

Cushitic influence on Bantu in East Africa

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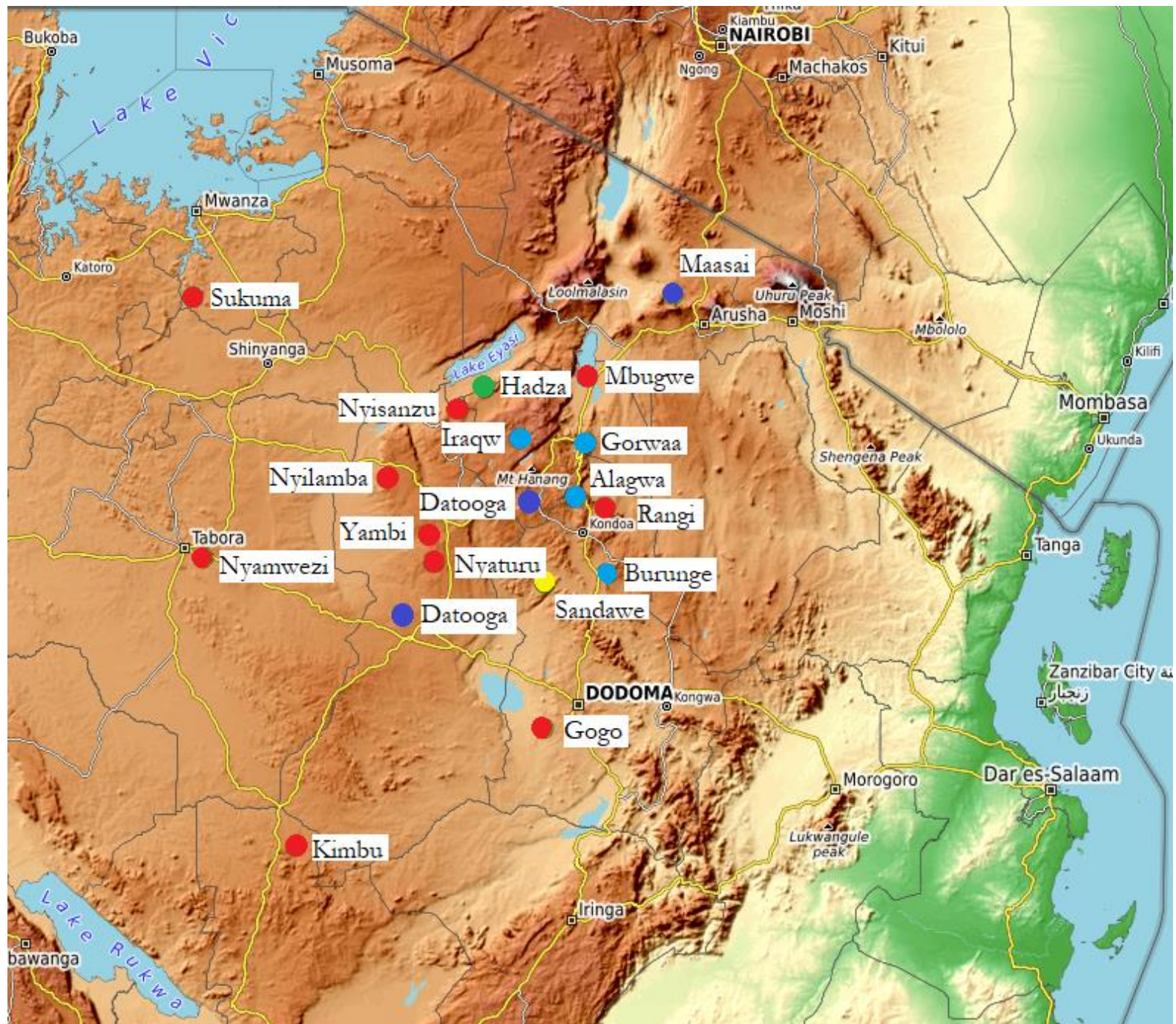


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Abstract

As part of our Linguistic history of East Africa LHEAf.org project we (mainly Nina van der Vlugt and me) look into the loans from Cushitic languages and proto-languages into the various groups of Bantu languages in East Africa. We hope to establish at which level of the linguistic tree of EA Bantu which lexical transfers took place and which ones are horizontal spreads within Bantu. We aim at understanding the spread of Bantu languages in East Africa and the nature of the contact with Cushitic people. We present the challenges that we encounter in the hope of your advice on how to continue. Work in progress, I hope.

This kind of contact is central to our larger aim. If we know more about places, nature, chronology and direction of contact, we know a large part of EA linguistic history.



What is the world that the Bantu entered?

What we did, what we are doing, what we should do

SOUTH CUSHITIC – SOUTH NILOTIC

Some Results

- South Cushitic early branch > early separation (ICHL Heidelberg)
- South Cushitic influenced by Oromo > late presence in Kenya (K&M PWR, ICHL Oxford, CR)
article in preparation with Roland Kiessling and Christian Rapold
- South Cushitic presence in Taita hills (Ehret & Nurse, Sophie Mulder, TAITA team in prep)

...

