

**Oropom Etymological Lexicon:  
Exploring an extinct, unclassified Ugandan language  
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*This is a paper in progress. Readers' input is extremely welcome.*

The oral tradition of the Karimojong, an Eastern Nilotic tribe of northeastern Uganda, tells of an aboriginal people called the Oropom, whom the Karimojong are said to have defeated and dispossessed. The local administrator J. G. Wilson reported in 1970 that he had found some people among the Karimojong who claimed Oropom descent; practically all of them speak Karimojong, but, apparently, a few old women claimed to remember some words of the Oropoms' original language. The 97-word list he put together, though it contains a substantial number of Karimojong words and has not been confirmed by any independent witness, remains to this day the only published fieldwork on the Oropom language. In the 1970s, Bernd Heine (p. c.) went to Karamoja to investigate Wilson's report, but found no signs of Oropom people, let alone an Oropom language. Judging by the great age of Wilson's reported informants 35 years ago, it is almost certainly too late to obtain any further information on it even if Wilson's report is correct.

The genetic affiliation of Wilson's Oropom wordlist remains unclear, although some observations have been made in previous literature. This paper provides an etymology (where possible) for each item of the wordlist, which appears to derive from a curious mixture of diverse sources, as well as summarizing the information that can be deduced from it. Karimojong itself (a member of the Eastern Nilotic Teso-Turkana dialect chain) accounts for at least a fifth of the words, and at least a seventh are from Kalenjin (a Southern Nilotic dialect chain bordering Karamoja on the east); the total number of Nilotic words may come to as much as half the vocabulary, if all doubtful cases are accepted. However, a substantial proportion of the list bears no apparent connection to any neighboring languages. There are three theoretically possible explanations for its patchwork character:

- gaps in the semi-speaker's memory, which she filled with other languages when pressed to provide a word she did not know;
- that the language was made up on the spot by the woman in question;
- that Wilson made it up.

While the third possibility is implausible, only further data can decide definitely between the first and second possibilities.

### **Previous literature**

Wilson 1970 provides a 97-word list compiled from an old lady named Akol, “descended from the prisoners taken by the Karimojong on the Turkwel.” He alludes to another very old woman who “claimed to be a child of one of the residual Oropom families that had remained after the break-up of the Oropom there [in Matheniko county]” and “remembered a few words of the language”, whose speech he sees as a different dialect, containing fewer Luo words than the “Turkwell dialect”. He also mentions that some Bantu words appear in the “Turkwell dialect”, and that both contain “words that are obviously Kalenjin borrowings.” Without presenting any arguments for the suggestion, he tentatively ascribes the language to the Khoisan group, presumably on the basis of their physical appearance, which he describes as “Bushmanoid”. I am indebted to Paul Whitehouse for referring me to this paper.

Elderkin 1983 compares the language to his own Hadza and Sandawe materials, coming up with 8 possible Hadza matches and 4 possible Sandawe (all mentioned in the list below), but noting similarities with Kuliak and, citing a personal communication from F. Rottland, suggesting that there may be many more Nilotic similarities. The latter point, at least, is amply confirmed below.

Wilson mentions the people (if not the language) again in Rowland & Wilson 2001, but this description is little more than a summary of his 1970 article.

Based apparently on Bernd Heine's previously mentioned fieldwork, both M. L. Bender and Roger Blench (p. c.) regard Wilson's list as spurious; Bender says that “Oropom was made up as a joke”, while Blench calls it “maybe a special or joke language, or made up to satisfy a well-meaning enquirer.”

### **Available data**

Wilson's published list consists of 97 words; of these, six (chalcedony, stone wrist bangles, neck bangles, black cooking pot, grooved design on pots, mark on forehead) were judged too obscure in nature to compare (none was to be found in any of the dictionaries consulted), leaving a working list of just 91 etymologically useful words. He alludes to unpublished data of his own; however, no other published data was found. A toponymic survey of the area might shed further light on the language, but is beyond the scope of this work.

