

## Retrieving Food History through Linguistics: Culinary Traditions in Early Bantuphone Communities

Birgit Ricquier and Koen Bostoen

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Most research on food history is based on the study of written documents. These documents vary from Mesopotamian grocery lists (Bottéro 2004), the Maya codex and travellers' accounts (Coe 1994), to early cookbooks and literary texts (Alcock 2005). But what if no documents are available for a particular period or region? How can we study the food history of Celtic Europe before the arrival of the Romans, of the Pre-Columbian Americas, or of Sub-Saharan Africa before Arabs and Europeans set foot on its shores? Archaeology is one way to explore early history. While it can uncover some culinary utensils and food remains, other tools, preparation techniques, and products left no traces at all. Linguistics can shed light on these otherwise hidden stages of human history. In this paper, we describe how linguistics can serve to reconstruct culinary traditions of early Bantuphone communities. Bantu, a lower node in the Niger-Congo tree, is Africa's largest language group, stretching from Cameroon to Kenya and as far south as southern Africa.

### From Language to History

Vocabulary shared between languages can generally be taken as a result of shared history. Starting from this premise, the historical-comparative study of culinary vocabulary may yield indirect, though valuable evidence on the culinary practices of past Bantuphone peoples. This approach involves both the reconstruction of vocabulary that was inherited from an ancestor language and spread with the dispersal of descendant languages and also the identification of loanwords which spread across languages through contact. The geographical distribution of shared vocabulary indicates either the relative time-depth of the proto-language to which inherited vocabulary is reconstructible, or routes of diffusion for loanwords. Following the basic idea of the *Words-and-Things* method, when a word can be reconstructed in a proto-language with a specific meaning, the referent of that word must have existed in the period this proto-language was spoken. The reconstructibility of *\*-bumb-* 'to bake in ashes' into Proto-Bantu, for instance, implies that early Bantuphone communities were familiar with this cooking technique (Ricquier & Bostoen 2008).<sup>2</sup>

A limitation of lexical data is that they do not allow making estimations in terms of absolute chronology, let alone in terms of calendar dates. One can only reconstruct a relative chronology, tied to the historical subgrouping within a language family.

