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Khoisan kinship revisited

Alan Barnard & Gertrud Boden

Introduction

The present book is the outcome of a comparative project on Khoisan kinship conducted by the editors between 2010 and 2013. Both have been working in the field of Khoisan research for many years. Alan Barnard began his research on the Naro in April 1973. At that time, rather little was known about the Naro and virtually nothing was known about their kinship system. The only kinship data on any San people were those on the Ju|’hoansi (who at that time were known as the !Kung). Naro kinship indeed turned out to be very different from Ju|’hoan kinship. Barnard’s earlier plan to focus on identity was jettisoned, the intricacies of the various kinship systems took hold in his mind, and the comparative perspective which he pioneered became the one he argued for many years to come. At the time of Barnard’s initial Naro fieldwork, he was a PhD student working with Adam Kuper at University College London. Barnard and Kuper invented their regional approach to the understanding of southern African ethnography (known as regional structural comparison) quite independently. When Barnard reported to his supervisor on what he had been finding out, his letter crossed with Kuper’s. Both Kuper and Barnard had been thinking along almost identical lines: Kuper, on sabbatical in Sweden and Barnard in the field in Botswana, Kuper writing on Bantu kinship and Barnard on Khoisan. There was of course no email at that time and no cell phones either. Even the land line between Ghanzi and the outside world had to be booked in advance, and was never used for what others would invariably see as casual conversation. Therefore, communication between Barnard and Kuper took several weeks. Kuper published his work on regional structural comparison through the late 1970s and 1980s (Kuper 1975, 1979, 1982, 1987). Barnard completed his PhD thesis in 1976 (Barnard 1976), and followed with a number of papers on various aspects of Naro (1978a) and comparative, mainly Khoisan, kinship (Barnard 1978b, 1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1987, 1988), as well as a book on regional comparison throughout Khoisan southern Africa aiming at identifying common underlying structures (Barnard 1992a). The

emphasis was "on understanding Khoisan culture as regionally specific and intelligible as a whole" (ibid: 14).

Gertrud BODEN's work on Khoisan began with a museum exhibition on the San (BODEN 1997) aiming at conveying to the public the diversity of San realities, not only in historical and political, but also in linguistic and cultural terms, and at diversifying representations of San, which used to be so heavily dominated by descriptions of the Ju|'hoansi of Nyae Nyae and Dobe (cf. BARNARD 1992a: 40). Next BODEN studied the social organisation of the Khwe in West Caprivi from a historical perspective, and analyzed changes in the realms of domestic relationships, kinship, and group identities among other things (BODEN 2003, 2005, 2007a, 2008, 2009). BODEN found the kinship terminology of the Khwe to be, on the one hand, clearly connected to the kinship terminologies of their closest linguistic relatives, and, on the other hand, to reveal interference or borrowing from the terminologies of their Ju-speaking as well as their Bantu-speaking neighbours. In her subsequent research on Taa communities in Namibia and Botswana, likewise focusing on ethno-historical aspects (BODEN 2007b, 2011, 2012), she found the internal variation in Taa kinship classifications to correlate with regionally differing language contact settings (BODEN, forthcoming). More generally, the Taa kinship terminologies turned out to be more closely related to those of their geographical neighbours than to those of their closest linguistic relatives.

A comparative approach aiming at identifying similarities and differences between and across Khoisan kinship systems was then at the centre of BARNARD's and BODEN's project "Kinship systems in southern African non-Bantu languages: documentation, comparison, and historical analysis" of which this book is the main outcome. The project was part of the larger collaborative one "The Kalahari Basin Area – a *Sprachbund* at the verge of extinction" (http://ww2.hu-berlin.de/kba), where the editors, in cooperation with linguists and molecular anthropologists, aimed at untangling the complex language and population history of the southern African groups who speak indigenous languages other than from the Bantu family and are commonly subsumed under the label 'Khoisan'. The collaborative research project was part of the European Science Foundation's (ESF) EUROCORES program Euro-BABEL. As social anthropologists, the editors addressed the population history of the Kalahari Basin area by looking at kinship systems. All contributors to the book are full or associate members of the collaborative project and have worked on kinship

terminologies and systems in different Khoisan populations. William B. MᴄGʀᴇɢᴏʀ who previously worked on Australian languages and kinship terminologies (1996, 2013) provides the first in-depth account of an Eastern Kalahari Khoe kinship terminology. Hitomi Oɴᴏ has been working and publishing on G|ui and G‖ana kinship systems for about twenty years (Oɴᴏ 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 2004, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, forthcoming). Akira Tᴀᴋᴀᴅᴀ also started his studies of San kinship relations in the central Kalahari, later broadening his field of research to the Ekoka !Xun in Namibia (2005a, 2005b, 2008a, 2008b, 2010, 2011, forthcoming).

