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Genealogical and Areal Linguistic Relations in the Kalahari Basin

Since January 2010 researchers from 6 projects from 5 different countries have joined forces to untangle the historical relations among the Non-Bantu linguistic populations in southern Africa within the cross-disciplinary EUROABEL project “The Kalahari Basin area: a ‘Sprachbund’ on the verge of extinction” (<http://www2.hu-berlin.de/kba/>). While the relevant language groups are conventionally subsumed under the unsubstantiated concept of a “Khoisan” language family there is alternative evidence that they share certain traits because of convergence processes within a geographical area called “Kalahari Basin”. Deciding between the two alternative historical hypotheses is the major problem that the collaborative research project network has set out to address. The workshop at ICHL attempts to disseminate first results of the project network and invites other scholars also working in this area to present their research pertinent to the above historical problem. The workshop thus addresses one of the major current issues in historical linguistics, namely of disentangling genealogical and areal linguistic relationships.