

The Bantu Expansion in East Africa Through Contact

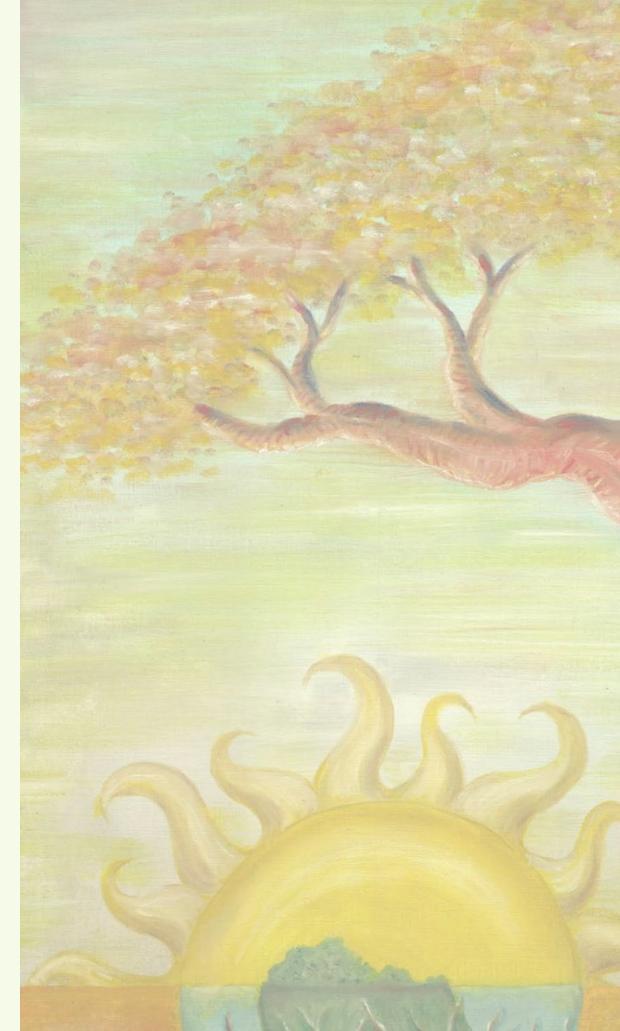
NINA VAN DER VLUGT (GHENT) & MAARTEN MOUS (LEIDEN)
LHEAf, 7 JUNE 2024



Focus

- We investigate the spread of the Bantu languages in East Africa by reconsidering Cushitic and Nilotic loans that have entered different groups of Bantu languages at different points in time and place.
 - Could this be an extra indication for subclassification in the spread of East African (EA) Bantu?
- We evaluate earlier proposals by Ehret building on Philippson (2013) and updating Cushitic and Nilotic links proposed by Nurse.





BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Linguistic landscape of East Africa

Cushitic

Pastoralist and agro-pastoralists.

WR: Iraqw, Gorwaa, Alagwa, Burunge in Tanzanian Rift Valley; Qwadza† (HG), Aasa† (HG) in Masai plains. Dahalo (HG) (click) in Kenya,

East Cushitic:

Yaaku†(HG) in Kenya, Boni (HG),

Oromo: Borana, Orma, Waata, Rendille, Somali.

Nilotic

Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists.

South: Kalenjin group Mt

Elgon+SE;

East: Turkana, Maasai;

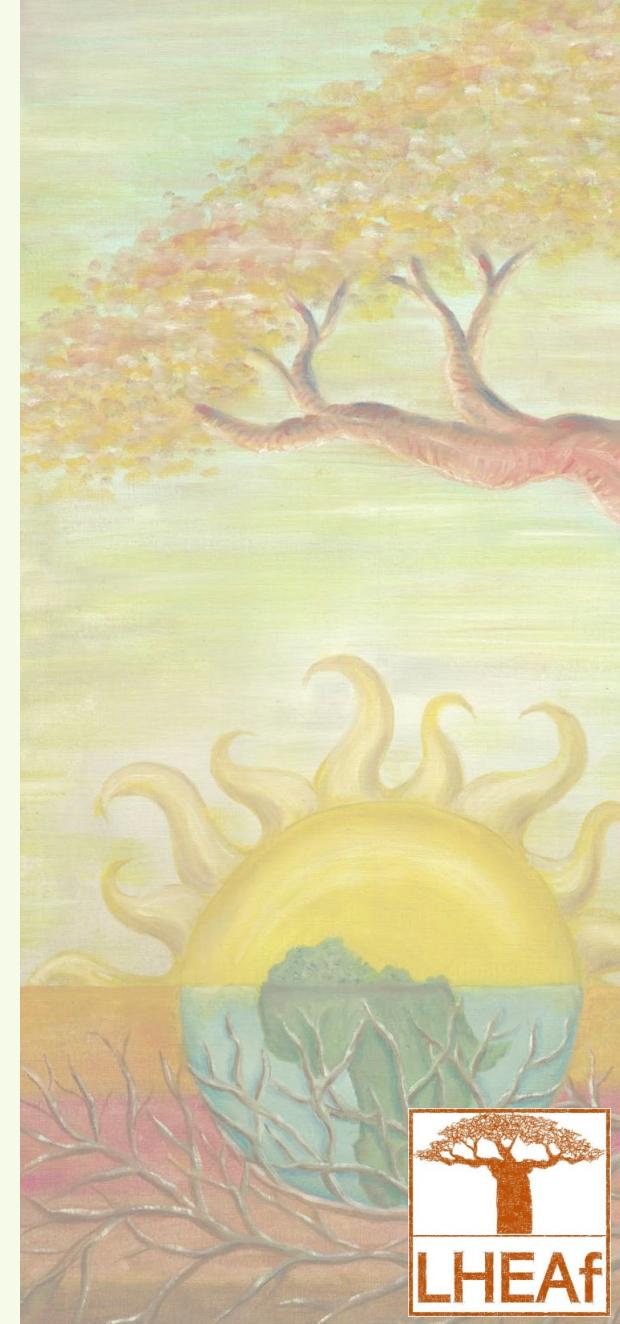
West: Luo, Alur (not taken into account here)

Bantu

Agro-pastoralists. Everywhere.

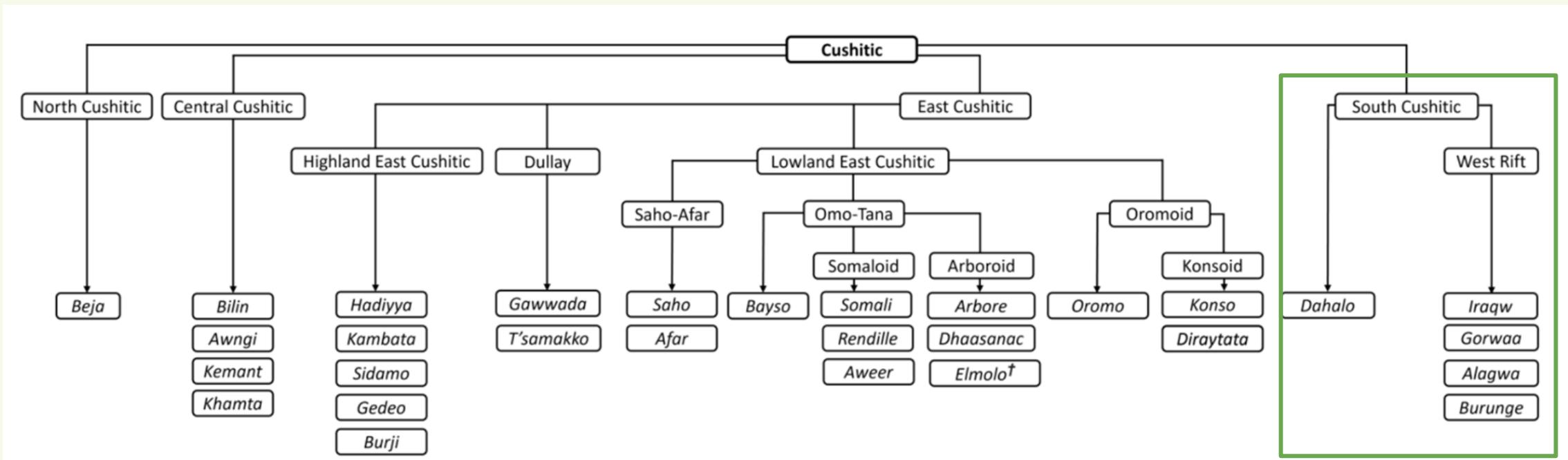
Eastern Bantu

East Nyanza, Central Kenya Bantu, Langi-CHAGA, NorthEast Coastal (NECB) including Sabaki, Ruvu; Southern Highlands, Corridor Rufiji-Ruvuma



