons for the Revival of No-Longer Spoken Australian Languages. For more details, see his website at <http://www.zuckermann.org/>.

Publications by members

- Allen, Cynthia.** 2006. Possessives and determiners in Old English. In Terttu Nevalainen, Juhani Klemola and Mikko Laitenen (eds), *Types of variation: Diachronic, dialectal and typological interfaces*, 149-170. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Allen, Cynthia.** 2006. Review of *English in the Middle Ages*, by Tim Machan. *Studies in Language* 30:221-4.
- Donohue, Mark.** In press. Variation in voice in Indonesian/Malay: Historical and synchronic perspectives. In Yoshiko Matsumoto, David Y. Oshima, Orrin R. Robinson, and Peter Sells (eds), *Diversity in language: Perspectives and implications*. Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Engelberg, Stefan.** 2006. The influence of German on the lexicon of Palauan and Kosraean. In Keith, Allen (ed.): *Selected Papers from the 2005 conference of the Australian Linguistic Society*. <http://www.als.asn.au/> (31.5.2006).
- Engelberg, Stefan.** 2006: Kaisa, Kumi, Karmoból. Deutsche Lehnwörter in den Sprachen des Südpazifiks. In: [Sprachreport 4/2006](#). S. 2-9. Mannheim. ([Sprachreport 4/2006](#))
- Engelberg, Stefan.** 2006. *Deutsch in der Südsee: Die sprachlichen Folgen deutschen Sprachkontakts und der Einfluss von Spracheinstellungen*. In *Proceedings of "Diaspora Experiences: German-Speaking Immigrants and Their Descendants; Waterloo, Ont. 2006"*. Waterloo: Waterloo Centre for German Studies. (Download: <http://www.ids-mannheim.de/pub/autoren/ids/engelberg.html>)
- Hill, Peter.** 2006. Post -1989 Lexical changes in the Slavonic languages. *Australian Slavonic and East-European studies* 20: 1-2. 173-193.
- Koch, Harold.** 2007. Divergent regularity in word-initial truncation in the Arandic languages. In Diana Eades, John Lynch, Jeff Siegel (eds), *Language description, history and development: Linguistic indulgence in memory of Terry Crowley*. (Creole Language Library 30) Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 267-280.
- Pawley, Andy** and Robert Attenborough, Jack Golson and Robin Hide (editors). 2006. *Papuan Pasts: Cultural, linguistic and biological histories of Papuan-speaking peoples* Andrew Pawley, Robert Attenborough, Jack Golson and Robin Hide (editors) (2005, *Pacific Linguistics* 572) Details at <http://pacling.anu.edu.au/catalogue/572.html>. Or click [here](#) for the same details in the booknote below.
- Ziegler, Debra.** 2007. *Interfaces with English aspect. Diachronic and empirical studies*. Studies in Language Companion Series 82. Philadelphia and Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Click [here](#) for flyer.
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** 2006. 'Etymythological othering' and the power of 'lexical Engineering' in Judaism, Islam and Christianity. A Socio-Philo(sopho)logical perspective. In 'Tope Omoniyi and Joshua A. Fishman (eds), *Explorations in the sociology of language and religion* (Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture series). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 237-58.
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** 2006. Israeli (Modern Hebrew). In Keith Brown (ed.), *Encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. 2nd Edition (14 vols). Oxford: Elsevier.

- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** 2007. Di Yisroeldike Shprakh: Hebreish lebt vider, Yidish lebt vayter (The Israeli language: Hebrew revived, Yiddish survived). *Afn Shvel* 337. [In Yiddish].
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** 2007. Hasafá Haisraelít kemusá mekhkár atsmá khashivút gisható shel rozén ladèmistifikátsya shel "tkhiát haivrít" (The Israeli Language as an Object of Independent Study: The Importance of Rosén's Approach to the Demystification of the 'Hebrew Revival'). *Iton* 77. [In Israeli]
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** 2007. *Israelit safá yafa_* (Israeli a beautiful language - Hebrew as myth). Tel Aviv: Am Oved. [In Israeli].
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** In press. Farmaskírte antláyung: Yídishe léksishe hashpóe af Ivrit (Camouflaged Borrowing: The lexical influence of Yiddish on Israeli) in Dov-Ber Kerler (ed.), *Yerusholaymer almanakh* 28. [In Yiddish]
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** (With Azzan Yadin) In press. Blorít: Pagans' Mohawk or Sabras' forelock?: Ideologically manipulative secularization of Hebrew terms in socialist Zionist Israeli. In 'Tope Omoniyi (ed.), *The sociology of language and religion: Change, conflict and accommodation. A festschrift for Joshua A. Fishman on his 80th birthday*. London: New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** In press. Diaspora influences on Israeli (a.k.a. Modern Hebrew). In M. Avrum Ehrlich (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Jewish diaspora*, Santa Barbara (California): ABC-CLIO.
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** (With Yair Sapir). In press. Phono-Semantic matching in Icelandic' in Judith Rosenhouse and Rotem Kowner (eds), *Globally speaking: English vocabulary in world languages*. Multilingual Matters
- Zuckermann, Ghil`ad.** In press. Between revival and survival: Yiddish and the emergence of the Israeli language. In Jennifer Dowling (ed.), *Yídish mítn Kop Aróp: Yiddish in the southern hemisphere* (Mandelbaum Studies in Judaica). Sydney: Mandelbaum Publishing, University of Sydney.

Profile: Matt Toulmin



Growing up in central Africa, I spoke English with my family, Swahili with my friends, and French in the classroom. I remember as a 12 year old discovering that my mates did not speak Swahili in their homes; they spoke Kinande. I set out to master their mother tongue, to learn its sounds and patterns, so that I could enter more closely into their world. Civil war forced my family from the country, and put an end to my language learning ambitions; but I was left with an enduring interest in different languages and the people who use them to communicate.

In mid-2006 I submitted my PhD dissertation to the Australian National University, and the degree was conferred later in the same year. The title is: *Reconstructing linguistic history in a dialect continuum: The Kamta, Rajbanshi, and Northern Deshi Bangla subgroup of Indo-Aryan*. (An edited version is in preparation for publication with CRLC; in the meantime, the

submitted version may be downloaded from <http://thesis.anu.edu.au/public/adt-ANU20070411.000201/index.html>).

The major problem that I wrestled with in that piece of research was methodological: is it possible to reconstruct linguistic history for lects that exist in a dialect continuum? In a continuum, the diachronic boundaries and relations between lects are complex and diachronically unstable. Are our historical linguistic methods capable of sequencing changes even for complex cases such as this? The question is methodologically important because the vast bulk of Indo-Aryan lects—not to mention many other lects around the world—exist in continua whose linguistic history is much more complex than that envisaged by a tree-diagram.

Well, what of my future research interests? I am a member of SIL International, and intend to return to India within the year to continue research on Indian languages and literatures. I will be operating under Serampore College in Kolkata, which was established in 1818 by (amongst others) the missionary-linguist William Carey. My major research project will combine linguistic analysis with studies in translation and religious literature. The project is titled: *The legacy of William Carey: a study of translation methods in three Bangla translations of the Bible*.

Alongside this project, I hope to continue on with synchronic description and historical reconstruction for ‘minor’ Indo-Aryan lects, including the Kamta/Rajbanshi/Deshi lects of north Bengal. I anticipate that the study of India’s languages and linguistic histories will continue to provide methodological complexities that will inspire papers of interest to the broader community of historical linguists.

Editorial by Peter Hendriks

Language change through the eye of a needle

As the new(ish) director of the Centre, I have been asked by the new(ish) editor to provide a few words by way of an editorial for this issue of the newsletter. First of all I should say that I am delighted to be able to take on the directorship of the Centre, and my task has been made so much easier thanks to the excellent organisational skills of my predecessor, Dr Cynthia Allen.

Of the various sub-fields studied by members of the Centre the one of most professional interest to me personally at the moment is that of language change through language contact. This is in fact a perennial favourite amongst members of the CRLC here at the ANU, and indeed our next reading group meeting is scheduled to discuss a chapter from Morse-Gagne’s 2003 PhD dissertation, “Viking Pronouns in England: Charting the Course of THEY, THEIR and THEM”. My own research interests however lie not in the linguistic situation of a small island nation off the coast of the continent of Europe, but rather in that of a small island nation off the coast of the continent of Asia, i.e. Japan.

The contact that Japanese has had with other languages over the millennia has been well documented. It ranges from pre-historic contact with Indonesian languages (see Kumar and Rose 2000), through very extensive contact with Chinese languages in the early years of the last millennium (see Shibatani 1990 for a succinct summary), and on to contact with European languages (primarily English) in the last few hundred years (again, Shibatani 1990 provides a good English summary).