The label 'Khoisan'

The term 'Khoisan' calls for some explanation. It is often assumed to be a linguistic label, and to refer to a language family. In fact though, according to recent linguistic work (Wᴇsᴛᴘʜᴀʟ 1971; Tʀᴀɪʟʟ 1986; Sᴀɴᴅs 2001, Güʟᴅᴇᴍᴀɴɴ 1998, 2008a, 2008b, 2014a, forthcoming-a), Khoisan is not a language family, but rather, a *Sprachbund*. In other words, it is a collection of three linguistic lineages (see Figure 1-1) whose relationships have occurred through contact rather than through common origin. The term 'Khoisan' was introduced by Sᴄʜᴜʟᴛᴢᴇ (1928) as a name for a biological or racial entity. It was then popularised by anthropologist Isaac Sᴄʜᴀᴘᴇʀᴀ (1930) in his *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*. This important book, derived from Sᴄʜᴀᴘᴇʀᴀ's 1929 PhD thesis, was very widely read and also gave rise to a similar anthropological issue, and indeed some confusion: the relation between the peoples called *Khoi* (nowadays spelled "Khoe") and those called *San*. Attempts to regularise the spelling of *Khoisan* as 'Khoesan' (e.g., Voßᴇɴ 2013) have not been adopted by anthropologists, and the use of inverted commas or quotation marks around that term have also proved futile. We retain *Khoisan* as a useful ethnic label for the pre-Bantu population in southern Africa, albeit one of both linguistic and biological imprecision, because there exists no easy alternative. In short, Khoisan is not to be taken as having any meaning other than as shorthand for the collective set of peoples conventionally labelled as such. It has been understood in this sense throughout southern Africa for centuries, notwithstanding different labels at different times (see Boësᴇᴋᴇɴ 1972-4).

Within the southern African Khoisan *Sprachbund*, three genealogical families are nowadays widely accepted: namely Kx'a (Hᴇɪɴᴇ & Hᴏɴᴋᴇɴ 2010; see also Sᴀɴᴅs & Hᴏɴᴋᴇɴ 2014), Khoe-Kwadi (Voßᴇɴ 1997 for Khoe; Güʟᴅᴇᴍᴀɴɴ 2004; Güʟᴅᴇᴍᴀɴɴ & Eʟᴅᴇʀᴋɪɴ 2010 for Khoe-Kwadi) and Tuu (Güʟᴅᴇᴍᴀɴɴ 2005). The assumed geograph-

ical distribution of individual languages in precolonial times is shown in Map 1-1; their confirmed genealogical relationships are represented in Figure 1-1 (cf. GÜLDE-MANN 2014a). Note that the spelling and choice of terms for individual languages and groups, used in the literature, has kept changing and continues to do so. Furthermore, names have been used for groupings on different levels and with idiosyncratic spellings (cf. TREIS 1998). Changes reflect a growing linguistic knowledge as well as a respect for self-designations. The spelling of terms and the choice of names used in this book follow the principles outlined in GÜLDEMANN (2014a). With respect to the spelling of language names they include, in particular, the removal of grammatical affixes and the omission of tones and other impractical diacritics. Regarding the choice of terms, autonyms were preferred to exonyms, and spellings agreed upon by the speech community itself over alternatives. The use of the same names on different classificatory levels was avoided, and suitable names known from the literature were maintained. Note that the inventory of languages in Figure 1-1 is only complete in the sense that no unknown languages are expected to be discovered in the future. It is nevertheless preliminary, because research into the large amount of older unpublished sources on extinct languages still has to establish conclusively all language-level units, and because the language-dialect distinctions have not yet been dealt with consistently for different language groups. Outside the Khoe family the tendency has been to recognise large language complexes, whose individual varieties need not always be mutually intelligible whereas within the Khoe family the situation has not been explicitly addressed in these terms (GÜLDEMANN 2014a).

Khoisan kinship

If Khoisan is not a linguistically or biologically meaningful concept, does it have any meaning for kinship analysis? The short answer is "no", or "not really". Yet the reason we use it is that it retains enormous historical significance because it differentiates a number of earlier populations of southern Africa from Bantu and all other later immigrants to the sub-continent. That it *does* mark out a number of features held in common among the populations subsumed under the label has been demonstrated by BARNARD (1992a) and will be further discussed in some of the chapters of this book. These include mainly a sharp distinction between joking and avoidance relatives, and the extension of these larger categories, and of smaller ones within them, throughout society (universal kin categorisation). Universal kin categorisation

