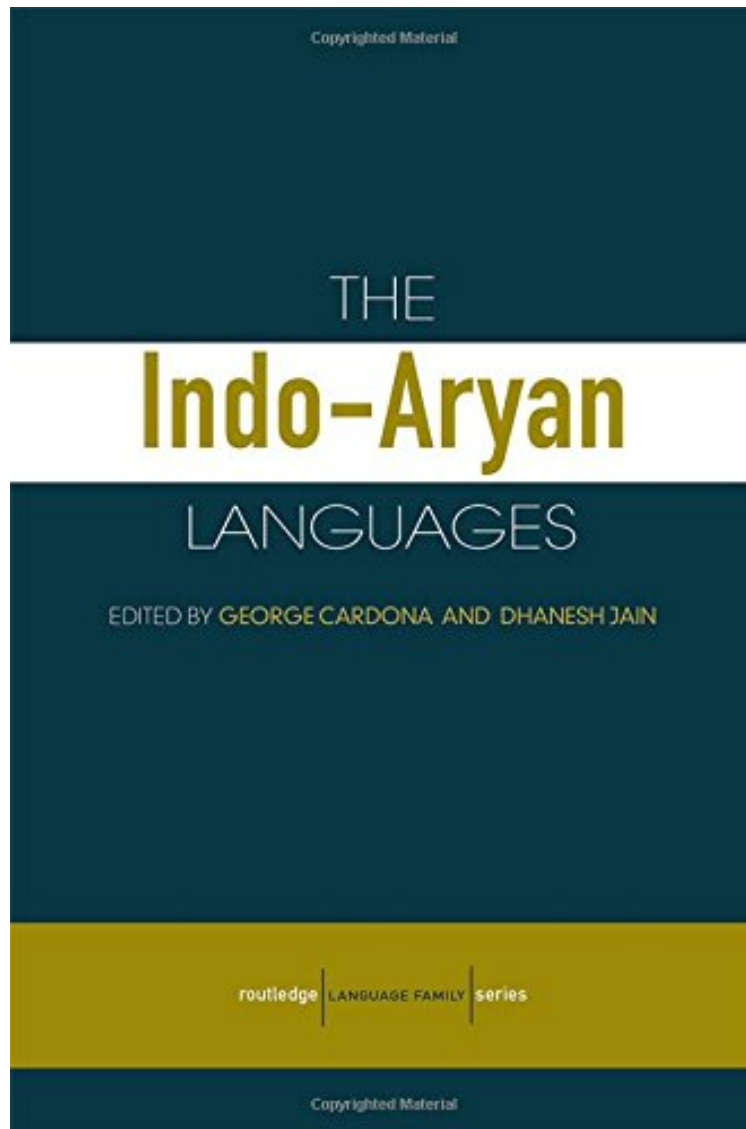


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The Indo-Aryan Languages (Routledge Language Family Series)

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From Brand: Routledge : The Indo-Aryan Languages (Routledge Language Family Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Indo-Aryan Languages (Routledge Language Family Series):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The biggest entry in the Routledge Language Family Series By Christopher Culver THE INDO-ARYAN LANGUAGES, edited by George Cardona and Dhanesh Jain, is a typical installment of the Routledge Language Family Services, which seeks to give brief but insightful descriptions of as many languages in a family as possible. With this volume, Routledge has certainly outdone themselves, giving us over

a thousand pages of linguistic goodness. The first three chapters cover the language family in general. These are the General Introduction, "Sociolinguistics of the Indo-Aryan Languages" and "Writing Systems of the Indo-Aryan Languages". I am generally satisfied with the General Introduction's presentation of the debate over the Indo-European Urheimat and the influence from the substrate. However, I think it would have been better if George Cardona and Dhanesh Jain had laid out the devout Hindu line on this branch of linguistics, for they see Sanskrit as a perfect language of divine origin and the real parent of the Indo-European family, and they claim that Indo-European linguistics is a racist or colonialist science. That would better prepare readers for the nutjobs that discussions of these languages in public fora inevitably attract. Then there are three chapters on Middle Indo-Aryan. One covers Sanskrit, the second Asokan Prakrit and Pali, and the third Prakrits and Apabhramsa. The bulk of the book is dedicated to single-chapter descriptions of modern languages: Hindu, Urdu, Bangla, Asamiya, Oriya, Maithili, Magahi, Bhojpuri, Nepali, Panjabi, Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi, Konkani, Sinhala, Dardic, and Kashmiri. While I have training in Indo-European linguistics, my academic knowledge of this particularly family stops with Sanskrit, so I cannot give it much of a critical review. But for linguaphiles, this is sure to be an entertaining read and an exhaustive source of information. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Quite a detailed survey on Indo-Aryan. By Thomas Martin This is a detailed survey, giving an overview of the phonology and grammar of most major Indo-Aryan languages. Though there is generally too little information on the history of the languages, like the sound changes or grammar changes. Likewise most chapters have no information about the dialects of the languages, beyond listing the dialects and sometimes saying what dialect is similar to what. There is unfortunately no chapter on the Dhivehi language, even though it is the official language of the Maldives, so it is an important language. Likewise the chapter on the various scripts of the Indo-Aryan languages has no mention of the Dhivehi script, which is a fascinating script, with both Arabic numerals and ancient numerals being adapted for use as consonants. There is also no chapter on the important Romany language (or it could be more accurately described as the Romany group of languages). In fact, Romany is hardly mentioned at all. There are two examples of Romany (spelled Romani by the author) in the chapter on Prakrits, saying that devoicing of murmured (meaning voiced aspirated) stops, like in the Paisaci Prakrit, occurred only in Romani and Dardic. Both examples are in Romani, and personally, as far as Dardic, I am aware of devoicing only in northern Kalasha. Other Dardic languages have either retained the voiced aspirates, or else have deaspirated them, sometimes resulting in a tone distinction. And even in Northern Kalasha, the devoicing is not general but sporadic, unlike Paisaci. The grammars of the various languages do not mention under what circumstances are subject pronouns not used, which is something I would want to know more about, as there are differences among the languages on where the pronouns are omitted. But beyond these faults, the book is in general very informative and useful.

The Indo-Aryan languages, spoken by at least 700 million people in the Republic of India, in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and in countries where immigrants from South Asia have settled, constitute a major group within the Indo-European family. They have a claim to great antiquity, with the earliest Vedic Sanskrit texts dating to the end of the second millennium B.C. This language family supplies a historical documentation of language change over a longer period than any other subgroup of Indo-European. Further, the interaction between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian, Munda, and Tibeto-Burmese languages as well as Arabic and other Indo-European languages affords a rich field of study for borrowing and adaptation. Major features of Indo-Aryan languages have been described before, but there is a need for a synoptic treatment of these languages.

'This carefully produced book is an important reference work. It contains ... a lot of information hard to find elsewhere, and the three indexes ... make this wealth of data easily accessible.' - Asko Parpola, University of Helsinki