Randy J. LaPolla with Chenglong Huang. 2003. *A Grammar of Qiang, with annotated texts and glossary.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. xvii + 445 pages.

The grammar under review here, Randy LaPolla's *A Grammar of Qiang, with annotated texts and glossary*, is a description of the Yadu subdialect of northern Qiang spoken in Ronghong Village, Yadu Township, Mao County, the subdialect spoken by Chenglong Huang. Comparisons with other dialects are frequently made either in the text or in the footnotes. The grammar contains a detailed 248 page grammar, 6 transcribed and annotated texts covering 78 pages, a glossary and glossary-index covering 89 pages, and a very useful index of the whole work. It is the best grammar to date of any of the Qiang dialects and is likely to remain so for sometime.

LaPolla's work is informed by his knowledge of three scholarly areas: the languages of this part of the world (Qiang, Tibeto-Burman, and Sino-Tibetan), what will be termed here functional syntax (for want of a better word), and the in-some-senses closely-related area of typology. LaPolla is fully familiar with the literature on Qiang; the volume shows that he has incorporated the insights and knowledge from not just the Chinese written sources but also from the contemporary Chinese scholars who have worked on these and related languages, giving him the benefit of the insights of the rich Chinese scholarly tradition. Throughout the work LaPolla's makes reference to not just other Qiang dialects but to other Tibeto-Burman dialects as well as Chinese languages, a broad background reflected both in his recent co-editorship of *The Sino-Tibetan Languages* and in the fact that LaPolla will be the

new editor of Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area beginning with the next issue.

LaPolla treats various syntactic phenomena with a sophistication often not seen in descriptive grammars. In part his description reflects his acknowledged expertise in functional grammar, including Role-and-Reference Grammar (see Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997) along with countless other articles and works. This being so, however, it is necessary to point out that the work requires no particular technical expertise in this or any other formalism—the work is not coded in any formalism; I never found myself puzzling over a formalism, something reflecting far more about the clarity of the presentation than about my knowledge of syntax. The benefit to the reader is LaPolla's ability to not only to recognize material with broader implications for syntax but also to recognize constructions that might not otherwise jump out at the analyst.

The third area that contributes significantly to LaPolla's description is his broad knowledge of typology, including morphology, syntax, and discourse aspects. Of particular value, at least to this reader, is his comments about what is not found in Qiang; for instance, writing about verbs of possession e.g. 'have' and existence e.g. 'be' (p. 98), LaPolla notes, "There is no difference between present and past possession, and there are no nouns that are obligatorily possessed. There is also no difference in the construction based on whether the possessor is represented by a pronoun, a proper noun or common." It would be delightful if others would follow this practice. Without such a statement, even if we go through a grammar page-by-page, example-by-example for such

information, the best we can say is that there were no examples—the possiblity still exists that the omission if fortuitous.

Finally, LaPolla scatters intriguing historical information throughout the volume. Now and then LaPolla notes an etymology, as when he suggests that the nominalizing clitic -*m* derives from Proto-Tibetan-Burman *mi 'man'. More frequently and of enormous value is LaPolla's use throughout the work of what I can best describe as 'internal reconstructions' accompanying various transcribed words. The problem is that Qiang has undergone significant phonological restructuring making comparisons within the language difficult, with other dialects opaque, and with broader Tibeto-Burman challenging. Thus, LaPolla often presents a straightforward transcription but follows it with an "underlying" form. For example (p.169), -*na:* 'sleep (present)' followed by (< *nə*), where the latter form represents 'sleep' and -*fi* 'till' followed by (< -phie). The phonological rules needed for generating such 'underlying' forms are presented in the phonology section of the grammar.

LaPolla's grammar should be of interest to typologists, syntacticians, Tibeto-Burmanists, historical linguists, and those wishing to have a model of how to write a richer, more valuable grammar.

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Graham Thurgood and Randy LaPolla. *The Sino-Tibetan Languages.* Routledge Language Family Series. London and New York: Routledge. xxii. 727 pp.

Van Valin, Robert Jr. and Randy J. LaPolla. 1997. *Syntax: Structure Meaning, and Function.* Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.