- Cushitic-Nilotic contacts at various levels, periods and places (article in review)
- South Cushitic – South Nilotic contacts (Ehret 1970, review with Roland and Christian)

South CushNil in Turkana corridor

- AARA 'goats/sheep'; ARAAR 'see'; CAM 'love, agree'; CAT 'clip, cut'; IAKAAT 'hunt'; OR 'ashes'; TAKWEES 'greeting'; TUP 'bury, cover'; TEERIIT 'dust'; TAA 'guest'; WAAX 'fear';
- The transfer of **core concepts (replacive)** and **verbs** shows that contact must have been **intense**. Possibly pK people being bilingual in pWR.
- **Additive** borrowings: economic and cultural exchange

Environment:

KENEER 'hyrax'; KUUTA 'aardvark'; MAK 'hippo'; SOORI 'buffalo'; SUYE 'wild dog';

Food production:

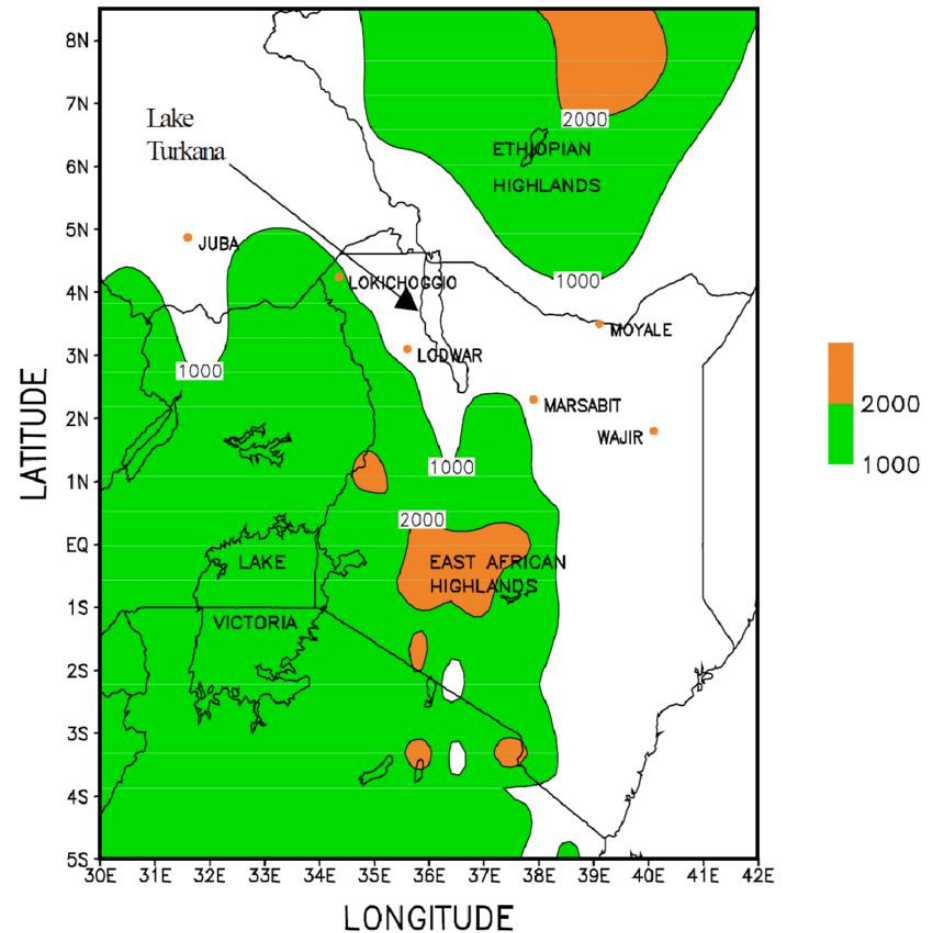
CAR 'bleed cow'; SOON 'barren'; TOMPES 'camel'; TUI 'pound grain';

Cultural artifacts and house

INKOR 'apron'; SEPET 'half-gourd'; TUKADUK 'doorpost'; YAAMA 'floor';

Social relations

PANAN 'pauper; orphan'



NON-BANTU LEXEMES IN BANTU

East African Bantu

- About 150+ languages in Uganda-Kenya-Tanzania
- Arrival on northern coast Lake Victoria about 1500 BP (from 3000 BP pastoral presence there)
- Contact with the Cush+Nil societies in the Turkana corridor
- Considerable nonBantu in Bantu:
- Dominique's database of proposed nonBantu loans in EA Bantu (725)

Transfer as window to history

- transfer at relatively high level in EA Bantu (subsequent regular sound changes apply) > indication of place and time (only chronology) of contact, of people. [distinguish from transfer at low level, individual transfers Cushitic Bantu]
- Rampant “horizontal” Bantu > Bantu spread. Swahili!, amalgamation of clans forming speech communities: complexity of language history and dealing with correspondences

Male domestic animals

- presented in Kampala and offered to proceedings

He-goat GULATA;

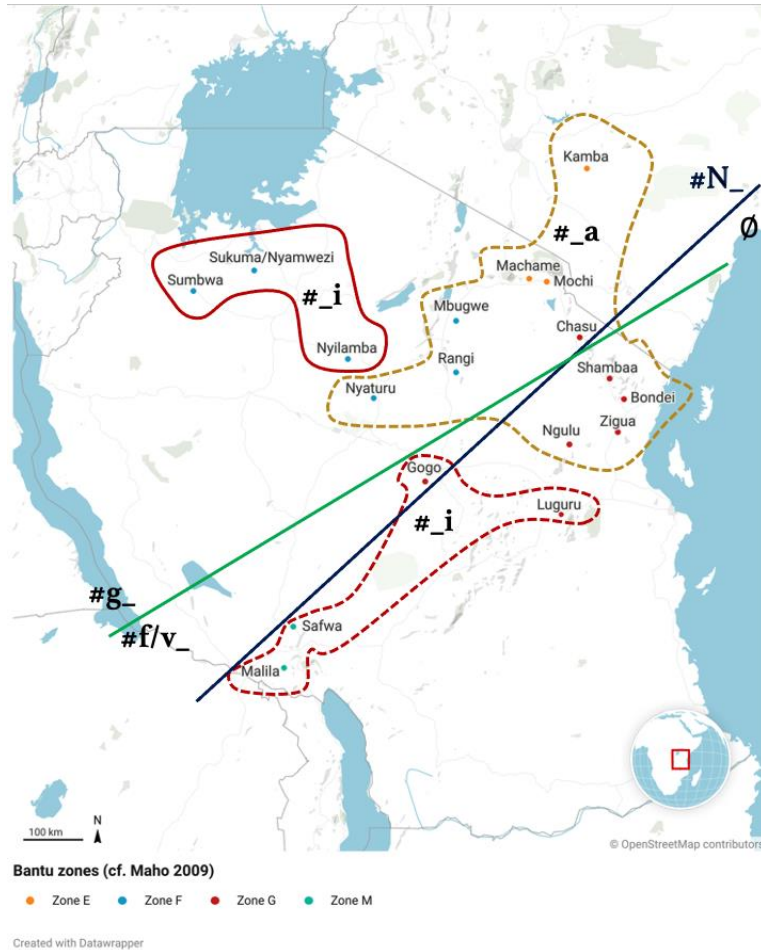
(Ram TULUME); (Ram KIRUK);

