

Words of apparent Arabic and CUSHITIC origin in Khoekhoe and Kalahari KHOE languages of southern Africa: how did they get there, and what are the implications?¹

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The paper builds on the early detection by Carl Meinhof of one or two Arabic loanwords in Nama (Khoekhoe, KHOE), and explores the possibility of other borrowings, from not only from Arabic but also languages of the CUSHITIC family. A context in which such borrowings could have occurred is provided through the presentation of historical evidence that suggests, for the first time, an actual connection between speakers of Khoekhoe languages – and some of the early Shona states involved in the early Indian Ocean trade along the east coast of Africa, where foreign partners included speakers not only of Arabic but also Persian, Hindi, and Malay. Two sets of additional borrowings that have been found (from Arabic, and CUSHITIC) are then presented and discussed. Different distribution patterns in the case of borrowings shared with various NTU languages are argued to suggest more than one stage in the emergence of the modern KHOE languages, while a particular connection is identified, for the first time, with languages specifically of the Mozambican and Madagascan coasts (as opposed to the Swahili coast). This evidence suggests that the earliest interactions behind some of the borrowings occurred during the older phase associated with the southerly hub of the Indian Ocean trade – which allows us to propose, in turn, that the people who came to be known as the ‘Khoi’ were forged by the constantly changing social and economic dynamics of an early African—yet cosmopolitan—world.

Keywords: KHOE languages, NTU languages, African languages, lexical borrowing, Arabic loanwords, CUSHITIC loanwords, east African Indian Ocean trade networks

1. Introduction

It has long been known that one or two words of Arabic origin are found in Khoekhoe languages of the KHOE family (Vossen 1997) of southern Africa. Carl Meinhof (1909: 106) noted, for example, that the Nama words for cannabis, *daxab*, and money, *marib*, probably had such a source – even while he also noted the occurrence of *mali* in Swahili, which meant that the Khoekhoe-speakers could have acquired the word indirectly. The aims of the present paper are (i) to provide a historical context for such borrowings; (ii) to show that there are several other probable loans; and (iii) to discuss a few of the broader implications that emerge from aspects of the data.

In Section 2, after a brief presentation of some background information, historical evidence will be presented to suggest, for the first time, an actual connection between Khoekhoe-speaking communities – and some of the communities of the southern African interior and the East Coast who participated in Indian Ocean trading networks over a period of approximately 2000 years (Campbell 2016: 5). (See Figure 1.)

In Section 3, new lexical evidence will be presented to suggest that there were other borrowings as well – primarily into Khoekhoe, but in some cases extending also into the Kalahari branch of the KHOE family. As far as the donor languages are concerned, the focus of this preliminary

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investigation will be limited to (i) Arabic and (ii) languages of the CUSHITIC family. Marginal notes will nevertheless mention any instances where the Arabic words are also found, in borrowed form, in languages such as Persian, Hindi or Malay – since these could have been indirect conduits for some of the Arabic transfers. (The further possibility of additional loans from some of these languages themselves is not addressed here.)²

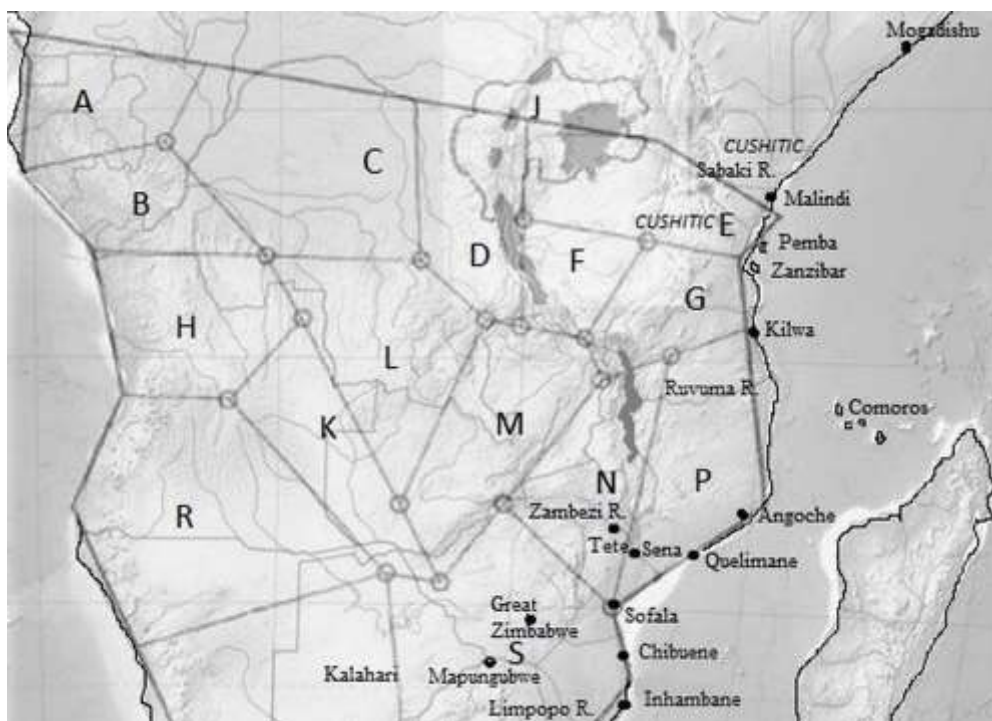


Figure 1: Names of coastal trading sites and other significant centres associated with the East African Indian Ocean networks, based on information and maps in Anneli Ekblom and others (2016) and Kings Phiri (1979). The diagram showing distribution zones of the NTU (or Bantu) languages is from Malcolm Guthrie (1967, vol 1: 100), with added delineation of the inter-lacustrine zone J as per Yvonne Bastin (2003) and the New Updated Guthrie List (Maho 2009). It is superimposed on a relief map of Africa by Eric Gaba (Wikimedia Commons user Sting, CC BY-SA 3.0). Present locations of some CUSHITIC languages have also been added, based on Maarten Mous (2012).

There are several reasons for considering CUSHITIC languages in addition to Arabic. For one thing, Derek Nurse and Thomas Hinnebusch (1993: 20–21) have noted the presence of a few CUSHITIC loanwords in the Sabaki languages of the Swahili coast. Several of these languages are spoken today in modern Kenya, including Oromo and Somali, while Iraqw, Gorowa, Alagwa, Burunge, Mbugu and Aasáx are spoken as far south as northern Tanzania (Mous 2012: 342). As for possible contact between Cushites and early KHOE SPEAKERS, this has been proposed by Roger Blench (2009), who notes that CUSHITIC languages may once have had a more southerly distribution.

² Terms such as ‘Arabic’, ‘Persian’, ‘Hindi’ and ‘Malay’ are used here as glossonyms only in the very broadest sense – essentially as ‘stand-ins’ for actual varieties spoken along the east African seaboard. This matches the conventions of Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993) and Thilo Schadeberg (2009).

Lastly, since Arabic and CUSHITIC languages ultimately belong to the same mega-family—Afroasiatic—there are occasionally cases in the African context where it can be difficult to determine whether a word has been borrowed from Arabic or one of the related CUSHITIC languages.

Additional notes will mention cases where borrowed Arabic (or CUSHITIC) words found in Khoekhoe languages are also found in NTU languages. This information is useful for two reasons. Firstly, it highlights instances where the borrowings into Khoekhoe languages may have been made only indirectly, via intermediary NTU languages. Secondly, it provides a useful picture of the wider distributions of the lexis in question. Some of these shared loans, as will be seen, are reconstructed for Proto-Bantu (PB), and their areal spread is revealed by the indication of the Guthrie zones with attested reflexes. The map in Figure 1 shows not only some of the east African coastal trading sites associated with the Indian Ocean networks, but also the Guthrie zones used to map the distributions of NTU languages.

Finally, in Section 4, the borrowings will be discussed, regarding (i) the adaptation of Arabic words in KHOE; (ii) the nature of the words borrowed; and (iii) different distribution patterns of the borrowed words, particularly where they also occur in NTU. The discussion will close with (iv) the suggestion of various scenarios that might plausibly make sense of these new findings.

2. Background information

The background information presented below in Section 2.1—concerning the speakers of the KHOE languages—and Section 2.2—concerning the participants in the Indian Ocean trading networks—is tied together in Section 2.3.

2.1. The KHOE languages, and theories concerning the origins of their speakers. The KHOE family is the largest grouping of the so-called ‘Khoisan’ languages,³ both in dialectal diversity and geographic distribution of its speaker communities. It has two main branches – Khoekhoe and Kalahari.

At the Cape, the indigenous people encountered from the 1480s onward by European sailors were herders of cattle and sheep who called themselves Khoikhoi, ‘Quena’ (Khoena) or Khoi, all from *khoe-b/s/i* ‘person’. Their recorded languages include:

- Varieties spoken by clans during the 16th and 17th centuries in the environs of Cape Town, Saldanhaabaai, and Stellenbosch (Nienaber 1963).

