M’s KY grammar is a well done and extremely valuable contribution to our knowledge of this highly endangered language. It will not only help to promote the studies of Yukaghir itself (both synchronically and diachronically), but will serve as an important database for typological research. Its orientation towards basic linguistic theory and the unbiased descriptive quality guarantee that it can be used in a variety of frameworks. [WOLFGANG SCHULZE, University of Munich.]


Japanese has the eighth largest number of speakers in the world, with the native population of Japan comprising more than 125 million people. Japanese is well known for its myriad of forms marking politeness—verbs can take polite, honorific, humble, and familiar forms. For modern English speakers, navigating these levels of politeness can be tricky, as interest in formal speech and writing in Western societies has declined throughout the twentieth century.

McCure’s contemporary guide to Japanese usage is both timely and highly insightful, providing needed practical advice. The first section deals with syntactic and phonological aspects of Japanese, showing the range of expressions available to express degrees of meaning, even in the neutral form. Some insightful examples of actual dialogue are presented to highlight various complexities, such as word choice being affected by the gender of participants in a conversation. For native English speakers, strategies for communicating apologies and honorifics are reviewed in detail. Regional variation in Japanese dialects is also presented, as speakers often express regional pride through both intonation and vocabulary.

In the second section, native word meanings and formation, as well as the effect of word borrowing, are discussed. Japanese words can have Japanese, Chinese, or ‘foreign’ origins, each variety having its own grammar. Word formations are particularly important for correct homonym usage, and the role of furigana symbols in guiding pronunciation is elucidated through examples. Almost one third of the book is devoted to word usage, and this is certainly not excessive given its central role in constructing contextually appropriate language.

The third section is concerned with individual grammatical elements and their nuances, covering the particles wa, mo, no, de, and to. This section includes discussions of topic marking and topic changing, direct and indirect objects, locations, lim-

its, and idioms. The difficult area of omissions is handled masterfully.

The final section examines how language is used in various social rituals, including greetings, condolences, and congratulations. Students will find it helpful to review the material presented in the first three sections in the context of various social customs.

The combination of strictly grammatical aspects of Japanese along with examples of usage in these different contexts makes M’s book a valuable resource for intermediate and advanced speakers of Japanese. [PAUL A. WATTERS, Macquarie University.]


After a long interval of near inactivity in the nineties, Dublin’s School of Celtic Studies has recently resumed the regular publication of its journal Celtica. Most of the contributions in this volume are dedicated to Irish philology and literature. Only articles of linguistic interest are discussed here.

JOSEPH ESKA, in ‘On syntax and semantics in Alise-Sainte-Reine (Côte-D’Or), again’ (101–20), reviews recent scholarship devoted to one of the best-studied Gaulish texts (RIG L-13); yet uncertainties remain in its analysis. A bone of contention is whether the syntagma etic gobedbi is to be interpreted as a dative plural ‘and to the smiths’, or as a comitative instrumental ‘and with the smiths’, an analysis in vogue in recent years (105–7). Eska’s aim in this well-argued article is ‘to address these new arguments in defence of the traditional interpretation’ (103). To this end he first demonstrates that the syntagma ‘connector + comitative instrumental’ would be exceptional in Indo-European syntax (105–7) and that attempts at interpreting etic as the 3rd singular of the copula ‘is’ + connective -c, used as a relative marker, meet with syntactic objections (108–10). He then proceeds to show that the discontinuity between the two constituents of the main verb’s dative argument (Ucuete ‘to Ucuetis’ and etic gobedbi dugjontijo Ucuetin in Alisija ‘and to the smiths who honor Ucuetis in Alisia’, separated by the accusative sosin celicnon ‘this edifice’) may be explained by a rightward shift of ‘heavy’ constituents to sentence-final position (113–15). But although the discontinuity can be justified in the suggested grammatical way, it can also be ascribed to metrical requirements: Pace Eska (107–8), the inscription is divided into two halves. The high amount of parallelism between them (equal number of stressed words,
nearly equal number of syllables in (half)lines, correspondence in constituent positions) suggests a conscious stylistic design. As to Eksa’s suggestion that -bi is a dative plural ending, cp. the inscription Ic <duŋiŋaunaşi> on helmet A from Ženjak-Negau, possibly a dative plural (Heiner Eichner apud Robert Nedoma, *Die Inschrift auf dem Helm B von Negau*, Vienna: Fassbender, 1995, p. 20).

In a traditionally short contribution, Eric P. Hamp, in ‘Gaulish ci -e, Old Irish cé’, Ogam KOF (129), explains the demonstrative particles mentioned in the title as diachronically and morphologically different locative formations of the PIE demonstrative stem *ko-ke-*. Kim McConne, in ‘Old Irish na ní: A case of *quid pro quo*?’ (168–81), starts with a review of Peter Schrijver’s *Studies in the history of Celtic pronouns and particles* (Maynooth, 1997), rightly rejecting Schrijver’s claim that the PIE nom/acc singular neuter demonstrative pronoun was *ti̯d*, the Celti-c evidence ties in perfectly with the *communis opinio* of PIE *töl* (168–72). McConne then discusses the PIE interrogative/indefinite pronominal stems *k̑o-o/t-k̑i̯-*, for which a suppletion of the type suggested by Schrijver for the demonstrative can be posited with more confidence. From a PIE pre-form *nek-ti̯d, the Old Irish neuter indefinite pronouns ni̯ (stressed) and nidi̯ (unstressed) can be derived directly by the application, in this order, of two uncontroversial Insular Celtic sound laws: (i) loss of final *i̯ d̅l̅i̯, and (ii) loss of absolute word final short *i* (174–78). This derivation allows a similar explanation for another irregular pronominal neuter aill ‘(an)other’ (178).

Malachy McKenna’s aim in ‘Grammatical gender in a nineteenth-century Ulster text’ (182–204) is ‘to discuss what the evidence is for determining the gender in [the modern Irish text] The spiritual rose’. He sets up a list of twenty-seven grammatical criteria that can help to determine noun gender (184–97) and then applies them to his text. A number of nouns ambiguous as to gender remain (203), since their behavior regarding the criteria is contradictory. Keven Murray, in ‘Lulghach ‘a milch cow’ (223–24), ad-duces extralinguistic material from cattle-breeding to support an old etymology for Old Irish lulghach ‘milch cow < *lu-laig-ach ‘having a small calf’.