THE VOCABULARY OF DEATH IN CHADIC AND HAMITO-SEMITIC LANGUAGES

Daniel BARRETEAU
Dymitr IBRISZIMOW
Herrmann JUNGRATHMAYR

ABSTRACT

In this paper are discussed the reconstructions of the roots for the items "to die" and "corpse". In all the 150 Chadic languages, which are spoken in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, as well as in the whole Hamito-Semitic family, "to die" is reconstructed by one single root: *mwt. On the opposite, there are at least four roots in Chadic for the gloss "corpse": A *mwt, B bg-, C *bn and D kum, with some borrowings.

The comparison and the analyses of these two items give a sample of the complexity of the Chadic language history: on the one hand, a fundamental notion, "to die", which carries forms coming directly from the original Hamito-Semitic language cradle, on the other hand, a more "cultural" notion, "corpse", which has been considerably affected through the contacts in the new African home. This may indicate that the funeral rites have undergone more recent changes in the environment of Lake Chad Basin.

Keywords: Hamito-Semitic, Chadic, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, comparison, reconstruction, die, corpse

RÉSUMÉ

LE VOCABULAIRE DE LA "MORT" DANS LES LANGUES TCHADIQUES ET CHAMITO-SÉMITIQUES.

Dans cet article sont présentées et commentées les reconstructions pour les termes "mourir" et "cadavre". Dans les 150 langues tchadiques, qui sont parlées au Nigeria, au Cameroun et au Tchad, ainsi que dans l'ensemble du phylum chamito-sémitique, "mourir" est reconstruit avec une seule racine : *mwt. A l'opposé, dans les langues tchadiques, on relève au moins quatre racines pour le terme "cadavre" : *mwt, bg-, *bn et kum, dont certains emprunts.

La comparaison et l'analyse de ces deux items donne une idée sur la complexité de l'histoire des langues tchadiques : d'un côté, une notion fondamentale, "mourir", qui se traduit par des formes remontant directement à l'origine des langues chamito-sémitiques ; de l'autre côté, une notion plus "culturelle", le "cadavre", qui a été considérablement affectée par des contacts dans le nouvel environnement africain. Cela pourrait indiquer que les rites funéraires ont subi des changements récents dans l'environnement du bassin du lac Tchad.

Mots-clés : chamito-sémitique, tchadique, Nigeria, Cameroun, Tchad, comparaison, reconstruction, mourir, cadavre

* * *

This paper is an enlarged version of a poster which was presented at the exhibition during the conference. A first study was conducted by Jungrraithmayr (1990) on the problem of reconstructing the roots for "death" and "to die" in the Chadic languages. In the present article, the data
come mainly from the comparative work on Chadic languages by Jungraithmayr and Ibrisizimow (in press). Some unpublished data come as well from personal materials on Cameroon Chadic languages collected by Barreteau.

Here, only the roots for the items "to die" and "corpse" are discussed, both having been reconstructed by Jungraithmayr and Ibrisizimow.

1. "To die"

There are only few glosses which are reconstructed with a single root for the whole Chadic family, such as: "to die", "to dream", "to drink", "eye", "finger", "fly", "four", "head", "neck", "nose", "to ripen", "sheep", "to swallow".

In all the 150 Chadic languages, which are spoken in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, "to die" is a representative of this group of glosses to be reconstructed by one single root. The proposals, up to now, were: *mea* by Newman (1977), *mwt* by Jungraithmayr & Shimizu (1981) and *mwt* by Jungraithmayr & Ibrisizimow (in press).

At the same time, this is the most fundamental Hamito-Semitic keyword in Chadic since it occurs in all families with the possible exception of Cushitic [which may be assumed as a secondary absence; cf. Murtonen 1989:256]. So, this root, *mwt* "to die", would be attested with a history of approximately ten millennia, in Asia Minor and in the whole of North Africa down to Lake Chad Basin. As far as the Hamito-Semitic languages in general are concerned, one can consult also the study of Vycichl (1983).