³ In addition to KHOE, there are two other families of Khoisan languages spoken in southern Africa, JU (Westphal 1963, 1971) and TUU (Güldemann 2005), with TUU divided into !Ui and Taa branches (Westphal 1963, 1971). They are not generally held to be related to one another, and the collective name ‘Khoisan’ is a merely a term of convenience. A few linguists (Heine & Honken 2010) have proposed a unification of the JU family with †’Amkoe, suggesting the name Kx’A for the higher-order grouping. However, the notion of a ‘Kx’ family’ is still only an unconfirmed hypothesis. The formulation of the theory is not based on the standard two-step method (Nichols 1996) for establishing unity, since (i) it does not begin by demonstrating formal similarities spanning whole paradigms, and (ii) it does not proceed to demonstrate any reconstructable lexical roots, but instead presents merely a preliminary reconstruction of the phoneme inventory. The presence of loanwords in their database is acknowledged by Heine and Honken, but the implications are not fully taken into account. For example, of only three series used to set up a voiceless aspirated stop, *Ch – one of the words (*khola* ~ *khoara* “unbind”) is not only reconstructed for Proto-W. Kalahari Khoe (as *khada “spread out, unroll”) but is in reality borrowed from neighbouring NTU languages (cf. Tswana *go-ala*), where it can be used in the sense of preparing for sleep (unrolling a bed mat).

- A dialect of Nama ('Little Nama'), spoken by clans along the West Coast and in Little Namaqualand⁴ up to the Gariep⁵ (Hahn 1881: 102, Levaillant 1796, vol 2: scattered).
- Kora (or !Ora) – with which some of the early Cape varieties seem to have formed a continuum, and dialects of which were spoken throughout much of the central interior, as far east as modern Lesotho, and as far north as the Gariep and beyond (Maingard 1932).
- Varieties spoken by clans in the Eastern Cape, which are mainly known from Levaillant's record (1790, vol 2: 174–187) of a few Gona words.

Some linguists (Meinhof 1930, Beach 1938, and the present author 2018) have used terms such as 'Gri' or 'Xri' or 'Giri' as glossonyms – implying the existence of a further distinct dialect. However, the people who in the early 19th century came to call themselves Griqua were probably originally speakers of Little Nama (Levaillant 1796, vol 2: 102).⁶

For the most part, Khoekhoe is actively spoken today only in Namibia, where varieties include Nama, spoken in the south of the country, and Dama and Hai||om, in the north. The modern collective endonym for the Nama-Dama varieties is Khoekhoegowab. The striking resemblance of the Khoekhoe gender system—in overall design and morphology—to the gender systems of Afroasiatic languages has long been noted (see Bleek 1851). Less frequently noted is the typological resemblance between KHOE and Afroasiatic languages in their tendency to nominalise verb phrases (Du Plessis 2018: 156–160).

The familial unity of several languages spoken in the Kalahari with the Khoekhoe languages was formally stated by Ernst Westphal in 1956, who labelled the Kalahari varieties 'Tshu-Khwe'.⁷ The Kalahari KHOE languages are spoken today mainly in Botswana, but also in Namibia, the fringe of south-western Zimbabwe, southern Angola, and by refugee communities in South Africa. The languages are grouped into several small dialect clusters, namely Khwe, Naro, ||Gana-|Gui, Shua, and Tshwa (Vossen 1997: 52). Unlike the Khoi, the speakers of Kalahari KHOE historically had no livestock,⁸ while neither the Khoekhoe- nor the Kalahari-speakers cultivated crops.

This paper will focus primarily on borrowings into Khoekhoe languages, although any co-occurrences in Kalahari languages will be noted, and briefly commented on. The extinct Kwadi language, while proposed by some scholars (Güldemann 2004) to be related to the KHOE family, will not be discussed here, mainly because the recorded lexis is so limited.

During the mid-19th century, the ahistorical notion became entrenched in Cape colonial society that the !Ui-speaking San people—who lacked livestock, and frequently accompanied the Khoi—must be the relic representatives of some 'early race'.⁹ The click sounds of their languages were considered to be 'primitive'—and hence evidence for the general 'ancientness' of the speakers

⁴ The Khoi sometimes distinguished younger clans from older ones by terms such as *kai* 'great' and *#gari* 'small'. The word meaning 'small' is discernible, for example, in a name variably represented by the Dutch as Charigrina or Charingurina. It is probably from the latter that the name Griqua was derived.

⁵ Kai Gariep (!Garib) means 'Great River' and was the Khoekhoe name for the river later called 'Orange' by the Dutch (in tribute to the royal house of the Netherlands). It is South Africa's largest perennial river, and part of it defines the national border with Namibia.

⁶ I am grateful to Bart de Graaff for conversations that have led to greater clarity on this point.

⁷ The names Tshu and Khwe were based on terms for 'person' in Eastern and Western varieties respectively.

⁸ The Tswana-speakers called these people 'Masarwa' or 'Macharwa', which reflects Tswana palatalisation of *-barwa*, the passive form of *-bata* 'capture' (cf. Shona *mubatwa* 'captive, slave').

⁹ The expression 'people of the early race' was repeatedly used by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd to translate a phrase from the !Ui language, |Xam—!xwe||na-so !ke—which means 'first-being people', and probably referred simply to ancestors.

(Bleek 1869). It was further supposed (for example, Stow 1905: 5–6) that the Khoi were relatively late entrants into the southern region. Both the supposedly autochthonous San and adventive Khoi in turn were (and still are) imagined as having inhabited the region long before any NTU-speakers.¹⁰

The notion of a Khoi origin ‘elsewhere’ gained momentum with the suggestion by Dempwolff (1916) of a link between Khoekhoe languages such as Nama, and the isolate ‘click language’, Sandawe, of Tanzania. Theories of such a connection are still advocated today, with some linguists (Güldemann 2008, Güldemann & Elderkin 2010) proposing a linkage via a hypothetical ‘Khoe-Kwadi’ (Güldemann 2004). The evidence remains elusive, though, for either a Khoe-Kwadi entity (Du Plessis 2014) or a Sandawe connection (Honken 2013: 21).

A differently formulated version of the theory assumes that a certain word for sheep in various southern NTU languages was borrowed from Khoekhoe, and that it was therefore speakers of the latter who introduced the animal into the region (Westphal 1963, Ehret 1973). On the basis of this, it is computed that the Khoi arrived around 2000 years before the present era – roughly the date of the earliest reliably identified sheep bones found in the south (Ehret 1982, Sadr 1998).

The relevant NTU words for sheep, shown in Figure 2 below, are, however, the expected reflexes of PB *-gu for each of the respective languages—as shown by the additional examples—with the shifts in the Nguni languages being typical of processes that accompanied Bantu spirantisation (Schadeberg 1994/5, Janson 2007: 82–83). Since *imvu* is the regular Nguni reflex of *(N)-gu, the claim (for example, Westphal 1963: 254) that the Xhosa word *igusha* is a borrowing of Khoekhoe *gūs* is questionable. It is more likely to have been a borrowing of a term such as Karanga *gushe*, used for the hair of an animal. This is corroborated by the glosses of Albert Kropf (1915: 137) for Xhosa *igushabokwe* as both ‘the fat-tailed Cape sheep’ and ‘a shaggy goat’ – where *-gusha* is clearly interpreted as ‘shaggy’. We might also note Tsonga *goxa* ‘very old she-goat’

¹⁰ The colonial notion of San ‘ancientness’ has become so deeply engrained in the popular imagination that it is seldom questioned – even by scholars, who sometimes assume it (with little evidence) to be an axiom.

Gloss	KHOE	NTU	Notes
2.i. sheep	PK: PKK; PWKal *gu: <i>gū-b/s/i</i> 'sheep' (Khoekhoe) <i>gū-b~gū-ku(a)</i> (masc. sg~pl) <i>gū-s(i)~gū-di</i> (fem. sg~pl) <i>gū-i~gū-n</i> (comm. sg~pl) <i>ghuu</i> (Naro)	PB *(9)-gú [KRS], *(9)-gú [KS] <i>nku</i> (Tswana S31) <i>nku</i> (N Sotho S32) <i>nku</i> (S. Sotho S33) <i>nyimpfu</i> (Tsonga S53) <i>imvu</i> (Zulu S42) <i>onđu</i> (Herero R30) <i>onzi</i> (Ndonga R22) <i>odi</i> (Kwanyama R21)	In Sotho-Tswana, the Cl. 9 prefix is omitted except before monosyllabic stems; also, PB *g → /k/ where originally preceded by /N-/ (Doke & Mofokeng 1967: 76).
The two additional words below illustrate similar sound changes:			
2.ii. hippopotamus		PB *(9)-gùbó' [ABCDEFGHIJKLMNRS] <i>kubu</i> (Tswana S31) <i>vuwu</i> (Tswa S51) <i>mpfuvu</i> (Tsonga S53) <i>imvubu</i> (Zulu S42)	
2.iii. tortoise	<i>/hurus</i> 'tortoise' (Kora)	PB *(9)-kúǀdù [ABCDEJHRS] <i>khudu</i> (Tswana S31)) <i>ufudu</i> (Zulu S42) <i>onđuǀdu</i> (Herero R310) <i>onhili</i> (Kwanyama R21) <i>kaǀáru</i> (Manyo K332)	In Sotho-Tswana, PB *k → /kh/ where originally preceded by /N-/ (Doke & Mofokeng). Click innovation in Manyo and Khoekhoe.
Reconstructions for Proto-Bantu (PB) from Bastin and others (2002). Letters in square brackets indicate Guthrie zones with attested reflexes. All NTU language names and Guthrie numbers as per Maho (2009).			

