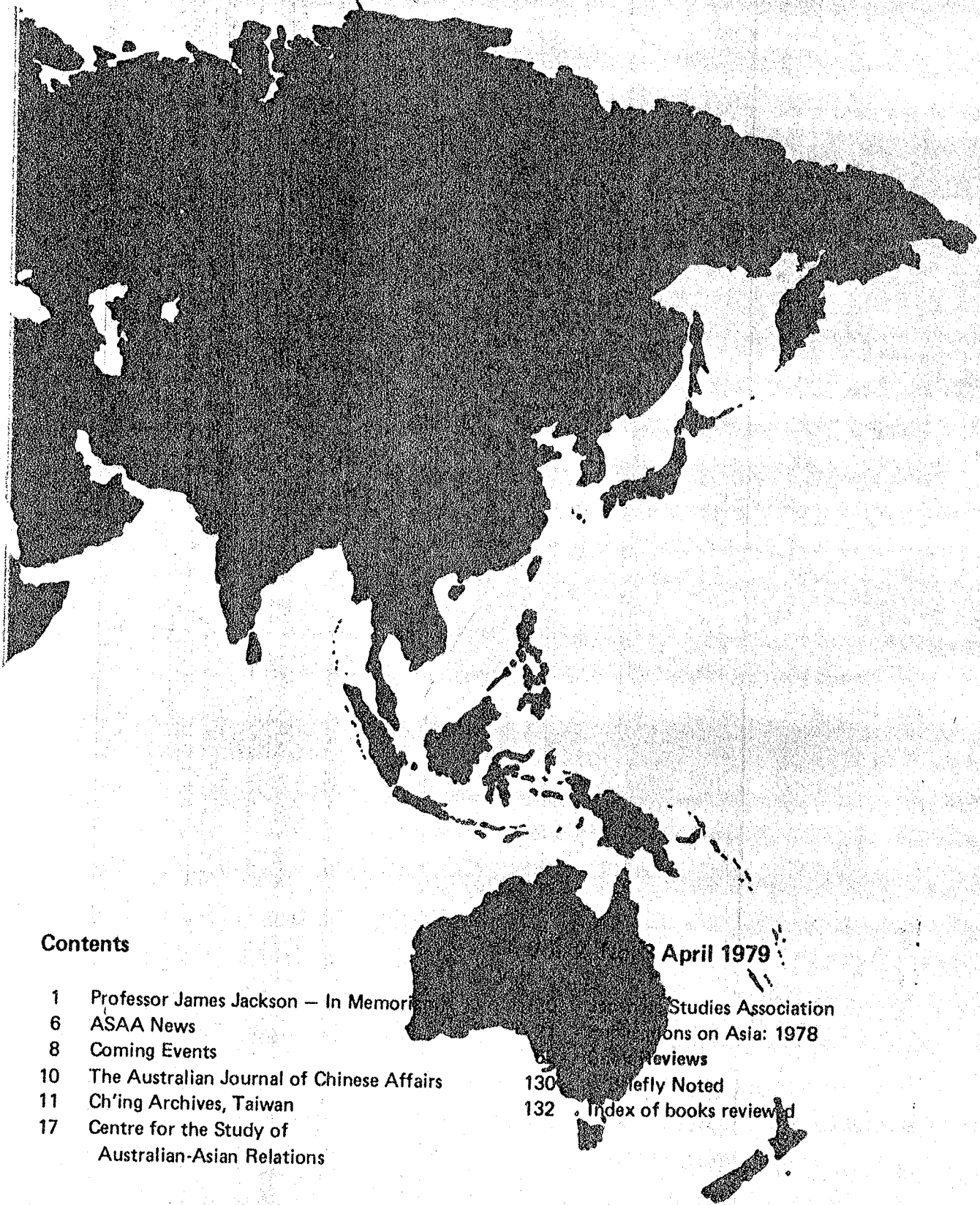


Asian Studies
Association
of Australia

Review



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J.N. Sneddon, *Proto-Minahasan: Phonology, Morphology and Wordlist*, Pacific Linguistics Series B - No. 54, Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1978. x, 204 pp., preface, map, bibliog. Paperback, n.p.g.

