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Newsletter of the Association for the Study of Language in Prehistory  
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<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/aslip.html>)

Editor for this issue is Harold C. Fleming

In a partial return to our old customs ASLIP will be producing occasional small newsletters on topics which are not usually covered in MOTHER TONGUE: THE JOURNAL and which are not original contributions like those which appear as articles in the Journal. We offer up three such small reports which are meant to stimulate responses or reactions which may guide us in future mini-newsletters. Tell us how you like the format and topic!

### **The People of Puerto Rico: A Bio-Genetic Overview.**

By H.C. Fleming

When Luca Cavalli-Sforza and his colleagues produced the gigantic tome, HGHG, THE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF HUMAN GENES, their aim was to recapitulate the genetic scene around the world in 1500 AD, i.e., before the great expansion of European peoples to the New World and their conquest of Oceania. Accordingly HGHG did not report on many New World populations because of the massive gene flow, or purported massive gene flow, from west Europeans, particularly Iberians, Britons, French and Dutch. Major sections of the Amerind population of Meso-America and the Caribbean, as well as the broken peoples of English North America, were absent from HGHG. In addition, particularly in the Caribbean, the large contribution from African slaves in the sugar-growing areas of the Caribbean was evident, indeed in some cases was suspected of being the dominant population element.

Recently, some scholars have investigated Caribbean populations as ends in themselves, not in the context of the 1500 AD autochthones. The present report is on Puerto Rico and exists in the presence of a received opinion that the original Indian inhabitants of the island, like many other Caribbean islands, could not adapt well to slavery or the harsh conditions of sugar-plantation labor. For this reason it was supposed that the African contribution was ultimately greater because Africans survived better under those conditions than the Indians. In addition several encyclopedias simply report that the original Indians of Puerto Rico had died out, gone extinct

Thus the results of the genetic survey were surprising. While modern Puerto Ricans are genetically African to the tune of 27% of mtDNAs, only about 12% of mtDNA was derived from Europeans. Hence the authors concluded that the dominant population element in Puerto Rico (around 61%) was derived from Amerinds. Since the colonial history of the Caribbean and Puerto Rico in particular is fairly well known, the further conclusion was that the Amerind genes were TAINO in origin, since that is the name of the Indians who occupied Puerto Rico in early colonial times. The Taino belonged linguistically to the Arawakan cluster

of the Macro-Arawakan family one of six sub-divisions of the Equatorial phylum which was itself in turn a moiety of the large Equatorial-Tucanoan sub-group of Amerind. These links tied the probable origins of the Taino to northeast South America and the Amazon basin, rather than Central America or Florida from whence they could have come. In looking these things up, one should refer to Merritt Ruhlen's GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S LANGUAGES rather than Greenberg's LANGUAGE IN THE AMERICAS. Ruhlen is based on Greenberg's classification but Greenberg does not list Taino, probably because it expired some centuries ago.

The authors accounted for the mtDNA discrepancies by proposing a great difference in the migrations of men and women from Spain. The situation is paralleled in Colombia in one city where the mtDNA is almost exclusively Amerind, while the Y-Chromosome frequencies are overwhelmingly European; it seems that historically Spaniards arrived without Spanish women and married Indian women. In the Puerto Rican case also Canarian and Berber haplogroups were frequent among the 'Spaniards'.

Reference (source): Authors: J.Martinez-Cruzado (U/Puerto Rico at Mayaguez) et al. "Phylogeographic patterns of mtDNA reflect the population history of Puerto Rico." Poster Paper presented at the Buffalo meetings of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, Session 27, April 13, 2002.

