

LONG RANGER 33 (part 1)

Newsletter of the Association for the Study
of Language in Prehistory.
(formerly Mother Tongue Newsletter)

Issue 33. (Part 1) September 2001.

The Association for the Study of Language in Prehistory (ASLIP) is a nonprofit organization, incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its purpose is to encourage and support the study of language in prehistory in all fields and by all means, including research on the early evolution of human language, supporting conferences, setting up a data bank, and publishing a newsletter (Long Ranger) and a journal (Mother Tongue) to report these activities.

Membership: Annual dues for ASLIP membership, including subscriptions to Long Ranger newsletter and Mother Tongue journal, are U.S. \$25 in all countries, except those with currency problems (e.g., Russia). Please send membership fees to:

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Readers: Please inform us of news items that might be of interest.

ASLIP Website: <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/aslip.html>>

Note: As of now **LR will first be published electronically**, in several parts per issue, as to allow rapid communication. A combined issue will be sent by regular mail to those members who do not have email. (In the future we may have to charge for this). Members are requested to **notify Peter Norquest of their email address**, and to indicate whether they **allow publication of their email address** on the website.

Long Ranger Newsletter No. 33 (LR 33-1) Fall 2001

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Obituaries

During the past few months we have lost

**Cyrus Gordon
Joseph Greenberg
Scotty MacNeish
Roger Wescott**

They were remembered during the yearly meeting. Several obituaries have already appeared in MT VI (which is on its way to all members)

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ASLIP Annual Meeting 2001

MINUTES

April 21, 2001
African Studies Center
Boston University
Boston, MA

CURRENT BUSINESS

Elections:

11 members of the Board of Directors were elected:

Anne W. Beaman, Allan R. Bomhard, Ronald Christensen, Gyula DTMcsy, Murray Denofsky, Harold C. Fleming, Frederick Gamst, Kenneth Hale, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Phillip Lieberman, Jan Vansina

The following officers were elected for the next year:

President: Michael Witzel

Vice-President: John D. Bengtson

Secretary-Treasurer: Peter Norquest

Secretary-Treasurer's Report:

M.Witzel relayed the Secretary-Treasurer's report, sent by Peter Norquest by e-mail as he

could not attend the meeting this year.

On the basis of votes mailed in, Merritt Ruhlen and Ofer Bar-Yosef were the top two vote-getters for the Council of Fellows, and will replace the deceased members (Igor Diakonoff and Karl Heinrich Menges). Vyacheslav Ivanov was third in the voting.

Vice-President's Report:

John Bengtson reported on the progress of our journal *Mother Tongue*. The 2000-2001 issue, *Mother Tongue VI*, was in preparation, and includes: articles in Memoriam of Roger Wescott, Cyrus Gordon, and Joseph Greenberg; articles discussing 'Paleolinguistics: The State of the Art and Science' (in memory of Roger Wescott); a discussion of Austric with L.V. Hayes and others; and book reviews. (This issue of *Mother Tongue* has since been completed and has been distributed to members)

President's Report:

Our recently deceased members

Cyrus Gordon

Joseph Greenberg

Scotty MacNeish

Roger Wescott

were remembered. Obituaries are to appear in MT.

A number of recent developments and prospects were reported.

* Printing of the *Brochure*, was delayed for financial reasons; it will be printed now and distributed to some institutions and libraries. Members are requested to ask for copies to do some advertising of their own.

* As for the *Newsletter*, John Bengtson is to include a report of the Moscow Conference, Announcements of meetings are to include NAACA and regional meetings of the LOS. M. Witzel briefly reported on a special Burushaski session at the Montreal ICANAS conference last August that brought together a dozen of specialists, including H. Berger, E. Tiffou.

* ASLIP Web site

The *Long Ranger* web site is up to date for the past seven issues. Earlier past issues will follow. The online Newsletter can remain open to the public for free. For continuity, it is better to publish it in smaller installments on the web, to be augmented between issues; they can then include for instance, to include members' new news.

* The *Mother Tongue e-mail list* : In LR 33, a summary of past discussions will be published; it has been prepared by Mary Ellen Lepionka. Randy Foot will summarize the syntax discussion later on.

(Additional note: The list is not functioning as of now (as the host company does not sustain it any longer, such as has also happened with Bill Gates' Listbot! It will be re-installed, with all old materials, as a Yahoo list.) A Linguist search engine will be added later on.

* Data Bases

The new ASCII-like encoding system, 'Unicode', allows phonetic transcriptions of most languages and, at the same time, the standard representation of written languages in their original characters. It is now included in the new Macintosh Operation System (OS X), and it has been available for the PC for some time. Hopefully, people will make use of it to replace our unwieldy ASCII-limited (7 bit character) transcriptions on the web and in email.

The Whitehouse and Bomhard fonts are to be added for the creation of a database that everyone can use and can connect to by hyperlink.

P. Whitehouse has offered to make his database collection available (see LR 33). LV Hayes' Austric data can be scanned in as pdf files, which then remain under his control.

The Starling database for Altaic, Dravidian, etc., can already be accessed easily via S. Starostin's website (<http://starling.rinet.ru/>). The same applies to the one for Indo-European run by S. Lubotsky at Leiden (<http://iiasnt.leidenuniv.nl/ied/index2.html>) they can eventually be hot-linked to our emerging database (P. Whitehouse); we can also add a database on (already existing) relevant texts and links to such texts.

Highly "intelligent", multi-purpose search engines should be included, such SIM developed by the Australia RMIT's SIM; unfortunately it is very expensive. John Gardner and M. Witzel have set up a prototype for such work, using mapping procedures, at a private computer company. More news will be reported as we progress.

It was suggested by members that we will create a list of language families on web site and add relevant links, lists of prominent experts, etc.

* Fund raising

On fund raising, the M. Witzel reported on 'footholds' on the East and West Coasts. It is hoped that these may lead to funding for ASLIP and related activities. He outlined a program for attracting funds for the creation of an institute that would establish and manage a universally accessible global database of facts relating to long-range comparisons.

DECISIONS

It was resolved at the 2001 Annual Meeting of ASLIP to publish the brochure developed last year, work on developing a mailing list and recruiting new members, deliver the Long Ranger Newsletter by email and on the website, and attend to the distribution of reprints of past issues of Mother Tongue long requested by certain new members.

NEW BUSINESS

Hal Fleming reported on his visit to Joe Greenberg in California just prior to his death.

A conference, in his memory, and a memorial volume, inspired by his work, are planned at Stanford (M. Ruhlen) for next year.

Hals' African conference, originally planned as a back-to-back conference with the Harvard *Central & South Asian Workshop* in May, had to be postponed; however, there are prospects for next Spring next year.

Or, it may be substituted for by one of the AAPA to be held in Buffalo, NY next April: this is a symposium headed by S.O.Y. Keita, which will cover the same elements that were to be included in the Gloucester conference.

It was suggested by members to have an ASLIP conference attached to other conferences, such as those of the Society for the Origin of Language, or the meetings of societies such as that of those of Linguistics, Archaeology, Anthropology, etc.

Members are encouraged to inform the Secretary about their participation in such conferences so that we can organize a get together or a para-session devoted to ASLIP matters.

Hal also reported a new discovery on Shabo, a hunter-gatherer society living within a society of hunter-gatherers with a little agriculture (SW Ethiopia). Their language does not seem to be related to any other one; sometimes it was thought to be a very old branch of Nilo-Saharan (or even of S. Cushitic), but with old borrowings from Omotic (or cognates?), Cushitic, Surma, and others. The East African 'Bushman' (Hadza and Sandawe) and the unclassified Kado also are geographically close. In other words, Shabo is situated at the crossroads of several major language families, and close to the suspected original home of Homo Sapiens before the migration out of Africa. Unfortunately, some genetic researchers recently walked right by the Shabo, as they were not allowed into their precise area.

Murray Denofsky reported briefly on his paper, 'Iconicity and Language: Phonetic Symbolism of the Occlusivity Symbol,' publication forthcoming. This paper is in search of universals supporting the concept of pan-language (e.g., open sounds = open staves; occlusivity = nasals and stops), particular sound symbols for contact, density, and other qualities.

Michael Witzel announced a 'Fourth Pillar' of long range linguistic comparison, mythology (linguistics, archaeology and anthropology, and population genetics being the other three pillars). According to him (see now MT VI), a comparison of whole mythologies reveals global patterns that closely relate to global distributions of languages. One pattern, termed *Laurasian*, spans, e.g., Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, Japan, Polynesia, the Americas, and includes a chronological structure of myth from creation to destruction with tales of origins, the flood, killing the dragon, and 4 or 5 generations of deities and heroes, and a final destruction of the world.

