Survey of the Language Groups in the Southern Sudan

By A. N. Tucker

It has been the custom of linguists to divide African languages into three main layers—"Sudanic," "Hamito-Semitic," and "Bantu". Of these the Bantu languages show the greatest continuity and the Sudanic languages the least.

The Southern Sudan may be regarded as one of the most interesting of African fields for the comparative linguist and anthropologist, for it is here that the Eastern "Sudanic" and the Western "Hamitic" races meet, and it is here also that one finds that peculiar wedge of people who, for want of a better term, are called "Nilotes".

The aim of this article will be to group together those Southern Sudan languages which show undeniable affinities, and, by applying phonetic and linguistic criteria, endeavour to allocate these groups places within the categories of African languages. For this purpose it will be necessary, first, to determine on the necessary criteria.

Definition of a Sudanic Language

It would appear that linguists in the past have been content to group under the general term "Sudanic" all Central African languages which cannot fit another grouping, and then to state that the main characteristic of Sudanic languages is their extraordinary divergence one from another. Thus vocabulary similarity as a criterion is permissible within only a very restricted range, while other criteria allow for such anomalies as isolative languages in the North-East Congo, inflected languages (with full personal verb conjugation and noun cases) around Lake Chad, and almost Bantu-like noun class systems in the Western Sudan.

With such a wealth of criteria available, the definition of "Sudanic" must needs be arbitrary. Westermann, however, has already given a lead with the following five points (see Die Sudan-sprachen, also The Shilluk People) which we may do well to follow 1:

1. Sudanic languages are monosyllabic, each word consisting in one syllable.
2. Each syllable or word consists in one consonant and one vowel.

1 The Shilluk People, p. 35.
(3) They are isolating, that is they have no inflection, and only few formative elements; the “class-prefixes” of the Bantu-languages and of some Hamitic languages are absent.

(4) They have no grammatical gender.

(5) Intonation is prevailing in a higher degree than it is in Bantu and Hamitic languages.

To this, for the purposes of this article, may be added the following characteristics, upon which most authorities are agreed:

**Phonetics and Word-structure**

(6) Characteristic consonantal sounds are the labio-velars *kp* and *gb* and the implosives *’b* and *’d*.

(7) Noun formatives are few, the most common being the prefix *a*- which forms nouns out of verbs. For the rest, new conceptions are formed by simply combining two or more given words, e.g. the diminutive is achieved by suffixing the word for “young”.

(8) The singular and plural of nouns is not distinguished, or else number is shown by adding a noun or pronoun (usually third pers. pl.). The most common plural formatives are the vowels *a* and *i* or a nasal.

(9) Case in nouns is shown either by the position in the sentence or else by combination with another noun in the form of a post-position.

(10) There are no derivative verb species, except where the idea of motion to or from the speaker is implied, when the verbs “to come” and “to go” will be combined with the main verb. Similarly the dative idea is obtained by combination with the verb “to give”.

(11) Verb conjugation for person consists in merely pronoun + verb stem.

(12) Tenses are few in number, but the tense particles cover more than the mere idea of time.

(13) There is no passive form of the verb, and the passive idea is expressed by a circumlocution.

**Sentence-structure**

(14) The normal sentence order is either subject + verb + object or subject + object + verb.

(15) The possessor (genitive or nomen rectum) precedes the

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1 I am deeply indebted to Professor Westermann for going over the MS. of this article with me, and also for the loan of the MS. of his own article Charakter und Einteilung der Sudansprachen (Africa, 1935), which goes into these points in greater detail and to which the reader is here referred. As further source I have used Dr. Alice Werner’s treatise Structure and Relationship of African Languages.
possessed (nomen regens) in the genitive construction. This applies also to the possessive adjective.

(16) The adjective may precede or follow the noun it qualifies.

DEFINITION OF A HAMITIC LANGUAGE

Although there seem to be very few languages which are truly and thoroughly Hamitic, authorities seem to be more certain on what are "Hamitic" characteristics than in the case of Sudanic languages. For convenience I shall use the same numbering as above.

(1) Hamitic roots may be monosyllabic, disyllabic, or even trisyllabic.

(2) The popular consistency of a root seems to be three consonants, with intervening vowels as in Semitic, though many roots have only two consonants.

(3) Hamitic languages are highly inflected, mostly by means of prefixes and suffixes, though vowel change (Ablaut) is by no means uncommon.

(4) They have grammatical gender—masculine and feminine.¹ Combined with this is the phenomenon known as Polarity, whereby a noun may be masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural, or vice versa.

(5) Dynamic accent plays a greater role than intonation.

(6) Characteristic consonantal sounds of both Hamitic and Semitic languages are the pharyngeal "emphatic" sounds (Presslaute), as typified by Arabic ح غ و ڥ .

(7) There are many noun formatives.

(8) The singular and plural of nouns is distinguished by a multitude of formative elements, mostly suffixes.

(9) Case relationship is often shown by suffixes, applied either to the noun or to the verb.

(10) Each verb may have derived species, formed mostly by suffixes or Ablaut.

(11) Person in verb conjugation is shown by prefix (as in Semitic) or by suffix.

(12) Tenses are shown by means of prefixes and suffixes.

¹ For the range of ideas covered by these two terms, see Meinhof, Die Sprachen der Hamiten, p. 22 et seq. Detailed discussion on this language family will also be found in De Lacy Evans O'Leary's Characteristics of the Hamitic Languages. See also Werner Vycichl, "Was sind Hamitensprachen?" (Africa, 1935); C. Broeckelmann, "Gibt es einen hamitischen Sprachstamm?" (Anthropos, 1932); Marcel Cohen, "Les Langues dites Chamitiques" (Congr. de l'Inst. des Lang. et Civ. afr., 1933).
(13) There is a distinct form of the verb for the passive.
(14) The normal sentence order is verb + subject + object.
(15) The possessor follows the possessed in the genitive construction and is usually linked to it by means of a genitive particle.
(16) The adjective follows the noun it qualifies.
(17) There is one characteristic of most African languages, which has been cited as Sudanic, Hamitic, and Bantu, respectively, on various occasions, viz. the use of "vocal images", "onomatopoeic words", "descriptive adverbs", "radicals", to bring out or intensify the meaning of ordinary verbs and adjectives. It is quite probable that these exclamatory words are characteristic of the Negro element in all three language families. Therefore their absence in any African language is more remarkable than their presence.

There are, roughly speaking, eleven decided language "groups" in the Southern Sudan (exclusive of several as yet unplaced languages) and their speakers are to be found mostly in the three provinces Upper Nile (91,100 square miles), Bahr el Ghazal (94,000 square miles), and Mongalla (54,900 square miles). These groups may be arranged under four headings, according as the speech characteristics conform with the criteria given above. Thus we have:

Sudanic languages:—
(1) The Moru-Madi group.
(2) The Bongo-Baka group.
(3) The Ndogo-Bviri group.
(4) Zande.

Nilotic languages:—
(5) Dinka.
(6) Nuer.
(7) The Shilluk-Acholi group.

Nilo-Hamitic languages:—
(8) The Bari dialects.
(9) The Lotuko dialects.
(10) The Topotha-Turkana group.

Fourth category (as yet unplaced):—
(11) The Didinga-Beir group.

It must not for a moment be thought that language groups

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1 Under "group" is to be understood here a number of languages and dialects with close grammatical and vocabulary affinities, to the point of complete or partial mutual intelligibility. This loose definition embraces also, of course, the idea of a common original language, whether actual or hypothetical.
necessarily confine themselves within political boundaries; con-
sequently almost all the Southern Sudan languages have affinities in
French Equatorial Africa, Belgian Congo, Uganda, Tanganyika,
Kenya, and Abyssinia. The interesting point is, however, that these
affinities are all relatively near geographically, and are all sharply
defined within their own areas. There is no grand spread of any one
group throughout the length and breadth of Central Africa—as, for
instance, in Bantu—although future investigation in the area between
the Sudan and Lake Chad may possibly bring to light more continuity
than has at first been suspected.

For my Sudan population statistics I am very grateful to the
Sudan Education Department and to the Governors of Provinces,
who provided me with the latest figures at their disposal. In the
case of some of the smaller tribes an attempt has evidently been
made at an exact census. In other cases only the number of tax-
payers is given; in such cases a fair estimate of tribal strength may
be obtained by multiplying the number of taxpayers by five.

These figures are to be regarded, on the whole, as only approximate,
and in fact some of them differ considerably from those given in the
"Report of the Rejaf Language Conference", those given in Seligman's
_Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan_, and again from figures which
I collected from local authorities three years ago. I enter them here
as the latest governmental estimate.

The location of the tribes and sub-tribes is obtained largely from
personal investigation during 1931–2, and I am deeply indebted to
the various local authorities, who spared no pains to help me make
out tribal maps for each district.

My Uganda and Tanganyika statistics have been taken from the
1931 census returns of those countries.

My Kenya statistics have been obtained through the kindness of
the Government of Kenya Colony, and show the estimated strength
of the various tribes in the Colony as on the 31st of December, 1933.

The Belgian Government has also very kindly provided me with
the latest population figures of the non-Bantu tribes in the north-
east corner of the Belgian Congo.