My own interest in this was kindled by Kinsui 1997, where he argues persuasively that contact with the Dutch language in the 1600's and 1700's resulted in the development of a new passive in Japanese. It is not so much the result of this contact that I find intriguing— after all, we all know that anything can be “borrowed”—but the situation in which this contact occurred. Japan at that time was strictly isolationist in outlook, and those (Dutch) merchants who were allowed to come to Japan were restricted to a small man-made island in the harbour of Nagasaki, a port town at the other end of the country from the capital, Edo. These merchants brought with them books on medicine, ship-building, and other “Western learnings” and in order to be able to beat the West at its own game, a small number of Japanese natives were permitted to learn Dutch to be able to translate these texts into Japanese. It was, then, through the eye of this needle that the Dutch language passed into Japanese. Not through massive speaker to speaker contact, immigration, or invasion, but through the halting steps of Japanese students learning and translating scholarly works on (for example) the grammar of the Dutch language. That this could have resulted in enough contact for syntactic transfer is precisely what I find fascinating about it all.

References:

- Kinsui, Satoshi. 1997. The influence of translation on the historical development of the Japanese passive construction. *Journal of pragmatics* 28: 759-779.
- Kumar, Ann and Phil Rose. 2000. Lexical evidence for early contact between Indonesian languages and Japanese. *Oceanic linguistics* 39. 219-255.
- Morse-Gagne, Elise Emerson. 2003. Viking pronouns in England: Charting the course of THEY, THEIR & THEM. PhD Thesis. University of Pennsylvania.
- Shibatani, Masayoshi. 1990. *The languages of Japan*. Cambridge: CUP.

Events

Forthcoming Conferences

Language Contact and the Dynamics of Language: Theory and Implications
10-13 May 2007, *Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology*, Leipzig
http://www.unice.fr/ChaireIUF-Nicolai/Archives/Symposium/Index_Symposium.html

Australian Linguistic Society 2007, Adelaide, 26-28 September 2007
<http://www.als.asn.au/>

The 18th International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHL 2007), August 6 - 11, 2007
at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada.

<http://www.ichl2007.uqam.ca/>

Seminar Series [information supplied by Rachel Hendery]

2 May 2006

Sander Adelaar

(University of Melbourne)

“A multidisciplinary perspective on the settlement of Madagascar”

30 May 2006

Maarten Mous

(Leiden University)

“Reconstructing sociolinguistic situations: Test case East Africa”

6 June 2006

Rachel Hendery

(ANU)

“When discourse elements become relative clause markers”

25 July 2006

Adrian Clynes, Alex Henry and Maslin Jukin (presented by Adrian Clynes)

(Universiti Brunei Darussalam)

“The evolution of the Brunei Malay Wedding Invitation: from a British model to a Bruneian one”

1 August 2006

Frank Lichtenberk

(University of Auckland)

“Attributive possessive constructions and the relational - non-relational noun distinction in Oceanic languages and in English”

4 August

Russell Gray

(University of Auckland)

“Out of Taiwan? Genes, languages and the peopling of the Pacific”

8 August 2006

Dianne Jonas

(Harvard University)

“The Scots language in Shetland - A diachronic perspective”

15 August 2006

Erma Vassiliou

(Visiting Fellow, ANU)

“Romance NPs with Greek Morphology in Medieval Cypriot”

22 August

Bill McGregor

(Aarhus University)

“Grammaticalisation of verbs into temporal and modal markers in Australian languages”

12 September 2006

Phil Rose

(ANU)

“Zooming-in on Oujiang Wu: tonal homogeneity and acoustic reconstruction in a small subgroup of Chinese dialects”

26 September 2006

Jennifer Hendriks

(ANU)

“The possessive doubling construction *Jan z'n boek* in Dutch: its origins and implications for developments in other Germanic languages”

22 November 2006

Patrick McConvell

(AIATSIS)

“Lenition and the identification of loanwords in Gurindji ”

Erich Round

(Yale University)

Friday 30th March 2007

"Reconstructing Tangkic truncation and augmentation"

William Steed

(ANU, School of Language Studies)

Tuesday 17 April 2007

"Aspects of Chu Tone Sandhi"

Felicity Meakins

(Melbourne University)

