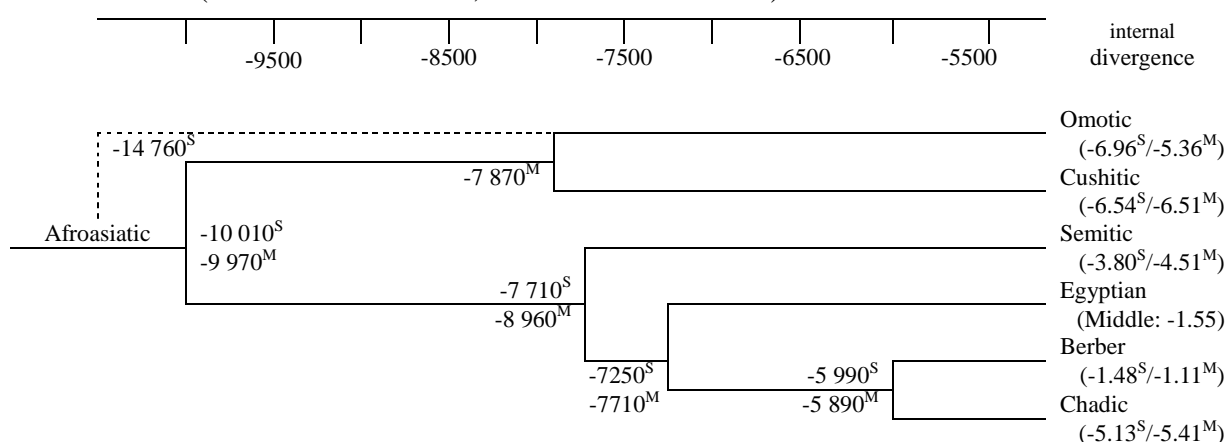


AFROASIATIC MIGRATIONS: LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

The Afroasiatic migrations can be divided into historical and prehistorical. The linguistic evidence of the historical migrations is usually based on epigraphic or literary witnesses. The migrations without epigraphic or textual evidence can be linguistically determined only indirectly, on the basis of ecological and cultural lexicon and mutual borrowings from and into substrata, adstrata and superstrata. Very useful is a detailed genetic classification, ideally with an absolute chronology of sequential divergencies. Without literary documents and absolute chronology of loans the only tool is the method called **glottochronology**. Although in its 'classical' form formulated by Swadesh it was discredited, its recalibrated modification developed by Sergei Starostin gives much more realistic estimations. For Afroasiatic G. Starostin and A. Militarev obtained almost the same tree-diagram, although they operated with 50- and 100-word-lists respectively.

Afroasiatic (^S = G. Starostin 2010; ^M = A. Militarev 2005)



Rather problematic results for Omotic should be ascribed to extremely strong influences of substrata. Various influences, especially Nilo-Saharan, are also apparent in Cushitic, plus Khoisan and Bantu in Dahalo and South Cushitic. Less apparent, but identifiable, is the Nilo-Saharan influence in Egyptian (Takács 1999, 38-46) and Berber (Militarev 1991, 248-65); stronger in Chadic are influences of Saharan from the East (Jungraithmayr 1989), Songhai from the West (Zima 1990), plus Niger-Congo from the South (Gerhardt 1983).

To map the early Afroasiatic migrations, it is necessary to localize in space and time the **Afroasiatic homeland**. The assumed locations usually correlate with the areas of individual branches:

Cushitic/Omotic: North Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea between the Nile-Atbara and Red Sea - Ehret (1979, 165); similarly Fleming (2006, 152-57), Blench (2006). Hudson (1978, 74-75) sees in Greater Ethiopia a homeland of both Afroasiatic and Semitic.

Area between Cushitic & Omotic, Egyptian, Berber and Chadic: Southeast Sahara between Darfur in Sudan and the Tibesti Massiv in North Chad - Diakonoff 1988, 23.

Chadic: North shores of Lake Chad - Jungraithmayr 1991, 78-80.

Berber-Libyan: North African Mediterranean coast - Fellman 1991-93, 57.

Egyptian: Upper Egypt - Takács 1999, 47.

Semitic: Levant – Militarev 1996, 13-32. This solution is seriously discussed by Diakonoff (1988, 24-25) and Petráček (1988, 130-31; 1989, 204-05) as alternative to the African location.

The fact that five of six branches of Afroasiatic are situated in Africa has been interpreted as the axiomatic argument against the Asiatic homeland of Afroasiatic (Fellman 1991-93, 56). But it is possible to find serious counter-examples of languages spreading from relatively small regions into distant and significantly larger areas: English from England to North

America, Oceania; Spanish from Spain to Latin America; Portuguese from Portugal to Brazil; Arabic from Central Arabia to the Near East and North Africa; Swahili from Zanzibar to Equatorial Africa. Among language families the chrestomathic example is Austronesian, spreading from South China through Taiwan to innumerable islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans from Madagascar to Rapa Nui.