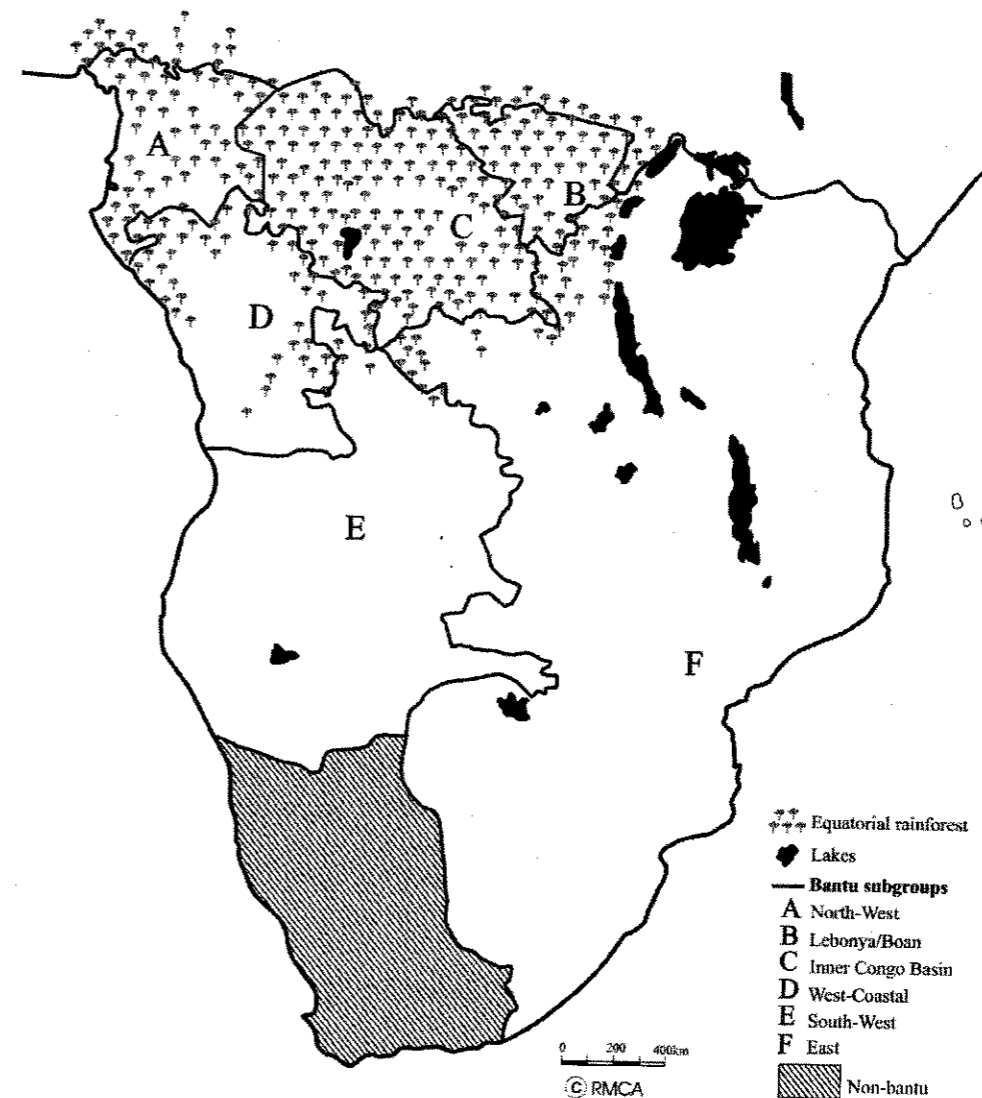


Figure 1. The Bantu subgroups.

This requires a fairly good understanding of that family's internal classification, which is the case for Bantu. Moreover, several initial stages in the Bantu expansion can be tentatively associated with archaeological findings. This allows integrating these language developments in a (still approximate) absolute chronology. It is agreed upon that Proto-Bantu originated in the grasslands of the Nigerian/Cameroonian border. Its daughter languages started to disperse from there 'some five millennia or a little longer ago' (Nurse & Philippson 2003: 165). This timeslot corresponds roughly with the emergence of macrolithism associated with the growing significance of pottery as found in archaeological sites scattered over the Central African rainforest between the first centuries of the second millennium BC and the last centuries BC (de Maret 1994–1995; Lavachery 2001). Likewise, it is commonly believed that the East-Bantu subgroup has its origins in the East-African Great Lakes region. Certain scholars, such as Phillipson (2005: 249–265), link its expansion with the south and eastward spread of the Early Iron Age Industrial Complex through East Africa. The oldest ceramic tradition of this complex, found all over the Great Lakes region, dates between 550 BC and AD 650 (Clist 1987). Other stages in the Bantu expansion, for example the spread of South-West-Bantu, are less well associated with archaeological findings.

#### Cuisine in early Bantuphone communities: the state of research

Both linguists and historians have approached the history of Bantuphone communities through the comparative study of cultural vocabularies. In most cases, reconstructing food history was not their primary goal. They were more interested in political and social developments (Klieman 2003; Schoenbrun 1998; Vansina 1990, 2004), in the history of technologies such as pottery (Bostoen 2005a) and wood-working (Bulkens 1999a, 1999b), in Bantu lexical reconstructions in general (Guthrie 1970a, 1970b, Bastin & Schadeberg 2003) or in issues of comparative linguistic method (Bostoen 2001; Ricquier & Bostoen 2008). Exceptions mostly concern the reconstruction of food plant names (Philippson & Bahuchet 1994–95; Bostoen 2005b; Maniacky 2005), or the borrowing of food knowledge from Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic speaking peoples in East Africa (Ehret 1967; Schoenbrun 1993). Only a few studies, such as de Luna (2008) and Schoenbrun (1998), focus on the food history of a regional Bantu cluster. However, most of the aforementioned research touches on food history. Taken together, they offer the first insights into early Bantu food history.

#### Cultivated foods

Scholars generally associate the Bantu expansion with the spread of agriculture, even though direct archaeological evidence for early food production in West-Central Africa is scarce (Bellwood 2002; Holden 2002; Phillipson 2002; Vansina 1994–95).

The importance of tubers, more specifically yams, for early Bantu-speakers has often been stressed (Vansina 1994–95). Maniacky (2005) reconstructs several Proto-Bantu names for 'yam', i.e. *\*-kùá*, *\*-bàdá*, *\*-dúndú*, *\*-kàmbà*, etc. Some of these also occur in

non-Bantu Niger-Congo. This indicates that the ancestors of the early Bantuphone peoples already consumed yams. Given the number of reconstructions, it can be assumed that different varieties were known. Unfortunately, almost no reconstructions can be linked to a specific yam variety. Therefore, it is difficult to determine which species early Bantu-speakers may have grown. Moreover, since many wild species occur in the Bantu area, the reconstructed yam terms do not provide reliable evidence for agriculture. The domestication of wild yams did not necessarily produce new names. One interesting exception is *\*-bàdá*, a term widely associated with *Dioscorea alata*, a yam species of Asian origin, and reconstructible to Proto-Bantu. If this reconstruction did not originally designate another species, it could mean that this yam existed in West-Central Africa before the Bantu expansion (Maniacky 2005).