in the Khoisan context was first noticed by BARNARD (1978b). He saw it as a feature common to hunter-gatherers (and former hunter-gatherers) generally, which to a degree also occurs among herding populations but never among agro-pastoralist communities. Based on her analysis of !Xoon kinship categorisations (Chapter 7), BODEN calls for studying the different practices and social implications of including and excluding people from the kinship universe in order to understand which practices are to be attributed to a hunter-gatherer past, to shared Khoisan ideologies, or, indeed, to communication needs in multi-lingual and trans-cultural social contexts.
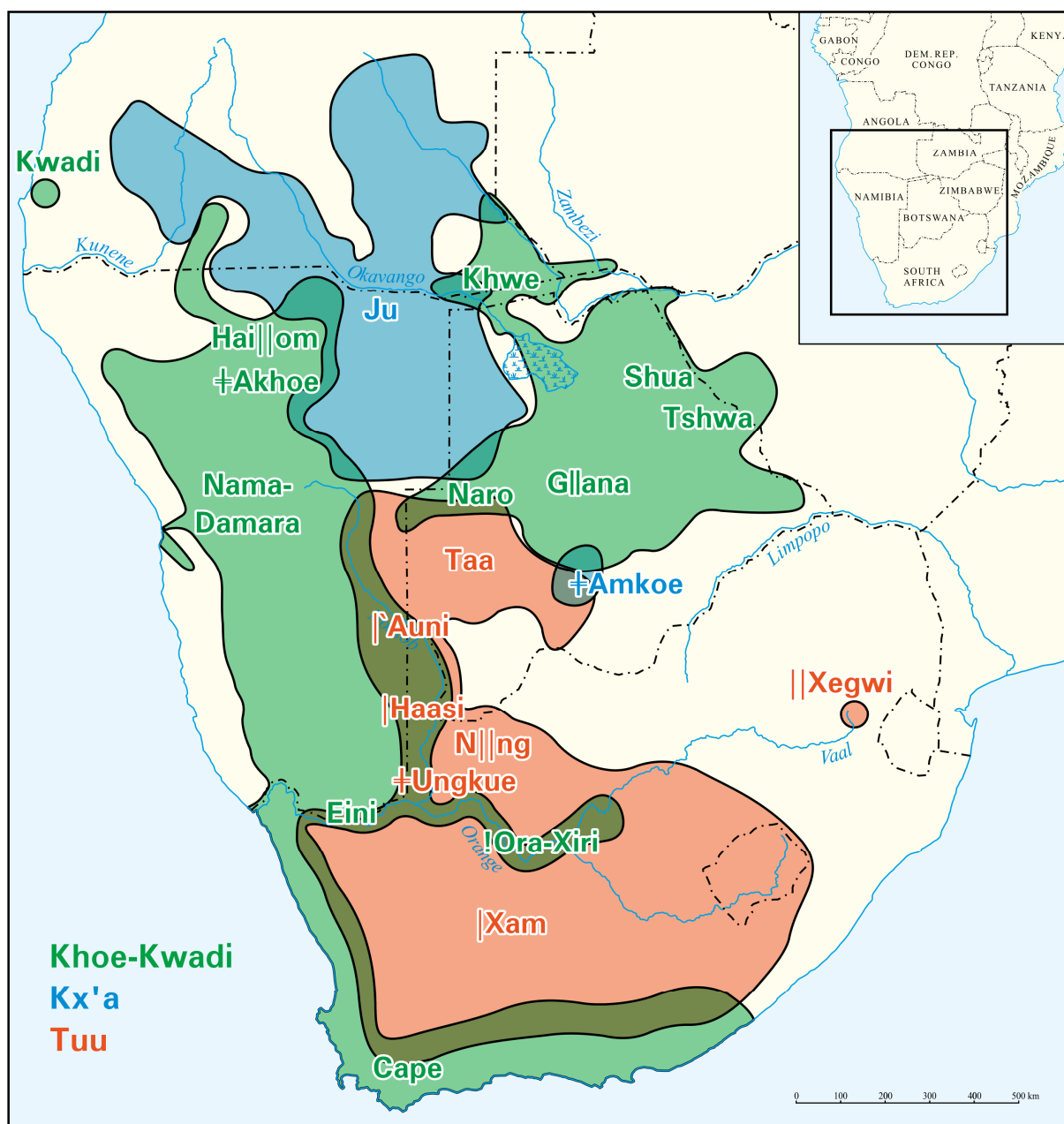
Map 1-1: Southern African Khoisan lineages and languages. Graph: Monika FEINEN

Khoisan Lineages   Languages (L) or language complexes (LC) and
                                                  selected dialects and dialect groups

(1) Khoe-Kwadi
    A Kwadi   single L †
    B Khoe
         Kalahari Khoe
              East   Shua: Cara, Deti, |Xaise, **Nata-Shua**, Danisi, Ts'ixa, etc.
                           Tshwa: Kua, Cua, Tsua, etc.
              West   Khwe: ‖**Xom**, ‖**Xo**, **Buma**, Buga, ‖Ani
                           G‖ana: **G‖ana, G|ui**, ǂHaba, etc.
                           Naro: **Naro**, Ts'ao, etc.
         Khoekhoe   (Cape K.) † LC
                           (!Ora-Xiri) LC
                           (Eini) † LC
                           Nama-Damara LC
                           Hai‖om
                           ǂAakhoe

(2) **Kx'a**
    A Ju   single LC: North: Angolan !Xun varieties
                                        North-Central: **Ekoka !Xun**, Okongo !Xun, etc.
                                        Central: Grootfontein !Xun, etc.
                                        Southeast: North Ju|'hoan (Dobe, Tsumkwe),
                                        South Ju|'hoan (Donkerbos, Blouberg, etc.)
    B ǂ'Amkoe   single L: West: ǂHoan, N!aqriaxe
                                        East: Sasi

(3) **Tuu**
    A Taa-Lower Nossob
         Taa   single LC: West: **West !Xoon**, (N|u‖en)
                                        East: 'N|oha, East !Xoon, Tshasi, ǂHuan, (Kakia)
         Lower Nossob   (|'Auni) †
                           (|Haasi) †
    B !Ui
                           N‖ng: N|uu, (Langeberg), etc.
                           (|Xam) †:   Strandberg, Katkop. Achterveld, etc.
                           (ǂUngkue) †
                           (‖Xegwi) †

Notes:

† extinct; () only documented in older sources;

bold type indicates main language units analyzed in this book.

