

**LINGUISTIC TIES BETWEEN
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AND BANTU**

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**Uncovering Symbiotic Affinities and
Relationships in Vocabulary**

FERGUS SHARMAN



Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton

*Linguistic Ties between Ancient Egyptian and Bantu:
Uncovering Symbiotic Affinities and Relationships in Vocabulary*

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I would like to dedicate this book to the following:
My wife and children for their patience and supportive
help during the research.

To the '**Children of Africa**' and the '**Children of Europe**'
who will one day I am sure, advance this study further and add to the bank of
existing knowledge.

This independent research is on-going. Any additions, corrections or
suggestions will be gratefully received. - Many thanks
email: ferg@kaa-umati.co.uk

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PREFACE



The distinguished Egyptologist Sir Alan Gardiner in his book on *Ancient Egyptian Grammar* makes the following important observation in relation to the Ancient Egyptian language:

*Despite resemblances with Semitic languages, Ancient Egyptian differs from all the Semitic tongues a good deal more than any one differs from each other, and at least until its relationship to the African languages is more closely defined, **Ancient Egyptian must certainly be classified as standing outside the Semitic group.***

(Sir Alan Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, section 3, page 3)

This original independent work presented in my book is the culmination of many years of intensive study into the linguistic affinities which exist between Ancient Egyptian and the Bantu languages of East/Central and Southern Africa. It presents the evidence which refers to Sir Alan Gardiner's statement above, that until the relationship to African languages is realised, Ancient Egyptian must be classified as standing outside the Semitic group of languages.

This statement is very revealing and has encouraged me to look for linguistic solutions in the Bantu languages of East/Central and Southern Africa. The scholar Cheik Anta Diop's work on the Ancient Egyptian language also echoes the views of Sir Alan Gardiner. The evidence I have uncovered is that the vocabulary of the Ancient Egyptian language is closely related to the Bantu languages of East/Central and Southern Africa. In other words, the linguistic connections form a symbiotic relationship in terms of commonality between the languages which are genetically related. A genetic relationship means that, at some stage in the past, the languages descended from a common language called a Proto Language, more specifically the Ancestral Language. In this case the Proto Language is Proto-Bantu. I have called this study 'The Bantu Rosetta Stones' as each stone has its own story to tell.

Sir Alan Gardiner states that the Ancient Egyptian language is related not only to Semitic languages but also to other East African languages (Galla, Somali). He states that in general structure the similarity is great, as Ancient Egyptian shares the principal peculiarity of Semitic languages, in that its word-stems consist of a combination of consonants, as a rule three in number, which are - theoretically at least - unchangeable. This book examines the statement and shows by using verifiable hieroglyphic forms that this is

not generally the case in the Ancient Egyptian language. If we consider word stems in Bantu languages, what one observes is that each word consists of an agglutination of meaningful morphemes which make up the word.

What Sir Alan Gardiner calls a formative consonant, like **M** (Gardiner, page 2) are typically Bantu formative prefixes which refer to an entity as being 'within' or 'being in some place'. Bantu languages contain prefixes which are agglutinated to verb stems. Semitic languages generally do not contain prefixes and to suggest that **M** is a formative prefix in Semitic is misleading. My book examines the phrase 'The Sun Shines/Rises in the sky'. In all probability the Semitic languages fail to address the phrase, for all the words which appear in the phrase are demonstrably of Bantu origin as proved in the study. Sir Alan Gardiner also refers to words being duplicated. Many Bantu languages use duplication of words to stress or intensify meanings of words.

The world-renowned linguist Joseph Greenberg was able to categorise the languages of Africa by sifting through and comparing vast amounts of vocabulary between African languages and by this process he was able to classify the languages of Africa. I have followed Joseph Greenberg's method of mass comparisons of vocabulary between Ancient Egyptian and Bantu. It has come as a surprise that many sound/meaning relationships between the languages are peculiarly of Bantu origin and the etymologies of lexical terms examined also present further evidence.