Two Proto-Bantu reconstructions provide a more solid indication of food production among early Bantu-speakers: *\*-kòndè* 'cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*)' and *\*-jùgù* 'Bambara groundnut (*Vigna subterranea*)' (Philippson & Bahuchet 1994–95). Both legumes are indigenous to Africa, but their domestication centre is generally situated outside the Bantu domain (Basu et al. 2007; D'Andrea et al. 2007). Other plants possibly cultivated by early Bantu-speakers are castor beans (*Ricinus communis*) and gourds (Klieman 2003). Guthrie (1970a, 1970b) reconstructs *°-bòndò/°-mòndò* 'castor-oil plant/bean'. Bulkens (1999a) confirms the early use of gourds as containers on the basis of the Proto-Bantu reconstruction *\*-cùpà* 'calabash bottle' and the more regional western proto-form *°-béndá* 'calabash'. The only reconstruction available for an edible gourd species is *°-(n)gòndó* '*Cucumerops edulis*', a gourd cultivated for oil (Vansina 1990).

Although not indigenous to Africa, bananas (*Musa sp.*) probably played a key role in the early Bantu expansion (Blench 2009; De Langhe et al. 1994–95; Klieman 2003; Mbida et al. 2001; Neumann & Hildebrand 2009; Philippson & Bahuchet 1994–95; Rossel 1998; Schoenbrun 1998; Vansina 1990). The *Musa* genus is of Asian origin and only occurs as cultivars in Africa. The existence of some widespread Bantu terms for banana and/or plantain seems to confirm their importance in early subsistence (Blench 2009; Philippson & Bahuchet 1994–95; Rossel 1998). However, reconstructions, such as *°-kòndè*, *°-kòndò* and *°-kò* (Guthrie 1970a) or alternatively *°-gondí*, *°-gòndò* and *°-gò* (Philippson & Bahuchet 1994–95) are not well established. It is not clear how these phonologically similar reconstructions relate to each other and whether they have a common etymology. Their phonological irregularities could result from contact-induced change, namely the diffusion of bananas and related vocabulary across communities after Bantu languages were introduced in an area. Finally, we need to know more about the relationship of certain Bantu banana terms with vocabulary in West African non-Bantu languages (Blench 2009).

An important change in the diet of Bantuphone peoples took place at a later stage of the Bantu language dispersal. Some 2500 to 3000 years ago Bantuphone communities emerged in the Great Lakes region, east of the equatorial rain forests (Ehret 1998; Nurse & Philippson 2003). In this area, they encountered peoples speaking Nilo-Saharan,

Afro-Asiatic and possibly even Khoisan languages. These interactions as well as different environmental circumstances resulted in an altered lifestyle and diet. We have evidence in the form of loanwords that East-Bantu-speakers acquired knowledge of cereal cultivation through contact with speakers of Nilo-Saharan languages. East-Bantu-speakers probably acquired pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) first as the term most frequently associated with this cereal, °-bèdè, is widespread in East-Bantu and reconstructible to Proto-East-Bantu. Its ultimate point of origin, however, is the West-Nilotic subgroup of Nilo-Saharan (Bostoen forthcoming-a). Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*), another indigenous African cereal, must have been introduced after Proto-East-Bantu had diverged into separate languages, because the words for this crop have a more local distribution (Bostoen forthcoming-a; Philippson & Bahuchet 1994-95). The same is true for finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*) (Philippson & Bahuchet 1994-95).

South of the equatorial rain forests, South-West-Bantuphone peoples also made the cultivation of cereals part of their subsistence. Vansina (2004) dates the adoption of cereal agriculture in this region towards the end of the first millennium AD (Vansina 2004). Based on climatic and environmental evidence, he supposes that cereals arrived in South-West Africa from the east, having spread through northern Botswana, south of the middle Zambezi River and south of the Okavango delta. Ehret (1998) presumes a somewhat earlier introduction by or before the middle of the first millennium AD, but also from an eastern centre of dispersion. According to Ehret, many South-West-Bantu cereal-related words have an East-Bantu origin, but several of those words need further analysis. For example, Ehret posits that °-sángú 'sorghum' was borrowed from East-Bantu °-sàngú 'individual grain'. Nevertheless, Bostoen (forthcoming-a) reconstructs °-cángú with the meaning 'pearl millet' as a predominantly western Bantu term with a considerable time-depth and excludes an eastern origin through borrowing. The word itself might date back to Proto-Bantu, but probably not associated with this cereal. Indeed, Vansina (2004) proposes it originally referred to grass seeds. The independent introduction of pearl millet into western Bantu-speaking Africa is supported by the recent discovery of charred remains of the cereal dating back to 400-200 BC in two archaeological sites from southern Cameroon (Eggert et al. 2006; Kahlheber et al. forthcoming). As the discrepancies in the historical-linguistic interpretations show, the history of cereal cultivation in the south-west needs further research.

