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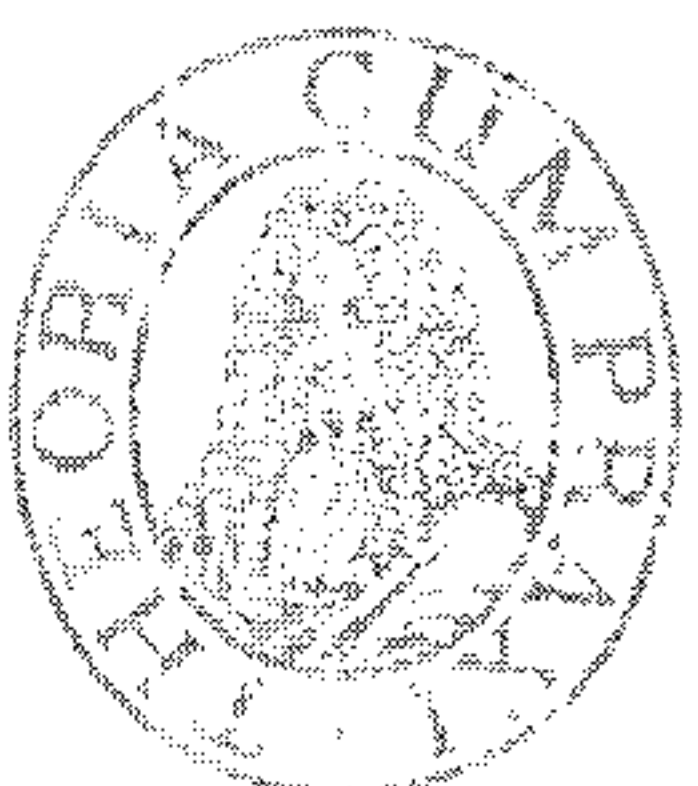
Schadeberg, Thilo: Tira and Otoro. Two Kordofanian Grammars by Roland C. Stevenson. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe 2009. X, 333 S., 1 Foto, 3 Diagramme, 3 Tabellen. 8° = Archiv Afrikanistischer Manuskripte, Bd. 8. Brosch. 48,00 €. ISBN 978-3-89645-173-6.

Bespr. von Angelika Jakobi, Köln.

The Nuba Mountains is a remote area of Sudan renowned for its extreme ethnolinguistic heterogeneity including Nilo-Saharan languages (Temein, Nubian, Nyima, Daju, Kadu) and Kordofanian languages, which are characterized by noun class systems as attested in the Bantu and other Niger-Congo languages. For this reason the Kordofan languages are considered to be genetically part of the Niger-Congo phylum. Geographically, however, they are quite distant from the other Niger-Congo languages, a fact suggesting their early separation from the main group. According to Schadeberg (1981a),¹ the Kordofanian language group consists of four branches, Heiban (comprising ten languages including Tira and Otoro), Talodi (six languages), Rashad (two?), and Katla-Tima. In the past very few linguists – Roland Stevenson, Meinhof (1943/44),²

¹ Schadeberg, Th. C. 1981a. Das Kordofanische. In: B. Heine / Th. C. Schadeberg / E. Wolff (Hgg.), *Die Sprachen Afrikas*. Hamburg: Buske.

² Meinhof, Carl (1934).



Black and Black (1971),³ Schadeberg und Elias (1979),⁴ and Schadeberg (1981b, c, 1989)⁵ – carried out research on the Kordofanian languages.

Recent research/publications

Fortunately, research on Kordofanian has recently been resumed. There are five on-going projects. While Nicholas Quint (2006, 2009)⁶ carries out research on Koalib, Sharon Rose and Farrell Ackerman are leading a project on Moro,⁷ both languages belonging to the Heiban group. Gerrit Dimmendaal's project concentrates on "A multi-media documentation of Tima".⁸ John Vanderelst is working on Dagik and Heleen Smits on Lumun, both languages being members of the Talodi group. In view of the diversity and complexity of the Kordofanian languages, insights from various perspectives are useful. Consequently, Schadeberg's edition of Roland C. Stevenson's Tira and Otoro manuscript grammars, although dating from 1942 and 1943 respectively, is still highly welcome.

Roland C. Stevenson (1915–1991) was a British missionary and linguist who spent more than 30 years in the Sudan studying mostly little known languages of the Nuba Mountains, but also of Darfur, Wadai and the river Shari area in Chad. Stevenson is well known among specialists of the Nuba Mountain languages, particularly because of his Ph.D. dissertation "A survey of the phonetics and grammatical structure of the Nuba Mountain languages, with particular reference to Otoro, Katcha and Nyimang" published in *Afrika und Übersee* in 1956 and 1957. However, Stevenson is not very well known in the wider Africanist community. This is due to two facts. First, little of his research was published under his own name. Rather, he made available a substantial amount of analysed and raw data to Archibald N. Tucker and Margaret Bryan's *Linguistic Analyses. The Non-Bantu Languages of North-Eastern Africa* (1966). Data that Stevenson contributed to that volume include three manuscript grammars – Sara Mbai, Bagirmi, and Nyimang – as well as grammatical material and vocabulary of various Nilo-Saharan and Kor-

dofanian languages, such as Kenga, Bulala, Dai, Zaghawa, Masalit, Tama, Liguri, Temein, Katla and Tima, Miri, Kadugli, Katcha, and Hill Nubian. While Nyimang, Liguri, Temein, Katla, Tima, Miri, Kadugli, Katcha and Hill Nubian are spoken in the Nuba Mountains, the remaining languages are spoken in the Chado-Sudanic border area of Wadai and Darfur or, in case of Sara Mbai, Bagirmi and Dai even further to the southwest along the Shari river. The genetic diversity and wide geographic distribution of these languages attests that Stevenson did not only devote "his life ... to the study of the languages of the Nuba Mountains", as the editor, Thilo C. Schadeberg claims in the preface.

