

Workshop introduction

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Some reasons for reassessing the established African linguistic classification

Unsolved problems/open questions of Greenberg’s classification

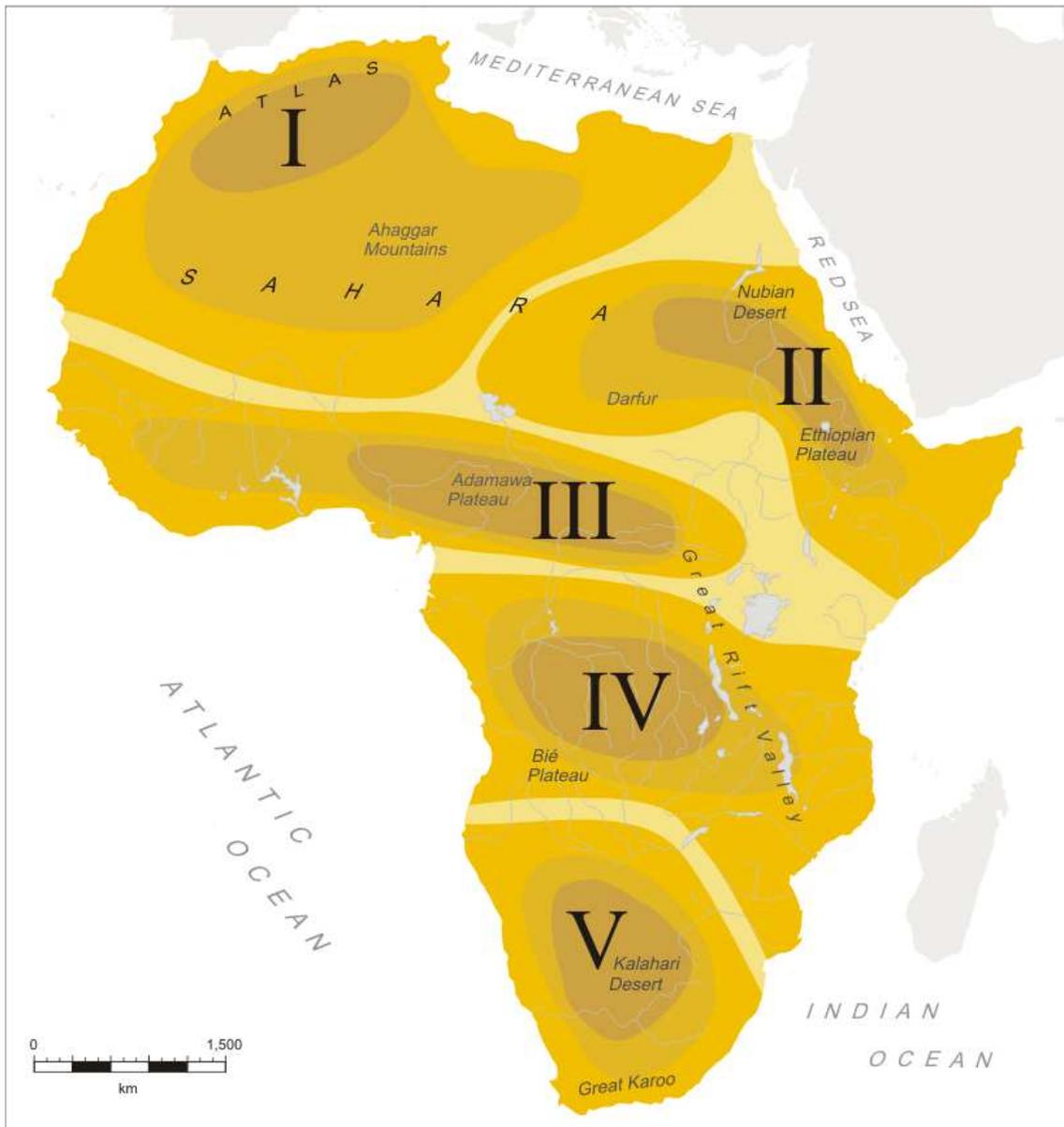
- + Greenberg’s theoretically puzzling shift from “splitting” classification with 12-6 lineages (1950, 1954) to “lumping” classification with 4 lineages (1963, 1966)
- + wide immediate criticism after publication of Greenberg (1963) by Africanists, which was to a considerable extent concrete and empirically oriented
- + recent criticism by non-Africanists (Nichols 1992, Thomason 1994, Dixon 1997)
- + recent de-facto abandoning of established families - Khoisan (Traill 1986, Sands 1998, Güldemann and Vossen 2000)