#### Domesticated animals

The early Bantuphone communities had three domesticated animals: °-búdi 'goat', °-kángà 'guinea fowl' and °-búá 'dog' (Guthrie 1970a; Guthrie 1970b; Klieman 2003). Dogs were probably above all hunting companions, but may also have been eaten. The preparation of dog meat has been reported in the northern Bantu domain (Vansina 1985). An important change concerning livestock was the acquisition of cattle. This happened in the same period as the adoption of cereal cultivation through contacts

with non-Bantu-speakers in the north-eastern Bantu domain, probably Nilo-Saharan speakers as suggested by some loanwords in East-Bantu (Schoenbrun 1998). Cattle-keeping remained a relatively unimportant activity until East-Bantu started to diverge and people became interested in the secondary products milk and blood (Ehret 1998; Schoenbrun 1993). For example, Schoenbrun (1997) reconstructed °-caabo 'container, churn, milking calabash, basket type', °-tunda 'churn', and °-lás- 'to bleed cattle' in Great-Lakes-Bantu, an East-Bantu subgroup.

In South-West Africa, keeping cattle would equally have been introduced during the first millennium AD, probably from South-East Africa. Similar to events in the East, cows were only milked later and not all cattle-keepers in the South-West adopted this practice (Ehret 1998; Vansina 2004). Ehret (1998) considers the distribution of °-gòmbè 'cow' and °-tàngá 'cattle-pen' as indicative of their westward diffusion. He claims that cattle vocabulary was not only borrowed from East-Bantu, but also from Khoisan. Vansina (2004) and Haacke (2007) do not share this view. However, the acquisition of sheep-keeping from Khoisan peoples is unanimously accepted, with broad recognition that the southern Bantu term °-gù 'sheep' is a Khoekhoe loan (Ehret 1998; Haacke 2007; Vansina 2004). In return, Khoisan speakers obtained goats from Bantu-speakers (Haacke 2007).

#### Wild foods

Most historical-comparative research on plant and animal names focuses on domesticates. However, early Bantu-speakers had a mixed subsistence. As is still the case in many present-day Bantuphone communities, wild foods such as fish, game, wild plants and honey were an important component in the earliest Bantu diet, if not the most important. Early Bantu-speakers fished with hook and line, °-dób- and, at later stages of the Bantu expansion, new fishing techniques, such as °-dùb- 'to fish with a basket', were developed (de Luna 2008; Ehret 1998; Vansina 1990). The most advanced lexical reconstruction work done so far on Bantu fish names focuses on the languages of Gabon, a regional scope too limited to draw conclusions on fish species consumed by early Bantu-speakers (Mouguiama-Daouda 1995). In de Luna (2008), two reconstructions for fish are mentioned, °-kóngá 'eel' and °-mpende 'bream (catfish?)', but neither has Proto-Bantu status. The early Bantuphone peoples hunted with spears, °-gòngá/°-jòngá, and with the bow, °-tá. They trapped, °-tég-, the animals that would otherwise plunder their fields. Several Proto-Bantu terms referring to wild animals, such as °-gòì 'leopard', °-jògù 'elephant', °-kákà 'pangolin or scaly ant-eater', °-játú 'buffalo', °-gùbù 'hippopotamus' etc. have been reconstructed, but no one has yet systematically analysed their place in the subsistence systems of the early Bantuphone communities. The first Bantuphone peoples also collected honey, as is indicated by the reconstructions °-jiki 'bee; honey' or °-júki 'honey' (Bastin & Schadeberg 2003; de Luna 2008; Klieman 2003; Vansina 1994-95).

We know a little more about the exploitation of wild trees by early Bantuphone peoples, including the use of the oil palm, called either °-bídá or °-téndé (Bostoen 2005b).



These words refer to both the tree and its nuts, implying that the latter were valued in the early period. This linguistic evidence is bolstered by the presence of charred palm nut husks in many archaeological sites from West-Central Africa commonly associated with the Bantu expansion (de Maret 1994–95). Moreover, the occurrence of the oil palm terms cited above in non-Bantu Niger-Congo languages indicates that the ancestors of early Bantu-speakers already exploited this plant. However, Bantu peoples added a new use, the extraction of palm oil. We know this because Bantu-speakers coined a new word, *\*-gādī* to talk about 'palm oil'. After the Proto-Bantu period, western Bantu peoples began producing an alcoholic beverage from the oil palm and other palm trees, referring to this beverage with reflexes of *\*-dōgū* (Guthrie 1970a; Vansina 1990; 2004). Other trees known by early Bantuphone communities were *\*-bīdf* 'African olive' (*Canarium schweinfurthii*), and *\*-cākú* 'safou plum' (*Dacryodes edulis*) (Bostoen forthcoming-b). The seeds of the former oleaginous tree are frequently found in association with palm nut husks in West-Central African archaeological sites associated with the Bantu expansion (de Maret 1994–95). It can be assumed that the early Bantu-speakers gathered the fruit of these trees in the wild, but they may have practised some kind of arboriculture as well (Bostoen forthcoming-b; Lavachery 1998).