A second pattern, including, e.g., Australian, sub-Saharan African, Papuan, and Andaman mythologies, does not include most of these elements but has its own commonalities. The two chief explanations for resemblances among myths--diffusion and psychic archetypes--in most cases cannot satisfactorily explain the distribution of these two patterns, but linguistic affinities very likely can. He proposes that, using the major (often 'official') myth systems as well as some folktales, the local patterns can be predicted on the basis of the model.

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ASLIP ANNUAL MEETING

April 15, 2000

Boston University

African Studies Center

CURRENT BUSINESS

The outgoing President, John D. Bengtson, was warmly thanked for his successful four years of dedicated service. He offered to stay on as Vice-President and editor of MT, and members agreed.

Elected Officers of ASLIP: Michael Witzel, President; John D. Bengtson and Roger W. Wescott, Vice-Presidents; Peter Norquest, Secretary-Treasurer.

Elected Members of the Board:

O. Bar-Yosef, A. Beaman, A. Bomhard, R. Christensen, G. Decsy, H. Fleming, F. Gamst, M. E. Lepionka, Ph. Lieberman, J. Vansina.

Nominations for Council of Fellows:

As Igor Diakonoff and Karl-Heinrich Menges have passed away since our last meeting, new elections to the Council are necessary. Michael Witzel will solicit nominations from the membership, and elections to vacancies in the Council of Fellows will be done by mail/email at a later time.

DECISIONS

Resolved: ASLIP will begin a monograph series with papers by members, per Fred Gamst's suggestion. These brief voluntary papers will be copied and stapled as special supplements to the journal. They will be listed in the journal, in the newsletters, and on the web site with an abstract and an order form, where they can be ordered and mailed as single copies for a fee (to be determined). The Secretary-Treasurer will manage the copying, mailing, and record keeping.

Resolved: ASLIP will seek funding to establish an Institute to collect databases relating to historical linguistics and language origins. These databases will be made comparable or usable comparably, prepared electronically, and made available to scholars worldwide. Paul Whitehouse will play a central role in this project.

Initial requests for funding for conferences will be a step in the quest to establish an Institute.

For example, small workshops and seminars (perhaps organized by macrofamilies) could be held to identify, discuss, and solicit the data that will be housed at the institute. Funds could cover travel for invited principals.

The point was raised that ASLIP's Institute could be specifically and explicitly linked to equivalent database projects in archaeology and genetics, including the human genome project.

DATA BASES

To begin with, Paul Whitehouse is willing to type up and collect word lists for the projected database. We should also link up with the extensive etymological databases of Sergei Starostin at: <http://starling.rinet.ru/> We will offer to publish word lists that authors have been holding privately (for example, L.V. Hayes' Austric lists, see his announcement in <http://204.156.22.2/cgi-bin/demogate/mothertongue/lwgate/MOTHERTONGUE/>).

THE NEWSLETTER

Name of Newsletter: We discussed and decided to keep Roger Wescott's suggestion of **The Long Ranger** for the newsletter to distinguish it from **Mother Tongue** for the journal.

Distribution of Newsletter: The Long Ranger will be made available for free on the ASLIP web site, with the options of receiving it in a pdf or a text format. It will also be available in hard copy for a fee (\$10 was suggested).

Content of Newsletter: The Long Ranger will be geared more toward members, including news and announcements of members' activities; events of interest to members; and anecdotes, jokes, or cartoons submitted by members. The News portion of The Long Ranger will contain brief summaries of news from Science, Nature, Scientific American, and other mass media. Members are encouraged to provide copy for this feature, which should be sent to Michael Witzel.

THE JOURNAL

Status of Journal: Mother Tongue V is coming out in July under the aegis of Vice-President John D. Bengtson who has agreed to continue as editor.

Distribution of Journal:

We will look into the possibilities of letting a publisher take over the publication and distribution of Mother Tongue. Institutional membership will be targeted (Individual membership remains \$25). The journal now has 225-250 subscribers, including 12 institutions.

CONFERENCE

Hal Fleming will organize an Africanist conference at Gloucester in May 2001.[NB: This did

not go through this year] M. Witzel proposed to link, in item if not in location, this with the Central/South Asian Round Table that has been held twice now at Harvard. From these workshops, a more general ASLIP conference may emerge in the future.

PROMOTION

Advertising and Promotion: ASLIP will have a brochure as developed earlier in ASLIP's history in conjunction by M. E. Lepionka with Allen Bombard.

INTERNET PRESENCE

ASLIP now has two internet presences. Its web site is at: <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/aslip.html>

with links to the old issues of the Mother Tongue Newsletter (now Long Ranger), and our journal, Mother Tongue. The Newsletters will be put on the web retroactively, issue by issue, as the opportunity arises (so far, issues 25-27, 30, 32 are available). The journal will only be represented by Summaries and Indexes (by Mary Ellen Lepionka).

The other web initiative is the Mother Tongue mail list and discussion forum, at:

<http://204.156.22.2/cgi-bin/demogate/mothertongue/lwgate/MOTHERTONGUE/>

where past discussions can be viewed. Request to join the list should be sent to the web master John Robert Gardner, who hosts the list for us at his Indological web site (vedavid.org), at: atman@vedavid.org or directly via:

<http://204.156.22.2/cgi-bin/demogate/mothertongue/lwgate/MOTHERTONGUE/subscribe.html>

[**Note: This will be shifted to Yahoo groups in September]

Our thanks go to Randy Foote who has taken the initiative, in February, to invite people interested in the origin of language to join. Mary Ellen Lepionka has proposed to summarize some of the discussion for the next issue of Long Ranger.

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Notes on the Moscow Conference on Long-Range Comparison

Peter A. Michalove

It was a great pleasure to attend the recent conference on "Problems in the Study of Long-Range Linguistic Comparison at the Turn of the Third Millennium" at the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow, May 29 through June 2, 2000. Led by Sergei Starostin, the conference was extremely well organized, with much of the logistical preparation made very effectively by George (Gosha) Starostin.

For me, one of the most fascinating aspects of the trip was the opportunity to see Moscow again for the first time since 1988. I had been there several times in Soviet days, and I was constantly struck by how much had changed since then, and by what had not changed. But that's a separate story.

The conference itself covered a number of topics. The first day involved papers on Indo-European. I felt that it was significant to devote an entire day to this best-established of language families at a conference on long-range comparison; the presentations made clear that work on established families is in principle no different from work on long-range work. Both endeavors share the same principles, goals, and problems.

The second day was devoted to Nostratic, and included papers on lexical, morphological, and phonological comparisons, as well as more theoretical considerations. After that the agenda became somewhat muddled as the schedule became more flexible to accommodate speakers who came late or left early, or were unable to come at all.

There was a very interesting session on Altaic, and Sergei gave an introduction to the Altaic etymological dictionary he is currently preparing in collaboration with Anya Dybo and Oleg Mudrak. The current state of the dictionary is available on the web at "<http://starling.rinet.ru/intrtext.htm>", along with other etymological databases in progress.

Another new etymological dictionary presented at the conference was the Semitic dictionary being prepared by Yuri Militarev and L. E. Kogan. Afroasiatic linguistics was also discussed in several papers at a session on comparative linguistics and ancient near eastern history, held in memory of the late Igor Diakonov. There was also a session on Sino-Tibetan and Caucasian linguistics, which I missed because it was held at the same time as the ancient near east session. In all, the conference covered a wide range of topics, and the organizers will publish a book of the conference proceedings around the end of this year.

But of course the high point of the conference was the opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones. I was especially glad to meet Fabrice Cavoto in person; we have been corresponding by email for some time now. In addition it was good to see Sergei Starostin and Aharon Dolgopolsky, whom I had met before.

Martine Robbeets, who was studying in Moscow for a month, had the task of orienting the foreign visitors, a job she fulfilled admirably. I especially enjoyed talking with her *___r, and with Egidio Marsico.

Among those whom I had known only from their published works, it was a pleasure to finally meet Václav Blazhek, Vladimir Dybo (who was just elected to the Russian Academy of Sciences) and his daughter Anya, Thomas Gamkrelidze (whose Georgian charm and wit were very much in evidence), Eugene Helimsky, Alexander Lubotsky, Edkham Tennishev, and several others.

One of the students at the conference gave some of the foreign visitors a tour of Moscow for an afternoon. Good linguists that we were, we spent as much time excavating the local bookshops as we did seeing the sights of Moscow. We all came home loaded down with more books, and amazed at the contradictions that fill the streets of modern Moscow.

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The International Conference "Problems in the Study of Long-Range Linguistic Comparison at the Turn of the Third Millennium", Moscow, 29 May - 2 June 2000

J.Bengtson

An interview with Fabrice Cavoto

LR (Long Ranger): How were the conference arrangements and organization?

Cavoto: The organization in itself was actually very good, from the preparations before the conference (help with visas, etc.) until the last minute of it. The program of the conference was changed a few times, typically because of last minute defections. A few times, there were two simultaneous sessions: Altaic or Afro-Asiatic related. Much attention has also been brought to the presentation of Starostin's and his team's online database, which is really impressive. A few activities had been prepared for us international guests, mostly a tour of the city. A reception was held the last evening.