This book illustrates substantial resemblances in lexical terms and demonstrates that the core vocabulary of the Ancient Egyptian language lies within the ancestral Bantu family of languages. Ancient Egyptian words for the eye, seeing, the sun, fire, heat, animal terms, body parts, words for trees, water, names for rivers, lakes, canals, stars, and other important words such as the word for a person defined as **MTU** have all been verified, tabulated and compared, to give a good fit in lexical terms with Bantu languages. Other words include terms for 'to know' and therefore to have knowledge and understanding. The cumulative evidence derived from many other words listed, suggests strongly that the Ancient Egyptian language is a distant relative of Bantu languages. And as Sir Alan Gardiner has suggested, the Ancient Egyptian language stands outside the Semitic group of languages and its status may be found in other African languages. From the supportive evidence and in-depth analysis carried out, I strongly maintain that the Ancient Egyptian language needs to be reclassified in the way Sir Alan Gardiner has suggested. Therefore the Ancient Egyptian language stands inside and not outside the Bantu family of languages of East/Central and Southern Africa, which in turn belong to the wider group of languages called the Niger-Congo languages.

Fergus Sharman 26th July 2012
Hampshire, England

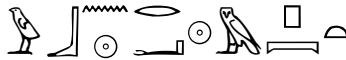
CHAPTER 1



DISCOVERING THE LINGUISTIC LINK


THE SUN RISES/SHINES IN THE SKY

Ancient Egyptian:







WBN	+	R Â	+	M	+	P-T
↑		↑		↑		↑
Shine/rise		Sun		in		Sky

The iconography of the writing system in the Ancient Egyptian language was largely developed from established pictorial forms. Words were represented by consonants with the omission of vowels. This may have been in order to save time and effort while carving the hard granite stone which was available in the quarries of Ancient Egypt. Moreover vowels in words do not remain as stable as consonants. They are likely to change with pronunciation over time. It is for these reasons that transliterations of words in Ancient Egyptian display only a skeletal template of consonants in the formation of words. However, certain vowels were classed as ‘weak consonants’ and were treated as consonants contrary to our understanding of what vowels are. Some of these ‘weak consonants’ may include the following letters **AH**, **I**, **Y**, **OW** which the Ancient Egyptians adopted according to their own style of accents and pronunciation and considered them to be weak consonants when describing a word in their language. As an example **A** was pronounced as **AH** and classed as a ‘weak consonant’ in the Ancient Egyptian language. By way of example the Ancient Egyptian word for a dog is given by the following

skeletal template of letters **IW**  , (Gardiner page 459, E14). In this case although letter **I** is understood to be a vowel, the Ancient Egyptians considered it to be a weak consonant. It is phonetically pronounced as letter **E** in English. The analysis below shows how the word for a dog was deciphered. The Ancient Egyptian word for a dog is **I+WA**. The ending **A** is a vowel, as we commonly understand it and is derived from Bantu forms of the word for a dog.

Another important aspect of the Ancient Egyptian language is the use of prefixes. This is discussed here and comparisons with Bantu prefixes will be made in order to establish a linguistic link between the languages. The presence or lack of different prefixes of words in vocabulary does not constitute a lack of connection in a language as the example below demonstrates. The simple example examines the Ancient Egyptian word for a dog and compares it with a known word for a dog in Bantu to illustrate common associations between the languages. Indeed, as stated, prefixes of words may be different but what is important is to discover roots of words which share a common base in the vocabulary of the languages.

Again, consider the Ancient Egyptian word for a dog shown by the skeletal template **IW**   , (Gardiner page 459, E14). The Ancient Egyptian prefix in this case is **I** which happens to be a vowel but in Ancient Egyptian it is considered to be a weak consonant. The Ancient Egyptian root of the word is **W** which derives the word **WA**, a sound which imitates the bark of a dog. This is reflected in the KiLuvale-Bantu root **WA**, derived from **WAWAWA** giving just **WA**, the bark of a dog . In both languages the root of the word is **WA**, the sound made by a barking dog. The complete KiLuvale-Bantu word together with the prefix **KA** describes a dog as **KA-WA**. So how can one compare the different prefixes **I** and **KA**, and what linguistic inference can one deduce from these prefixes? Fortunately the KiLuvale-Bantu prefix **KA** defines the characteristics pertaining to a given activity or quality. In this case the activity of a dog is its bark. The KiLuvale-Bantu word **KA+WA** → **KAWA** means a dog, more specifically ‘the barker’. By the comparative method it seems likely that the Ancient Egyptian prefix **I** reflect the same characteristics pertaining to the activity and quality of a barking dog as in KiLuvale-Bantu. In other words the prefix **I** = prefix **KA**. From the evidence one may deduce the Ancient Egyptian word for a dog as **IWA** → ‘the barker’. Hence we may conclude the following correspondences between the two languages:

Ancient Egyptian: **IWA** dog, ‘the barker’

KiLuvale-Bantu: **KAWA** dog, ‘the barker’.