The figure does not aim at completeness on the level of dialects, listing only the better known and well attested ones; the eastern African Khoisan languages were omitted because they are not covered in this book.

Source: adapted from GÜLDEMANN (2014a: 26).

Figure 1-1: Linguistic lineages subsumed under "Khoisan" and internal composition

There are also a great many cultural features other than kinship which are held in common among Khoisan groups. These can be shared across the hunter/herder boundary, which in a sense becomes fairly meaningless when we consider relations among people similar in kinship classification, in naming customs and in economic and exchange relations. For example, in exchange relations the Ju│'hoan custom of *hxaro* (the system of delayed direct exchange of non-consumable property, which overlies a right of generalised reciprocity of rights to hunt and gather in each other's territory) is very well known (see WIESSNER 1982). Indeed, *hxaro* is also practised by Naro, who seem to lack the noun for the relationship but know it simply by the verb: ‖*aĩ*. Among Naro, it works exactly as among Ju│'hoansi. What is less well known is a similar custom which occurs among Khoisan pastoralists (BARNARD 2008: 66-69). Nama and particularly Damara possess giving customs (notably *mâ!khunigus*, which involves giving in delayed balanced reciprocity, either of consumables or other items). A second example is *mafisa*, or more particularly its opposite form, "inverse *mafisa*". *Mafisa* is a Tswana custom whereby a poor individual looks after livestock for a relatively wealthy person, and the poor person receives milk or offspring from the wealthy person's animals. In "inverse *mafisa*", the reverse is true. A poor person leaves his livestock with a wealthy person as a capital reserver, and the latter receives benefits such as milk and calves. This latter custom is common among Hai-‖om, who leave their stock with Owambo and thus avoid the appearance of wealth in this hunter-gatherer society where wealth is frowned upon (WIDLOK 1999: 113-19). Another example is bridewealth, conventionally viewed as typical of pastoralist communities, but found not only among Khoekhoe but in a number of Khoisan hunter-gatherer communities too: for example, Ju│'hoan and Naro (e.g., LEE 2013: 86-87). In Ju│'hoan it is known as *kamasi*, and in Naro as *kamane*. These words are in fact identical but for the suffixes, which in each case are plurals. The word also may refer to childbirth gifts. In summary, the hunter/herder boundary is not as precise as it is sometimes assumed. While in the realm of subsistence economy or ecological management, we know better what hunters and herders are, within kinship or social relations more generally the distinction is not always obvious. This most certainly does not mean that the boundary is not there, but rather that its meaning can be subtle and its application open to detailed analysis.

Conjectural histories of Khoisan populations

The fact that Khoe languages are spoken by hunters and herders, together with archaeological finds attesting that pastoralists have been living in the region no longer than about 2,000 years (e.g., SMITH 2005), suggest that the earliest pastoralists in southern Africa spoke a Khoe language and entered the sub-continent as colonisers. The expansion would have coincided with higher summer rainfalls around 3,000-2,000 BP, a time when the Kalahari was far more humid than nowadays, followed by a subsequent re-desertification (DENBOW 1986). Researchers have developed a number of scenarios from these facts.

One assumption is that only a small group of Khoe-speakers, the ancestors of the Khoekhoe, adopted a pastoral mode of life through contact with a northern population (ELPHICK 1977; EHRET 1982). Archaeologists disagree about whether early herders brought sheep and pottery from Zimbabwe and Zambia through Namibia to the Cape by 2,000 BP (KLEIN 1984; SMITH 2000) or whether these items spread south through exchange networks between hunter-gatherers (MITCHELL 1996; SADR 1998).

Alternatively, the linguistically assumed chronolect of Proto-Khoe-Kwadi might have been spoken by pastoralists (GÜLDEMANN 2014a). Lexical reconstructions of agro-pastoralist vocabulary in the Kalahari Khoe languages (VOßEN 1984; KÖHLER 1986) suggest that the speakers of the proto-language were food producers with small-stock animal husbandry based on sheep and small-scale agriculture. The question is then, whether the San groups who speak Khoe languages adopted the language of the colonisers, or once were pastoralists who adopted a forager lifestyle for whatever ecological or political-economic reasons. GÜLDEMANN (2008a) suggests the former for the south-western Kalahari Khoe (Naro, G‖ana) and the latter form of "devolution" for the north-eastern Kalahari Khoe (Kxoé, Shua, Tswha). Recent molecular anthropological research supports that south-western Kalahari Khoe are language shifters (PICKRELL, PATTERSON ET AL. 2012; PAKENDORF 2014). The genetic profiles of the Khoe-speaking San in the central Kalahari are more similar to those of the Kx'a and Taa speakers than to either the speakers of Khoekhoe or of the Kalahari Khoe languages spoken on the margins of the Kalahari Basin.