As luck would have it, two other papers from the same AAPA meetings, albeit listed in different sessions, had some bearing on the question of Taino origins. The first was "The populations in the circum-Caribbean area from the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. to the conquest: the biological relationships according to possible migratory routes." Authors: J.Coppa (University of Rome, 'La Sapienza', Rome, Italy), et al. Their abstract reads:

"The migrations that led to the peopling of the Caribbean took place beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and originated from different continental neighboring areas. By the time of the conquest (Ed. Note: Spanish conquest) the islands were densely populated by what the chronicles reported as the Ciboney, Arawak (Tainos) and Carib cultures. This paper investigates the extent of biological relationship among various groups from the circum-Caribbean area through the analysis of dental morphological traits. Six different groups have been analyzed, identified according to their general geographical location: Florida, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Virgin Island, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. The samples belong to different cultures and span wide chronological times. We tried to investigate the biological affinities of groups from the same and different migratory movements. Several multivariate statistical techniques have been applied" Maximum Likelihood, Principal Component Analysis, Multidimensional Scaling, Minimum Spanning Tree, and Mean Measures of Divergence. A separation between cultural, even though coeval, groups arose, along with different relationships among island groups compared to continental ones. The Tainos (from Santo Domingo, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico) always clustered together and separated from the Ciboney of Cuba, the latter being considered the result of earlier migratory events. Interestingly, the pre-ceramic sample of Cueva Roja (an earlier non-Taino group from Santo Domingo dated to between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC) merges towards the Cuban Ciboneys, indicating its origin from one of the first migrations towards Hispaniola during the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Instead no clear affinity of the samples from southern Florida and Venezuela emerges. The former ones, even the more ancient, do not seem to have any relationship with the Ciboneys. Their less distinct biological collocation related to the island groups could result from within the subcontinents demic movements and a higher gene flow, contrarily to what occurred to the geographically and genetically more closed island populations."

The second was: "Contemporary mtDNAs reveal pre-Columbian migrations to Puerto Rico". The authors were P.Valencia-Rivera (Dep't. of Biology, University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, San Juan, Puerto Rico), et al. Their abstract reads as follows:

"We aim to contribute to the knowledge on the historical migrations that peopled the Caribbean region through detailed analyses of mitochondrial DNAs (mtDNAs) of Native American origin from Puerto Rico. The mtDNA haplogroup of 804 residents from 28 municipalities making up a representative sample for

the island is being identified by means of RFLP analysis. From 787 mtDNAs that have been identified, 483 have been shown to belong to any of the four main Native American haplogroups. No mtDNA belonging to the fifth Native American haplogroup X has been found. Haplogroups A (52.6%) and C (35.8%) represent 88.4% of the Native American mtDNAs. Seventeen restriction sites that had previously been shown to be variable in Haplogroup C mtDNAs of the New World were tested in 79 Haplogroup C mtDNAs. Only two haplotypes representing 49 and 30 mtDNAs were identified. These differed at two sites, one of which was the site known as the most variable in mtDNA, suggesting that Haplogroup C represents one or two very recent migrations to the island that originated in the deep region of the Amazon Basin. Median network analysis of DNA sequences from regions HV-1 and HV-II of 40 Haplogroup A mtDNAs revealed two haplotype clusters that represent at least two Haplogroup A migrations to Puerto Rico, one much older than the other. The average number of sites differing from any sequence to the root in the older cluster suggests that the first migration occurred shortly before the disappearance of the land bridge that connected Cuba with the Yucatan Peninsula.

Harold C. Fleming  
Prof. emer., Boston Univ.  
16 Butman Ave.  
Gloucester MA 012930  
978- 282 0603

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**Report on the Conference:  
Linguistic Databases and Linguistic Taxonomy Workshop**  
Santa Fe Institute  
January 6-10, 2003

By J.D. Bengston

The Conference began on January 6 with a welcome from the organizers, Murray Gell-Mann and Sergei A. Starostin. Nobel Laureate Murray Gell-Mann is a distinguished fellow at the Santa Fe Institute, and Sergei A. Starostin, a professor at Russian State University of the Humanities in Moscow, has been residing for periods of time at Santa Fe as part of the Evolution of Human Language Project (EHL).

The general plan of the conference consisted of about six presentations each day. Each presenter was allotted an hour for the presentation and discussion. The presentations on Monday through Thursday were as follows:

Jim Mason (Director of the Rosetta Project, San Francisco, CA) updated the conference on the progress of the Rosetta Project. See <http://www.rosettaproject.org/live>

Merritt Ruhlen (Stanford University and SFI) reported on “The Current State of Linguistic Taxonomy.”