Figure 2: Words for sheep in KHOE and southern NTU, with further items for comparison.

The Khoi, on the other hand, probably obtained their word *gū-b/s/i* from one of the Sotho-Tswana languages.¹¹ It is well-known (for example, Tucker 1929, Cole 1975, Creissels 1999) that the Sotho-Tswana languages differ from most others of the south—except Makua (or Makhuwa) [P31] (Janson 1991/2)—in preserving the original 7-vowel system of PB and not reflecting any of the sound shifts associated with spirantisation.¹² In short, the theory of the Khoi as the first sheep-bringers is doubtful.

There remains a small possibility that the inherited *gu* words came originally from Arabic *ganam* (pl. *gunûm*) (Wehr *ganam*, pl. *agnam*) 'sheep'. But then, to account for the various regional reflexes, it would have to be assumed not only that the transfer occurred fairly locally, but that the process of spirantisation was still active at the time – whereas it is usually held that it occurred at a fairly early stage (Nurse 1999: 21).

Yet another version of the theory of north-eastern origins for the Khoi is offered by Roger Blench (2007), who argues that 'some continuities of pastoral culture between NE Africa and the Khoec-speaking peoples' came about because:

¹¹ While it is true that *gu has been reconstructed for the whole of proto-Khoe, the mere fact that a reconstruction can be postulated does not imply that it cannot nevertheless reflect a borrowing – particularly in this case, given the non-pastoral lifestyle of the speakers of Kalahari KHOE. A case in point is *goe, which is reconstructed for proto-W. Kalahari Khoe, and yet which—as Güldemann and Elderkin (2010) have pointed out—is probably a borrowing of some regional reflex of proto-Bantu *gombe.

¹² Cuabo [P34], from the same zone, has a 5-vowel system, yet no spirantisation (Guérois 2015: 44).

pastoralists speaking Cushitic languages once spread as far as south-central Africa, where they were in contact with the ancestors of present-day Khoe-speakers. [p. 2]

The only *linguistic* evidence adduced is in the statement that ‘southern Bantu languages such as Xhosa have borrowed their words for ‘sheep’ and ‘cattle’ from Khoe’ (Blench 2007: 3). Yet, as already noted, the Khoekhoe word *gū-b/s/i* for sheep was probably borrowed from a Sotho-Tswana language. As for the Khoekhoe word *goma-b/s/i*, this is not held (apart from Ehret 1973) to be the source of the Nguni cattle term *inkhomo*, which is evidently a contraction of Venda *kholomo*.¹³

Gloss	KHOE	NTU
3.i. ‘bovid’ (cow, bull)	PKK *goma <i>goma-b/s/i</i> (Khoekhoe)	? PB *(9)-bógomà [J] ‘old domestic animal’ <i>ébugúmâ</i> ‘goat’ (Nande JD42) <i>embuguma</i> ‘cow’ (KINGA G65) <i>-buguma</i> ‘female’ (Hehe G62) <i>bogoma</i> ‘cow’ (Nyamwezi F22) <i>goma</i> ‘cow’ (Shambala G23) <i>goma</i> ‘cow’ (Giryama [E72a]) <i>goma ra-ngondzi</i> ‘fullgrown ewe’ (Giryama E72a) <i>nghoma</i> ‘barren cow’ (Shona variety S10)
antelope sp.		<i>mngoma</i> ‘kudu’ (Nyanja N31) <i>ngoma</i> ‘antelope sp.’ (Sena N44)

Figure 3: Possible sources of the Khoekhoe word for a bovine animal (cow or bull).

Concerning the origin of *goma*, one possibility is that it is an abbreviation of the *buguma* words shown in Figure 3. (These have provided the basis for a limited PB reconstruction, although suggested by Chris Ehret (1973: 39) to be loans from Central Sudanic.) It is notable, nonetheless, that a word very similar to *goma* occurs in a few Mozambican languages of Guthrie zone N – where it refers, however, to the kudu or a similar antelope.

2.2 A brief note on the East African Indian Ocean trading networks. As has been neatly summarised for the benefit of linguists by Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 29–32) and Thilo Schadeberg (2009: 78–85), there is a well-known history of ancient commercial exchanges with people living in the Horn of Africa – some of these exchanges being intra-African, and some involving traders from the Mediterranean, the Arabian peninsula and the Gulf of Oman, the coasts of India, and the Indonesian archipelago. It is not certain when seafaring merchants started to venture further south down the coast of Somalia beyond Mogadishu, but undoubtedly there was foreign trade with the east African coast by at least two thousand years ago (Campbell 2016: 5). Early exports from the continent included ivory, rhinoceros horn and tortoiseshell, while imports included metal tools as well as beads and grain (same source).

There is an emerging consensus among archaeologists and historians (Ekblom and others 2016) that there were along the east coast:

¹³ Elision of /l/ or syllables beginning with /l/ is characteristic of the Chimanda dialect of Venda (Dakalo 2009: 56–93).

two distinct hubs, with possibly also different sets of trading partners—the one incorporating Madagascar and the southernmost section of the present-day Swahili coast, and the other the northern east African coast. [p. 214]

Archaeologists (such as Wood 2012, Sinclair and others 2012) have found, for example, a distinctive type of bead ‘in Chibuene and interior sites such as Schroda’, where the latter—described as a precursor to Mapungubwe—lies on the Limpopo River, close to where the border of modern-day South Africa meets both Zimbabwe and Botswana. These beads, thought to have arrived in the seventh century CE, are seldom found in northern sites. Citing work by James Denbow and others (2015) among others, Marilee Wood notes (2016: 184) that beads of the Chibuene series have subsequently also been discovered at a number of sites in Botswana, including ‘Nqoma, in the Tsodilo Hills 1500 km west of Chibuene’ and ‘Kaitshàa, overlooking the Makgadikgadi salt pans of central Botswana’. These discoveries are also described by Edwin Wilmsen (2017), among others.

Further north, a boom in trade between the 9th and 13th centuries coincided ‘with the rise of the Swahili, Great Zimbabwe, and early Malagasy civilisations’ (Campbell 2016: 10). Throughout this later phase, traders from Arabia, Persia, India and Indonesia called regularly at African ports such as Malindi, the islands of Pemba and Zanzibar, Kilwa, Angoche, and Sofala (see Figure 1). By the early 1500s, exports from Africa included gold, ivory, and ambergris, while goods exchanged for them were commonly cotton and silk textiles, as well as beads (Barbosa [1521]: 94).

From the west, the Portuguese entered the arena only at the end of the 15th century, but soon they too were trading with the cities of the east African coast, and—via such inland centres as Sena and Tete on the banks of the Zambezi—with Shona kingdoms of the Plateau. At this time, the Zimbabwe state (c. 1300–1450 CE) was already in decline, with the Torwa state (late 1400s to late 1600s CE) in the ascendancy (Beach 1980: 36). In a letter to the King of Portugal dated 1506, Diego de Alcaçova (in Theal 1898: 63–65) wrote that the reason the gold no longer came to Sofala in the same quantities as before was that the kingdom of the ‘Vealanga’ [Vakaranga] had been at war for over a decade with a general of the previous ‘Menamotapam’ [Monomatapa]. This ‘ameer’ [Arabic *āmir* ‘commander, governor’] died in battle, but left an heir named ‘Toloa’ [Torwa], who continued to wage war. The Portuguese were followed within a century by the Dutch, French and, English.

Some of the kaleidoscopic interactions of the past two millennia are reflected in the numerous loanwords in the modern NTU languages of the Swahili coast of modern Kenya and Tanzania (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 29–30). Here the difficulty is sometimes not so much in recognising the borrowings, as in pinpointing their source (Schadeberg 2009: 81). Languages such as Arabic, Persian, Hindi, and Malay not only have numerous dialects but also reflect long-naturalised cross-borrowings from each other. The kinds of fusion that have come about are illustrated in Figure 4. As shown by series 4.ii ‘river, sea’, it is not unusual for some of these borrowings to be reconstructed for Proto-Bantu (PB).

Gloss	NTU	CUSHITIC	Arabic	Persian	Hindi	Malay
4.i. ocean	<i>bahari</i> (Swahili G40) <i>bahari</i> (Karanga S14)		<i>baḥr</i>	<i>baḥr</i>	<i>bahr-i- á'zam</i> 'great ocean'	<i>bahar</i>
4.ii. river, sea	PB *(9)-jádé 'river' [BCDH] <i>ncali</i> (Njabi B52) <i>nzali</i> (E. Teke B76) <i>njare</i> (S. Teke B77) <i>nzali</i> (Bangi C32) <i>cali</i> (Kuba C83) <i>jali</i> (Gongo C83B) <i>nzadi</i> (KisiKongo H16)	? PW-R *yaa'ee <i>yaaee</i> 'river' (Iraqw)	<i>jary, jarî</i> 'course of river' (Wehr: <i>jarayāan</i>) < <i>jara</i> 'flow', <i>darr</i> 'a flow'	<i>daryā</i> 'ocean (in 'lang. of mysticism')	<i>daryá</i> 'sea, river'	<i>darya</i> 'sea, ocean, river'

Figure 4: Examples of Arabic words borrowed into Persian, Hindi, and Malay – which also occur in NTU as loans, and sometimes (because cognate) in CUSHITIC.