Tuesday 24 April 2007

"Alternational Code-switching and mixed language genesis"

CRLC Historical Linguistics Reading Group Schedule, 2006 [information supplied by Bevan Barrett]

Session 1: 24th March

- Bybee, Joan. 2003. Mechanisms of Change in Grammaticization: The Role of Frequency. In Joseph, Brian D. & Richard D. Janda (eds.) *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, Malden : Blackwell Publishing. Ch. 19, pp. 602-623.
- Traugott, Elisabeth Closs. 2003. Constructions in Grammaticalization. In Joseph, Brian D. & Richard D. Janda (eds.) *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, Malden : Blackwell Publishing. Ch. 20, pp.624-647.

Session 2: 12th April

- Heine, Bernd & Tania Kuteva. 2005. *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, pp. 1-39.

Session 3: 28th April

- Heine, Bernd & Tania Kuteva. 2005. *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3, pp. 79-122.

Session 4: 19th May

- Blake, Barry J. 2001. *Case (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6 “Life cycle of case systems”, pp. 161-183.

Session 5: 8th June

- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs & Richard B. Dasher. (2002). *Regularity in Semantic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, pp. 24-50

Session 6: 30th June

- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs & Richard B. Dasher. (2002). *Regularity in Semantic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2, pp.51-104.

Session 7: 8th September

- Blevins, Juliette. (2004) *Evolutionary Phonology: The Emergence of Sound Patterns*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10 “Diachronic phonology”, pp. 259-299.

Education

Courses taught in 2006 at ANU:

- Language Change and Linguistic Reconstruction (LING2005), an annual first-semester course, was taught this year by Dr. Harold Koch.
- Study of a Language Family (LING3008), a 2nd semester course, this year was on the Chinese language family and was taught by Dr. Phil Rose.

Courses taught in Semester 1, 2007:

- Language Change and Linguistic Reconstruction (LING2005)—Harold Koch
- Languages in Contact (LING2018)—Jennifer Hendriks

Recent theses completed:

Toulmin, Matthew, *Reconstructing linguistic history in a dialect continuum: The Kamta, Rajbanshi, and Northern Deshi Bangla subgroup of Indo-Aryan*. (ANU PhD; Supervisors Harold Koch, Malcolm Ross, and Bethwyn Evans, Adviser Luise Hercus).

ABSTRACT: This study outlines a methodological framework for reconstructing linguistic history within a dialect continuum and applies this methodology to an under-described, controversial, and complex subgroup of New Indo-Aryan (NIA)—the Kamta, Rajbanshi and Northern Deshi Bangla lects (KRNB).

Dialect continua are characterised by non-discrete boundaries between speech communities, and as a result previously divergent lects may undergo common innovations; the result is the familiar picture of overlapping dialectological isoglosses. The sequencing of these innovations and the historical relations between the lects involved are often highly ambiguous. Given the right sociohistorical conditions, a widespread innovation may be more recent than a localised innovation—the very opposite sequencing to that implied by the splits in a family tree.

Not surprisingly, discrete application to the NIA continuum of traditional methodologies—including the Comparative Method, etymological reconstruction and dialect geography—has yielded unsatisfactory and at times chronologically distorted results. Historical studies, therefore, have chosen between: (a) only studying the histories of NIA lects with written records; (b) reconstructing using the chronology suggested by the shape of a family tree; or (c) settling for a ‘flat’, non-historical account of dialect geography.

Under the approach developed here, the strengths of each of these traditional methods are synthesised within an overarching framework provided by a sociohistorical theory of language change. This synthesis enables the linguistic history of the KRNB lects to be reconstructed with some detail from the proto-Kamta stage (1250-1550 AD) up to the present day. Innovations are sequenced based on three types of criteria: linguistic, textual and sociohistorical. The old Kamta stage, and its relation to old Bangla and Asamiya, is reconstructed based on linguistic Propagation Events and Speech Community Events—two concepts central to the methodology. The old Kamta speech community and its language became divided into western, central and eastern subsections during the middle KRNB period (1550-1787 AD, dates assigned by attested sociohistorical events). During the same period, KRNB lects also underwent partial reintegration with NIA lects further afield by means of more widely propagated changes. This trend of differentiation at a local level, concurrent with reintegration at a wider level, also characterises the modern KRNB period from 1787 AD to the present.