The importance of this word must be seen in the aspect of the genetic heritage which has been considerably shrunk due to the following facts:
- the Chadic languages were one of the first to separate from the common Hamito-Semitic ancestor;
- in their historical development, the Chadic speaking peoples had long and narrow contacts with the peoples of the Sudan area who speak "Nigrritic" (i.e. non-Hamito-Semitic) languages;
- the 150 Chadic languages represent the most numerous and diversified linguistic unit within Hamito-Semitic as well as the widest geographical distribution if one does not count the more recent expansion of Arabic, after the VIIth century A.D.

EGYPTIAN

| Egyptian | mwt |
| Coptic | muu |

SEMITIC

| Akkadian | maat |
| Ugaritic | mt |
| Phoenician | mt |
| Hebrew | mwt |
| Arameic | mwt, myt |
| Arabic | mwt |
Due to the above mentioned facts, the present-day Chadic reflexes display sometimes an extreme "deformation" as a result of linguistic erosion, e.g.

\[ *\text{mwt} > *\text{mut} > *\text{nt} > *\text{t} > \text{ru.} \]

The first radical (R1) is for the most part preserved in its original quality:

\[ *\text{m} > \text{m} \] in all branches, Western, Central and Eastern.

It has changed to \text{n}– in some Central Chadic languages and in Mokilko (Mokilko group) due to the loss of an internal vowel and therefore directly preceding a dental (partial regressive assimilation): \[ *\text{mwt} > *\text{mt} > \text{nt} \]. See for example:

- Ngwaxi: \text{nti}
- Cibak: \text{nti}
- Gude: \text{n'to}
- Mokilko: \text{?indy–}

The nasal was weakened to \text{w} in some languages of the Central Branch:

- Higi-Baza: \text{wto}

or even disappeared totally:

- Kilba: \text{atū}
- Hizli: \text{tēw}
- Wandiu: \text{to–w}
- Tsuvan: \text{zā}
- Gudu: \text{rūu}
As to the triradicality of the reconstruction for the Chadic languages - in spite of the obvious biradicality of most of the reflexes - the argument derives from the fact that a number of the languages display reflexes with a long vowel, a possible sign of a lost (weak) consonant, e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sura</th>
<th>mùùt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karem</td>
<td>mèet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boghom</td>
<td>mọ:s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migama</td>
<td>mǎa tō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jegu</td>
<td>màat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mubi</td>
<td>màdō</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The semi-vowel *w, in internal position, is a weak consonant. It seems that this consonant has been lost at an early stage of the Chadic language history. However, we may find some reflexes of *w as w or y. The interchange between w and y is probably due to the respective vocalisation, a fact well-known from the Semitic languages, e.g. Arabic "to die" màata (Perfect), yamuutu (Imperfect), màyyiıtun (Adjective).

The semi-vowel w is observed in a few languages such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gerka</th>
<th>mwàth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siri</td>
<td>miwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabalay</td>
<td>muwè</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or in some specific verbal forms, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mubi</th>
<th>màat (Perfective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>muwàat (Imperfective)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We may find some traces of this semi-vowel w in the quality of the internal vowels, which are most of the time close, -u- or -i-, as for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hausa</th>
<th>mútíùù</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angas</td>
<td>múùt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwami</td>
<td>múd-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwona</td>
<td>múr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbazla</td>
<td>muc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JimjimÈn</th>
<th>mút</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gavar</td>
<td>mící</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musey</td>
<td>mút</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sokoro</td>
<td>mítō</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some languages of the Central Branch the first and the second radicals *mw have fallen together, being hardened to mb, which is a current phoneme in these groups:
The third radical (R3) has undergone regular changes either to c, ts, s, y, l, r, d and even to zero.

Generally, a trend towards palatalization – *t > y > c – can be observed (mainly) in Central Chadic, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zizilivokan</td>
<td>màcà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavoko</td>
<td>mòcà(wé)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Mofu</td>
<td>mèc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besleri</td>
<td>mèc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This development led to such forms like Fali-Mucella mìkyē and even Kiria wñkī.