Instead of by pastoralism alone, the proto-Khoe-Kwadi society could, of course, have been characterised by a mixed economy of foraging, small stock animal husbandry, and horticulture, and to have specialised according to the local ecological conditions. More generally, a common linguistic heritage neither requires a common

way of subsistence nor a common genetic profile. However, academic imaginations of Khoisan populations have tended to be preoccupied with the idea that biology, language and culture should be bounded consistently. We think that kinship is in part an independent system, and that the analysis of kinship systems provides an alternative path towards reconstructing history, which complements and can be used to cross-check or triangulate some of the hypotheses generated by other disciplines.

The north-eastern margins of the Kalahari have been suggested as the location from where proto-Khoe-Kwadi speakers expanded into southern Africa because this would best explain the geographical distribution of the historic languages (GÜLDE-MANN 2008a). GÜLDEMANN further suggested that Proto-Khoe emerged through intensive contact with local hunter-gatherers, who most probably spoke a Kx'a language (see also GÜLDEMANN, forthcoming-b). For the southern part of the Kalahari Basin area, he considered a strong substrate of Tuu languages, in particular from the !Ui branch, a likely explanation for the distinct linguistic character of Khoekhoe, compared to Kalahari Khoe. Geographically, the area where Khoekhoe was spoken was entirely included in the Tuu territory before some Khoekhoe groups ventured north and entered Namibia in the aftermath of the European colonial expansion in the Cape (GÜLDEMANN 2006b). However, the divergence of Khoekhoe from the rest of Khoe has recently been challenged (HAACKE 2014; RAPOLD 2014).

The languages from the Kx'a and Tuu families show a considerable degree of linguistic-typological homogeneity, which, notably, exceeds the homogeneity within Khoe, and could either result from an areal convergence over a long time span or from a very old common ancestor language which cannot yet be demonstrated by accepted linguistic methodology. However, all individual instances of borrowing, language shifts and substrate interference are still far from being understood (GÜLDE-MANN 2008a, 2014a).

The hypotheses sketched above raise interesting questions with respect to kinship systems and terminologies. Transformations of structural aspects of kinship terminologies have often been explained as effects of developing social complexity and hierarchy (ALLEN 1986, 1989, 2004, 2008), which, although not uniform, are considered irreversible (KRYUKOV 1998). The scenario of pastoralists shifting to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle raises the question whether they adopted features of the kinship systems of their hunter-gatherer neighbours parallel to changing subsistence strategies. The alternative scenario of hunter-gatherers shifting to the language of the

pastoralist colonists entails the question whether they retained features of their hunter-gatherer kinship systems, and, if they did, which features, and why they were retained? Is the suggested Kx'a substrate in Khoe as a whole, and the additionally-suggested !Ui substrate in Khoekhoe mirrored in the respective kinship terminologies and kinship classifications? Do kinship data support a common ancestry of Kx'a and Tuu languages or, alternatively, convergence over a long time span? Is the paradox that modern groups which today constitute the Khoe-Kwadi family are in many ways more heterogeneous than the Non-Khoe groups which do not form a language family or at best a family that is far older, reflected in kinship terminologies and classifications? Can the analysis of kinship data help to solve such questions, and what are the requirements with respect to the data basis and the theoretical models? The chapters in this book address these questions in more or less detail and on more or less comprehensive levels: for individual languages, individual contact settings, linguistic lineages and the Kalahari Basin area as a whole. The contributions which the individual chapters make to the overall puzzle will be taken up and brought together in the concluding section.

Kinship terminologies

From the earliest days of social anthropology (MORGAN 1871) until today (e.g., GODELIER, TRAUTMANN ET AL. 1998; JONES & MILICIC 2011), the different ways of grouping relatives into kin classes have been considered useful for tracing language family boundaries and population histories or studying common origin and contact. Kinship terminologies have been represented as stable and "relatively unaffected by political, economic and social circumstances or the calculated interest of actors" (TRAUTMANN 2008: 310), and as complex cognitive systems of interrelated terms, built on an internal logic (READ 2001, 2011), possessing a structure and constituting specific configurations, whose terms are connected in a network of complementary relationships and cannot change independently (GODELIER 2011: 181). In spite of some discussion about the exact number of distinct basic types, kinship terminologies around the world were often understood as more or less complex variants of a handful of types named after example societies, such as Sudanese, Hawaiian, Eskimo, Iroquois, etc. Terminologies combining components of several types appeared as hybrids or as systems in transition from one type to another. Transitions from one type of kinship terminology to another were often conceived in the long term of

social development, either in evolutionary terms (e.g., DOLE 1957; MATLOCK 1994; ALLEN 1986, 1989, 2004, 2008) or in terms of regional history (BARNARD 1988, 1992a). The asserted stability and structural coherence of kinship terminologies, thus, substantiates their potential for tracing language family boundaries and reconstructing population histories. In our view, the focus on types, inherited structures, and on the internal logic and coherence of kinship terminologies has obstructed the alertness for the insight potential of incoherent and a-typical features for the reconstruction of long term historical processes (for an early critique of typological approaches to kinship terminologies, see LOWIE 1928).