The etymological investigations below rather suggest, although they do not prove, the existence of certain confusions in the wordlist; most conspicuously, these include a possible interchange of “hand” and “sun” (**akeleng, aca**), and a possible confusion of “lion” (**ru**) with “lying”; less probably, “water” and “oil” (**lata, konoye**) may have been interchanged as well. Likewise, the form of “seer” (**murwe**) suggests an abstract noun “sorcery” rather than an actor. However, none of these points is certain, and only further investigation could check these. Such confusions, if present, will necessarily bias any statistics given.

### Phonology and orthography

Given the extraordinary level of Karimojong influence and the circumstances described for the language, caution is necessary in supposing that it even had any autonomous phonology independent of Karimojong's any more when Wilson recorded it. However, a few general points can be deduced.

The orthographic vowels consist of: a, e, i, o, u, aa, oo, au, as well as ie and io. In all observed cases, aa and oo occur finally. The cognates observed suggest that oo is not to be read as in English; in **apintoo** it corresponds to Nandi ö (a:), while in **iyoo** it corresponds to Nandi o:. In the one cognate found for aa, it corresponds to Nandi a:. The best cognate for au (which occurs in all positions) is the still-questionable **de-au**, in which it corresponds to Karimojong o. Cases like **akopito, nakwanta, sanan, merék, meri, ki-ito, kibunte** confirm that the five single-letter vowels are more or less as in Karimojong, although in the case of o one must also add cases like **coko** and **ngoror** where it corresponds to Nandi ö. It is probable that (as for Karimojong) the vowel transcription used is inadequate to the language's vowel system.

The consonants used are: -, b, c, ch, d, g, k, j, l, m, n, ny, ng, p, r, s, t, th, w, y, as well as the clusters kw, rg, nt, lt. From this, one might speculatively generalize that the allowable clusters are liquid+stop and consonant+semivowel. **coko** confirms that, despite the isolated occurrence of ch in **chege**, c represents ch, as in Karimojong; **paja** confirms that j is also as in Karimojong. As for th, it is presumably meant as in English, but in all three cases where an etymology is available – **tuth, woth, and puthia** – it corresponds to s elsewhere; it may be an allophone of s. The dash “-” must surely correspond to a glottal stop, or at any rate a hiatus between vowels; cf. **ki-ito, de-au**. The resulting consonant chart would be:

p b    t d    c j    k g    [-]  
 m     n     ny    ng  
        s [th]  
 w     l     y  
        r

### Grammatical observations

Karimojong, like (for instance) Berber, normally obligatorily prefixes nouns with articles indicating number and gender; these are:

	Singular	Plural
<b>Feminine</b>	<i>a-</i>	<i>nga-</i>
<b>Masculine</b>	<i>e-</i>	<i>ngi-</i>
<b>Neuter</b>	<i>i-</i>	<i>ngi-</i>

In certain kinship terms, *a-* and *e-* are replaced by *lo-* and *na-* respectively; certain nouns without a singular prefix take the prefix *ta-* in the plural. At least three of the nouns below seem to feature Karimojong articles – **akopito**, **apintoo**, **emaa** – and while one could envision other explanations (compare Ik *na* “near (proximal) demonstrative, relative clause marker”), it is tempting to interpret the prefix of **nakwanta** as an error or dissimilation for *nga-*. (Many other unconfirmed possible instances can be seen below.) However, oddly enough, only one of these is a Karimojong word, while most Karimojong nouns appear without the article.

Similarly, one of the Kalenjin singular suffixes, *-ta*, can be observed in several Kalenjin words, certainly including **apintoo**, **nakwanta** and possibly **moda**, **kwolta** (and maybe even **lata**.) The (Karimojong) etymology of **kibunte** “vagina” suggests a suffix *-te*, perhaps to be sought also in **kiriente** “cooking pot”; perhaps this is to be included. Similarly, **coko** seems to be a clear occurrence, on a Kalenjin word, of the corresponding Kalenjin plural suffix, *-ka*. (Cognates of both suffixes are of course also found elsewhere in Nilotic, but the distribution and form argue for Kalenjin origin.)

The single pair **kuko** “old man” - **kukuye** “old woman” suggests some sort of feminine suffix *-ye*; perhaps the same suffix is to be sought in **kokuye** “dog”, **kongiye** “eye”, **konoye** “oil”. Of those three, however, only in the case of

**kongiye** is *-ye* certainly a suffix (and one also found on it elsewhere in Nilotic); it may be noteworthy that **kongiye**'s Teso-Turkana cognate is feminine in gender.

