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Otto Dempwolff: *Induktiver Aufbau des Urbantu*. Herausgegeben und bearbeitet von Ludwig Gerhardt and Justus Roux. (Archiv Afrikanistischer Manuskripte Band V). Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1998. 116 pages, DM 38.

Otto Dempwolff was professor for African and Oceanic linguistics at the University of Hamburg from 1918 to 1938. In 1930/31 and 1934/35 he gave a lecture series on the reconstruction of Proto Bantu (Urbantu) as had been proposed by his colleague and mentor Carl Meinhof (e.g. Meinhof 1910, 1932). The manuscript on which the lectures were based has now been published, edited and annotated by Ludwig Gerhardt and Justus Roux.

The aim of the lectures was to introduce Meinhof's work on Bantu to students as well as to a wider audience. Dempwolff shows how by establishing sound correspondences between words of the three sample languages Swahili, Zulu and Pedi (North Sotho) the hypothesis of common proto forms can be developed. The approach is pedagogical – part 1 (§§1–13) gives an introduction to the field of linguistics – as conceived of at the time – and to the comparative method as applied to Bantu languages. In part 2 (§§14–33), Dempwolff introduces the first two 'test languages' Swahili and Zulu. By giving relevant cognate sets, proto sounds and forms are established step by step ('inductively') and problematic sets are highlighted, thus for example, whether to reconstruct PB ***-pûta** or PB ***-kûta** from Swahili **-futa** and Zulu **ámá-fút^hà**, both meaning 'fat', since Swahili and Zulu /f/ is a reflex of both PB ***p** and PB ***k** preceding a high PB ***û**. This leads to the introduction of the third language, Pedi (§§34–50), which is related to the established reconstructed sounds and then used to resolve outstanding problems. Thus the Pedi word **mà-húrà^h** 'fat' provides evidence for reconstructing PB ***-kûta**, rather than PB ***-pûta**, since Pedi preserves the difference between PB ***k** and PB ***p**; Pedi /h/ is a reflex of PB ***k**, while PB ***p** becomes Pedi /f/ (60). After the PB sound system is developed in this manner, the final part (§§51–57) turns to grammatical reconstruction and provides a sketch of PB morphology and syntax. In an appendix (§§58–60), Dempwolff offers a criticism of some PB reconstructions.

The editors of the present edition of Dempwolff's text have provided an introduction, discussing the lecture series and its background, and a selected bibliography, as well as several corrections and comments regarding individual forms, notably the addition of tone marking for Zulu and Pedi words.

The publication of the lectures, some 60 years after they were held, is, I believe, a useful reminder that there is, in fact, no book which introduces students and other interested parties to Bantu reconstruction. Other than a short chapter by Gerhardt (1981) and the comparative sample sentences in Rodegem (1991), very little comes to mind when thinking about teaching, rather than research in, comparative Bantu. In the more recent textbooks of historical linguistics one finds exercises from – next to Indo-European – Turkish and Japanese in Lehmann (1992), Basque, Skikun (Atayalic), or Maa in Trask (1996), or languages of the South Pacific in Crowley (1997), but not from Bantu. Of course, the present edition of Dempwolff's lectures is not a textbook in the modern sense of the term – which probably would include some treatment of the status of comparative reconstruction together with a more general introduction to modern historical linguistics, a number of exercises and a rather expanded bibliography – but it might serve as an inspiration for a pedagogically minded Bantuist to actually write one. Dempwolff's idea to provide an accessible introduction to Bantu reconstruction is as relevant today as it was in 1930.

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