Bull JEKU/YAKAMBA/JAO all innovated in EA Bantu.

Trend in EA Bantu: male domestic animal term is innovated maybe because breeding became important

GULATA 'he-goat' < TzCushitic

*gwereta~gwereti

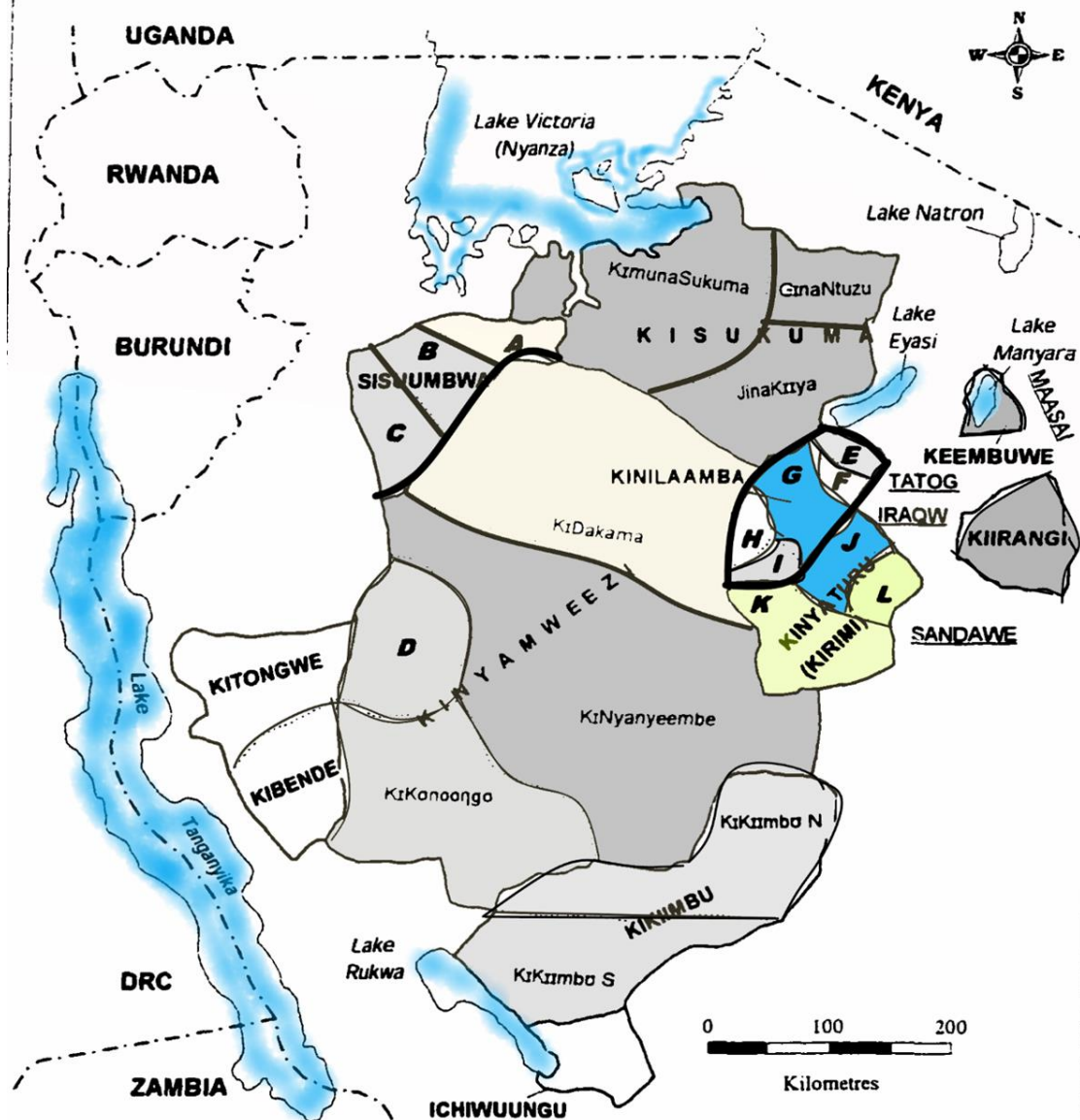


wider Cushitic cognates
but without final syllable
-ita is SNilotic singulative
E.Cushitic ***kol** > S.Nilotic ***kwεR**
> S.Cushitic ***gwereta**
Burunge innovated to **..ti** reinterpret
Two different SC sources **i/a**

addition of initial class 9 nasal
regular $g > v/_u$ and $v > f$ in NECB +
spread (Safwa, Malila)