Enormously increased data base

- + linguistic documentation
- + historical comparative work on lower level

Theoretical and methodological shift in historical linguistics

- + acceptance of diversity as linguistic “normality” > appreciation of essential role of small lineages and “isolate” languages for large-scale linguistic profiles (Nichols 1992)
- > greater a-priori genealogical diversity in Africa (cf. Dimmendaal 2008, Sands 2009)
- + importance of “diachronic typology” for syntactic reconstruction (Croft 1990) - cf. debate on Niger-Congo word order reconstruction
- + more precise criteria for establishing genealogical relationships as a reaction to “lumping” classifications (Nichols 1996, Campbell 2003, Campbell and Poser 2008)
- + recent macro-areal research (Güldemann 1998, 2005, 2008, forthcoming; Clements and Rialland 2008) - long-term areal convergence as potential alternative explanation for shared features across some poorly substantiated African lineages proposed by Greenberg (1963)



Map 1: Macro-areal profile of Africa (Güldemann forthcoming)

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A survey of family/genus-level units in Africa

Abbreviations for fragmentation zones:

NM Nuba mountains

RV Rift valley

WS Western Sudan border belt

	Lineage	Number of languages	Hardly known	Geographic location
1	Chadic	195		central Sahel (Niger to Chad)
2	Berber	026		Maghreb
3	<i>Egyptian</i> (extinct)	001		Nile valley (Egypt)
4	Semitic	074		Ethiopian plateau
5	Cushitic	047		Horn of Africa > Tanzania
6	Omotiic	028		southwestern Ethiopia
7	(<i>Ongota</i> = Birale)	001	X	southwestern Ethiopia
	Total	372		

Note: *Single language*, **Secure member of higher lineage**

Figure 1: Primary lineages of Afroasiatic

	Lineage	Number of languages	Hardly known	Geographic location
1	<i>Hadza</i>	001	X	RV (Manyara-Eyasi Basin)
2	<i>Sandawe</i>	001	X	RV (Manyara-Eyasi Basin)
3	Khoe-Kwadi	?	X	Kalahari Basin
4	Ju- Hoan	?	X	Kalahari Basin
5	Tuu	?	X	Kalahari Basin
	Total	?		

Note: *Single language*

Figure 2: Primary lineages of Khoisan

	Lineage	Number of languages	Hardly known	Geographic location
1	?Atlantic	064		western Atlantic coast > East
2	Mande	068		western half of West Africa
3	Dogon	?		Bandiagara M. (Mali, Burkina F.)
4	<i>Bangi-me</i> (Blench 2005)	001	X	Mali
5	Gur	098		central interior West Africa
6	Kru	039		Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire
7	<i>Pre</i> (Creissels n.d.)	001	X	northern Côte d'Ivoire
8	Kwa	081		Côte d'Ivoire to Benin
9	<i>Mpre</i> (Cardinall 1931)	001	X	northern Ghana
10	<i>Dompo</i> (Blench 1999)	001	X	northern Ghana
11	Ijoid	010	X	Niger delta (Nigeria)
12	?Adamawa	089	X	Nigeria, Cameroon, south. Chad
13	<i>Jalaa</i> (Kleinewill. 2001)	001	X	northeastern Nigeria
14	?West Benue-Congo	078		Nigeria
15	?East Benue-Congo	860		Nigeria, Cameroon, > Southeast
16	?Ubangi	070		Central African R, DR Congo
17	<i>Laal</i> (Boyeldieu 1982)	001	X	south-central Chad
18	Core Kordofanian	029	X	NM
19	Katla	002	X	NM
	Total	~1500		