THE EASTERN SUDANIC LANGUAGES

Westermann, in his _Charakter und Einteilung der Sudansprachen_,
gives four sorts of Sudanic language. I shall not try to relegate the

1 Under a combined grant from the International Institute of African Languages
and Cultures and the School of Oriental Studies.
languages dealt with here to any particular category or categories within his Sudanic family, but merely state that the affinity any one group bears any other, either inside or outside the Southern Sudan, is of the slightest superficially, except in the case of the Bongo-Baka group and the Moru-Madi group, which show a fair amount of vocabulary and grammatical correspondence. The term "Eastern" is therefore used here in a strictly geographical sense, and implies merely the territorial position of the speakers of these languages as against other Sudanic tribes to the west.

The Sudanic tribes in the Southern Sudan, with the exception of the Azande, have suffered much from slave raids from the north and invasions from the south. Hence they are very small and much scattered. Although most of them have settled down now, a few of the smaller ones are still on the move, and localization of them is difficult. This is particularly so in the Western District of the Bahr el Ghazal, where the government's repatriating policy is still at work.

1. The Moru-Madi Group

This is a very interesting group of almost mutually understandable languages, which stretches in a horse-shoe bend from Amadi to Yei in Mongalla Province, through the north-eastern corner of the Belgian Congo and the north-western corner of Uganda, and back into Mongalla Province, Opari District. These languages and dialects seem to fall into three sub-groups, which may for convenience be called the "Northern or Moru dialects", the "Central languages", and the "Southern or Madi languages".

The Moru Dialects (29,000 speakers)

The districts Amadi and Maridi in Mongalla Province are the home of the Moru speakers, who are as follows:—

The (Moro)Miza (1,900 taxpayers) live south-east of Amadi under Chief Ndarago. Their dialect is now the language of education in the mission schools.

The (Moro)Kediru (1,400 taxpayers) live north of the Miza under Chief Wala. A branch of the Kediru, the Maku'ba, live under Chief Roba on the Tapari.

The Lakama'Di live north of the Kediru on the Tali road under Chief Monda.

These three dialects are almost identical.

The Moroondri (700 taxpayers) live west of the Miza under Chief Ngere.
The 'Bōli'ba (300 taxpayers) live south of the Miza, adjoining Pōjulu territory, under Chief Jambo.

These two dialects are almost identical.

The Morōogi (400 taxpayers) live west of the Moroōndri on the road to Maridi in two small sections under Chiefs Agangwa and Okupoi respectively. Another small section of the Miza is to be found living between them.

The (Moro)Wa'di (325 taxpayers) are scattered about north of Maridi under the Chiefs Okupoi and Madragi. Many so-called Wadi are really Morokodo, and speak a Bongo-Baka language.

These two dialects are almost identical, and nearer Moroōndri than Miza. In fact, Moroōndri is more representative of the majority of Moru dialects than Miza, and has more affinities with Avukaya on the one hand and Madi on the other.

The Central Sub-group (83,000 speakers)

The Avukaya \(^1\) live in two sections between Maridi and Yei. The Ojila branch (650 taxpayers) live largely between the Naam and the Olo Rivers, but reach as far east as Chief Wajo; another smaller section is to be found north of Chief Madragi. The Ojigō branch (700 taxpayers) live just north of Yei, but there is a small section of these, called Agamoro, living on the outskirts of Mundu country, south of Maridi.

The Keliko \(^1\) (real name Ma'di) (1,113 taxpayers) are to be found west of Yei; they extend into the Belgian Congo, where a section is to be found south of Aba (9,138), in the territory Alur-Lugwara.

It is doubtful whether the Bōri have separate tribal existence. The various scattered clumps seem to speak either Keliko or Pōjulu according to the people they live among. I am told that there is a Bōri rain-makers clan among the Moru, whose graves resemble those of Kakwa rain-makers.

The Logo (some 60,000) are mostly to be found in the Congo in the triangle of country between Aba, Faradje, and Watsa, where there seem to be four sections of them. A few Logo are to be found in Yei District of Mongalla Province. The Belgian Government statistics concerning this tribe are as follows:

"In the territory of the Logo-Dongo (head township, Faradje) there are 75,581 inhabitants, of whom 62,941 are indigenous. They

\(^1\) "Avukaya" or "Abukaya" is said to be a Zande nickname for the Ojila and Ojigō. The name "Keliko" is of obscure origin.
are divided into Logo-Agambi (19,976), Logo-Doka (31,510), Bari-Logo (4,292), and Dongo-Tedemu (7,163).”

The Central languages are not so closely tied as the Moru dialects. Keliko and Logo are on the whole mutually understandable, but Avukaya can only be understood with an effort, forming as it does a bridge between these languages and the Moru dialects.

The Madi Sub-group (240,000 speakers)

The Lugbara (also called “Lugwari”) live in the North-East Congo (50,844) with centre Aru, and extend into the West Nile District of Uganda with centre Arua (139,348). A few (171 taxpayers) are to be found in Yei District.

The Madi (pronounced Ma’di) of Uganda (40,307) are to be found in Aivu County, West Nile District, and also in greater or lesser numbers through most of the north-east counties in Gulu District. They extend into the Sudan into the western section of Opari District, Mongalla Province (1,022 taxpayers).

There seem to be two main dialects of Madi in the Sudan:—

Ma’di Lokai spoken by Chiefs Surur, Odego, and Ito Gaperi (2,000);
Ma’di Pandikeri spoken by Chiefs Dar, Iberu, Geri Nyani Kuyu (5,000). Ma’di Lokai is most like Uganda Madi, and is the language of education in mission schools in Opari District. Ma’di Pandikeri has more in common with Moru (Moroondri dialect). I have heard of a third dialect, ’Burulo, said to be spoken around Nimule, but was unable to follow it up. The few words I met with were like Pandikeri.

The Lulu’bo (766 taxpayers) constitute the vanguard of the Madi penetration into Opari District, and now appear left high and dry on the Luluba Hills, 40 miles south-east of Juba and west of the Lokoya. Their dialect is more like Pandikeri than Lokai, with some Pöjulu vocabulary borrowings.

All these three languages are mutually understandable to a fairly high degree. As a matter of fact, all the Moru-Madi languages (with the exception of Lendu, which shall be discussed separately) are so closely related that any speaker of one would very soon be able to adapt himself if brought to live among speakers of another. ¹

The Lendu also belong to the Moru-Madi group, but their language cannot be understood by the other members, having undergone

¹ My questionings of a Moru speaker, whom I had with me while on tour, elicited the fact that, of all the Moru-Madi languages which were foreign to him, he got on best with Abukaya and Madi, but found Logo the most difficult to understand. He himself was a Moroondri.
violent phonetic changes which have resulted in a "spitting" pronunciation of syllables containing consonants only, which cause great trouble to would-be scribes. The Lendu live in the Congo, west of Lake Albert (151,925) with centre Djugu, while a smaller branch (5,985) are to be found in Alur-Lugwara territory; some have overflowed into (mostly) the West Nile District of Uganda (2,670). Their real name is 'Bale or 'Balendru, and their language is 'Baatha or of 'Baletha. They have often been erroneously classified as Bantu.

2. The Bongo-Baka-Bagirma Group

The members of this group are the most scattered and diverse of any, and mutual understanding, except in a few cases, is absent. By comparison of vocabulary and grammar, however, one can easily ascertain such members as are on record.

The Bongo in Schweinfurth's time were evidently far more numerous than now (3,192). At present they are to be found mainly in two small settlements, one, under Chief Sabun, on the Bussere River just south of Wau and extending south along the Bo road, and the other larger settlement further east, near Tonj, under Chief Kerisit. There is also an isolated colony in the Lori country, near Rumbek. The now extinct Mitatu (Wetu) were Bongo speakers, as far as can be ascertained.

The Baka (2,380 taxpayers) live fairly thickly around Maridi and extend almost to Yei. There is another section of them in the northeast corner of the Belgian Congo (4,000).

The Baka form the southern end of a linguistic chain, stretching up through Moru country to Rumbek. Those that live in the Moru district cause most confusion to investigators:—

The Morokodo (625 taxpayers) live on the Amadi-Maridi road just west of Amadi, under Chief Hassan.

The (Moro)Biti, also under Chief Hassan, live north of Amadi on the Tali road.

The Ma'di live north of these, and the (Moro)Wira farther north, both tribes under Chief Dokolo.

The Ma'du live with the Lakama'di under Chief Roba.

These five small tribes are all called "Moru", and consequently are often confused with the true Moru. The languages Morokodo and Ma'di are almost identical, while Biti, Wira, and Ma'du may be

1 Not to be confused with the Ma'di of Opari district, whose language belongs to the Moru-Madi group.
grouped together. These five dialects are the most closely connected of all the Bongo-Baka group.

The Nyamusa (600 taxpayers) live north of the Wira, also under Chief Dokolo, but their language is not so closely allied.

The northern section of this linguistic chain is composed of the "Rumbek Jur" 1 (7,194), stretching from just north of the Nyamusa to Rumbek in the Bahr el Ghazal. They consist of four small tribes (hemmed in on the north by the Ngok Dinka and on the east by the Agar and Atwot):—

The Lori live north-west of the Nyamusa along the old Mvolo-Gnop road, and the Lali close to them. Their languages are almost identical.