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Cushitic languages



Nilotic languages

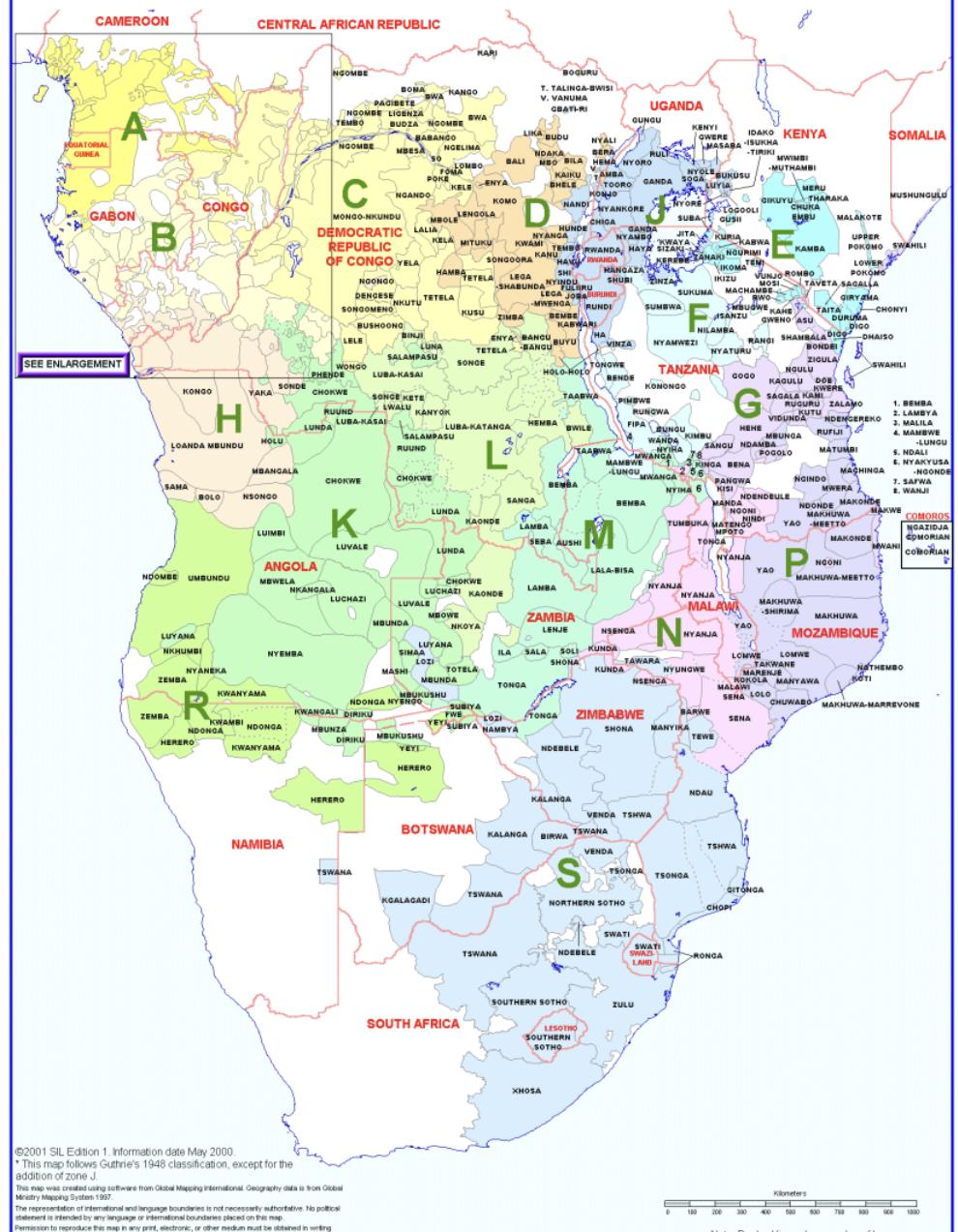
- Nilotic:
 - Eastern:
 - Bari: **Bari**
 - Lotuxo-Maa: **Lotuho, Maasai**
 - Teso-Turkana: **Teso, Turkana, Karamojong, Toposa**
 - Southern:
 - Kalenjin: **Päkot, Nandi, Markweta**
 - Tatoga: **Datooga, Omotik**
 - Western:
 - Lwoo:
 - Northern: **Anywa, Päri, Shilluk**
 - Southern: **Lango, Acholi**
 - Dinka-Nuer: **Dinka, Nuer**

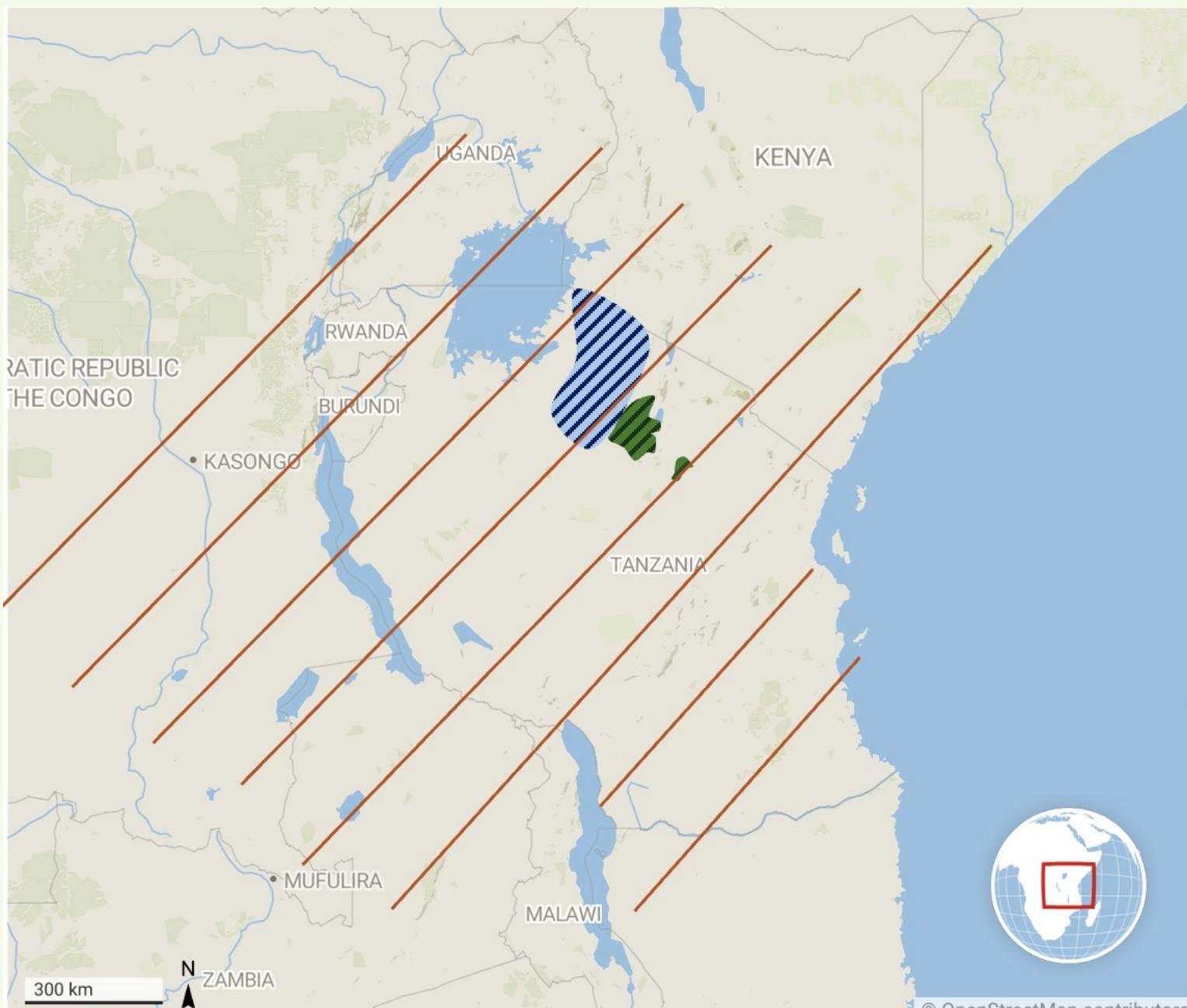
Bantu languages

- ▼ Narrow Bantu (578)
 - Bantu A-B10-B20-B30 (75)
 - Central-Western Bantu (218)
- ▼ East Bantu (256)
 - Botatwe (10)
 - Corridor Bantu (16)
 - Greater Lega (13)
 - Kilombero (2)
 - Mbugwe-Langi (2)
 - Northeast Savanna Bantu (134)
 - North Mozambique Bantu (17)
 - Nyaturu-Nilamba (3)
 - Rufiji-Ruvuma (14)
 - Sabi (8)
- Southern Bantu (27)
- Tumbuka-Sena-Nyanja (10)

The Bantu languages of Africa

Groupings based on Guthrie, 1948*





South Cushitic

South Nilotc

East Bantu

On the Bantu Expansion in East Africa

- Ehret's 1998 work on "An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in world History, 1000 B.C.~A.D.~400."
 - Philippson (2013) gives a thorough review of this work.
- Nurse and Philippson 1980 give us a subclassification
 - Subclassification is the backdrop of our loan word research
- Grollemund et al. 2023: phylogenetic study and cognacy judgements



On the Bantu Expansion in East Africa

- Research within LHEAf suggests a late entry of Cushitic into Tanzania (contrary to Nurse 1988)
 - *If* South Cushitic was indeed late entering Tanzania, *then* deep loans cannot be the result of contact with now extinct local South Cushitic communities
 - This has big implications for the linguistic history and landscape of East Africa and potentially poses a problem for Cushitic loans in Bantu languages
- Can we work with this new assumption?
 - Different scenarios to account for the lexical contact that we see

