

Review

The Languages of the World

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Third edition. Routledge: London, UK, 1977/2002

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After 21 brief essays on the language families of the world, this book gives a series of one- to two-page entries on 200+ different languages. Each of these entries includes: (1) a passage, poem, or paragraph from this language, in its distinctive script, often something from the great literature of the language, (2) an English translation of that, and (3) a few paragraphs about this language, various interesting stuff, and where it fits into the world geographically, historically, or linguistically. Part III is a country-by-country survey, with a few sentences about the main language or languages of each, or their linguistic makeup.

Delightful and fascinating. Not nearly as detailed, nor as definitive as the *Ethnologue*, or the language section of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, but much more accessible. Also very interesting, and fun. Even a casual browsing gives the reader perspective on the linguistic diversity of humanity, good for the development of World Christian understanding.