

THE HIGH UNADVANCED VOWELS OF PROTO-TANO-CONGO

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Capo (above) argues that there are no grounds for recognizing the [+High, -Advanced Tongue Root] vowels $\underline{ɪ}$, $\underline{ɔ}$ either in Hwe or in proto-Gbe, and suggests that this raises doubts about my hypothesis (Stewart 1971:203-4) that languages such as Akan inherited these vowels from the latest common ancestor of the Kwa languages. I show here that if we take the proto-language in question to be proto-Tano-Congo (Tano-Congo equals Benue-Congo plus Kwa minus Kru), then a regular $\underline{ɪ}$, $\underline{ɔ}$ = $\underline{ɪ}$, $\underline{ɔ}$ correspondence between Akan and proto-Bantu confirms my hypothesis; and that Capo's doubts are consequently unjustified.

Capo (ci-dessus) avance qu'il n'y a pas de place pour les voyelles [+Fermées, -ATR] $\underline{ɪ}$, $\underline{ɔ}$ ni en Hwe ni en proto-Gbe, et suggère que cela soulève des doutes à propos de mon hypothèse (Stewart 1971:203-4) que les langues telles que Akan auraient hérité ces voyelles de l'ancêtre commun le plus récent des langues Kwa. Je montre ici que si l'on accepte que la proto-langue en question est proto-Tano-Congo (Tano-Congo égale Benue-Congo plus Kwa moins Kru), alors une correspondance régulière $\underline{ɪ}$, $\underline{ɔ}$ = $\underline{ɪ}$, $\underline{ɔ}$ entre Akan et proto-Bantu confirme mon hypothèse; et que par conséquent les doutes de Capo ne sont pas justifiés.

0. INTRODUCTION

Capo, in his article in this issue, expresses reservations about my reconstruction of the vowels of the latest common ancestor of the Kwa languages. He fails, however, to take account of any publication more recent than Stewart (1971), the relevant section of which was first circulated in 1969 under the title "Cross-height vowel harmony in the Kwa languages". I shall begin, therefore, by summarizing the progress that has been made since then; I shall deal first with the implications of the Bennett and Sterk (hereafter (B & S) (1977) classification for the questions of what the latest common ancestor of the Kwa languages is and of how we should set about reconstructing it; second with my claim (Stewart 1970) that proto-Bantu, which shares that latest common ancestor, had the vowels $\underline{ɪ}$, $\underline{ɔ}$ and not \underline{e} , \underline{o} as Guthrie and Greenberg both supposed; third with Guthrie's reasons for positing \underline{e} , \underline{o} ;