Challenges when zooming in

- situation in dialects of group F is a mess
- details of dialect lexical inventory differs from lexicon collected at language level
- Various local spreading events: sporadic change to **nguLYati** and spread;
- the **ly** of **ngulyaati** is only PART of Nyamwezi
- one dialect of Sumbwa and one adjacent one of Nyamwezi have different root
- intruding lexeme **mpahi**.
- different collections of lexicon give different data:
Rimi/Nyaturu has **nguata** in literature but two different roots in Masele's detailed fieldwork



shades of grey:
ngula

ti;
nguly

aati,
ngula

ta
light yellow:
tulag

e
light lime:
nhwa

Ra
blue:
mpah

i

Challenges of chance similarity

Complexities of similarities: hunt for the word for ‘to hunt’ GTD

Proto Bantu

*tʃak ‘desire; wish; search for’

*tʃak ‘drive; chase’

*ʃak-a ‘find food, trade or work
for food’
[Proto-Great-Lakes Bantu]

*tʃagad ‘lead away; accompany’
[Great Lakes area]

Researcher is biased in their area of expertise

Tanzanian Cushitic

lakaat ‘to hunt’

Other Cushitic:
saag, faak

Ometo: *ʃank-att*

South Nilotic

*lʏak-aat ‘to hunt’

Proto Kalenjin *lak

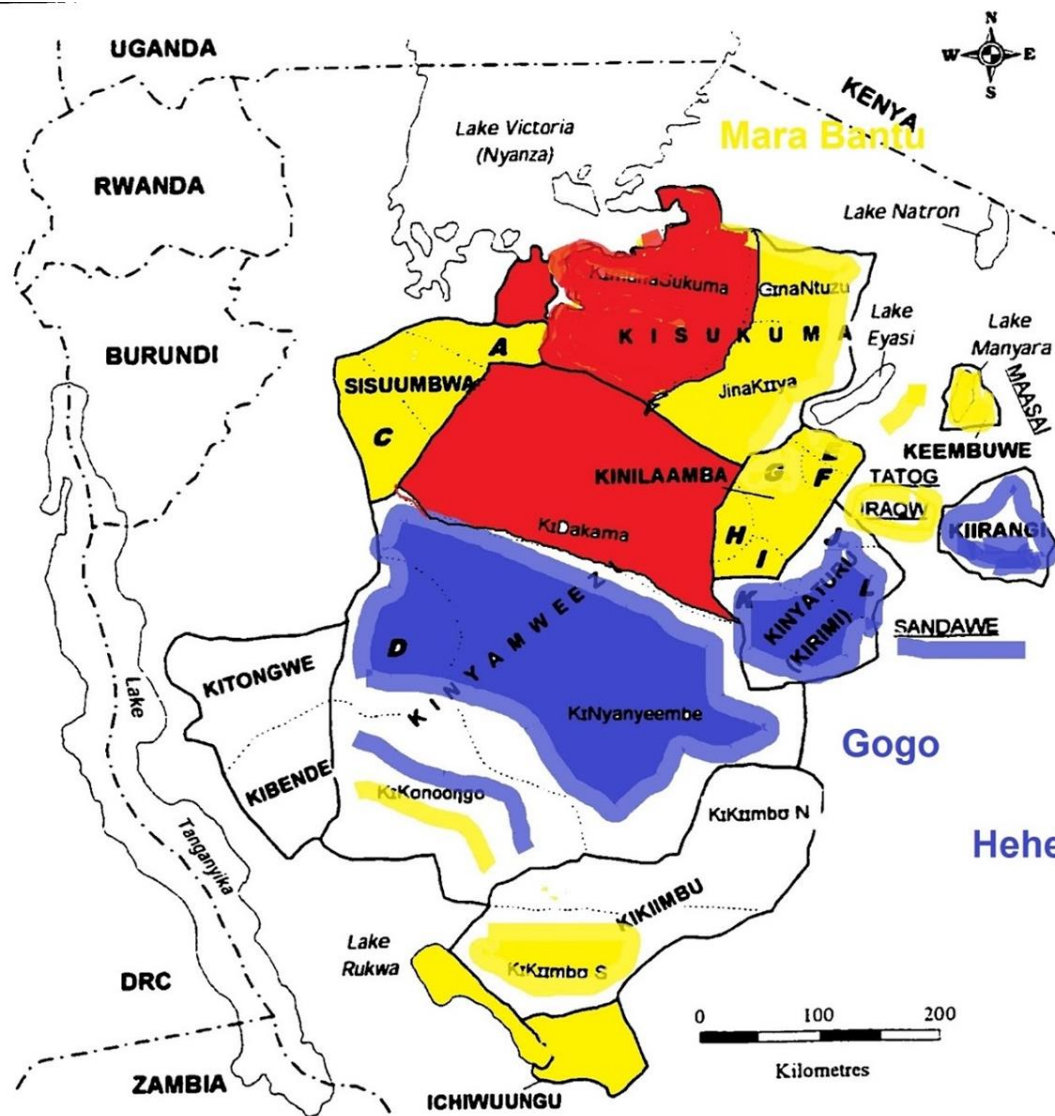
Datooga
*ʃakaat

Proto-Nilotic *lɔk
‘to trap, lay snare, angle’

Complexities of subclassification

Fish in the Tanzanian Rift Valley

- = abflussloses Gebiet No fish, is recent introduction by missionaries
- Nilotic and Cushitic cultures “don’t eat fish” = ‘snake’ (but)
- There are two Bantu roots for fish common in Tanzania *cómbá (BLR 659-east and south) and *cúí (BLR 751-wide distribution) and both are present in the Tanzanian Rift valley. But their distribution seems independent of any subclassification.
- Rangi F33 has (had) *somba* (Seidel 1898) and Mbugwe F34 has (n)síyé (MM notes, Masele: 2001:650).
- The Sandawe word *sǒbá* ‘large fish’ (Ehret et al. 2012:114) is a Bantu loan, most likely from Nyaturu which has *sóombá* (Masele 2001:650) given that a large part of the Sandawe are from Nyaturu origin.
- Iraqw and Gorwaa have *siyóo for ‘fish’. Kiessling and Mous (2003:250) suggest that this is a transfer from Mbugwe : (n)síyé 9/10 fish; which makes sense since that is where their fish would come from.



yellow for reflexes of *cúí;
indigo for reflexes of
*cómbá
and red for a root **ndiilo**

The areas do in no way
correspond to any
linguistic subgrouping
(except for the Sukuma-
Nyamwezi innovation).
Recent spreads, also
Bantu > Bantu.