#### Cooking techniques and utensils

264

How did early Bantu-speakers prepare the plants and animals they ate? Right now, we have a rather fragmentary picture of cooking techniques and utensils. One technique is *\*-jánik-* 'to spread to dry in the sun' (Bastin and Schadeberg 2003; Guthrie 1970b) whereby food items were dried in order to preserve them. Once dried or immediately after the harvest, starchy foods like yams could be pounded (*\*-tō-*) (Bastin and Schadeberg 2003) in a mortar (*\*-dū ~ \*-nū*) with a pestle (*\*-icē*) (Bulkens 1999b). This is in contradiction with Vansina (1985, 2004) and Ehret (1998) who link mortars with the introduction of cereals, and who consider some of the mentioned reconstructions as loans from Nilo-Saharan subgroups. It is not certain whether the mortars of the early Bantuphone peoples were wooden mortars, or more basic varieties such as a stone or a carved-out tree-stump (Bulkens 1999b).

The aforementioned *\*-būmb-* 'to bake in ashes' is one of the few Proto-Bantu reconstructions referring to a cooking technique (Ricquier & Bostoen 2008). It was most certainly applied to yams and other vegetables, and maybe also to pieces of meat and fish wrapped in leaves. Another technique was roasting directly over the fire, reconstructed as *\*-káng-* (Bostoen 2001). Some other lexical reconstructions listed in Bastin & Schadeberg (2003) designate the same or similar techniques, but need further analysis to determine their time-depth.

With respect to cooking tools, early Bantu-speakers used at least two types of clay pots in their cooking, *\*-jōngó* and *\*-bigá*. The first term probably referred to a spherical cooking pot having a certain height and with a medium opening, used to boil basic foodstuffs. The second term was the generic term for 'pot', which may have additionally

designated a specific kind of cooking pot distinct from the one named *\*-jōngó*. Its function and form are difficult to retrieve from the present-day data (Bostoen 2005a). Early Bantu-speakers used a spatula or stirring stick (*\*-ikō*) when cooking in these pots (Bulkens s.d.). Besides the Proto-Bantu reconstruction *\*-gādī* 'palm oil' mentioned above, Guthrie (1970b) reconstructs *\*-kútā* 'fat; oil', which seems to be a more generic term. This suggests that the palm oil was not the only type of oil familiar to early Bantuphone communities. These lexical reconstructions for different kinds of oil hint at the cooking technique of frying, but the only reconstructed word for frying so far, *\*-kádang-*, is of more recent eastern Bantu origin (Bostoen 2001). It is possible that oil was used only as seasoning or that it was not used in cooking at all, but rather for cosmetic purposes.

Important culinary changes are related to the introduction of cereals. Pearl millet and other cereals were threshed (*\*-pūd-*), ground (*\*-ti-*) and winnowed (*\*-jēd-*), all being reconstructions which need more study (Bastin & Schadeberg 2003; Guthrie 1970b; Schoenbrun 1997). Instead of grinding, cereals could also be processed with a mortar and pestle. Despite the fact that Bantuphone peoples already had mortars, a new word appeared in Proto-East-Bantu: *\*-tūdf* (Bulkens 1999b). Ehret (1998) considers this to be a loanword from Eastern Sahelian, a Nilo-Saharan subgroup. From our own research, we have learnt that both flour and stiff flour-based porridge, the staple in large parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, are innovations linked to the introduction of cereals. A widespread word in the Bantu languages for this porridge is *\*-kīmā*. In contrast to Ehret (1998), this word is not a Nilo-Saharan borrowing, but instead a Proto-Bantu word that originally referred to a mash of starch food such as yams or plantains. With the introduction of cereals and flour, people could prepare the staple carbohydrate in a new manner and the word underwent a semantic shift. Instead of pounding starchy roots to produce mash, cereal growers could produce flour and stir it into hot water until it became a thick porridge. This preparation method is referred to with reflexes of *\*-dūg-* in the east of the Bantu region, and *\*-jīpik-* in the South-West, each an older Bantu word that also underwent a regional semantic shift to talk about this form of cooking. Nowadays, the new technique is applied as well to tubers, such as cassava, and plantains.