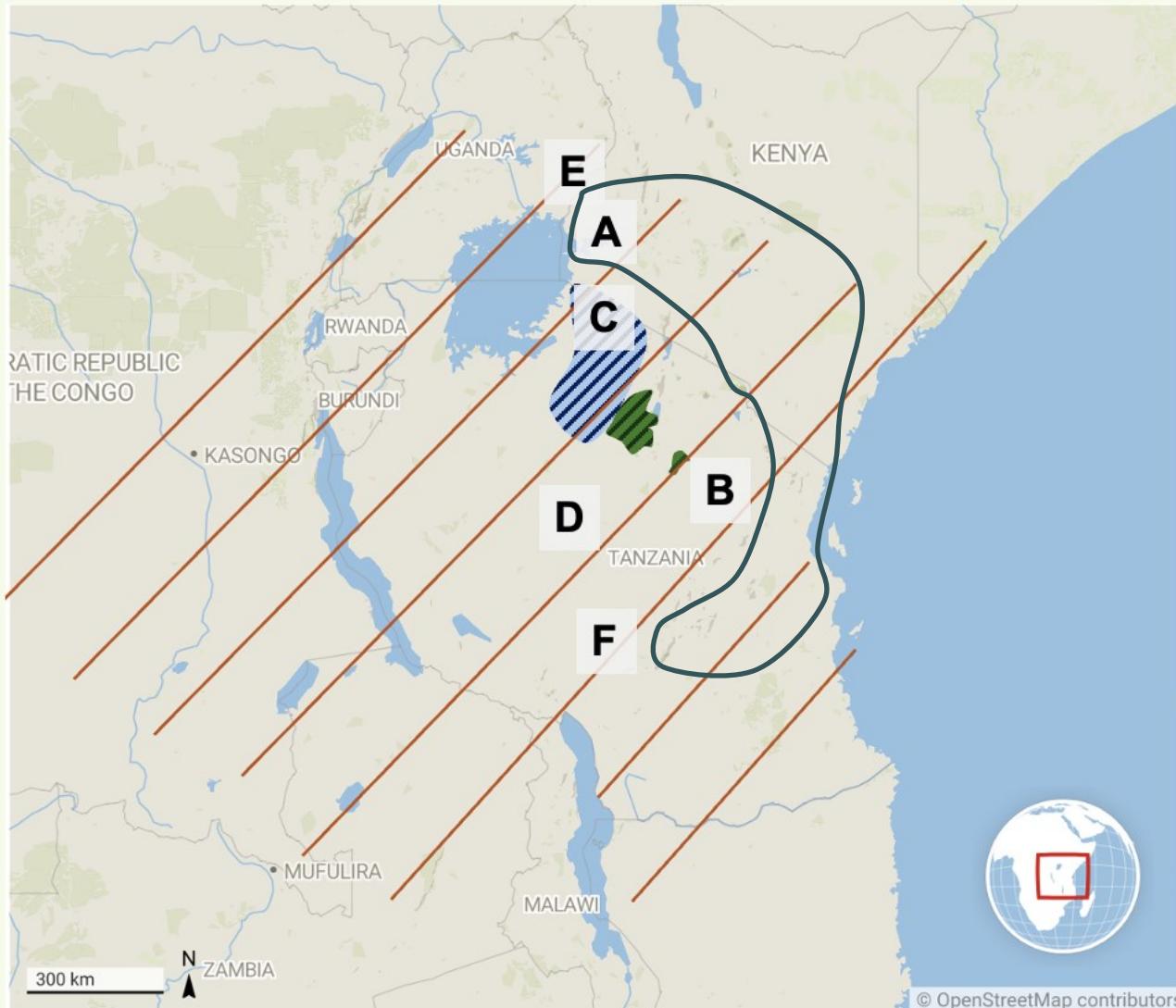


Scenarios

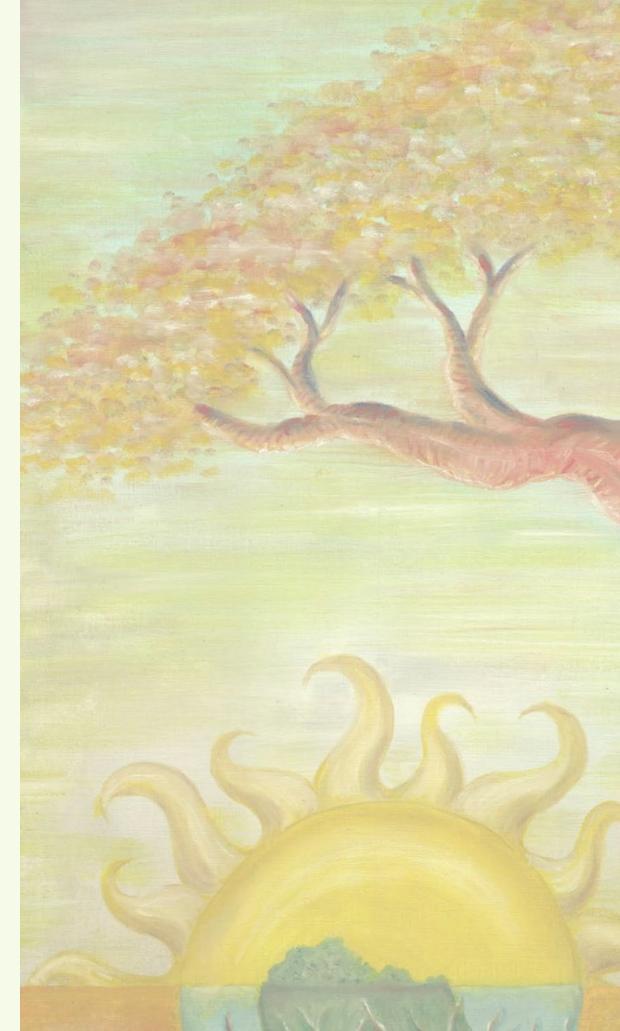
- A. **East Nyanza** with **South Cushitic** + **South Nilotic** filter
- B. **Kilimanjaro-Taita-Pare** mountain ranges and local **South Cushitic** (**Taita talk**)
- C. **Semi/Tonjo**: two layers of **Cushitic loans** (**Not yet studied**)
- D. The Tanzanian Rift Valley (cf. **Gibson and Mous to appear**)
- E. **East Nyanza** and late **Kalenjin-Luhya** and **Mara** contact (not elsewhere). Spread over spread (**Luhya talk**)
- F. **Southern Tanzania Highlands Bantu** & **Corridor Bantu**. No chain of links with A, no **Cushitic** and **no Nilotic** spoken there.

Scenarios

- A. East Nyanza with South Cushitic + South Nilotic filter**
- B. Kilimanjaro-Taita-Pare** mountain ranges and local **South Cushitic** (Taita talk)
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- A** Source of Cushitic-Nilotic lexicon
- B** Separate Cushitic source of Taita + Bantu
- C** Sonjo with late Gorwaa influence
- D** Late local influence of WR-languages and Datooga
- E** Second wave Bantu with later Kalenjin influence
- F** Cushitic/Nilotic loans that cannot be explained by the above => “Horizontal” spread or counterevidence



THE BANTU EXPANSION IN EAST AFRICA

Methodology

- Database > 700 entries based on the literature (Dominique Loviscach)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	1	root	meaning	ref	source	comments	bantu lgs	WW-file	scenario
					root)				
73	73	-kòlò	sheep (also spread through Malawi across southern Zambia)	Ehret 1998:59; 305	ESh *bil 'goat' (for *bil > *bel-, *-pel- in this loanword set, see 'rhinoceros' and 'hyrax' above) (see also table 39A)	???	Kati (Kaskazi)	Y	
74	74	-sakata	monitor lizard (Yao)	Ehret 1998:59; 305	ESh: Rub: Soo sagat 'monitor lizard' (earlier Rub *sak'at-)		Rufiji-Ruvuma (Kaskazi)		
75	75	-belele	sheep (also spread through Malawi across southern Zambia)	Ehret 1998:59; 305	ESh *bil 'goat' (for *bil > *bel-, *-pel- in this loanword set, see 'rhinoceros' and 'hyrax' above) (see also table 39A)	Not in E2001	Rufiji-Ruvuma (Kaskazi)		
76	76	-pùlà	nose	Ehret 1998:59; 305	ESh(?) □ Cf. ESh (and PNS) *phur 'to blow'	innovations of uncertain or Bantu source	Southern Kaskazi		
77	77	-túmbí	egg (also in Thagiicu of Upland)	Ehret 1998:59; 305	ESh(?) □ Source unknown, but has typical Bantu phonological structure	innovations of uncertain or Bantu source	Southern Kaskazi		

Methodology

- Database > 700 entries based on the literature (Dominique Loviscach)
- Majority of South Nilotic and South Cushitic origin
- +- 200 words
- Today: highlighting of case studies
- Word categories:

Domain	Example
Domestication of animals	Thorn fence, blood, sheep, calf, bull, ox
Agricultural terminology	Hoe, sorghum, pearl millet
Wild animals and hunt	Hunt, rhino, baboon, hare, hawk, wild animal
Kinship	Uncle, girl, stranger/guest
Other	Tattoo, raid, darkness, forge, lizard, beads

A.dana ‘forge’

- Two forms in Bantu:

- East Nyanza:

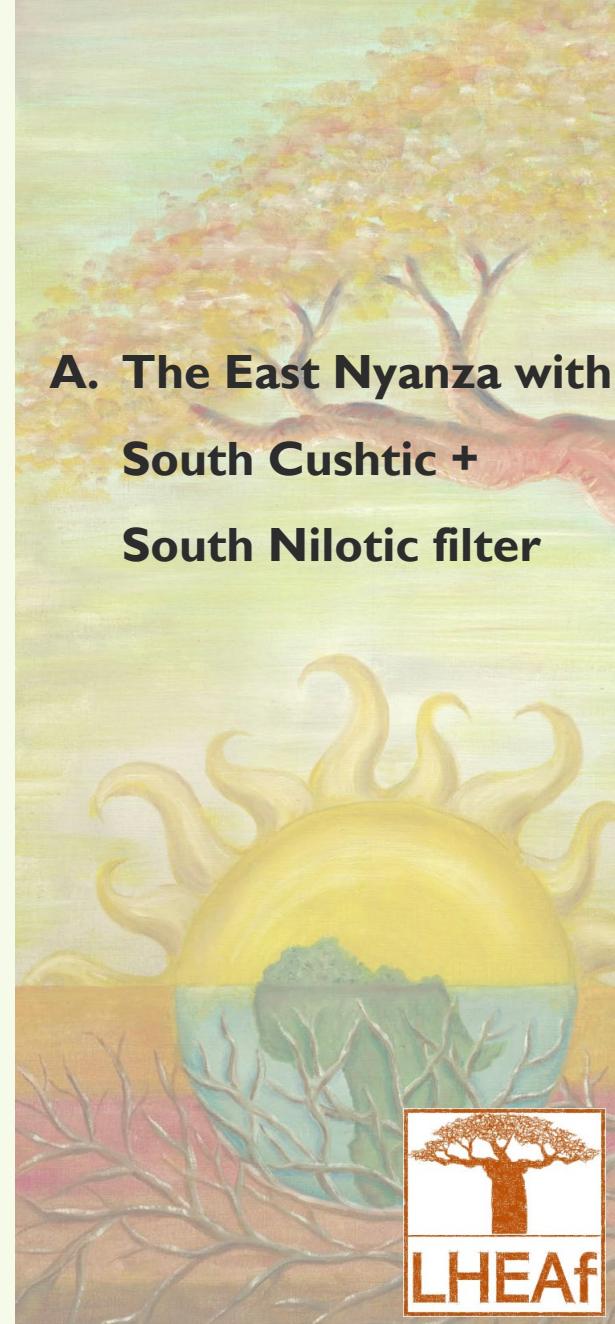
rany
khw-iranya
ohw-itanya

Bukusu JE3
Luhya JE32
Samialugwe JE34

- Other Bantu

(i)sana
u-tiana
ku-shana
syana
ku-yana
ku-syana

Mkuu E623
Nyaturu F32
Sambaa G23
Bungu F25
Ndengeleko P11
Malila M24



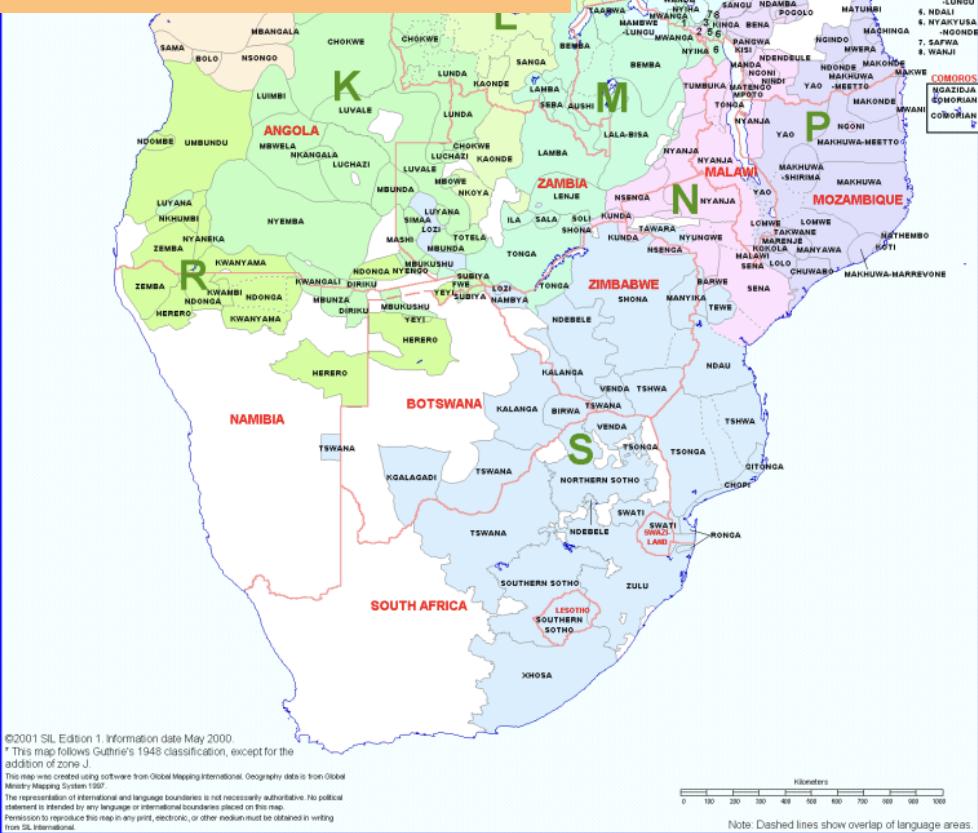
The Bantu languages of Africa

Groupings based on Guthrie, 1948*



(i)sana	Mkuu E623
u-tiana	Nyaturu F32
ku-shana	Sambaa G23
syana	Bungu F25
ku-yana	Ndengeleko P11
ku-syana	Malila M24

rany *Bukusu JE3*
khw-iranya *Luhya JE32*
ohw-itanya *Samialugwe JE34*



A.dana ‘forge’

- Two forms in Bantu:
 - East Nyanza:
Proto South Nilotic *ta:ny from West Omo-Tana
 - Other Bantu (cf. Guthrie 1967: 122)

73.65 The group of C.S. with the meaning ‘to forge (metal)’, which are displayed on Topogram 19, present what is apparently a relatively dimple picture. They are

C.S.1861 ***-týd-** G(D:6)
C.S.403 ***-cúd-** (D:3)

C.S.1580 ***-pönd-** E(D: 0)
C.S.1743 ***-tján-** E(D: 3)



East Nyanza
rany Bukusu JE3
khw-iranya Luhya JE32
ohw-itanya Samialugwe JE34

Other Bantu
(i)sana Mkuu E623
ku-shana Sambaa G23
syana Bungu F25
ku-yana Ndengeleko P11
ku-syana Malila M24



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-tian-, -tjan- forge Dv

2.11

C.S.1743 *-tján- forge E(D:3)

1743 The prehistory of the group of C.S. with this meaning is discussed in 73.65 in Part I.

E.64 -san-
E.74b -tjan-
F.31 -tjan-
F.32 -hrjan-
F.33 -tjan-

G.23 -jan-
M.23 -sxan-
N.21 -sxan-
P.12 -yan-
P.14 -hyan-

P.21 -syān-
P.25 -haan-

*

2.11

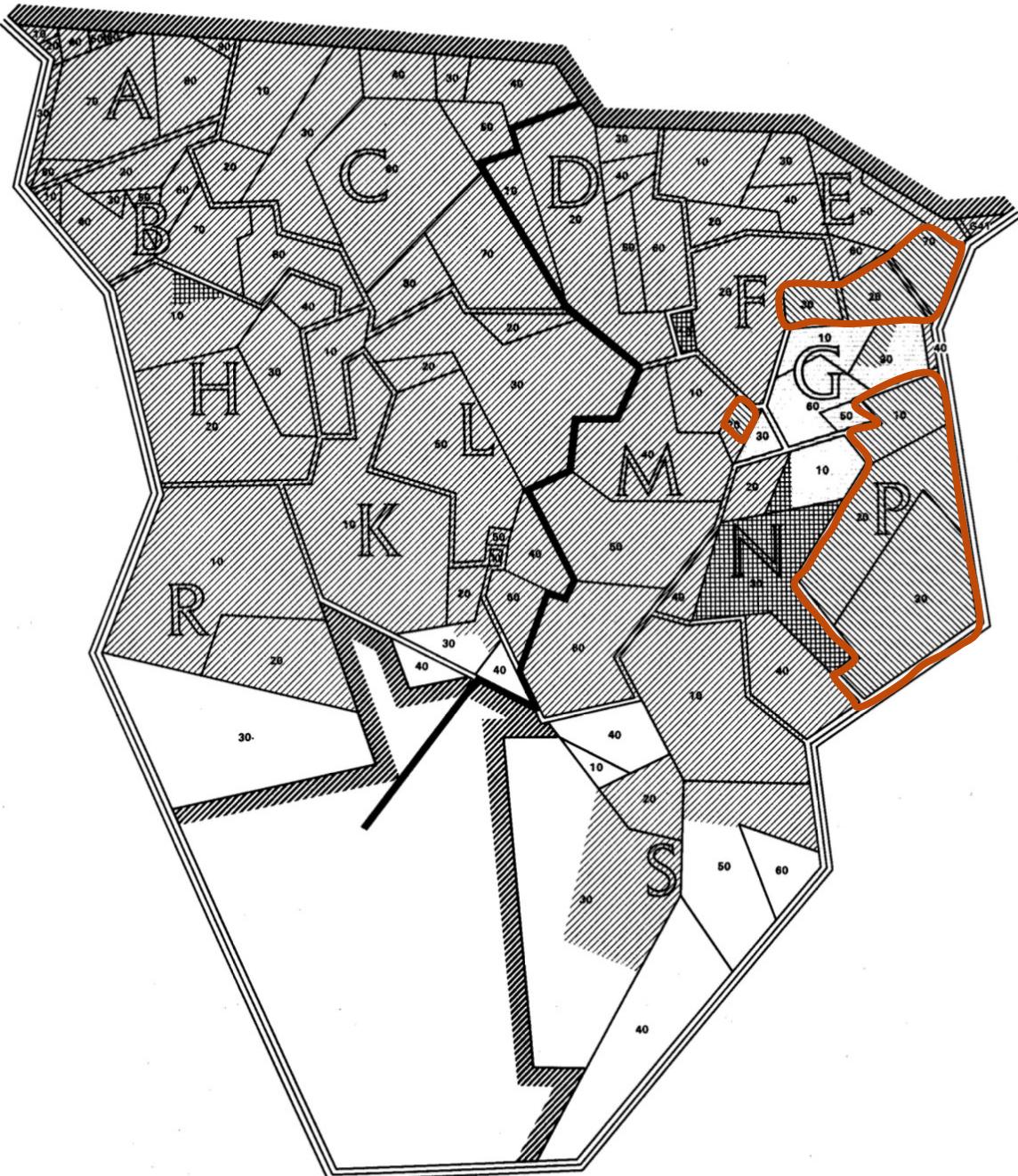
-tian- ~~forger~~ forgeron

Swa. +U -sal-

+ -tian -



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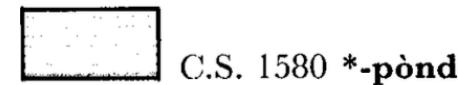