BARNARD (1992a: 5-7) explicitly backed away from typological approaches, and considered relationship terminologies to be part of the surface structure. His concern was with even deeper structures or with underlying similarities across typological and societal boundaries. He argued that kinship was especially significant for Khoisan regional comparison "because kinship appears to be the most fundamental area of difference between Khoisan societies, while at the same time having at its core certain principles which unite Khoisan culture as a whole" (ibid: 5). The explicit aim then was to "convey some idea of the historical and structural linkages between Khoisan cultures" (ibid: 295). The concept of underlying structure implies a notion of cross-cultural similarity, and, at the same time, of distinctiveness from universal structures. For BARNARD, kinship appeared as a means to other ends with hierarchy being played out through kinship in the herder societies, and equality being defined and maintained through kinship and quasi-kinship relations of giving and receiving in the hunter-gatherer societies.

Whether the common underlying structure in Khoisan kinship is inherited or should be understood as the solidified shared common ground in a *Verwandtschaftsbund,* viz. a collection of kinship systems whose relationships have occurred through contact rather than through common origin is a central question addressed in this book. Similarities and differences will be analyzed on different levels: the macro-level of Khoisan, the meso-level of the individual linguistic lineages (see Figure 1-1), and the micro-level of individual languages and contact settings.

A new approach

Slightly more than twenty years have passed since the publication of BARNARD's comparative ethnography of Khoisan peoples (BARNARD 1992a) which included accounts

not only of kinship but also of subsistence, politics and religion. The present book focuses solely on kinship. The other subjects have become such specialised areas that to do justice to them would require more than just one book. New data in the realm of Khoisan kinship available in the meantime alone, could serve as a justification for looking at the subject again from a comparative perspective. However, the emphasis is different too: here we look at differences in Khoisan kinship systems as much as at commonalities.

Most importantly, while the social reality, degree and effects of contacts between San hunter-gatherers and populations of Bantu origin, has instigated the hotly argued out "Kalahari debate" (cf. BARNARD 1992b; KENT 1992; KUPER 1992), research on *Khoisan internal contact* has played a relatively minor role in social anthropology. The present book explicitly addresses the possible effects of Khoisan internal contact on kinship terminologies and kinship categories in prehistoric and historic contact settings. Note, however, that it only deals with relationships between southern African Khoisan populations. The kinship systems of the Hadza and Sandawe in eastern Africa, whose languages are also often subsumed under Khoisan could only have been discussed from a genealogical, but not from a contact perspective.

The approach presented here is new in several respects. Firstly, it analyzes new data from a number of Khoisan kinship terminologies and systems which had previously escaped documentation. Secondly, it combines the identificiation of common structures with an interest in the potential of atypical features, incoherent structures and internal variation as indicators of transition, and attempts to explain them as an outcome of contact. Thirdly, it treats different data for the same language as documented by different researchers not as more or less imperfect representations of "the kinship terminology" of that language but as a chance for tracing and understanding transformation or change, for addressing the relevance of documentation contexts as well as the impact of the multilingual and trans-cultural contexts, in which Khoisan communities are living today and might have been living in the past. Fourthly, contemporary developments are considered relevant for understanding earlier transformations in kinship terminologies by analogy. The condition that most southern African non-Bantu languages are severely endangered and spoken by people who live in close association with people from other ethnic groups, including people of Bantu and European origin, is taken as a chance to observe how people deal with the different kinship systems they encounter within their families and neighbourhoods.

Fifthly, regional structural comparison has so far mainly been applied to the Khoe language family within Khoisan (cf. BARNARD 1976, 1980b, 1992a: 282-294). We here present attempts to reconstruct inherited structures also within the other two lineages of southern African Khoisan before venturing on Khoisan-wide comparision. There were no a priori premises for similarities in terminologies being effects of genealogical versus contact relations, nor were there a priori premises with respect to the direction of transformations. Finally, we explicitly use the spatial distribution of features for explaining their historical development. In short, the book attempts to combine a perspective seeing "the pattern as the thing" (BATESON 1972: 430), as was the epigraph of BARNARD (1992a), with a perspective taking "the variety as the message" (BARNES 2012: 196).

The individual chapters stress these perspectives to different degrees. The aim is to identify the features which are diagnostically relevant for identifying genealogical relations and for reconstructing contact, and, thereby, to contribute to the understanding of the population history in the Kalahari Basin area.

Outline of the book

The title of the project from which this book evolved was "Kinship systems in southern African non-Bantu languages: documentation, comparison, and historical analysis". The three parts of the project title are also reflected in the structure of the book. The first two sections present recent documentary work on kinship terminologies and kinship relations. The second part of the book is devoted to comparison and likewise covers two sections, first, the comparison of kinship systems within individual Khoisan lineages, namely Kx'a and Tuu, as well as across Khoisan as a whole, and secondly, the appearance of kinship systems in particular language contact settings.

