An invitation to contribute to a forthcoming series of articles on ‘Aboriginal historiography’


Current debates on the stolen generations, Indigenous labour relations, reconciliation and whether or not ‘genocide’ is an appropriate concept to employ in Australia have led to public discussion of contested approaches to historical interpretation. The Board wishes to encourage a deeper exploration of these historiographical concerns, and that of other historiographical issues.

The Editorial Board invites contributions of articles to this Aboriginal historiography series. Suggested topics are set out below. The list is not exhaustive.

Intending contributors should contact the Editor, Ingereth Macfarlane or Deputy Editor, Ian Howie-Willis at Aboriginal History, History, School of Humanities, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia. Email addresses: Ingereth.macfarlane@anu.edu.au or ian.willis@anu.edu.au.

Suggested topics

- Definitions: What is ‘Aboriginal history’ — something unique, a subset of Australian history, or of the history of indigenous peoples generally, or of colonial and post-colonial societies?
- Is it possible to produce a typology of ‘schools’ of Aboriginal historiography? If so, what would it be, and which historians could be assigned to its various types? Such a typology would consider certain ‘-isms’ and Aboriginal historiography: for instance, what have been the perspectives of classical empiricism, neo-Marxism, post-modernism, neo-conservatism etc on Aboriginal History?
- An early dominance of anthropology and anthropologists, seen for instance in the 1964 Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Act, which defined ‘Aboriginal Studies’ as ‘anthropological research’. (The 1989 AIATSIS Act amended the definition to read ‘the study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and society’.)
- ‘Aboriginal history’: an evolving discipline? To what extent is Bain Attwood’s notion of ‘three waves’ of Aboriginal historical writing accurate? (His ‘first wave’ was represented by Charles Rowley in the 1960s, the ‘second’ by Henry Reynolds and others in the 1970s-80s and the ‘third’ by the Aborigines who began publishing history in the 1980s-90s.) Is this typology generally accurate or is the reality more complex?
• Are there dominant figures? If so, who are they, what topics are they researching and writing, and what are they saying? If there are dominant figures, is there a group of lesser known figures; who are they, what are their interests?

• What is the current state of teaching of Aboriginal history?

• What are the inter-disciplinary connections contributing to the production of Aboriginal history: anthropology, linguistics, archaeology, political science, sociology, economics, geography, environmental studies, legal studies, fine arts, media studies and so on? Is Aboriginal history an omnibus term or does it have its own disciplinary integrity and methodologies?

• The preceding point leads to the question, ‘Who are entitled to call themselves ‘Aboriginal historians’ — anyone who is interested in the subject and does some research/publication, or is some qualification necessary?

• The ‘new conservatism’ and its views of Aboriginal history: who are the neo-conservatives, what topics are they interested in and are they saying? Is the neo-conservative thrust led by non-historians — journalists, political scientists — or do historians contribute to it?

• Does Aboriginal history have its own myths? If so, what are they? Do they include matters such as spirituality, sovereignty, assimilation, massacres, stolen generations, discrimination and the immutability of land-ownership?

• Who is allowed to say what? Are there some topics that are taboo for historians of Aboriginal people, eg substance abuse, communal violence, rape, intra-group rivalries and dissension? If so, may anyone write about them?

• The contribution of Indigenous historians: who are they, what are their interests and what are they saying? What effect are they having on non-Indigenous scholars? What effect might they be expected to have in the future?

• Who constitutes the next generation of historians of Aboriginal people — the people who, for instance, are now researching for post-graduate degrees and might be expected to be the pace-setters of the future? What are their interests and what are they likely to say?

• What happened to the historians of Aborigines who emerged during the 1970s and 80s? Are they still in Aboriginal history or have they broadened their scope or moved into other fields?

• Has our journal Aboriginal History changed over the quarter-century since it first appeared? If so, how? Who were our earlier authors, our mid-life ones and our later ones? What were they all writing about? Has our focus changed as the authors have? What other journals have made significant contributions to advancing Aboriginal history? Have we anything to learn from them, or they from us?

• The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and its role in Aboriginal history. Has AIATSIS managed to overcome its early bias towards anthropology (and anthropologists) to promote research and writing in history?