Historical remnants of the pan-Nilo-Saharan prefix *k-* can be found at least in **kongiye** “eye” and **ki-ito** “ear”, both probable Karimojong borrowings. The probable etymology of **kopurat** “red” suggests a prefixed *ko-*, as do some possible etymologies of **konoye** “oil” and **kokuye** “dog”; but all three cases seem weak. (This prefix is probably not to be sought in **kodo**, but the possibility should be considered.)

The etymology of **mamunyu** “father” suggests a prefix *ma-*, about which little, if anything, can be said on the basis of such scanty data; there is no obvious reason to seek this prefix in **madik** “honey”.

### Conclusions

Much of the vocabulary, including the most basic words, appears to derive straightforwardly from Karimojong and Kalenjin sources. A significant part of the remainder appears to have Eastern or Western Nilotic cognates, and either one or two animal names seem to be Kuliak. The only really notable similarities to non-Nilo-Saharan languages found here seem to be a couple of striking but isolated Hadza comparisons. However, even after this investigation, as much as half the wordlist remains unexplained.

If we take the language to be real, this suggests that the language itself was an isolate – or at any rate unrelated to any language family of the area – with substantial Kalenjin borrowings, and more recent Karimojong borrowings, possibly simply filling gaps in the speaker's memory. (For a list of languages compared, see below.) Heine's survey, less than ten years after Wilson's researches, found no evidence of the language, nor even the ethnic group, which constitutes a strong, though not conclusive, argument against this hypothesis.

If the language was made up by the “speaker”, then we would expect words gathered from other “speakers” to be substantially different. This may be testable if Wilson has retained the data he mentions from the other “dialect” of Oropom. The “speaker” would also have to have known at least Karimojong and Kalenjin, and perhaps some Luo as well. The motive would presumably have been to please the stranger asking for words, and perhaps earn a

reward; in Wilson's own article, he mentions having to deal with "a number of charlatans" after word got around that he was "on the look-out for people who had some knowledge of the language". If the Oropom themselves are a real ethnic group, then we may also expect that technical terms related to Oropom culture – such as words for cowrie shell ornament, grooved design on pots, etc. – are more likely to be "real Oropom" than commoner words which were presumably elicited through direct questioning.

If the language was made up by Wilson, then he would have to have a decent vocabulary of Karimojong and Kalenjin, a basic understanding of Karimojong grammar, and at least some materials on other Nilotic languages of the area of Karamoja and north and east, although he could be entirely ignorant of other local languages, and indeed of the concept of regular sound shifts. The more striking of the Hadza similarities could then be coincidences or deliberate red herrings. However, motive is absent. Had Wilson made up the wordlist, he would surely have included more "Khoisan" and Egyptian words, to aid his efforts, found throughout the paper, to link the Oropom to those two fascinating cultures; and his contributions in other fields appear to be respected.

Which of these is true? Only further investigation can establish the answer. The most promising lines of investigation would be the unpublished Wilson wordlists and the toponymy of the Karamoja area: if the area's previous inhabitants indeed spoke a language such as Wilson describes, one would expect at least some traces of it to remain in placenames. However, in the meantime, the second hypothesis – that all or most of the wordlist was made up by his informants – seems most plausible.

### **Wordlist**

Unless otherwise specified, words quoted are taken from the following sources:

- reconstructions of Southern Nilotic or its subfamilies from Rottland 1981; Nandi forms from Creider & Creider 2001; Bari & Lotuko from Muratori 1948; Maasai from Payne 2003;
- reconstructions of Eastern Nilotic or its subfamilies, as well as Teso forms, from Vossen 1982; Turkana from Ohta 1989; Karimojong from Farina et al. 1985;
- Western Nilotic: Alur forms from Ringe 1948; Lango forms from Noonan 1992; Labwor forms from Wayland 1931; Acoli from Muratori 1948; Luo

- from Tucker ed. Creider 1994;
- Kuliak reconstructions, as well as Nyang'i and Tepeth forms, from Heine 1976, while Ik forms quoted alone are from Heine 1999; Dorobo from Wayland 1931;
  - Nilo-Saharan reconstructions from Ehret 2001;
  - Shabo from Anbessa & Unseth 1989;
  - Hadza forms and comparisons from Elderkin 1983;
  - Sandawe from Kagaya 1993;
  - Afro-Asiatic: Ongota, Arbore, and Tsamai from Wedekind 2002; Yemsa from ed. Hayward 1990; Boraana Oromo forms from Stroomer 1995.