The author has undertaken a comparative survey of five languages spoken in the Minahasa region of North Celebes in order to reconstruct as much as possible of their common parent language, Proto Minahasan (PMin).

The book consists of four sections: (1) introductory material on the names, dialects, locations, and relationships of the Minahasan languages, and on the procedures and problems in reconstructing their historical ancestor; (2) reconstruction of PMin phonology on a systematic language-by-language, then group-by-group comparison; (3) reconstruction of PMin inflectional and derivational affixes (based on available data); and (4) reconstruction of a preliminary PMin lexicon.

The author's insistence on a careful and systematic reconstruction of a proto-language by doing it in successive stages is not a pedantic one. It is the basis for sound comparative work on higher order proto-languages. Hence, for Austronesianists, this effort represents a meso-language reconstruction (PMin is a daughter language of Proto-Austronesian, Proto Hesperonesian, and possibly of Proto-Philippine - although this needs research and verification).

The delimitation of the Minahasan subgroup is based primarily on the results of a lexicostatistical classification (*Oceanic Linguistics* 9:11-36), and is further supported by the overall agreement of shared phonology, morphology, and lexicon, not to exclude the author's intuitions after extensive study of these and other related languages. However, genetic subgrouping rests on the weight of shared innovations, the examination of which is not studied or discussed in one given place in any detail. Hence, the statement*that 'the lexicostatistical evidence gives a solid basis for the subgrouping hypothesis on which the reconstructional work is based' (p. 9) is over-optimistic (of lexicostatistics generally), but certain to be correct (with regard to Minahasan interrelationships) due to the high scores.

Space limitations allow only cursory comments. Since all the languages share most [19/24] phonemes, the tables (pp. 20, 21, 23, 38, 54) are repetitive and less informative than, say, a combined table on one model (e.g., p. 58) or the excellent diagram of correspondences (p. 74). However, the independent discussion of the phonological peculiarities of each language is crucial.

The book is filled with valuable data and insights, e.g., the solution of vocalic /u/ over semivowel /w/ (p. 60), or the

establishment of PMin *r₁ and *r₂, including the rationale for selecting subnumerals rather than different symbols (pp. 65 ff). The forms for 'hundred' are clearly problematic (pp. 101-4) and serve as a classic example of the difficulty presented by functors in historical reconstruction. Does one most economically set up different prefixes (*mah-, *nah-) for one form alone, or does one set up a unique lexeme (*Hatus) with the only instance of initial *h-? [PMin *h otherwise underwent metathesis as in *ahmut < PPH *Ramut 'root', *ehdo? 'earthquake' < PPH *Ridu? *uhmun 'nestle' < PPH *Rumun 'lair, nest'.] While glottal stop may be a spontaneous development in some forms in some languages, all Minahasan languages agree in reflecting a PMin *tu?mid 'heel' rather than *tumid (pp. 71, 182). Since the use of *i- to mark beneficiary occurs in Philippine languages, it is more likely to be a retention rather than an independent innovation (p. 85). Among some minor typographical errors there is one that is both humorous and crude (p. 187, line 2).

The author is to be commended on the success of his study. One hopes that this will lead to further study of the closest genetic relatives of the Minahasan languages (possibly the Sangirese group as the author indicates). This effort should also play some role in the establishment of the reality and extent of 'Proto-Philippine'.

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S.A. Wurm, ed., *Language Maps of the Highlands Provinces, Papua New Guinea*, edited with P. Brennan, and other members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, New Guinea Branch, Pacific Linguistics Series D - No. 11, Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1978. iii, 16 pp., pref., notes, bibliog. \$3.00.

Papua New Guinea is well-known for its linguistic heterogeneity. The attendant problems are met daily by social scientists, missionaries and administrators, and are part of the mental frame of reference of villagers as well as being oft-used weapons in the armoury of politicians both traditional and modern. Nationals outside their natal area, and foreigners alike, will therefore welcome the publication of the *Pacific Linguistics, Series D* which makes available the most recent work of workers from the Summer Institute of Linguistics and universities.

The core of this volume is a chart of the nine language families in the highlands (comprising over forty languages and many more dialects), and six maps showing the location on the