Paul Whitehouse, working in London for SFI, spoke on “Inclusion Versus Exclusion: The Problem of Negative Evidence. “

Alexander Lubotsky (Leiden University) reported on the progress of the Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Project. See <http://iasnt.leidenuniv.nl/ied/index.html>

Sergei A. Starostin (Russian State University, SFI) reported on the extensive language database being compiled for the EHL. A compact disk containing the database was distributed to conference participants. See <http://starling.rinet.ru/index2.htm>

Martine Robbeets (Leiden University) presented a report on her doctoral thesis, a thorough evaluation of the evidence for the hypothesis that Japanese is an Altaic language.

Anna Dybo (Russian Academy of Science, Institute of Linguistics) reported on the historical contacts between the Ainu language of Japan and various Altaic languages.

Aharon Dolgopolsky (University of Haifa) presented the paper “Proto-Nostratic: a synthetic or analytic language.”

Harold C. Fleming (ASLIP and Boston University) reported on “The Grand Strategy” in the search for Mother Tongue.

William Baxter (University of Michigan) reported on “New techniques for reconstructing the history of Chinese  $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ ialects,.”

John D. Bengtson (ASLIP and SFI) presented a paper on “Basque comparative phonology.”

Vitaly Shevoroshkin (University of Michigan) reported on “Salishan and North Caucasian.”

Timothy Usher (Rosetta Project and SFI) reported on recent comparative work testing the validity of Greenberg’s Indo-Pacific hypothesis, and on the huge Indo-Pacific database being compiled.

Ilya Peiros (Max Planck Institut and SFI) reported on the Intercontinental Dictionary Series and historical linguistics of Southeast Asia. See <http://ves101.uni-muenster.de/IDS>

Dmitry Leshchiner (SFI) presented the paper “Hokan Comparative Studies ^ Status and Prospects in Larger Amerind Context.”

Luca Cavalli-Sforza (Stanford University) reported on the latest information on the evolution of modern humans, according to population genetics.

Václav Blazhek (Masaryk University and Brno Institute of Linguistics) presented a report on Afro-Asiatic glottochronology.

Christopher Ehret (University of California/ Los Angeles) presented his results on the reconstruction of the Proto-South-Khoisan and Proto-Khoisan proto-languages.

Georgiy Starostin (Center of Comparative Linguistics, Moscow, and SFI) presented a paper “Towards a Reconstruction of Proto South African Khoisan.”

Alexander Militarev (Moscow Jewish University) reported on “Dating Proto-Afro-Asiatic.”

Some others who did not have specific presentations but participated in organized and spontaneous discussions, or otherwise participated “behind the scenes” were Bernard Comrie (Max Planck Institute), William S.Y. Wang (City University of Hong Kong), Vittorio Loreto (La Sapienza University, Rome), Natalie Operstein (Los Angeles), Lisa Diamond, and Kurt Bollacker.

The following are my personal reflections on the conference. For me it was a sequel to the Symposium on Language and Prehistory, held at Ann Arbor in 1988. At least 11 of the participants at the Ann Arbor conference were re-united for the present conference. For some of the Russians in 1988 it was their first journey to the United States and a first taste of the freedom brought about by the fall of the Iron Curtain. Now, almost 15 years later, we can report on significant progress in the study of language in prehistory. Much of this progress was made possible by the contacts between Western and Soviet-Bloc scholars initiated by Hal Fleming and Aharon Dolgopolsky in the early 1980s. They (along with Gell-Mann, Starostin, Ruhlen, Wang, Comrie) deserve copious credit and thanks for the state of the art in paleo-linguistics.

John D. Bengtson  
Vice President  
Association for the Study of Language in Prehistory  
156 15th Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55413 U.S.A.

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**The Fourth Round Table on the Ethnogenesis of South and Central Asia (RTESCA), Harvard U.**  
Saturday, May 11 - Monday May 13, 2002

By M.Witzel

As part of ASLIP undertakings we held this Round Table for the past few years. Here a report on last year's meeting.

The 4th yearly Harvard Round Table on the prehistory of South and Central Asia Brought together a large number of specialists from the fields of archaeology, genetics, linguistics and philology.

This was made possible by a large grant of the Asia center and of the Infinity Foundation. We were joined by some thirty colleagues from South Asia (India, Nepal, Pakistan), Europe (Czech Republic, England, Finland, France, Italy, Russia) as well as from Canada, from the Greater Boston area and from other parts of the US. Several of our own Graduate students also gave papers this time.