In addition to these, Luganda and Dahalo were compared, but yielded nothing worth quoting below. The main gap in areal representation is Central Sudanic, while Bantu is perhaps underrepresented by a single language, although the complete absence of any interesting Luganda similarities is scarcely promising.

Given the circumstances described for the language, it might reasonably be assumed that any Karimojong form is a relatively recent loanword, and should not be regarded as indicative of the language's ultimate origins. Clear Karimojong loanwords are thus italicized for ease of reference. However, several words are found in other Eastern Nilotic languages but were not found in Teso-Turkana.

**aca**: sun. Origin unclear. Several possibilities suggest themselves, including Proto-Kalenjin *\*asus*, eg Nandi *asista* / *á:si:s-tà*, *ásî:s*, *asi:s (nom.)*; *ási:s-wa*, *ási:s-wék*; Western Nilotic, eg Alur *ceŋ*, Labwor *cheng orieng*, Lango *cèŋ*; Hadza *ʔiʃo*; even, conceivably, the curious pair of Ongota *ʔa'xatʃo* and Sandawe *//? akas(u)*; none seems convincing. One might even add Proto-Semitic *\*ʔis(at)*-“fire”, or recklessly throw in Shabo *oha*, Yemsa *awa11*. But see comment under **akeleng**.

**akeleng**: hand. Origin unclear. Sandawe *tl'ung'* “hand, arm” is curiously tempting; or one might try to see a connection with Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-k<sup>3</sup>ain-* “arm, hand” (> Karimojong *akan*.) But neither suggestion seems convincing. Interestingly, if this and the previous one (**aca**) were reversed, they would be much easier to explain: one would very naturally postulate **akeleng** < Karimojong *akoloŋ* “sun” < Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-k<sup>3</sup>ɔlɔŋ*, and at least suggest **aca** < Karimojong *akan* “hand”. However, the two are not particularly close together on Wilson's list as printed.

**akopito:** hair. From Karimojong *a-qopīr* “feather” (Köhler 1970), Teso *a-kopir-ót* “feather”, Turkana *a-kopir-o* < Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-k<sup>3</sup>opir-* “feather, hair”.

**apaukoo:** foot. Origin unclear; startling resemblance with Hadza *ʔapuk<sup>w</sup>a*. Note also Proto-Kuliak *\*tak'w* “foot, leg” (Ik *tak'a* “shoe” (Crazzolara), Tepeth *tɛg* “leg”, Nyang'i *tɛ'gw* “leg”) One thinks of Proto-Nilo-Saharan *\*p<sup>h</sup>àh* “leg/foot”; yet Ehret supports this root only with Uduk *àp<sup>h</sup>p<sup>h</sup>á* “sandal, shoe” and Eastern Central Sudanic *\*pa*, and the similarity is no greater than with, for instance, Persian *pâ*.

**apintoo:** meat. From Kalenjin, with prefixed Karimojong article; cf. Nandi *bendö* /*pe:n-tâ, pé:ny; \_pany, \_pany-é:k/* < Proto-Kalenjin *\*paŋ* < Proto-Southern Nilotic *\*paŋ*.

**apirgoo:** house. Origin unclear; no obvious candidates. Cf. perhaps Proto-Kuliak *\*bɛr* “to build, to mould” (identical forms in Ik, Tepeth, Nyang'i.)

**araukoo:** food. Origin unclear; no obvious candidates.

**ariet:** cat. Origin unclear; two promising Nilotic candidates are Nandi *arwet* / *\_à:r-wét, \_à:r-wa; \_à:r-ék, à:r-ó:y, \_à:r-ék, à:r-ók/* “animal young, hatchling” and Karimojong *amirerya* “genet” (but contrast Turkana *nameresia* “genet”).