The first section starts with BODEN's description of the Khwe kinship terminology which is a slightly amplified version of a chapter in her German dissertation (2005) and the first comprehensive account of Khwe kinship available in English. Before the Kalahari Basin Area (KBA) project started, detailed accounts of any of the Eastern Kalahari Khoe kinship terminologies were lacking. MCGREGOR's description of the Shua kinship terminology fills a major gap here. No full accounts existed of the kinship terminologies of any of the moribund Tuu languages either. N‖ng is the only language within the !Ui subbranch of Tuu which has survived to the present

day. Studying the N‖ng kinship terminology was considered to potentially improve our understanding of the historical development of Tuu kinship classifications more generally. However, after her attempt to reconstruct the N‖ng kinship system with the then nine last speakers, BODEN comes to the conclusion that although distinct N‖ng kinship terms have survived, a reconstruction of their semantics and, consequently, of a former distinctly N‖ng system of kinship classifications is virtually impossible by means of research into memory culture at such an advanced stage of language endangerment.

Data from field research on several other kinship terminologies have not been dedicated individual chapters in this book. This pertains to Ts'ixa and Danisi, Eastern Kalahari Khoe languages spoken in Mababe in Botswana, and to ‖Ani, a Western Kalahari language closely related to Khwe, as documented by Anne-Maria FEHN; it also pertains to different Taa dialects as documented by BODEN; to ǂ'Amkoe as documented by BODEN in collaboration with Falko BERTHOLD, Linda GERLACH and Blesswell KURE; to South Ju|'hoan as documented by BODEN in collaboration with Lee James PRATCHETT; and to Angolan !Xun spoken by San from Angola currently living in Namibia's Bwabwata National Park as documented by BODEN. Reasons include previous publication in the case of Taa dialects (cf. BODEN, forthcoming), lack of major differences compared to already published work by other authors, viz. ǂ'Amkoe (cf. GRUBER 1973) and South Ju|'hoan (cf. SYLVAIN 2000), and lack of comprehensiveness (Angola !Xun, Ts'ixa, Danisi and ‖Ani). The data will nevertheless inform the comparative chapters, as well as the comparative kinship database which, apart from this book, is the second main product of the research project. The database will be accessible online in the near future (http://www2.hu-berlin.de/kba/). It offers new opportunities for correlating kinship data with data from other disciplines and testing hypotheses with new methods, including Bayesian statistics (for a first utilisation and appraisal see BODEN, GÜLDEMANN & JORDAN 2014).

Three chapters in the second documentary section deal with how people use kinship terms for configuring kinship relations rather than with the terminologies as abstract structures. ONO describes how among the G‖ana peoples, a strict joking and avoidance dichotomy serves as a structural basis for the cultural practice of spouse exchange in the system of universal kinship categorisation. TAKADA shows how kinship categories are enacted in socialising practices among the Ekoka !Xun, and BODEN provides an account of the different degrees, ideas and strategies involved

when including and excluding people from kinship categories among the !Xoon in Namibia.

For untangling the relationship between any two languages from one of the three Khoisan lineages, it would be useful if the basic structural elements of proto-Khoe, proto-Kx'a, and proto-Tuu kinship classifications were identified. For the Khoe language family we can rely on the extensive work of BARNARD (1976, 1980b, 1992a). Similar accounts of Kx'a and Tuu kin categorisations were missing at the time of his early work and continue to be hampered by the unequal quality and scope of their documentation, as well as by the unequal number of languages belonging to each of the three lineages.

Khoe-Kwadi is the largest southern African language family subsumed under the label 'Khoisan', also showing the most complex internal sub-branching and the widest geographical distribution. Ethnographic descriptions of kinship systems and comprehensive accounts of kinship terminologies of satisfactory quality are only available for the Khoe lineage of that family. The common structure and potential historical transformations of the kinship terminologies of the Western Kalahari Khoe into those of the Khoekhoe (or vice versa) have comprehensively been outlined by BARNARD (1980b, 1992a), focusing on the transition between hunter-gatherer and pastoralist societies.

The Kx'a language family consists of only two languages: the widely distributed Ju dialect cluster with, according to different authors, between eleven and fifteen different dialects (SNYMAN 1997; KÖNIG & HEINE 2008; SANDS 2010), plus the ǂ'Amkoe isolate. While linguists decided for a genealogical relationship of !Xun and ǂ'Amkoe (for a discussion see TRAILL 1973, 1974a; WESTPHAL 1974; HEINE & HONKEN 2010), kinship classifications show considerable differences. The ǂ'Amkoe kinship classifications share more features with those of their G|ui and Taa neighbours than with those of the Ju dialects. Less far-reaching differences between the kinship classifications of the individual Ju dialects also apparently relate to the respective contact situations. However, so far the kinship systems of only three Ju dialects, namely those of the Ju|'hoansi in the Nyae Nyae and Dobe areas (MARSHALL 1957, 1976; LEE 1984, 1986, 1993, 2013), the Ju|'hoansi in the Omaheke (SYLVAIN 2000), and the !Xun in Ekoka (TAKADA 2008b) have been studied in any detail. Therefore, the actual scope of the pan-dialectal variation in Ju kinship systems still remains unknown. In their comparative chapter on Kx'a kinship classifications, BODEN & TAKADA suggest

that a common proto-Kx'a kinship structure was most probably characterised by a high degree of alternate generation equivalence, strict naming rules, and lineal/collateral distinctions as historically described for North Ju|'hoan. At the same time they caution against the effect, which anthropological descriptions of the North Ju|'hoan kinship terminology as structurally consistent might have had for letting it appear to be closest to the proto-Kx'a kinship terminology.