TOPOGRAM 19: Synonymous group meaning 'to forge'

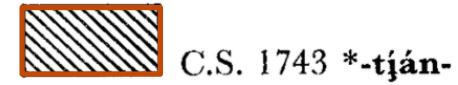
A.dana 'to forge'



C.S. 1861 *-túd-



C.S. 1580 *-pònd-



C.S. 1743 *-tíán-



C.S. 503 *-cúd-

“The existence of C.S. 1743 on the other hand suggests that a completely independent item to refer to the work of the smith emerge in the east. From the evidence displayed on the topogram it is at least possible to infer that *-TÚD- may have emerged so late in the Proto-Bantu period that it did not spread to the whole of PB-B, while *-TÍÁN- probably arose in part of PB-B, not necessarily to replace *-TÚD-, but through the acquisition of the skill of metal working from a quite distinct source (Guthrie 1967: 122)”

A.dana ‘forge’

- Relative chronology $^*-\acute{t}ián-$
 - Must have been present *before* Bantu Spirantization happened in these languages
 - Check: to see if all languages with fricatives in C1 actually underwent spirantization, or if they might have borrowed it from a language

Bantu Spirantization
The high vowels *i and *u would have caused preceding reconstructed Proto Bantu stops to turn into fricatives and affricates, cf:

PB $^*-\acute{d}im$ > Nyamwezi
zimá

(Bastin & Schadeberg 2003, 1992; Bostoen 2008)



A.dana ‘forge’

- Scenarios
 - The two forms are not related
 - East Nyanza = loan (Proto South Nilotic *ta:ny), other Bantu = innovation and similarity is coincidence.
 - The two forms are related
 - How do we explain the palatalization in C2 in East Nyanza if *tyan* is the origin?
 - Where does *-tian- come from?
 - South Nilotic *tany ‘to forge iron’ but Bantu Spirantization would require *tany > tyan
 - Ik (Kuliak) has *ityak* ‘forge, hammer’ but C2 is different

East Nyanza

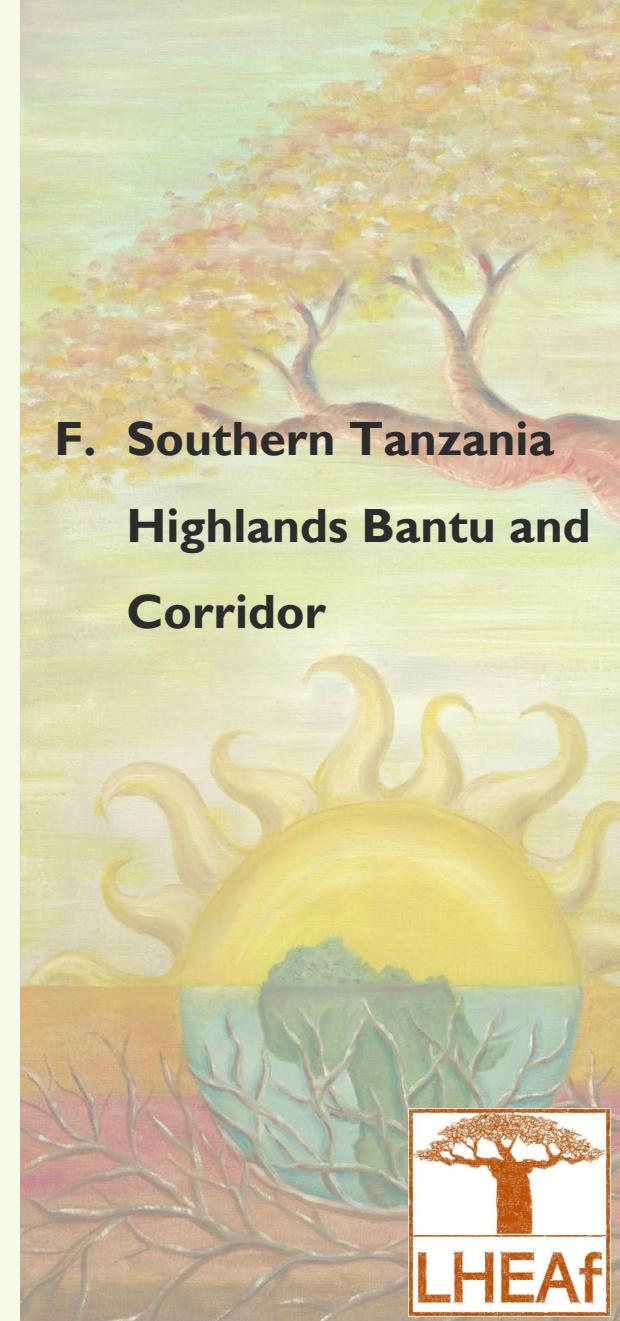
<i>rany</i>	Bukusu	JE3
<i>khw-iranya</i>	Luhya	JE32
<i>ohw-itanya</i>	Samialugwe	JE34

Other Bantu

<i>(i)sana</i>	Mkuu	E623
<i>u-tiana</i>	Nyaturu	F32
<i>ku-shana</i>	Sambaa	G23
<i>syana</i>	Bungu	F25
<i>ku-yana</i>	Ndengeleko	PII
<i>ku-syana</i>	Malila	M24

F. *kolo-mo* ‘hoe’

- The hoe is a new instrument; until a few generations ago Tanzanian Cushitic people used a wooden digging stick
- Peculiar distribution in Bantu
- 3 syllables



**F. Southern Tanzania
Highlands Bantu and
Corridor**

The distribution of 'hoe' in zone JE and M

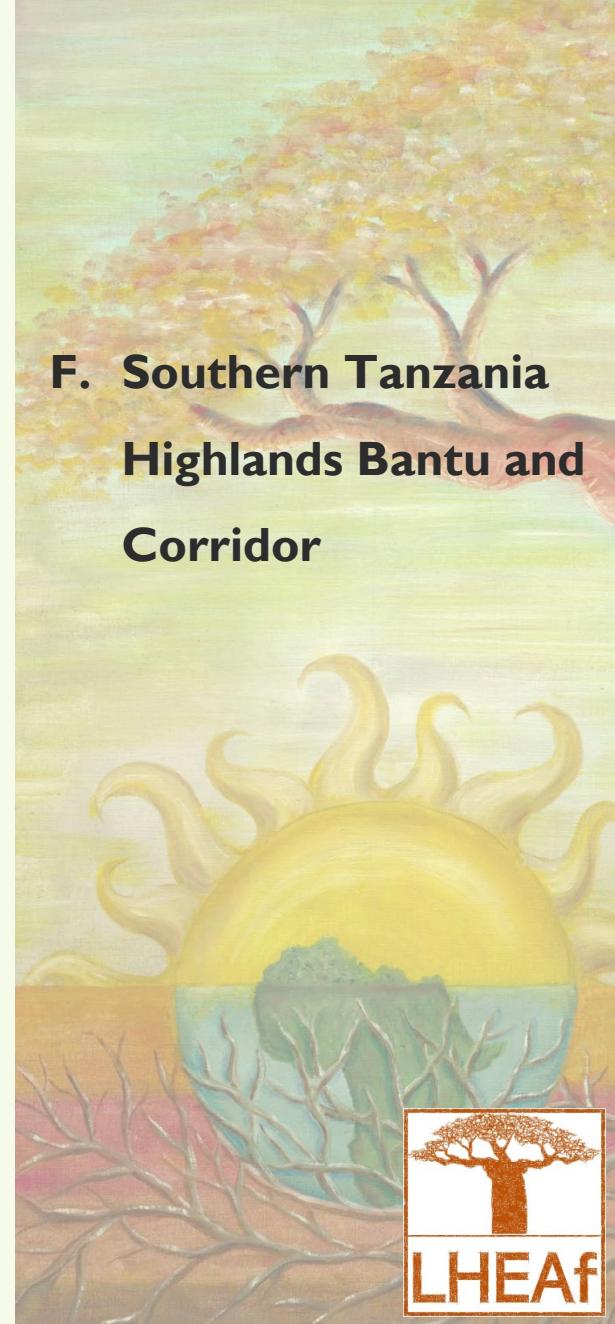


- akoromo (JE45)
- amukolo (M15)
- ekoromo (JE402)
- iinkolo (M13)
- mukolo (M14/5)



F. *kolo-mo* ‘hoe’

- Mara Bantu
 - *ekoromo* JE402 Ikizu (Tanzanian Language Survey)
 - *koromo* ‘traditional hoe’ JE402 Ikizu (Swangi 2008: 24)
 - *akoromo* JE45 Nata
- Tanzanian Cushitic
 - *kuru-moo* ‘hoe’
 - Cushitic singulative suffix -mo
 - Derived from *kooloo* ‘heel, ankle’ (cf. Proto East Omo-Tana *kal ‘ankle’, Burunge use the word for ‘ankle’ for ‘hoe’ and Sandawe borrowed as *kòlòó-n̩g* ‘hoe’)