**ariet:** witch. Origin unclear; perhaps to be connected with homophonous “cat”, above?

**aruka:** to receive. Origin unclear; but compare Nandi *ki-ruch* /*ki:-rûc/* “to round up, gather up”.

**atunatun:** chalcedony. Not compared.

**aurare:** stone wrist bangles. Not compared.

**awar:** day. Origin unclear. The best comparisons seems to be Luo: Labwor *deowor*, Lango *wôr* “night” (which Wayland gives as *owor*), Alur *wor* “night”. But compare also Karimojong *akwar* “24-hour day”, Turkana *akwaar* “24-hour day”, or Karimojong *aparan* (Roncari et al. 1973) & *apaaran* (Farina et al. 1985, Köhler 1970), Teso *a-paará.n* (Vossen 1982), Turkana *aparan* (Ohta 1989) & *á-pààrán* (Dimmendaal 1979) < Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-paran*.

**bu:** enemy. From Proto-Kalenjin *\*puuŋ* (Rottland 1981), eg Nandi *bunyöt* / *pu:n-yâ:t, pu:n-yâ:; pu:n, pu:n-ik/*.

**bung:** fool. From Karimojong *ebaŋ*, which is presumably the source of Ik *ibááŋ-on* “to be too foolish to look for food”.

**chege:** dig. Origin unclear; homophonous Nandi *ki-cheg-e* / *\_ki:ce:k-ê:/* “to seize, pluck” is semantically rather far-fetched, while the semantically closer Kuliak forms (Ik *tókɔb* “dig, cultivate”, Nyang’i *tɔbɔk*, from Nilo-Saharan *\*tɔ:k*, according to Ehret 2001) are phonetically not far but perhaps not close enough. Hadza *tʃuk* is if anything the best match.

**coko:** milk. From Proto-Kalenjin *\*ce:;* eg Nandi *chegö* /*ce:-kà, ce; cey-yâ:, cey-yâ:t/*. Compare also Proto-Western Nilotic *\*cak* (eg Alur, Acoli *cak*, Labwor *chak*, Luo *ca’k*, Lango *càk*) < Proto-Nilo-Saharan *\*tʰa* (Ehret 2001.)

**de-au:** dry. Probably from Karimojong *eo-nit* “be dry”, with mysterious d-; but compare also Proto-Lotuko-Maa *\*-toi-* “be dry” (cf. Lotuko *loteyon*), or Western Nilotic: Alur *θwɔ(yo)*, Acholi *twɔɔ*, Luo *two’yo*, Lango *twòòyò*; Ocolo *twa* (Ehret 2001) < Proto-Nilo-Saharan *\*θwà(h)* “to dry (tr.)”, Proto-Kuliak *\*cai-* (Ik pl. *tsai-*, Nyang’i *cái-*); or Ik *dewdew* “be hollow, empty of trees and gourds”.

**dokol:** to speak. From Karimojong *e-dokole* “throat, esophagus, voice”, Turkana *e-dokole* “throat”. But cf. Ik *dokólóm-on* “stammer”.

**emaa:** fire. From Proto-Kalenjin *\*ma[s][t]* with prefixed Karimojong article, eg Nandi *mat* / *\_mâ:t, \_mà:; má-stinwa, má-stinw-ê:k/*. This could probably be traced back to Proto-Nilotic; compare Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-kʰI-ma-*, Alur, Acoli *mac*, Labwor *mach*, Lango *màc*, Luo *ma’c*.

**girito:** bad. Cf. Labwor *rite*. A direct comparison with Proto-Kalenjin *-Ra-*, and other Nilotic parallels, eg Proto-Eastern Nilotic *-rrɔ-n/k*, Alur *rac*, Lango *ràc*, scarcely seems convincing.

**gorom:** neck bangles. Not compared.

**iken:** egg. From Nandi *ki-geŋy* / *\_ki:-kêny/* “to hatch (tr.)” (and the Nandi for “egg” itself is a Swahili loanword); no need to go further afield to the likes of

Boraana Oromo *okokaani* or Shabo *tutukan*.

