Kenneth R. Beesley and Dirk Elzinga. *An 1860 English-Hopi Vocabulary Written in the Deseret Alphabet.*
Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Brian D. Stubbs

Authors Kenneth R. Beesley and Dirk Elzinga did commendable work and a valuable service in producing the book *An 1860 English-Hopi Vocabulary Written in the Deseret Alphabet.* The volume is of value to persons interested in early Mormon missions, the Deseret Alphabet, the Hopi people, or to linguists interested in the Hopi language or Uto-Aztecan comparative linguistics. Any time that an older recording of a language becomes available, its value as an earlier window to that language makes it a treasured acquisition because all living languages are always changing: sounds change or are lost, words are replaced, and so forth. The recording of Native American languages generally has not enjoyed prolific endeavor due to a shortage of interested linguists and sometimes due to tribal opposition to their language being recorded, inadvertently choosing that the language be lost rather than be written. For example, I produced the largest Tewa dictionary[1] in existence, extracting data from already published sources—bilingual primers and the Tewa New Testament—yet the tribal powers that be prefer that it remain an unused file in my computer. For many tribes, as native speakers pass away, so does the language, never to be known to the descendants who wish they knew something of their ancestors' language. Nevertheless, Hopi, in spite of some internal Hopi opposition, is among the more thoroughly recorded native tongues, especially because of the recent *Hopi Dictionary,*[2] which is an exceptionally good and sizable dictionary of the Third-Mesa Hopi dialect.

---

1. Brian D. Stubbs, *Rio Grande Tewa: An Indexed Vocabulary* (in preparation).

2. Kenneth C. Hill, Emory Sekaquaptewa, Mary E. Black, and Ekkehart Malotki, *Hopi Dictionary—Hopìikwa Lavàytutuveni: A Hopi-English Dictionary*

Beesley and Elzinga begin with an outline of the Mormon missions to the Hopi and the recent awareness of an "Indian Vocabulary" written in the Deseret Alphabet, long laid away in the Church History Library—but without names, dates, or language specified.

Chapter 2 reviews the history of the Deseret Alphabet (10–18) and the identification of the manuscript as a Hopi vocabulary (it could have been Ute, Shoshoni, or some other language), and then specifically as the Hopi Third-Mesa dialect. After examining some background of the fifteen missions to the Hopi between 1858 and 1873, a bit of detective work identifies the author of the Hopi vocabulary as Marion Jackson Shelton, of the 1859–60 mission, with a nice biographical outline of this rather remarkable individual. The authors then offer some history of the Mormon interest in Native American languages and provide an overview of other early Hopi vocabularies produced (47–49), though most are not as early or as large as this recently discovered treasure.

Chapter 3 begins with an introduction to Hopi's place in the larger Uto-Aztecan language family, followed by an excellent analysis of some key aspects of Hopi phonology. It may be the best treatment of Hopi *r* in all the literature, mainly because it brings together and cites all the literature and what each of the various sources says about Hopi *r.* The linguistic analyses of the Third-Mesa dialect's *p, s,* and falling tone are also enlightening.

Chapter 4 introduces the 1860 Hopi vocabulary, which is made available in its entirety. Appendix A illuminates places in Hopi land, and appendix B specifies people and addresses a legend.

The Hopi vocabulary lists the English gloss, its transcription in the Deseret Alphabet followed by the Hopi term in the Deseret Alphabet, and a transcription of that Hopi term in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Also cited are relevant Hopi terms as they appear in the primary Hopi sources published since—the most authoritative being the *Hopi Dictionary*—with some citations from Seaman's dictionary and Milo Kalectaca's vocabulary of Second-Mesa Hopi. Besides the Hopi vocabulary, the English index to the Hopi vocabulary is helpful.

As mentioned, the value of such an edited resurrection of early materials is a window into earlier stages of a language, often important for reconstructing earlier forms relevant to other related languages. For

---

of the Third-Mesa Dialect with an English-Hopi Finder List and a Sketch of Hopi Grammar (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998).

example, the very first entry, *nəkəvü* ("ear"), shows an additional vowel not in the *Hopi Dictionary*'s entry *naqvü* ("ear"), suggesting that the earlier Hopi form was **naqapü,* which agrees well with Proto-Uto-Aztecan **naqapa* ("ear") (e.g., SP *naŋqava-vi* and Sr *qävaa-č* "ear, leaf").[3] Other examples of an older vowel heard by Shelton, but not in later sources, can be found on pages 16, 44, 69, 80, and 88.

Also of interest to Uto-Aztecan specialists are the forms that show **p* changing to *b* in contrast to present *v-* (16, 89, 169). When a voiceless stop like **p* occurs between voiced vowels, a common change is that it becomes voiced *b* and perhaps later a fricative *v.* That process of change from *p* > *b* > *v* or similarly *t* > *d* > *đ* happened in Spanish and is a common kind of sound change in many languages' histories. For example, among Hopi's relatives, some Numic Uto-Aztecan languages north of Hopi show **-p-* > *-b-* and others show **p* > *b* > *v.* While many words in Shelton's Hopi vocabulary do show *v* as in the contemporary *Hopi Dictionary,* a number of others show *b.* The difference may be a different speaker from whom Shelton heard *b* versus others who said *v*; or the sound may have been between the two, a slight frication of a near stop, as the *b* of some Spanish dialects can sound like either *b* or *v*; or it may simply be an occasional hearing discrepancy on the part of Shelton. Whatever the case, the Hopi *v* must have been close enough to *b* for Shelton to hear *b* some of the time, which is linguistically intriguing.

I find interesting the transcription of Thales Haskell's Hopi name Konesoke from *honsoki* ("bear claws") (28). Most Uto-Aztecan languages have *k* and *h,* but nothing between, except for Hopi's linguistic relatives in Uto-Aztecan's Takic branch, wherein some languages (Luiseño, Cahuilla, and Cupeño) show initial *x-,* between *k-* and *h-,* and thus exhibit all three: *k-, x-,* and *h-.* However, one specialist sees preexilic Israeli Semitic *x* and *ḫ* becoming *k* and *hu* / *ho* in Uto-Aztecan, respectively, though the two later merged to things between *k* and *h* in strength. And **hunap* (> *Hopi hona*) ("bear") is one such item (from Semitic *ḫnp*)[4], so to see that particular Hopi *h* understood as *k* is noteworthy.

---

3. Brian D. Stubbs, *Uto-Aztecan: A Comparative Vocabulary* (Blanding: Rocky Mountain Books, 2011), no. 752; and Brian D. Stubbs, *Exploring the Explanatory Power of Semitic and Egyptian in Uto-Aztecan* (Provo, Utah: Grover Publications, 2015) no. 1070.

4. Stubbs, *Exploring the Explanatory Power,* no. 675.

In summary, the book is a thorough and excellent treatment of what is a valuable contribution to certain fields. Though the book's subject matter may not match *Harry Potter* appeal in numbers, it far exceeds the latter's contribution in knowledge for those interested in early Mormon missions, the Deseret Alphabet, the Hopi people, or Uto-Aztecan comparative linguistics.

Brian D. Stubbs is a linguist and instructor at Utah State University Eastern. He received a master's degree in linguistics and completed his PhD coursework in Near Eastern languages and linguistics from the University of Utah. His book *Uto-Aztecan: A Comparative Vocabulary* (2011) is to date the largest work in comparative Uto-Aztecan studies.