• Historians in the public arena. Are historians activists, or advocates, in either advancing or retarding Indigenous people’s causes.
The Sally White – Diane Barwick Award

The Sally White – Diane Barwick Award of $1000 is awarded annually to a female Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Tertiary student who is about to start or is already studying at Honours level.

The Award can be used for any purpose.

Candidates are invited to apply in writing at any time for selection in April of the following year.

Apply to:
Aboriginal History Inc.
GPO Box 2837
Canberra ACT 2601

Contact Robert Paton 0419 736459 for further details.
Obituary
Kenneth Locke Hale (1934–2001)

Kenneth Locke Hale died on 8 October 2001. He has left to Australia an outstanding bequest through his contribution to the study of Australian Aboriginal languages and the social and intellectual life of their speakers. His contribution is multi-faceted. It consists of language documentation, description and analysis; major breakthroughs in the reconstruction of the prehistory of Australian languages; new theoretical insights into the grammar of Australian languages and ultimately of human language in general. Throughout his career, Hale trained and encouraged young linguists, including Aboriginal language speakers, to study Australian languages; he supported Aboriginal language maintenance and bilingual education programs in Aboriginal communities and he applied the results of his linguistic research to the cause of the restoration of traditionally held lands to Aboriginal peoples.

With his wife, Sally, and their infant son, Whit, Ken made his first field trip to Australia in 1959–61 and a second in 1966–67, with five later, short, task-specific visits. In these few years he documented about 70 Australian languages spoken in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, the Port Augusta region of South Australia and northern Queensland. His recordings and remarkably accurate transcriptions, as well as other field note materials, have been the basis, not just for his own publications on Australian languages, but also for the work of hundreds of other scholars. Hale’s remarkable legacy of Australian language documentation deposited in AIATSIS (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) in Canberra, on open access, constitutes one of Australia’s largely unrecognized cultural and intellectual treasures.

Reviewing Hale’s work on Australian languages, one sees a brilliant instantiation of the main intellectual developments and concerns which marked the field of linguistics during the 20th century. Following his appointment to the Department of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1967, Hale increasingly became one of the most influential figures — often operating behind the scenes — in the elaboration of linguistic theory, although he may not have pictured himself in this role.

Naturally, Hale’s output reflects aspects of a distinctively north American linguistic tradition within the wider discipline of linguistics. After receiving his first degree from the University of Arizona, Hale embarked on postgraduate studies in linguistics at Indiana University where he wrote a thesis entitled A Papago Grammar under the supervision of Carl Voegelin. His linguistics education, influenced by the great American linguist-anthropologists such as Boas, Bloomfield and Sapir who had researched the indigenous languages of north America, combined rigorous training in both linguistics and anthropology. In fact it was thanks to one of his anthropology teachers that
Hale’s interest in Australia was aroused. He picked out ‘central Australia’ from a hat filled with pieces of paper assigning different regions of the world to students to research for an anthropology class. As he read the works of Spencer and Gillen and others on the peoples of central Australia he was rapt, and determined to go to Australia himself to conduct his own field research as soon as the opportunity arose. In 1959 that opportunity came in the form of a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellowship. Hale’s early training, coupled with his own particular genius and zest for learning and understanding languages, laid the solid foundations on which he continued to build both in his empirical and theoretical investigations.

Fieldwork
It was Arthur Capell, another of the indefatigable recorders of Australian languages (as well as languages of Papua New Guinea and many Pacific Islands) who encouraged Hale to make his first trip to Australia, and who supported his attempts to get into the field and record languages. Capell’s openness, his appreciation of the linguistic richness within Australia and its fragility, and the urgency to get the languages recorded by the very best linguists — not just for the degree of accuracy of their transcriptions but for the fact they would be seeking answers to more revealing questions — contrasted with the rather closed attitude displayed by other authority figures of the time. Theirs was the chasse-gardée view that certain languages or peoples were the privileged domain of certain scholars and that it was not done to intrude — an attitude that was certainly holding back the study of these languages.