The example used in naming the word for a dog highlights the structure of the Ancient Egyptian language and illustrates that the Ancient Egyptian language is an agglutinative language. This will be defined in detail later. In the wider scheme of comparisons of words between the languages one may conclude that the Ancient Egyptian language shows instances of agglutination similar to those used in Bantu languages. In agglutinative languages words are derived by gluing together or agglutinating meaningful morphemes, the

smallest unit of meaning to derive the final form of the word. The word for a dog in Ancient Egyptian is derived from an agglutination of the prefix **I** with the word **WA**. These two morphemes were glued together and compared with Bantu forms giving **I + WA → IWA**, ‘the barker’, the name for a dog. Further examples of agglutination in the ancient Egyptian language will be discussed later.

After many years of detailed research a linguistic link has been established between the Ancient Egyptian and Bantu languages of Africa. The link between the languages has been widely recognised in Africa, but may be little known throughout the rest of the world. This study examines lexical terms which have a common base between the languages. During the period of research substantial amounts of common vocabulary between the languages were studied. Many terms of a fundamental nature have been examined and comparisons between the Ancient Egyptian language with present-day Bantu and Kiswahili-Bantu languages have been uncovered and documented. By examining different Bantu languages and adopting the method of comparative linguistic in a similar way to Joseph Greenberg’s classification of the languages of Africa, it has become possible to compare sound/meaning relationships between words and their etymologies in the Ancient Egyptian and Bantu languages of Africa.

I have called this study ‘**The Bantu Rosetta Stones**’ as they form the basis in understanding cognates of words having common origin between the Ancient Egyptian and Bantu languages. Although, the Ancient Egyptian language is classified as Afro-Asiatic, the language contains a substantial amount of vocabulary derived from Proto-Bantu forms, as will be shown. This new aspect of the Ancient Egyptian language has never been previously studied. Mitochondrial DNA evidence carried out by Bryan Sykes has shown that modern human beings originated in Central/Southern Africa and spread across the rest of Africa and along the Arabian peninsular carrying and diffusing language. Only at a later stage did modern human beings spread north into Egypt and the process of carrying and spreading language was repeated. The human migration out of Africa carried with it fundamental concepts of words, ideas and language which permeated the entire length and breadth of the world. Without a proper realisation and understanding of this important factor, linguists have not given enough thought to the ancient role developed by early human ancestors as they overflowed from their original homeland in East Africa. The earliest wave of migrants, 60,000 years ago or more, went via the Arabian peninsular embedding African concepts of words, ideas and language as they proceeded to India, Indonesia and Australia. Later migrations arrived in Asia and Europe as seen from the map.

The antiquity relating to words and their conceptual meanings formed during the very early stages of language development in Africa have spread across the world from Southern Africa and have now become blurred and eroded, only to be replaced by the latest phenomena of global etymology -

LINGUISTIC TIES BETWEEN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AND BANTU

thereby downgrading the contribution and importance of Southern African linguistics. There is so much to be researched with regard to the impact the early migration out of Africa had on the development of languages and the subsequent dissemination of words, ideas, concepts across the continents of the world.