**ipo:** cook. Probably from Karimojong *aki-pore*, Turkana *akipore*. Compare Proto-Lotuko-Maa *\*(ɪ)pɔt²*- “churn v.”

**iyoo:** mother. From Proto-Kalenjin *\*iyo*, eg Nandi *eiyo* /é:yyo:/, < Proto-Southern Nilotic *iyo* “my mother”. Cf. Proto-Nilo-Saharan *\*yā*. No need to go further afield, even though Sandawe *iyoo* presents a perfect match.

**karu:** fish. Origin unclear; Karimojong *ekolia*, Turkana *ekolia*, borrowed into Ik as *nkólíá*, Dorobo *yokolia*, is surely cognate, but as surely not the source of the word, considering how much more different the vowels are than in typical Karimojong loanwords. Tsamai *χa:re*, Ongota *ka:ra* present interesting comparisons; indeed, one might recklessly be tempted to throw in Finnish (and Proto-Finno-Ugric) *kala*.

**keter:** hard. Origin unclear.

**ki-ito:** ear. From Karimojong *akit* (given as *akiit* in Roncari et al. 1973), Turkana *akit*. Proto-Kalenjin *\*iit* < Proto-Southern Nilotic *\*iit* is no doubt cognate, but less closely related; cf. also Alur *ith*, Labwor *eit*, Lango *yít*, and indeed Shabo *k'itti*. There is no need to go further afield and consider Sandawe *kʰéʔé* “hear” (Elderkin 1983.)

**kibunte:** vagina. From Karimojong *akibon*, Turkana *akibony*.

**kiriente:** black cooking pot. Not compared.

**kisina:** breast. From Karimojong *e-kisina* (given as *ki-din-a* by Johnston 1904), Teso *é-kí-sín-á* (Vossen 1982), Turkana *é-sí-kín-á* (Heine 1980b) or *ekisina* (Ohta 1989). Vossen derives this from Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-kʰIn²*- through prefixation and metathesis; but he also points to Proto-Kalenjin *\*kɪɪn* < Proto-Southern Nilotic *\*kɪɪn*.

**kodo:** cooking pot. Origin unclear; compare perhaps Karimojong *a-kod-et* “handle, hook”, or Acoli *agúlú* “pot (in general)”, Luo *agú'lú*, Lango *gúlú*, or even Ik *kokó* “big gourd, used as a pot”, *koʃó* “calabash, calabash bowl”.

**kokuye:** dog. Probably from Karimojong *ikuyo* “puppy”; cf. Maasai *ol-*

*kúyà* “dog”, *ɔl-kúyúkúí* “puppy”. But compare also Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-kɪ-ŋɔk*, Proto-Kalenjin *\*-ŋok*, Labwor *gwook*, Alur, Acholi *gwok*, Luo *gʊɔk*, Lango *gwôk*; and Elderkin 1983 notes Sandawe *ḵá:ḵà*. Vaguely similar forms are common worldwide; one could even add Mandarin Chinese *gou*.

**kongiye**: eye. Probably from Teso-Turkana, or at the least Eastern Nilotic, given the suffix: Karimojong *a-kɔŋ-u*, Teso *a-kɔŋ-ú* (Vossen 1982), Turkana *á-kɔŋ-ɔ* (Heine 1980b) < Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-kʷɔŋ-/kʷɔŋ-*, though Proto-Kalenjin *\*kɔɔŋ* < Proto-Southern Nilotic *\*kɔ[ɔ]ŋ* is also possible. It is curious that the *-iye* suffix is paralleled in Bari and Lotuko by a suffix *-ε* (eg Bari *kɔŋε*); but there is at any rate an *-ε-* in the Teso-Turkana plural (*ŋakonyen*). In any case, both derive from Proto-Nilotic *\*waŋ* (Ehret 2001) or *\*ɔŋ* “eye” (Hall et al. 1975:10) (the initial “moveable k” is not found in Proto-Western Nilotic, contrast Alur *waŋ*, Labwor *yoang*, Lango *wàŋ*), and ultimately, according to Ehret 2001, Proto-Nilo-Saharan *\*wāŋ*.

**konoye**: oil. Origin unclear; but cf. Lotuko *nɛyali*, *nayali*, or less plausibly Ik *kɔŋ-ɛs* “v. cook”. Also note **lata** below.