This account of KRNB linguistic history is based on a rigorous reconstruction of changes in phonology and morphology. The result is not only a reconstruction of historical changes, but of the proto-Kamta phoneme inventory, hundreds of words of vocabulary, and specific areas of nominal and verbal morphology. The reconstruction is based on data collected in the field for the purposes of this study. Phonological reconstruction has made use of the WordCorr software

program, and the reconstructed vocabulary is presented in a comparative wordlist in an appendix.

The methodology developed and applied in this study has been found highly successful; though naturally not without its own limitations. This study has significance for its contribution both to the methodology of historical linguistic reconstruction and to the light shed on the linguistic prehistory of KRNb.

Book notes

Indo-European language and culture: An introduction

Fortson, Benjamin W. IV. 2004. (Blackwell Textbooks in Linguistics 19) Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Here, finally, is a usable textbook on Indo-European linguistics. The book contains 20 chapters, 11 of which are devoted to particular sub-families (Anatolian, Indic, Iranian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Armenian, Tocharian, Balto-Slavic, and Albanian). A final chapter discusses fragmentary languages such as Phrygian and Illyrian. Each of these chapters discusses the external history and internal linguistic developments of the branch and the basic phonology and grammar of its languages, and provides commented text samples. Earlier chapters discuss Proto-Indo-European phonology, morphology, verbs, nouns, pronouns and other parts of speech, and syntax—giving a state-of-the-art discussion of the reconstruction of the proto-language (if not all the most radical interpretations). PIE culture and archaeology are confined to a 30-page chapter 2, and covers the topics: society; religion, ritual and myth; poetics; personal names; archaeology and the PIE homeland. Some readers might wish for a better balance between culture and language, especially given the title. Each chapter is provided with a bibliography and further reading notes. Most importantly, given its billing as a textbook, are the exercises at the end of each chapter; if these are worked through carefully, readers can test their understanding of key concepts and master the intricacies of the major sound changes in each branch, laryngeal theory, ablaut grades, accent-ablaut classes (acrostatic, hysterokinetic, etc.) and thematic vs. athematic inflection, as well as aspects of poetic language, etc. A shortish PIE vocabulary, organised by semantic domains, is given at the end of each of the 12 language-family chapters. As a paperback volume of just under 500 pages (including indices and front matter) this book is good value; it is useful both for Indo-Europeanists to quickly learn of recent interpretations and for general historical linguists who are looking for a one-stop guide to this language family which continues to be one of the bedrocks of our discipline. [Harold Koch]

Papuan Pasts: Cultural, linguistic and biological histories of Papuan-speaking peoples Andrew Pawley, Robert Attenborough, Jack Golson and Robin Hide (editors) (2005, Pacific Linguistics 572).

This book is an inter-disciplinary exploration of the history of humans in New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands, which make up the biogeographic and cultural region that is coming to be known as Near Oceania, with particular reference to the people who speak Papuan (non-Austronesian) languages. Discoveries over the past 50 years have given Near Oceania a prominence in world prehistory far beyond its demographic, economic and political importance. Archaeological research has established that by 40,000 years ago people had made the ocean crossings from South-east Asia to the Australia - New Guinea continent and had reached New Britain and New Ireland. By 30,000 years ago they had penetrated the high valleys of the central highlands of New Guinea. There is evidence of cultivation of taro, yam and banana and associated forest clearance in some parts of the central highlands from 10,000 years ago and this takes on a more systematic, agricultural character after about 7,000 years ago. The northern third of New Guinea is the most linguistically diverse part of the planet, containing a concentration of disparate language families consistent with *in situ* diversification in the late Pleistocene. The Bismarcks and Solomons are a second area of great linguistic diversity. Research in population genetics, using mitochondrial and Y-chromosome DNA, shows a degree of genetic variation in Near Oceania consistent with at least 40,000 years of human settlement and *in situ* diversification of semi-isolated populations, while also in some cases suggesting several distinct population arrivals. The 28 chapters of the book include state of the art reports by archaeologists, historical linguists, environmental scientists, cultural anthropologists, biological anthropologists and population geneticists, together with introductions by the four editors.

2005 ISBN 0 85883 562 2 xxiii + 817 pp

Prices: Australia AUD\$148.50 (incl. GST)

Overseas AUD\$135.00 [publisher's blurb from <http://pacling.anu.edu.au/catalogue/572.html>]

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