The 'Beli and the Sofi, speaking practically identical languages, live just south of Rumbek, the 'Beli being north of Toinya post and the Sofi south of it.2

Of these "Jur" languages, 'Beli and Sofi are most like Bongo, while Lori and Lali are much more like Nyamusa and the so-called "Moru" dialects.

Such are the main members of the Bonga-Baka group in the Sudan. Of late, however, some interesting information on the very confused population of the Western District of the Bahr el Ghazal has come to light:—

The Yulu 3 (1,124), Binga (pronounced "Bija") (638), Kara (328), and, less definitely, the Runga (150), Aja (728), and Ngunguli (1,052) show remarkable vocabulary resemblance to Bongo and Baka, though no grammatical material is as yet forthcoming. These tribes are for the most part an overflow from tribes in French Equatorial Africa—the boundary is very near.

The Sinyar,4 who live on the border of Darfur and French Equatorial Africa at Mogororo (lat. 12 N.), show a vocabulary resemblance also. This seems to be the only language in Darfur or Kordofan to do so.

Outside the Southern Sudan, enough vocabulary evidence has been

1 Not to be confused with the Shilluk-speaking "Jur" (Luo) near Wau. The word "Jur" means "stranger" in Dinka, and the Dinka apply the term to all foreigners except Europeans and Arabs.
2 Of all these tribes the Beli are the most numerous. Seligman mentions another tribe, Gberi, living west of Mvolo, and speaking a dialect akin to Mittu (Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, p. 474). I was unable to locate this tribe.
3 From information supplied me by Fathers Simoni and Santandrea.
4 From information supplied me by P. B. Broadbent and A. J. Arkell, of the Sudan Political Service.
collected by M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes to pursue this group along the Chari Rivers in French Oubangui-Chari as far as Fort Archambault. The representatives in this area he classes under the Barma group, and they comprise the languages Barma, Babalia, Dissa, Bulala, and the multitudinous Sara dialects (Sara Denjé, Sara Guléi, Sara Bai, Sara Lak, Kaba, Horo, Ngama, Valé, Télè, and Tané).

Finally, south-east of Lake Chad, are the Bagirmi (30,000), whose language also shows considerable resemblance to Bongo, as already remarked by Gaden. To this language is related that of the Kenga and Kuka on Barth's evidence.

On the strength of the above data I should suggest as a tentative name for this huge belt of Sudanic languages, the combination "Bongo-Bagirmi" or "Bongo-Baka-Bagirmi", as embodying the most important Eastern and Western members of the group.

3. The Ndogo-Bviri Group

This group consists of four dialects, so closely allied as to be mutually intelligible. The area covered by this language group is roughly that of the Central District of Bahr el Ghazal Province, with centre Wau.

The Ndogo (2,164) live a few miles west of Wau (where the Wau-Deim Zubeir road crosses the Getti), and at Kayango.

The Sere (also called Basiri) (1,320) live west of the Ndogo, where the same road crosses the Kpango River.

The Bai (1,120) live west of the Sere.

The Bviri (commonly called Belanda, also Mvegumba) (3,660)

1 Documents sur les Langues de l'Oubangui-Chari. I have been able to compare aspects of Bongo grammar with notes taken on Sara by Professor Westermann and Dr. H. J. Melzian, and justify at least the inclusion of that language in the Bongo group.

2 Essai de Grammaire de la Langue Baguirmienne. Gaden was able to note only the vocabulary similarity, but comparison of his grammar with my field notes has established the connection beyond all dispute. It is interesting to note here that, of all the Bongo-Baka languages in the Sudan, Bagirmi most approaches the Morokodo sub-section in grammatical structure; this is strange, seeing that these languages have themselves been largely influenced (in other respects) by Moru-Madi.

3 Sammlung und Bearbeitung Central-Afrikanischer Vocabularien. Dr. J. Lukas, who read this article in MS., informs me from personal experience that Bulala, Kuka, and Mudogo (not mentioned above), are all practically identical and all closely related to Bagirmi.

4 The name "Belanda" is the cause of much confusion, as it is used to denote two tribes, speaking totally unrelated languages: the Bviri (also called "Mvegumba") speaking a Ndogo dialect, and the Bon (also called "Mverodi") speaking a Shilluk dialect. These two tribes are neighbours, intermarry, and mostly know each other's languages, however. See my article, "The Tribal Confusion around Wau" (Sudan Notes and Records, vol. xiv, pt. 1, 1931). The name "Belanda" is of Bongo origin.
live on the Belanda circular road, which leaves Wau, and after a southern detour joins the Deim Zubeir road near the Getti. Another branch of Bviri may be found near Deim Zubeir.

Scattered clusters of all four peoples may be found at intervals on the road from Wau to the Zande country and on the circular road north-west of Tembura. There is also a body of Sere living in French Equatorial Africa, across the border from Yubu.

Mention should here be made of the Golo (1,952), who live between the Ndogo and Wau, and whose as yet unplaced language is fast dying out in favour of Ndogo.

4. THE ZANDE LANGUAGE

The Zande language is spoken consistently throughout the southern part of the Bahr el Ghazal Province, and in the neighbouring regions of French Equatorial Africa and Belgian Congo, whence the Azande originated. At one time Zande bid fair to oust all the other Sudanic languages in the Southern Sudan—the Maridi-Amadi conglomeration, the Ndogo languages at Wau, and even a good many of the Western District languages. Since the enforced retirement of the Azande conquerors, however, these other languages have regained to a certain extent their former usage. The Azande in the Sudan (231,000), owing to sleeping-fever legislation, are concentrated at Tembura, at Yambio, and along the Tembura–Yambio and Yambio–Maridi roads.

There is only one sub-dialect of Zande in the Sudan, spoken by the Makaraka (true name Adio) (415 taxpayers), who live between Yei and Maridi.

There are over 500,000 Azande in the Congo, and they form the majority of the population in several territories. The Belgian Governmental statistics are as follows:—

 Territory of the Avungara, centre Ango, 72,527 out of 72,605.
 Territory of the Avuru-Wando, centre Dungu, 175,774 out of 177,002.
 Territory of the Abandia, centre Bondo, 107,839 "Zandeized" Mongwandi.
 Territory of the Madjara, centre Niangara, 72,313, population largely of Nilotic origin.

The Azande in French Equatorial Africa are assessed at about 50,000, but no statistics are to hand.

Among the Azande are the descendants of a variety of conquered
peoples (such as the Pambia, Barambo, Huma, Bukuru), but the pronunciation of the language varies surprisingly little with locality.

**Other Sudanic Languages**

The Western District of the Bahr el Ghazal contains a confused mass of very small tribes. Of these the most important people are the **Kreish** (Kredja) (real name Gbaya) (6,930). There are five sub-divisions of the Gbaya:

- The Gbaya-Ndogo once lived near Deim Zubeir, but have lately been moved north of Raga. Their language has been reduced to writing by the R. C. Mission at Deim Zubeir.
- The (Gbaya)Naka live near Kafia Kingi, north of the Gbaya-Ndogo. Their language is perhaps the most representative dialect.
- The (Gbaya)Hofra live on the River Boro, south of the Naka and north of the Binta.

Near the Hofra, and related to them, live the Yomamgb (People of the Hills), the Kutowaka, Boko, and others.

The Woro are hunters in the woods near Deim Zubeir.

The Kreish language is not confined merely to the Gbaya, but has spread over other small tribes as well. It has nothing in common with Baya or Gbaya (Mandjia) in Oubangui-Chari.

After the Kreish, the Banda are the most important people (5,980). They live between the Rivers Biru and Sopo, and are directly related to the Banda of Oubangui-Chari (and hence, perhaps, to the Mbwaka, Banziri, and Monjombo).

Other unplaced Western languages are Feroghe (3,200), Indri (related to Feroghe); Shayu and Mongaiyat, about which almost nothing is known.

Among the Baka in Maridi, also north of Yei, live the Mundu (1,861 taxpayers). There is a further colony of them in the Belgian Congo, north of Aba (some 2,000). Their language is decidedly Sudanic but the grammar construction cannot warrant its inclusion in the Bongo Baka group, although it has many affinities. It is suspected that the Congo Bangba (2,125), lying between Dungu and Watsa, are closely related to the Mundu.

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1 See Lagae “La Langue des Azande” for a full list of Zande sub-sections.
2 Note that Poutrin, in Principales Populations de l'Afrique Equitoriale Française, considers Kreish a sub-section of the Banda group. I can find no correspondences in the two languages to justify this. Kreish has, if anything, more in common with Bongo-Baka.
3 Burssens's estimate of Bangba tribal strength is 50,000, and he would place them between Dungu and Niangara.
Reference should be made at this point to the welter of non-Bantu languages in the north-east corner of the Congo. Some few, like Logo and Lendu mentioned above, have been identified, but practically nothing is known about the rest, owing to lack of even vocabulary material.

Professor A. Burssens, in "Het Probleem der Kongoleesche Niet-Bantoetalen", sums up the classifications of Delafosse, Drexel, Schebesta, Liesenborghs, Vekens, and others, and evolves the following tentative grouping:

1. **Oubangui-Uele Group.**—Banda; Gbaya (Mandjia); Mondunga; Ngbandi (Sango); Bangba, Mundu, Mayogo; Barambo; Zande.
2. **Sudan-Nile Group.**—(a) Lugwara, Logo, Lendu; (b) Baka.
3. **Mangbetu Group.**—Mangbetu, Makere, Medje, Malele, Mabisanga, Popoi, Rumbi, Beyru, Manga, Aka.
4. **Mamvu-Efe Group.**—(a) Mamvu, Lese, Bendi, Mbutu, Mbuba; (b) Efe (Pygmy).
5. **Nilotic Group.**—Lur.