Another example is shown in Figure 5, where the initial borrowing appears to have been from Persian into Arabic.

Gloss	NTU (selected reflexes)	Arabic	Persian
5.i. bead > iron	PB *(7)-jómà 'thing; bead; iron' [all 16 zones] <i>chuma</i> (Swahili G40) <i>iyuma</i> (Makua P31) <i>chuma</i> 'gold' (Shona S10)	<i>jumân</i> 'bead'	<i>manzūma</i> 'i <i>zawāhir</i> 'string of pearls', < <i>manzūm</i> 'joined, threaded'
<p><i>Note:</i> This word is discussed by Pierre de Maret and F. Nsuka (1977), who argue that the earliest speakers of Proto-Bantu had a non-metallurgical culture. In this case, a word with the initial meaning 'bead' was repurposed as a term for 'iron'. What has perhaps <i>not</i> previously been mentioned is that the word is borrowed from Arabic – while Steingass (1882: 32) suggested an original borrowing into Arabic from Persian. The fact that it has proved reconstructable for all 16 Guthrie zones suggests either that the adoption occurred at some very early date, or else that its uptake and diffusion was more recent, but rapid. Either way, it is an obvious implication that the spread of metal-working technology—as reflected in the archaeological record—cannot be taken as proxy evidence for the dispersal of early NTU-speaking people.</p>			

Figure 5: Example of an Arabic/Persian loanword reconstructed for PB.

That the Arabic influence was not restricted to the coast is suggested by the account of João dos Santos [1609], who visited the 'Kingdome of Manamotapa' in the 1590s.¹⁴ Dos Santos (in Theal 1901, vol 7: 219) described the extraction of gold in the region, stating that 'gold from the stones' was called *matuca*, while 'all the other gold they call *dahabo*, whether it be in powder or in pieces.' Here we note that the Arabic word for gold (*zāhab* – or, in the Wehr transliteration, *ḍahab*) had already been naturalized in the Karanga language spoken at this time, in much the same way as modern Swahili *dhababu*.¹⁵

Conversely, the influence of the Shona states evidently extended all the way to the coast. David Beach (1980: 83) tells us that by the early 13th century, there was a Zimbabwe culture settlement in

¹⁴ The Mutapa state flourished in the north from at least the 15th to the late 18th century (Beach 1980: 36).

¹⁵ The modern Shona word for gold is *chuma* (Hannan 1984: 823), but Elliott (1897: 77) recorded *ihabu* in an unknown variety (possibly Kalanga).

the Inhambane region, with a ‘still considerable Shona-speaking population calling itself ‘Karanga’ in the 1560s. And concerning Sofala in 1506, Alcaçova (in Theal 1898) wrote:

The kingdom, Sir, in which there is the gold that comes to Sofala is called Vealanga, and the kingdom is very large, in which there are many large towns, besides many other villages, and Sofala itself is in this kingdom, if not the whole land along the sea. [p. 63]

2.3 Historical evidence that Khoekhoe speakers had connections with people in the far interior. I will now present historical evidence that suggests an actual connection between the speakers of the Khoekhoe languages (described in Section 2.1 above) and some of the societies in the interior who were highly engaged participants in the coastal trade (Section 2.2 above).

It emerges from their own testimony that the Khoi at the Cape had a relationship in living memory with people in the distant interior. In 1657, some of the Saldanhars (a clan of the Khoi) told Jan van Riebeeck (in Moodie 1838) that there was:

a certain great Lord, Emperor, or King, who is the ruler over all these Cape tribes, whom they call Chobona, living very far off in the interior, rich in gold, which they call chory.¹⁶ [...] They have large stone houses with beams, sowing white rice, [...] wearing clothes, and speaking a language different from that spoken by the tribes nearer to this Cape.’ [...] These tribes are all subject or at least tributary to Chobona. [...]. This Chobona has, they say, a General (Veltheer) over these tribes, to keep them in subjection, and to oblige them always to acknowledge Chobona for their Sovereign, and to punish the rebellious by making war upon them. This Veltheer is the same as the Saldanhars in dress and language, and is called Kochoqua, consisting of 2 powerful armies, the 2nd of which is named Gorona, and both have no other employment than making war upon the rebellious. [p. 110]

This account either described a remembered past state of affairs, or—if it reflected contemporary circumstances—probably referred to the Torwa state. Certainly, when the earlier Zimbabwe state was at its height, its wealth was reflected in its great stone buildings—known as *dzimbabwe*—around which there were continuous walls ‘pierced by entrances under wooden lintels’ (Beach 1980: 43).¹⁷ Although some of the Shona royals wore the skins of animals, most wore imported cloth, such as silk, satin, cloth of gold, and cotton (Beach: 98). The Torwa state, as Beach (p. 188) further explains, was ‘based on Khami, a south-western successor to the Zimbabwe culture between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries’.

Concerning the Shona term *torwa*, meaning ‘stranger, foreigner’, Beach (1980: 107) comments that it did not necessarily imply Arabs, but could refer simply to Arabised local people, in much the same way as the later Portuguese term, *mouros* (‘moors’). Beach cites Duarte Barbosa, whose notes from 1521 are quoted here in the translation of Theal (1898):

These Moors [of Sofala] are black men, and among them are some dark brown, some of them speak Arabic, and the others use the language of the country, which is that of the heathens. [p. 94]

Beach adds that ‘since the Swahili of this period were already Islamicised, the language of the Gentiles [or ‘heathens’] can only have been Sena or Shona.

¹⁶ Note Kora /*kx'urib* , Nama /*urib* ‘iron, metal’.

¹⁷ Beach explains (p. 80) that copies of the structures at Great Zimbabwe were built ‘over a great deal of the Plateau from about 1300 onwards.’

From accounts given by different Khoi chiefs (Moodie 1838: scattered throughout), it appears that some still considered themselves to owe allegiance to the far-off generals, while others had broken away, and so were occasionally at war with some of their own fellow clans. The remark about ‘making war upon the rebellious’ even suggests a partial explanation for the emergence of at least some of the Kalahari-KHOE-speaking communities, who, on being subjugated, were perhaps compelled to adopt the language of their conquerors.

3. Data: lexical items shared by Khoekhoe (and sometimes Kalahari) KHOE languages with Arabic and CUSHITIC.

The background notes above will hopefully have provided sufficient context to account for the various apparent borrowings from Arabic and CUSHITIC now presented in Tables I and II. The main focus is on loans found, in the first place, in Khoekhoe varieties of KHOE. This decision has been motivated by consideration of the historical evidence presented above. Occasional occurrences in Kalahari KHOE are nevertheless noted, although it can be difficult to rule out the possibility of only later diffusion into the Kalahari varieties, either from Khoekhoe, or neighbouring NTU languages.

Table 1: Lexis of apparently Arabic origin in Khoekhoe (and occasionally Kalaahari) KHOE