These arguments speak for the Levantine location:

Distant relationship of Afroasiatic with Kartvelian, Dravidian, Indo-European and other Eurasiatic language families within the framework of the Nostratic hypothesis (Illič-Svityč 1971-84; Blažek 2002; Dolgopolsky 2008; Bomhard 2008).

Lexical parallels connecting Afroasiatic with Near Eastern languages which cannot be explained from Semitic:

Sumerian-Afroasiatic lexical parallels indicating an Afroasiatic substratum in Sumerian (Militarev 1995).

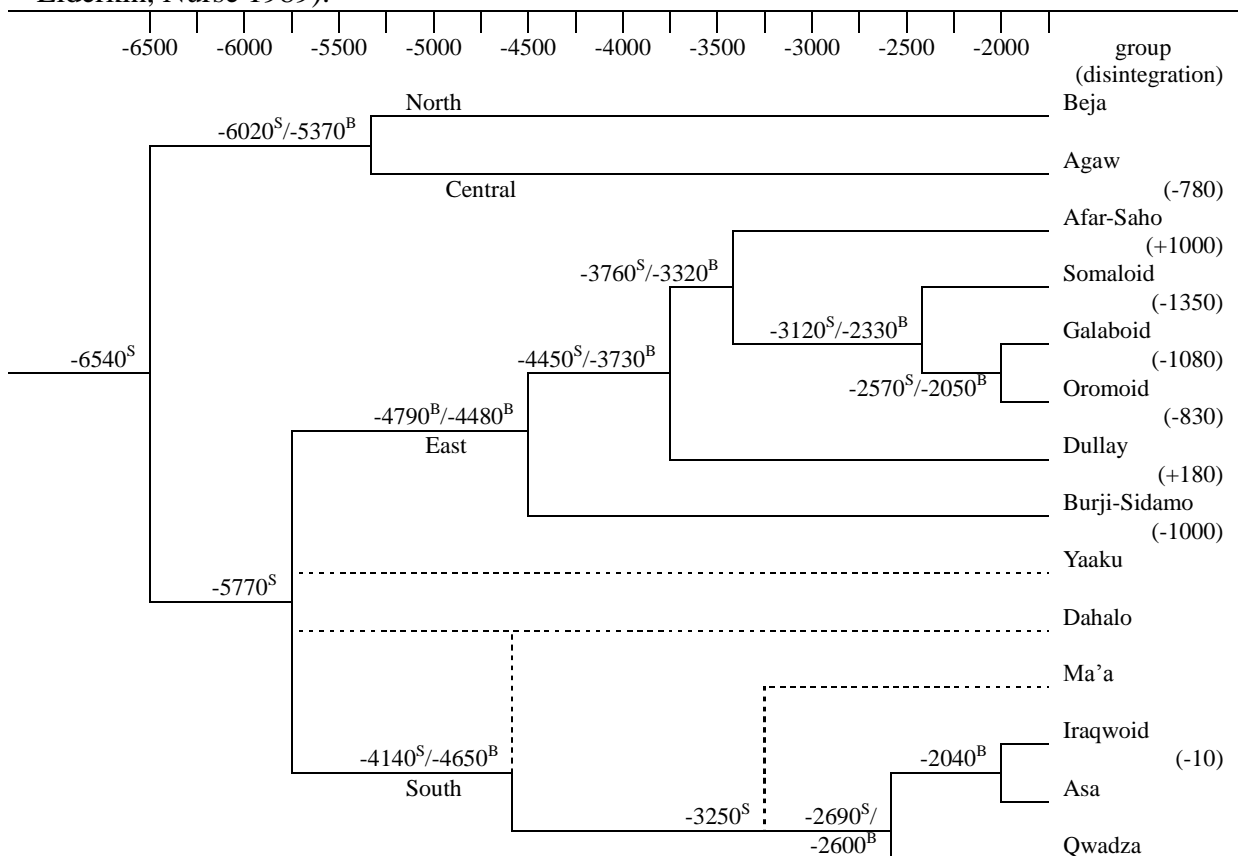
Elamite-Afroasiatic lexical and grammatical cognates explainable as a common heritage (Blažek 1999).

North Caucasian-Afroasiatic parallels in cultural lexicon explainable by old neighborhood (Militarev, Starostin 1984).

Regarding the tree-diagram above, the hypothetical scenario of disintegration of Afroasiatic and following migrations should operate with two asynchronic migrations from the Levantine homeland: Cushitic (& Omotic?) separated first *c.* 12 mill. BP (late Natufian) and spread into the Arabian Peninsula; next Egyptian, Berber and Chadic split from Semitic (the latter remaining in the Levant) *c.* 11-10 mill. BP and they dispersed into the Nile Delta and Valley.