It is quite probable, when more is known of these languages, that the demesne of the Moru-Madi and Bongo-Baka groups will be still further enlarged. **Mangbetu** has distinct vocabulary affinities with both groups, although it plainly does not belong to either.

The following governmental statistics of these tribes should be of general interest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory of the Babira-Walese centre</th>
<th>Irumu</th>
<th>94,230 inhabitants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Mabira-Walese centre</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Mabudu</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Mangbetu</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Makere-Malele-Popoi</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Babua</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Mobenge-Mabinza</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Babali-Barumbi</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Mongelma-Bamanga</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>North Wanande</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>South Wanande</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Bakumu</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Mamvu-Monbutu</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Logo-Dongo</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>Alur-Lugware</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Kongo-Overzee, Oct. 1934.
2 Schebesta, in Les pygmées du Congo belge, remarks considerable vocabulary correspondence between Efe and the Lendu-Logo languages, but considers this due to mutual borrowing.
3 Mention is made here of a tribe "Ndo" (13,947); it is grouped with the Keliko and Lendu.
The above language groups conform to our given criteria in almost every respect:—

(1) They are fundamentally monosyllabic.
(2) Each syllable consists of a consonant and a vowel.
(3) They are isolating.
(4) They have no grammatical gender.
(5) They have a well marked tone system, which unfortunately has hardly been studied. The fact that the Azande and the Banda use talking drums is significant.
(6) The characteristic consonant sounds, \( kp \) and \( gb \), \( 'b \) and \( 'd \) are in great evidence, as also a flapped \( l \)-sound and flapped \( v \)-sound.
(6a) They have a simple vowel system, \( a, e, i, o, u \), but the varieties of \( e \) and \( o \) (as in Bongo, and \( i \) and \( u \) (as in Zande and Moru) need further investigation. "Umlaut" of \( a \) by a following \( i \) or \( u \) is common. There are no long vowels or diphthongs; when two vowels fall together, the resultant sound is a disyllable.

(7) Noun formatives are few, noun combinations very popular.
(8) The singular and plural of nouns is not normally distinguished. Zande, however, uses the prefix \( a- \), and Ndgo \( nda- \); Moru has an optional suffix \(-i \) (-\( ki \) in dialects).
(9) Case is shown by position in the sentence or by preposition. (Postposition in Moru-Madi.)
(10) There are no derivative verb species. (Motion to and from speaker is indicated in Moru-Madi by changes in the "characteristic" vowel.)
(11) Verb conjugation is simple.
(12) Tenses are few in number (except in Zande).
(13) There is no passive form of the verb, the passive idea being conveyed by a circumlocution embodying (usually) the third person plural construction.

1 Ndgo intonation, from a lexical point of view, has been fairly well recorded in Father Ribero’s *Elementi di Lingua Ndgo*, but the grammar rules are yet to be worked out.

2 By "characteristic" I mean a vowel which harmonizes, according to distinct phonetic rules, with the vowel in the verb stem.
Bongo-Baka for “complete” tenses, but in Moru-Madi for “incomplete” tenses. In Zande the two forms of the verb are distinguished by suffixes, -a for the “incomplete” tenses and -i for the “complete” tenses. In Ndogo-Bviri no distinction is made.

(14) The sentence order is subject + verb + object. (In Moru-Madi the order is subject + object + verb for the “incomplete” tenses. e.g. ma so gini = “I hoe—or hoed—the ground,” magini oso = “I am hoeing the ground,” with characteristic vowel.)

(15) The possessor usually follows the possessed, but in special constructions (and also in some sub-dialects) it still precedes it.

(16) The adjective may precede or follow the noun it qualifies.

(17) “Descriptive” adverbs are very common.

THE NILOTIC LANGUAGES

The Nilotes form by far the greater proportion of the population of the Southern Sudan, and their languages extend beyond its boundaries as far south as the Great Lakes.

5. DINKA (true name Jiŋ or Jəŋ)

Dinka is spoken fairly solidly over an area consisting in the northern half of the Bahr el Ghazal Province and the southern part of the Upper Nile Province by about 500,000 people. It is composed of numerous dialects, which may be grouped conveniently according to the geographical distribution of the speakers. Although there is great divergence, no dialect is sufficiently removed from any other as to be unintelligible, but it is doubtful if one dialect will ever serve as literary or standard language for all.

Western Dinka is spoken in the northern half of the Bahr el Ghazal Province by about half the total Dinka population. Its main dialects are:

Rek ("Raik") (99,932) spoken between Wau and Meshra el Rek. It is the literary dialect of this area.

Malwal (88,360) spoken north of Aweil and south of the Bahr el Arab. The Malwal tribe is probably the most numerous, but is the least get-at-able of all Dinka tribes, owing to its position in the swamps, and its northern boundary is uncertain.

Twic ("Twij") (27,988) spoken between the Rek Dinka and the Nuer.

1 It is impossible to give here the names of all the sub-sections and clans within the Dinka tribes and sub-tribes, so, as far as possible, I shall confine myself to those sections which are known to speak definite dialects and which give their names to these dialects.
All three dialects are very much akin.

Central Dinka is spoken in the south-east corner of the Bahr el Ghazal Province and in Yirrol District, Upper Nile Province. Its main dialects are:—

Agar (51,940) spoken south-east of Tonj and north of Rumbek. It may become the literary dialect of the district.

Gok (18,220) spoken between the Agar and the Rek. Another branch of the Gok (4,000) is to be found in Yirrol District.

Aliab (13,500) spoken south-east of the Agar to the northern borders of the Moru and the Bari speakers.

The Central Dinka dialects are nearer Western Dinka than Eastern Dinka.

Eastern Dinka is spoken in the southern part of the Upper Nile Province. Its main dialects are:—

Bor (17,000) spoken at and about Bor on the east bank of the Nile. It is the literary dialect of these parts.

Other dialects in Bor District are Twi (18,000), Thany ("Tain") (1,300), Nyarweng (2,500), Ghol (pronounced yəl), etc. (4,200).

On the west bank of the Nile, in Yirrol District, are related dialects: Afaak (13,000), Ciec ("Chich") (14,500), Ador (5,000).

North-Eastern Dinka is spoken south and north of Malakal. Very little is known about the dialects in this region, which are:—

Ngok (pronounced ṣok) and Balak (7,000) spoken south of the Sobat River, near its junction with the White Nile.

Rueng (4,000) west of the Ngok, on the Khor Filus. Both these sub-tribes are in Abwong District, but there is a further detachment of Rueng (50,000 ?) in Western Nuer District.

Just north of Malakal, on the east bank of the Nile in Shilluk District, are the Dungjol (7,500).

Further north, on the same side in Melut District, are the Ager (3,000), Nhiel (2,000), Abuya (1,300), and Beir (2,800).

Further north still, in Renk District, are the Bowom (1,600), Giel (850), and Akon (1,100), last-named probably being the most northerly section of all the Dinka.

Material in all these dialects is practically non-existent with the exception of Ngok, which resembles Bor to a certain extent.¹

¹ For those concerned in orthographical problems, it is probable that the Bor orthography will cover the Eastern and North-Eastern dialects, and the Rek orthography the Western and Central dialects. Owing to different processes in word-formation, the same orthography will not do for both sections.
6. **Nuer** (true name Naath)

Nuer is spoken by some 220,000 people, who are situated in the swamps of the Upper Nile Province between the Dinka and the Shilluk. Nuer also contains many sub-dialects, which may be grouped according to the geographical distribution of the speakers; but there is much closer affinity between Nuer dialects than between Dinka dialects.

**Western Nuer** is spoken on the Bahr el Arab and the Bahr el Ghazal by the following main tribes:

- **Jikaany** ("Jikain"), **Reaij-Yan**, **Dok**, **Wot**, **Nyoon**, **Door**.
- Also on the island between the White Nile and the Bahr el Zeraf by the following:
  - **Laak**, **Thyai**, and **Gaaawar** ("Gaweir").

These dialects are all practically identical, but Jikany is the literary dialect.

**Central Nuer** is spoken by one very large tribe:

- The **Laau**, lying south of the Gaweir and extending east across country almost as far as Nasser on the Sobat River.

**Eastern Nuer** (another literary dialect) is spoken by three sections of Jikany who moved into the region of Nasser and the Upper Sobat during the Nuer expansion, and who are now practically isolated there. These are:

- The **Gaaajook**, **Gaaajak**, and **Gaaawaj**, and they extend as far as the Abyssinian frontier.

Eastern Nuer differs considerably in phonology from Central and Western Nuer, and it is doubtful if the same orthography would suit both literary dialects.

**Atwot**

There is one important sub-language belonging to the Nuer family, spoken by a very reserved tribe living between Shambe and Yirrol, commonly known as the Atwot (23,000). For some time these people, whose real name is Aril, have been regarded as a branch of

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1 Here again it will be impossible to give the names of all the Nuer sub-tribes and clans.