The Tuu language family has been conceived as an entity since Dorothea BLEEK's early research (e.g., BLEEK 1927a). However, systematic attempts to reconstruct the proto-language have only recently been made (HASTINGS 2001; GÜLDEMANN 2005) and are hampered by the fact that most of its languages are extinct and that many older data on extinct !Ui varieties remain unpublished and were long difficult to access (GÜLDEMANN 2014a). Furthermore, only limited information on the kinship terms is available, while in-depth ethnographic descriptions of the kinship systems 'in action' are missing (HEWITT 1986: 27). Taa is the only living language within the Tuu language family. Differences between the Taa terminologies and those of the rest of Tuu – as far as data on the latter are available – are considerable, and BODEN comes to the conclusion that no features of proto-Taa kinship classifications can be reconstructed in spite of a number of cognate kinship terms as identified by GÜLDEMANN (2005).

The next chapter in this section looks at selected features of kinship terminologies across all three Khoisan lineages. The aim is to understand which features and ideas shared by various Khoisan populations should better be explained as common heritage or as resulting from contact. This also involves the identification of kinship features which trace language family boundaries best. As shown in a recent article (BODEN, GÜLDEMANN & JORDAN 2014), sibling terminologies are not good candidates (contra MURDOCK 1968; Dziebel 2007). BODEN demonstrates that the presence or absence of terminological equivalence between grandparents and grandchildren suits the purpose much better, at least in the Khoisan context. She concludes that high degrees of alternate-generation equivalence, cyclical concepts of society and the recycling of personal names can be reconstructed for a hypothetical proto-Kx'a kinship system, whereas such features were most certainly absent in the proto-Khoe kinship system, evidence for the proto-Tuu kinship system being notoriously weak. If these features did exist in the proto-Tuu kinship systems, they would probably have operated in a different way than in the proto-Kx'a society and would possibly have

been similar to those historically documented in the Taa kinship systems. The chapter also explains several Khoisan kinship terminologies, namely South Ju|'hoan, Ekoka !Xun, ǂ'Amkoe (all Kx'a) and Taa (Tuu) as having incorporated Khoe features, first the equation of cross- and grandrelatives in ascending and descending generations, and subsequently parallel/cross distinctions and bifuracte-merging equations. The Naro (Khoe) terminology also seems to be a hybrid, deserving a different line of explanation involving language shift (see also BARNARD's chapter on Naro-Ju|'hoan contact).

The last section looks at kinship systems in contemporary contact settings. In his chapter on the historical relationship between Naro and Ju|'hoansi, BARNARD re-examines, in light of the findings of PICKERING and his colleagues (PICKERING ET AL. 2012), the hypothesis he posed in 1988. He outlines the changes required and considers some of the probable reasons for them, in order to explain how and why the ancestors of the Naro apparently came to switch languages. The switch was from a Kx'a language to a Khoe one, entailing the adoption of a Khoe kinship terminology structure along with a mainly Khoe kinship vocabulary. TAKADA relates the kinship practices of the Ekoka !Xun to discussions about ethnicity and the famous Kalahari debate. By looking at life histories and surnames, he demonstrates how the !Xun of Ekoka maintain and shape relationships in trans-cultural settings by using different bundles of kinship conventions in different social settings which construct ethnicity. He makes a strong claim for studying family and kinship relations formed by inter-marriage and fostering between ethnic groups. BODEN, in her chapter on the flexibility of kinship classifications, likewise urges us to address the relevance of trans-cultural social settings. She demonstrates that kinship classifications and the semantics of kinship terms differ among speakers of the same language according to regional divisions, age cohorts and similar life histories or work biographies, and makes a plea for a new research agenda, since after more than a century of kinship studies a sound data basis of what happens to kinship classifications in contact situations and, therefore, also models for reconstructing pre-historical changes in kinship classifications, are still lacking.

In the concluding chapter BARNARD & BODEN summarise the achievements and the remaining gaps, outline the pros and cons for different historical scenarios from a kinship perspective, and draft possible lines for future research. In all, the volume presents not only a new understanding of Khoisan kinship, but also a re-analysis of

many aspects of Khoisan society that are related to kinship. The focus is decidedly on terminologies and categories, but much more is revealed. Although in many ways threatened, Khoisan social structure remains vibrant. The present book documents both its continuity and its changing circumstances and demonstrates that kinship systems can be used as independent source in historical reconstructions. We hope it will be useful not only within the rather specialised field of kinship studies but also beyond that, in Khoisan studies, within linguistics, in related fields and in southern African history.

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