LR: What impression do you have of the organizers (ASLIP Council Fellow Sergei A. Starostin, and his son George S. Starostin)?

Cavoto: Generally, Sergei Starostin deserves special attention, because of his efforts to build a bridge between Moscow and the rest of the world. I remember a few discussions with some of the others about that. Also, speaking of databases, he insisted several times on the fact that such tools should be available to everyone, and for free, through the internet. Unfortunately, a database with Nostratic material won't be available until [Aharon] Dolgopolsky has published his Nostratic dictionary. He [Dolgopolsky] repeated that the book is in its last phase of preparation, but I understand from others that this is what he has been repeating the last 10 years.

LR: How was communication between Russian and non-Russian scholars?

Cavoto: One point of disappointment for us non-Russian guests was that presentations which had been announced in English actually were held in Russian, which is why we didn't attend to all of them. We understood later on that some of the young participants, especially students, actually couldn't speak enough English to have made their presentation in English.

I myself had a few conversations with Oleg Mudrak, whose views about the relationship of Yukaghir are most interesting, I think. Generally, there is some space between Western and Russian scholars, especially when it comes to knowledge of each other's work. Therefore, Sergei Starostin's efforts to establish better communication between East and West seem very important to me, in general.

LR: What discussion was there, if any, of Joseph H. Greenberg's recent book, *Indo-European and its Closest Relatives: The Eurasiatic Language Family?*.

Cavoto: I asked around about Greenberg's book while I was there. I don't think that it was discussed, at least when I was there. I had no clear answer from Russians however, which can be interpreted in different ways. Both my presentation and Peter Michalove's presentations referred to it a few times, especially to Greenberg's observation that the first person singular perfect marker **-H̄e* in Indo-European could correspond to what is seen as **-k* in other languages. This is an important point and opens lots of possibilities for further comparisons of IE with other Nostratic and Eurasiatic languages. I hear that a discussion on IE **H*'s [laryngeals] and their correspondences in other languages has also been opened by B. Vine recently. Except for Sergei Starostin's presentation about a new row of correspondences for stops [in Nostratic] and George Starostin's paper on Dravidian initial **y-*, most presentations on long range comparisons were based on lexical parallels, which might be the reason Greenberg's book wasn't being referred to.

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ASLIP Conference on Central and South Asia

Michael Witzel

From May 12-14 this year we held the Third Harvard Round table on Ethnogenesis of South and Central Asia. It was co-sponsored by ASLIP and the Infinity Foundation (<http://www.infinityfoundation.com>). This year's Round Table was attended by 25 invited speakers/discussants from India, Europe and America, and a considerable number of additional participants, from Dagestan to Rochester, NY., including Hal Fleming and Daniel McCall, Mary Ellen Lepionka, and the ASLIP members listed below by order of appearance (Zide, Anderson, Patnaik, Witzel, Bengtson, Meadow, Farmer, Miller).

Aims.

In his summary of genetic studies, L. Cavalli-Sforza writes: "... the need for a multidisciplinary approach, ... from historical demography to archaeology, palaeoanthropology and linguistics, and perhaps ethnography, together with population and molecular genetics" (1994: 372). This is precisely what we have been doing over the past three years at our Round Table.

These days, philologists, linguists and geneticists find themselves between a rock and a hard place: on the one hand, the 'indigenist' one in archaeology where "... the English speaking archaeological world, ... adopted an essentially unanimous rejection of "migrationism" (Cavalli-Sforza 1995: 138-139), and on the other hand, the present Indian revisionist movement which rejects any immigration (Aryan, Dravidian, etc.) into the subcontinent. Interestingly, revisionists hardly speak about the "African Eve".

We have discussed these issues at great length, and from various angles, without a preset agenda or a preconceived outcome: what does language tell us, how does it fit the present evidence of archaeology, of multivariate anthropological analysis, and of principal component and non-recombinant Y-chromosome genetic studies?

As in past years, the meeting was held in the form of a frank open-ended and detailed discussion of specialists and some interested lay persons. We had a detailed update on the present state of affairs.

Program.

This year's meeting (for updates and reports see our permanent site: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~sanskrit/RoundTableSchedule.html>) concentrated, to a large degree, on linguistics, especially that of the neglected **Munda group of languages**. We had a virtual mini-conference of leading specialists in the field who had the chance to meet for the first time after many years:

N. ZIDE: Introduction

D. STAMPE: The current state of Munda and Austroasiatic studies, with special reference to lexicography

G. ANDERSON: Recent Advances in the Reconstruction of Proto-Munda and Proto-Austroasiatic Morphology

P. DONEGAN: Typology and drift in Munda.

A. GRIFFITHS: A report on fieldwork in Koraput District, Orissa: the Senior Gadba tribe and the Gutob language

M. PATNAIK: A synchronic analysis of linguistic divergence in South Asia: A case study of the verb 'say'

[An outcome of our informal discussions is that there is some hope now for a comparative. **etymological dictionary of Munda**]

However, we did not neglect other language families: **Dravidian** was represented twice:

S. STEEVER: Historical Dravidian linguistics: the need of internal reconstruction to balance the results of the comparative method.

S. PALANIAPPAN: Culture change in Tamil Nadu in the early centuries CE.; and **Tibeto-Burmese** figured at least with Manipuri:

S. RAY : The many forms of Meitei Mayek: orthographic debates in Meitei language.

Another highlight of this year's meeting was a state of the art overview of genetics, especially that of non-recombinant **Y-chromosome genetic studies**, which was presented by a former Cavalli-Sforza student (now teaching at Sassari, Sardinia):

P. FRANCALACCI : The peopling of Eurasia: the contribution of Y-chromosome analysis.

As usual, we continued our discussions about the **links between archaeology, texts, and language**. This year, we explored, from various angles, the northwest of and areas further northwest of the Indian subcontinent, the **Bactria-Margiana Archaeological complex**, and their mutual relationships from the Indus civilization onwards. (Note that F. Hiebert's Anau seal, if indeed local, would be the first written evidence of the BMAC language, at c. 2300 BCE).

H.-P. FRANCFORT: Perspectives on the origins and religious aspects of the Oxus Civilization (BMAC)

G. THOMPSON: The relationship between Vedic and Avestan: the provenance of Soma, *amshu*, and its relation to the BMAC?

B. LAWERGREN: On Bactria-Margiana and later Iranian trumpets

F. HIEBERT: The recently discovered Bronze Age inscription (2300 BC) from Anau, Central Asia.

M. WITZEL: Central Asian substrate languages

J. BENGTSON: Genetic and cultural links between Burushaski and the Caucasian languages and Basque

Prominently present, as every year, were the Indus civilization and related theoretical issues,
R. MEADOW: Current excavations at Harappa
R. MUGHAL: Cemeteries of Late Harappan period at Harappa

B. WELLS: The geographical distribution of Indus signs
S. FARMER: Three problems in Indology approached from comparative perspectives:
textual layering, the dates of the Vedas, and the Harappan 'writing' question.

K. YOUNG: Searching for Clues to Indian Prehistory Around and Across the Arabian
Sea: Are Nubia, Punt (on the eastern coast of the Red Sea), Indus Valley, and Tamilnadu
Linked and If So, How?

D.P. AGRAWAL: The Central Himalayas in the archaeology of the Northern Plains,
and the myth of Vedic Aryans

Some more theoretical issues were dealt with by :

G. POSSEHL: Franz Boas on Race, Language and Culture

H. MILLER: A look at method and theory: the example of Biblical Archaeology

And, last but not least, we had a refreshing view of one of our classical texts of state craft:

B. BROOKS: The Arthashastra Core as a Maurya Document

We plan to continue the Round Table during this academic year. Some finical support has
already been secured. Results, handouts and full papers relating to the Round Table will be
published, this Fall, at its website: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~sanskrit/RoundTable2001Papers.html>
and also via the ASLIP website.

KUSUNDA LIVES!

The isolate language Kusunda in Central Nepal has been declared dead for quite some time, for example by SIL. In fact, it lives, albeit feebly. The Nepali linguist B.K. Rana has been on their trail and has discovered a few surviving mother tongue speakers in various districts of Central and Western Nepal. Below some extracts from his report in the local journal Jana Jati. The writer is a socio-linguist by discipline who is concentrating his studies on Tibeto-Burman languages. He believes that the Nepali language has evolved sharing with Magar language of the Karnali area as well as other Tibeto-Burman languages in the Southern Himalayan Belt.

A Short Note on Kusunda Language

B. K. Rana

In Nepal, about 91 languages [are spoken] belonging to different families for example: 73 of Tibeto-Burman, 16 of Indo-Aryan, 1 Dravidian and 1 of Austro-Asiatic are spoken today

...