Legend		
<u>SANDawe</u>	Non-Bantu Language	
---	International Boundary	
—	Language Boundary	
.....	Dialect / Variety Boundary	

A. KiLoongo	E. KiriHaanzu	J. GiRwana
B. SiYoombe	F. KiriAmbi	K. GiAhi
C. SiSiloomba	G. KiriLaamba	L. YinyaMunyiqanyi
D. SiGalagaanza	H. KiriMbuga	I. KiriUshoola

Challenges of Bantu subclassification

- Bantu spirantisation for subclassification; may have happened parallel (NEC & Interlacustrine)

Challenge of direction

- isolated position of Tanzanian Cushitic and isolated distribution within Bantu Case of sita 'refuse'.

Cush si? <> Bantu sita 'deny, refuse'

PWR * si? 'refuse, deny'

Kw'adza has si?im (v) 'be afraid; resemble'

• F33 Rangi	sita
• F34 Mbugwe	sita
• F31 Nyaturu	hita (Nyaturu has sporadic s>h)
• F32 Nyiramba	siita
• F10 Kimbu	siita
• G11 Gogo	siita 'refuse'
• G66 Wanji	sita
• G65 Kinga	sita
• M24 Malila	sita
• P23 Makonde	hita
• P25 Mbia	ita

- The West-Rift root + middle/durative derivation = **si?iit**.

- Bit no such derivation in a WR SC language.

- 1. WR SC borrowed the verb from Bantu and removed the final consonant recognising it as a **-t** derivation. Within Bantu very limited distribution. BLR3-6044 ***crt** 'refuse' Zones F,G,M

- 2. There was an earlier stage of WR SC with **si?iit** as common derivation but no wider cognates in Cushitic

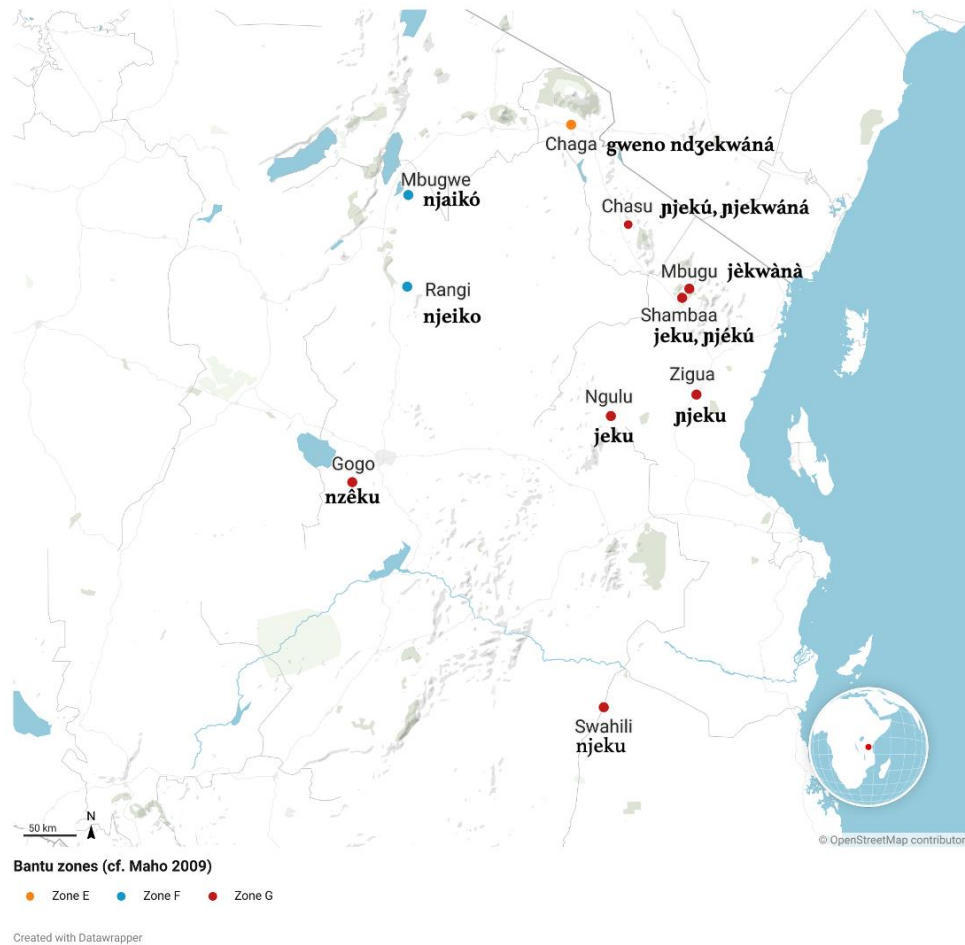
- Sandawe **?ísi** 'to refuse', next to other verbs for 'refuse'.

{Hadza has different roots, and so does Datooga.}

The Bantu expansion in East Africa

- subclassification
- oral traditions
- shared borrowings: shared innovation or horizontal spread
- formation of language groups
- and the special case of Bantu-Bantu: Mbugwe

Can we detect patterns in loans?