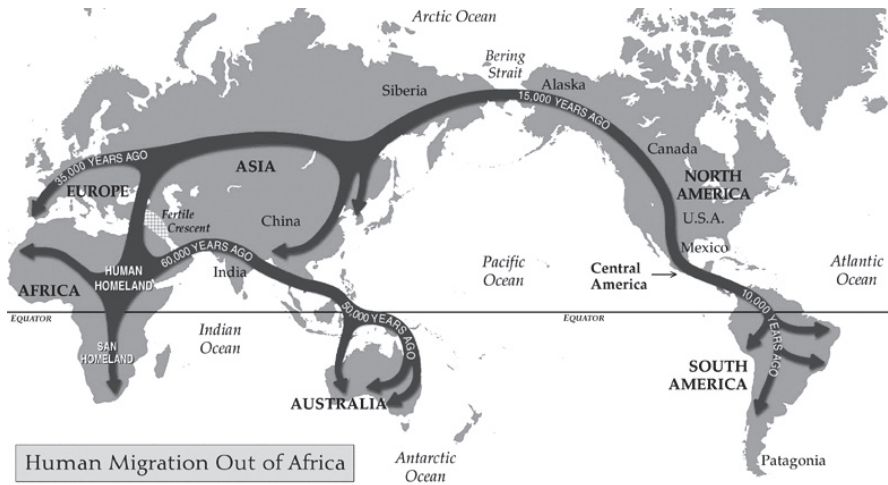


Diagram courtesy of Deadly Harvest by Geoff Bond

The indigenous people of Australia associate land ‘as being’ where their language come from’ and words in a language ‘come from the environment’. The concepts of language, words, land, and environment are interconnected and inseparable. This observation is true, as words formed in the early stages of language development were acquired by associating vivid representations of ideas in sound called ideophones. Early human beings were able to make observations about their environment, particularly with words defining the rising and setting sun and its relationship with time. In this manner the sun was seen as the earliest timepiece, the sun clock.

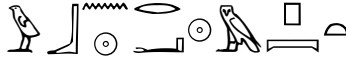
The latest advances in DNA techniques associated with early language development in Africa and its subsequent dissemination around the world may become possible to understand and so reveal the important role African languages played in the formation of present-day languages of the world. Russian linguists have observed that the genetic code found in what is called ‘junk DNA’ follows the same rules as languages. They compared the rules of syntax (the way words are put together to form phrases and sentences), semantics (the study of meaning in language forms) and the basic rules of grammar. They found that the alkaline in our DNA follows a regular grammar and do have set rules similar to languages. They concluded that human language did not appear coincidentally but is a reflection of our

inherent DNA. As we now know, studies have shown that slight DNA changes may be linked with environmental factors.

The discovery of the linguistic link between the Ancient Egyptian language and Bantu languages of Africa was made after a short holiday in Egypt. I noticed that many statues and place-names in Egypt had familiar-sounding names and features resembling those in the Sub-Saharan African continent. I noticed that many of the statues had their noses broken off. It is widely believed that these statues were deliberately tampered with by those trying to establish the Islamic religion in Ancient Egypt. Despite the disfigurement of the statues, the Ancient Egyptian language was able to survive intact, mainly from the inscriptions left on them which were difficult to destroy. A chapter by Alan Gardiner in his book reflected on the nature of the Ancient Egyptian language and surprisingly stated that in his opinion there were some linguistic connections between the East African languages and Ancient Egyptian, although he did not specifically mention the Bantu languages.

ANALYSING THE SUN RISES/SHINES IN THE SKY

Ancient Egyptian



WBN + RÂ + M + P-T


↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

Shine/rise Sun in Sky

Reference Sir Alan Gardiner page 36, *Egyptian Grammar*


The study of the Ancient Egyptian language using Bantu vocabulary as a means of support was an ideal way for studying the complexity of words in sentences and phrases. This method of approach gave a realistic insight into the complexity of the Ancient Egyptian language and the challenges faced.

By analysing the sentence '**THE SUN RISES/SHINES IN THE SKY**' shown by the set of hieroglyphics above, it was possible to identify the Bantu and Kiswahili-Bantu preposition '**M**' similar to the Ancient Egyptian


consonant '**M**' . This discovery was surprising, as no other language to my knowledge uses this form of preposition. In Bantu languages the prepositions **M**, **MU** gives the concept of an entity being included in something, 'in' or 'within' something. As an example 'in the sky' becomes **MU- JULU** in the Bantu-BoTatwe dialects. The Ancient Egyptian form would be **MU P-T**, in the sky. The two forms of phrases are very similar in their grammatical construction, except the word for the sky is different.

Other Bantu words for the sky which give a close match with the Ancient Egyptian language may be observed from the KiKamba-Bantu language, which uses the words **ITU** or **MATU** for the sky. From the set of hieroglyphics above it soon became clear that the Ancient Egyptians used the Bantu preposition **M**. An assumption I had to make was this: If the Ancient Egyptians used the same Bantu preposition **M**, could more Bantu words be embedded in the language?