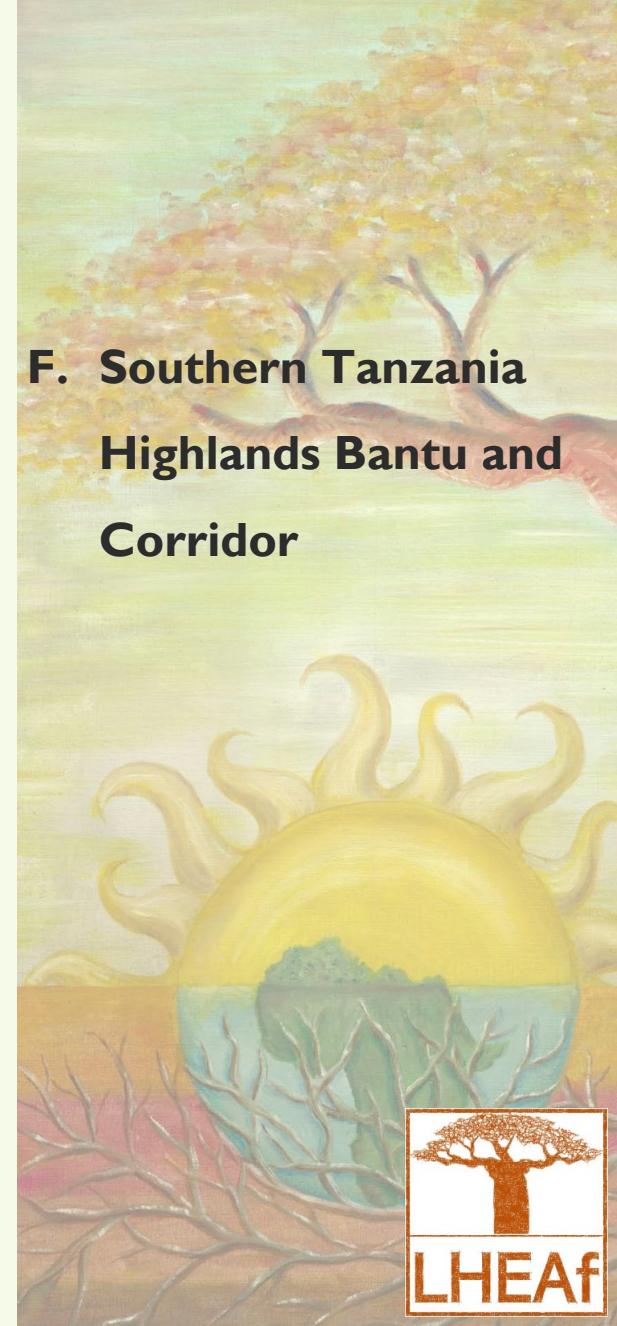


F. *kolo-mo* ‘hoe’

However:

- No similar transfer of this root found outside Mara so far
- M10 Fipa-Mambwe
 - *iinkolo* M13 Fipa
 - *amukolo* M15 Mambwe
 - *mukolo* M14/15 Rungu

F. Southern Tanzania Highlands Bantu and Corridor



F. *kolo-mo* ‘hoe’

However:

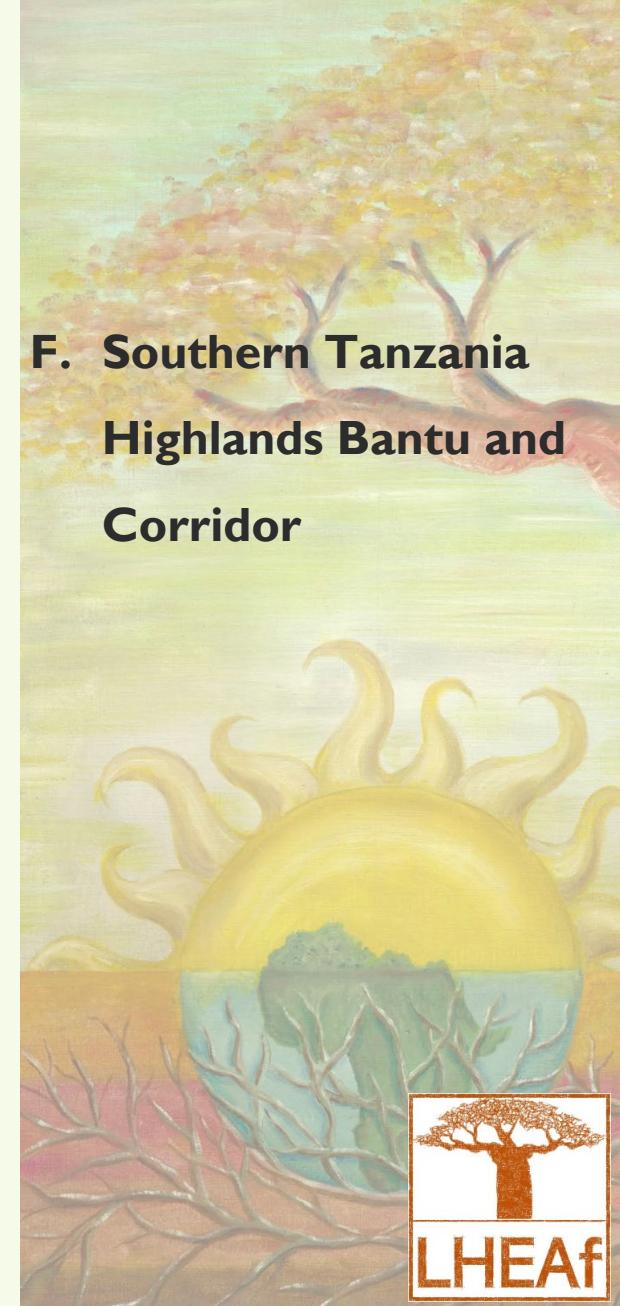
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M13 Fipa
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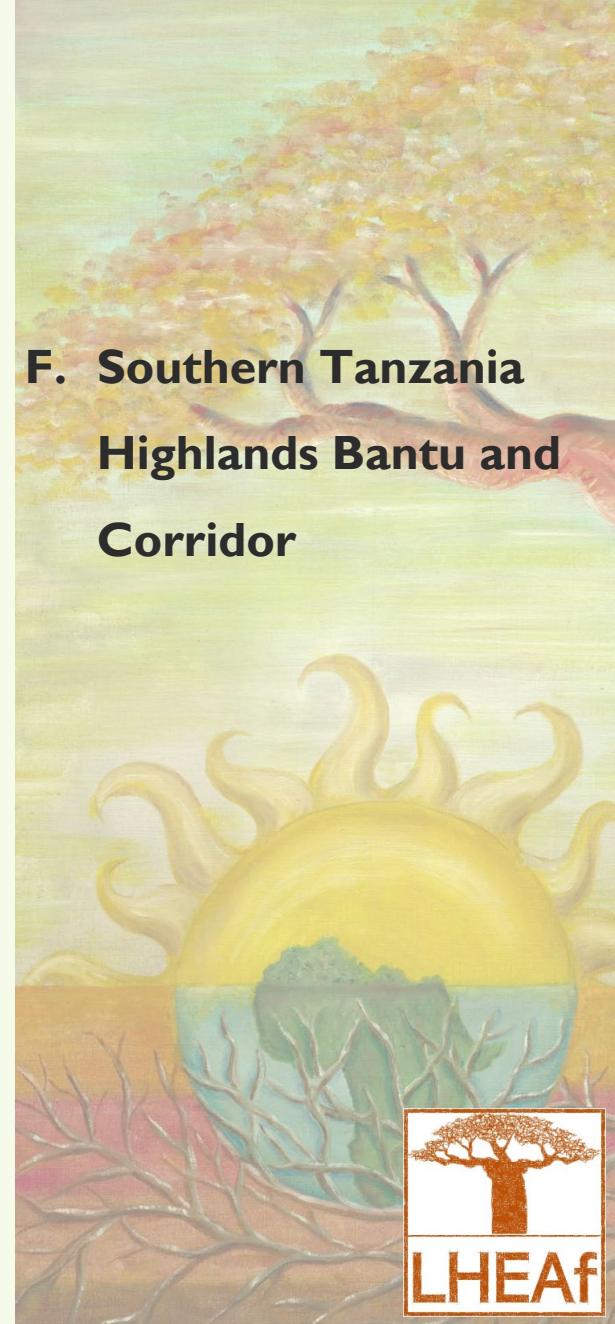
No suffix -mo!

**F. Southern Tanzania
Highlands Bantu and
Corridor**



F. *kolo-mo* ‘hoe’

- Scenarios:
 - Lexical innovation in Fipa area based on Bantu internal source, spread into West Rift Cushitic through trade > addition of *-mo* > Mara Bantu
 - Mara Bantu borrowed from West Rift Cushitic, Fipa is an independent innovation based on a Bantu internal source such as: *kodUd ‘scrape’ CJKLMR (BLR3 1894), *kodUdo ‘digging tool’ in JLM (BLR3 7028) cf. 1875 *kod ‘work’ (BLR3 DFJ).
 - Similarity is coincidence
 - Why no spirantization?
 - Where would the innovation have come from?