At the time of Hale’s first fieldtrip it was very difficult to have access to speakers of many Aboriginal languages, especially without a powerful patron, because so many of Aboriginal people’s lives were under the control of missions, government settlements, pastoral properties and leases. Sally Hale’s reflections on their first Australian fieldtrip vividly recalls this aspect of Aboriginal life in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. Attending the 1960 Brunette Downs races, she writes:

there was just the most incredible scene. ... there were all these station people who came from all over the Barkly Tablelands. They brought huge tents, guests, and everything; it would be the nearest thing probably to a camp race meeting in the southern United States in the 1800s. They brought Aborigines to wait on them, to cook, to put the tents up, to get firewood, to support their whole operation. Plus they brought their horses to race. ... So Ken started going around trying to meet the Aborigines that were supporting the camps, because they had really been closed to us. We weren’t allowed on their stations so this was an opportunity to get the language materials. When Ken met an Aborigine he’d shake their hand, look them in the eye, address them with respect, and ask them if he could spend some time with them to find out a little bit about their language. So at night, when their jobs were finished and they were around their own little fires, Ken would go there, and try to get a few words or find out what languages were spoken around there. ... The station owners thought we were Communists: one of them came over and told us that we really didn’t have a clue about how you should treat Aborigines.5

Despite these very real difficulties, Hale undertook a number of extraordinary field trips during 1960 to record languages in western and northern Australia (docu-

mented in Simpson et al. 2001) in collaboration with other adventurous young linguists. One of these was Geoff O’Grady, another of the great students of Australian languages, the other was Monty West who had studied linguistics with Hale at Indiana University. Being based in Alice Springs for some time, Hale was able to work on a number of central Australian languages including Arandic languages, Warlpiri, Warumungu and several Western Desert languages. He was later able to undertake in-depth research on the Lardil language of Mornington Island, where he and his family were invited by the pastor, the late Rev. Doug Belcher, and his family.

Another indefatigable linguist who devoted himself to recording Australian languages (as well as those of Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Region) with whom Hale collaborated in these early years was Stephen Wurm, who also died in October 2001. Wurm’s fieldwork complements Hale’s in that the former was particularly concerned at that time with recording the last speakers of eastern Australian languages in southern Queensland and New South Wales.

Towards the end of the 1960s more young linguists from here and abroad were going into the field in Australia, such as Gavan Breen, Barry Blake, Bob Dixon and Jeffrey Heath and the many SIL (Summer Institute) linguists. Then came the next generation, the students of Blake, Dixon, Hale and Wurm and then their students...

**Language classification**

In his earliest published work on Australian languages (1962, 1964 and 1966a) Hale was mainly concerned with how Australian languages were related to each other. By applying the comparative historical method which aims to uncover the regular sound changes which relate languages, he showed that two groups of languages, one in central Australia, the other in north Queensland, which had been viewed as phonologically aberrant and possibly unrelated to other Australian languages, were in fact closely related to the large expanse of languages spoken across the Australian continent and on many offshore islands, with the exception of the northern part of WA and the NT. Hale’s interest in understanding how Australian languages were related to each other was shared with his contemporaries such as O’Grady and Wurm, and continued a long tradition of such interest.

On the basis of previous classifications of Australian languages, especially those of Schmidt in Vienna in 1919 and Capell (1956), plus other works and his own extensive fieldwork investigations between 1950 and 1960, partly in partnership with Geoff O’Grady and Monty West, Ken Hale proposed a third major language classification. He was able to show that the apparently aberrant nature of certain languages in central Australia (which he showed belonged to a single Arandic group) and in Cape York (which he showed belonged in the same group as their more conservative Paman relatives) was due to relatively recent sound changes particularly ones affecting word initial sounds. Hale argued that most of the mainland languages and those of the western Torres Strait Islands derived from a common ancestor language he named Pama-

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2. See Tryon and Walsh 1997.
Nyungan, from pama a widespread word for ‘person’ in Cape York languages and nyunga the equivalent in southwest WA.

In collaboration with Hale, and inspired by his insights, Geoff O’Grady, along with Carl and Florence Voegelin, published the next comprehensive genetic classification of Australian languages in 1966, to which two of Hale’s papers on Paman languages were appended. O’Grady et al proposed that all the Indigenous languages for which there was documentation belonged to an Australian Phylum consisting of a number of probably related language families, one of which was Hale’s Pama-Nyungan family. This divided into a number of language groups, and within those groups, a number of subgroups. The other languages, all situated in the northern part of WA and the NT, belonged to one of some twenty or so non-Pama-Nyungan language families.