A more fronted development, i.e. to an alveolar fricative (with further palatalization) or to an affricate, is found in languages of the Northern and Southern Bauchi group, as well as in Central Chadic, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsagu</td>
<td>mòòsèn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurd'ung</td>
<td>masse / mís</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geji</td>
<td>mìsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buli</td>
<td>mìsshī / mòshū / mìsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tule</td>
<td>mòshī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaar</td>
<td>mìshī / mìs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wandala</td>
<td>mts-à / òmtsámtsà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pëlasla</td>
<td>mòtsà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buwal</td>
<td>màts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of *t > y:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warji</td>
<td>miy-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kariya</td>
<td>mìyà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miya</td>
<td>miy-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa'a</td>
<td>mìyà / miya / mìyà</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following examples it can not be definitely established whether y is a reflex of the second (*w) or the third (*t) radical, or even represents a fusion of both:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siri</td>
<td>miwa / mìyù / mìyù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mburku</td>
<td>miy-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwang</td>
<td>màyè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndam</td>
<td>mìyà</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of \(*t > 1\) :

- Bole: \(màlò\)
- Jimbi: \(mul\)

Examples of \(*t > r\) :

- Bacama: \(mùbùrò\)
- Dera: \(mùr\)
- Hwona: \(-mèrì\)
- Ga’anda: \(mùrì\)
- Gabin: \(mùrì\)
- Boka: \(mèrì\)
- Gudu: \(rù\)
- Musgu: \(mùra\)
- Munjuk: \(mùrì\)
- Majèra: \(màrì\)
- Jina: \(màrà\)
- Sibine: \(mùr\)
- Tobanga: \(màrè, mà, màrà\)

Examples of \(*t > d\) :

- Tangale: \(mùdè\)
- Kwami: \(mùd-\)
- Gera: \(mùdù-\)
- Afad'e: \(mèdì\)
- Mastam: \(mùdì\)
- Malgbe: \(mùdì\)
- Mpadè: \(màdì\)
- Mokiiko: \(?ìnd-\)

Examples of \(*t > ò\) :

- Tera: \(màdìi, VN mòtà\)
- Mbara: \(mòdìì\)

A total loss of the third radical (R3) is attested in some eastern languages:

Kera: \(mè / màa-\)
Kabalay: \(muwà\)
Lele: \(mà\)
Tumak: \(mà\)

Cases in which only R3 has been preserved exist but are rare (in the Central Branch):

Gudu: \(rù\)
Tsuvan: \(zà\)

The form \(wòkà\) in Kiria is an interesting example of how assimilation and metathesis have been at work as it often occurs in Bura-Margi and in Higi groups: \(*mwt > *mwki > *wmki > wòkì.\)
CHADIC

Western Branch

Hausa group
Hausa  mûtùu
Gwandara  mûtù

Sura-Gerka group
Sura  mûut, pl. murap
Angas  mût
Cip  mut
Ankwe  mût
Tal  mût:
Gerka  mwoth

Ron group
Fyer  mot
Daffo  mot
Bokkos  mot
Kulere  mot / mwôth
Sha  môt

Bole-Tangale group
Karckare  meet- / metaw
Bole  màlô / mot-
Ngamo  mato
Maha  muto
Tangale  mydë
Kwami  mûd-
Kupto  mût-
Pero  mûtù
Dera  mur-
Kirifi  mutto / múk-kô, VN mûtô
Gera  mudu-
Gerumawa  mutalla

Northern Bauchi group
Warji  mì- / míyàun / miy-
Tsagü  mûôsèn
Kariya  miyà
Miya  miy-
Pa'a  miyà / miya / miyà
Siri  miwa / mîyu / mîyû
Mbærkù  miy-
Jimbi  mul-
Diri  mûtô / matu
Dîra  mûsi
Burma  mîsè