Gloss	KHOE	Arabic	(NTU)	Notes
I.1. ox, riding ox > horse (? original sense a male stud animal)	<i>karab</i> -n 'domestic animal, livestock'. (Nama KK)	<i>baqar</i> 'ox, bovine animal' (<i>baqarat</i> , <i>baqarat</i> 'cow') (Wehr <i>baqar</i> , pl. <i>baqarat</i>)	PB * <i>bāgāda</i> 'man, male' [HKL] > * <i>baā</i> <i>i-bānāza</i> 'man' (Kakongo H16d) <i>bakala</i> 'man' (Yombe H16c) <i>mākalala</i> 'man' (Civili H12) <i>i-dāna</i> (Ndebele Tebele S44)	Xam (U) <i>kara</i> 'horse'. Meyhof suggested Arabic source (1909: 106).
I.2. cannabis	<i>dāza</i> -b (Khoekhoe)	<i>dājān</i> - <i>dājān</i> 'smoke' (n) <i>dājān</i> - <i>dājān</i> 'smoke' (vt) (Wehr: <i>dājān</i>)	<i>jan</i> (v) 'as tides' (Swahili G41-43)	Persian <i>tarābādan</i> , Cushitic: <i>yar</i> (Oromo).
I.3. flow, stream	<i>dāra</i> (Khoekhoe)	<i>jan</i> (v) <i>darr</i> (n) (Wehr <i>jan</i> i. <i>darra</i> i t)		
I.4. geld, castrate	<i>dābi</i> 'castrate goat' (Nama) <i>dābi-gu-b</i> 'wether' (Nama) <i>dābi-lu-b</i> 'gelding' (Nama) <i>tibi</i> (Naro)	<i>janwax</i> , <i>yūwāwix</i> 'castrate' (Wehr: <i>janwāx</i> 'eunuch')	PB * <i>tāba</i> 'goat' [ABCH] <i>nāba</i> (Yanzi B85, Bangi C32)	Voicing is not contrastive in modern Nama or Dama, but may once have been in Kora (Beach 1938: 250). Anticipatory vowel assimilation in Naro.
I.5. turn, revolve	<i>dāba</i> , <i>dāwa</i> (Khoekhoe) <i>tibise</i> (Naro)	<i>dāwawar</i> (Wehr: <i>dāwawān</i> 'turning')		
I.6. crow > vulture	<i>gora</i> -b 'crow' (Nama), <i>kora</i> -b 'crow' (Kora) <i>dōra</i> (IGana-Gui)	<i>gurāb</i> (pl. <i>gurābān</i>) (Wehr: <i>gurāb</i>)	<i>gora</i> 'vulture' (Shona S10) <i>e-korova</i> (Kwangali K33) <i>e-tola</i> (Ndonga R22)	Ehret (1973: 62) suggests Central Sudanic source. Cushitic: <i>kuray</i> (pl. <i>kurawwe</i>) 'hawk, kite' (Iraqw).
I.7. donkey, ass > horse	<i>hā-b</i> , <i>hā-s</i> 'horse' (Khoekhoe)	<i>jabā</i> (pl. <i>jibān</i>) 'donkey' (Wehr: <i>jabā</i>)	<i>i-har'ke</i> 'horse' (Xhosa S41) <i>gi-haxi</i> (Tswa S51)	Cushitic: <i>harre</i> 'ass' (Oromo).
I.8. dog	PKK *?ari dog <i>ari-b</i> -s i (Khoekhoe)	<i>kaib</i> (pl. <i>kaibān</i>) (Wehr <i>kaib</i> , pl. <i>kaibān</i>)		
I.9. metal, mineral > money	<i>mari</i> -b (Khoekhoe) <i>mari</i> (Naro)	<i>ma dān</i> (pl. <i>ma dānān</i>) 'metal, mineral' (Wehr: <i>ma dān</i>)	<i>mali</i> 'money' (Swahili G41-43) <i>mari</i> (Shona S10), <i>masi</i> (Tswana S31) <i>i-mali</i> (Zulu S42), <i>yi-maliwa</i> (Kwangali K33), <i>oc-hi-maliwa</i> (Ndonga R22)	Meyhof suggested Arabic source (1909: 106). Cushitic: <i>masil</i> (pl. <i>masil</i>) 'money' (Iraqw, but possibly < Swahili).
I.10. herbs (fragrant)	<i>zā-b</i> (Khoekhoe) PKalk * <i>tāhā</i> <i>tāhā</i> (Naro)	<i>zā-b</i> (pl. <i>zābān</i>) (Wehr: <i>zābān</i>)		
I.11. whip, switch	<i>zami</i> -b (Khoekhoe) <i>zāma</i> (Naro)	<i>zamarāb</i> (pl. <i>zamarābān</i>)	<i>zama</i> (Tswana S31)	Persian <i>chābūk</i> 'horse-whip', Hindi <i>chābūk</i> , Malay <i>zambok</i> , <i>chabok</i> , <i>chambok</i>
I.12. cloth, clothing	<i>zā-b</i> (Khoekhoe)	<i>zāzāzif</i>	<i>ki-tzara</i> (Giyama E72a) <i>ek-i-sāzāngutu</i> (Nama ID42)	
I.13. pot, pipe-bowl	<i>zā-b</i> (Khoekhoe)	<i>zābūk</i>		Ehret (1982:180) suggests Central Sudanic source. Persian <i>chābūk</i> , Malay <i>chapot</i> 'bowl of pipe'
I.14. partridge, pigeon, quail	<i>hābi</i> -p (Gona) <i>hābi</i> -s (Nama) <i>hābi</i> -s 'quail' (Nama)	<i>qābī</i> (Wehr: <i>qābī</i>)	<i>qāpū</i> 'bittern' (Tswana S31)	Persian <i>qābī</i> 'partridge', <i>hān-kābīzār</i> 'wood-pigeon'; Hindi <i>kābī</i> 'partridge', <i>kābīzār</i> 'pigeon', <i>qāpūt</i> 'dove'; Malayasy <i>kābōkī</i> 'sp. wild duck'

The sources of the data are set out in Table III (1–3) at the end of the paper. The Arabic words are given in the original transliterations of the sources but with the modern transliterations of Hans Wehr (1976) added in parentheses. Where others have previously pointed to or discussed a word, this is acknowledged in the right-hand column. The same column is used to indicate any occurrences of the Arabic word in other languages associated with the Indian Ocean trade (for reasons noted earlier). A few brief notes are supplied immediately after each table, but the main discussion is reserved for Section 4.

3.1. **Lexis of apparently Arabic origin in Khoekhoe (and occasionally Kalahari) KHOE.** As inspection of Table I reveals, several of the apparently Arabic words found in Khoekhoe (and occasionally also Kalahari) KHOE occur also in NTU languages, which raises the possibility that the latter were the conduits whereby the loans entered the KHOE languages. There are other cases, nevertheless, where a borrowing is found only in KHOE – and hence seems to have been acquired directly from the source (unless instances of these words in other potential intermediaries remain to be detected).

If these words are indeed borrowed from Arabic, then it is notable that the KHOE words in series I.14. ‘quail, pigeon, partridge’ have introduced a click. There is even, as it happens, precedent for click innovation in a word borrowed from Arabic, as shown in Figure 6.

Gloss	NTU	Arabic	Persian	Hindi
6.i. time	PB *(?)-kàtí ‘time’ [GP, ‘diffusion Swahili, origine arabe’] <i>wakati</i> (Swahili G41–43) <i>makati</i> (Makua P31) <i>isikhathi</i> , hl. <i>isin athi</i> (Zulu S42)	<i>waqt</i>	<i>waqt</i>	<i>waqt</i>
<i>Note:</i> The abbreviation hl. stands for <i>-hlonipha</i> , being a term for the respect registers formerly used by Zulu married women, and male initiates.				

Figure 6: While recognised as a loan from Arabic, the word for time is nevertheless reconstructed for PB. At the same time, it features innovation of a click in Zulu.

Further instances of click innovation will be noted, but will not be discussed in any detail here, since the topic really demands a paper of its own. It should be sufficient for the present merely to comment that evidence of this kind should prompt us to reconsider any notions we might still harbour that click consonants are necessarily ‘ancient’.

One of the words in Table I has been identified only through its secondary occurrence in !Ui languages, whose speakers, as noted earlier, did not keep livestock themselves. Thus, for series I.1. ‘ox’, the word *baa* is given for ‘cow’ and *bañ* for ‘ox’ in two records of a !Ui variety spoken by San communities living by the 1830s in the district of Hopetown, adjacent to Griqualand West (Smith, in Kirby 1940: 281, and Norton 1919).¹⁸ Somewhat later, in 1879, one of the |Xam speakers described sorcerers who rode the rain-bull using reins that resembled *bara-ka !hãu!hãu* or ‘horse’s reins’ (Lloyd [102] 8439*rev*). The word *bara* is translated now as ‘horse’, perhaps by conflation with Dutch *paard* ‘horse’. (Long before the introduction of the horse into the region, oxen were used as mounts and pack-animals by both Nguni and Khoi, while the Xhosa people had a long-standing

¹⁸ I am grateful to Bonny Sands for bringing this wordlist to my attention.

tradition of ox-racing (Soga 1931: 271.) There are no extant records of *bara* as a term for ‘ox’ (or ‘male animal’) in either Nguni or Khoekhoe languages of the Eastern Cape – but *barden* found today in Namibian Khoekhoe with the meaning ‘livestock’ is perhaps a vestige of it.

3.2. Lexis of apparently CUSHITIC origin in Khoekhoe (and occasionally Kalahari) KHOE.

The words presented in Table II suggest that, just as in the Sabaki languages, there are a few words in KHOE languages that appear to have come from a CUSHITIC source – even if only via an intermediary. As already noted, CUSHITIC words will sometimes naturally have cognates in other Afroasiatic languages—such as Arabic or other SEMITIC languages (as of Ethiopia)—which can make it difficult to pinpoint an exact source.

4. Discussion

The proposed borrowings will now be discussed from various perspectives, with a brief note on the adaptation of Arabic words to conform to the phonotactics of the receiving language; a few remarks concerning the nature of the words borrowed; and observations on the distribution patterns of the borrowed words in Khoekhoe and Kalahari KHOE, particularly where these have a shared occurrence in different NTU languages. The discussion ends with an attempt to synthesise the findings through the formulation of a scenario that might account for them.

4.1. Adaptation of Arabic words. While it is not possible to make too many generalisations on the basis of such limited evidence, it appears that, in naturalising words borrowed from Arabic, speakers of Khoekhoe would occasionally re-analyse a final consonant as a gender suffix. Examples include Khoekhoe *gora-b* ‘crow’ (< Arabic *gurāb*), *hā-s* ‘mare’ (< *jaḥš*), and *ari-b* ‘dog’ (< *kalb*).