Ethnologue survey of languages in Nepal has painstakingly dug out more numbers of languages than they actually are there, offering independent nomenclature to them to increase unreal number of languages in the country. For example: it mentions - Byangsi, Chaudangsi and Darmiya as three different languages spoken in Darchula District, of far west Nepal but they are dialects of Shauka language which I had an opportunity to study last year. Likewise, the survey report presents Tarali Kham known as Kaike, Kham Gamale, Kham Maikoti, Kham Nishi, Kham Sheshi and Kham Takale as different languages of the area which should also have been introduced as Magar language of Karnali area. The Magar language of that area is publicized as Kham Magar Kura but in fact, Kham does not mean any language category. It refers to an administrative unit set by then Yumila (Jumla) kingdom to rule over the indigenous Magar peoples of that area. Now, the practice of offering a nomenclature as Kham and Kaike for Magar languages of Karnali area requires linguistic redefinition and new recognition as well.

Kusunda language is one of the endangered languages in Nepal. At the moment, there are only three speakers of this language [now at least 7, --MW]. It is widely believed that this language is already dead. But, it is not true. ... Prof. Sueyoshi Toba, one of the Kusunda authorities, who first analyzed the language scientifically, in association with Johan Reinhard, now believes that Kusunda is not a dead language and further states that "we do not call a language "dead" or "extinct" as long as there is anyone alive who knows even a little of the language in question" (Toba 2000).

Kusunda language has been already declared extinct following the death of Raja Mama's mother, the presumed last speaker; who died of diarrhea few years ago in Damauli of Tanahu District, West Nepal. Although, there are very limited noun phrases and a remarkable

loss of major word classes including verbs and their patterns, yet Kusunda is not a dead language because there are at least three Kusunda speakers "physically alive" in different parts of the country, which I have mentioned above.

Kusunda is one of the unique languages found in the southern Himalayan region, primarily in Nepal, which was recorded and published, for the first time, by Brian Houghton Hodgson. The Hodgson word list of 1857 (Hodgson 1992 reprint) contains only 223 words and fifteen sentences collected through supposedly available trained-hands of those days. It is understandable that Nepali was lingua-franca at that point of time also. The Rana Regime (1846-1950) had barred Hodgson from visiting Kusunda areas in rural Nepal. It is believed that he could not have any opportunity to listen to Kusunda utterances by himself. Researchers in Linguistic Survey of India Team carried over his works. But, "one is to argue that Hodgson (from whose article the Linguistic Survey of India drew its Kusunda vocabulary) was a well-meaning Victorian amateur whose data are worthless, whereas those of Reinhard and Toba are the reliable findings of modern professionals. The other view is that Hodgson worked with a living language whose internal variation we can only guess and recorded it faithfully by the standards of his age, whereas Reinhard and Toba worked with the aging and isolated survivors of a vanished language community whose imperfectly remembered idiolects may or may not have been representative of a language whose internal variation we can now only guess at. There is some truth in both views, but my own leaning is towards the latter. Certainly the limitations of our Kusunda data are such that we are in no position to pick and choose." (Whitehouse 1997).

Following Hodgson's return to his country, Kusundas and their language remained ignored for a long time until Narahari Nath Yogi tried to write something on them in 1955. And in 1970, an Anthropologist, Johan Reinhard from Austria arrived here and took interest in them. He recorded some sample sentences and hundreds of Kusunda words, brought them to Katmandu for analysis, until when the language was hardly spoken by few Kusundas of central hills of Nepal. Prof. Sueyoshi Toba, a linguist from Japan worked together with Reinhard, analyzed the record in a standard linguistic framework. Both of these scholars' contribution to Kusunda community is immensely great for their reports are the only authentic source of information on Kusundas, their language, their plight and other sorts of things related to them. (Reinhard & Toba 1970).

Below is a functional explanation of Kusunda cognates and their comparison with other Tibeto-Burman languages found in Nepal:

a) Kusundas have "tang" [ta+ng] for water, Shaukas and Chepang have [ti] and Magars say it [di]. In "tang" we have voiceless alveolar "t" of Shauka and Chepang "ti". And, Shauka and Chepang "ti" is voiceless representation of Magar "di". [Note: ng = œ]

b) For fish Kusundas say "ngsa" = [ng+sa], Magars of Karnali area say "nga+sya" , Chepangs say it "nya or nga", Baram say it "nanga" and Magars of Gandaki area say it [di+sya]. The Kusunda segment "ng" of "ta+ng" i.e. "water" stands here to denote "water

related object" and "sa" for meat > "meat from water = fish". These segments: [ng+sa], [nga+sya] and [di+sya] have same meaning and morphologically, the formation of these words are distinctly similar.

c) Blood is "yu+ei" in Kusunda, whereas, it is "chyu+huei" in "Balkura" (Baram language) and "wei" in Chepang language. These three words are phonetically similar in these three languages.

d) "Aagai" is a dog in Kusunda, whereas in Baram language it is "aakyo" and here voiced velar "g" is present in Kusunda "aagai" and voiceless "k" in Balkura.

e) Generally speaking Kusunda phonology is that it has initial "ng" distribution in at least two words, so far found, for example: fish = [ng+sa] and wife = [ng+yang+di]. The initial "ng" segments in these words suggest their root from Tibeto-Burman language. One of the major characteristics of Tibeto-Burman languages is that they have initial "ng" segment in their cognates.

f) In Kusunda words like "ngsa", "ngyangdi", "dimtang", "lahang", "mangmi", "kapang", "gelang", "pinang", "ghinga", "atang", "chining" "chan" "iping jing" "ing" etc. we can find [ng] in initial, middle and final distribution. These all words have Tibeto-Burman characteristics.

g) Tamangs say "moje" for banana and "kakhare" for a crab. Kusundas say them "muchu" and kakchi" respectively.

h) Bhotes say "manjya" for millet and "du" for a snake and Kusundas have "mangmi" and "tu" for them respectively.

i) As concerns numerals in Kusunda, there is "ghinga" for count number "2" and in Baram it is "ni" and "ngi" in Thaksya [Thakalis (Bhotes?) who lived around Thak Satsaya Khola] (Gierson 1909). The nasal [ng] in these words is very similar to Magar "nish" for numeral 2. Similarly, Chepang say "poin-zho" for "4" - Kusunda say it "pinang" and in Baram it is "bi" - here too, we can find bilabials [p] and [b] present in these three words.

j) Chepangs say "micha" for a goat and in Kusunda and Baram languages it is "mijha" and "michha" respectively. And, a road is "un" in Kusunda and "ungma" in Baram language.

i) Let us again see these Kusunda pronominalized sentences and phrases below:

I eat rice = "ci kaadi taamaanan" [it should have been "chaamaanan". Raja Mama says "gaamaanam"];

You eat rice = " nu kaadi naamaanan"

He eats rice = " git kaadi gaamaanan"

My stomach = "cie cimat";
 Your stomach = "nie nimat";
 His stomach = "gidie gimat" (Bandhu 1999).

ii) The Magars of Karnali area say "ge+pang" for "their own language" and "rangpang" for Khas Kura (= Nepali language). Kusundas also say "gi+pan" for their language. The Magar language of Karnali area is one of the Tibeto-Burman languages which also has pronominalized sentences and phrases as outlined below:

I eat rice = "nga [nga] yai/kang jyonga"
 You eat rice = "nang [nang] yai/kang jyona"
 He eats rice = "wola yai/kang jyowa"
 My stomach = "nga phu"
 Your stomach = "na phu"
 His stomach = "wa phu"

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9

Lurker's Log : The MT email List**Mary Ellen Lepionka**

February 2000

Our site is live! Randy Foote (GRFoote@aol.com) posts our site to Nostratic List and PaleoAnthList.

LV Hayes on Austric and Austro-Asiatic (lvhayes@worldnet.att.net) 2/2. Asks about date for beginning of spoken human language 2/13.

Patrick (Pat) C. Ryan (proto-language@email.mns.com) joins the list 2/11.

NY Times article on Ruhlen's criticism of Greenberg's classification for multilateral comparison (MLC) posted by Randy 2/2. Also "Scientist At Work: Joseph H. Greenberg, What We All Spoke When the World Was Young" by Nicholas Wade.

John Bengtson (John D Bengtson <jdbengt@operamail.com>) clarifies that both mass comparison and historical reconstruction are needed and are not incompatible, an idea supported by Lloyd Anderson, Ecological Linguistics (ECOLING@aol.com), who also clarifies methodological distinctions between multilateral comparison and historical linguistics. Anderson asks if Greenberg's African classification continues to hold up.

John Robert Gardner, Emory University, identifies topic: the role of first person pronouns in "expressive architecture of self" John G. (<http://vedavid.org/diss/>) announces his role as keeper of passive gateway to ASLIP and giver of rules (No attachments, provide URL to place where attachment could be read, posts not to exceed 5 full screens. Nettiquette needed; no flaming, etc.)

