Bjarke Frellesvig describes the development of the Japanese language from its recorded beginnings until the present day as reflected by the written sources and historical record. Beginning with a description of the oldest attested stage of the language, Old Japanese (approximately the eighth century AD), and then tracing the changes which occurred through the Early Middle Japanese (800–1200), Late Middle Japanese (1200–1600) and the Modern Japanese (1600–onwards) periods, a complete internal history of the language is examined and discussed. This account provides a comprehensive study of how the Japanese language has developed and adapted, providing a much needed resource for scholars. A History of the Japanese Language is invaluable to all those interested in the Japanese language and also students of language change generally.

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Review

‘This book provides a ready resource on pre-modern Japanese for linguists throughout the world.’
Satoshi Kinsui, Osaka University

Hardback 9780521653206
USD 130.00
460 pages