While more recent work has shown that some particular languages claimed by O’Grady et al to be Pama-Nyungan should be reclassified as non-Pama-Nyungan (and vice versa), and doubt has been cast about some of their Pama-Nyungan subgroupings, this study will stand as a monument of scholarship, especially if it is taken not as the last word on the classification of Australian languages, but, as the authors intended, a starting point for more rigorous examination of the data and the claims made about it. While the evidence is now pointing towards a single (or at least less diverse) northern or non-Pama-Nyungan family, it is firmly on the side of Hale’s Pama-Nyungan hypothesis, although some remain skeptical. The detailed comparative study of inflectional morphemes shows that Pama-Nyungan language forms reconstruct to very different ones from non-Pama-Nyungan languages forms.

The grammar of Australian languages

Hale was the first to try to apply a Chomskyan approach to the analysis of Australian languages with his 1965 and 1967 papers on Lardil (Mornington Island language), followed by his 1970 paper on ‘The passive and ergative in language change: the Australian case’ discussing Warlpiri and Lardil. The very title of papers such as ‘Deep-surface canonical disparities in relation to analysis and change: an Australian example’ testify to the transformational grammar paradigm in which Hale’s linguistic analysis was set. However, in unpublished work on the syntax of Warlpiri written in 1967 and 1968 Hale showed that while he accepted the general thrust of Chomsky’s theoretical framework, he did not try to force Warlpiri into an ill-fitting English mould — the investigation of English being the driving force behind Chomsky’s model. In these early analyses of Warlpiri syntax, as well as in his 1973 paper ‘Person marking in Walbiri’, Hale hypothesized that the complex constituent (he dubbed it AUX recognising its similarities to the auxiliary verbs of traditional English grammar) containing modal, aspectual and tense morphemes followed by pronominal morphemes was generated in the initial position in the deep structure of the finite clause. To allow for one other constituent to appear before AUX, as in actual sentences, Hale proposed a transformational rule.

What is significant here, is that Hale was proposing a deep structure which looked fundamentally different from the standard structure proposed for the English finite

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5. see Dixon 1997 and 2000: xvi.
clause (or simple sentence (S)) at that time $S \rightarrow NP \ VP$. The phrasal categories noun phrase (NP) and verb phrase (VP) were headed by open class lexical items belonging to the noun and verb word classes — there was no provision made in Chomsky's early phrase structure model for what we now know are the building blocks of syntactic systems, the closed grammatical categories instantiated as auxiliary verbs, or as the various inflectional affixes which are found on open class items. Hale had introduced a closed class constituent into his syntactic representation of the Warlpiri finite clause as early as 1967. Eventually it was Hale's influence which lead to the introduction of the inflectional categories into the phrase structure models of mainstream generative grammar, first appearing as $\text{INFL}[$ection$]$ as a locus for auxiliary verbs in English, and then progressively subdivided into a whole range of grammatical categories most famously in the work of Pollock (1989).

Other aspects of Hale's analysis were even more prescient in the light of later developments. In his 1973 paper, 'Person marking in Walbiri', Hale analysed the pronominal clitics as elements related to the determiner in the coreferential nominal expression. As Blake (2001) remarks, it was Hale who characterized the noun phrase as being headed by a determiner, long before the idea was commonly accepted following the work of Hudson 1984, Abney 1987 and others. In analyses of clitic pronouns in European languages published in the 1990s, one finds strong echoes of Hale's 1973 analysis of Warlpiri clitics as determiners.

In 1976 Hale published an extremely influential paper entitled 'The adjoined relative clause in Australia'. Again this paper lucidly set out the very different properties of syntactic constructions which were referred to under the traditional grammar label of 'relative clause' in English and two central Australian languages, Warlpiri and Kaytety. In English, 'relative' clauses are embedded inside noun phrases; Hale showed that their Aboriginal language translation equivalents are not. (The Warlpiri equivalent of The man that fell asleep started to snore would be more like The man started to snore that he fell asleep.)