**kopurat**: red. Possibly from Proto-Kalenjin *\*piriir*, eg Nandi *birir*, < Proto-Southern Nilotic *\*piriir*, with an unidentified prefix. Arbore *bu'r:ida* is phonetically closer, though; one could even throw in Sandawe *butl'(e)*.

**kuko**: old man. From Kalenjin; cf. Nandi *kugö* /*kú:ka*/ “great-grandfather”. (Maasai *kokoô* “great-grandmother” is surely parallel.) No need to resort to Ik *kɔw* “old”, nor to Karimojong *a-kukokin*, *akudokin* “to stoop, bend down”.

**kukuye**: old woman. Surely derived from **kuko** by suffixation.

**kwolta**: snake. Origin unclear, owing to an embarrassment of possible Nilotic cognates. Compare Karimojong *ekolitak* “blue racer snake”, Turkana *lokolitak* “a kind of snake”, or – less semantically close but more phonetically – Kalenjin, eg Nandi *ke-kwöl* /*ke:-kwá:l*/ “to bend (a stick or piece of metal)”; or indeed Acoli *twol*, Luo *thʊɔˀl*, Lango *twòl*.

**lat**: rain. Origin unclear, but cf. **lata**. Perhaps compare Dorobo *watt*?

**lata**: water. Origin unclear; but compare Proto-Eastern Nilotic *\*-la-ta* “oil” (no Teso-Turkana cognates given.) Hadza *?ati* scarcely seems promising.

**lim:** warrior. Origin unclear.

**losogol:** bull. Origin unclear.

**lujuk:** soft. From Karimojong *elujuk*.

**lukiya:** brother. Origin unclear; compare Karimojong *lokaato*, Turkana *lokato*; Ik *léyó* “sibling”.

**lura:** lie down. Origin unclear. See also **ru**.

**madik:** honey. Origin unclear; compare perhaps **moda** below (cf. Karimojong expression *akimyet a ao* “oil of bee”), or cf. Ik *mód* “earth bee”.

**mak:** boil water. Origin unclear; compare Hadza *mako* “boil”.

**mala:** to burn. Origin unclear.

**mamunyu:** father. From an Eastern Nilotic source; compare Maasai *ményé*, Bari *mónyε* “father, master” (your ~: *munyi*), Lotuko *mónyε*. The prefix, if such it is, is interesting.

**merek:** sheep. From Karimojong *amesek*, Teso *e-merekék*, Turkana *ngamezekin*. Ultimately, whether via Karimojong or otherwise, from Proto-Teso-Lotuko-Maa *\*-mereké<sup>3</sup>*- “ram” (supported by Maa), though Vossen 1982 qualifies this reconstruction as “highly questionable” due to problematic correspondences.

**meri:** leopard. From Proto-Kalenjin *meliil*, perhaps contaminated by Karimojong, Turkana *eris*; or direct from Kuliak (Nyang'i *mεriṯ*, Soo *mεriat*.) According to Ehret 2001, Proto-Southern Nilotic *\*meril* < Proto-Rub *\*mεriṯ* < Proto-Nilo-Saharan *\*mεrith*. Ongota *mɪrila* no doubt derives from the same root.

**moda:** fat. Origins unclear. Several possible comparisons: Karimojong *akimyet*, Turkana *akimet*; or Proto-Kalenjin *\*mwaaR* “(liquid) fat”, eg Nandi *mwaita* / *\_mwa:y-tâ*, *\_mwà:y*; *\_mwá:n*, *\_mwa:n-ik*/ “oil”; or Acoli *moo*, Luo *mo*, Lango *mò*; or Amharic *mora*.

**mokrat:** thief. Possibly Kalenjin with semantic shift; eg Nandi *mögöriöt* /

*makar-yâ:t, makar-yà:;* *makar-e, makar-é:k* “rich person”. It seems harder to link in Karimojong *e-koko-lan*, Turkana *a-koko* “steal”; and one also thinks of Acoli *kwalo* “steal”.

**moro:** crocodile. Origins unclear: compare Proto-Kalenjin *\*moororooc* “frog”, Nandi *mororochet /mò:rôro:c-ét/* “frog”, Karimojong & Turkana *e-morotot* “python”.

