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This work is the published version of Holzknecht’s doctoral thesis submitted to the Australian National University. The book is divided into seven chapters. It also contains an excellent series of maps and an extensive bibliography.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to this work, and presents the conventions used in the presentation of the data. It describes the aims of the study as being to test the genetic relationships of the Markham Valley languages, and their relationships with previously established lower order subgroupings of Oceanic, and to endeavour to reconstruct the history of Markham languages. H attempts to reconstruct the history of the Markham languages by using the standard comparative method. She also proposes to use further linguistic, social and geographical information as evidence for reconstructing forms. Chapter 1.3 gives a good summary of the special characters used.

Chapter 2 deals with earlier descriptions of the Markham languages, and with the methodology used in this work. H criticises the comment of Schmitz (1960:413) that the dialects of the Markham Valley have “always been suspected as belonging to an older stratum of the Austronesian family.” H also judges the research of Milke (1965) to be incorrect, in that the “evidence” that Adera belongs to the Gedaged group because of the phonological rule *z > o is insufficient proof. Hooley is criticised for his use of wordlists which are too short to give good statistical evidence, though H does acknowledge that the work of Hooley and McElhanon (1970) and later publications by Hooley were helpful despite the shortcomings. The work of Ross (1988) is acknowledged as valuable, because of its use of some morphosyntactic data as well as lexicostatistical data. In the estimation of H, while most of these previous studies have been helpful, virtually all have some shortcomings, especially with...
respect to Adzera, the language with the highest number of innovations.

In chapter 2 H also describes the methodology she used for her research, which was the standard comparative method. She researched fifteen languages altogether and changed some wordlists in order to fit inland cultures. Most of the data was gathered within the local villages. Where this was not possible informants were contacted in Lae. After doing her own research other comparative wordlists of Proto-Oceanic (POC) were used to establish a Proto-Markham (PMK) sound system. The same procedure was followed for morphosyntactic forms.

Chapter 3 deals mainly with the geography and group movements in the past. It gives an excellent series of maps for the languages researched, and the description of the language boundaries is quite thorough.

Chapter 4 deals with the phonology of the Markham languages. It starts with a short introduction, in which the phonology of each language is charted. Some remarkable features are the contrastive tone found in Labu, and the three-vowel system of Mari, as opposed to the five-vowel system of the other languages. This chapter would be quite helpful to anyone working in the Markham languages, as it gives a good summary of relevant phonemes.

The chapter then deals with the reconstruction of POC phonology, showing two charts of the phonemes: an original version from Grace et al, and a revised version from Ross (1988). A scheme for Proto-Huon-Gulf (PHG) consonants is also given.

Next H deals with the construction of PMK phonology, giving extensive tables of comparison between POC, PHG, PMK and the current Markham languages. The arguments that H presents for her reconstructions of PMK appear to be consistent with the current phonologies of the Markham languages.

Chapter 5 deals with morphosyntax. H points out that the reconstruction of PMK morphosyntax is more complicated than that of POC phonology, due to the fact that some innovations have originated from borrowings from languages in groups other than the Markham or Huon Gulf groups. For this reason, research is based on classes of morphemes common to all the languages researched: common nouns, personal nouns and their pro-forms, attributive bases, location bases, verb bases, and pronominal forms.

The rest of the chapter is a description of the different classes of morphemes. The charts included in this chapter are very helpful. H describes clearly the relationships between POC and PHG and the current forms in the Markham Valley. H points out that the conclusion of Anttila (1972) that "comparative morphology" is applied phonology does not hold for Markham languages since these languages have had considerable influence from non-Austronesian (NAN) or Papuan languages.

Chapter 6 deals with the internal unity of the Markham languages. H divides the Markham languages into three groups; Upper Markham, Watut and Lower Markham, and says that each of these groups can be divided further into subgroups. Data from chapter 4 is used to show regular and irregular phonological innovations from POC and PHG, marking the Markham languages as a special family. This development is sketched for each phoneme.

The chapter then discusses the morphosyntactic innovations, using evidence from chapter 5. H sketches a lexical innovation in the use of a small set of generic verbs. This feature is common in Papuan languages, but not in Austronesian (AN) languages, and is probably due to the contact with Papuan language speakers in the vicinity.

The book closes with a clear short history of the Markham languages. A "family tree" model does not work for the Markham languages, because there is reciprocal borrowing between the Markham languages, as well as from neighbouring languages, often not AN ones. H suggests that future studies should not concentrate on the division of AN vs. NAN, but rather on the "culture area" in which common elements and differences are recorded within geographical areas. Borrowing tells us more about the nature of language change.

I found this study quite interesting. Not only are the relationships with POC and PHG clearly described, but also H stresses the importance of geographic features in borrowing from other languages. The study should be read by anyone planning to work in one of the Markham languages. It gives a good summary of phonological and grammatical characteristics of each of the fifteen languages described and points out the importance of language change through intensive cultural contact. The language is clear. The tables are easily understandable for those with a linguistic interest. I would highly recommend the book to workers in Markham and Huon Gulf languages, and for those interested in Austronesian languages.
References


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In *Beach-la-Mar to Bislama* Crowley traces the history and development of Bislama, the English-based pidgin spoken in Vanuatu (formerly the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides), from its earliest days in the early to mid-nineteenth century until ten years after Vanuatu attained independence in 1980. Crowley’s book is a major achievement, bringing together a wealth of material culled from a wide range of sources, largely well-known to Pacific specialists, in a convincingly argu-