One of the main components of Chomsky's syntactic model was phrase structure. As increasingly more sophisticated theories about the nature of syntactic systems were elaborated in the 1970s and 1980s, it became clear to Hale that while these were able to account for a very large amount of what had been observed about languages where the ordering of the constituents of a sentence were highly constrained, eg in English, but the so-called 'free word order languages' such as Warlpiri and many other Australian languages (but not exclusively Australian ones) were not so well accounted for in terms of the current assumptions.

In a number of papers written in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the best known being his 1983 paper 'Warlpiri and the grammar of non-configurational languages', Hale proposed that the deep structure of free word order languages was like that of strict word order languages — in this way accounting for the many observed similarities between them — but that they differed in the nature of the relationship between their deep and surface structures. Whereas the relationship between the different levels of structure for the strict word order languages was definable in terms of transformations by which constituents of a sentence 'moved' to a higher position in the structure, thus preserving their configuration structure, in the case of the free word order languages, the surface structure was flat (or non-configurational) just consisting of one member of a set
of potential strings of concatenated phrases (unordered), the relationship between the two levels of structure essentially being defined via case-marking. This radical new way of looking at languages inaugurated a flurry of research which has made a great contribution to both empirical and theoretical investigations.

Semantics and the lexicon
Around this time Hale conceived of a project to add value to several of his Australian language field note collections. He wanted to make their contents accessible to a wider audience including speakers of those languages. He would do this through deriving a descriptive grammar and dictionary from the notes and publishing it. He wanted the dictionaries to be more than simple word lists or glossaries, he wanted them to reflect as much as possible the richness of their semantic and world knowledge connotations. After all the lexicon provides one window onto the conceptual world of a language's speakers. Some of the products of this project include dictionaries of Lardil (Mornington Island), Ngarluma (Roebourne WA) and Warlpiri (NT).

Hale's interest in how the expression of meaning is organised in languages is reflected in his 1986 article 'Notes on world view and semantic categories: some Warlpiri examples' in which he makes the crucial distinction between meaning which is inherent to linguistic systems, and meaning which is not. The latter sort of meaning which derives from a speaker's unique (although largely shared within a speech community) experience of the world, is mostly reflected in the open class vocabulary — particularly nominal words in Australian languages. It is the former that is embedded in the syntax and syntactically relevant forms.

Hale's desire to get a better understanding of the relationship between linguistic forms and the meanings they expressed led to the MIT Lexicon Project conducted from the mid to late 1980s. This project involved many linguists and opened up serious inquiry into the nature of the relationship between the semantic and syntactic components of language and into the organisation of the lexicon — when we learn a word, what is it that we come to know about that specific word as distinct from what we can intuit (or the virtual potential knowledge we have) about how that word may be used in a well-formed sentence on the basis of our knowledge of the language system? This line of enquiry taken by Hale — as exemplified in his collaborative work with Jay Keyser — has proved to be extremely productive as linguists study more language data from this perspective.

Anthropological linguistics
Hale's interest in anthropology and training in anthropological fieldwork techniques and methodology contributed to the language elicitation methods he developed and used with such brilliant results in his Australian language work. It is especially evident when one looks at his fieldnotes for those languages such as Warlpiri on which he was able to spend a relatively long time with a number of different speakers. From the beginning of his language elicitation, Hale aimed to learn the language and to use it to elicit more language. Some of the very best Warlpiri material in terms of both richness of vocabulary and variety of grammatical structures is found in passages in which the

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Warlpiri speaker responds to Hale’s questions by giving extended oral essays on a range of topics: flora, fauna, kinship, tools, shelters, emotions and so on. Hale was interested in how language was used, in the different linguistic registers used in the speech community as a function of age (e.g. how adults speak to children), sex, kin relations, ceremonial situations and obligations; the language of songs and incantations as opposed to everyday language. Without an understanding of social organisation, much of the linguistic variation cannot be explained.