Cushitic (^S = Starostin 2010; ^B = Blažek 1997)

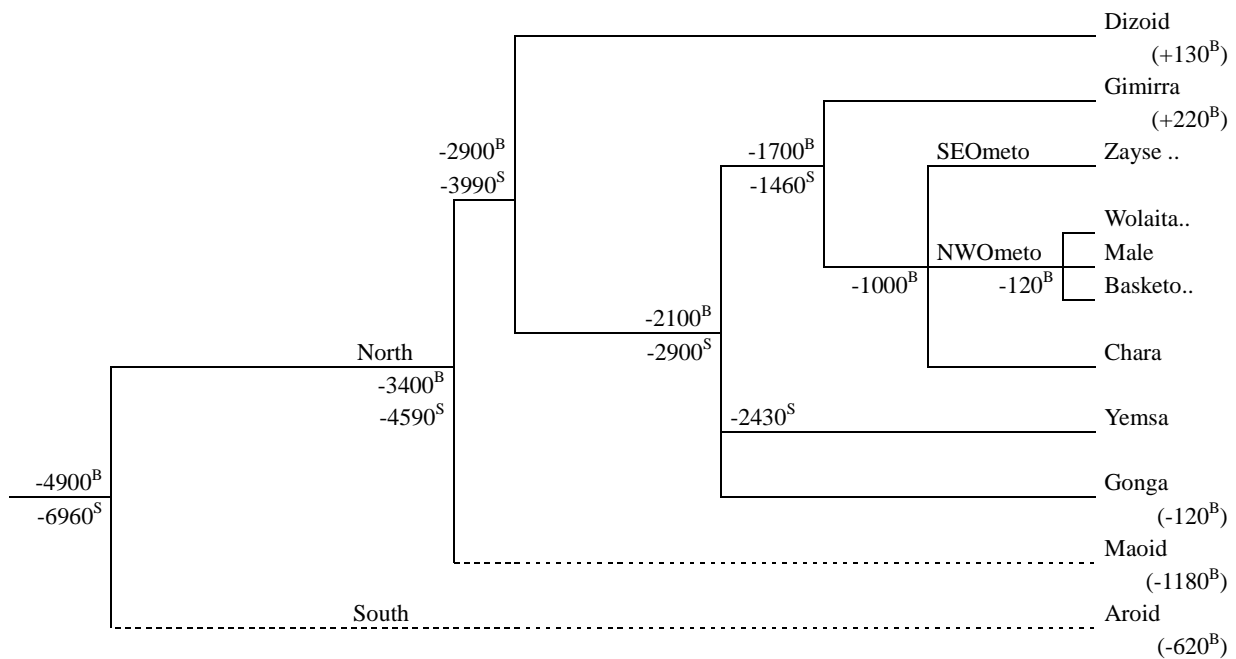
Both models of Cushitic classification agree in topology. Only the positions of Yaaku and Dahalo are problematic, having been influenced by strong substrata and adstrata (Ehret, Elderkin, Nurse 1989).



Having identified a Cushitic-like substratum in Modern South Arabian, Militarev (1984, 18-19; cf. also Belova 2003) proposes that Cushites originally lived throughout the Arabian Peninsula; thus they would be the original southern neighbors of the Semites, who then assimilated those Cushites who did not move into Ethiopia. This hypothesis is supported by Anati (1968, 180-84), who analyzed the rock art of Central Arabia. He connected the pictures of the ‘oval-headed’ people depicted with shields with the Arabian ‘Cushites’ from the Old Testament [Genesis 10.6-12; Isaiah 45.14] described also with specific shields [Jeremiah 46.9; Ezekiel 38.5]. The spread of Cushites in Africa is connected with the Rift Valley. In the coastal area of Eritrea and Djibuti, where the Rift enters into the African mainland, three archaic representatives of the North, Central (= Agaw) and Eastern branches of Cushitic appear: Beja, Bilin and Afar-Saho respectively. In this place the disintegration of Cushitic probably began. Ancestors of the Agaw spread in the north of Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Beja also in Sudan between the Nile and the Red Sea. Other East and South Cushitic languages moved southward along the Rift Valley through Ethiopia, Kenya, as far as Central Tanzania. Partial migrations from the Rift inhabited areas more distant, e.g. the Horn by Somaloid populations (Heine 1978, 65-70) or the lower basin of the Tana in Kenya by the Dahalo and recently by the South Oromo. Concerning Ma’a, see Mous 2003.

Omotic (^B = Blažek 2008; ^S = Starostin 2010)

The model combines the results of Blažek and Starostin, disagreeing only in the time depth and some details.

