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## Preliminary report on the project for an Etymological dictionary of the Angas-Sura group of Chadic languages

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**Abstract** The brief report announces the current work on the forthcoming first two fascicles of an etymological dictionary elaborating the Afro-Asiatic background of a Chadic language group, one of the first ones in this genre in the history of Chadic linguistics.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** African linguistics, Afro-Asiatic, Chadic, etymology.

### Introduction

The languages of the Angas-Sura group, spoken between the South-Eastern Plateau and the Benue river, Plateau State of Nigeria, belong to the West Chadic subbranch of

<sup>1</sup> The primacy belonging, in a way at least, to N. Skinner's (1996) *Hausa comparative dictionary* (Cologne, 1996, Köppe) which, however, lists *comparanda* in and outside Afro-Asiatic in the manner of J.H. Greenberg's „mass comparison” *ad hoc*, without elaborating the consonantal correspondences. Others out of the 27 (!) Chadic groups have mostly not even been researched even for an internal reconstruction, let alone for the elaboration of their etymological dictionaries with all the Afro-Asiatic cognates etc. So far, the comparative lexicons and (sometimes) historical phonologies have only appeared for the following groups: Angas-Sura (Takács 2004) with pilot studies on their Afro-Asiatic background (see fn. 6 below), Bole-Tangale (Schuh 1984), Northern Bauchi (Skinner 1977 and Takács 2002) with some external etymologies by the present author (Takács 2002, 2007), Southern Bauchi (Shimizu 1978), Mafa-Mada (Rossing 1978), all in all just 5 (!) Chadic groups, while efforts have been made to globally reconstruct West Chadic (Stolbova 1986-7) and Central Chadic (Gravina 2014) also, though both attempts suffer from fundamental difficulties of coherence regarding their historical phonologies surely to be reconsidered in the light of additional data.

the Chadic branch, which, in its turn, represents part of the Afro-Asiatic (Semitic-Hamitic) language family (or phylum), divided since the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into six equipotential cognate branches thanks to the fundamental results of J. Lukas & J.H. Greenberg on Chadic<sup>2</sup> and M. L. Bender & H. C. Fleming on Omotic,<sup>3</sup> resp., namely: (1) Semitic, (2) Egyptian, (3) Berber, (4) Cushitic, (5) Omotic, (6) Chadic.

Some minor segments of the phonological and lexical reconstruction of the Angas-Sura group had only been partly elaborated in pioneering studies by J. H. Greenberg, C. Hoffmann and O. V. Stolbova<sup>4</sup> in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century before the first comprehensive comparative lexicon of Angas-Sura has been published by G. Takács (2004)<sup>5</sup> that also only offers a purely internal reconstruction without going beyond the frontiers of Angas-Sura.

### The new project

Over the past two decades, on the basis of that comparative dictionary, I have discussed thousands of external cognates of the Angas-Sura lexical stock both inside its gigantic Chadic kindred and in the remote branches of the Afro-Asiatic macrofamily in my series of papers “Angas-Sura etymologies”, whose majority has appeared on the pages of this journal.<sup>6</sup> Using these materials with numerous *addenda et corrigenda* re-

<sup>2</sup> Who were the first scholars to claim the Chadic languages to belong together in a separate branch of Afro-Asiatic.

<sup>3</sup> The two American Ethiopianists were both the pioneers of Omotic comparative linguistics establishing their internal classification as well as the isomorphs and the isoglosses indicating their special status in contrast to the Cushitic languages which they were both the first ones to recognize.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, J.H. Greenberg (1958) surveyed the Angas-Sura roots beginning with labials pointing out the original labial triad \*b - \*p - \*f inherited from Afro-Asiatic. O.V. Stolbova devoted two studies to the subject, using basically the Angas (Foulkes 1915, Ormsby 1913-4) and Sura (Jungraithmayr 1963) lexicons for the comparison adducing some additional data from Chip, Montol, Gerka (collected and published by Jungraithmayr 1965). In 1972, she proposed a historical-comparative survey of the Proto-Angas-Sura consonant system in the light of some illustrative lexical material (2-3 exx. for each correspondence). In her 1977 paper, O. V. Stolbova presented 256 lexical roots and Proto-Angas-Sura reconstructions accompanied by a brief sketch of vowel correspondences. C. Hoffmann (1975 MS) offered a phonological (both consonantal and vowel) reconstruction of the Proto-Angas-Goemai level (on the basis of Goemai, Mernyang, Sura, and Angas) through 248 lexical roots. The West Chadic historical phonology by Stolbova (1987: 240-244) also contains a separate list of some 64 Proto-Angas roots.