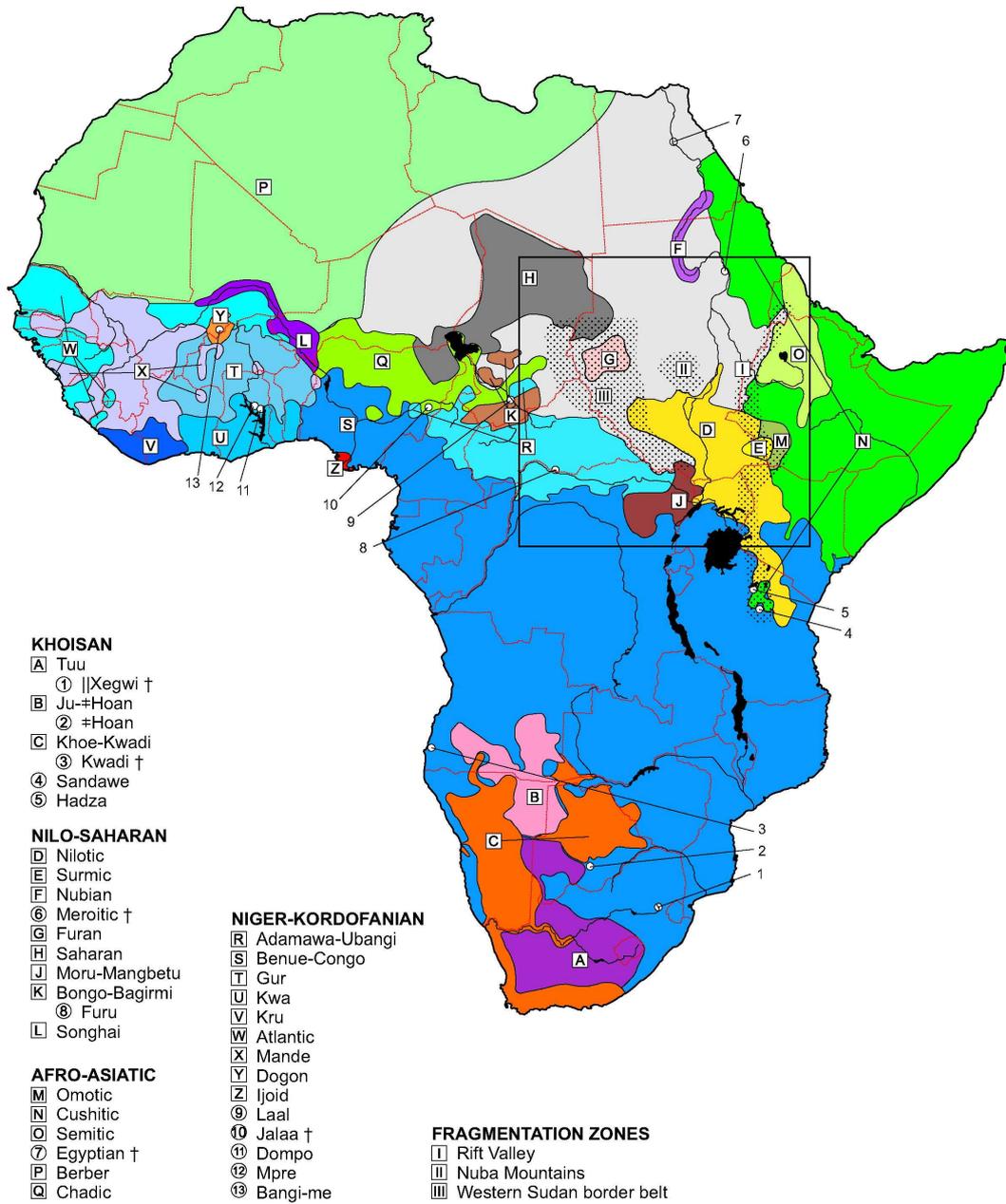
Note: ? Unclear unit, *Single language*, **Relatively secure member of higher lineage**