The present volume comprises Stevenson's Tira grammar (110 pages) including specimens of text and a vocabulary. His Otoro grammar is nearly twice the size (208 pages). Focusing on the Kwara dialect, it also provides a supplement for the Kwijur and Orombe dialects at the end of each chapter. Schadeberg has added to these two grammars an appendix of seven pages which contains a summary of an excellent MA thesis "The status and function of tone in Tira" written by Kathie Swanson Watters in 1993. It contains detailed information on tone and the phonological system and thus complements Stevenson's grammar.

While Tira belongs to the southern branch of the Heiban group, Otoro is a central Heiban language. The two languages share a number of features but they also differ in several respects. The vowel inventory of Otoro, for instance, comprises 13 vowels as opposed to 11 in Tira. The Tira and Otoro consonant systems are characterized by five places of articulation, with an opposition between dental and alveolar (retroflex) consonants, but Otoro has an implosive /d/ which is absent in Tira. All Otoro fricatives are voiced whereas in Tira there is an opposition between voiced and voiceless fricatives. Otoro has twelve noun classes, Tira eight. Each class is morphologically defined by a special set of class and concord prefixes. Most of the classes have a semantic core, class 1 being correlated with the notion "Person/Living Things", class 2 with "Nature", class 3 with "Unit-Collective", class 4 with "Thing", class 5 with "Harmful Things", class 6 with "Long Things". Whereas in Tira the class 7 prefixes may form diminutives from nouns of other classes, in Otoro this is not possible. The Otoro classes eight to twelve do not have counterparts in Tira. There is grammatical agreement between the head noun and its dependents, i.e. the concord prefixes are attached to the dependents ("Qualificatives"), which include possessives, demonstratives, adjectives, numerals, interrogatives, and a postposition marking instrumental and comitative constituents. Dependents follow the head noun.

As for morphological case marking – which is absent in other Niger-Congo languages – it is interesting to note that both Tira and Otoro mark the object (accusative) with a suffix. Moreover, there is a highly complex system of person pronouns, including prefixed "Pronoun Subjects"

³ Black, Mr./Mrs. K. Black. 1971. *The Moro Language: Grammar and Dictionary*. Khartoum: Sudan Research Unit.

⁴ Schadeberg, Th. C. / Ph. Elias. 1979. *A description of the Orig language (Southern Kordofan): based on the notes of Fr. Carlo Muratori*. Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale.

⁵ Schadeberg, Th. C. 1981b. *A Survey of Kordofanian, Volume One. The Heiban Group*. Hamburg: Buske. – 1981c. *A Survey of Kordofanian, Volume Two. The Talodi Group*. Hamburg: Buske. – 1989. *Kordofanian*, in: J. Bendor-Samuel / Rh. L. Hartell (eds.), *The Niger-Congo languages*, 66–80. Lanham: University Press of America.

⁶ Quint, Nicholas. 2006. *Phonologie de la langue koalibe*. Paris: L'Harmattan. – 2009. *The Phonology of Koalib – A Kordofanian Language of the Nuba Mountains (Sudan)*. Cologne: Köppe.

⁷ vgl. <http://moro.ucsd.edu/>

⁸ http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/afrikanistik/_en/forschung/forschungsprojekte/tima2/index.html

and suffixed or infixes “Pronoun Objects”, whose selection and position in relation to the verb depends on aspect. So in connection with a pronominal subject and object the constituent order varies, including the patterns SVO, OVS, SOV, and OSV, but with a nominal subject and object the typical order is SVO. Another rather uncommon feature is that both prepositions and/or postpositions are involved in the marking of peripheral constituents denoting location, goal, source, comparative, instrument, etc. Additionally, Tira employs various body part terms as postpositions to express locational relations. This is not attested in Otoro. Both languages exhibit an aspect rather than tense system, aspect being marked by the alternation of the final vowel. In Tira, there is a distinction between a “Definite”, “Indefinite”, and “Dependent” aspect stem, but in Otoro, although there is a three-stem system too, the stems do not correspond to the Tira ones. In case of motion verbs, direction toward or from the speaker (ventive, itive) is also expressed by final vowel alternation, so the same morphological strategy is used for aspect and ventive/itive marking.

As for verb-to-verb derivation, Tira and Otoro have suffixes enlarging or reducing the argument frame, such as the applicative (“Dative Action”), causative, neuter-passive/reflexive/stative, and the reciprocal. There is also an extension expressing a comparative (“to be more”) but without appearance of the element representing the standard of comparison, which is quite uncommon cross-linguistically. The reduplication of the partial or complete verb stem is used to express repeated, continual or frequentative action (known as pluractional).

Some of the features of Tira and Otoro – for example retroflex consonants, reciprocal and pluractional verb derivation – are also attested in the neighbouring Kordofan Nubian languages but absent in the other Nubian languages spoken outside of the Nuba Mountains. This may suggest that due to contact these features have spread from Kordofanian to the Nubian languages.

Schadeberg has chosen to publish Stevenson’s Tira and Otoro grammars as volume 8 in the *Archiv Afrikanistischer Manuskripte*. According to its editors Gudrun Mieke and Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg, this series is intended to publish valuable manuscripts documenting African languages. In regard to the many uncommon typological features of Tira and Otoro, the *Archiv Afrikanistischer Manuskripte* is an appropriate publishing place for Stevenson’s grammars.

