

THE ORIGINS OF BINTULU b , d ¹

By ROBERT A. BLUST

Bintulu, an Austronesian language spoken in the district capital of that name and in several smaller communities in the basin of the Kemeni river, Fourth Division, Sarawak, has two previously unrecognized implosive stop phonemes, b and d . Where these segments occur in lexical items known to reflect a Proto-Austronesian (PAN) reconstruction, they appear to result from an unconditioned phonemic split of PAN $*b$, $*d$, $*D$, or $*j$. A hypothesis constructed to account for a wider range of linguistic facts offers an explanation of some of these apparent irregularities. Most if not all residual discrepancies can be accommodated under an ancillary hypothesis of borrowing, independently motivated by various considerations. The case of the Bintulu implosives is of general theoretical interest, as it necessitates modifications in some recent claims regarding the diachronic sources of implosive stops.

In an earlier paper (Blust, 1969) I called attention to the fact that some of the languages of northern Sarawak and contiguous areas in Brunei and Indonesian Borneo exhibit two sets of reflexes for the Proto-Austronesian phonemes written $*b$, $*d$, $*D$, $*j$, and $*Z$. Most of the data which provided the basis for this observation were gathered from the well-known comparative vocabularies published by S. H. Ray (1913). In addition to these word lists, I was able to collect at first hand material for the Barito dialect of Kelabit (BK), where it was discovered that the discrepant (less common) reflex is invariably a member of a previously unrecognized series of phonemic voiced aspirates / b^h /, / d^h /, / g^h / (phonetically [bp^h], [dt^h], [gk^h]). Thus, while the usual reflex of PAN $*b$ is BK b , we sometimes find b^h , and while the usual reflex of PAN $*d$, $*D$, $*j$, and $*Z$ is BK d , we sometimes find d^h .² In most instances the established reconstructions are unable to account for this seemingly divergent development, as can be seen in table 1. PAN reconstructions follow Dyen's modifications of Dempwolff and are written in Dyen's orthography, except that the medial nasal is always written $*-y-$. Reconstructions preceded by 'PAN (B)' are proposed in Blust (1970). Kelabit forms are cited in my phonemic transcription.

¹ Part of the material in this paper was collected during a linguistic field trip undertaken from April to November 1971 in the Miri and Baram Districts, Fourth Division, Sarawak, Malaysia. I wish to express my thanks to the National Science Foundation for financial support under NSF Grant No. GS-3206, to Benedict Sandin and Lucas Chin of the Sarawak Museum for official sponsorship by the museum, and to William Hau, principal of the Kolej Tun Dato Tuanku Haji Bujang, Miri, for his assistance in making arrangements for me to work with students at that institution. In addition, my wife and I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Haji Abdullah bin Yusoff and family, who made our stay in Miri a memorable experience. Finally, I owe special appreciation to Ismail bin Lazim (Kampung Masjid) and Umar bin Hamzah (Kampung Sebiew) without whose interest and patience my knowledge of Bintulu would be considerably more limited than it is.

Certain points that will be touched on in the following discussion can only be developed fully through a detailed investigation of a much larger number of languages than it is possible to examine here. The full evidence will appear in my dissertation *Proto-North Sarawak and the problem of linguistic subgrouping*.

For list of references, see p. 620.

² Examples of d^h as the reflex of $*z$, or of g^h —the least frequent of the voiced aspirates—are unknown in any word that can be derived from a PAN reconstruction.

Kelabit	Bintulu	PNS	PAN
<i>teb'ek</i>	<i>tumbek</i>	* <i>tebSek</i> 'stab'	* <i>tebeSek</i> 'prick, pierce'
	<i>uban</i>		* <i>guban</i> 'grey hair'
	<i>ubat</i> 'medicine'		* <i>ubat</i> 'gunpowder' ⁹
<i>ubih</i>	<i>ubey</i>	* <i>ubi</i>	* <i>qubi</i> 'yam'
<i>ed'o</i>	<i>daw</i>	* <i>dSaw</i>	* <i>a(ŋ)daSaw</i> or * <i>qa(ŋ)jaSaw</i> 'day'
<i>badil</i>	<i>bedil</i> 'firecracker'		* <i>bedil</i> 'gun, fire-arm'
<i>bed'uk</i>	<i>beduk</i>	* <i>bedSuk</i>	* <i>be(dDj)uSuk</i> 'kind of monkey' ¹⁰
	<i>jadey</i>		* <i>zadi</i> 'become'
<i>ed'an</i>	<i>k-ejan</i>	* <i>jSan</i>	*(<i>Sa</i>) <i>ReZaSan</i> 'ladder'
<i>ked'ep</i>	<i>k-em-ejep</i> ¹¹	* <i>kejSep</i>	PAN (B) * <i>ke(zZ)eSep</i> 'blink'
<i>ped'uh</i>	<i>le-pedew</i>	* <i>pedSu</i>	* <i>gapejuSu(S)</i> 'gall (-bladder)'
	<i>pedes</i>	(* <i>ped(S)es</i>)	* <i>pej(eS)es</i> 'ailing, ill'
<i>ded'ur</i>	<i>redu</i>	* <i>dedSuR</i> 'woman, female'	
<i>ded'em</i>	<i>se-dem</i>	* <i>dedSem</i>	* <i>De(Sem)DeSem</i> 'darkness'
<i>temed'ur</i>	<i>temedu</i>	* <i>temedSuR</i> 'rhinoceros'	

B

<i>bareh</i>	<i>ox</i>	* <i>baRa</i>	* <i>baR₁aH[]</i> 'ember'
<i>baraq</i>	<i>vaq</i>	* <i>baReq</i>	* <i>baR₁eq</i> 'abscess; swelling'
<i>bera</i>	<i>vas</i>	* <i>beRas</i>	* <i>beRas</i> 'husked rice'
<i>berat</i>	<i>vat</i>	* <i>beRat</i>	* <i>beR₂at</i> 'heavy'
<i>batuh</i>	<i>vatew ~ batew</i>	* <i>batu</i>	* <i>batu[]</i> 'stone'
<i>bulan</i>	<i>vulan ~ bulan</i>	* <i>bulan</i>	* <i>bulan</i> 'moon, month'
<i>buluk</i>	<i>vulew ~ buluw</i>	* <i>bulu</i>	* <i>bulu</i> 'body hair, feathers'
<i>abuh</i>	<i>avew</i>	* <i>abu</i>	* <i>abu</i> 'ashes'
<i>bibir</i>	<i>bisi</i> 'mouth'	* <i>bibiR</i>	* <i>biRbiR</i> 'lips'
<i>lubay</i>	<i>luway</i>	* <i>lubay</i>	* <i>lubay</i> 'hole'
<i>daraq</i>	<i>raq</i>	* <i>daRaq</i>	*(<i>dD</i>) <i>aR₁aQ₂</i> 'blood'

⁹ This reconstruction was based on the comparison Toba Batak *ubat*, Javanese, Malay *obat* 'gunpowder'. Wilkinson, however, cites Malay (as used in Java) *obat* 'drug, philtre, charm', standard Malay *obat* 'drug, philtre', *ubat bedil* 'gunpowder'.

¹⁰ To explain the comparison Malay, Ngaju Dayak *beruk*, Dempwolff posited PAN **be(r)uk* 'kind of monkey'. These forms cannot be reconciled with the reflexes of PAN **be(dDj)uSuk*, and together with Bisaya *gabuk*, Kadazan *gobuk* (met.) 'large brown short-tailed monkey' must be attributed to a doublet **beRuk*.

¹¹ Variants *kemejeb* and *kemajeb* also occur.