265

Of course, the adoption of cereals and cattle were not the only changes in the culinary traditions of the Bantuphone peoples. The Proto-East-Bantu reconstruction *\*-kádango* indicates that people in the Great Lakes region, for instance, developed a small and rather flat pot with a wide opening used for frying or dry-roasting (Bostoen 2005a). This noun is derived from the above mentioned verb *\*-kádang-* 'frying', which is probably also an East-Bantu innovation (Bostoen 2001). Taken together, the two terms suggest that the appearance of this new type of pot correlated with the emergence of a new cooking technique. Later, when the East-Bantu languages started to diverge, the speakers further innovated their vocabulary for pots and even for plates (Bostoen 2005a).

## Concluding remarks and agenda for future research

The linguistic evidence presented in this paper summarizes what we currently know from linguistic evidence of the culinary traditions of the early Bantuphone communities. The lion's share of the available lexical reconstructions relate to the diet of early Bantu-speakers. Scholars have paid particular attention to foods obtained from domesticates, both cultivars and livestock, but relatively little is known about the practices of early farmers and pastoralists. As for wild foods, some lexical reconstruction work has been done on foraging practices such as hunting and fishing, but little is known about the species obtained this way. The collection of honey has been documented to some extent. Although some historical linguistic research has been done on wild tree names, our knowledge of wild plants in the diet of early Bantu-speakers remains limited. Information on cooking techniques and utensils is even more fragmentary. Some lexical reconstructions provide indirect evidence for food preparation techniques, such as drying, pounding, threshing and winnowing, and others for cooking techniques, such as baking in ashes, frying, roasting and preparing porridge. We also have linguistic evidence for the use of pots, mortars, pestles, stirring sticks or spatula, and calabashes. We know the least about the exact preparations of particular dishes with only a few reconstructions for palm oil, palm wine and porridge.

Needless to say, a lot of work still has to be done. Future research should focus on food products, such as beverages, relishes, flour, porridges, etc., cooking techniques and cooking utensils. We also need to know more about the names of wild foods, including plants, mushrooms, fish, game, and edible insects such as caterpillars. Moreover, we still do not have reconstructions for the names of many cultivated plants, like the Hausa and Livingstone potato as well as egg plants. These new data will allow us to have a more nuanced idea of the varied and balanced diet the early Bantuphone communities probably had. Special attention should be paid to the names for condiments. After all, how can we know what the food of the early Bantuphone communities tasted like, if we do not know how they seasoned their preparations? Finally, the Bantu area has not been equally covered. A lot of research has centred on East-Bantu and to a lesser extent on South-West-Bantu, whereas the North-West remains largely invisible in publications. The outcome of this uneven regional focus is that some proposed reconstructions could prove incorrect. Taking into account the entire Bantu domain, we might be able to propose more valid reconstructions.

## Notes

1. This paper is part of the PhD-project 'A Comparative Linguistic Approach to the History of Culinary Practice in Bantu-Speaking Africa' carried out at the Université libre de Bruxelles and the Royal Museum for Central Africa with a grant from the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique. We thank Kathryn de Luna for commenting on an earlier draft.
2. Reconstructions preceded by \* go back to Proto-Bantu, while ° points to reconstructions which are of more limited time depth and/or less solid. Bantu languages are tonal. The acute accent on a vowel indicates a high tone and the grave accent a low tone, e.g. /à/. Proto-Bantu is reconstructed with 7 vowels represented here as /i i e a o u/.