Heifer dama

- WR: *damaa (f) 'calf, heifer' (*damaa'u (m) 'elands')
 - Sandawe: dáma
 - Hadza: ndama-
 - Langi: ndamá (F in general)
 - Swahili ndama
 - Seuta, Ruvu, Pare: ndama
-
- Could be original Bantu word ... BLR3 8197 dà má G, H, S
 - Source could be Tanzanian Cushitic but isolated within Cushitic
 - The phonological shape does not tell us much, too simple.
 - The presence in Swahili does not help
 - It is unlikely to have LH tone pattern from Swahili loans (there are some)
 - (It is also unlikely to have the LH pattern from WR.)
 - Distribution is difficult to establish due to possibility of late Swahili spread and seems mostly Tanzania

-gondi sheep

Nurse & Hinnebush Sabaki p288 pNEC innovations from SC: *ngonzj
9 'sheep' pTzCush(-Ehret) *gondi/gondu

TzCush ***gwa(a)ndi** 'ram' (Kiessling and Mous (2003:125). Proto-Somaloid ***wan** 'ram' (Heine 1978). Retention.

Bantu ***gondi**, ***gondu** 'sheep'. Most end in **i** (East Nyanza, F)

Phillipson (2013): wide distribution of Bantu languages in East Africa that have borrowed this item.

Bantu pre-nasal: later Bantu internal development or in transfer.

Round vowel in Bantu: Either we reconsider the West-Rift reconstruction, or we assume an earlier Cushitic language with a round vowel, or in transfer but Cua... is generally possible in Bantu.

...

Semantics male/female animal: Ram borrowed as sheep because male rather than female sheep central in contact.

Thagicu (Central Kenya) **nundu** for 'sheep' (except Sonjo final i = influence Mara Bantu). Separate transfer; Earlier? Or innovated as a group {loss of **g**: Meinhof's law operates: NC–N(C) -> N - N(C)}

The Kilimanjaro area has the root but without internal regular correspondences: late and separate spreads

But Taita has **fwandi** with regular gw>fw: early

Southern Highlands has word ***gwada** 'calf' {Kwanyama law NC-NC -> NC-C}. Separate transfer

Corridor Bantu languages further developed forms, like Malila **nonzi**

ngondi sheep

- Thagicu as early and separate development **o**
- recover development in South Cushitic
- nasal added as Bantu development
- Southern Highlands has word *gwada ‘calf’ as separate transfer **wa**.
- wa>o, o>wa

Barren

tasa (Cush)

- ALBU*tsa'ata (f) 'barren female'
- No further Cushitic cognate
- Sandawe tsà``tá 'sterile cow'.
- Nurse & Hinnebush (Sabaki: 288)
*tasa 'barren' pNEC innovation
from SC with cognates in CK and
Chaga, etc.. pSC-Ehret *dzaa'
'extinguished' for Dahalo dzaa' 'to
die'
- Thagichu: ndhaata; dh ~ c

sunu (Nil)

- Kalenjin **so:n** (Rottland 1982:559)
- Datooga **soonoo-da** 'barren cow'
- ^{PIRQ*}**soona** (n) 'barren female' from D.
- in East Nyanza (Mara+Suguti)
 - Zanaki **sunu**
 - Ikizu **esono**
 - Nata **a-sono**
 - Jita **isunu**
 - Logoli **isunu** –close to Kalenjin
- Languages also have the old Bantu word ***gumba** for 'barren woman' BLR3-1505 (wide distribution).

barren

tasa

- With metathesis: Swahili **tasa**; Pokomo **ndata**; Gogo **ntaasa**; Seuta: Shambaa **nthàshà**; Bondei, Zigula, Ngulu **ntasa**; Zaramo **tasa**;
- F: Langi **ntahata**, **ntasa**; Nyilamba **ntaasa**; Nyaturu **ntaha**; Sukuma/Nyamwezi **ndaasa**;
- Chaga: **Rasa** (<***taca**);
- Pare: **tathá**, **tasá** (adjective); Tuveta **ndasa**

sunu

Later and more local transfer of Kalenjin/Datooga into (parts of) East Nyanza

East Nyanza

Mara

- *North Mara*: Gusii, Kuria, Suba
- *South Mara*: **Ikizu**, **Zanaki**; Isenya, Ikoma/**Nata**; Ngorome

Suguti: **Jita**, Kwaya

Greater Luyia: **Logooli**; Luyia, **Bukusu**, Saamia

...

tasa

- Borrowings events 1. in proto-Thagicu or pre-proto; 2. with metathesis in F+Seuta +Gogo; 3. in Pare (then Gweno, Mbugu) with tone change
- original form long vowel, first syllable is low, second mostly low but sometimes high; F and NEC: Seuta, and Chaga, Pare have metathesis. [BLR3-9209 *taaca 'barren cow' [G,E]; BLR3-9274 *caata [E] (Ehret 1980)
- Thagiicu closest to source, early transfer. Hence Sandawe from Tz Cushitic.

sunu

conclusion

Cushitic word into Kenyan Bantu: Central Kenyan (Thagicu) and NECoastal after metathesis + Bantu>Bantu spread But how into zone F?

