

Studies in African Linguistics

Volume 37, Number 2, 2008: Abstracts

Michael Kenstowicz: On the Origin of Tonal Classes in Kinande Noun Stems.

This paper investigates the Proto-Bantu origins of the principal tonal classes in Kinande nonderived mono- and disyllabic nominal stems. The ternary H vs. L vs. 0 distinction in the final syllable of the current language is traced back to a binary H vs. L contrast in Proto Bantu on the basis of two strata of reconstruction: first, a shallow one based on c. 200 PB cognates shared with the closely related Lacustrine languages Runyankore, Haya, and Jita, and second, a deeper one based on c. 100 PB cognates shared with the more distantly related Congolese languages Tembo, Luba, and Lingala. A chronology of tone changes is postulated in which different sequencing of the same changes as well as alternative phonologizations of ambiguous phonetic structures play a key role.

Michael R. Marlo: Tura Verbal Tonology.

This article provides a comprehensive description and analysis of the verbal tone system of Tura, a previously undocumented dialect of Luyia (Bantu, Kenya, J.30). Tura has many tonal patterns marking tense-aspect-mood-polarity distinctions that are characterized by a grammatical (“melodic”) H tone on different positions of the verb stem. The realization of melodic Hs depends on the prosody of the verb stem (number of syllables, syllable weight, C-initial vs. V-initial) and complex interactions with H-toned prefixes. Some melodic Hs surface whether or not there is a H-toned prefix; others do not surface after a H-toned prefix; and one surfaces only in combination with a H-toned prefix. Some melodic Hs block the H of the reflexive from surfacing; others are blocked from surfacing by the reflexive H; and another surfaces along with the reflexive H. The article describes and analyzes these and other cross-melody differences in the Tura tonal system as well as variation between two speakers of the dialect.