Southern Bauchi group
Boghoom  mas
Kir  muse, mès!
Tala  mès-
Jimi  mache
Gurdung  masse / mis
Geji  mish
Buli  mōshū / mōshū / mish
Tule  mōshē
Wang  mōs / mis
Zaar  mōshē / mis
Seya  misi
Dwot  mus
Pelci  misi
Bade-Ngizim group  mōte / mutu
Ngizim  mutu
Bade  

Central Branch

Tera group  mōri, VN mētā
Tera  mūr
Hwona  -meri
Ga’anda  mēri
Gafin  mēri
Boka  nti
Ngwaxi  nti

Bura-Margi group  mti
Bura  nti
Cibak  mtō
West-Margi  mtō
North-Margi  mtō
Kilba  ātū
Hizli  tōw
Wandiu  tō-w
Kiria  wēkē
Mwulyen  -mbütō
Bana  mēti

Higi group  mte
Higi-Nkafa  mto
Higi-Futu  wto
Higi-Baza  mtō
Psikye  mtō
Hyà  mētō

Gbwata group  zā
Tsuvan  mōtō
Sharwa  mēcō
Zizilivekēn  mēt
Jimjime  nūtō
Gud’ē  mbūtō
Njanyi  mbūtō
Gbwata  mbūrō
Bacama  

Gudu
Fali-Mucella
Fali-Bwagira
Gava
Nakatsa
Laamang group
Laamang
Wandala group
Wandala
Golvaxdaxa
Guduf
Dghwede
Gəvoko
Xədi
Mabas
Sakun group
Sakun
Mafa group
Mafa
Mefele
Cuvok
Southern Mofu
Northern Mofu
Southern Giziga
Northern Giziga
Mbazla
Merey
Dugwor
Zəlgwa
Məlokwo
Mada
Muyang
Wuzlam
Matal
Mbuko
Pəlasla
Daba group
Daba
Besleri (= Hina)
Mədam
Gavar
Buwal
Kafa-Munjuk group
Kafa (= Gidar)
Musgu
Mbara
Munjuk

ru
mikyrà
mti
mtşıgànà
ms
mt-
mts-a / əmts àm t sá
mt-
mts'(ə)gànà
mùcà / mtsàyà
mòcà(wé)
mòt
mòt (ùkù)
-àŋgwus
mòtsa
mòtsà(y)
mòtsa
mèc
mèc
mùc
mùc
mùc
mùc
mùtá
mùt'
mùt
mùt
mùt
mùt
mùt's
mùt's
mùt's
mùt's
mùt's
mùc
mèc
mùts
mùts
mùts
mùts
mtá
màra
mìdǐŋ
mìrì
Mida'a group
Majore
Jina

Kotoko group
Lagwan
Msor
Afadə
Maslam
Malgbe
Mpaθə
Yedina

Masa group
Masa
Musey
Lame
Zime

Eastern Branch
Kwang-Kera group
Kwang
Kera

Lele group
Kabalay
Lele

Sibine group
Sibine
Ndam
Tumak
Tobanga

Sokoro group
Sokoro

Dangla group
Dangla
Migama
Bidiya

Mokilko group
Mokilko

Mubi-Toram group
Jegu
Birgit
Mubi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*mwt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bg-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*bn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. "Corpse"

There are at least four roots in Chadic for the gloss "corpse": A *mwt, B bg-, C *bn and D kum. They are reconstructed roots, with an asterix, or possibly reconstructed roots, without any asterix. There are also some forms which still expect explanation: these are marked in the list below with a dash.
"Corpse" can be circumscribed and rendered by "dead (person)". Thus the various reflexes which are put together under root A, *mwt, are undoubtedly based on the root for "to die", *mwt; cf. e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>&quot;to die&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;corpse&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boghom</td>
<td>mas</td>
<td>masāw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masa</td>
<td>mīt</td>
<td>mītnā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lele</td>
<td>mā</td>
<td>tūmādū</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the reflexes for which root B, bg-, has been reconstructed are only tentatively assumed to go back to one single root, therefore it is presented without an asterisk. We are possibly dealing here with forms related to that of the root *bg reconstructed for "body". Still unexplained remains the co-existence in Southern Mofu (Mafa group) of vāw "body" and vāgāy "corpse". As to Hausa (Hausa group) gāāwāā and Ngizim (Bade-Ngizim group) gūvū, both tentatively considered for this root, a metathesis is assumed. The fact that neighbouring Benue-Congo languages have –vāgē (Menemo) and u–kwē (Kambari) for "corpse" makes the Chadic reflexes of the B root appear to be Niger-Congo loans. On the other hand, the borrowing may have, in individual cases, also gone later in the reverse direction, cf. i–gāawā (Ura) which is probably of Hausa origin.