2 The spellings here are taken from the introduction to Father Crazzolara's *Nuer Grammar*, as the official spellings of these sub-tribes are not to hand.

Seligman's arrangement of the most important Nuer tribes, based on Dr. Evans-Pritchard's ethnographical field work, is as follows:—Western, Bul, Jagei, Lek, Nuong, Dok; Eastern (i.e. central), Thiang, Lak, Gaweir, Lau; Far Eastern, Gaajok, Gaajak. (See *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, p. 207.)
the Dinka (whose language they also speak), but their own tongue displays unmistakable Nuer affinities.

7. THE SHILLUK-ACHOLI GROUP

This group has over a million speakers, the majority of whom live in Uganda. Numerically the Sudan Shilluk-speakers (less than 200,000) are far below the Dinka-Nuer speakers, but their roving adventures in past history have left many scattered tribes in the most unexpected quarters.

Upper Nile Province

The Shilluk proper (own name = Col; language = Dho Colo) are a relatively small tribe (60,000) living round the junction of the White Nile and the Sobat, and extending northwards on the west bank of the Nile opposite the Dungjol Dinka. Shilluk literature is in the hands of three or four missions.

The Anuak (own name = Anyua) (15,000) live on the Akobo River at its junction with the Pibor, and in Abyssinia in the area between the Baro and Akobo Rivers. There is also a section on the Sobat river, east of Abwong.1

The two languages, though differing substantially, are mutually intelligible.

Bahr el Ghazal Province

The "Jur"2 (real name Jo Luo; language = Dhe Luo) (14,292) extend in a chain on the outskirts of Dinka territory, north of Wau towards Aweil and west of Wau as far as Tonj. Their language is more like Anuak than Shilluk; it once had a literature, but, owing to the new language policy, its place has been taken by Dinka.

The "Dembo" (real name Bodho) (1,404), the "Jur Shol", and the "Jur Abat" live between Wau and Aweil, and speak dialects (Dhe Bodho and Dhe Colo) very much akin to Luo.

The "Shatt" (real name Thuri) (1,963) live in the woods near Deim Zubeir, north of the Ndogo-speakers. I am told by a Shilluk that this dialect, of all the Bhar el Ghazal dialects, most resembles his home language.

The Bor (also called "Belanda"3 or "Mverodi") (3,600) live mostly between the two main Bongo settlements, south of Wau,

1 I am told by Dr. Evans-Pritchard that most of these so-called "Anuak", lying between the Ngok Dinka and Nasser, are really Balak Dinka.
2 Not to be confused with the "Rumbek Jur". See footnote above.
3 See footnote on Bviri above.
that is to say, on the Belanda circular road and on the Bo-Tembura road. There is a further small detachment of them on the Kuru River near Deim Zubeir. Their language (Dhe Bor), both in pronunciation and in grammar, has been strongly influenced by Bviri, spoken by the "Mvegumba" section of the Belanda.

Among the swamps north of Wau, between the Jur and the Lol rivers, lives a peculiar tribe of expert canoemen, known as the "Jur Wir" (= strangers of the river) or MANANGEER. Their language is supposed to be a dialect of Shilluk, though they all know Dinka as well.

**Fung Province**

There are some peculiar and little known people, commonly classed under the general name "Burun", who inhabit several hills in Dar Fung, and whose dialects reveal a startling vocabulary resemblance to the Nilotic languages. No grammar material being to hand, it is impossible to determine which Nilotic language is implicated, but various authorities who have studied their customs and their history (such as it is) point to their being the remnants of a long-ago Shilluk invasion, left behind when the main body retreated.1

These people inhabit the following hills, and are sometimes named after them (or vice versa; words in italics are known tribal names):—

Northern section: Maiak, Surkum, Jerok, Mufwa; Kurmuk, Kudul, Ragreig, Abuldugu; Mughaja, Tullok.

Southern section: Ulu, Gerawi.

Also the tribes Meban ("Gura"), and the Jumjum inhabiting Khor Jumjum and the hills Tunya, Terta, and Wadega.

The Burun languages are quite distinct from those of the Berta, the Ingassana, and the Gumus ("Hameg").

**Mongalla Province**

There is a section of Anuak (1,150 taxpayers) on Lofon (Lepul) Hill at Lokoro (north-east of Torit), whose language is almost identical with that of the Anuak in Upper Nile Province. These people are

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1 This contention is vigorously opposed by Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, pp. 415–422, who relies largely on cephalic index, both of the present inhabitants and of the early inhabitants (700 B.C.). Both are found to be mesaticephalic with typical prognathous negroid faces, whereas the Nilotes are dolichocephalic, and in many cases, especially among the Shilluk, "with long shapely faces, thin lips, noses anything but coarse, and well-modelled foreheads."
usually called "Lofon" or "Berri", but call themselves Päri or Lokoro.¹

Acholi (Log Aycyoli) is spoken in the Opari District of Mongalla Province and on the Acholi Hills. At one time it was thought that all the non-Madi tribes of this district were Acholi, but investigation has recently brought to light the fact that more than half these Acholi-speakers really belong to the Lotuko family, while the rest are mostly Anuak. Consequently the Acholi spoken in the Sudan is not of the purest.

The Acholi proper (620 taxpayers) are to be found (mostly in the minority) under the following chiefs in Opari district:—

- Chief Odouro . . . Acholi-Agula.
- Chief Aburi . . . Acholi and Latuko.
- Chief Ollaya . . . Acholi and Anuak.
- Chief Paito . . . Acholi and Anuak.
- Chief Okec . . . Acholi and non-Shilluk Lango.
- Chief Ongiro . . . Acholi and Latuko.

The Anuak element (404 taxpayers) predominates over the Acholi element under Chiefs Ollaya (Anuak-Gila) and Paito (Anuak-Farajok). The other sections, apart from that under Chief Odouro, are predominantly Nilo-Hamitic.

Uganda Protectorate

The purest form of Acholi is spoken in the Chua and Gulu districts of the Northern Province of Uganda, although Acholi are to be found scattered throughout most Provinces. The Uganda Acholi number 137,792.

South of the Acholi are the Lango (pronounced laço) (176,406), mostly in the Lango District of the Eastern Province, although there is a large section (some 10,000) in Paranga County of Gulu District (Northern Province).

The Alur (Ja Luo) (80,639) live for the most part north of Lake Albert in the West Nile District. There is another section of them across the border in Belgian Congo, stretching west from Mahaji (67,963).

The languages of these tribes are very closely allied.

The "Chopi" (Jo Pa Luo) (4,701) living mostly in Gulu and Bunyoro districts of Northern Province also belong to this group.

¹ According to Driberg ("Lafon Hill," Sudan Notes and Records, 1925) the Päri are divided into three sections; the Pugéri (of Shilluk origin), and the Boi and the Kor (of Anuak origin).
Kenya Colony

The Nilotic Kavirondo or Jaluo (470,867) are to be found on the north-east corner of Lake Victoria. Their language (Dho Luo) is quite closely related to Acholi.

Acholi and the southern languages form a sub-group by themselves. By a process of simplification they have lost some of the Nilotic characteristics, both in pronunciation and in grammar.

ANALYSIS OF THE NILOTIC LANGUAGES

1. Nilotic languages are monosyllabic.

2. The Nilotic word consists for the most part of consonant + vowel (or diphthong) + consonant.

3. Formative elements are few, but the Nilotic word is inflected by internal change, although the characteristic prefixes and suffixes of Hamitic and Bantu are missing. Nouns show plural (and in Dinka-Nuer case as well) and verb stems show voice or species in the following ways:

   By change in vowel quality e.g. a > e etc.
   By change in vowel length a > aa
   By change in voice quality a > a (i.e. squeezed voice > breathy voice)
   By change in voice pitch å > à (high tone > low tone)
   By change in final consonant 1 > t
   w > th.

(Here one might well have a case for vanished suffixes.)

Another characteristic of this form of inflexion is that analogy plays little or no part; every word has its own way of expressing plurality, etc., and can use or reverse any of the above processes or any combination of them in doing so, so that no rules can be laid down.

4. There is no grammatical gender.

5. Intonation is present to a high degree, but is more grammatical and emotional than semantic.

6. The Nilotic languages have a peculiar pronunciation of their own which at once distinguishes them from all other sorts of languages. The consonants are relatively simple. Two outstanding series are the dental consonants (written th, dh, and nh, and to be differentiated from the alveolar consonants t, d, and n), and the pure palatal

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1 It should be added here that Nuer uses a few suffixes as well in its inflexions.
2 Acholi and Lango make no distinction between dental and alveolar consonants while the vowel system in most of the Southern languages is much simpler than in Shilluk and Anuak.
consonants $c$ and $j$ (quite different from the Sudanic or Bantu equivalents, which resemble more the sounds in "church" and "judge"). Another outstanding characteristic is their slurred pronunciation; thus $p$ will often be pronounced like $f$, $th$ like the "th" in English "thin".

(6a) The vowel system is so complicated that it is hard to say what are the fundamental vowels and what the derived forms. On the whole there seems to be a seven vowel system at bottom, $a$, $e$, $i$, $o$, $u$, but with many varieties. The most striking of the derived vowels are the "centralized" vowels:—under certain conditions, governed mostly by grammar, a centralized form of a vowel (i.e. a form approaching the neutral vowel $a$) will be used instead of the normal vowel. "Umlaut" of $a$ by a following $i$ or $u$ is absent however. Diphthongs are very common. Length, tone, and voice quality\(^1\) also enter in.