Hale’s curiosity about the relationship between language and social organisation in Australia is reflected in a number of important published works as well as in his fieldnotes. These include his 1966 paper which shows how the pronominal systems of languages such as Lardil and Arandic encode distinctions in the kinship relations between referents such as whether they belong to the same generation moiety or not or whether they belong to the same patrimoiety or not. His 1971 paper analyses how a ‘new’ language is fashioned out of the ordinary language by Warlpiri men in the context of male initiation ceremonies. Similarly his 1982 paper and his later 1997 paper coauthored with David Nash on the Mornington Islanders’ Damin ceremonial language reveal the logic behind this consciously constructed ceremonial language system which so fascinated Hale. His 1975 paper ‘Gaps in grammar and culture’ in which he reflects on the significance of the lack of counting systems in the lexicon of Australian languages (among other ‘gaps’), like his 1986 paper referred to above, reveals his acute perceptiveness about the complexity of the relationship between language and culture. Hale shows that the relationship is a very indirect one indeed, and warns against jumping to unsustainable conclusions about one on the basis of the other.

Relations with speakers of languages studied
Throughout his career Hale always showed great respect and concern for all the people he worked with, be they colleagues, students or language informants. He saw them all as collaborators in the quest for greater understanding of the phenomenon of human language and what language reveals about human beings. He was always encouraging of other researchers and excited by good work and robust results. Conscious that knowledge was empowering, Hale sought to put the benefits of his linguistic and anthropological research at the disposal of the speakers of the languages he researched. This is especially the case for his Australian and Amerindian research collaborators. These concerns were very clearly expressed in his 1972 paper ‘Some questions about anthropological linguistics: the role of native knowledge’.

In 1974, once more in partnership with Geoff O’Grady, Hale helped set the course for bilingual education programs in the Northern Territory under the Whitlam government in the early 1970s. In their commissioned report O’Grady and Hale set out 25 recommendations to the Australian Government about how to implement their envisioned educational reform.

Hale made his language materials available to particular schools starting out on bilingual programs involving languages he had worked on. These materials were in the form of wordlists, dictionaries, language lessons, grammatical sketches, original field-
notes and recordings. At the inception of the Warlpiri bilingual program in 1973, Hale was invited by the Yuendumu community to come and instruct Warlpiri teaching assistants employed in the schools in how to write Warlpiri in a consistent orthography. He also passed on to them the fundamentals of language analysis and description.

Hale’s concern that the speakers of minority languages be given the opportunity to engage in linguistic research on their own languages was a constant in his career. From his earliest research experience Hale was pondering these issues. He was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) in Darwin in the early 1970s to train Aboriginal linguists for whom potential careers were emerging in the newly established bilingual education programs mainly in the NT. SAL later merged with the Bachelor based Institute for training Aboriginal teaching assistants and teachers which became known as Bachelor College.

Another way in which Ken used his research findings for the benefit of Aboriginal people was by showing how linguistic research could provide evidence of the sort required to prove their rights in land under the 1976 NT Land Rights Act or the more recent Native Title legislation. His pithy paper (Hale 1980) on the complementary roles of Warlpiri kirda and kurdungurlu in social organisation is a classic piece of clear anthropological writing. His 1997 paper prepared as evidence in a claim brought on behalf of the Wik peoples of Cape York presents a wonderful model of comparative historical linguistic research which produces robust findings that can serve as evidence of the relationships between people and between them and their country. In 1980 Hale served as an interpreter for the Warlpiri people’s claim over Willowra pastoral lease.

It must be recalled that Hale’s Australian language research ran in parallel with his work on native American languages and, in collaboration with his students at MIT, on languages from all over the world. Just as he was concerned to empower Australian language speakers to receive the sort of education and training that would allow them to read, write, analyse and describe their own languages, he invested much of his time and energy to assist young native American linguists to achieve what he perceived to be their intellectual potential in the field of linguistics. It was Hale’s generous and dogged support which enabled a number of them to gain their doctorates in linguistics with dissertations devoted to their first language. From the late 1980s Hale worked for many years with Rama-speaking people in Nicaragua to document their language, having first gone to Nicaragua in 1986 as a volunteer, to conduct workshops for Miskitu and Sumu language-speaking primary-school teachers embarking on the new bilingual education programs there, just as he’d helped indigenous north American and Australian teachers a decade before.

Hale has left us with so much. Some of the projects he started need to be carried to term. Much of his language documentation awaits further elaboration. What’s so important is that it is there. He taught us so much about Australian languages and about language generally. He got us asking new questions, looking at language data in new ways. Ken will want us to continue doing that.