After much research using different Ancient Egyptian examples my initial assumption was proved to be correct as I discovered that Bantu vocabulary is deeply ingrained in the structure of the Ancient Egyptian language. As a mathematician solving abstract investigations I was able to penetrate meanings and structures of words in the Ancient Egyptian language by adopting a rigorous approach in similar ways to solving a mathematical conundrum. Resolving what was written down as an abstract puzzle on stone became more understandable. During the research I was rather fortunate to have discovered the Ancient Egyptian word for a serpent given by the letters


NIK  and realised that the letters spelt out the Kiswahili-Bantu word **NIOKA**, a word used for a serpent or snake. The word **NIOKA** or **NYOKA** presented a meaningful insight, for the word has its Proto-Bantu form given by the root **-OKA**, a serpent. Had I not discovered the root of the word it would have been difficult to ascertain which part of the letters of the word **NIK** contained the root. Was **N** the root, or was it **I** or was it **K** or was the whole combination of letters **NIK** the root? Such was the dilemma I faced when exploring new words unfamiliar to me. However this finding encouraged me to investigate the Ancient Egyptian language further. My unexpected realisations that more Bantu vocabulary forms could be embedded in the Ancient Egyptian language became an ongoing study.

Referring back to the sentence ‘The sun rises/shines in the sky’ the investigation was not without setbacks, for the word for the sun, represented

by the consonant **R**  presented an obstacle at the time, for it was unknown to me during the very early stages of research that Bantu languages could have included the consonant **R** for the sun. I had not researched this. Being new to the subject I kept exploring various Bantu words for the sun and initially wrote and published a paper about Bantu words representing the sun. I was finally able to identify some Bantu words which used the letter **R** for the sun. The KiShona-Bantu word **RA-NZI** denotes a ray of sun at dawn or a beam of sun or moon entering a room. This word for a ray of sun is similar to the ChiTonga-Bantu language given as **RA-ZI**. However I was convinced that since the sun represented a universal symbol, words defining the sun in Africa had to remain stable and enduring. The KiChaga-Bantu word for the sun, **RIUA**, is one example of many which is closely associated with the Kiswahili-Bantu word for the sun, namely **JUA**. In the KiDigo-Bantu

language of Tanzania **RA** means to shine. Moreover the word for ‘today’ in many Bantu languages is given as **REO**, or **LEO**. Today implies the ‘solar day’, that is the space of time during which there continues to be sunlight. The Cushitic-Rendille language of Kenya, a non-Bantu language uses the word **ORRAH** for the sun. However Obenga in his book on *Ancient Egypt and Black Africa*, page 128 gives the following words for the sun in West Africa: **RA** from the Kono language in Sierra Leone and **RA** from the Susu language in Guinea. It is reasonable to assume from the list of words for the sun the Ancient Egyptians used an African word for the sun.

Consider next, the word for bask in the sun or face the sun given as '**ORA**' in Southern-Sotho-Bantu and '**OTA**' in Kiswahili-Bantu. It is clear that these two words '**ORA**' and '**OTA**' are cognates despite having dissimilar consonants. '**ORA**' and '**OTA**' convey meanings which are alike. Hence **ORA** → **OTA** gives a consonantal match, **R** → **T**. From this analysis one can make the following observation and compare the Kiswahili-Bantu word for a lamp or a source of light given as '**TAA**'. Since **R** is interchangeable with **T** as proved above, that is **R** → **T**, it is reasonable to assume that **RAA** is the same as **TAA**, giving the Ancient Egyptian word **RAA** or **RA**, the word for the sun. The next Ancient Egyptian word for consideration was to examine the


word representing the sky, given as **P-T** . The Kiswahili-Bantu word **PAA** means a roof. It also means to rise up or ascend. Consider the following:




PAA


Ancient Egyptian: **P-T**  canopy, sky, heaven

Kiswahili-Bantu word: **PAA** → roof of a house, fly up, ascend, mount, rise,

On further researching the word associated with the sun rising/shining in the sky, the following ideophone **PE**, derived from the Southern-Sotho-Bantu language, refers to the sun. **PE** means to rise and shine as the sun, be hot as the sun, to shine, to be bright. Moreover the Kiswahili-Bantu word associated with this could be the word **EUPE** which means white, clear, bright, usually associated with the clear, bright sky. By definition a canopy is a covering and performs a similar function to a roof. The Ancient Egyptian word **P-T** contains the word **PAA** followed by the feminine **T**. Hence the word could be pronounced as **PAA-TI**. This would give the Ancient Egyptian word for the sky.