(7) Dinka has a noun formative in $a$-; the Sudanic tendency to combine words is strong throughout the Nilotic languages.

(8) As stated above, plurality is expressed by internal change. In Nuer it is sometimes expressed by the suffix -$nã$ or -$ni$, and in Acholi by the suffix -$i$.

(9) Case in Shilluk is shown by position in the sentence. In Dinka and especially Nuer some cases are shown by inflexion of the noun as well. In all languages it is sometimes shown by change in the verb stem.

(10) There are many derived verb species, mostly formed by internal change (Ablaut).

(11) The verb conjugation for person consists in merely pronoun + verb stem, except in Nuer, which denotes person by suffix and internal change in a Hamitic manner.

(12) Tenses are few in number and correspond in usage to the Sudanic tenses.

(13) Not only is there a distinct passive voice, but also two active voices, one for use with definite objects, and the other for indefinite objects or when no object is expressed.\(^2\) It is interesting to note,

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\(^1\) I am interested to hear that Dr. Ida Ward, in her researches in Nigeria, came lately across a tribe which also distinguishes words by means of voice quality: The ABEUA in the Niger Delta. This phenomenon is also suspected in Kalabari. Neither language shows any vocabulary or grammar affinities with the Nilotic languages.

\(^2\) This phenomenon is also to be found in Hausa, Ful, and Nubian. See also the Nilo-Hamitic languages.
however, that Nuer forms its passive in a Sudanic manner—by a circumlocution involving the 3rd pers. plur. pronoun.

In Shilluk, Anuak, and “Jur” (Luo) the passive is used whenever possible in preference to the active. In Dinka one form is as popular as the other. In Acholi and the Uganda dialects the passive is hardly ever used.

(14) The word order is variant.

Shilluk: Object + passive verb + subject.
Acholi: Subject + verb + object.
Nuer: Subject + verb (with suffix) + object.

In Dinka the important noun is placed first and the verb is active or passive according as to whether the noun is the subject or object of the action. Thus: Subject + active verb + object.

Object + passive verb + subject.

When auxiliary particles are used, the word order in Dinka and Nuer is affected. Thus

Dinka: Subject + particle + object + active verb.
Nuer: Particle + subject + object + verb.

(and the particle in Nuer is inflected for person).

(15) The possessor follows the possessed, and in Eastern Dinka and Acholi there are connecting particles. In Nuer there is no connecting particle, but the possessor is inflected.

(16) The adjective follows the noun it qualifies.

(17) “Descriptive Adverbs” (except in Acholi) are noticeably absent.

Leaving Acholi out of account for the moment, the Nilotic languages show a fairly equal blending of Sudanic and Hamitic traits, with, in addition, peculiarities in phonetics and word structure common to neither language family. One might almost be tempted to class the Nilotic languages as Sudano-Hamitic. It should be noted that Nuer has the most Hamitic affinities and Shilluk the least. Acholi, in its course of simplification, due largely to its use as a lingua franca, has lost the typical Nilotic pronunciation and the Hamitic inflexions.

1 This, however, would be to ignore the Nubian factor, which probably also plays a part. The reader is referred to Murray’s “The Nilotic Languages,” JRAI., 1920. It is interesting to note, in passing, that the undeniable Hamitic element in the Nilotic languages tallies well with Professor and Mrs. Seligman’s description of these people as being, both in cranial structure and in culture, strongly hamiticized. (See Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, chap. i.)
THE NILO-HAMITIC LANGUAGES

The Nilo-Hamitic speakers inhabit the southern portion of the Southern Sudan (Mongalla Province) and are to be found also in Uganda and Kenya. In fact the majority of these people live in Kenya, and the probability is that they have overflowed into the Sudan.

The Sudan representatives fall into three groups, the Bari group, comprising the languages spoken on the Nile and west of it to the Congo border, the Lotuko group, spoken on the hills east of the Nile, and the Topotha group, spoken east of Lotuko as far as Lake Rudolf. The last two groups have much in common with each other and with the Turkana, Suk, Nandi, Masai, and Tatoga languages of Kenya and Uganda, while the Bari group shows most Sudanic influence.

8. THE BARI DIALECTS

The BARI proper (7,512 taxpayers) extend along both banks of the Nile from Rejaf northwards to Terrakekka, including Juba, Mongalla, Lado, and Gondokoro (the last three places being now mere sites of old settlements). Bari is the literary language for the group.

The POJULU ("FAJELU") (3,446 taxpayers) lie inland and west of the Bari between Juba and Yei, and extend as far north as the Moru-speaking ' Böliba'.

The KAKWA (5,997 taxpayers) are to be found mostly in Yei district. There is another colony the other side of the border in Belgian Congo (10,802), and a fair number (16,515) in Uganda (Kobboko County of West Nile District and Gimara County of Gulu District). The Congo dialect, which differs considerably from the Sudan dialect, has a literature of its own, and a beginning was made a few years ago to make Sudan Kakwa a literary language.

The KUKU (3,972 taxpayers) live mostly on the Kajé Kaji plateau, south-west of Rejaf. A few (1,123) overlap into Gulu District, Relli County, Uganda.

The NYEPU ("Nyefu") (546 taxpayers) live between the Kuku

1 The term "Nilo-Hamitic" must be taken here in its strictly linguistic sense. Ethnologically and culturally the Shilluk, Nuer, etc., are Nilo-Hamitic, and the Western Bari speakers Sudanic.

2 The Rejaf Conference Report mentions 8,000 Bari living in the Belgian Congo, but I have been unable to find any support for this statement. The Belgian Government statistics, however, give two sections of "Bari" (with alternative name "Bale") one, 1,149, being a sub-section of the Lugwara, and the other, 1,629, living in Mamvu Monbutu territory. There are also the Bari-Logo, with a similar name.
and the Bari, of whom they are probably a sub-section—the languages being practically identical.

The Nyangwara (2,264 taxpayers) are to be found mostly in Amadi District, east of the Pøjulu. A few live near Rejaf.

The Mondari (‘‘Mandari’’) (2,353 taxpayers) live in Amadi District, north of the Terrakekka road, and extend from Tali to the Nile. They are bordered on the north by the Aliab Dinka, whom they much resemble in appearance and culture.

The Shir live on the east bank of the Nile opposite the Mondari, of whom they are probably an offshoot.

The languages of all these people are so closely related as to be mutually understandable; the western languages are obviously dialects of Bari, and these people are usually referred to as the ‘‘Bari Speakers’’.

10. THE LOTUKO DIALECTS

The country immediately east of the Bari is a very difficult one to define tribally, as it consists of plains dotted over with small hills, on which live related tribes, speaking a multitude of dialects of the same language group. Nearly every investigator of tribal distribution in this area has produced a fresh number of tribal names, discountenancing the evidence of his predecessors. The cause of this is that many of these people name themselves and their dialects after their home villages or hills, while others assume the names bestowed upon them by their neighbours. Consequently it is not uncommon to find two men from the same village swearing to two entirely different tribal names.

The Latuko¹ (3,105 taxpayers) live in the plains around Torit, mostly to the north and east. Their language, or rather the Torit dialect (as there are some five main dialects of Lotuko) is the literary language.

The ‘‘Lokoiya’’ (2,450 taxpayers) live between the Latuko and the Bari, on and about two hills, Lirya and Lueh; consequently the two sub-tribes call themselves and their dialects Erya and Owe respectively, although both sections own to the name Oghoriok (pronounced oyoriok) as well. (The name ‘‘Lokoiya’’ is of foreign origin.) Their language is most representative of the district.

The Koruk (3,948 taxpayers) live mostly between the Lokoiya and the Latuko on the hills Longairo, Imuruk, and Ifoto. They are often referred to as the ‘‘Hill Latuko’’.

¹ Singular: Lotuko.
The LAPIT ("Lofit") (1,895 taxpayers) live on the Lafit range of hills, north-east of Torit.

The DONGOTONO (684 taxpayers) live on the Dongotono Hills, south-east of Torit.

The LANGO \(^1\) (3,872) live on the Imatong Mountains (south of Torit on the Sudan border), and on the southern parts of the Dongotono Hills. There are a great number of varying dialects of Lango, named after the various tribal sites, like Ikoto, Logiri, Logoforok, Madial (the last and most divergent dialect being found on a hill south of the Dongotono Hills). It is probable that the word "Lango" is a nickname; the people themselves have no collective name for their dialects.

Driberg\(^2\) also makes mention of the LOKATHAN ("Bira") and NYANGIYA, on the Acholi Hills, south-east of the Dongotono, to whom they are related.

It must not be imagined that each hill specializes in one particular dialect. Lotuko villages are to be found in the Dongotono Hills, and Koriuk villages in the Lango language sphere; so that the exact distribution of the speakers of any one dialect is almost impossible to determine.