Figure 3: Primary lineages of Niger-Kordofanian

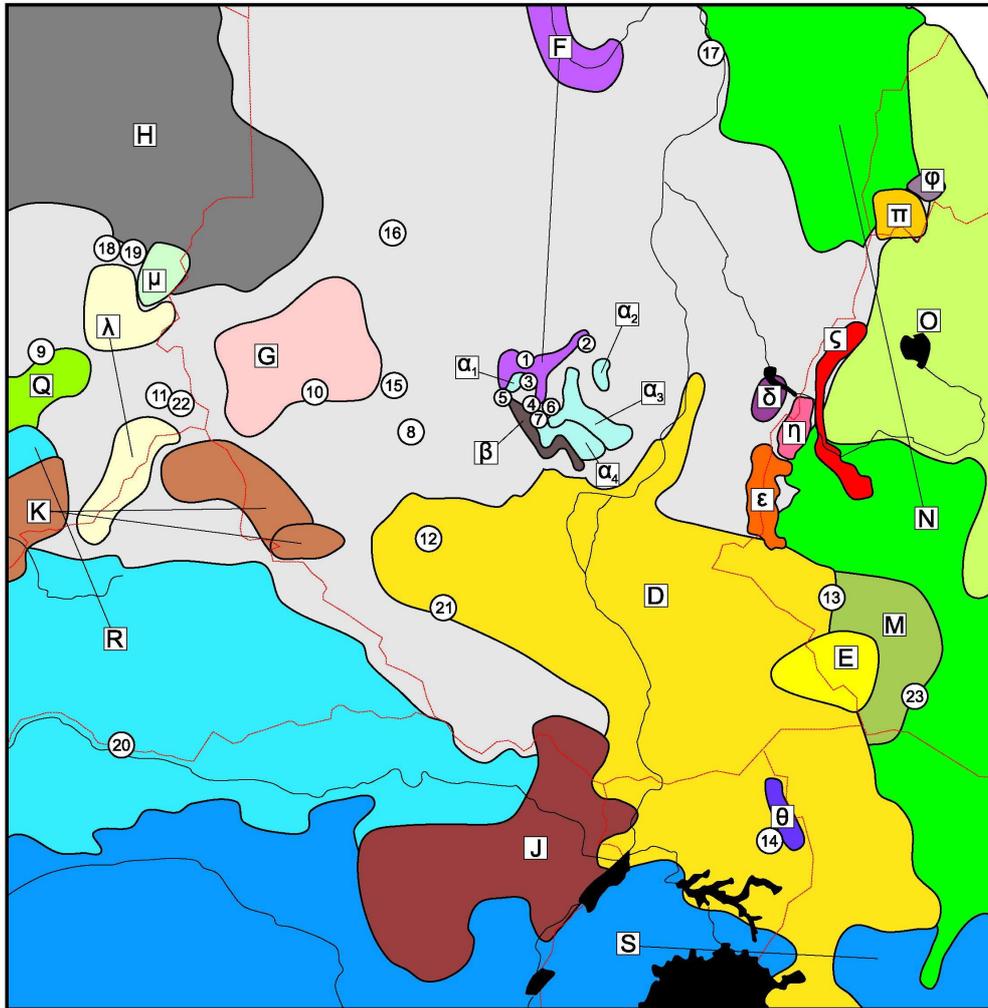
	Lineage	Number of languages	Hardly known	Geographic location
1	Songhai	009		Niger bend
2	?Central Sudanic	065		
	West (Bongo-Bagirmi)	043		South Chad, WS
	East (Moru-Mangbetu)	022		Sudan, Congo, Uganda
3	Maban	009	X	WS
4	Tama	003	X	WS
5	Furan	003	X	WS
6	Saharan	009		Central Sahara
7	Nubian	011		WS, NM, Middle Nile
8	<i>Meroitic</i> (extinct)	001	X	Middle Nile
9	<i>Nera</i>	001	X	RV
10	<i>Kunama</i>	001	X	RV
11	Nyima	002	X	NM
12	Temein	002	X	NM
13	Daju	007	X	NM, WS
14	Kadu	007		NM
15	Jebel	004	X	RV
16	Koman	005	X	RV
17	<i>Gumuz</i>	001	X	RV
18	<i>Berta</i>	001	X	RV
19	<i>Shabo</i> (= Mikeyir)	001	X	RV
20	Surmic	010		RV
21	Nilotic	052		Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania
22	Kuliak	003		RV
	Total	207		

Note: NM = Nuba mountains, RV = Rift valley, WS = Western Sudan border belt, ? Unclear unit, *Single language*

Figure 4: Primary lineages of Nilo-Saharan



Map 2.1: African lineages according to family/genus level



NILO-SAHARAN

- Nyima
- ① Ama
- ② Afitti
- Temein
- ③ Temein
- ④ Tese
- Daju
- ⑤ Lagawa
- ⑥ Logorik
- ⑦ Shatt
- ⑧ Baygo
- ⑨ Dar Daju
- ⑩ Dar Fur
- ⑪ Dar Sila
- ⑫ Njalgulgule

- β Kadu
- δ Jebel
- ε Koman
- ζ Gumuz
- η Berta
- ⑬ Shabo
- θ Kuliak
- ⑭ Oropom †
- D Nilotic
- E Surmic
- F Nubian
- ⑮ Birked
- ⑯ Midob
- ⑰ Meriotic †

- G Furan
- ⑱ Mimi
- ⑲ Amdang
- H Saharan
- J Moru-Mangbetu
- K Bongo-Bagirmi
- ⑳ Furu
- ㉑ Bongo
- λ Maban
- μ Tama
- φ Nera
- π Kunama

AFRO-ASIATIC

- M Omotic
- N Cushitic
- O Semitic
- Q Chadic
- ㉒ Kujarge
- ㉓ Ongota

NIGER-KORDOFANIAN

- R Adamawa-Ubangi
- S Benue-Congo
- α Kordofanian
- α₁ Katla
- α₂ Rashad
- α₃ Heiban
- α₄ Talodi

Map 2.2: African lineages according to family/genus level