

FRANKLIN C. SOUTHWORTH. *Linguistic archaeology of South Asia*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2005, pp. xiv+369. ISBN 0-415-33323-7 (hbk), £95.00

This book, written by Franklin C. Southworth (until 1998 professor at the University of Pennsylvania, now retired), a renowned scholar of South Asian linguistics and specialist in both Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages, is at the crossroad of two sciences. Being intended primarily for students of history and archaeology, it deals with the aspects of linguistic research that are relevant for those who concentrate on the history and, especially, prehistory of South Asia.

Chapter 1, 'The scope of linguistic archaeology' (p. 138), is a useful introduction to the subfields of linguistics that can supply historians and archaeologists with relevant information. These include, among others, comparative and historical linguistics, linguistic palaeontology, sociolinguistics, and the philological study of (ancient) texts. All these branches are grouped together under the label 'linguistic archaeology',¹ used for the lack of a better term (but, intuitively, understandable for everybody). Chapter 1 conveniently summarizes the main theoretical prerequisites and methods of comparative linguistics. It also offers a brief discussion of several basic issues such as what causes linguistic change, how to correlate linguistic and archaeological evidence, etc. Southworth offers, in general, a balanced overview of research problems and achievements in the field. Yet, the chapter is not always free of unbiased evaluations. Thus, the author quite sceptically estimates the potential of glottochronology, dedicating to this subfield as few as nine lines (p. 29). Quire regrettably, he only refers to the earliest studies in glottochronology, which appeared half a century ago, ignoring more recent works by S.A. Starostin, which offer a more accurate methodology for lexicostatistics (see Starostin 2000).

Chapter 2, 'The South Asian linguistic scene' (pp. 39–61), offers a useful survey of languages spoken in South Asia, introducing the basics of their genetic affiliation. It includes sections on Indo-Aryan, Iranian, Dravidian, Munda/Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman, and isolates (mentioning the three best-known languages: Burushaski, Nahali, and Vedda²). The section on Iranian (2.3) briefly mentions Avestan and Old Persian and quite inconsistently, incorporates a sub-section (2.3.1) on Kafiri/Nuristani, which as the author himself notes (p. 46), forms a separate, third, branch of Indo-Iranian. The concluding section touches upon the fairly complicated issues of the sociolinguistic situation in ancient India, such as the Sanskrit-Prakrit diglossia.³

Chapter 3, 'Prehistoric languages of South Asia' (pp. 62–97), is an overview of research on traces of non-Indo-European languages that can be detected in Old Indo-Aryan—a field to which the author of the book, alongside a number of eminent Indologists (M.B. Emeneau, F.B.J. Kuiper, M. Witzel, and others), made considerable contributions in the last half of the 20th century. A third part of the chapter is dedicated to lexical borrowings from Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic or unknown sources. Unfortunately, important research on the pre-Indo-European substratum in Indo-

¹ The structurally similar term 'linguistic palaeontology' refers to the subfield which 'uses the history of the forms of language (attested or reconstructed), along with textual and other evidence, to draw inferences about the socio-historical realities of the ancient societies in which the languages were used' (p. 17). This branch has probably the most direct connection to the object of research of archaeology proper, and, apparently for that reason, is employed by some scholars as an alternative term to 'linguistic archaeology' (as noticed by Southworth himself, p. 35).

² Vedda is, in fact, not 'a language of Srilanka' (p. 52), but a variety of the Indo-Aryan language Sinhala, which only preserves separate words (and, presumably, grammatical features) of the pre-Aryan vernacular that was spoken in Sri Lanka before the Indo-Aryan invasion.

³ To be more precise, we are rather dealing with a **polyglossia**, since Old Indo-Aryan and Middle Indo-Aryan could be presented by several varieties (e.g., by Vedic and Epic Sanskrit).

Iranian, tentatively identified by Lubotsky (2001) as originating from the unknown language of the Bactria-Margiana culture, does not get a mention in Southworth's otherwise quite comprehensive survey. A short section entitled 'Structural evidence', mentions the oft-textbook examples of non-Indo-European influence in the Indo-Aryan grammar, such as the expansion of retroflex consonants or the use of quotatives. A full listing of such structural features might of course be much longer. Thus, the dramatic restructuring of the Old Indo-Aryan case system, loss of many Proto-Indo-European cases and the emergence of the new, agglutinative, cases (cf. especially such New Indo-Aryan languages as Sinhala, where new cases are incorporated into the nominal paradigm on the same level as the reflexes of Old Indo-Aryan cases) may be due to the influence of some non-Indo-European agglutinating languages of the Dravidian type (see Kulikov 2006, 41).

Chapter 4, 'The social context of linguistic convergence' (pp. 98–125), introduces the most important concepts related to linguistic contacts, such as convergence, diffusion (of linguistic features), and shared linguistic change. It also offers a convenient synopsis of possible models of linguistic contacts, specifying the exact character of channelling structural relations between languages in contact.

