

LYNCH, John (ed.): *Issues in Austronesian Historical Phonology*. Pacific Linguistics 550. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 2003. vii + 227 pp., bib., figs, maps, tables. Price: Australia A\$59.40 (inc. GST), Overseas A\$54.00 (paper).

Paul de Lacy
Rutgers University

The organizers of the 9th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics and the 5th International Conference on Oceanic Linguistics (both held in 2002) decided against publishing a large volume of proceedings. The conference papers will instead appear as separate thematic books. This one is the first, and contains ten papers on diachronic change in Austronesian phonologies. It is sometimes hard to justify to one's library the expense of a large conference proceedings when only a few chapters are of interest. Publishing specialized volumes solves this problem, so I thank the conference organizers for doing so and hope that they have started a trend.

Four chapters focus on proto-phonemes and their reflexes. One of John Wolff's contributions proposes a reconstruction of Proto Austronesian (PAN) phonemes; the other discusses the reflexes of PAN phonemes in Fijian. Richard McGinn's paper deals with the reflexes of Proto Malayo-Polynesian *a in the Rejang and Land Dayak groups, and Uri Tadmor's chapter proposes an account of the source and progression of changes in Proto Malayic word-final *a in western Austronesian.

Three papers focus on classification into language families. All happen to discuss Sulawesi languages. One of David Mead's papers builds on work by René van den Berg in arguing for a Celebic group that contains almost all the languages of central, eastern and south-eastern Sulawesi; he adduces additional support for the group and identifies several sub-groups. Mead's other chapter argues that the Saluan and Banggai languages form a group. René van den Berg builds on work by Mark Donohue about the members of the Muna-Buton group, but differs in advocating Tukang Besi's inclusion.

Three papers use historical evidence to analyze synchronic phonologies. Robert Blust proposes that some words in Selau have no underlying vowels. He argues that any other analysis would require an impossible set of diachronic changes. Hans Schmidt proposes a series of diachronic changes to account for the famous Rotuman 'phase' alternations, discussed below. John Lynch proposes palatalized proto-forms of labial consonants in the Loyalties subgroup of New Caledonia to account for synchronic distributions of front vowels.

Space limitations prevent me from commenting on more than a couple of chapters in detail. My choice here is rather arbitrary as all of the articles provided food for thought.

Wolff's first article 'The sounds of Proto Austronesian' is essentially a summary of an ongoing research enterprise to reconstruct the phonology of PAN. Apart from its value for PAN scholarship, the article succinctly lays out significant methodological considerations in historical reconstruction. For whatever reason, comparative evidence alone seems to ensure that the older the reconstructed language, the greater the number of phonemes. To counter-act this tendency, Wolff advocates strictly adhering to criteria for positing a proto-phoneme (all irregular forms, strictly defined, must be ascribed to borrowings or analogy), justifying every sound change as phonologically or phonetically motivated, recognizing the role of restrictions imposed by the languages' phonological systems (e.g. the prosodic restrictions that forced

Austronesian roots to be disyllabic), and allowing for free and register-conditioned allomorphic variation. Wolff's short article (13 pages) is a pleasure to read and could be profitably discussed in a class on diachronic methodology.

Hans Schmidt's paper on Rotuman raises some interesting issues. Famously, most Rotuman words have two forms: a 'complete phase' with usually penultimate stress (e.g. [hóla] 'spread out') and an 'incomplete phase' with final stress ([hoál]). Schmidt adds new data and does a thorough job in interpreting and reconciling the many descriptions. Every analysis has proposed a large number of processes, including metathesis, deletion, glide formation, and vowel harmony; Schmidt proposes six rules that describe successive diachronic changes. The proposals prompted me to think about the influence of theoretical frameworks on understanding diachronic change. Chomsky & Halle's (1968) *The Sound Pattern of English* placed emphasis on processes rather outcomes. In contrast, constraint-based frameworks like Prince & Smolensky's (1993) Optimality Theory emphasize the target of change. In Rotuman, all of the changes either provide the motivation for or are the consequence of stressing the final vowel: metatheses like [hóla]~[ho.ál] serves to make the final syllable heavy, so attracting stress away from the penult, as does the deletion in [ráko]~[rák], and coalescence in [tóle]~[tóél]. The glide alternation in [tíro]~[tjór] is a way to avoid an onsetless syllable (*[ti.ór]) when possible. Is a diachronic change the addition of a process or the imposition of a target? SPE conditions one to think in terms of processes, and so consider diachronic change to be the successive accumulation of processes. In contrast, target-oriented theories see the key diachronic change in Rotuman as imposition of the target of final stress. To reach this target, several different processes would have had to develop simultaneously; there would therefore be no intermediate stage of the language in which only some processes applied to only partially meet the target. In short, Schmidt's paper and many of the others illustrate the sometimes subtle influences of phonological theories on understanding diachronic change.

This book will be valuable to anyone interested in diachronic change and synchronic phonologies in Austronesian languages. The empirical coverage of the book is wide, ranging from Western Austronesian to Polynesian languages. Phonologists that are not specialists in this language family will also find the book worthwhile to consult given the recent upsurge in interest in diachronic perspectives on synchronic explanations.

I conclude with an appeal. While some of the articles in this book use the International Phonetic Alphabet, a great deal of work on this language family does not. Non-standard symbols have created confusion for both descriptive and theoretical linguists (Schmidt gives excellent examples for Rotuman). Consistent use of the IPA would open up much of this valuable work to the broader linguistic community.