Many of the so-called "Acholi" in Opari District belong actually to sub-sections of the Lotuko-speakers. Thus:

- The Ileriji under Chief Aburi (near the Obbo Forest) speak a dialect of Lotuko.
- The Obolong under Chief Lokwat (south of the hill Imurok) speak a dialect of Koriuk, though some hold them to be Lokoiya.
- The Ofirika under Chief Ongai speak a dialect of Lokoiya.
- The Lolibai under Chief Ongiro, and the Logiri under Chief Okec are related to the Logiri of Ikoto, and speak a dialect of Lango.

All the Lotuko languages and dialects are mutually intelligible, with the exception perhaps of one or two Lango dialects (like Madial). On the whole one may say that Lotuko itself and Koriuk form an entity, while Lokoiya, Lopit, Dongotono, and some of the Lango dialects have characteristics in common not to be found in Lotuko.

10. THE TOPOTA-TURKANA GROUP

The country between the Dongotono Hills, and the Didinga-Boya Range is scarcely populated, and east of the Boya Hills no villages

\(^1\) Not to be confused with the Shilluk-speaking Lango of Uganda. See above.
\(^2\) In "Lotuko Dialects", *American Anthropologist*, 1932.
are to be seen until the Thingaita River and Kapoeta, where live the Topotha. The intervening plains are merely grazing and hunting grounds.

The Topotha ("Taposa", "Dabossa") (5,783 taxpayers) live mostly along the Thingaita and Lokalyan rivers, west and east of Kapoeta. They are a semi-nomadic people, and their exact habitat has never been properly defined. They may be found at different times of the year on the borders of the Sudan and Kenya Colony.

The Jive, an offshoot of the Topotha, live between the Topotha and Pibor Post, but their exact locality is impossible to tell, as they are constantly on the move. There is another section among the Western Turkana and Dodoth.

Another offshoot of the Topotha, the Nyangatom (or Donyiro or Bume, it is uncertain which is the true name) live over the Abyssinian border, north of the Marille, on the Kibish and Omo rivers. The "Ng-Kera" are also mentioned as living here.

The Turkana (58,478) are to be found mostly in Kenya between Lake Rudolf and the Kenya-Uganda border, although they overflow into the eastern corner of Mongalla Province and the neighbouring corner of Abyssinia as far north as the Tirma highlands. There appear to be two main divisions—the Billai and the Hyisirr.

The "Karamojong" (or "Karamoja") lie south-west of the Turkana, partly in Kenya Colony and partly in Karamoja District of the Eastern Province of Uganda Protectorate (63,849).

The following further members of the Topotha-Turkana group are not mentioned in any of the census returns, and it is probable that they are merely subsections of the Karamojong:

The "Dodoth" are supposed to live just north of the Karamojong.

The "Nyipori" are supposed to live on the Nyangeya Hills on the Karamoja-Chua boundary.

The identity and locality of the "Muno" and the "Teuth" ("Teusa" or "Wandorobo") is uncertain.

The languages Topotha, Turkana, and Karamojong are so much alike as to be almost identical, and the speakers have no difficulty at all in understanding each other's dialect.

1 Since there are at least two "Omo" rivers in Abyssinia, it should be mentioned here that the river referred to above is that which flows south into the north end of Lake Rudolf.
NILO-HAMITIC LANGUAGES OUTSIDE THE SUDAN

The chain of Nilo-Hamitic languages to the south can be given here only very sketchily, without an attempt at exact grouping. The two main groups here seem to be the Nandi-Tatoga group and the Masai group. Authorities differ among themselves in the allocation of the smaller dialects, but on the whole the grouping is as follows:

THE MASAI GROUP

Uganda Protectorate

The Teso (387,643) live mostly in Teso district, but some 40,000 of these are scattered through Bugwere, Budama, and Busoga districts—all in the Eastern Province of Uganda.

The Kumam (43,916) are to be found in Lango District (Eastern Province) mostly in the counties Kwania, Kaberamaido, Kalaki, and Dokolo, i.e. between the Teso and the Lango.

Both these languages are said to belong to the Masai group.

Kenya Colony

The Masai proper stretch from Uasin Gishu, north of the Nandi, well into Tanganyika Territory, as far south as lat. 6. The Kenya census gives the following sub-tribes of the Masai:

Purko (19,393); Loita (2,917); Il Damat (1,476); Siria (4,624); Uasin Gishu (3,920); Matapato (3,228); Dalalekotok (1,301); Kaputiei (2,403); Lodokilani (1,258); Sigirari (756); Ngurman (201); Salei (49); Loitokitok (4,070); Kekonyukei (2,469); Dorobo (1,400).

The Samburu (10,128) also speak a Masai-like language.

Tanganyika Territory

The Masai in Tanganyika (including the Kwavi) are given in the Tanganyika census returns as living in the following districts:

Masai (28,742); Handeni (1,908); Kondoa (1,537); Pare (1,029); other districts (2,181).

The Arusha (26,703), speaking a language like Masai, live at and about Mount Meru and the town Arusha.

1 Struck, for example, places Suk in the Masai group and Kwafi and Ndarobo in the Nandi-Tatoga group. Other tribes of his which I have been unable to follow up are the Elgumi, speaking Masai, and the Japtulel, Sabei, and Burkeneji, speaking Nandi dialects. (See Ueber die Sprachen der Tatoga und Irakulente and compare Hollis, The Masai, Oxford, 1905.)
The Nandi-Tatoga Group

Kenya Colony

There seem to be four divisions of the Nandi themselves (according to Hollis)\(^1\):—

The Nandi proper (51,260) live on the Nandi Escarpment, east of the Kavirondo on Lake Victoria; also to the north.

The Kipsigis ("Lumbwa") (72,745) live in Lumbwa District, south of the Nandi, of whom they are probably an offshoot. South of them live the Buret and south of these the Sotik, in the districts Buret and Sotik.

The Elgonyi (4,457) live on the Uganda border near Mt. Elgon.

In the Kerio Valley live the Elgeyu (36,078) north-east of the Nandi, the Kamasia (or "Tuken") (31,348), east of the Elgeyo, and the Mutei.

The Njemps (2,221) near Lake Baringo also probably speak a Nandi dialect, although Hollis does not mention them.\(^2\)

All these languages are so closely related as to be regarded as dialects.

The Suk (real name Pokwut) (24,117) live north of the Nandi speakers, and south-west of the Turkana, with the Marakwet south of them. Beech holds their language to be almost a dialect of Nandi.\(^3\)

Tanganyika Territory

The Tatoga (Taturu) (3,560) lie south-west of the Masai between Lakes Manyara and Narasa, in districts Manyoni, Musoma, and Mkalama.

The Masai group and the Nandi-Tatoga group show strong affinities with each other and with the Lotuko-Topotha-Turkana groups; also, but to a lesser extent, with the Bari group; and ultimately (but in vocabulary alone) with the Nilotic languages.

Analysis of the Nilo-Hamitic Languages

(1 & 2) The most typical Nilo-Hamitic word stem, when shorn of its prefixes and suffixes, seems to be disyllabic and to consist in consonant + vowel + consonant + vowel (the two vowels being dissimilar). Naturally, where Nilotic stems are found, they have Nilotic monosyllabic form: consonant + vowel + consonant.

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\(^1\) The Nandi, their Language and Folklore, Oxford, 1909.

\(^2\) Probably another name for the Mutei, as the localities of these two alleged tribes seem to coincide.

\(^3\) The Suk, their Language and Folklore, Oxford, 1911.
(3) The Nilo-Hamitic word is highly inflected by means of prefixes and suffixes, especially the latter. Analogy plays a considerable role, so that rules may fairly easily be drawn up for the use of these adjuncts.

(4) Grammatical gender is present, to a stronger or weaker degree in all the languages, and no language has more than two genders. Gender is not expressed in the noun or adjective itself, however, but in the pronoun affix. Cases of Polarity are also to be found (see under definition of Hamitic language).

(5) Dynamic accent (accompanied by high or falling tone) plays a far bigger part in grammar than syllable pitch. Bari retains distinct traces of inherent tone, but it is safe to predict that soon all these languages will be entirely stress-languages and not tone-languages in the Sudanic sense.

(6) The Hamitic "emphatic" sounds are absent; so too the Sudanic kp and gb,\(^1\) and the Nilotic th, dh, and nh series. Bari distinguishes the "glottal" consonants 'b and 'd from normal b and d. The other languages make no such distinction, but their normal b and d consonants appear to be slightly implosive.

The Nilotic palatal sounds (c and j) are represented by forms of s and dj in Bari and Lotuko, fading off to ts and dz in Congo Kakwa in the west, and to dental fricatives (as in English "thin" and "then") in Topotha in the east.

One almost Nilotic characteristic in these languages (with the exception of the Bari dialects) is a tendency to soften and slur consonants (usually between vowels). Thus: t > d; p > b or v; f > v; k > x or g; x > y; so that the orthographist is often hard put when to distinguish a genuine soft sound from a slurred one.

(6a) Bari has a well defined and logical vowel system; there are ten vowels, five of which are "tense" (o, e, i, o, u) and the other five "lax" (a, e, i, o, u), and the rules for vowel sequence in prefixes and suffixes are such that a tense vowel and a lax vowel may never occur in adjoining syllables. This system gradually breaks down through the Bari dialects to the west, where a Sudanic simplicity ultimately reigns. There are no long vowels or true diphthongs in the Bari group.