The last word attached to the phrase ‘the sun shines/rises in the sky’  contains the word for shines/rises given

by the tri-literal skeletal template with consonants **WBN**    . The tri-literal word **WBN** denotes to shine, to rise as a planet or any celestial body. In the case at hand, the celestial body being the sun is given by the

determinative of the sun  . Unravelling the consonants **WBN** presented a problem during the initial stages of the investigation, for the Kiswahili-Bantu language does not contain in its vocabulary the word shines/rises with a combination of letters **WBN**.

Initially there were several possibilities. Exploring a dead language was difficult to resolve, especially as little was known about how the Ancient Egyptian language connected with Bantu languages. Was the tri-literal consonant **WBN** a single word? What was the root of **WBN**? Did I come across a word of non-Bantu origin? Did the Ancient Egyptian language consist of a mixture of different Bantu languages in its construction? However I was convinced that the phrase I was examining had to be a phrase containing Bantu linguistic forms since the other words examined were of Bantu construction, particularly the unique preposition **M** examined earlier. I kept on examining the consonants **WBN** and came up with various made up options which I rejected immediately. However I kept on trying to discover the root of the word. Was it **W**? Was it **B**? Was it **N**? Was it **WB**? Was the whole word **WBN** the root? Was **WBN** an agglutination of understandable morphemes as in the case of the word for a dog examined earlier on?

After a long while researching the word I realised that there were two possibilities. Either **W** or **B** was the root. Choosing **W** as the root gave the Kiswahili-Bantu word **WAA**, which means to shine brightly as the sun or moon. This seemed a good choice. My next consideration was to choose the root as **B**. This gave **BA**, for **BALA** in Bantu-Botatwe languages and means to shine as the sun. **BA** is derived from the KiShona-Bantu ideophone **BHA-A** which means 'shining' especially the shining of the rising sun or moon. The Proto-Bantu form of **BA** is **BAD**. In the Kiswahili-Bantu language moonshine or moonlight is given as:

BALA MWEZI
 ↑ ↑
 shine moon

Rejecting the Kiswahili-Bantu word **WAA** as being the root, I decided that **B** as **BA** was the correct root. Having finally discovered that **B** was the root of the word **WBN**, further research revealed the following Bantu forms; **BN** without the initial letter **W**. So what was **W** and what was its significance?

Southern-Sotho-Bantu: **BANYA, BANIA** → to shine

Southern-Sotho-Bantu: **BENYA, BENIA** → to be bright, to shine, to glitter

Silozi-Bantu: **KU-BENYA** → to shine

KiShona-Bantu: **PENYA** → shine, be bright

KiZulu-Bantu: **BANI** → lightning, flash of light

KiZulu-Bantu: **BANE** → ideophone of flashing, throwing sudden light, torch

To determine the significance of **W**, I had to compare two Bantu languages. I used a different Kiswahili-Bantu word **WAKA** which means burn brightly, be lighted, to shine. The following comparisons were made:

Kiswahili-Bantu: **WA-WAKA** → to be shining, to be burning brightly

In this case **W** is the verb ‘to be’ and used as a prefix. I quickly realised that since Bantu languages are related, then **WA-WAKA** → **WAWAKA** is grammatically equivalent to **WA-BENIA** → **WABENIA**, to be shining, derived from Southern-Sotho-Bantu. The Ancient Egyptian word **WBN** is an agglutination of the verb ‘to be’ and the word **BENIA**, to shine or be shining. As an additional observation the ending **NYA** or **NIA** in the word **BE-NYA** or **BE-NIA** denotes the emission of light rays.

The Kiswahili-Bantu word **WAWAKA**, burns, shines, to be shining brightly, is similar to the Ancient Egyptian word **WABAKA** given by:

Ancient Egyptian: **WBKH**  be bright, to shine

(Faulkner page 59)


The root is the KiShona-Bantu word **BAKA**, kindle, to give light and this may be further broken down to **-AKA**. Meeussen’s Proto Bantu **BAK**, burn. **BAKA** is also given as **BEKA**, to shine, in KiBemba-Bantu. By attaching the prefix **WA** derived from the verb ‘to be’ the following lexical forms may be derived when comparing Ancient Egyptian and Bantu:

Ancient Egyptian: **WBKH**  be bright

KiShona-Bantu: **WA+BAKA** → be bright

KiBemba-Bantu: **WA + BEKA** → be bright

Conclusion:

The etymology of each and every term expressed by the sentence 'the sun rises/shines in the sky'  has been finally analysed in terms of Bantu lexical forms. Initially by establishing the preposition 'M' → 'MU', which means 'in' plus the supporting words for a serpent, **NIOKA** and the word for a dog **IWA**, 'the barker', and the word for the sky **PAA-TI**, the structure and vocabulary of the Ancient Egyptian language became more understandable in terms of Bantu linguistics. Illustrating the agglutination of the word with prefix **W** as in **WBN** to be shining, and the prefix **I** as in the word for a dog, **IWA**, illustrate convincingly that the Ancient Egyptian language is an agglutinating language and its vocabulary contains prefixes. Present-day Afro-Asiatic languages may find it difficult to explain every word in the sentence 'the sun rises/shines in the sky' in terms of etymology and grammatical construction as the words examined. Refer to Sir Alan Gardiner page 36, *Egyptian Grammar* for further explanations.

CHAPTER 2



MAIN INDICATORS FOR ESTABLISHING SIMILARITY BETWEEN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AND PROTO-BANTU

In order to classify the Ancient Egyptian language into the Niger-Congo branch, some of the following seven indicators for establishing similarity between the languages have been used.

- (1) Substantial resemblance and similarities in fundamental vocabulary.
- (2) Organisation of parts of speech, the sentence.
- (3) Morphological analysis.
- (4) Etymology of words.
- (5) Ranking of gender nouns.
- (6) Augmentative gender noun forms.
- (7) Collective gender noun forms.

The first indicator, namely substantial resemblance and similarities in fundamental vocabulary, will be considered including the etymologies of the vocabularies analysed. Collective gender-noun forms together with gender ranking have been researched and are included in the work. A selection of hieroglyphics will be analysed to demonstrate their sound/meaning relationships with Proto-Bantu forms.

The linguist Merritt Ruhlen makes the following observations about the mechanisms of similarities, which may be explained by three criteria. These are convergence, borrowing, and common origin.

Convergence

By the process of convergence, objects that were originally different have come to resemble each other either accidentally or because of some external motivating factor. The mode of flight in birds and bats is a convergence satisfying the laws of flight. In language, convergence is always rare and accidental and follows the laws of probability. There are too many random possibilities for different sound representations for convergence to take place and the probability diminishes rapidly for chance resemblance to take place. The probability of finding a word involving two or three consonants in the same order as in the word **NIOKA** (the author's example of word) with the

same meaning in three unrelated languages is less likely that a chance resemblance will occur.

Borrowing

Languages borrow words from other languages. Borrowing is usually done by the name of an item; as an example, the words borrowed for coffee, Internet, or television. On the other hand pronouns are rarely borrowed.

Common origin

If we eliminate convergence and borrowing by the methods outlined above, the resemblance in vocabulary which remains must be attributed to none other than a common origin. The sound/meaning relationships of words examined between Ancient Egyptian and Bantu are words that do not converge, nor are they borrowed words; in fact they are words derived from a common origin.

The words analysed in this paper make up a small sample of the substantial amount of words analysed during the course of the research. These words should demonstrate common origin between the Ancient Egyptian language and the Bantu languages of Africa. I have chosen to use the words '**The Bantu Rosetta Stones**' in keeping with the actual Rosetta Stones which were discovered in Egypt. The methodology of approach was to examine only those words which demonstrate a near or exact match in sound and meaning with Ancient Egyptian. As an example if the consonants of an Ancient Egyptian word are given as **KM**, then only Bantu words with near consonants and meanings will be considered.

The Proto-Bantu element in the Ancient Egyptian language is present because, there is a strong visible connection between the consonants and the actions portrayed by the hieroglyphics. If one considers the group of Indo-European languages, strong visible connections between the consonants are not so readily recognisable. Despite this, a linguistic link between European languages and Sanskrit was discovered by William Jones in 1786 and from this, he was able to establish the concept of language families. As an example, consider the Indo-European word for the number two. Two is given as **DOU** in Latin and **DO** in Old Irish. Contrast this with the Armenian word for two, given as **ERKU**. Armenian is considered to belong to a branch of the Indo-European language. The two words, though distinctly different in their consonants, share a common origin. In fact the words **DUO** and **ERKU** are said to be evolved forms, cognates, 'born together'. Cognates are those words that derive from a single earlier word in a single earlier language, a word that has then diversified into similar or dissimilar forms in contemporary languages. Despite such diverse consonants which do not appear to have common sound correspondence, the words **DUO** and

ERKU evolved from a common origin. Such diverse consonants will not be examined in the Ancient Egyptian language and as stated, only exact or near matches will be examined.