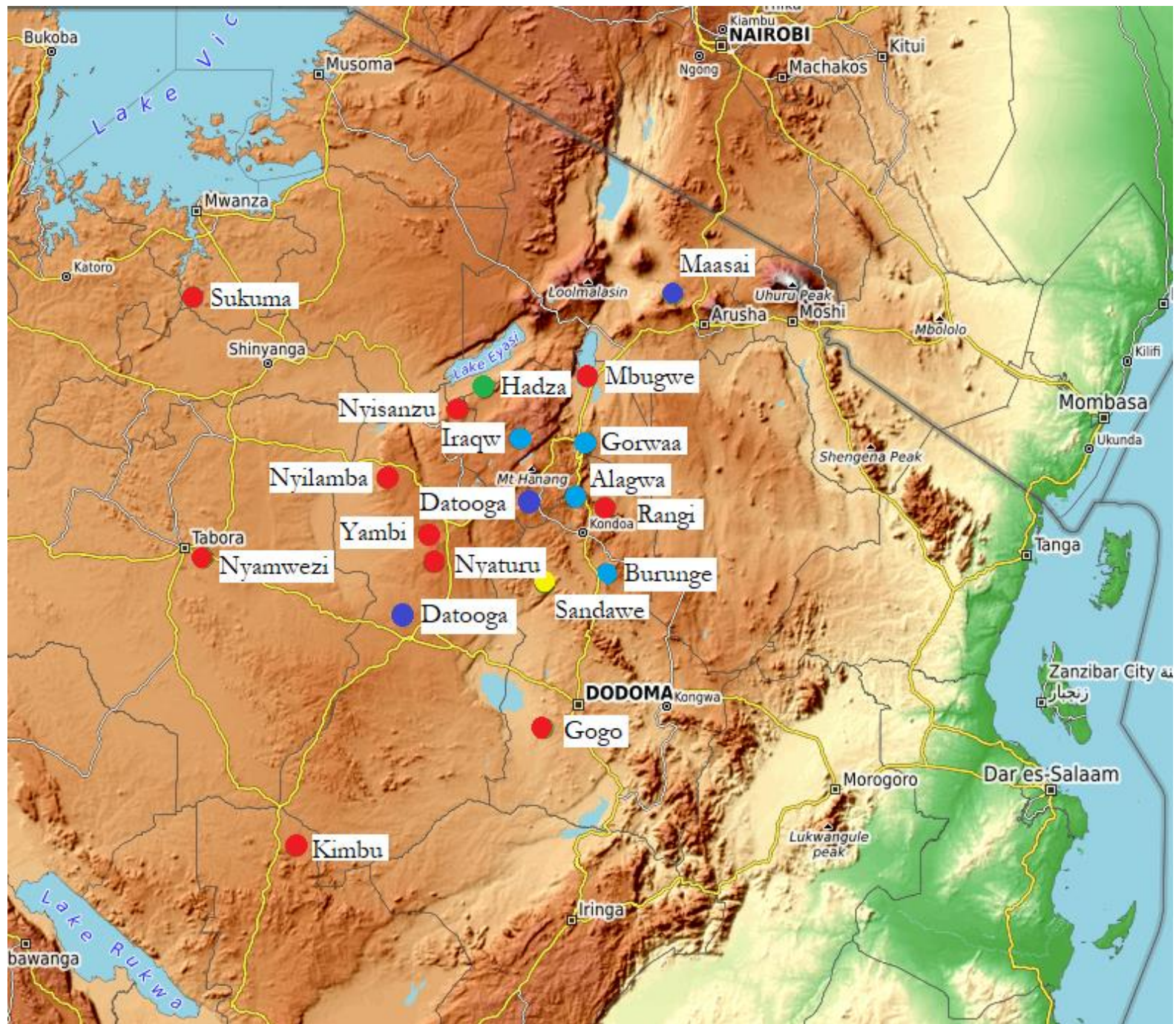
Nilotic word later and local into East Nyanza=Victoria lgs where there is no sign of tasa (yet?)

deem ‘herd’

- Ehret-Classical Age p.87,68,327 Proto Southern Cushitic transfer into Southern Nyanza basin Bantu. Nurse 1988 Southern Highlands -dima ‘to herd’ + Proto-Nyika dima ‘to herd’ + Proto Mwika -cema ‘to herd’. From virtual Bantu °dum ‘to herd’ d should not occur before i in Bantu inherited vocab in the area.
- PWR *de'em (v.dur) ‘herd, tend cattle’
- F: Rimi, Nyamwezi, Kimbu, Sukuma, Sumbwa dum ‘to herd’
- Southern Highlands: Bena, Sangu, Pangwa, Kinga, Wanji, Kisi, Manda, Ngoni and Ndamba
- *Rufiji/Ruvuma: Matengo, Poto: lima ‘to herd’ (consonant and vowel are different) different source?*



- No evidence in Central and Northern Tanzania, Kenya: Hehe; NE: Zigula, Lugulu, Gogo, Shambaa
- The loan has to be old because of the distribution in Bantu. Less to more specialised semantics in competing Bantu lexemes (Nurse 1988): **chungu** ‘watch’ > **lisha** ‘let eat’ > **diima** ‘herd’.
- Remarkable SOUTHERN distribution. F+Southern Highlands suggests transfer from TzCush when they already were in Tz Rift Valley and contact with proto-Southern Highlands



TAITA mountains

- Separate South Cushitic source of loans into the Bantu languages of the Taita, Kilimanjaro, Pare and Usambara mountains.
- Results of Taita zoom club: Derek Nurse, Bonny Sands, Mauro Tosco, Ed Elderkin, Gérard Philippon, Christian Rapold, Ahmed Sosal, Sjef van Lier, Maarten Mous
- Into Saghala (+other) 20 potential transfers from pre-TzCush; 9 (12) from Dahalo, 14 from Coastal Bantu, ultimately Somali, 5 Maasai, 3 Oromo