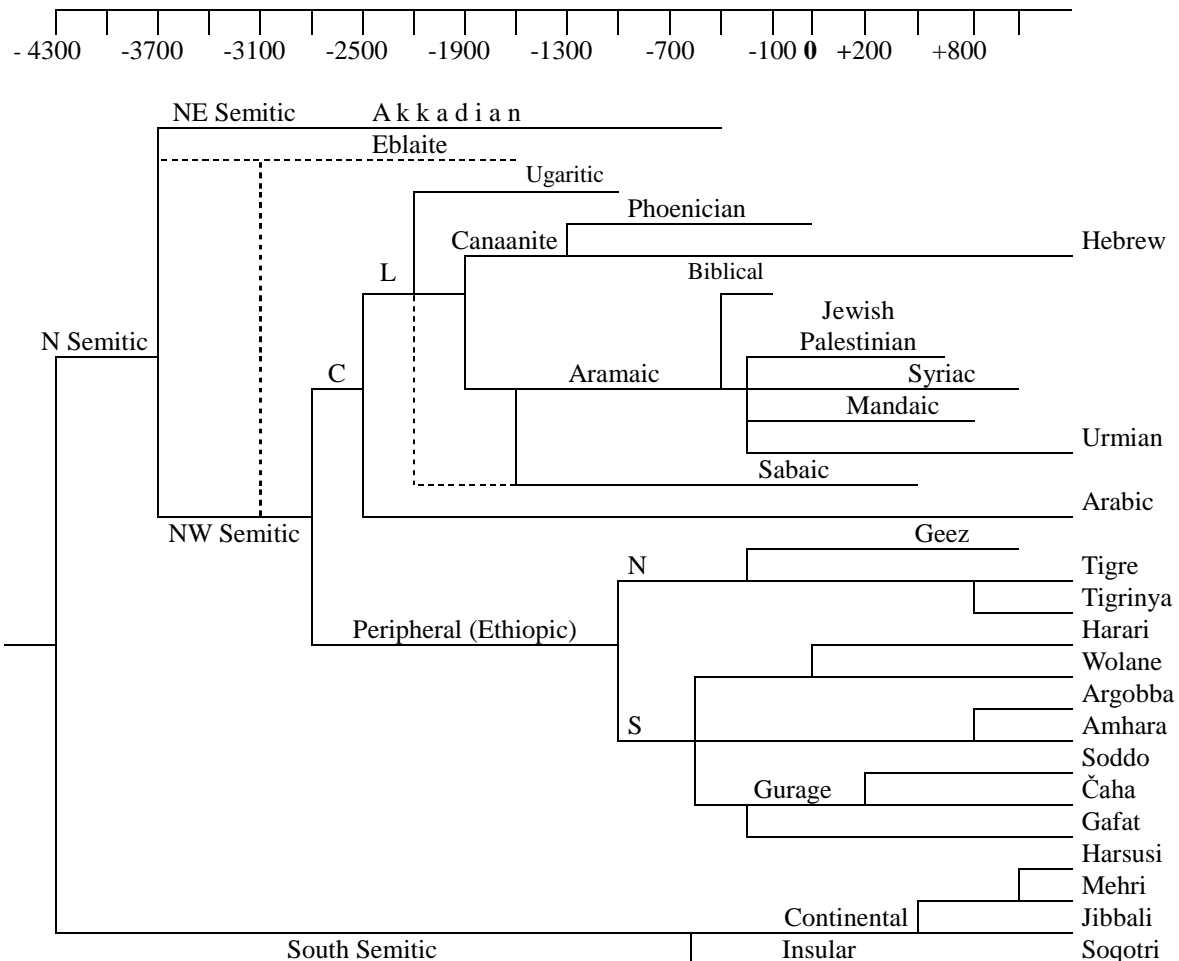


Both external and internal classification of Omotic are controversial. Emancipation of ‘West Cushitic’ as Omotic, an independent branch of Afroasiatic, was based on lexicostatistical estimations of Fleming and Bender (1975). The careful grammatical analyses by Bender (2000) and Zaborski (2004) demonstrate that most of the Omotic grammemes inherited from Afroasiatic are common with Cushitic. Numerous lexical isoglosses connecting Omotic with other Afroasiatic branches to the exclusion of Cushitic (Blažek 2008, 94-139) attest that Omotic and Cushitic are sister-branches, i.e. they do not support the West Cushitic conception. On the other hand, Nilo-Saharan parallels to the unique pronominal systems of Aroid and Maoid indicate they could be ‘Omotized’ (Zaborski 2004, 180-83 proposes their Nilo-Saharan origin). Regarding these conclusions, the model by Militarev dating the separation of Cushitic and Omotic to the early 8th mill. BCE and reconstructing their route

through Arabia seems valid. The pronominal system of Ongota indicates that it should be classified as Nilo-Saharan (Blažek 2005, 2007).

