

# Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/tsl.129.preface>

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**Austronesian Undressed: How and why languages become isolating**

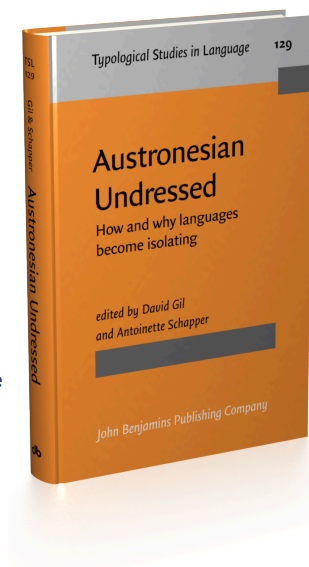
**Edited by David Gil and Antoinette Schapper**

[*Typological Studies in Language*, 129] 2020. ix, 510 pp.

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## Preface

This volume is a product, albeit a belated and rather indirect one, of a panel on “Isolating Austronesian Languages”, organised by David Gil and John McWhorter, which took place on the 22nd of June 2009, at the Eleventh International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics, in Aussois in the French Alps.

The production of the volume took much longer than anticipated, due largely to the sloth and ineptitude of the first editor, David Gil. In the course of the years, we lost a few papers but also gained a few others, and several of the original papers presented at the 11ICAL panel evolved substantially as their authors were able to incorporate fresh insights and understandings with the passage of time.

The focus of the volume is largely inspired by John McWhorter, who, in his writings, brought the issue of isolating Austronesian languages to the attention of the general linguistic community, and introduced the metaphor of languages undressing. For several years, editorial work on the volume was assisted by Scott Paauw, whose untimely passing was a great shock to us all – this volume is dedicated to his memory.

For their support during the production of this volume, David Gil would like to thank Bernard Comrie and the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology as well as Russell Gray and the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History. Antoinette Schapper would like to acknowledge that her work on editing this volume was made possible thanks to funding from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research VENI project “The evolution of the lexicon: Explorations in lexical stability, semantic shift and borrowing in a Papuan language family”, the Volkswagen Stiftung DoBeS project “Aru languages documentation”, the Australian Research Council project (ARC, DP180100893) “Waves of words”, and the OUTOFPAPUA project (grant agreement no. 848532) funded by the European Research Council.

Finally, we are grateful to Angela Terrill for her punctilious copy editing.