This year's discussions were arranged in three sessions: Central Asia, the Indus Civilization and South Asian language and prehistory.

As far as Central Asia was concerned, we could rely on several well known experts. Three of them concentrated on the enigmatic prehistory of the Indo-Iranians and presented a wide range of materials and interpretations: E. Kuzmina (Moscow) spoke on the Indo-Iranians and Archaeology, A. Parpola (Helsinki) on Proto-Aryan, Proto-Indo-Aryan and Proto-Iranian in archaeological perspective, and C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Harvard) gave another, critical view on Indo-Iranians and archaeology.

These presentations were balanced by the very new data coming from genetics, presented by P.

Françalacci (Sassari, Italy) who spoke on mitochondrial DNA in Central Asia found in the Kirghiz, Kazaks and Uighurs. They indicate that Central Asia was, from early post-African Exodus times onwards, a center of expansion into Europe and Eastern Asia, and that it has remained a cross-roads of exchanges between east and west until today.

Our Italian colleagues M. Cattani, E. Menghi and M. Tosi (Bologna, Italy) concentrated on their excavations in the Margiana and Bactria areas, and on the innovative technologies they have put to use there. An important point was the early interaction of steppe populations with the settled farmers of the Bactria-Margiana area.

We then moved to Central Asian languages. M. Witzel (Harvard) briefly spoke about Central Asian substrate languages. In continuation of his talk last year, J. Bengtson (ASLIP, Minneapolis), expanded his comparisons to the cultural vocabulary of the Macro-Caucasian language family that has been largely established, single handedly, through his own work. It links early W. Europe (Basque) with the Caucasus and the Pamirs (Burushaski in N. Pakistan). V. Blazek (Brno, Czech Rep.) expanded our view of ancient Iran by establishing links between Elamite, the language of the old Bronze Age culture of Elam in Mesopotamia and SW Iran, and their distant Indo-Aryan neighbors to the east.

The second day was reserved for an extensive discussion of the often still enigmatic Harappan or Indus Civilization that has been the focus of Harvard Archaeologists for some two decades now.

D.P. Agrawal (Almora, India) outlined the large set of transformations that ultimately led to the decline and collapse of the Indus Civilization and the return to smaller agricultural communities. This period of transformation was also discussed by R. Mughal (Lahore and Boston U.) on the basis of an intensive study of the Cemetery H culture in the Harappa and Cholistan area. R. Meadow (Harvard), director of the Harappan excavations, gave a brief report of current activities, halted this year due to the general political situation.

Steve Farmer (Palo Alto) built on his talk of last year and delineated a number of features that tend to show that the enigmatic Indus script is different from other, already deciphered scripts and rather would fall in the range of symbolic signs only. By contrast, our Grad. student B. Wells (Harvard), gave a detailed outline of where we actually have to start in defining and ordering the c. 600 Indus characters. There were two contributions on religion in Harappa, one by A. Sharma (Montreal) on religion itself, and one by K. Young (Montreal) on the Mesopotamian connections with the Indus religion.

Our Graduate student Sharry Clark (Harvard) talked about her dissertation work dealing with the multi-faceted and extremely informative types of figurines of the Indus civilization and with their successors in later subcontinental civilizations. Another Harvard Graduate student, Peter Eltsov, reported on his ongoing thesis work, which entails a comparison between the Indus and Gangetic cultures and the various kind of literary and archaeological sources one can bring to bear on them. Finally, B. Brook (Amherst) reported on the ever-controversial date of the Buddha, supposedly sheet anchor in India history, but now under discussion again.

On the third day, we turned to linguistics and philology of South Asia. F. Southworth (Philadelphia) began with an overview of his forthcoming book dealing with the linguistic prehistory of India and presented a "Prehistoric Language Map of South Asia". In a similar vein, Bh. Krishnamurti (Hyderabad) reported about a particularly intriguing aspect of his forthcoming book on the reconstruction of Proto-Dravidian, dealing with the culture of Proto-Dravidian Speakers.

