

## The position of Asá and Qwadza within Cushitic

The paper I will present a re-examination of lexical data on two extinct languages; Asá and Qwadza. The goal the paper is to show in detail how these languages relate to each other and to other languages, in particular to the West Rift Southern Cushitic languages and their reconstruction. There has not been much research into these languages, and therefore it is important that the data that is available is properly analyzed. The position and classification of these languages within Cushitic will help explain developments in other Cushitic languages and adds to the existing body of knowledge about the area where these languages were spoken; the Tanzanian Rift Valley. The presentation will contain a comparison of the phonology of the languages, a comparison of morphology on both nouns and verbs, and a semantic analysis of the lexemes, which will lead to a better understanding of cognacy, and aims to show cultural similarities and discrepancies between the languages, and ultimately the people who spoke these languages. By doing this, I will answer if Asá and Qwadza are Cushitic languages, if they are South Cushitic languages, and if they form a branch together. The data seem to suggest that Asá and Qwadza are indeed both Cushitic, and probably South Cushitic, based on the similarities of the proto-masculine gender suffix *\*-ku* with Asá *-(o)k* and Qwadza *-ko* and the proto-feminine gender suffix *\*-ta* with Asá *-(e)t* and Qwadza *-(t)o*. These gender suffixes are shown in the examples below.

### 1. Asá

a. *dom-ok*

eland-MASC

‘male eland’

b. *def-et*

rhinoceros-FEM

‘female rhinoceros’

### 2. Qwadza

a. *sag-i-ko*

head-SGV-MASC

‘head’

b. *'ag-o-to*

eat-NMLZ-FEM

‘food’

However, previously, it was suggested that Asá and Qwadza form a branch together called 'East Rift', but the current analyses suggest that Asá separated from the other languages first, and Qwadza did so later on, which would mean that they do not form a branch together. This is, among others, based on the alternative development of the lateral in Asá, as is shown below. Asá has a *d* where Qwadza and Proto-West Rift have *tl*.

<b>Asá</b>	<b>Qwadza</b>	<b>Proto-West Rift</b>
<i>daka</i>	<i>tlakwa</i>	<i>*tlakw</i>
'bad, etc. ; rotten'	'bad'	'bad, wicked'

So, this presentation provide relevant information about the classification of these languages within the Cushitic language family. A new classification of Asá and Qwadza has repercussions for the South Cushitic language family, and perhaps even for the rest of Cushitic. Future research will depend on and refer to this classification. In addition, since there are no standard works on both of these languages, I hope to provide some basic grammatical information about Asá and Qwadza. This will include phoneme inventories, an overview of morphology, as far as that can be extracted from the lexical data, and etymologies of the lexemes, where possible. This will be helpful for typological linguistic studies, but will also extend beyond the field of linguistics since anthropologists, archeologists and historians also benefit from an overview of lexical data, for cultural similarities and discrepancies between the languages are reflected in this.