

## Review of Studies in Irian Languages; Part II by Ger P. Reesink, ed.

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*Studies in Irian Languages; Part II*, is the sequel to *Studies in Irian Languages; Part I*, which was published in 1996 as NUSA volume 40. This series deals with perse topics on Indonesian and other languages of Indonesia. The *Studies in Irian Languages* focus on the Papuan languages spoken in the Bird's Head peninsula of the Indonesian province of Papua, formerly known as Irian Jaya. The first part briefly sketches phonological and morphosyntactic features of a few Papuan languages. The second part offers analysed and annotated texts from the oral tradition of the West-Papuan languages Moi, Tehit, Abun, Maybrat, Mpur, Meyah, Sougb and Hatam and the Trans-New Guinea Phylum language Inanwatan. Although comparatively insignificant in terms of numbers of speakers (varying from 800 inpiduals for Inanwatan to 22,000 speakers of Maybrat), these nine languages are very important for Papuan typology and linguistics in general. The inclusion of texts from the oral tradition also makes this book very attractive for anthropologists.

The *Studies in Irian Languages; Part II*, forms a sympathetic and useful introduction to the state of the art in Papuan linguistics. Each text from the oral traditional is accompanied by a short introduction to the language under investigation. Dialects, alternative names for the languages in the literature and other publications are listed, and maps are also provided. The presentation of the linguistic data allows easy comparison. For instance, the basic vowel inventory of the Bird's Head languages consists of /i, e, a, o, u/, except for Tehit, which has no phoneme /u/. Abun and Mpur show distinctive tone contrasts, Moi makes a distinction between short and long vowel phonemes, Meyah and Sougb have a pitch-accent system with two levels of tone, and Inanwatan has phonemic stress. The Papuan languages studied share important morphosyntactic features. The canonical word order seems to be subject-verb-object. The morphemes that mark the person, number and gender of the most salient actants involved in the verbal scenario generally belong to a set of single-consonant prefixes which can be attached to verbs (including so-called 'prepositional verbs') and nouns (especially those marking inalienable possessions), but also to other parts of speech such as adjectives and quantifiers. Moreover, in many West-Papuan languages these bound morphemes are formally similar to the unbound forms which function as pronouns. The morphosyntactic analysis of the text material is of the no-nonsense type, whereby sentences are broken up into morphemes with glosses and translated into English. Thus, Reesink (p.112) provides us with the following statement in Sougb:

Le-gida	kaba	y-em-esi-ro
PL-woman	then	2PL-IRR-shoot-not

*As for the women, don't shoot them.*

The spelling used throughout the book is phonemic, and the glossing conventions for grammatical morphemes are kept the same as much as possible throughout the book. Most of the contributions are written by linguists working within the framework of ISIR (Irian Jaya Studies: a programme for interdisciplinary research, 1993-2000) at the Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia and Oceania of Leiden University in the Netherlands. The contributors have succeeded in documenting a number of languages and cultures of a region which is still marginally understood. The overall strength of this book, accordingly, is its fundamental enhancement of our knowledge of Papuan languages.