Summary

results with uncertainties

slight indications for separation of Bantu

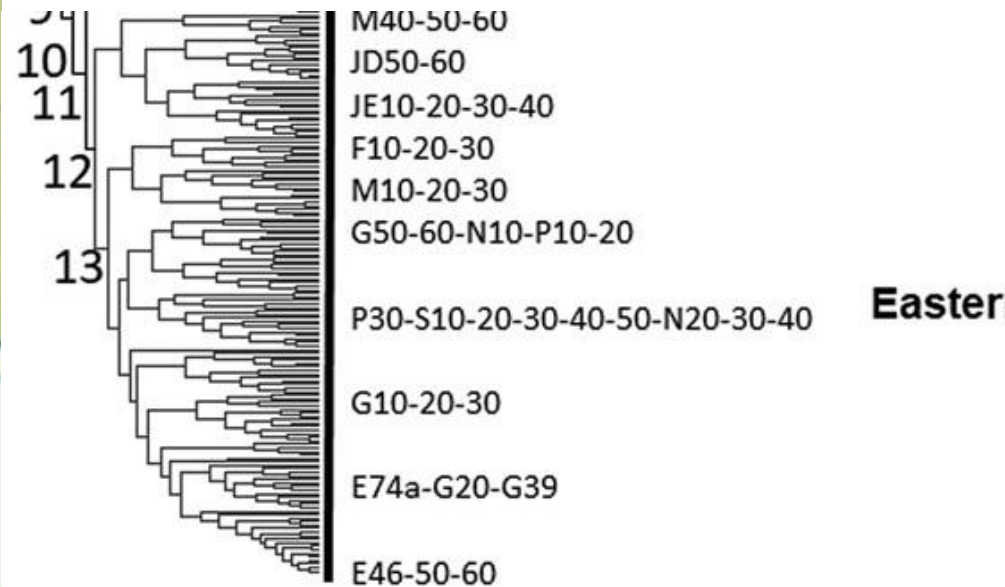
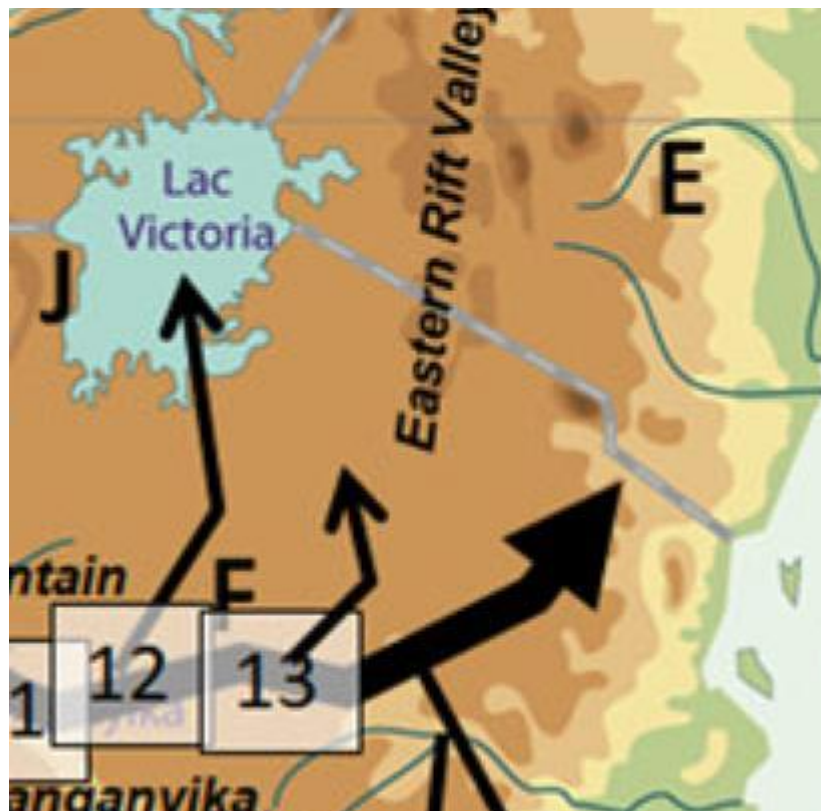
challenges in all corners

Sisyphus task: many languages, details needed,
many candidate transfer

we have Nilotic largely ignored so far

how to make choices? quality or quantity

PS Another view on Bantu spread EA



Grollemund, Rebecca ; Schoenbrun, David ; Vansina, Jan 2023 Moving Histories: Bantu Language Expansions, Eclectic Economies, and Mobilities. *Journal of African history* 64(1):13-37

Grollemund et al. text

The second phase of the expansion, which began with the split by Branch 10, at the foot of the Mitumba Mountains, being followed by another split (branch 11), on the eastern side of Lake Tanganyika. The first offshoot entered the dense Maniema rainforests. The second, known as the Central Woodlands or the Sabi-Botatwe branch, occupied the dry forests along the slopes of the Mitumba Mountains, from upper Katanga southwestwards, eventually reaching the Caprivi Strip.⁸² Lake Tanganyika blocked movement eastwards. Some people eventually moved around the Lake's northern or southern shores or they crossed in canoes, its opposite shore visible from the Burton peninsula. People relied again on fishworkers, hunters, or foragers who knew this Lake. In today's western Tanzania, the speech community ancestral to Great Lakes Bantu languages (branch 12) split off, moving north and northeast of Lake Tanganyika. Speakers of West Tanzanian languages (branch 13) expanded east of Lake Tanganyika and the remainder spread to the Indian Ocean coast and a few of its Islands, after which people stopped moving east-ward.⁸³ Bantu speakers failed to cross the eastern rift valley, perhaps blocked by its natural environments and by the presence of other mixed farmers and pastoralists. The corridor between Lakes Tanganyika and Malawi channelled some Bantu speakers who settled near hunter-gatherers and other mixed farmers and herders.⁸⁴ Once there, movement divided in two directions. Some went east and northeast around the southern end of the eastern rift valley reaching coastal Tanzania and Kenya. The ancestors of the southern Bantu languages moved to the southeast.⁸⁵ These last movements of the second phase concluded Bantu expansions on the continent.

Grollemund, Rebecca ; Schoenbrun, David ; Vansina, Jan 2023 Moving Histories: Bantu Language Expansions, Eclectic Economies, and Mobilities. Journal of African history 64(1):13-37

Thank you



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