Iain Davidson, Professor of Archaeology and Paleoanthropology at the University of New England in Australia identifies topic 2/14: Beginning of speech (Iain.Davidson@une.edu.au). Suggests 80-60 thousand years outside of Africa as date for spoken language.

John Gardener (jrgard@emory.edu) and Randy Foote join the discussion about speech. Patrick Ryan joins speech 2/16. Science article on Chomsky posted. Michael Witzel (witzel@fas.harvard.edu) responds.

Randy posts a NYTimes article on sign language 2/15.

Albert Naccache, Beirut, Lebanon, joins discussion of sign language and language learning (anaccash@nidal.com) 2/16.

Rogert Lass (lass@iafrica.com) joins discussion on beginning of speech .

Norman Holland (nholland@ufl.edu) alerts ASLIP members to "Language and the Brain," an online lecture series on the brain's processing of language at <http://www.medinfo.ufl.edu/other/profmed/lectures.html>.

Isaac Elchanan Mozeson (mozeson@yahoo.com) announces a web site on Hebrew as the original language (www.homestead.com/shimon12/edenic.html). ASLIP discussants politely explain that the date is far older.

See "Origins of First Americans" (<http://www.human-nature.com/>).

From evolutionary-psychology@egroups.com, a suggestion to see 3 300-dpi JPG images at <http://www.umich.edu/~newsinfo/Releases/2000/Feb00/bracejpg.html>.

Pedra Furada dates posted 2/19. Articles on archaeology of first Americans posted by Randy.

See Mammoth Trumpet (<http://www.peak.org/csfa/mthome.html>).

Article on age of fossils at Brazilian findings at Sao Raimundo. See <http://insidedenver.com/shns/story.cfm?pk=PREHISTORY-or-14-00&cat=AS>.

Michael Witzel announces topic: Wide-range comparative mythology 2/19 [see now MT VI].

Jess Tauber joins discussion; topic: Sound/Symbol (typological waves and geographic distribution (Zyology@aol.com)). See Sound/Symbol@list.pitt.edu, which describes a model in which waves of typological change sweep across the landscape.

Discussions also on work on Munda, clarification of ideophones, and saltationist perspective.

Ken Jacobs (jacobsk@anthro.umontreal.ca) on Loring Brace's reference to Neanderthal characteristics in the Americas and latitudinal affinities of Eurasian languages, linking Ainu and Saami.

Jacques Cinq-Mars (jacques.cinqmars@sympatico.ca) joins discussion on first Americans 2/19.

Albert Naccache proposes metaphors for Jess Tauber's typological waves. LV Hayes clarifies meaning of cladistics 2/20. (Would love to see map animations of Tauber's typological waves and Jacobs' Eurasian latitudinal affinities.)

Clarification on how to reach ASLIP web site: To subscribe: <http://204.156.22.2./cgi-bin/demogate/mothertongue/lwgate/MOTHERTONGUE>. For Archives: same as above /archives/.

Randy quotes RMW Dixon from *Rise and Fall of Languages* (Cambridge 1997) based on study of aboriginal Australian languages, in which language change is postulated as linguistic punctuated equilibrium

LV Hayes debates relative merits of areal and genetic descriptors of linguistic change 2/20.

Michael Witzel cites earlier precedents for these models and metaphors from 19th cent.

Randy sends monograph from Alvah Hicks, "Hypothesis Testing vs. Hypothesis Comparability in the Problem of the Origins of Native Americans" by G. Dziel and A. M. Hicks, on alternatives to Clovis-settlement theory, analysis of reasons for rejection of pre-Clovis hypotheses, age of evidence in the Americas, and argument for possible ancient local origin of first Americans with reverse connections with Asia vs. (or in addition to) peopling of New World from Asia.

Randy clarifies the idea of Clovis New World origin and backward migration in addition to pre-Clovis settlement of the hemisphere.

Randy sends Scientific American piece from the Discovery Archaeology web site (DiscArch: <http://www.discoveringarchaeology.com/0799toc/0799.shtml>) on "Solutrean Solution" (Europeans as precursors to Clovis) by Dennis Stanford and Vance Haynes, on climatic constraints on New World settlement.

Canadian geologists Arthur Dyke and Victor Prest announce precise maps of deglaciation through the late Pleistocene, which shows an earlier corridor. See www.geoserv.org.

Randy posts summary of article from Science on Human Genetics: "Genes May Link Ancient

Eurasians, Native Americans," by Virginia Morell (Lineage X)!

Jonathan Adams joins the discussion (jonathan.adams@netzero.net), confirming Haplotype X European. Randy suggests that this could correspond to a North Atlantic migration to the Western Hemisphere or the presence of Europeans in Asia. The true global distribution of X will shed light on who were the first Americans.

Paul Sidwell (Paul.Sidwell@anu.edu.au) joins the discussion on tree vs. wave theory and the general Australian rejection of Dixon, preferring genetic tree.

Jonathan Adams asks about linking Aboriginal language patterns with paleoclimatology data 2/22, citing Vostok oxygen isotope evidence regarding glaciation. See <http://www.esd.ornl.gov/projects/qen/nerc.html>.

Randy visits Adams' paleoclimatology site and recommends it. Cites Neil Boas' use of "the phrase climate pump to describe the forces that first drew modern humans out of Africa and the Levant---the warm/wet and cold/dry conditions that alternated over N. Africa, Arabia and the Middle East" 3/3.

Randy posts abstract of article by Jonathan Adams and Marcel Otte in Current Anthropology on effect of climatic instability on language change and movement ("Did Indo-European Languages Spread Before Farming?") 2/23.

LV Hayes discusses pro- and anti- Greenberg camps (favoring the antis) and cites Historical Linguistics and Lexicostatistics, edited by Vitaly Sheroroshkin and Paul Sidwell, published by the Association for the History of Language with articles critical of Greenberg's methods. The table of contents, posted later, also includes articles by Sergei Starostin "Methodology of Long-Range Comparison" and Alexander Vovin, "Some Notes on Linguistic Comparison."

Paul Sidwell, Dept. of Linguistics, Australian National University, reports on Australian linguistics, favoring historical linguistics and the Dixon approach. Sidwell points out that there is no agreed genetic map of Australian languages.

Randy posts a notice about Lingua Ex Machina: Reconciling Darwin and Chomsky with the Human Brain by Derek Bickerton and William Calvin (Bickerton has previously published Language and Species) 2/24.

Article posted by Randy from Discovering Archaeology proposes a more recent date for the movement of modern humans out of Africa (50,000 vs. McCann/Wilson 150 - 200 kya in Mitochondrial Eve) and also proposes a distinction between anatomically human and behaviorally human. See "Human Genes: New Genetic Studies Trace Movement of Modern Humans Out of Africa," based on work of Marcus Feldman of Stanford (2000 indivs. vs. 1000 for sample size) based on Y-chromosome data 2/24.

Also an article relating to Migrant Genes discussion from Science, "Anthropology: No Last Word on Language Origins" by Constance Holden. Why did people have anatomical capacity for spoken language so long before there is any evidence of it? Tattersall says empathy, intuitive reasoning, and future planning are possible without language, also symbols with socially shared meaning in Upper Paleo. Swiss army knife model of intelligence (Steven Mithen of U. Reading, UK). Thus there was little cross-use until 40,000 BP when brain evolution permits generalization and analogy. An Alternative to the cognitive model is the social context model (size and complexity of population and environment). Getting to Australia would have required language (60T - 40T bp). Was this change sudden or gradual?

Jonathan Adams asks about the current status of mitochondrial Eve (2/25).

Margaret Magnus (mmagnus@conknet.com) joins the discussion, asks about linguistic iconism (correlation between consonant distribution and semantic domains). See data on her web site (www.conknet.com/~mmagnus/)

See Peter Brown's Australian and Asian Paleoanthropology web site at <http://www-personal.une.edu.au/~pbrown3/palaeo.html>. Brown reviews speculations that Australians may have derived from or interbred with Indonesian *H. erectus* (Niah Cave in Borneo). Iain Davidson clarifies Brown's actual position as more moderate than that.

Randy explains how speculation about Australians relates to multiregional evolution hypothesis (vs. out of Africa hypothesis, e.g., Rebecca Cann and Alan Wilson), followed by M. Wolpoff and Loring Brace (and earlier by Carleton Coon and Franz Weidenreich). Randy presently favors monogenesis of modern humans.

Randy clarifies questions about the Eve hypothesis and posts the Science article, "Human Evolution: Y Chromosome Shows that Adam Was an Africa," by Ann Gibbons 2/25. Gibbons identifies 10 haplotypes, including 1 shared by both Chimps and Khoisans!