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10. eg Hale 1965b, 1966b, 1972
Unfortunately, too many of the languages Hale documented are no longer spoken, and fewer are now being learnt by young children as their first language than when Ken came here. Without Ken Hale and the other intrepid linguists who went and recorded languages all over Australia in the post-war period (and before) so much of Australia’s linguistic and cultural heritage would have been lost and with it vital keys for unlocking the human prehistory of this continent. Ken felt strongly about the loss of language diversity in the modern world from both a human and linguistic standpoint, and used his tenure as President of the Linguistic Society of America (1994–5) to raise awareness of the current situation. Australia represents a striking example of this global trend which challenges linguists to respond actively and creatively.

Ken is survived by his wife, Sally, and his sons, Whit, Caleb and Ezra to whom we extend our deepest sympathy. I especially want to record my gratitude to Sally Hale who was Ken’s ever solid rock — it was very much Sally who allowed Ken to reach his potential and make the great contribution to linguistics and anthropology, and especially to Australian language studies. Sally has always been there, not just for Ken and her family, but for the great extended family of linguists and would-be linguists who were pulled into Ken’s orbit.

Before his death, Ken was presented with a number of Festschriften honouring his contribution to linguistics. One of these, Forty Years On: Ken Hale and Australian languages (2001), was devoted to acknowledging and honouring Ken’s place in the study of Australian languages and offered as a gesture of thanks to Ken for the contribution he had made to the lives of each of the contributors. This volume contains a full bibliography of Hale’s published and unpublished (but accessible through archival deposit) works on Australian languages compiled by David Nash. The bibliography of Ken Hale’s works on Australian languages and more information on tributes to Ken Hale can be found at www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/hale/

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Stephen Wurm was a great linguist and a great man. He was born in Budapest, and before learning many other languages he was bilingual in Hungarian and German. He graduated PhD (Oriental languages and anthropology) in 1944 from the University of Vienna and became a specialist in Altaic languages. With this began that vital interest and respect for the endangered languages of minorities that was an inspiration throughout his life. He soon became aware of the language situation in Australia and New Guinea, and after appointments in Vienna and London he came to a research fellowship in Sydney in 1954 and then to a Senior Research Fellowship at the Australian National University in 1957. He remained in the Research School and became Professor of Linguistics.

More or less straight after his arrival he set to work on Australian languages. From 1955 on he did fieldwork on many Aboriginal languages, especially in New South Wales and Southern Queensland.

He was a highly skilled motorcyclist and travelled huge distances by motorbike, and sometimes in his Sydney days he took his older colleague Arthur Capell with him in a side-car. He travelled at a time when there were still just a few people left speaking languages that have since then become extinct. In those days outback road conditions were outrageous and heavy rain could turn the roads as well as the surrounding countryside into something that felt like porridge. At that time also one often had to deal with hostile police and suspicious landowners before one had a chance of speaking to the people one wanted to learn from. Stephen Wurm had tremendous skills in dealing with all this and in gaining respect: he was helped in those circumstances by the fact that he was a tall, impressive-looking man. He knew that as a last resort he was able to drink the most macho station-owner right under the table.

He located Aboriginal people who may have retained knowledge of their traditional languages and recorded information on tapes and in field notes written with his own abbreviations and a kind of shorthand notation. He also devised ways of packing huge amounts of linguistic information into a short space, as tapes were expensive in those days. Grace Koch has supplied us with a list of languages for which the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has tapes from Stephen Wurm:

- Central New South Wales: Kamilaroi, Yuwaaliyaay-Yuwaalaray, Ngiyampa, Wayilwan, a little Wiradjuri
- Western New South Wales Paakantyi (with various dialects now extinct, notably Paruntyi, Wilyakali and Pantyikali), Malyangapa
• South-east New South Wales: Tharrawal
• North-east New South Wales: Bandjalang, Galibal, Gidhabal, Yugumbir
• South west Queensland: Karlali, Wangkumara, Yandruwantha
• Inland Queensland: Gunggari, Guwamu
• South-east Queensland: Yagara, Dungudjawu, Waka-Waka, Bajala, Dharumbal
• Cape York: Dyiru, Mbabaram, Lamalama, Koko-Bera
• Gulf of Carpentaria Islands: Kayadilt, Lardil
• Northern Territory: Gupapuyngu

Most of what is known of some of these languages comes from Stephen Wurm’s data.