This study into the linguistic aspects of the Ancient Egyptian language should be looked upon as further supporting evidence in advancing the work carried out by Professor Diop and Professor Theophile Obenga's research on the genetic linguistic connections between the Ancient Egyptian and African languages based on the study of comparative linguistics. Professor Obenga has endeavoured to prove that there is a linguistic relationship between Ancient Egyptian and modern African languages. He draws attention to important typological similarities in grammar, the feminine gender formed by the suffix **-T**, the plural of nouns by the suffix **-W** or **U**.

However, the study presented in this book is quite distinct from the rest, as it pinpoints exact words in the languages concerned, and compares known vocabulary terms on a one to one basis which are common between the languages.

Professor Obenga has concluded that morphological, lexicological and synthetic similarities amounted to convincing proof of the close relationship between Ancient Egyptian and African languages of today. This type of parallelism was impossible between Semitic, Berber and Ancient Egyptian. Professor Obenga's comparisons of expressing the verb 'to be' in verb-noun combinations, the common archaic form in Bantu language - was the same in this respect as that of the most archaic form of the Ancient Egyptian language.

Further proof of the linguistic affinities between the Wolof language and the Ancient Egyptian language has been carried out by Professor Diop. Professor Diop has made an exhaustive study on correspondences between verb forms in Wolof and Ancient Egyptian. He has also shown correspondences between Ancient Egyptian and Wolof demonstratives. All the linguistic comparisons made by Professor Diop are impossible to set aside by modern scholarship. Professor Obenga states the following: 'The method of comparative linguistics restores the main outline of the pre-dialectal mother tongue, the common pre-dialectal language, by comparing and examining sounds (phonetics), the form of the words and of grammar (morphology, syntax), the lexicological facts (vocabulary), common to the words. The comparative method shows that a language is rarely isolated in time and space, that is to say, that it is rare to come across a language which does not belong to a more or less large community, family or group'.

CHAPTER 3



DATING THE AGE OF THE KISWAHILI-BANTU LANGUAGE

The Kiswahili-Bantu language is an ancient language on all accounts. Its vocabulary when compared with the Ancient Egyptian language dates it as being over seven thousand years old, if not more. In a comparative and historical study entitled *Swahili & Sabaki: A Linguistic History*, University of California Publications in Linguistics: Volume 121, Mzee Thomas Hinnebusch and Derek Nurse describe Kiswahili as part of what they call the Sabaki Bantu sub-group. They describe the latter as following: "The Sabaki languages form a major Bantu subgroup and are spoken by 35 million East Africans in Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and the Comoro Islands". The authors provide a historical/comparative treatment of Swahili (and other Sabaki languages), an account of the relationship of Swahili to Sabaki and to other Bantu languages, and some data on contemporary Sabaki languages.

KiSwahili is the Swahili word for the Swahili language. Ki- is a prefix attached to nouns of the class which includes language. Swahili being the main noun stem from which the term KiSwahili is derived. KiSwahili is the Swahili language and Wa-Swahili refers to the people who practice the Swahili culture. In a similar way the English language is known as KiIngereza. The vocabulary of the Kiswahili-Bantu language consists of two distinct sets of vocabulary, Bantu and Semitic. Hence sentences can either be expressed by pure Bantu forms or may include Semitic words in their construction. As an example the linguist Abdulaziz Lodhi illustrates the following two examples.

(1) 'Alirudi nyumbani **KABLA** hajamaliza kazi' which literally translates as, 'He returned home before he has not finished work' which means, 'he returned home without finishing work'. This example uses the Arabic loan word **KABLA**, meaning 'before'. The same sentence using pure Bantu forms may be given as,

(2) 'Alirudi nyumbani **ALIPOKUWA** hajamaliza kazi'. In this instance the Arabic loan **KABLA** has been replaced by the Bantu form, **ALIPOKUWA**. The word **ALIPOKUWA**, means 'when he was as'. The meaning of the