## Bibliography

- Alcock, Joan, *Food in the Ancient World, Food through History*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005.
- Bastin, Yvonne, and Thilo Schadeberg, 2003, Bantu Lexical Reconstructions 3, <http://www.metafro.be/blr>. Last consultation: 29/10/2009.
- Basu, S., J.A. Roberts, S.N. Azam-Ali & S. Mayes, 2007, 'Bambara Groundnut,' in *Genome mapping and molecular breeding in plants: Pulses, sugar and tuber crops*, ed. C. Kole, 159-73, New York: Springer.
- Bellwood, Peter, 2002, 'Farmers, Foragers, Languages, Genes: the Genesis of Agricultural Societies,' in *Examining the farming/language dispersal hypothesis*, ed. P. Bellwood & C. Renfrew, 17-28, Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.
- Blench, Roger, 2009, 'Bananas and Plantains in Africa: Re-interpreting the linguistic evidence,' *Ethnobotany Research & Applications* 7: 363-80.
- Bostoën, Koen, 2001, 'Osculance in Bantu Reconstructions: a case study of the pair °-kádang-/-káng- ('fry', 'roast') and its historical implications,' *Studies in African Linguistics* 30 (2): 121-146.
- , 2005a, *Des mots et des pots en bantou*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005a.
- , 2005b, 'A Diachronic Onomasiological Approach to Early Bantu Oil Palm Vocabulary,' *Studies in African Linguistics* 34 (2): 113-158.
- , 2007, 'Pots, words and the Bantu problem: On lexical reconstruction and early African history,' *Journal of African History* 48 (2): 173-199.
- , forthcoming-a, 'Pearl millet in early Bantuphone communities in Central Africa: A reconsideration of the lexical evidence,' *Afrika und Übersee*.
- , forthcoming-b, 'The subsistence economy of early Bantuphone communities from a historical-linguistic point of view,' in *African Flora, Past Cultures and Archaeobotany. Proceedings of the Fifth International Workshop for African Archaeobotany, London, 3-5 July 2006*, ed. D. Q. Fuller and M. A. Murray, Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Bostoën, Koen, and Claire Grégoire, 'La question bantoue: bilan et perspectives,' *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris, Nouvelle Série XV*, 2007, 73-91.
- Bottéro, Jean, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World. Cooking in Mesopotamia*, Chicago - London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Bulkens, Annelies, 1999a, 'Linguistic indicators for the use of calabashes in the Bantu world,' *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* (57): 79-104.
- , 1999b, 'La reconstruction de quelques mots pour 'mortier' en domaine bantou,' *Studies in African Linguistics* 28 (2): 113-153.
- , s.d., 'Spoons and stirring-sticks in the Bantu world.'
- Clist, Bernard, 1987, 'A critical reappraisal of the chronological framework of the early Urewe Iron Age industry,' *Muntu* 6: 35-62.
- Coe, Sophie D., *America's First Cuisines*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.
- D'Andrea, A.C., Stefanie Kahlheber, A.L. Logan & D.J. Watson, 2007, 'Early domesticated cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*) from Central Ghana,' *Antiquity* 81: 686-698.

- De Langhe, Edmond, Rony L. Swennen & D. Vuylsteke, 1994-95, 'Plantain in the Early Bant World,' in *The Growth of Farming Communities in Africa from the Equator Southwards. Azania special volume XXIX-XXX*, ed. J.E.G. Sutton, 147-60, Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- de Luna, Kathryn M., *Collecting Food, Cultivating Persons: Wild Resource Use in Central-African Political Culture, c. 1000 B.C.E. to c. 1900 C.E.* PhD dissertation, Evanston: Northwestern University, 2008.
- de Maret P., 1994-95, 'Pits, pots and the far west streams,' *Azania* 29-30: 318-23.
- Eggert, Manfred K.H., Alexa Höhn, Stefanie Kahlheber, Conny Meister, Katharina Neumann, and A Schweizer, 2006, 'Pits, graves and grains: archaeological and archaeobotanical research in southern Cameroon,' *Journal of African Archaeology* 4 (2): 273-298.
- Ehret, Christopher, 1967, 'Cattle-Keeping and Milking in Eastern and Southeastern African History: The Linguistic Evidence,' *African History* VIII (1): 1-17.
- , *An African Classical Age. Eastern & Southern Africa in World History 1000B.C. to A.D.400.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998.
- Guthrie, Malcolm, *Comparative Bantu. An Introduction to the Comparative Linguistics and Prehistory of the Bantu Languages*, Vol. 3, Hants: Gregg International Publishers, 1970a.
- , *Comparative Bantu. An Introduction to the Comparative Linguistics and Prehistory of the Bantu Languages*, Vol. 4, Hants: Gregg International Publishers, 1970b.
- Haacke, Wilfrid H.G., 2007, 'Linguistic Hypotheses on the Origin of Namibian Khoekhoe Speakers,' *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 18: 69-86.
- Holden, Clare Janaki, 2002, 'Bantu language trees reflect the spread of farming across sub-Saharan Africa: a maximum-parsimony analysis,' *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London Series B* 269: 793-99.
- Kahlheber, Stefanie, Koen Bostoen & Katharina Neumann, forthcoming, 'Early plant cultivation in the Central-African rain forest: first millennium BC pearl millet from Southern Cameroon,' *Journal of African Archaeology* 7 (3).
- Klieman, Kaim, *The Pygmies Were Our Compass. Bantu and Batwa in the History of West Central Africa, Early Times to c. 1900 C.E.* Social History of Africa Series, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.
- Lavachery, Philippe, *De la pierre au métal. Archéologie des dépôts holocènes de l'abri de Shum Laka (Cameroun)*, PhD dissertation, Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1998.
- Lavachery, Philippe, 2001, 'The Holocene archaeological sequence of Shum Laka Rock Shelter (Grassfields, Cameroon),' *African Archaeological Review* 18: 213-47.
- Maniacky, Jacky, 'Quelques thèmes pour 'igname' en bantu,' in *Studies in African Comparative Linguistics with Special Focus on Bantu and Mandé*, ed. K. Bostoen and J. Maniacky, Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa, 2005.
- Mbida, Christophe M, Hugues Doutrelepoint, Luc Vrydaghs, Rony L. Swennen, Hans Beeckman, Edmond de Langhe, and Pierre de Maret, 2001, 'First archaeological evidence of banana cultivation in central Africa during the third millennium before present,' *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 10: 1-6.
- Mougouïama-Daouda, Patrick, *Les dénominations ethnoichthyologiques chez les bantus du Gabon : étude de linguistique historique*, PhD dissertation, Lyon: Université Lyon 2, 1995.
- Neumann, Katharina & Elisabeth Hildebrand, 2009, 'Early Bananas in Africa: The state of the art,' *Ethnobotany Research & Applications* 7: 353-62.
- Nurse, Derek, and Gérard Philippson, 'Towards a historical classification of the Bantu languages,' in *The Bantu Languages*, ed. D. Nurse and G. Philippson, London: Routledge, 2003.
- Philippson, Gérard, and Serge Bahuchet, 1994-95, 'Cultivated crops and Bantu migrations in Central and Eastern Africa: A linguistic approach,' *Azania (The Growth of Farming Communities in Africa from the Equator Southwards)* (XXIX-XXX): 103-120.
- Phillipson, David W., 'Language and Farming Dispersals in Sub-Saharan Africa, with Particular Reference to the Bantu-speaking Peoples,' in *Examining the farming/language dispersal hypothesis*, ed. P. Bellwood & C. Renfrew, 177-187, Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2002.
- Ricquier, Birgit, and Koen Bostoen, 2008, 'Resolving phonological variability in Bantu lexical reconstructions: the case of 'to bake in ashes', *Africana Linguistica* 14: 109-149.