In cases where the typical phonotactic pattern of Khoekhoe lexis would have been violated, another strategy seems to have been to re-analyse the word. In the case of *dāxab* ‘cannabis’, for example, the irregular occurrence of a medial velar fricative is resolved by re-interpreting the word as *daa-xa-b*.¹⁹ (A similar strategy is seen with Khoekhoe *tsuxu-b* ‘night’, which is borrowed from NTU—PB *(14)-tíkú) with anticipatory vowel assimilation—and which is pronounced *tsuu-xuu-b* (Haacke and Eiseb 2002: 144).

4.2. Nature of the words borrowed. We should note that there is a certain amount of bias inherent in the data, since it was deemed better for purposes of this initial study to present only words that were plausible candidates for borrowing in the first place. For this reason, we should not make too much of a trend for the borrowed words to be associated with aspects of commercial exchange, such as trade goods, cannabis and the smoking pipe, or animal and plant domesticates.

The CUSHITIC word for grain is widely distributed throughout the regions associated with the Sabaki languages, as well as central and southern parts of the continent. Most of these languages, however, also have their own indigenous terms for different varieties of sorghum and millet, and the borrowed word (< *-bèdé) was perhaps originally used for a particular domesticate, or

¹⁹ It is notable that the vowel length recorded by Wilfrid Haacke and Eliphaz Eiseb (2002: 22) is not carried through into Afrikaans, which has borrowed the word from Khoekhoe simply as *dagga*.

Table II: Lexis of apparently CUSHITIC origin in Khoekhoe (and occasionally Kalahari) KHOE

Gloss	Khoekhoe KROE	Cushitic	NTU	Notes
II.1. grain, sorghum, millet > bread	<i>bara, b̄ra</i> (Cape) <i>b̄ra-β</i> (Kora) <i>p̄ra-β</i> (Nam KK) <i>p̄r̄e</i> (Naro)	PW-R *bala 'ungwe <i>b̄ra</i> (Iraqw)	*[6.11, (14)]-bed̄ 'millet, sorghum' [EFGJLMRS] <i>em-b̄ra</i> (Nande JD42) <i>ama-b̄ra</i> (Xhosa S41) <i>ma-b̄r̄e</i> (S. Sotho S33)	All Cushitic reconstructions for Proto West-Rift Southern Cushitic (PW-R) from Kießling & Mous (2003) Ehret (1982: 180) suggests Central Sudanic source for Khoekhoe <i>b̄ra-β</i> : Blanch (2007: 612) suggests S. Cushitic source for NTU words. Sandawe <i>b̄r̄e</i> (attrib. Ehret (2012: 14) to S. Cushitic)
II.2. woman, girl	<i>tara-s, tarab̄ho-s</i> 'woman' (Khoekhoe)	<i>intala 'girl'</i> (Oromo) <i>ab̄hala</i> 'woman' (Oromo)	<i>m-dala</i> (Hehe G62) <i>mu-dala</i> (Bena G63) <i>m-dala</i> (Ndatenjo N13) <i>wa mi-tala</i> 'women' (Yao P21) <i>chi-tani</i> (Yao P21)	Hetherwick (1902: 242) noted for Yao: ' <i>afala</i> , a pot for carrying the water used to wash the hands. Women are sometimes spoken of as <i>wa mitala</i> , i.e. those who carry the washing pot.'
II.3. honey	PK *dani <i>dani-s</i> (Khoekhoe) <i>d̄ene</i> (Naro) <i>d̄ini</i> (Klwe) <i>dani, d̄ene</i> (Ts'ixa) <i>zani-s</i> (Khoekhoe)	PW-R *dini ~ *dani <i>dani</i> (Iraqw)		Kießling & Mous (2003: 95) compare their PW-R reconstruction with the PK root. Anticipatory vowel assimilation in Kalahari KHOE.
II.4. breast		PW-R *isaangw <i>isaangw</i> (pl. <i>iseema</i> ~ <i>isaama</i>) (Iraqw)	? < *-jānu-a 'suck, suckle' [CEGKLMRS] <i>-amwa</i> 'suck' (Giryama E72a) <i>-amwa</i> 'suck' (Cewa/Nyania N31b) <i>zamu</i> 'breast, udder' (Shona S10) <i>dōmu</i> 'breast' (Venda S21)	Unclear whether the PB root meaning 'suckle' is the source of the Shona and Venda words.
II.5. bird	PKal *dzada <i>d̄ad̄a</i> (Klwe) <i>tara</i> (Naro) <i>zera</i> (fGama-(Gui) <i>d̄eada</i> (Shua, Tahwa) <i>d̄ida</i> (Ts'ixa) <i>kuri-β</i> 'year' (Khoekhoe) <i>kuri</i> (Naro) <i>kuri</i> (Ts'ixa) <i>kuri-β</i> (Khoekhoe)	PW-R *tura'a <i>tz̄r-i</i> (Iraqw)	*[9]-jida (< *(9)-gid̄a 'bird' [AHKLR]) <i>od̄ia, od̄ie</i> (Kwanyama R21) <i>ond̄ila</i> (Ndonga R22) <i>onḡera</i> (Herero R30) <i>zi-dira</i> (Kwangali K33)	? Arabic <i>fair</i> , <i>ḥr</i> (pl. <i>ḥayr</i>) (Wehr: <i>fair</i>). Jan Vanina (2004: 274) believed PB *jida 'bird' to be an innovation in certain NTU languages of southwestern Africa – which he named 'Njila'.
II.6. cloud > year (annual moons?)	<i>ku</i> (Khoekhoe) <i>ku</i> (Naro) <i>ku</i> (Ts'ixa) <i>kuri-β</i> (Khoekhoe)	PW-R *kuri or *kwari <i>kuru</i> 'year' (Iraqw)	? *(7)-kiri 'cloud' [ADJ] <i>kore</i> 'cloud' (Tete N43) <i>gole</i> 'cloud, year' (Shona S10) <i>gole</i> 'cloud' (Venda S21))	Irreg. reflexes in NTU of zones N, S > ? borrowed from other NTU, or via these from Cushitic?
II.7. tree, wood		PW-R *xa'i <i>xax̄-i</i> (Iraqw)		
II.8. carry child on back	<i>aba</i> (Khoekhoe) <i>d̄va</i> (Klwe) <i>aba</i> (Ts'ixa)	PW-R *ubeab <i>aba</i> (Iraqw)		

grain as a commodity. Given that the nomadic lifestyle of the Khoekhoe speakers made it difficult for them to practise sedentary agriculture, it is highly likely that the introduction of this particular word into Khoekhoe was made via one of the NTU languages.

It is not immediately obvious why some of the other terms should have been borrowed – unless the items they referred to were novel in their specific use as commercial goods (such as birds bred for sale). There may also have been a lustre associated with the donor language, and prestige to be gained by drawing from its vocabulary.

While the list still has the potential to be expanded, the lexical influence of Arabic on Khoekhoe overall seems to have been limited. The borrowed words are also differentiated to some extent by whether they were additionally (or only) adopted into Kalahari KHOE, and by differences in the distribution patterns of words occasionally found to co-occur in NTU – as will be discussed next.

4.3. **Distributions of borrowed words in KHOE with co-occurrences in NTU.** We have seen a number of cases where Khoekhoe words of apparently Arabic and (or) CUSHITIC origin additionally occur also in NTU. Where reconstructions exist for the latter, it is notable that the languages with reflexes of the PB roots fall into three broad clusters, as revealed by their Guthrie zone labels.²⁰ These are set out in Figure 7, and the three main groupings are discussed in turn below.

Borrowing in KHOE	Distribution by Guthrie zones of co-occurrences in NTU				
	ABCHKR	J(DE)	E	G	NPS
	Western	Inter-lacustrine	NE coastal	Swahili coastal	S coastal and interior
< Arabic (or CUSHITIC?)					
I.1. 'ox'	HK				
I.2. 'cannabis'					S
I.3. 'flow'				G	
I.4. 'geld'	ABCH				
I.6. 'crow'	KR				S
I.9. 'money'	KR			G	S
I.11. 'whip'					S
I.12. 'cloth'		J	E		
I.14. 'partridge'					S
< CUSHITIC					
II.1. 'grain'	R	J	E	G	NS
II.2. 'woman'				G	NP
II.3. 'honey'					P
II.4. 'breast'					S
II.5. 'bird'	AHKR				
II.6. 'cloud'	A	DJ			

Figure 7: Distributions as revealed by Guthrie numbers of borrowed words in KHOE with co-occurrences in NTU. Groupings implied by the column headings are merely geographical and not intended to imply any relationships, or inter-stages within PB. They exclude many central languages, such as those of zones F, L and M. (While sources for the latter were consulted, they did not turn up the kinds of co-occurrences relevant here.)

²⁰ The Guthrie map of NTU (or Bantu) language zones represents a snapshot of distributions only at a particular moment in time – roughly speaking, the mid-20th century (but with updates from Maho 2009).

