This book brings together new work on Austronesian historical linguistics and culture history to honour Robert Blust. The memoirs in Part 1 reflect on Blust’s groundbreaking contributions to these fields over the last 40 years. The remaining 26 chapters contain contributions by leading Austronesianists on a wide range of topics that broadly match Blust’s own research interests. The chapters in Part 2 (‘sound change’) examine issues in the historical phonology of Austronesian languages. Those in Part 3 (‘grammatical change and typology’) deal with morphological and syntactic reconstruction at various levels, from Proto Austronesian down. Methodological and substantive issues in the genetic classification of Austronesian languages are treated in Part 4 (‘subgrouping’) and in several chapters in other sections. Chapters in Part 5 (‘culture history and lexical reconstruction’) investigate ways in which the close analysis of lexicon, in conjunction with different kinds of non-linguistic evidence, can throw light on the history of Austronesian-speaking peoples.

Several chapters in the volume propose significant revisions to currently accepted reconstructions of PAn phonology and/or morphosyntax. Others focus on the historical development of languages of particular regions, including Taiwan, the Philippines, Borneo, Java, the Strait of Malacca, Sulawesi, the Moluccas, New Guinea, the Solomon Is., Vanuatu, Polynesia and Micronesia.

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Austronesian historical linguistics and culture history: a festschrift for Robert Blust

Edited by
Alexander Adelaar and Andrew Pawley

Pacific Linguistics
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
The Australian National University
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The idea of putting together a festschrift for Bob Blust was mooted by the editors in April 2006, during a visit by Sander Adelaar to The Australian National University, and then canvassed with George Grace and Byron Bender of the University of Hawai‘i. We decided to aim for a book whose content would reflect Bob’s central research interests, which are diverse but connected. The subject matter was to be restricted to Austronesian historical linguistics and culture history and individual contributions were to be limited to 9000 words. Pacific Linguistics provisionally agreed to publish such a volume.

In August 2006 an invitation to contribute was sent to more than 40 scholars—past or present colleagues of Bob’s, former students and fellow linguists—with a deadline of July 15, 2007. Inevitably, some of those asked had to decline and inevitably, even when the deadline was extended a few were unable to complete their papers in time. All draft chapters were sent to referees for review and some underwent quite substantial revisions. In the end, twenty-nine contributions made it into the book.

The editors would like to thank all the authors for a fine collection of papers and all those scholars who served as anonymous referees. We also thank those intending contributors who drafted chapters but couldn’t complete revisions in time (in particular Risukou Kikusawa, who was unable to revise her chapter because of a painful medical condition that prevented her from typing or writing).

We are grateful to George Grace and Byron Bender for their advice in the planning of this enterprise, and to these same two friends plus Laurie Reed and Malcolm Ross for helpful comments on our introductory chapter about Bob. Particular thanks are due to Laura Chang-Blust for helping to fill out our account of Bob’s early years and his field work in Taiwan. We are indebted to Anthony Jukes, Rachel Hendery and Jeannette Coombes for copy editing and formatting the draft chapters and to Jeannette Coombes for adding the final touches in the production of the volume. Thanks are due to Jenny Sheehan for drawing many of the maps, to Jason Jackson for providing the photo of Bob and to Julie Manley for the cover design.

We have tried to keep the project a secret from Bob. Secret or not, we hope the final product pleases him.

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K.A.A. and A.K.P.