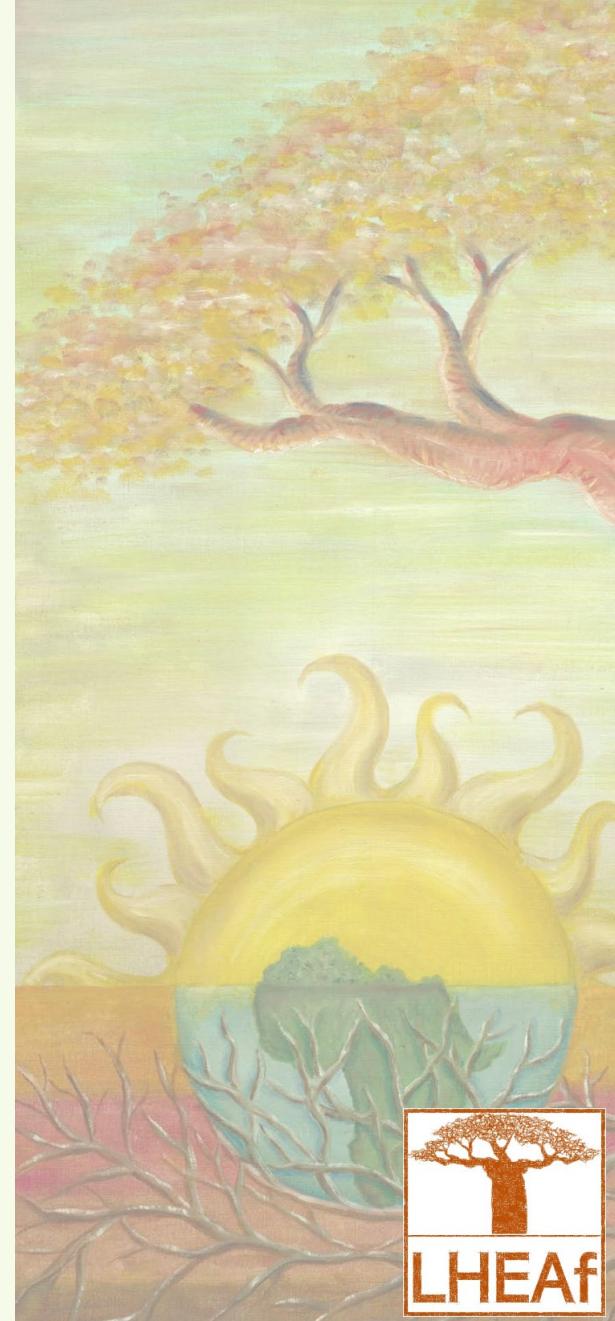


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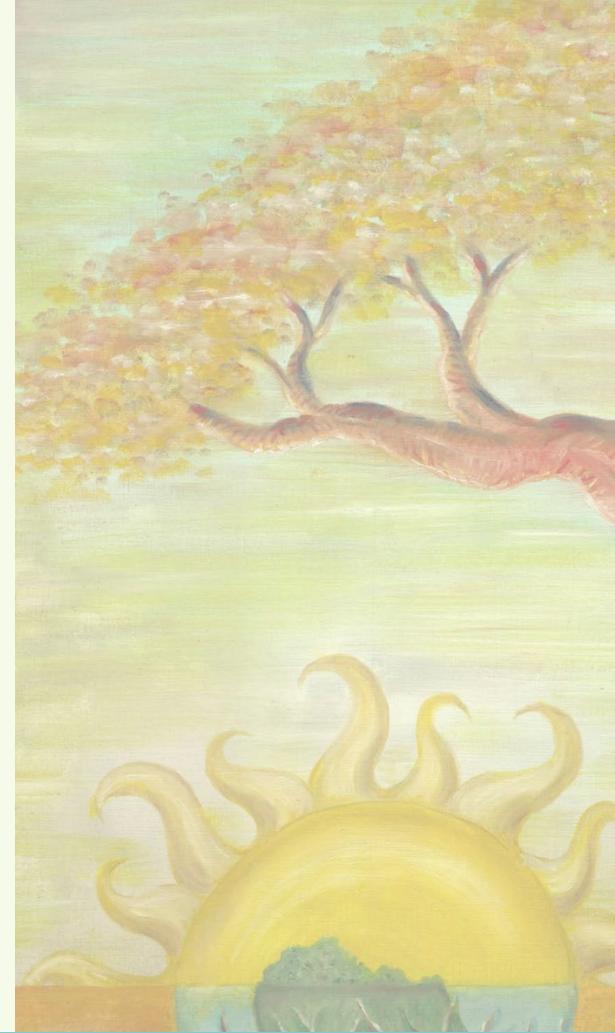


Generalizations

- For part of Cushitic loans, we can assume they were picked up in East Nyanza (scenario A) because of the wide distribution
- If we assume there were no early Cushitic people in East Africa, we need an explanation of the loans in Rufiji and South Tanzania (scenario F)
 - 'hoe' will only be a problem if the origin is Cushitic (but we are still checking Nilotc languages)

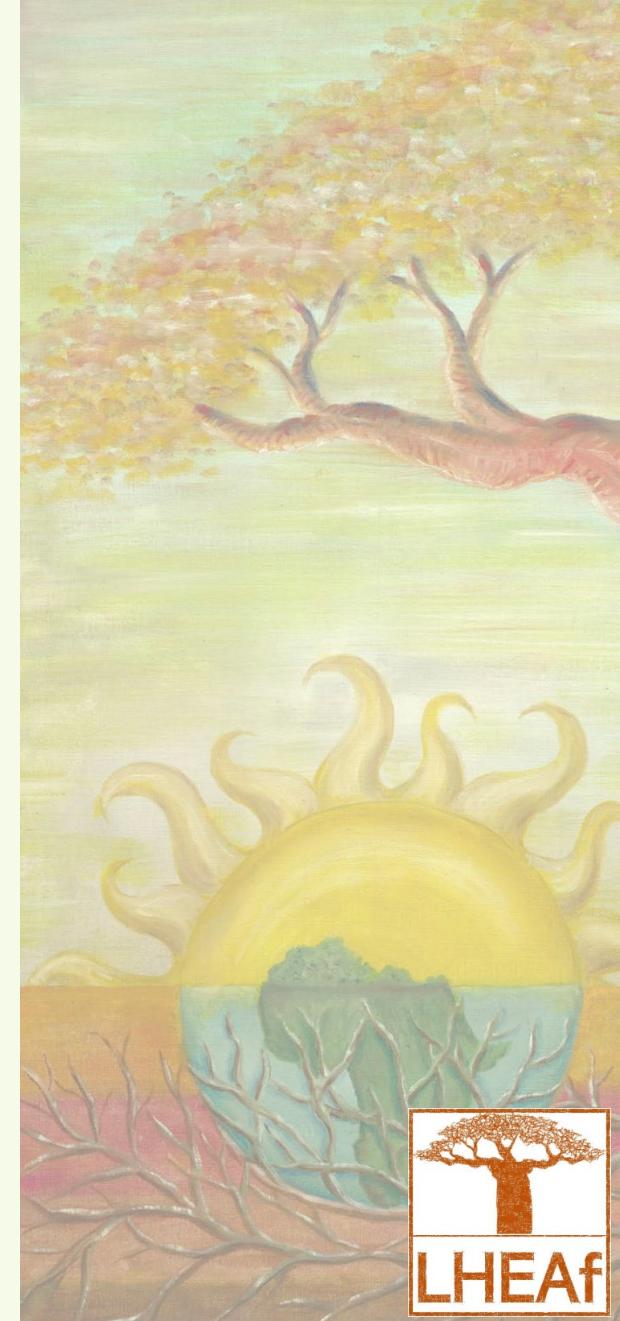


CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS



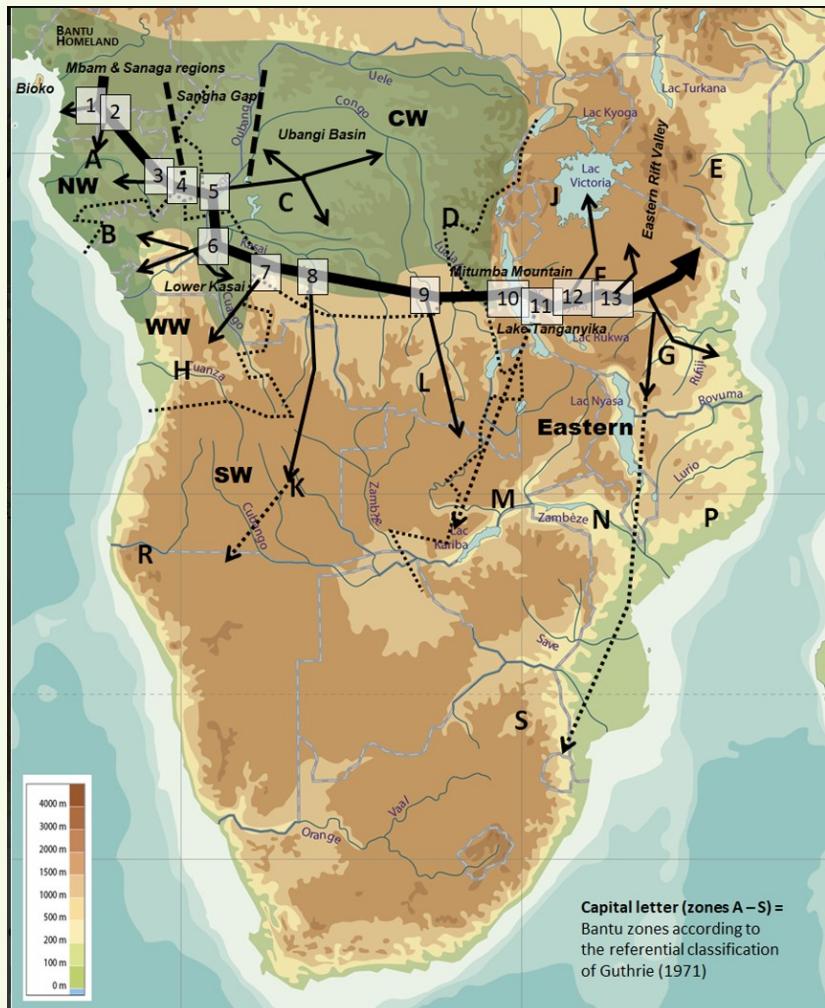
Challenges

- As we follow Ehret (1970, 1980), we have the same biases and limitations as he has
- Similarity in Bantu and intense contact with other Bantu languages (or multilingualism)
- Horizontal vs vertical transfer
- Words such as **de’em* ‘herd’ (discussion point)
- How does it relate to earlier evidence, such as the proposal by Grollemund et al. (2023)?