- Rossel, Gerda, *Taxonomic-Linguistic study of plantain in Africa*, ed. W. J. Vogelsang, CNWS Publications. Leiden: Research School CNWS, Leiden University, 1998.
- Schoenbrun, David L., 1993, 'We Are What We Eat - Ancient Agriculture between the Great-Lakes,' *Journal of African History* 34 (1): 1-31.
- , *The Historical Reconstruction of Great Lakes Bantu Cultural Vocabulary. Etymologies and Distributions*, ed. R. Vossen, Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika SUGIA - Beihefte. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1997.
- , *A Green Place, A Good Place. Agrarian Change, Gender and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th Century*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998.
- Vansina, Jan, 1985, 'Esquisse historique de l'agriculture en milieu forestier (Afrique Equatoriale),' *Muntu* (2): 5-34.
- , *Paths in the Rainforest. Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
- , 1994-95, 'A slow revolution: Farming in subequatorial Africa,' *Azania (The Growth of Farming Communities in Africa from the Equator Southwards)* XXIX-XXX: 15-26.
- , *How Societies Are Born. Governance in West Central Africa Before 1600*, Charlottesville - London: University of Virginia Press, 2004.

# **Food and Language**

Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2009

Edited by Richard Hosking

Prospect Books  
2010

First published in Great Britain in 2010 by Prospect Books, Allalleigh House,  
Blackawton, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 7DL.

© 2010 as a collection Prospect Books.  
© 2010 in individual articles rests with the authors.

The authors assert their moral right to be identified as authors in accordance with  
the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form of by any means,  
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior  
permission of the copyright holders.

ISBN 978-1-903018-79-8

The illustrations on the front and back covers are by Simon Drew © 2010 Simon  
Drew.

Design and typesetting in Gill Sans and Adobe Garamond by Tom Jaine and Oliver  
Pawley.  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by The Cromwell Press Group, Trowbridge.

## Contents

Foreword <i>Carolin C. Young</i>	9
The Language of Food <i>Judith Jones</i>	13
Food and Language: What's In a Name? <i>Joan P. Alcock</i>	23
<i>Shinagaki</i> Tales: Reading Between the Lines of a Japanese Menu <i>Elizabeth Andoh</i>	33
In Praise of Shadows: Japanese Language for Japanese Food Experience <i>Kimiko Barber</i>	37
'Truly the Ear Tests Words as the Palate Tastes Food' (Job 12:11): Synaesthetic Food Metaphors for the Experience of the Divine in Jewish Tradition <i>Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus</i>	42
The Anatolian Origins of the Words 'Olive' and 'Oil' and the Early History of Oleiculture <i>Anthony F. Buccini</i>	52
The Visual Language of the Recipe: A Brief Historical Survey <i>Ruth Carroll</i>	62
Re-viewing a Surrealist's Distasteful Writings: Georges Bataille's Linguistic Consumption of/with the Eye <i>Janine Catalano</i>	73
A Limousin-French Dictionary as a Source on the History of Cooking: Potatoes in the Tulle Area in the Early Nineteenth Century <i>Monique Chastanet</i>	84
The Emergence of the Cookbook and the Evolution of Cooking Terminology in Imperial Russia <i>Didi DiVirgilio</i>	94