Semitic

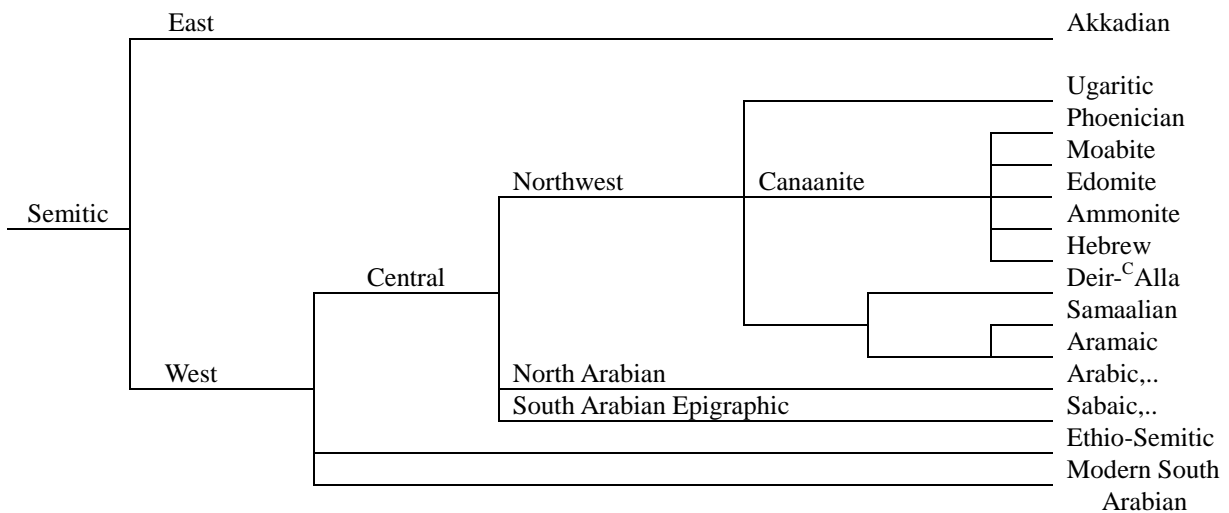
Militarev combines in his classification the ‘recalibrated’ glottochronology developed by Sergei Starostin and results of comparative Semitic linguistics (SED XL-XLI):



Abbreviations: C Central, E East, L Levantine, N North, S South, W West.

Note: On position of Sabaic see Hayes 1991.

A more traditional classification is based on grammatical isoglosses (Kogan 2009, 20-21):



The Semitic ecological lexicon indicates the **Semitic homeland** was in the Northern Levant (Kogan 2009, 18-19). The home of the **Akkadians** was Northern and Central Mesopotamia. From the time of the Sargonid Empire (24/23rd cent. BCE) Akkadian began to push Sumerian into Southern Mesopotamia. Akkadian also spread into Elam, Syria, and Anatolia. In the 2nd mill. BCE the southern dialect, Babylonian, was used as a diplomatic language in the Near East, including Egypt. The massive migration of the **Canaanite** tribes into Lower Egypt c. 1700 BCE has been connected with the campaign of the Hyksos (Egyptian *q3w-h3swt* "rulers of foreign countries"). A part of this multiethnic conglomerate could be the **Hebrews**, whose return c. 1200 BCE was described in the book *Exodus* in the Old Testament. This mythic narration is supported by linguistic analysis of Egyptian toponyms from the Bible (Vycichl 1940). The oldest **Phoenician** inscriptions are known from Byblos (11-10th cent. BCE), later also from Tyre, Sidon and other Levantine ports. During the 1st mill. BCE Phoenicians founded numerous bases in south Anatolia and Cyprus through Malta, Sicily, Sardinia, Ibiza and the coast of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria to Morocco and Hispania, including several points along the Atlantic coast (today Tangier, Cadiz). Although the strongest of them, Carthage, was destroyed by Romans in 146 BCE, the Phoenician/Punic language survived in North Africa till the 5th cent. CE. Traces of Punic influence are identifiable in modern Berber languages (Vycichl 1952). In the late 2nd mill. BC **Arameans** lived originally in North Syria and Mesopotamia. During the first half of the 1st mill. BCE their inscriptions appear in the whole Fertile Crescent. From the end of 9th to mid 7th cent. BCE Arameans came into North Mesopotamia as captives of the Assyrians. By the time of the fall of Assyria (612 BCE) Aramaic was already a dominant language in North Mesopotamia and from the Babylonian captivity (586-539 BCE) Aramaic began to replace Hebrew in Palestine. Aramaic became a dominant Near Eastern language in the time of the Achaemenid Empire (539-331 BCE), where it served as a language of administration from Egypt and North Arabia to Central Asia and the borders of India, where the Aramaic script was adapted into local scripts. The dominant role of Aramaic in the Near East continued till the expansion of Arabic in the 7th cent. CE, but its presence there never ended (Lězov 2009, 414-30). A half millennium before the rise of Islam **Arabs** expanded from North Arabia into the Levant and Mesopotamia. Two states where Arabs dominated controlled the commercial routes between Mediterranean, Red Sea and Persian Gulf: Palmyra and the Nabatean kingdom, although for official documents Aramaic served. With the spread Islam an unprecedented expansion of Arabic began, and by the 8th cent. Arabic was used from Morocco and Hispania to Central Asia. Although in some areas Arabic lost its position (Hispania, Sicily, Persia), elsewhere its role expanded. In Africa Arabic extended to the southern border of the Sahara and along the East African coast. One of pre-Islamic languages of Yemen crossed the Red Sea in the role of a trade lingua franca in the early 1st mill. BCE and became a base of the **Ethio-Semitic** branch (Gragg 1997, 242). Separation of north and south Ethio-Semitic subbranches can be dated to 890 BCE (Militarev 2005, 399), disintegration of Agaw to 780 BCE (Blažek) and a strong Agaw substratal influence especially in North Ethio-Semitic could have a causal connection.

