A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages

By Mikhail S. Andronov

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A decisive role played by the Dravidian component in the linguistic history of South Asia, makes the historical study of the Dravidian languages one of the primary tasks of modern South Asian linguistics. Information on the Dravidian language structure at the earliest stage of existence as well as on the course of its development in subsequent periods has become indispensable for the understanding of many fundamental aspects of the evolution of Indo-Aryan, Munda and other languages spoken in this area, not to mention the internal history of the Dravidian family itself. Modern linguistics operates with data from twenty-six Dravidian languages, viz., Tamil, Malayalam, Kasaba, Kurru, Kota, Toda, Kodagii, Kannada, Kuruba, Tulu, Koraga, Bellari, Telugu, Kolami, Naiki, Parji, Gadaba, Gondi, Konda, Pengo, Manda, Kul, Kuvi, Kurukh, Malto and Brahui. In the absence of a definite boundary between the notions of language and dialect some of the South Dravidian tribal dialects are occasionally treated as independent languages in literature. It seems, however, that there are no sufficient grounds for it as peculiarities of such dialects do not generally exceed dialectisms found elsewhere. Therefore tribal dialects retain their original status in this edition of Comparative Grammar. At the same time there is no confidence that all languages of the Dravidian family have already been discovered and their list will not be expanded in the future. Dravidian comparative studies have a 140-year-old history. The multiplicity and diversity of collected facts, the complicacy of raised problems and the discrepancy between their conflicting interpretations, on the one hand, and the necessity to restrict the extent of the study to the limits of this book, on the other, called for a careful selection of the material to be examined here.

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