Albert Naccache, Lebanese University, on Migrant Genes discussion: Are language origins a matter of genetic specification or social interaction alone? Cites Peter MacNeilage, "Whatever happened to articulate speech?" and Merlin Donald, "Preconditions for the evolution of protolanguages," in M.C. Corblalis and S.E.G. Lea, eds., *The Descent of Mind: Psychological Perspectives on Hominid Evolution*, Oxford University Press, 1999. This discussion strand becomes known as "Getting Back on Track," with Derek Bickerton responding.

Patrick Ryan responds to MacNeilage's proposition that speech learnability evolved in the context of the learnability of perceived movements. See <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/2803/PL-MonosyllableMeaning.htm>.

Randy asks if there is a leap from protolanguage to human language? Does the rise of syntax signify the beginning of symbolic behavior? What do we mean by human language? LV Hayes gets into the question of defining speech, language, and symbol.

Iain Davidson argues for a sharp divide at the emergence of the first symbols. Things either are or are not symbols and there are no protosymbols. Discussion strand begins on syntax as an emergent property without protolanguage (2/27).

Ken Jacobs, who taught paleoanthropology, human anatomy, and osteology for 20+ years at U. of Montreal, states preference for adaptationist vs. saltationist view and notes that preplanning does not differentiate humans from apes.

LaVaughn Hayes and Ken Jacobs discuss the hyoid (2/27). Iain Davidson says it's irrelevant to the question of language origins, and Derek Bickerton agrees.

Pat Ryan: Would mutation causing hemispheric separation have led to syntax? Ken Jacobs says no because other primates have hemispheric separation with interaction during activities.

Derek Bickerton speaks: language is ancient. It enables, it doesn't enforce. Can't be inferred from artifacts and fossils (timing keeps going back). E.g., water-craft for getting to Australia dating to 60 kya does not give a date of origin for language. Cites Sue Savage-Rumbaugh and Talmy Givon research grant to teach syntax to apes. Points out that pidgins are languages without syntax. Symbols are a necessary but not a sufficient prerequisite for syntax. Derek

defends the idea of protolanguage against Iain.

See the BBC radio series of human evolution at See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/apeman/>.

Larry Trask (larryt@cogs.susx.ac.uk) forwards from Nostratic mailing list an article on Johanna Nichols' work on linguistic geography, published in New Scientist.

Randy posts a synopsis of The Science Times Book of Language and Linguistics by Nicholas Wade.

Miguel Aquirre (miguel.aquirre@wxs.nl) joins the discussion (2/28) on climatic change and linguistic expansion--the impacts of the Younger Dryas oscillations on both linguistic and demic expansion (Nostratic?). Jonathan Adams agrees. Ken Jacobs offers scientific evidence to be cautious about equating the I-E expansion with the Younger Dryas, but generally supports the Adams and Otte idea of climatic pumps. Cites Tony Marks' works at <http://www.smu.edu/~anthro/amarks.html> among many others. Asks if paleolinguistic hypotheses can ever be tested? Remains skeptical that we will ever know the origins of the spread of I-E, but the end of Younger Dryas opened large areas of empty land to people and would have had a strong impact on linguistic and genetic expansion (3/1).

March 2000

Randy attempts to mediate between LV Hayes and Derek B on definition of language as more than speech and on status of deaf language as language.

Andy Lock cites "Introduction to Part III: Ontogeny: Symbolic development and symbolic evolution." In A. J. Lock and C. R. Peters (Eds) Handbook of Human Symbolic Evolution Oxford (University Press/Blackwell pp. 371-399) RE: ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny is not applicable to language origins. Andy Lock talks about development of syntax in child language acquisition.

Iain Davidson and Derek Bickerton on definitions and theories. This becomes the Gradualism vs. Great Leap Forward debate. Iain favors a bigger role for behavioral selection, agrees that Kanzi and Panbanisha are not doing language. Discusses Bonobos chimps, H. erectus, and Koobi Fora evidence. Cites his 1999 article "The Game of the Name. Continuity and discontinuity in language origins." In B. J. Kind (ed.) The Origins of language: what nonhuman primates can tell you.

Iain D. and Derek B. agree on deaf being language. Various sources cited.

Jonathan Adams asks if children accelerate language drift. Izzy Cohen (Izzy_Cohen@bmc.com) responds: listing ways in which Israeli children influence language (e.g., lisps, shared idiosyncratic speech, in-group/out-group jargon, secret languages) Jonathan Adams points out that children preserve ancient language fragments (eeny, meeny, mieny, mo = pre-IE counting?).

Michael Witzel points out the that latter has cognates in German and Buddhist Sanskrit (suggesting pre-IE origins).

Derek B. (derek.bickerton@worldnet.att.net) sends a poem, "Genius." (I think we should request permission to publish it in ASLIP's Long Ranger.)

Paul Whitehouse joins the discussion (paul_whitehouse@talk21.com) on Australian

linguistics, responding to Paul Sidwell. Paul requests lexical data on which classifications by Stephen Wurm were based. He especially seeks Kunkarakany (last speaker died in 1989), which he believes taxonomiclaly could have constituted as much as one-quarter of the human language family!

Iain and Derek on syntax and whether apes do language, on Savage-Rumbaugh, on Chomsky, on Alexthe parrot, on protolanguage.

Paul Whitehouse and LV Hayes on Tai-Kadai and Miao-Yao, and on deep connections between Austric, Indo-Pacific and Australian (in agreement with Cavalli-Sforza).

Alvah Hicks (pardnerH@netscape.net) on SE Asian languages for Paul W. and others: F. Seto 229-1123, Kanagawa-ken, Kami-Mizo 3093-205, Japan.

Andy Lock (<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~ALock>; A.J.Lock@massey.ac.nz): Symbols can be used in ways that qualify as a pre-syntactic language. Bonobo production is not syntactic but their comprehension is.

Randy posts an excerpt from a study by Richard Rogers and Larry Martin relating current linguistic theory to glaciation. See: <http://www.peak.org/csfa/mt13-3.html#part3> Posits occupation of Americas 18kya. (3/4).

Jacques Cinq-Mars sends a useful bibliography in support of predating the Fall of the Clovis Wall, citing Rogers, Rogers, and Martin et al. (3/4).

Paul Whitehead appeals to list members to call for the gathering together and publishing of the Swadesh 200 word list for every language in the world. Reports on attending SOAS, suggests that link between Proto-Austric and people of Australoid physical type cannot be determined and that emerging genetics data suggest a far more complex reality.

Alvah Hicks sends annotated bib on population formation in deglaciated North America and Siberia and quotations from historical works, beginning with Franz Boas on the 1905 Jessup Expedition, J.W. Fewkes 1912, and others to the present, all of which support the idea of possible back migration after the last glacial period.

Albert Naccache quotes from Bickerton 1990 in answer to Andy Lock. Cites Andy's paper "On the recent origin of symbolically-mediated language and its implications for psychological science," in M.C. Corblalis and S.E.G. Lea, *The Descent of Mind: Psychological Perspectives on Hominid Evolution*, Oxford University Press, 1999. 3/6 See <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~ALock/virtual/welcome.htm>. See also Lock and Peters *Handbook of Symbolic Evolution*, which supports recent origins.

Paul Whitehouse again implores people not to withhold data (3/7).

Randy posts some selections from V. Sarich, *Race and Language in Prehistory* See http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/academic/cult_sci/anthro/exploratorium/hominid_journey/sarich.html. This site explain's Sarich's view that people (genes plus languages) were admixed ca. 15,000 years ago and macro families are recent and that relationships prior to 7,000 bp are unknowable. See also Sarich's *Molecular Clocks Now and Then*.

Jonathan Adams counters that environments favored discontinuity in population distributions, not panmixis. Patrick Ryan thanks Randy for the reference. Derek Bickerton asks how early Australians got panmixed, based on Sarich's very recent date. Iain Davidson agrees with the criticism, noting the example of Colin Renfrew's assertion that language emerged with agriculture at the last Evolution of Language conference (3/9).

Andy Lock posts his book review of *Language in Cognitive Development: Emergence of the Mediated Mind* by Katherin Nelson (Cambridge University Press 1996, 1998) from the field of developmental psychology. Cites Merlin Donalds' 1991 scenario for the evolutionary origins of the human mind through stages of representation (episodic narrative, mimetic narrative, theories) in a process similar to ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny. Based on inference and extrapolation from studies of language learning in human infants.

Randy asks Bickerton, Davidson, and Naccache to report on the 2000 Evolution of Language conference in Paris (see <http://www.infres.enst.fr/conf/evolang/>). Albert Naccache sends a list of invited speakers and the titles of their papers.

Marc Verhaegen (Marc.Verhaegen@village.uunet.be) sends his paper for the Evolution of Language conference with Stephen Munro, "The Origin of Phonetic Abilities: A Study of the Comparative Data" (an appreciation of the "aquatic ape" and "singing origin" theories)

Iain Davidson sends an abstract of his paper for the conference, "Tools, Language and the Origins of Culture," addressing the question: What do tools tell us about language-based symbolic representations in the mind? Cites Mellars concept of "imposed form" (geometric microliths) versus "modification of a form" (Mousterian and Acheulean, which did not require language). Posits a 90,000 bp African origin in Olduwan, followed by discontinuity vs. progressive sequence. Davidson points out that the naming of tool industries and attributing of tool industries globally and to different species has hidden the issues of variation and mechanical constraint, conceptualization, cultural context, and intent.

