

Re: Same ancestral mother tongue for all?

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- *From:* "benlizro@xxxxxxxxxx" <benlizro@xxxxxxxxxx>
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On Mar 26, 6:38 am, Jack Linthicum <jacklinthi...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Sounds like something I have read before.

Same ancestral mother tongue for all?

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Posted on Tuesday 25 March 2008 - 11:21

By Evans Wafula and Portus Chege

Protus Chege took a journey to Kitale and found out how Scot's research has revealed the mysterious linguistic ties between EA's Karamojong and Euro-Asian speakers.

The epithet 'Dark Continent' was routinely used by the colonialists to refer to Africa as a continent of a people with inherently inferior cultural roots and intellectual fiber.

Of course, the notion has long been dispelled by Africans' spectacular advancements in all fields of human endeavor, including the arts, science and literature.

And one man's efforts at putting the notion to bed have produced startling revelations that suggest a linguistic relationship between the Karamojong of Uganda and European and Asian speakers, hinting at a common language between mankind, which contradicts archaeologists and anthropologists' inquiry and findings of the 20th century as of mere Stone Age.

John Wilson, a Scot, reveals from his research that the language of the Karamojong contains words that are similar to or identical with and have identical or related meanings with Scots Gaelic, Spanish and the Tibetan of the Indian sub-continent, among others.

"There is no doubt that mankind spoke a common language at a certain time. The research I have done proves beyond any doubt that through language Africa shared the same cultural beginning as the rest

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of the world," Wilson says.

Wilson says Karimojong, the language of the Karamojong, a Nilotic people that live in North–East Uganda and have close cultural and linguistic ties with the Turkana of Kenya, Topossa of Southern Sudan and the Dongiro of South–West Ethiopia, has the same linguistic connection with those of other languages.

He says lack of research on Africa by the whites had created a wrong perception that an otherwise rich African culture was unworthy of consideration let alone scientific inquiry.

"Throughout Africa during the colonial era, no notice had ever been taken of extant cultural patterns; it simply translated not only as indifference but contempt..."

"We whites did no research on Africa. The Karamojong culture was not primitive and we made no attempt to preserve it."

Posted in 1952 as an agriculture officer to Karamoja district in north–east border of Uganda which borders Kenya for 200 miles, Wilson was awe–struck by the unique ways of the Karamojong.

Until the 1960s, the Karamojong, a fiercely proud people who regarded outsiders as fleeting interlopers, were semi–nomadic cattle herders and peasant farmers whose measure of wealth was cattle.

They walked naked; the man with a pair of long spears for defensive purposes, a splendid carved wooden stool or neck–rest and a snuffbox on a chain around the neck or shoulder. In pierced earlobes would hang curiously assorted objects while on their heads they wore beautifully constructed headdresses of human hair, painted and decorated with feathers.

Wilson discovered that all the paraphernalia was an historical throwback to ancient civilizations, especially Egypt.

And it was not until Dictator Idi Amin Dada came to power that they started wearing clothes. "This brought their whole culture to an end." Or at least, until Wilson came around to resuscitate it out of his research.

Being a naturalist, he started collecting plants and getting them scientifically named. As recognition of his efforts, he was sent for a post–graduate course in Tropical Ecology and later co–authored *The Vegetation of Uganda* (1964).

In fact, four species of plants are named after him, two of which, *Aloe Wilson*, and *Caralluma wilsonii*, can be found within the museum garden.

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He retired from government service in 1968 and embarked on research on that community's culture the results of which he has preserved in The Treasures of Africa Museum in Kenya's Western Province township of Kitale.

The museum preserves artifacts that arguably cannot be found elsewhere in the world. Therein is preserved in excess of 130 examples of Karamojong pottery, many of which bear a single or pair of handles, polished stone axes, emblematic and decorative objects, among others.

Wilson discovered that words denoting human atmosphere, dwelling and lifestyle, livestock, agriculture, context of cultivation and pastoralism had a striking similarity with those describing similar concepts in European and Asian languages.

This, Wilson argues, points at the possibility of a 'common ancestral "Mother Tongue" and shared elements of a common material culture between people from the continents.

