Table of contents

LAWRENCE A. REID
Seidenadel's grammar of Bontoc Igorot: one hundred years on .................................................. 141

KLASZ ZIMMERMANN
The Diccionario español-chamorro (1865) by Padre Fray Aniceto Ibáñez del Carmen: a historiographical characterization of a pedagogic-lexicographic discourse type in late colonial Austronesia ................................................................. 163

THOMAS STOLZ
The Gramática chamorro ....................................................................................................................... 183

THOMAS STOLZ
German and Dutch contributions to Chamorro studies (1800–1920) ................................................. 201

THOMAS STOLZ, CHRISTINA SCHNEEMANN, BARBARA DEWEIN & SANDRA CHUNG
The mysterious H. Who was the author of Die Chamoro Sprache? .................................................. 227

List of contributors .................................................................................................................................. 243

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Preface

Only a small segment of the world's languages boast of a long documented history. To
the overwhelming majority however, this privilege does not apply. Thus, in many cases,
it is illusory to write a philologically informed diachronic grammar. Historical linguistics in terms of reconstruction is often feasible if genetically related languages exist. However, reconstructing proto-stages does not exhaust the agenda of the historical linguist. One wants to know more about relatively recent developments. For many languages spoken in former colonies of western powers, this includes the dynamics of contact-induced change wherever the language of the colonisers has exerted influence on the lexicon and grammar of the languages of the colonised. Moreover, early documents are helpful when it comes to language planning, revitalisation or standardisation. Speech-communities need access to earlier stages of their language to recover lost territory in the realms of lexicon, idioms, constructions, etc. in order to prepare their languages for Ausbau without relying too much on the languages of their colonisers.

Among the languages which are underprivileged in terms of historical documentation, there are the countless autochthonous languages of the Pacific and their distant relatives in Southeast Asia. On closer inspection, one realises that this is too sweeping a statement as some languages of this region stand out from the vast majority of their neighbours. They stand out because there are bits of text in and/or about these languages which predate the turn of the 19th century. Apart from the occasional case of autonomous pre-colonial indigenous literacy, we find examples of a noteworthy tradition of Missionary descriptive linguistics during Spanish colonial dominance in the Philippines and in the Marianas ranging from the mid-16th century to the late 19th century. Owing to the withdrawal of Spain in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War of 1898, other foreigners entered the scene and thus US-American, German, Dutch and other scholars began to write extensively on and sometimes also in the languages of the newly acquired territories. When the 2nd World War settled the question of political dominance in this region in favour of the United States, these traditions based on languages other than English soon became obsolete and have fallen into oblivion. Since the knowledge of the languages of former (and sometimes only ephemeral) colonisers (including clerical Latin) among the native speakers of Philippine and Micronesian lan-
In the Chamorro section the work of the Spanish cleric Fray Aniceto Ibáñez del Carmen is the topic of two papers: Klaus Zimmermann (Bremen/Germany) scrutinises his Spanish-Chamorro dictionary from the point of view of a constructivist theory of language (contact) whereas Thomas Stolz (Bremen/Germany) highlights some linguistically striking aspects of the Spanish grammar written in Chamorro by Ibáñez del Carmen in the mid-19th century. In his second paper, Thomas Stolz surveys German and Dutch contributions to the study and description of Chamorro from the early 19th century until the end of the 1st World War. In the final paper, Thomas Stolz, Christina Schneemann, Barbara Dewein (Bremen/Germany) and Sandra Chung (Santa Cruz/USA) jointly solve the problem of the identity of H. Costenoble, the author of the most sizable grammar of Chamorro.

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