Ken Jacobs assesses Sarich's effort at a grand unifying theory and cites opposing evidence of recent (15-20kya) African (Eden) origin, citing Frayer, Brace, Caspari, Wolpoff, and others (3/11).

There is now a rich discussion strand called "Symbol, Syntax and Discontinuity." Randy summarizes this strand and the positions of Iain, Derek, Andy, and others (Lieberman, Deacon, Zegura, Fitch, Donald, Pinker) in a posting on 3/13 and in a separate article for the Long Ranger. His summary represents more than 90 pages of spirited email for the month of March.

Jacques Cinq-Mars shares a bibliography on recent surveys and summaries from archaeology on the middle and lower European paleolithic (3/26).

April 2000

Roger Lass (lass@iafrica.com), Randy, and Andy Locke discuss the dualism vs. true relationship between biology and culture as this question relates to the roles of symbolism and syntax in human verbal and nonverbal communication (3/30; 3/31; 4/1). Andy says, "...the brain/culture nexus is a closed loop...." and Roger agrees that both "coevolved as wetware response to percepts"!

In a series of postings, Jess Tauber claims phonosemantic connections in roots between Austronesian and Tai-Kadai and also to Salish! She says: "Lots of language families share the same phoneme/semantic mapping..., but not the distribution of particular roots, which seems to be more a fossil of relatively arbitrary lexicalization from the ideophone pool." Tauber also asks about rules of evidence for deep genetic relationship. Cites Mary LeCron Foster's model

of form/meaning pairings, based on internal reconstruction inherited from ur-language. Suggests that expressive/ideophonic bases are a continuing source of new lexicalized roots that then are subject to normal historical changes.

Paul Whitehouse responds to Jess with claim of low probability that lexicons were ever continually reinvented and defends Greenberg against Nichols etc. At the same time he says that historical linguistics (as done by Greenberg, Ruhlen, and Bengtson) "relies for its validity on the arbitrariness of sound and meaning," which sound symbolism threatens. Randy defends the applicability of sound-symbol relationship/iconicity studies to long ranger interests.

Jess rejoins with data on roots and ideophones in Kobon and Kalam (Papua, New Guinea), Basque, Niger-Congo, Japanese, Yokuts, Northwest Caucasian, etc., in a closely reasoned argument that addresses every one of Paul's points but is over my head! Jess says: "It is time, perhaps, instead, to look at large scale lexical corpus data--being as exhaustive as we can. The statistical clumpings and clusterings of forms/meanings within a language or family may tell us even more about the genetic and areal connections than any 200-word list ever could." Paul says that he is interested only in taxonomy and that he thinks whole lexicon comparison will never happen.

Michael Aguirre makes the following points about the work of the long ranger: It's more difficult because it looks for much older relationships, depends on comparison among many languages in which individuals may not be equally expert, and involves non-linguistic evidence such as human genetics and paleoclimatology. A long ranger is a generalist (and, he implies, a dreamer).

Randy posts a review of *Lingua ex Machina* by Paul Bloom, which is online at <http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/04/14/reviews/000416.16bloomt.html>. Bloom says that Calvin and Bickerton place the evolution of syntax in the context of modern neuroscience (4/15). Bloom says the book is "witty, opinionated and deeply clever." Jess Tauber says that the authors had neglected phonosemantics in their initial draft and hopes they corrected it.

May 2000

Randy posts a commentary on *Paleoanthropology: A Glimpse of Humans' First Journey Out of Africa* by Michael Balter and Ann Gibbons from *Science* on the 1.7 mya *H. erectus/ergaster* finds at Dmanisi. The authors posit increased size of brain and body as cause of food getting patterns (not new tools) that lead them out of Africa. Jerry Ottevanger (OTTEVANGER@ukgateway.net) agrees and notes that pebble tool cultures long predated migrations. Cites Ofer Bar-Yosef that there was more than one wave out of Africa.

Roger Lass forwards a post on anthropometric maps in relation to the issue of chance correspondences, in which it is proposed that genetic links and/or areal contacts be found to account for the aleph-GHT and sibilant + het (SW) parallels. Presents a body-part map of "Hermes" and "Aphrodite" (by Izzy Cohen: izzy_cohen@bmc.com) as evidence for late Semitic-Germanic areal contact via Phoenician! Cites T. Venemann and Larry Trask.

Randy posts a *NYTimes* article summarizing current genetic research into modern human groups and migrations, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science>

/050200sci-genetics-evolution.1.GIF.html. The summary is by Nicholas Wade and clarifies the 10 nuclear-DNA haplotypes and 18 mitochondrial-DNA lineages. Cheddar man, Sally Hemings, and first Americans are among the examples. E.g., based on mitochondrial-DNA (Wallace), American Lineage B is not Siberian (but appears elsewhere in Eurasia) and suggests a separate origin from Lineages A, C, and D, which are Siberian. Africa has only 1 lineage with 3 branches as the source of all African, Asian, and European lineages. Cites Y-chromosome studies and Cavalli-Sforza's "sons of Adam". Claims that Bushmen and central Africa pygmies are genetically nearest the *H. sapiens* root. Gives an African dispersal date of 50 kya. Describes Lineage X in America (as European and pre-Columbian).

See also 5/9 NYTimes article by Nicholas Wade, "Y Chromosome Bears Witness to Story of the Jewish Diaspora" citing studies by Michael F. Hammer, and the following ABC news site on the 7 European daughters of the African Eve. (<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/science/DailyNews/daughters000420.html>). See also oxfordancestors.com for an offer to trace your ancestry to one of the 7 European Eves! (Just send cheek cells and \$180)!!!

Article from Science, "Et tu Homo Sapiens?" a review by Marc D. Hauser on Michael Tomasello, *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (Harvard University Press, 1999). Analyzes the claim (based on Premack and Woodruff on mental state attribution, plus Donald, Dennett, Blackmore [meme machine], Dawkins [selfish gene], and Boyd and Richerson on evolution) that humans are unique by virtue of ability to take the view of the other (be in another's cognitive shoes) and to use this capacity to imitate (vs. having a brain that is modular or domain-specific). Hauser essentially disagrees (see *Wild Minds: What Animals Really Think*--Holt, 2000).

Article from Science on Johanna Nichols' Nakh Daghestanian language family and its link to spread of farming and genetics. Refers also to Orin Gensler's claim to have discovered pre-Celtic languages in British Isles and strong links between Celtic and Afroasiatic. Jess Tauber and Michael Witzel expresses skepticism because of easy confusion between typological and genetic connections and the question of word order change. Derek Bickerton hopes Gensler is right but also questions the word order analysis. Roger Lass says the idea of Afroasiatics in Britain is old, from German scholars, and is very solid. Bernard Comrie, Director, Dept. of Linguistics, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (comrie@eva.mpg.de) says that word order plays only a minor part in Gensler's theory and we should all read the work.

A whole separate discussion strand on SOV-VSO-SVO commences in relation to etymological comparisons, in which Derek, Jess, Randy, Ken, Roger, Marc, and Pat participate. I have printed out this correspondence if anyone would like to try to summarize it for the next issue of Long Ranger or Mother Tongue (melpionk@ma.ultranet.com).

JUNE

This is as far as I got, and I still have a big stack of discussion printouts to get through. If ASLIP members find it useful I will try to continue Lurker's Log. The discussion pretty much petered out by the end of the summer and did not resume in the fall. It is now May 2001 and Jess Tauber has just introduced a topic, so perhaps it will get going again.

[NB: this list is moving to Yahoo groups in September 2001]

Lurker's Recommendations:

Web hosting should move to a more active vs. passive mode.

Discussion should center on new books, articles, and papers relevant to long ranger interests that are uploaded, abstracted, reviewed, or linked to the site (URL or hotlink).

Webmaster(s) should post the above, and discussants can propose postings. **Randy Foote** has performed this role effectively in the past and perhaps would consent to organizing new reviews and discussions through postings.

A special mailing to ASLIP members should request greater participation and perhaps describe the discussions that have taken place as a stimulus (as in Lurker's Log).

Nonmember discussants should be actively recruited to join ASLIP.

9

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SFI Bulletin Vol. 16 No. 1
Language Evolution****MacArthur Foundation Helps SFI Study Long-Range Relationships of Human Languages**

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation will fund a five-year research project at the Santa Fe Institute on the long-range relationships of human languages. This work should throw light on the evolution of human languages of the modern type and on other related studies of the development of *Homo sapiens sapiens*. The initiative is spearheaded by SFI Distinguished Fellow **Murray Gell-Mann**.