In the other Nilo-Hamitic languages vowels seem to be as numerous

\(^1\) In the Western Bari dialects, especially Pøjulu and Kakwa, the kw and gw and nw sounds of Bari have been "Sudanized" to kp and gb and nwm.
as in the Nilotic languages, but are not governed by the peculiar processes (such as centralization, length, breathy voice) which govern Nilotic vowels. Diphthongs are very common.

In all the Nilo-Hamitic languages, ”Umlaut” of a by a following i or u is common.

(7) There are many noun formatives; Sudanic noun combinations (without intervening particles) are also found, but are not common.

(8) The suffixes for the singular and plural of nouns are multitudinous, and seem reminiscent of some class system, since broken down.

(9) Case is shown either by position in the sentence or by preposition. Some cases are shown by suffixes applied to the verb.

(10) Each verb has many derived species, formed mostly by suffixes.

(11) The verb conjugation is very elaborate in most of the Nilo-Hamitic languages—notably Lotuko, Topotha, and Masai, where suffixes denote person as well as tense. In Bari and Nandi a Sudanic simplicity prevails.

(12) In Bari, tense formation and application is definitely Sudanic. In the other languages, especially Masai, Hamitic prefixes and suffixes abound.

(13) In most languages there is a distinct form of the verb for the passive, and also for the two active voices—formed by suffixes. The passive, however, is not preferred to the active as in some of the Nilotic languages.

(14) The sentence order in Bari is subject + verb + object. In the other languages it is typically Hamitic: Verb (inflected) + subject + object.

(15) The possessor follows the possessed in the genitive construction, and is always joined to it by a relative particle.

(16) The adjective follows the noun it qualifies.

(17) ”Descriptive Adverbs” are very common.

Apart from the rather doubtful phenomenon of sound-slurring, the only claim these languages have to the term “Nilo-” lies in the formidable array of words which, when shorn of their Hamitic prefixes

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1 Note that in Masai and Nandi there is no passive form proper, but a form derived from the third person active, after the manner of Sudanic languages.

2 In some locative expressions the old Sudanic construction is to be met. Thus in Bari, i mukök na mere (at the foot of the mountain) may also be rendered i mere mukök. In Nandi: mi tulwed yony.
and suffixes, reveal undeniable Nilotic stems. Take the following examples from Shilluk, Bari, and Masai:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Shilluk</th>
<th>Bari</th>
<th>Masai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eye</td>
<td>waŋ pl. nyin</td>
<td>k-Ø-n-e pl. k-Ønke-n</td>
<td>enq-Ø-n u pl. iq-Ønke-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cow</td>
<td>dhyŋ pl. dhok</td>
<td>ki-Ønø pl. ki-suq</td>
<td>enq-Ønø pl. iq-Ønø-fu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crocodile</td>
<td>nyan</td>
<td>ki-nyan</td>
<td>ol-ki-nyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to die</td>
<td>thou</td>
<td>thwa-Øn</td>
<td>tua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to hear</td>
<td>liŋ</td>
<td>yin-Øa</td>
<td>-niŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to count</td>
<td>kwan</td>
<td>ken-dya</td>
<td>-ken-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(It is worthy of note that relatively more Nilotic stems are found among Nilo-Hamitic nouns than among verbs and adjectives.)

For the rest the languages are fundamentally Hamitic. Bari, however, although its word structure is Hamitic, shows strong Sudanic affinities in pronunciation and in grammar, while there are enough vocabulary similarities with Moru-Madi to warrant further investigation.

11. THE DIDINGA-BEIR GROUP

This group of languages is very puzzling to the investigator, as it seems impossible to link it with any other group.

The Didinga (1,767 taxpayers) live almost exclusively in the Didinga Hills, east of the Dongotono Hills and just north of the Uganda border.

The Longarim (752 taxpayers) inhabit the Boya Hills immediately north of the Didinga. These two tribes thus help to cut off the Lotuko speakers from the Topotha speakers.

The Mongalla tribal analysis of 1932 adds to this group a tribe called the Birra (156 taxpayers) living in Lotuko District.¹

The "Beir" (Murle, also known as "Jiye" or "Ajibba") (30,000) live well north of the Longarim on the Pibor River between Pibor Post (Upper Nile Province) and Mount Kathangor, and are separated from them by a wide stretch of swampy country. Their language is more like Longarim than Didinga, though all three languages are mutually understandable.

On the Abyssinian border more tribes are to be found which are suspected of belonging to this group:

There is supposed to be another settlement of Murle on the Boma Plateau.

On the same plateau, north of the Kichepo, and also on the Omo Plateau.

¹ It is possible that these people are Driberg's "Lokathan" in which case their language belongs to the Lotuko group. See p. 887.
River, live the Epeta (or Kapeta), who are said to speak a dialect of Didinga.

The Surma of the same district are supposed to speak the same language, though racially they are different.

The Nyikaroma and Ngera, over the border near Mount Tid, are also said to speak Didinga.

Information concerning these eastern tribes is scarce and conflicting.

**Analysis of the Didinga-Beir Group**

1. The words are very long, but the roots, on the whole, seem to be disyllabic.
2. The popular form of the root seems to be consonant + vowel + consonant + vowel.
3. These languages are more highly inflected than the Nilo-Hamitic languages; suffixes are used more than prefixes.
4. There is no grammatical gender (except in a few loan-words).
5. Neither intonation nor dynamic accent seems to have semantic or grammatical function (but see (13) below).
6. The acoustic effect resembles that of Topotha. ‘b and ‘d seem the normal variants of b and d. Dental fricatives are common, so are palatal sounds.
6a. The vowel system is simpler than in Topotha. Vowel length is significant, and diphthongs common.
7. There are many noun formatives.
8. The suffixes for singular and plural are as numerous as in any Nilo-Hamitic language, and again seem to point to some old class system.
9. Case relationship is shown by suffixes, applied to the noun or to the verb, according to the case. There are many more case-endings here than in the Nilo-Hamitic languages.
10. There are many derived verbal species, usually formed by means of suffixes.
11. Person in verb conjugation is shown by prefixes and suffixes.
12. Tenses are many and complex, involving the use of prefixes, suffixes, and adverbial auxiliaries.
13. According to Driberg, the passive is indicated by changes

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1 "The Didinga Language," MSOS., 1931.
in vowel length or intonation. My own impression (based on the study of Beir) is that the passive idea simply does not enter in. Context, assisted sometimes by word-order, gives the clue as to who is the agent and who the sufferer of an action, but there is no actual formal distinction in the verb itself, the intonation and length variations being connected with emphasis. Driberg admits that "grammatically there is no difference between the conjugation of the passive and active voices".

(13a) There are two main forms of the verb; one I should call the "Indefinite" (Driberg's "Aorist"), which indicates the action of the verb with no regard to time, and the other "Definite" (Driberg's "Perfect", including the Imperative), which is especially connected with the completion of the action. Each form has a fundamental stem of its own (thus on is the Indefinite and tayu the Definite form of the verb "to sleep" in both Didinga and Beir), and each stem is used with a specific set of tense particles—although these sometimes overlap.

This phenomenon, as may easily be seen, has nothing to do with the Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic active "voices", but is similar in function to what has already been described in the Sudanic languages.

(14) The sentence order is verb (inflected) + subject + object, although the construction verb + object + subject for emphasis may also be found, especially in quasi-passive sentences.

(15) The possessor follows the possessed in the genitive construction, and is usually linked to it by means of a (relative) particle.

(16) The adjective follows the noun it qualifies, but precedes it when predicative, i.e. it behaves like a normal verb.

(17) There are many descriptive adverbs.

The general data given above is overwhelmingly Hamitic, yet one has hesitated in the past to assign Didinga-Beir definitely to this family, owing to complete lack of affinities with other Hamitic languages, both in vocabulary and in formative elements (although this may be said of most of the groups within the Sudanic family also). Driberg describes the languages as "incorporating elements common to both the Hamitic and Nilotic families, with a third (possibly Semitic) element intruding". It is true that Beir, owing probably to its proximity to Anuak, has a relatively high percentage of Nilotic words in its vocabulary, but otherwise the Nilotic elements in this group are very small.
OTHER ABYSSINIAN FRONTIER TRIBES

There are many other tribes on or just over the Abyssinian border, about whom little or nothing is known. Only a few will be mentioned here:—

The DATHANIC ("MARILLE") live north of Lake Rudolf, on the Omo River above Sanderson's Gulf. Their language is probably Hamitic, in that in grammatical behaviour, though not in vocabulary, it is somewhat similar to Galla.¹

The TID, TIRMA, MEINO, and KICHEPO are Boma Plateau tribes, or rather geographical sections of one tribe, speaking an unlocated language.

Among these frontier tribes are probably other speakers of the Topotha or Didinga language groups, but the information about them is too scrappy and contradictory to be reliable at the present stage of investigation.

The above article should be regarded as a companion treatise to my previous article "The Linguistic Situation in the Southern Sudan" (Africa, Jan., 1934) and as an introduction to my forthcoming linguistic series on "Language Groups of the Southern Sudan". Unfortunately I have been unable to include in this treatise the languages and language groups of Darfur, Kordofan, and Dar Nuba. These constitute a complete study in themselves, but would possibly also throw interesting sidelights on the Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic languages.²

¹ This conclusion was arrived at after seeing the MS. notes on this language, compiled by Mr. Shackleton of the Kenya Political Service.