A small sensation was created by the report of B.K. Rana (Kathmandu) of his rediscovery of the Kusunda language that had been thought extinct for some decades, but of which he has rediscovered about a dozen speakers by now. This language of Central Nepal is an important isolate, probably a remnant of the early Stone Age settlement of South Asia, and still is virtually undescribed. A. Daladier (Paris) discussed details of affixes in Austro-Asiatic dealing with the notion of animate beings and with borrowings into neighboring languages. This was followed by discussions of further mutual influences of the language families of India on each other. G. Anderson (Manchester, UK) spoke about the Dravidian influence on Munda, and M. R. Bachvarova (Manchester, UK) on Dravidian structural influence on Sanskrit. The final

talks were on philology proper. S. Palaniappan (Houston) stressed the "indispensability of philology in resolving some Dravidian etymological problems", a feature well established in Indo-European linguistics by now, but still a problem in the somewhat differing situation of Dravidian, with just one language, Tamil, possessing two thousand year old inscriptions and literature. Last, but no least, G. Thompson (Sharon, NH) turned to the Veda and discussed the material culture and the poetics of the Rgveda.

In sum, we had very useful exchanges, learned a lot from each other, and look forward to the fifth, if by necessity much smaller meeting scheduled for May 10-12, 2003.

See: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~sanskrit/RoundTableSchedule.html> (includes text of some of the papers)

Michael Witzel  
 Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies,  
 Harvard University  
 2 Divinity Avenue  
 Cambridge, MA 02138-2020 USA  
 (617) 495-3295 FAX: (617) 496-8571  
 direct line: 496 2990  
 witzel@fas.harvard.edu

PROGRAM 4<sup>th</sup> RTESCA  
 Saturday, May 11 2002

CENTRAL ASIA: ARCHAEOLOGY, LANGUAGE & GENETICS

- E. Kuzmina: Indo-Iranians and Archaeology
- A. Parpola: Proto-Aryan, Proto-Indo-Aryan and Proto-Iranian in archaeological perspective
- C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky: Indo-Iranians and archaeology
- M. Witzel: The Indo-Iranians: Archaeology and Linguistics
- P. Franca Ricci: Mitochondrial DNA in Central Asia (Kirghiz, Kazhaks and Uighurs)
- M. Cattani and M. Tosi: Farmers' towns and herders' campsites in Bronze Age Margiana: A First Understanding of a Transitional Landscape from the Archaeological Record
- E. Menghi and M. Tosi: Excavations at Kafir Kala and the Archaeological Survey of the Zeravshan Valley to the South of Samarkand: First Results.
- J. Bengtson: Macro-Caucasian Cultural Vocabulary (Basque, Burushaski, Caucasian)
- V. Blazek: Elamo-Arica

Sunday, May 12

INDUS CIVILIZATION

- D.P. Agrawal: Significance of the Multidimensional Transformations c. 2000 BCE
- R. Mughal: Archaeology of the Dead: Harappan and Non-Harappan about 1500-500 BC
- S. Farmer: New Proofs of the Non-Linguistic Nature of the Indus Valley Inscriptions
- S. Clark: Later Harappan Terracotta Figurines and Their South Asian Successors
- A. Sharma: Religion in Harappan Culture
- K. Young: Mesopotamian connections to Indus religion
- B. Wells : Methods for Defining Indus Graphemes

P. Eltsov : Bridging the gap between protohistoric and early historic India; archaeology and texts  
B. Brooks: The Date of the Buddha and Sino-Indian Chronology

Monday, May 13

#### SOUTH ASIA: LANGUAGE AND PREHISTORY

F. Southworth: A Prehistoric Language Map of South Asia

Bh. Krishnamurti: The Culture of Proto-Dravidian Speakers as Reconstructed from the Dravidian Etymological Dictionary (DEDR)

B.K. Rana: The Kusunda Language

A. Daladier: k(v) and j(v) affixes in Austro-Asiatic, the AA notion "animate", and some borrowings in Tibeto-Burmese and Vedic(?)

G. Anderson: Dravidian influence on Munda

M. R. Bachvarova: Dravidian Structural Influence in Sanskrit

S. Palaniappan: Indispensability of philology in resolving some Dravidian etymological problems

G. Thompson: Material Culture and the Poetics of the Rgveda