<sup>5</sup> My research on the Afro-Asiatic background of the Angas-Sura lexicon began back in September 1998 during my first research at the Haifa University under the guidance of the late Prof. A. B. Dolgopolsky (1930-2012), may his memory be blessed, one of the greatest Afro-Asiatic or Semito-Hamitic comparativists of all times.

<sup>6</sup> First part (roots with initial \*b-) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 46 (2004), 131-144. Second part (\*b-) in *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 57/1 (2004), 55-68. Third issue (\*p-) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 48 (2006), 121-138. Fourth part (\*f-) in *Folia Orientalia* 47/2 (2011), 273-289. Fifth part (\*m- in monoconsonantal roots) in *Cahiers Caribéens d’Égyptologie* 13-14 (2010), 137-142. Sixth part (rest of \*m-), originally scheduled for *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 74/1 (2021), has so far not been completed and submitted. Seventh part (\*d-) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 62/3 (2020), 95-120. Eighth part (\*d-) in *Folia Orientalia* 57 (2020), 321-354. Ninth part (\*t-) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 63/1 (2021), 53-72. Tenth part (\*z- + Ø or

sulting from most recent new sources on the Angas-Sura daughter languages as well as from my ongoing research on other Afro-Asiatic groups in the frames of my current project for the micro-reconstructions in Southern Afro-Asiatic,<sup>7</sup> I am currently working on the reformed etymological entries for the Angas-Sura lexical items with initial labials and dentals to achieve a new synthesis going into the first two separate volumes of the planned „Etymological dictionary of the Angas-Sura group of Chadic languages”.<sup>8</sup> As my research for collecting comparative evidence with initial sibilant and velar consonants in my quarter-of-a-century old Afro-Asiatic root catalogue progresses these years, systematically dealing with further segments of the Angas-Sura lexical stock will also be facilitated for hopefully updating or elaborating all the relevant etymological entries for the next two fascicles.

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labials or dentals or velars) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 64/1 (2022), 73-96. Eleventh part (\*z- + nasals) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 64/2 (2022), 49-76. Twelfth part (\*z- + liquids) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 63/2 (2021), 56-75. Thirteenth parts with AS \*z- + liquids (continued) in *Lingua Posnaniensis* 65/2 (2023), 83-102.

<sup>7</sup> My research for the micro-reconstruction of the consonantal system and the lexical stock in every single individual group of the neglected Southern Afro-Asiatic branches (Cushitic, Omotic, Chadic) has begun back in the 1990s with a new look on a reformed Southern Cushitic reconstruction (first addressed in my lecture delivered in Trieste in April 1998) as well as with my start to collect comparative data of Angas-Sura (Haifa, September 1998). In course of the next decades, this approach of mine has been extended onto Omotic (since 2019) and further Chadic groups as well, namely: Northern Bauchi (since 2005), Mafa-Mada (since 2021), Musgu and Masa (both since 2020), Dangla-Migama and Mubi-Toram (both since 2008). These long-range projects of mine have been currently generously supported by a research fellowship offered by the University of Łódź. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Krzysztof Tomasz Witzak (Department of Classical Philology, University of Łódź) for encouraging and supporting me to successfully apply for the ARR grant of his home university, in the frames of which also this volume has been completed thanks to the immense paper-based apparatus, i.e., the Egyptian etymological word and Afro-Asiatic root catalogues, established in 1994 and 1999, resp., of the unique Lexicographical Library of Afro-Asiatic Root Research at Balatonederics (LLAARR).

<sup>8</sup> The author gratefully acknowledges the permanent intellectual and moral support of the Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente of Roma (ISMEO) also over the past years, whose membership is hoped to facilitate also the material background of the new publication.

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