The focus of this rich volume is total reduplication, that is, reduplicative constructions where one finds two copies of the same element appearing adjacent to each other in a way prescribed by the grammar of a language, as opposed to representing mere repetition.¹ To pick one example, in Swahili, total reduplication of an adjective can be used to code plurality of the noun it modifies (p. 3) rather than merely emphasizing its semantics. The book’s title both oversells and undersells its content. On the one hand, its areal focus is limited to Europe. While examples are drawn from languages beyond the continent, one will not find a global-scale survey of the sort that has become familiar since the publication of HASPELMATH ET AL. (2005). On the other hand, there is much more than areal linguistics here. Extensive attention is given to methodological issues, the literature review brings interesting older work to light, and, most importantly, the book convincingly demonstrates that the understudied phenomenon of total reduplication should be brought solidly into the fold of linguistic patterns worthy of descriptive and typological attention as part of grammatical “canon”. This last point is especially significant given that recent decades have seen much more attention paid to partial reduplication than total reduplication.

The structure of the book largely mirrors the stages of investigation and discovery that take place over the course of a multi-year project rather than

¹ In terms of coverage, this book is unusually expansive, and it is impossible to fully address the whole range of its content in a single review. Interested readers will find discussion of additional points in several other reviews that have already been published in Studies in Language 36, 440–448; Linguistics 51, 653–662; and Language 89, 375–377.
emphasizing specific research results, giving it more the feel of a (massively) extended project report than a typical academic monograph. Its overall orientation is strongly functional-typological, though the richness of its coverage will mean that linguists of any theoretical persuasion should find something of interest here, as well those specializing in morphology, syntax, semantics, and historical linguistics, among other subdisciplines.

The presentation is divided into four parts, some consisting of multiple chapters. The first part, comprising about a third of the book, is devoted to the question of how to approach total reduplication from an analytical perspective and the discussion is far ranging. There is good reason for this. On the one hand, compared to other grammatical phenomena, total reduplication superficially appears trivial in nature, and the authors take great care to explain its importance. Indeed, there has been a historical prejudice against the phenomenon as something characteristic of “simple” societies or less educated speakers (p. 98–99). On the other hand, the lack of clear-cut formal coding associated with total reduplication makes it difficult to pin down just what counts as an instance of it. For instance should the first two words in a phrase like very very bright (p. 22) in English count as an instance of total reduplication or just as a double application of a modifier? Ultimately, the authors invoke flexible devices, such as prototypes (p. 69) and grammaticalization chains (p. 147) to delineate the phenomenon in a manageable way. The discussion in this part of historical approaches to reduplication (stretching back to the nineteenth century) and how reduplication fits into models of grammaticalization are particularly valuable additions to the literature. The tone here, as well as in much of the rest of the book, is often quite critical but, at the same, the authors consistent presentation of novel observations helps to offset any negativity.
The second part of the book is an extended investigation into total reduplication in Maltese, serving as a case study that provides context for the typological investigation to follow. The choice of language is largely practical in nature: It exhibits enough instances of total reduplication, with varying analytical complications, to make it informative, and the authors also have significant previous experience with the language. The study is divided into two major sections, a relatively short one giving a quantitative overview of the patterning of total reduplication as found in a Maltese corpus, and a longer one covering the distribution of total reduplication across word classes, the extent to which there is evidence for phonological or morphosyntactic constraints on its appearance, and its various functions.

The third, and longest, part of the book investigates the distribution of total reduplication in Europe, contrasting its results with those of the typological study of Rubino (2005), which found much less reduplication in Europe than reported here. As with the Maltese case study, the discussion is divided into a quantitative and non-quantitative sections. The primary database from which the results are derived involves parallel corpora based on existing translations of Le Petit Prince and the first book in the Harry Potter series. Parallel text typology represents a relatively new method to explore cross-linguistic patterns (see Cysouw / Walchli 2009), and its application is especially appropriate here given that discussion of total reduplication is not a standard part of grammatical descriptions and that it is relatively easy to detect on the basis of textual data alone. A truly impressive amount of data was considered. For instance, over 100 European languages were part of the Le Petit Prince corpus, including many nonstandard varieties (p. 342).

The quantitative results of the typological investigation show significant variation in type and token frequency of total reduplication across languages in
the sample, but there is still a clear general pattern: Total reduplication is avoided, if not entirely absent, in the north and center of Europe, especially in Germanic and Baltic, and, to a lesser extent, Slavic. Total reduplication is prominent in the east and south of Europe (which, in this survey, includes languages found outside of the area that is most often treated as “European”, such as Kurdish, Kazkah, and Udmurt). Romance is noteworthy for being divided across the two classes with, for instance, French avoiding total reduplication, but not Italian (p. 416). The quantitative figures are not subjected to sophisticated statistical testing, but the extent of the descriptive statistics presented is nevertheless impressive.

Parallel to the Maltese cast study, the non-quantitative part of this section considers how total reduplication is distributed across word class, constraints on where it is employed, and the functions it encodes, which include, for instance, intensification and extension in time and space (p. 458). The empirical basis of this discussion is expanded beyond parallel texts to include, among other things, information from available descriptions.

The comparatively short final section of the book situates its empirical results in a wider theoretical and analytical context. Among other things, total reduplication is compared to constructions involving coordination of identical conjuncts, and the issue of whether or not reduplication should be considered an instance of copying or doubling of two like elements is given attention. Possible explanations for the areal patterning of total reduplication in Europe are also considered, with Heiné / Kuteva’s (2006) model of contact-induced language change singled out as useful for explaining its specific grammatical character (p. 536) and languages of the Middle East suggested as being responsible for its spread into the southern and eastern parts of Europe (p. 534). In addition, a theme from the first section is reconsidered: How does total
reduplication fits into existing notions of language universals? The authors consider the intriguing possibility that the phenomenon represents a new category, the latent universal, describing a grammatical pattern which could be realized straightforwardly in any language, even if it happens not to be (p. 540).

It seems necessary to conclude this review with some warnings about the book’s readability. The discussion often feels somewhat circuitous, giving the impression that the authors attempted to write down everything they discovered about total reduplication rather than paring down the treatment to the essential points. Editorial aspects also leave much to be desired: Typos and lack of idiomatic English are not uncommon, tables are not always clearly explained, maps lack captions and are presented as language name abbreviations scattered on the page rather than being overlaid onto an outline of Europe, and passages are given in various languages other than English without translations (though, fortunately, their core content is usually discernible from the following discussion). At the same time, there is a sense in which the lack of “tight” editing is a strength of this book. Too often, scholarly outputs focus on the showcase results of a project, and we never learn of the many interesting intellectual meanderings that researchers had to undertake to arrive at those results. While this expansive format would not be appropriate in all cases, it seems fitting here since this is a work that seeks not merely to explore the relatively narrow topic of the areality of total reduplication but also to establish it is a grammatical phenomena meriting much more serious consideration in the future. It does this quite convincingly.
REFERENCES