Chapter 5, 'The Grierson hypothesis revisited: subgroups of Indo-Aryan' (pp. 126–53), discusses the much debated and fairly controversial issue of the classification of Indo-Aryan languages. The author demonstrates the considerable disagreement among scholars as far as the subgrouping of New Indo-Aryan languages is concerned⁴ and addresses the notorious threefold division of Grierson. As is well-known, Grierson argued that the eastern languages, such as Bengali, Oriya and Assamese, share more features with the southern (Marathi) and northwestern (Sindhi, Lahnda) languages than with two other groups, 'inner' (Western Hindi) and 'intermediate' (Eastern Hindi, Panjabi, Nepali etc.), and thus form a single 'outer' group. Linguistic evidence for such subgrouping includes, foremost, past forms in *-l-*⁵ and future forms originating in the Sanskrit *-tavya* gerundive.

Chapter 6, 'Historical implications of the inner-outer hypothesis' (pp. 154–92), places the linguistic evidence presented in Chapter 5 in a historical perspective. First, it establishes the main correlations between the genetic classification of New Indo-

⁴ Unfortunately, the presentation of the material (p. 127) is not free of inaccuracies or unbalanced views. Thus, the term 'Rumany/Rumani' (the languages of the Gypsies) does not exist: the correct spelling is 'Romani'. The Dardic languages are refused the status of a separate group ('this seems to be largely a regional grouping with some locally diffused shared features, rather than a genuine subgroup'). In fact, they rather form a separate genetic group, a fourth branch of Indo-Iranian, alongside with Indo-Aryan, Iranian, and Nuristani (see e.g. Kogan 2005).

⁵ The discussion of the origins of the *-l-* past is rather confusing. Arguing for the Old Indo-Aryan origin of this morpheme, the author claims that 'the l-forms appear to have been originally adjective-forming suffixes in O[ld] I[ndo-]A[ryan]'. However, Southworth's reference to the authority of Pāṇini (based on G. Cardona's personal communication, p. 150, note 20) is hardly appropriate in this discussion. The sociolinguistic status of Sanskrit as taught by Pāṇini is a difficult problem on its own, and argumentation based primarily on Pāṇini's rules can hardly be sufficient evidence for positing (reconstructing?) this morpheme as early as Old Indo-Aryan.

Aryan languages and the dialectal variation within late Old and Middle Indo-Aryan. These include, in particular, a number of 'East-West innovations', such as the merger of the three Old Indo-Aryan sibilants (*s*, *ś*, *ṣ*) in *s*. Reconciling linguistic evidence with textual and archaeological data, Southworth reconstructs a possible route of the Indo-Aryan expansion into the peninsula, which has split in two groups, corresponding, eventually, to the Inner and Outer groups of languages.

Chapter 7, 'Palaeobotanical and etymological evidence for the prehistory of South Asian crop plants' (pp. 193–228), addresses the correspondences between (i) botanical and palaeobotanical data, (ii) archaeobotanical data (from the study of evidence for use of plants in archaeological cultures), and (iii) linguistic evidence, i.e., first of all, the history of plant names. Data collected in these subfields are synopsized within more than fifty lemmata on cultural plants (barley, cotton, etc.). This historical dictionary of plant names serves as a basis for important historical implications on the sources of borrowings in old Indian agriculture.

Chapter 8, 'Some aspects of Dravidian prehistory based on vocabulary reconstruction' (pp. 229–87), addresses the history of Dravidian tribes. It opens with a useful summary of the linguistic history of Dravidian. On the basis of an extensive and well-organized Proto-Dravidian vocabulary of cultural terms (pp. 257–83), Southworth reconstructs several aspects of the Proto-Dravidian culture, such as agriculture; political, social and economic relations; material culture; and technology. An important conclusion which can be drawn from this analysis is that '[t]he reconstructed vocabulary of Proto-South Dravidian implies a society which is far more advanced than any found in South India before the beginnings of the late BCE period' (p. 255).

Chapter 9, 'Maharashtrian place names and the question of a Dravidian substratum' (pp. 288–321), continues the issue of the Dravidian presence in the Indian peninsula, dwelling upon a more specific topic. On the basis of toponymic evidence, the author concludes how the speakers of Dravidian and Indo-Aryan could be distributed over Maharashtra, discussing the chronology and possible scenario of the shift from Dravidian-speaking to Indo-Aryan-speaking in the area.

Chapter 10, 'Historical linguistics and archaeology in South Asia' (pp. 322–34), offers a short and very convenient summary of South Asian linguistic prehistory. It presents a general chronological overview of several archaeological cultures, starting from 3500 BCE, followed by a synopsis of linguistic prehistory by region (Indus Valley, Central, East, etc.).

The book concludes with a bibliography and an index.

Southworth's book is a good overview of the state of the art that can be used both by students and experienced scholars of several fields of research on South Asia. Albeit intended, foremost, for non-linguists, this introduction might also be helpful reading for students of linguistics. It is written in clear and transparent form and, in spite of a few (rather minor) lacunae and biased opinions, can serve as a useful handbook for all interested in the history, archaeology and linguistics of South Asia.

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