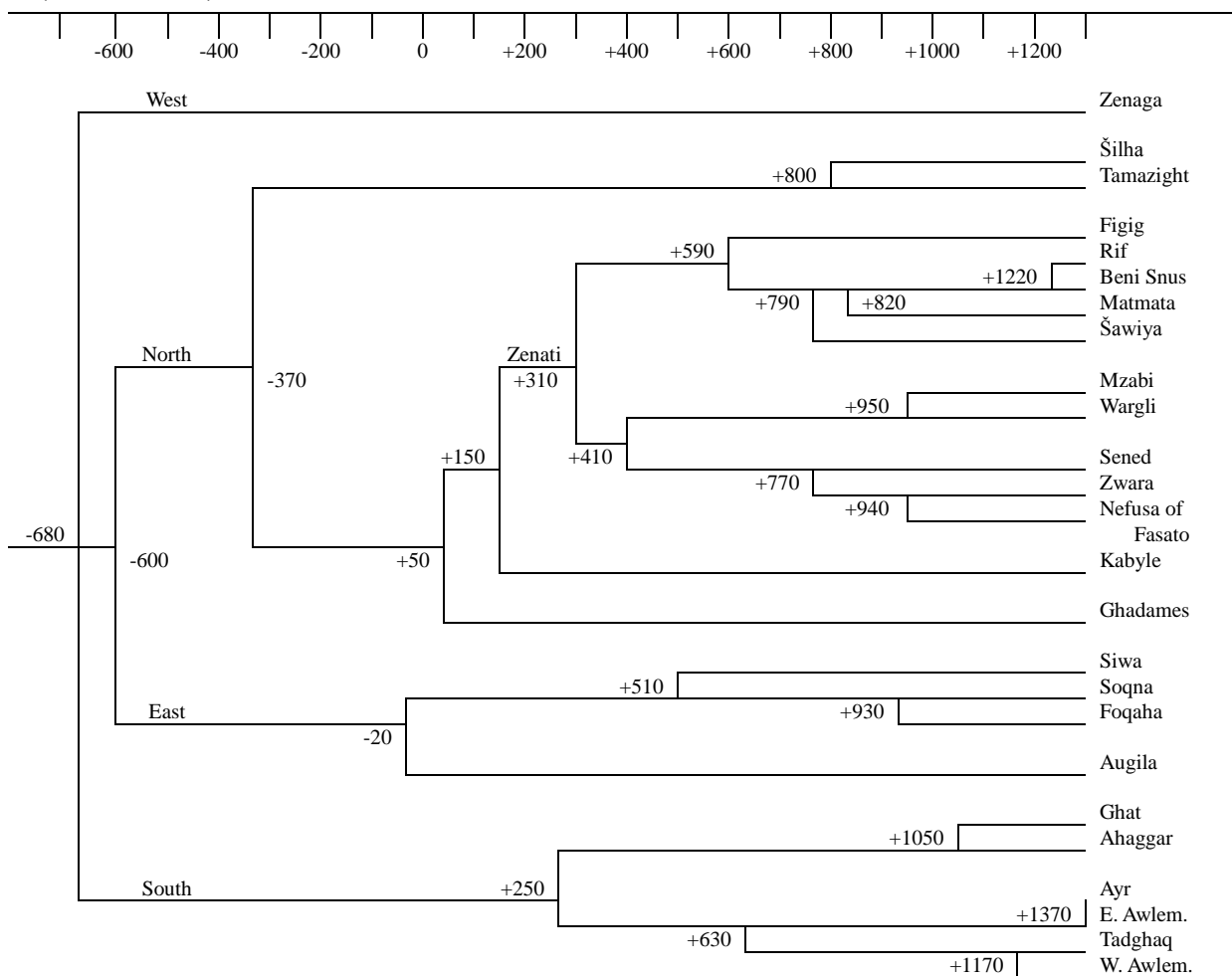
Egyptian

Egyptian was spoken in the Nile Valley from Lower Nubia to the Delta, probably also in oases of the Western Desert, and in the times of Egyptian expansion during the New Kingdom also in Sinai and Palestine. The unification of Upper and Lower Egypt c. 3226 BCE (Ignatjeva 1997, 20) probably stimulated a process of homogenization of local dialects. From their original diversity remained only a few traces, e.g. the double reflexation of Afroasiatic **t* in Egyptian *d* and *t* which may represent the Upper and Lower Egyptian dialect opposition (Militarev, *Vestnik drevnej istorii* 1982/4, 194).