In the *first* group, somewhat unexpectedly, there are several borrowings in KHOE (mainly Khoekhoe) with a shared presence in what we might loosely think of as ‘western’ NTU languages – broadly speaking, languages of zones A to C in the north, with Kongo and related languages of zone H, the Luyana languages of zone K, and the Wambo and Herero languages of zone R.

These words are not easy to explain, but one possibility is that some of them reflect a longitudinal north-south diffusion of Arabic (or CUSHITIC?) words down the west coast or western interior of Africa, which could have occurred independently of diffusions via Swahili from the east coast. This is not to discount the simultaneous possibility of west-to-east (or east-to-west) diffusions along latitudinal trade routes. This last scenario seems particularly likely in the case of words (such as those in series I.6 ‘crow’, I.9 ‘money’ and II.1 ‘grain’) that are also found in Sabaki languages of the east coast (zones E and G), or some of the languages of zones N, P or S.

In a few cases (series I.1 ‘ox’ and I.4 ‘geld’), where the terms seem specifically Arabic and are also clearly associated with animal husbandry, it has not been possible to identify any co-occurrences in languages of the eastern seaboard. There are two potential explanations for this. One is that the borrowings into Khoekhoe were made only indirectly, and at a relatively recent date, from NTU languages in the south-western area. Alternatively, these may be instances of words that were borrowed directly from Arabic into Khoekhoe (in the kind of historical context suggested in section 2.3 above).

In the case of the words in series II.5 ‘bird’, the apparently borrowed word is found *only* in varieties of Kalahari KHOE. The speakers of the Khwe dialects of Kalahari KHOE traditionally lived in the vicinity of the Okavango delta, which is famed for the richness of its birdlife. We might have expected the supposedly early inhabitants of this region to have a correspondingly rich inventory of bird names, but what we find instead is that, of the approximately fifty names recorded for Khwe (Kilian-Hatz 2003), at least a dozen are borrowed from neighbouring languages, particularly of zone K.²¹ (In several cases, the NTU prefix is even still present.) In addition, a number of these names are innovations based on *djara*, which is the Khwe reflex of PB *(9)-jida, with anticipatory vowel assimilation – while the additional terms used to form the compounds are often plainly borrowed from a variety of Tswana. Examples include *coéca-djara* (*coeca* ‘white’) for the white stork (Tswana *lêleswêu*), and *bèyè-djara* (*bèyè* ‘zebra’) for the white-crested helmet shrike. In ||Gana-|Gui, where the word for bird is *zera*, a number of similar compounds occur (Sugawara 2001).

One possibility is that this seemingly CUSHITIC word was borrowed via adjacent NTU languages prior to the proliferation of Kalahari KHOE – although why there should have been such a conspicuous lexical gap, and a shortage of bird names in general—is a puzzle.²² Another possibility is that the *-jida reflexes, along with other bird names in Khwe, are from a NTU substrate, and afford us a glimpse of what may have been the original languages of some ‘Masarwa’ communities.

In a *second* discernible grouping, some of the co-occurring words (I.3 ‘flow’, I.9 ‘money’, and II.2 ‘woman’) are found, as we would expect, in zone G, where the best-known representatives are varieties of Swahili (G41–43). In a few cases, these words are also found in zone S, sometimes with N or P. More interestingly, five of the co-occurrences are found uniquely in zones P or S. Here we might mention again that the sphere of influence of the early Shona states extended to the coast of Mozambique. At the same time, the unifying factor of the *coastal* distribution of various

²¹ Examples include *múkongò* ‘secretarybird’, *ɲwàrú* ‘black-headed heron’, *khóvo* ‘African mourning dove’, *tcúkoé* ‘spur-winged goose’, *ngóngà* ‘brown snake-eagle’, *múkòkò* ‘red-billed hornbill’, *bángwara* ‘cardinal woodpecker’, *mùròrà* ‘crimson-breasted shrike’, and *mìningú* ‘fork-tailed drongo’.

²² By way of comparison, the list of Tswana bird names collected by Cole (1995) includes names—frequently more than one—for well over 200 of the approximately 600 bird species of Botswana.

Mozambican languages is not readily apparent from their assignments to zones N, P and S. (Consider, for example, Yao (P21), Makua (P31), Cuabo (P34), Tete (N43), Sena (N44), Ndaou (S15) and Tswa (S51).)

The historical evidence mentioned earlier has suggested that the Khoi were connected in some way to the early Shona states of the Plateau, and perhaps even arose among the Torwa, having some place within their military hierarchy. It now begins to seem, from the small amount of linguistic evidence presented here, that the coastal connections of these people may ultimately have begun much earlier – possibly even before they emerged as ‘Khoi’. It appears, indeed, that their original involvement was specifically with the southern (that is, Mozambican and Madagascan) hub of the east African trade, during the very early phase when destinations in the interior included places in modern Botswana and South Africa.

Lastly, in the *third* broad grouping, the co-occurrences occur in languages of the Sabaki coast - and the northern Great Lakes. In one case (I.12 ‘cloth’), the words are found not only in zone E, but also in the inter-lacustrine zone J.²³ (The words from one other series (II.1 ‘grain’) are widely distributed, but include occurrences in zones E, G, N and S as well as zone J.) Some of the best-known representatives of the north-eastern zone E are the coastal languages of the Sabaki group, while languages of zone J include Rwanda (JD61) and Rundi (JD62), Nande-Konzo (JD41-42) and Ganda (JE15).

As it happens, there are a few other words in KHOE with NTU counterparts that fall exclusively within the narrow range of zones C, D, and J, as now shown in Figure 8. These words are not borrowed from any of the Arabian, Indian or Indonesian languages, but appear to be indigenous to NTU (with one possible exception, 8.iii ‘he-goat’, as indicated). The last example (8.iv ‘giraffe’) includes another instance of click innovation.²⁴ These additional words confirm the overall impression of a small, specifically northern (or north-eastern) component within the lexis of the KHOE languages. The difficulty now is to reconcile this with the south-eastern coastal connection.

²³ Yvonne Bastin (2003: 502) explains that ‘the inter-lacustrine zone lies at the sources of the White Nile and includes many of the languages classified in Zones D and E by Guthrie, combined as Zone J by Meeussen. To clarify the connection between these two classifications, they are [...] labelled JD and JE [...].’

²⁴ Usually treated as instances of click *loss* in eastern varieties (Traill 1986, Traill and Vossen 1997).

Gloss	KHOE	NTU	Notes
8.i. tongue	<i>tamma</i> (Kora) <i>tammi</i> , <i>lammi</i> (Dama) <i>nammi</i> (Nama) <i>tam</i> (Naro) <i>dàm'</i> (Khwe) <i>dam</i> (Ts'ixa)	PB *(11)-dámì [CD] <i>le-deme</i> (Tukongo C85) <i>lo-lame</i> , <i>ndame</i> (Kusu C72) <i>i-nem</i> (Gongo C83) <i>lo-lame</i> (Nyangwe D26)	
8.ii. garden	<i>samob</i> (Nam KK)	PB *(9)-càmbo 'field, landed property' [DJ] <i>muri u bu-sambu</i> 'country' (Lega D25)	Khoekhoe with NC → N.
8.iii. he-goat	<i>bae</i> 'sheep' (Cape) <i>baib</i> , <i>bairab</i> 'he-goat' (Nama)	PB *(9)-pàja [J] <i>mpaya</i> 'he-goat' (Bira D32) <i>mpai wa meme</i> 'he-goat' (Nyali D33) <i>émbáya</i> 'he-goat' (Nande JD42)	Ehret (1982: 180) suggests Central Sudanic source for Khoekhoe <i>bairab</i> . Khoekhoe <i>-ro</i> (~ <i>ra</i> , <i>ri</i>) = Dim.
8.iv. giraffe	PK *!ae; PKK *!ae; <i>!nabé</i> (Naro) <i>ngyáve</i> (Khwe) <i>gabee</i> (Hie Tshware)	PB *(9)-gabe 'kind of antelope' [AJ] <i>éngábi</i> (Nande JD42)	Click innovation in Khoekhoe and W. Kalahari KHOE.

Figure 8: Examples of words shared by KHOE with NTU languages of zones C, D and J

4.4. **Making sense of the evidence.** One broad statement we can make with reasonable certainty is that the lexis uncovered here reveals different layers in the emergence of the KHOE languages:

- There is a small set of words that can be linked to a northern or north-eastern region, and which seem to reflect a particularly early stage.
- Another stage is represented by loans that can be linked specifically to intermediary NTU languages spoken on the east coast – in particular, the coasts of Mozambique and Madagascar, where trading relations with foreign partners appear to have begun at least 2000 years ago.
- Some of the Arabic and (or) CUSHITIC words with co-occurrences exclusively in western NTU appear to reflect borrowings made at some relatively recent stage, possibly by just one section of the rather diverse KHOE-speaking people, and mostly via NTU. A few of the items in this group may alternatively have been acquired directly from Arabic – presumably during the rise of the Torwa state in the interior.