Of all the languages Waka-waka/Dunudjawu was his favourite: it was the one on which he was able to spend most time. Stephen Wurm’s main subsequent work was in New Guinea and in establishing a fine research unit in Pacific languages. As a result he never had a chance to write a grammar and dictionary of any of the Australian languages. However, he made other most important contributions.

He took part in the classification of Australian languages: with Ken Hale and Geoff O’Grady he published in 1966 a full linguistic map of Australia along with an article on classification. This was updated by Michael Walsh, in Wurm and Hattori’s 1983 Language Atlas of the Pacific. This classification has provided the starting point for most later work on classification in Australian languages.

Stephen Wurm did everything possible to publicise the importance of Aboriginal languages: he wrote Encyclopaedia articles on Australian and Tasmanian languages for the Grolier Encyclopaedia 1961 and Encyclopaedia Britannica 1975. In the 1960s and 1970s he wrote a number of general works on the state of knowledge of Australian languages and contributed a major article on the classification of Australian languages in Current trends in linguistics 1971. Much of this material was included in a book by Mouton under the title Languages of Australia and Tasmania in 1972. He founded the series Pacific Linguistics which was, and remains, the only place where works on Australian languages were published at an affordable price — literally hundreds of authors are indebted to him.

Although he worked mainly in New Guinea after his early Australian fieldwork, Stephen Wurm was active in the Institute of Aboriginal Studies, right to his last year was a member of the Comité International pour la linguistique UNESCO Committee. He was an important member of a number of international linguistic research associations, and was particularly influential in those dealing with endangered languages. His knowledge of so many languages, including Russian and Chinese meant that what he had to say was appreciated directly in many countries.

Above all Stephen Wurm was a very generous man. Like Ken Hale, he did everything possible to help others in their work. He made his data available to other scholars including post-graduate students. He handed over his recordings and notes on a major scale. For example:

• Wangkumara to Mary-Alyce McDonald, published jointly by PL 1979
• Paakantyi to Luise Hercus
• Malyangapa to Peter Austin
• Kamilaroi to Peter Austin
• Yandruwantha (Nyirrpi dialect) to Claire Bowern
• Ngiyampa-Wayilwan to Tamsin Donaldson
• And, right up to the present, Dungudjawu to Suzanne Kite, which is about to be published with joint authorship in the Pacific Linguistics Series.

Stephen Wurm was devoted to language studies, but in a totally unselfish way. He would help others quietly behind the scenes as is clear from Michael Walsh’s account:

My most memorable early contact with Stephen Wurm took place in 1972. I was enrolled for a postgraduate research degree in Linguistics at the Australian National University and had recently been awarded a grant by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies [AIAS] to undertake fieldwork on a language at Daly River. En route to the field from Canberra I decided to stop over in Sydney for the meeting of the Linguistic Society of Australia at the University of Sydney. I was awed: this was my chance to make contact with so many people that I had only encountered through their writings. I noticed that Stephen Wurm seemed to know everyone and was thoroughly at home whereas I was very much feeling my way. I was upset when I received a telegram during the conference telling me that it was not suitable for me to proceed on my intended work at Daly River. I turned to Stephen Wurm who told me that I should go to Port Keats instead and study Murrinhpatha. He brushed aside my concerns about how AIAS as my grant-giver would take this sudden switch of language and field location. Stephen indicated that he would look after this. In the event I went to Port Keats and never heard a word of complaint from AIAS. This mixture of cheerful pragmatism linked with a formidable academic network was something I was to see many times in the ensuing years. It turned out that, at the time, Stephen was a member of the AIAS Council as well as chair of the panel that considered applications for grants in linguistics. Little wonder that my switch of research site and project created no trouble.

There are no doubt many, many cases where the people involved did not even know that Stephen Wurm was helping them behind the scenes.

Stephen Wurm is survived by his wife of 55 years, Dr. Helen Groger Wurm, herself a fine anthropologist. He was a great force for the good, not only for Australian languages but for minority languages throughout the world.

Luise Hercus, ANU
Harold Koch, ANU
Michael Walsh, University of Sydney