Berber

To the Berber branch belong not only modern Berber languages spoken in North Africa from Senegal and Mauritania to Egypt (Oasis Siwa), but also the language(s) of Libyco-Berber inscriptions attested from the Canary Islands to Libya and dated from the 7/6th cent. BCE (inscription from Azib n'Ikkis, Morocco - see Galand-Pernet 1988, 65; Pichler 2007, 25) to 4th cent. CE, and fragments of languages of aborigines of the Canary Islands recorded by Spanish and Italian chroniclers in the 14-16th cent. The oldest archaeological traces of a human settlement at the archipelago dated to *c.* 540 BCE are known from Tenerife; from the 6th cent. BCE should also be the most archaic inscriptions from Hierro (Pichler 2007, 57-59). Taking account of glottochronological dating of the disintegration of the Berber languages to the 7th cent. BCE (Blažek 2010), it is possible to see here the only process stimulated by the rise of the Phoenician influence spreading from the Mediterranean coast. The adaptation of the Phoenician script and borrowing of *c.* 20 cultural Canaanite words, with different reflexes in all Berber branches (i.e., adapted before the disintegration of Common Berber), support the causal connections of the described events. In this perspective it is probable the ancestors of the Berbers originally spread along the North African coast (cf. Mercier 1924 on ancient toponyms with Berber etymologies).

(Blažek 2010)



Awlem. Awlemmiden, E East, W West.

The model of classification of the Berber languages prepared by George Starostin (2010) with the disintegration of Zenaga dated to 1480 BCE and disintegration of North, East and South subbranches dated to 1080 BCE is not compatible with the distribution of Phoenician loans in

all subbranches. Their spread is thinkable only in the 1st mill. BCE.