Roots C, *bn, and D, kum (including the similar forms marked with D in the list below), also have obvious cognates in Benue-Congo; cf. Kwanka pun, Birom vīnō, Legbo *ē–bonō, etc. and Chori, Kenyi kōm, Yashi kum, etc. Still the reflexes of root C *bn show regular sound correspondences.

The ungraded Yedina (Kotoko group) reflex bīn seems not to be related with the C root, but would come from Kanuri kawīn.

The unmarked reflex in Diri (Northern Bauchi group) arū may be related to the root *wr for "fetish".

### Western Branch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Roots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hausa group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>B?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwandara</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sura-Gerka group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sura</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kofyar</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goemai</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ron group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daffo</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokkos</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bole-Tangale group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karekare</td>
<td>B?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangale</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kupto</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dera</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galembi</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Northern Bauchi group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warji</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vīwāi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsagu</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>vūnē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kariya</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vīyū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miya</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vīyāu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa’ā</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vīyā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siri</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vīyīyī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mburku</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vīlīhū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimbi</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vīlūwā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diri</td>
<td></td>
<td>arū</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Southern Bauchi group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boghom</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>masāw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaar</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>mor ki mis-kinĩ</td>
</tr>
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</table>

# Bade-Ngizim group

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngizim</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>gūvù</td>
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## Central Branch

### Tera group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tera</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>mədi</td>
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### Gbwata group

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacama</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>wēe</td>
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### Wandala group

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dghwed’e</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>kwāpākā</td>
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### Mafa group

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mofu-Gudur</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vāgāy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giziga</td>
<td>A/A</td>
<td>mamcaŋ/mumucaŋ</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>vagay</td>
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### Daba group

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Daba</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>məmīcĩ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kola</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>mīmtyĩ</td>
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### Kada-Munjuk group

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Munjuk</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>dif zī miri, dif zī pi</td>
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### Kotoko group

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yedina</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>bin (cf. kāvĩn, kābĩn in Kanuri)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kotoko</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>bālõ nāmārã</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>faadĩse</td>
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### Masa group

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<tr>
<td>Masa</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>mītnã</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zime</td>
<td>A/A</td>
<td>māt /māt</td>
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## Eastern Branch

### Kwang-Kera group

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<tr>
<td>Kwang</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>bāmātīī</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kera</td>
<td></td>
<td>tītī</td>
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### Lele group

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<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabalay</td>
<td></td>
<td>kūmã muwã</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lele</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>tūmādũ</td>
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CONCLUSION

The comparison and the analyses of the two items "to die" and "corpse" are a sample of the Chadic language history: on the one hand, a notion which carries forms coming directly from the original Hamito-Semitic language craddle, on the other hand, a notion which has been considerably affected through the contacts in the new African home.

In addition there is a great diversity of forms for other notions connected with "death", such as "grave" or "funerals". They are rendered through various innovations like semantic analogy ("hole" for "grave"), derivation, compound words and loan words. This may indicate that the funeral rites have undergone more recent changes in the environment of Lake Chad Basin.

ORSTOM, LATAH, Bondy, France
University of Frankfurt-Am-Main, Allemagne

BIBLIOGRAPHY

An extended bibliography is not given in this paper: for additional information one may consult the sources mentioned below. Maps of Hamito-Semitic and Chadic languages may be found in Jungraithmayr (1981), Dieu & Renaud (1983).