Alternative proposal

Grollemund et al. (2023) propose the following root into East Africa

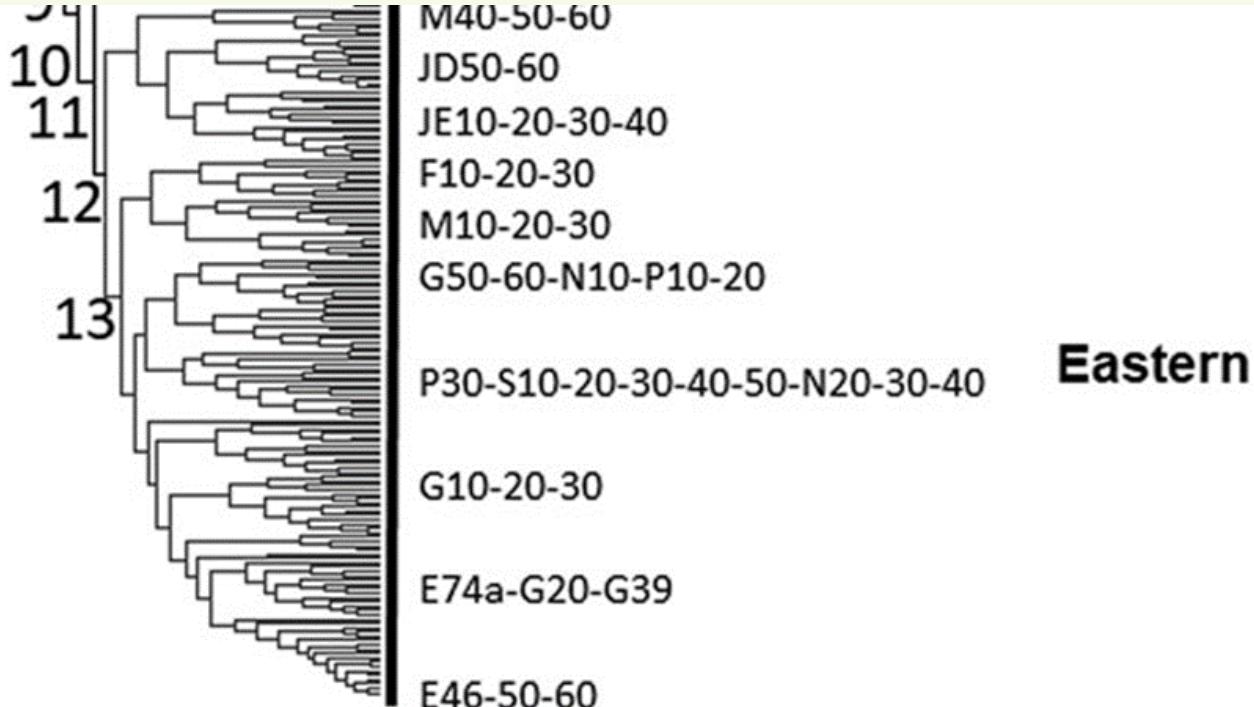
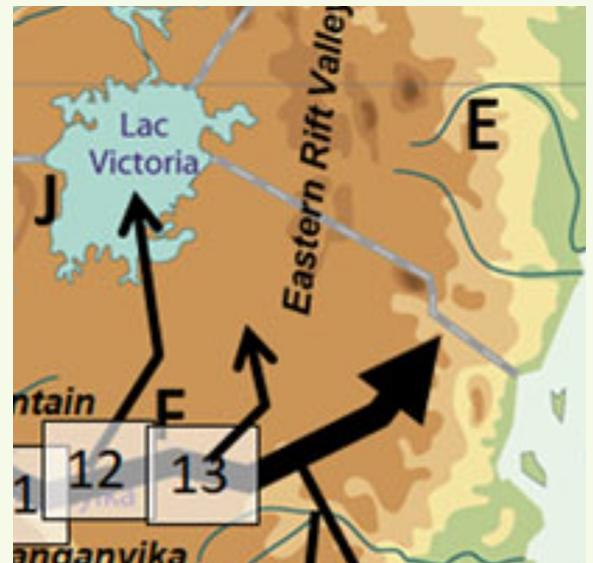


Grollemund, Rebecca ; Schoenbrun, David ; Vansina, Jan 2023 Moving Histories: Bantu Language Expansions, Eclectic Economies, and Mobilities. *Journal of African history* 64(1):13-37



THEATRE

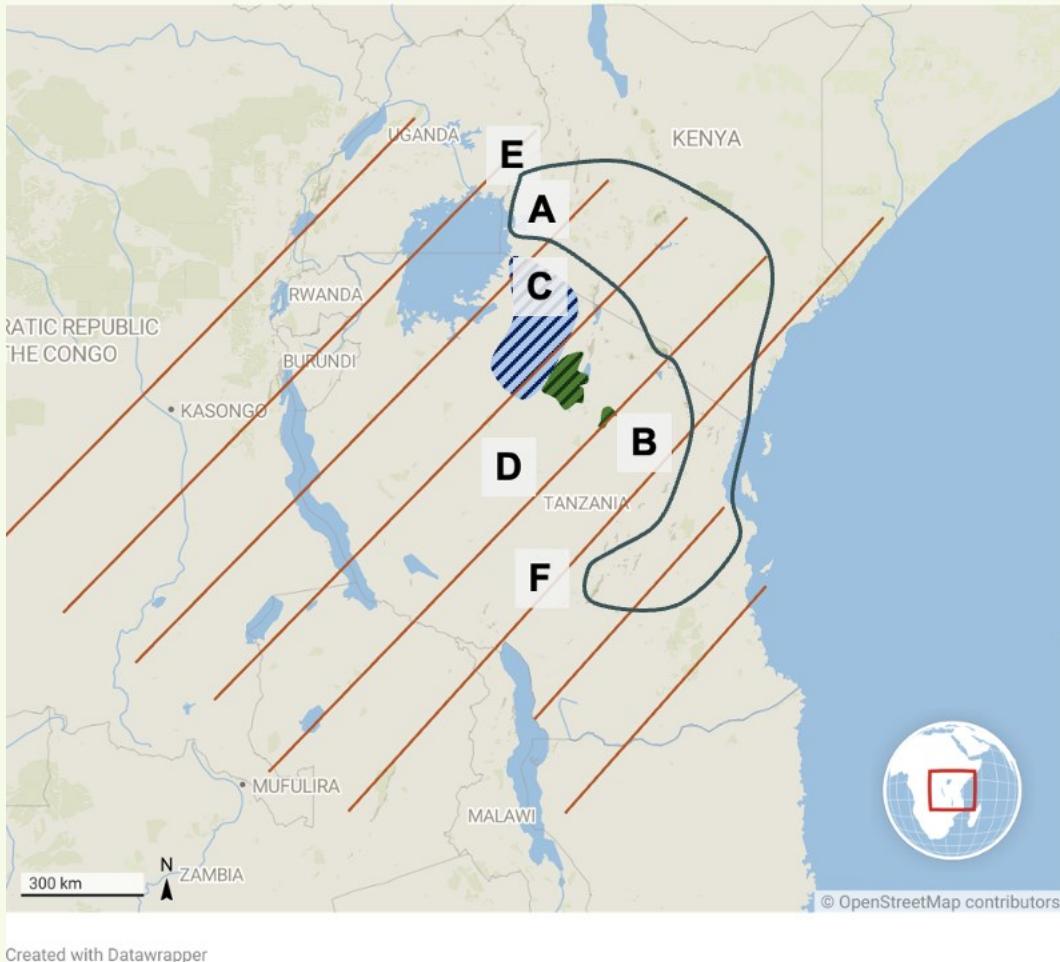
Alternative proposal



However, we run into the issue that it does not explain the Cushitic and Nilotc loan distribution in East Bantu languages.

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





- A** Source of Cushitic-Nilotic lexicon
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Discussion

- *Could Cushitic and Nilotc loans be an extra indication for subclassification in the spread of East African (EA) Bantu?*
 - The loans seem to be localized and restricted to certain subgroups. Sorting out vertical versus horizontal transfer remains difficult but sound changes and morphology has proven helpful.
- *We find Cushitic loan words at different places in East Africa. Can we work with this new assumption of late arrival of Cushitic people in Tanzania?*
 - Partially, although scenario F challenges the theory (but an early arrival in Tanzania brings its own issues)
- *What's next?* More words, to find tendencies and patterns of overlap.



Many thanks!

To the LHEAf team and to the audience, and especially to: Maud Devos, Dominique Loviscach, Derek Nurse, Gerard Philippson, Ahmed Sosal, and Aron Zahran

Discussion questions

- How do we explain words from scenario F that only occur in Southern Tanzania or further down where we do not find Cushitic or Nilotc today?
- Does a later arrival of Cushitic people in Tanzania give us a better explanation for what we find than an earlier arrival?
- What are the implications of assuming Cushitic people were late to enter Tanzania?
- (How) does multilingualism across Bantu subgroups affect loan words? Can loans be a valid additional criteria for subgrouping?