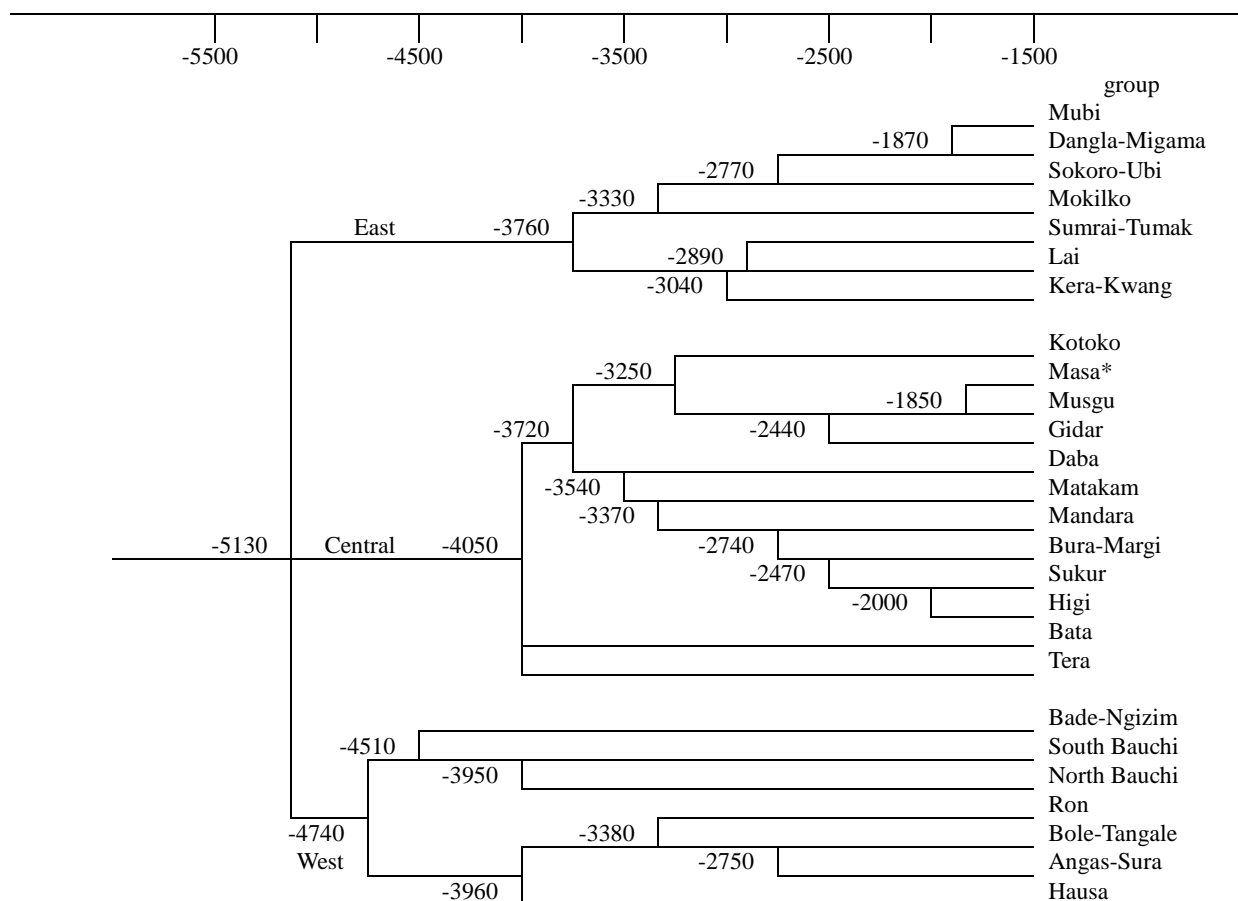
Militarev (1991, 154) localizes the area, where the **South Berber (Tuareg)** subbranch formed, in the triangle Ghudāmis-Ghāt-Sabhah in West Libya. In this space the ancient city Garama also lay, the center of the people called Garamantes (Herodot IV, 183-84; Tacit, *Historiae* IV, 50) who are frequently identified with the ancestors of Tuaregs. Another argument connected with this area is the ethnonym *Hawwārah*, located by Ibn Khordadbeh ("Book of Roads and Kingdoms", 870 CE) and by al-Mas^Cudi ("The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems", 956 CE) in Fezzan or Tripolitania. In agreement with the Berber historical phonetics, the name *Āhaggār* of the North Tuaregs is derivable from *Hawwārah*. More difficult is the reconstruction of the route of the **West Berbers** represented by the Zenaga living along the Senegal-Mauritanian border now, but in a large part of West Mauritania till the 17th cent. The closest relative Tetserret/Tameseghlalt is spoken by a small, non-Tuareg, minority living among the Tuaregs of Niger (Souag 2010, 178). Other, substratal, traces of West Berber appear in the Arabic dialect Hassaniya, used in Mauritania, West Sahara and Algeria, and in the North Songhai dialects Tadaksahak (East Mali, West Niger), Tagdal (West/Central Niger), besides the South Tuareg influence, and Kwarandzyey (West Algeria), besides the Moroccan Berber influence. Souag (2010, 186) thinks about a movement of Kwarandzyey in the north from the basin of the Niger. In this case the route of the West Berbers probably preceded the spread of the Tuaregs into the southwest. Could the form *zngn* from the Libyan inscription from Girsā in Tripolitania be connected with the ethnonym **Zenaga** (Militarev 1994, 277-78)? In the 3rd and 2nd mill. BCE the linguistic traces of Berber related idioms appear in the Nile Valley. One witness is seen in *c.* 20 etymons in Nubian languages, all with good Berber etymologies (Blažek 2000). The Nubian lexemes are not limited to Nile Nubian but they are distributed in all Nubian branches. This means they would have been adopted before the disintegration of Nubian, dated to the 11th cent. BCE (Starostin 2010). The contact zone could be localized around the mouth of Wadi al-Milk in the Nile in North Sudan (Behrens 1984, 208, map 7.5; Blažek 2000, 40). This is in agreement with the information of Herkhuef, a commercial emissary who visited Upper Nubia *c.* 2230 BCE, about the ruler of the district *J3m* fighting against the tribes *Tmw* by the fourth cataract. The *Tmw* are usually connected with antique Libyans and modern Berbers. From the area between the 2nd and 4th cataracts the *Tmw* are mentioned also in the time of Ramesses II (1290-1224 BCE) on the stele of his official Ramose who sought workers among *Tmw* (Behrens 1984, 137-39). The direct linguistic witness can be found in the name *3bjqwr* of one of dogs of the nomarch Antef II from the 11th dynasty (2118-2069 BCE), exactly corresponding to proto-Tuareg **ābaykūr* "wild dog" > Ghat *abaikur*, Ahaggār *ābāikôr*, Ayr/Awlemmiden *abāykor* (Müller 1896, 207; Blažek 2000, 40). Interesting is also the ethnonym *Jsb*, mentioned together with other Old Libyan tribes *Rbw* and *Mšwš* in the description of fights of Ramesses III *c.* 1180 BCE. *Jsb* corresponds to Ἰσβύσται (Herodot IV, 170-71), Ἰσβῦται (Ptolemy IV, 4.10), localized to the east of the Gulf of Sidre, and *Asebet*, pl. *Isebeten*, one of the Berber tribes related to the Ahaggār Tuaregs (Behrens 1984, 145-46). These facts support the spread of proto-Berbers along the Mediterranean coast from the Nile Valley. The *Tmw* from Northern Sudan were probably assimilated by neighboring Nilo-Saharan populations.

Chadic

Starostin's date 5130 BCE of the Chadic disintegration agrees very well with the estimations by Militarev (2005, 399: 5410 BCE). The easternmost Chadic language is Kajakse from the archaic group Mubi, spoken in the Waddai highlands in Southeast Chad (on both sides of the Chad-Sudan border is spoken Kujarge, a puzzling language with a Chadic stratum in lexicon). This area is accessible from the Nile Valley only in two ways: along the Wadi Howar north of Darfur (Blench 2006, 162) or along the Bahr al-Ghazal and its north tributary Bahr al-^CArab

to the south of Darfur. The northern route could lead along the Batha river, today flowing into Lake Fitri, forming in a wetter past a part of Lake Chad (4000 BCE: 400.000 km², today 1.350 km²). The southern route could continue along the Bahr Azoum/Salamat into the basin of the Chari, the biggest tributary of Lake Chad.

(Starostin 2010)



*Note: The close position of Masa to Musgu - see Tourneux 1990.

Summary

The present scenario has its analogy in the spread of Semitic languages into Africa. The northern route through Sinai brought Aramaic and Arabic, the southern route through Bab el-Mandeb brought Ethio-Semitic.

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