One scenario that would make sense of all this is that the Khoekhoe languages developed out of an early lingua franca, and that some of the words with a northern or north-eastern co-occurrence are retentions from an original base language. We might posit, for example, that some of the *mouros* who travelled with the Arab, Indian, and other seafaring traders (see Vasco da Gama, in Ravenstein 1898: 23) came originally from much further north along the coast, and were hired from places such as Malindi, long associated with coastal languages of Guthrie zone E. We might also suppose that the ancestors of these people came in turn from the interior – specifically from the inter-lacustrine region. An early traders' lingua franca could well have emerged here, and later been supplemented with additional vocabulary from the coast. Such a language could have started out as a 'mixed'

language, much like Ilwana (F22g), which has both CUSHITIC and NTU elements (Nurse 1994). Another similarly mixed language is the isolate, Sandawe (Ehret and Ehret 2012: 4–6).

In a modified version of this scenario, the ancestors of the people who became the Khoi did not themselves come from the north, but instead were longstanding inhabitants of the south. In this case, it was perhaps only when they began participating in the coastal trade that they adopted an already fully-fledged lingua franca they encountered there, in which Arabic and CUSHITIC (or more broadly Afroasiatic) as well as northern NTU elements had long been incorporated. Both scenarios would explain the vestigial yet unmistakable Afroasiatic elements in the modern KHOE languages – as well as their eclectic mix of lexis.

A further possibility is that the Khoekhoe languages only began to emerge *as such* when the lingua franca suggested above was adopted for use as an ‘inner language’ or ‘sociolect’ much like Ma’a (Mous 2001). It is suggested by the accounts of the Khoi themselves that they had come to constitute a kind of military class, so that they could well have employed a special ‘barracks register’ similar to that used in the Venda *thondo* (Van Warmelo 1971: 368).²⁵ This scenario would help to account for the relative scarcity in KHOE languages of specialist vocabulary, such as bird names.

5. Conclusion

This paper has undoubtedly raised more questions than it has offered answers. There is much more that remains to be uncovered, including more evidence of borrowings in KHOE, not only from Arabic and other languages of the Indian Ocean network but also from African languages of the NTU and CUSHITIC families. It has nevertheless been possible to build on the original observations of Carl Meinhof by pointing out a number of additional borrowings from Arabic, while also providing a specific historical context—the rise of the Torwa state—in which at least some of the transfers could plausibly have occurred. Analysis of different distribution patterns in the case of borrowings shared with various NTU languages has pointed, in fact, to the probability of more than one stage in the emergence of the modern KHOE languages – with a particular connection having been discovered with languages of the Mozambican and Madagascan coasts (as opposed to the Swahili coast). This suggests that the earliest interactions behind some of the borrowings occurred during the much older phase associated with the southern hub of the Indian Ocean trade. This allows us to conclude in turn that the people who came to be known as the ‘Khoi’ were quite probably forged by the constantly changing social and economic dynamics of an early African—yet cosmopolitan—world.

²⁵ A reviewer has questioned the plausibility of this suggestion, mentioning instead ‘the Khoe-Kwadi’, and recommending that the idea of ‘an eastern African (pastoral) origin, as put forward by Güldemann (2008) and Güldemann and Elderkin (2010) should be discussed as a real possibility, as it is fully compatible with the Cushitic and Northeastern Bantu loanwords’ presented in this paper. I am therefore compelled to point out that it is mistaken to suppose an automatic correlation between any postulated proto-language (such as proto-‘Khoe-Kwadi’, or proto-Indo-European for that matter) and some ‘proto-community’ of actual people (such as ‘the Khoe-Kwadi’, or indeed ‘the proto-Indo-Europeans’). There are multiple social and economic reasons why certain communities—of whatever origin and culture—may end up speaking certain languages, and it is an antiquated notion—if it has ever been widely subscribed to at all—that the reconstruction of a proto-language is simultaneously a proxy reconstruction of some conjectural ‘ethnic’ group.

Sources of lexical data

Table III.1: Sources for KHOE languages

KHOE	
Proto-Khoe (PK)	Vossen (1997)
Khoekhoe	
Proto-Khoekhoe (PKK)	Vossen (1997)
Gona	Levaillant (1790)
Cape (15 th –17 th century)	compiled in Nienaber (1963)
Kora (or !Ora)	Meinhof 1930, Engelbrecht (1928), compiled in Du Plessis (2018)
Nama	Lloyd (1880), Tindall (1858), Haacke & Eiseb (2001)
Dama	Haacke & Eiseb (2001)
Kalahari Khoe	
Proto-Kalahari Khoe (PKalK)	Vossen (1997)
Khwe	Kilian-Hatz (2003)
Naro	Visser (2006)
Gana- Gui	Sugawara (2001)
Shua, Tshwa, Ts'ixa	Vossen (1997), Fehn (2019)
Hie Tshware	Dornan (1917)
<i>Notes:</i> A Namibian Khoekhoe word is identified in this paper as 'Nama' or 'Dama' where distinguished as such by Haacke and Eiseb. In all other cases, their entries are labelled 'Namibian Khoekhoe' (Nam KK). The label 'Khoekhoe' is used as a generic term for a word found in the same form in all varieties. All spellings used here follow the orthographies of these sources (except for Naro, where the Roman letters used for clicks are transliterated into the IPA symbols).	

Table III.2: Sources for languages associated with East African trading networks

Arabic	Steingass (1882), Steingass (1892), Wehr (ed. Cowan) (1976)
Persian	Wollaston (1882)
Hindi	Platts (1884), Shakespeare (1834), Lal (1941)
Malay	Wilkinson (1901), Shellabear (1916)
<i>Note:</i> All transliterations (and in some cases, romanisations) used in the tables are those of these sources, but in the case of the Arabic words, the transliterations of Wehr have been added in parentheses.	

Table III.3: Sources for other African languages

CUSHITIC	
Proto-West-Rift Southern Cushitic	Kiessling & Mous (2003)
Iraqw	Mous, Qorro & Kiessling (2002)
Oromo	Ali & Zaborski (1990)
Sandawe (isolate)	Ehret & Ehret (2012)
TUU	
[Xam (!Ui)	Bleek & Lloyd (1870–1880)
NTU (or Bantu)	
Proto-Bantu (PB)	Bastin & others 2002
General	Guthrie 1967 (vols 3 & 4), Johnston (1919, 1922)
Guthrie zones (A)–D	
Njabi B52, Teke B76/7, Yanzi B 85,	Johnston (1919, 1922)

Bangi C32, Kusu C72, Kuba, Gongo C83, Tukongo C85, Lega D25, Nyangwe D26, Bira D32, Nyali D33	
Tervuren zone J	
Nande-Konzo JD42	Mutaka & Kavutirwaki (2011)
Guthrie zone E	
Kikiyu (or Gikuyu) E51	McGregor (1904)
Giryama E72a	Taylor (1891)
Guthrie zone F	
Nyamwezi F22	Johnston (1919, 1922)
Guthrie zone G	
Shambala G23	Johnston (1919, 1922)
Swahili G41–43	Madan (1903)
Hehe G62, Kinga G65	Johnston (1919, 1922)
Guthrie zone H	
Kongo (or Kikongo) H16	Bentley (1887)
CiVili H12, KisiKongo H16a, KaKongo H16d	Johnston (1919, 1922)
Guthrie zone N	
Nyanja N31	Scott & Hetherwick 1957
Tete (Nyungwe) N43	Bleek-Peters (1856)
Sena N44	Simbe (2004), Bleek-Peters (1856)
Guthrie zone K	
Kwangali K33	Kloppers & others (1994)
Manyo K332	Möhlig & Shiyaka-Mberema (2005)
Mbukushu K333	Wynne (1980)
Guthrie zone P	
Yao P21	Hetherwick (1902), Steere (1871)
Makua (or Makuwa) P31	Maples (1879)
Cuabo (or Chuwabo) P34	Shrum (2018), Johnston (1919, 1922), Bleek (1856)
Guthrie zone S	
Shona variety (unknown) S10	Elliott (1897)
Shona S10–15, Korekore S11, Zezuru S12	Hannan (1984)
Karanga S14	Louw (1915)
Ndau (or ‘Sofala’) S15	Bleek (1856), Doke (1931)
Venda S20	Van Warmelo (1989)
Tswana S31	Brown (1965)
N. Sotho S32	Kriel (1983)
S. Sotho S33	Mabille & Dieterlin (1988)
Xhosa S41	Pahl (1989), Mini & Tshabe (2003), Tshabe & Shoba (2006)
Zulu S42	Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana & Vilakazi (1990)
Swati S43	Rycroft (1981)
Ndebele S407 (of Zimbabwe, S44)	Pelling (1966), Elliott (1897)
Tswa S51	Persson (1928)
Tsonga S53	Siteo (1996), Chapatte (n.d.)
Guthrie zone R	
Kwanyama R21	Tobias & Turvey (1954)
Ndonga R22	Viljoen, Amakali & Namuandi (2004)
Herero R30	Viljoen & Kamupingene (1983), Viehe (1897)

Notes: Sources of data for NTU vary in comprehensiveness and accuracy. All spellings used in this paper are those of the original sources. A few recently published works were not available to the author.

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²⁶ Every effort has been made to establish the first names of authors, but in some cases this was not possible.

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