Basic Vocabulary

I/me, you, two, who, language, name, eye, heart, tooth, no/not, fingernail/toenail, louse/nit, water, tear (drop), death, hand, night, blood, horn (animal), full, sun, ear, salt.

From the list of most highly conserved words among human languages.

Conventional historical linguistics recognizes language families that can be traced back to a partially reconstructed ancestral language spoken some 6,000 or 7,000 years ago--or even less. (So-called glottochronology or lexicostatistics permits crude estimates of when a given pair of related languages separated.) At such time depth the sound system of the "proto-language" can be reconstructed with some confidence. Since the evidence for the relationship of the languages in any of these families is overwhelming, it is difficult to believe that research on the classification of languages must stop at such time depths. That is true even though the evidence becomes sparser and the methods somewhat less rigorous as the groupings get larger and larger and the corresponding languages older and older.

A small group of researchers, spread out across the world, is studying the wider relationships of human languages. The great pioneer in this effort is Joseph Greenberg of Stanford University, now retired but still producing remarkable work. He began with the classification of African languages in the late 1940s and early 1950s. After undergoing

extremely harsh criticism, his work was finally accepted even though it involved finding very large sets of related languages stemming from proto-languages that date back very far. Through that method, he found that all the African languages fall into four groups.

Despite the general acceptance of the African work, the same harsh criticisms have been leveled in recent years at Greenberg and other scholars who have applied similar methods to discovering long-range relationship in other parts of the world. These efforts thus require as much support as possible in order to push the work of classification forward, strengthen (if possible) the statistical and other arguments for the correctness of the ideas, and relate results to other kinds of work on early *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

Although the evidence is still not copious, there are serious indications that all existing human languages are descended from a single ancestor, "proto-World," which would have been spoken some tens of thousands of years ago. (It seems that an age of 100,000 or 200,000 years can be ruled out: there would not be any significant amount of evidence remaining.) A number of words of this proto-language may well have been identified. If this idea is correct, it is tempting to identify the time when modern language began with the explosion of cultural achievement by *Homo sapiens sapiens* (but not by Neanderthal man, soon to disappear) toward the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic, when painting, sculpture, engraving, and the making of refined stone tools all appeared.

But there are now exciting results from the study of human genetics, especially the work on Y chromosomes and mitochondrial DNA, which permit tracing all of today's people back to a single male and a single female ancestor respectively. The dating of these ancestors is still not very accurate, but they seem to have lived considerably earlier than the Upper Paleolithic.

Such genetic studies, plus others based on physical anthropology, especially the examination of teeth, are yielding a great deal of information about early human lineages descended from the two common ancestors, including the migration patterns of the people involved. All of this material can be correlated with the linguistic work. Even though there is not a perfect correspondence between genetic heritage and speech (witness, for example, Japanese-Americans speaking English, a Germanic language), there are correlations and it is crucial to explore them further.

As the Institute has done in other cases, it will provide resources and a home for the far-flung, now informal, network of researchers of human languages and for related aspects of the development of human beings.

In February, John Holland (Michigan) and William S-Y. Wang (City University at Hong Kong) hosted a short, intense working group meeting on language emergence and mathematical modeling.

Understanding how language emerged is a quest which obviously requires piecing together knowledge from the several disciplines represented at our workshop," writes Wang. "We need to know about the biological and social parameters in the prehistoric times when the major transitions of language emergence took place: the first words, segmental phonology, word order, hierarchical structure, and recursion, etc." Wang explains further that the Stanford geneticists Luca Cavalli-Sforza and Marcus Feldman offer dates for our most recent common ancestors with whom presumably true language began. He finds it fascinating that mtDNA

and Y-chromosome yield disparate dates, and explains that that fact contains important lessons for us about population sizes, migratory patterns, and modes of cultural transmission, all of which are relevant to the linguistic scenario they wish to eventually reconstruct.

The interdisciplinary team of Martin Nowak (Institute for Advanced Study), Natalia Komarova (Institute for Advanced Study), and Partha Niyogi (Chicago) has pioneered modeling language emergence with significant results, experimenting with various definitions of communicative fitness in simulating how words first emerged and when syntax began. "They have provided a precise framework within which questions on emergence may be formulated and investigated quantitatively," Wang says. "My intuition is that language is a cumulative repository of numerous histories of 'tinkerings,' i.e., successes and false starts, over the many millennia of its evolution." As a consequence, Wang sees that each language is riddled with ambiguities, homophonies, and inconsistencies, and that speakers of the same community differ significantly from each other in their linguistic behaviors, so that their "common core" is much smaller than is usually assumed. "The 'universal' in 'universal grammar' may turn out to have little substantive content," he says. He hopes that as future models of language emergence become increasingly refined and complex, these models will approach more and more of these realistic aspects of language, which have been unfortunately all too often ignored in recent linguistic literature.

"As I begin to understand more of the strategy of genetic algorithms (GAs), thanks to John Holland's overview, it seems that this approach may prove to be quite hospitable to some of the realistic aspects of language I have in mind. In fact, some properties of rules, such as 'default' and 'exception,' have been used by linguists for a long time in language description," he says. As an example he says "default" is called the "elsewhere condition" in linguistics. He wrote about the consequences of linguistic rules in competition in 1969 [Language 45.9-25]. "However," he adds, "linguistics has come nowhere close to the rich body of theory that has been developed for genetic algorithms."

"As D. Eric Smith (SFI) has noted, the GA approach builds upon 'successive incorporation of independent rules into ever more complex networks.' It would be particularly significant if we could show for some of these instances of successive incorporation how its extension was driven interactively by increases in semantic need and in cognitive capacity, as Schoenemann argues," says Wang. He cites as very suggestive Smith's metaphors from physics, of spin glasses, alignment, frustration, etc., where ultra-metricity (hierarchy) and parsability emerge dynamically. "I hope that this approach can be pursued in earnest, perhaps complementarily to the methods pursued by Nowak and his colleagues."

Wang believes that the linguists are in a position to set the agenda for such research, since they own the target list--the set of properties that should emerge from the modeling. Therefore the kind of typological variations that Bernard Comrie (Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology) began to circumscribe help define the boundaries of the task. "At more concrete levels, Merrit Ruhlen's (Stanford) hypothesis that the first syntax which emerged in phylogeny was of the form SOV, and Lee's distinction between two stages of languages in ontogeny, comparable to propositional calculus and to predicate calculus, both offer real challenges to efforts at simulation."

Wang believes the researchers from the several disciplines have a lot to share with

each other on this topic whose time has come. "I hope such dialog can be sustained, if not intensified, leading directly to collaborative research along the lines discussed at the workshop."

<http://www.santafe.edu/sfi/publications/Bulletins/bulletinSummer01/features/language.html>

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NSF Grant for Endangered Languages

Sender: Linguists at the University of Arizona <LINGUA@listserv.arizona.edu>
From: Andrew Carnie <carnie@EMAIL.ARIZONA.EDU>
Subject: Endangered Language Database
To: LINGUA@listserv.arizona.edu

Colleagues, Friends and Students,

The NSF grant that the linguist list (with Terry and I as PIs) got for endangered language preservation is currently highlighted on the NSF homepage! (www.nsf.gov)

Here's what they say:

The emergence of English and Spanish as the dominant languages of global commerce is causing many other tongues to fall into disuse. This trend alarms social scientists worldwide because linguistic research not only provides cultural information, but also insight into the diverse capabilities of the human mind.

To combat the decrease in the number and diversity of languages and to capitalize on a growing store of digitized linguistic data, a team of National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded researchers led by Anthony Aristar at Wayne State University is developing an endangered languages database and a central information server that will allow users to access the material remotely by computer. A \$2 million NSF grant to Aristar and his colleagues at Eastern Michigan University, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Arizona will be used to create this public digital archive.

The goals of the Electronic Metastructure for Endangered Languages Data (E-MELD) project are to collect data on endangered languages and to devise a Web-based protocol so that new and existing data will be accessible to researchers and native speakers everywhere. The researchers on the E-MELD project will start with 10 distinct endangered languages to design a system that will be versatile, useful and extensible. E-MELD is modeled on the Internet, where standard communications protocols allow users to access information housed on a variety of very different operating systems, including UNIX, Windows-NT, and VMS. [Dave Vannier]

The first version of E-MELD is expected to appear online this fall at:

<http://www.linguistlist.org>.

(For more history on efforts to save endangered languages, contact Mary Hanson, 703-292-8070)

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ASLIP Business: Reminder

Readers are reminded to pay their 2001 dues, if they have not done so already. Only those who have paid 2001 and prior dues will receive the 2000/2001 Mother Tongue Journal (MT VI). To make payments, or to clarify your membership status, please contact ASLIP Treasurer Peter Norquest. (See inside front cover for his addresses.)

Mother Tongue Journal, issue VI, has been published and is in the mail