This pervasive linguistic connection suggests that particular lifestyles and lexicon are based on shared experience rather diffusion of words from one language to another out of cultural interaction.

"There is no doubt that mankind spoke a common language at a certain time. The research I have done proves beyond any doubt that through language Africa shared the same cultural beginning as the rest of the world. It was not primitive."

For instance, he compared the form of Karamojong pottery with those dating back to ancient Europe and the Middle East and notes a striking similarity in the lexicon.

"It occurred to me that the names of specific parts of African pottery had a resemblance to the corresponding words in ancient Asia and Europe," he says.

The corresponding similarity, he says, can be found between Karimojong, on the one hand, and Asian languages like Hebrew and Sumerian and European ones like Spanish and Gaelic, on the other.

For example, such Spanish words as 'jarro' (a pitcher, jug); tacho (earthen pot); tabor (a chamber pot), corresponds with Akarimojong's a-jarosior, (to empty a (ceramic) jug); a-jarapiar (to drink noisily (from a jug)); and atibo (a distinctive small pot or jug) respectively.

Similarly, Karimojong words such as abaal (a wide-mouthed beer pot), abichir (kind of small pot), and atako (vessel for storing ghee) respectively correspond with Gaelic words Ballan (a drinking vessel), Biceir (beaker) and Tacar (kitchen).

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Also, the researcher says Karimojong words related to pastoralism have similar linguistic features with those of the Tibetan language of the Indian sub-continent.

For instance, the Akarimojong word a-kariij, which means to curdle milk, has a relationship with dkar-kro, which is Tibetan for milk and curds. Also, Tibetan tshir (squeeze forth) dovetails with aki-chirit, which is 'milk cows' in Akarimojong.

Indeed, Wilson's assertions are borne out by the fact that these modern languages are so geographically spread but with distinct thematic commonalities between their word lists that the conclusion that the various languages formed a single entity some time in the past becomes inescapable.

Indeed, conclusions that fly in the face of archaeological inquiry and findings.

"Instead of digging up remains all we need to do is take words of an African language with corresponding ones in a European language. Nobody in the world has compared the words of an African language with those of a European language."

Wilson faults archaeologists accuracy on the exact historical time frame of the Iron Age, which they put at 1100 BC.

"One of the most important discoveries I have made in my thirty years of research is that the Iron Age probably began as far back as a million years before the time archaeologists say it did," Wilson says.

Wilson says that there is therefore need to evaluate Africa's cultural heritage of hundreds of thousands of years as opposed to archaeologists' definition of it as primitive Stone Age.

It is in recognition of Wilson's accomplishments that Kesarine and Associates, a regional rural development consultancy, has volunteered to link up local and regional universities and research institutions with Wilson's work.

"We would like to see more public investment in what Wislon is doing," said Michael Wekesa, a senior partner at the firm.

The Treasures of African Museum could also come in handy for the country's tourism, especially now that the Western circuit is of particular interest.

"The museum can be a powerful tool for enhancing the development of communities in the neighborhood and beyond," added Kesarine's Irene Karani.

<http://www.archaeologynews.org/story.asp?ID=273199&Title=Same%20ances...>

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The most interesting of Kitale's museums is the Treasures of Africa Museum (Mon– Sat 9am– noon & 2–5.30pm; Ksh250; 054/30867, toam@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx), northeast of the main road, out past the Kitale Club (Ksh30 by boda–boda from town). Run by John Wilson, a retired former colonial administrator in Uganda, the museum displays cultural artefacts, mainly from the Karamojong, a pastoral Nilotic people of northern Uganda. The exhibits are arranged to illustrate the proprietor's case – based on linguistic parallels between Karamojong and supposedly unrelated languages, such as Scottish Gaelic – that a single worldwide farming culture existed in the ice age, long before agriculture is thought to have developed anywhere in the world. The proprietor himself is usually on hand to explain all this in person, but if you want to be sure of a guided tour, it's best to call or email him in advance of your visit.

– from the Rough Guide to Kenya

Just in case anybody wants to follow this up in person.

Ross Clark

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