**motit:** arrow. Origins unclear; error for the same etymology as **ngokit?**

**muren:** man. From Kalenjin; eg Nandi *murenēt /múren-é:t, múren; múrên, múrén-ík/* “warrior, man”.

**murwe:** seer. From (same root as) Karimojong *emuron* “wizard”, Turkana *emuron* “traditional doctor/medicine man/diviner/prophet” < Proto-Teso-Lotuko-Maa *-muro-ni* “ritual expert”. Specifically, it seems that an *-e* suffix forms verbal nouns (Barrett 1988 cites *aki-per* “to sleep” > *e-per-e* “a way of sleeping”, *aki-cap* “to weed” > *e-cap-e* “a way of weeding”), so *e-muro-e* would presumably be “a way of making sacrifice, sorcery” (Karimojong verb *a-muro*).

**muto:** child. Perhaps from Kalenjin with semantic shift; cf. Nandi *ki-mut /\_ki:-mût/* “to take or carry along (a child, s.t. living) with one”. One could in principle compare Boraana Oromo *muc'a*.

**nacipa:** grooved design on pots. Not compared.

**nageran:** mark on forehead. Not compared.

**nakwanta:** woman. From Kalenjin, eg Nandi *kwöndö /kwa:n-tà, kwa:ny; kwá:ny-în, kwá:ny-î:k/*; but note also Bari *nakwan, ηστʷ' narakwan*.

**napiroi:** ear-ring. Origins unclear.

**ne-et:** tooth. Origins unclear.

**ngobo:** cow. Origins unclear; Elderkin 1983 compares Sandawe *hūbù*.

**ngokit:** spear. From Proto-Kalenjin (and Proto-Southern Nilotic) *\*ŋɔt*; cf. Nandi *ng'otit /\_ngot-ít, \_ngòt; ngót-wây, ngót-wék/*. No need to go further afield and compare Sandawe *mùkě*: (Elderkin 1983.)

**ngoror:** goat. From Proto-Kalenjin \**ḡḡḡḡ* “she-goat”, eg Nandi *ng'ororiet* / *\_ngóro:r-yét*, *\_ngóro:r*; *\_ngórô:r*, *\_ngórô:r-ék*.

**nyapid:** soil. Origins unclear.

**ongor:** women's apron. Origins unclear; possibly Kalenjin, eg Nandi *anget* / *\_ánk-ê:t*, *\_ánkâ*; *ánk-ó:y*, *\_ánk-o:sya*, *ánk-ô:k*, *\_ánk-o:syèk* “cloth”, but then why the -r? Cf. also Labwor *agetta*.

**ongor:** eland. Origins unclear. Ik and Proto-Kuliak *oḡor* “elephant” is semantically far-fetched.

**oyaa:** penis. Origins unclear.

**paja:** to sit. From Karimojong *aki-paja-kin* “to sit on the ground”.

**pange:** cattle. Origins unclear.

**pau:** good. Possibly Western Nilotic; cf. Luo *be'r*, pl. *be'yo*, Alur *ber*, Labwor *be ar*, Acoli *mabεr*, Lango *bèr*, pl. *bècò*.

**pauwo:** walk. Origins unclear.

**pel:** cowrie shell. Origins unclear.

**pele:** moon. Origins unclear. Maybe metathesis from, eg, Karimojong & Turkana *elap* < Proto-Eastern Nilotic \**ṯapaty-*; cf. also Proto-Western Nilotic \**pai* < Proto-Nilo-Saharan \**ṯp'á:y* (Ehret 2001.) Or, perhaps, **pele** below. Note also Ik *pelém-ét-ɔn* “arrive, appear, rise” (eg of sun). With such an embarrassment of near-misses locally, it seems unnecessary to throw in Arbore *εh*, Tsamai *ε?ɔ*, Ongota *ε?*.

**pele:** white. Possibly Proto-Nilotic \**bo:r* (attested in Eastern Nilotic, Maa, Datooga “yellow”) < Proto-Nilo-Saharan \**bò:ɖ*; or Hadza *petʔa*. Even less convincingly, note Proto-Kuliak *bec'* (Ik *bets'*, Tepeth *bej*, Nyang'i *bej*) – or, on a different note, Ik *piripir* “ideo. glittering white” - Yemsa *poro22*, Sandawe *phoo-s(i)* “white, pale”.

**pese:** sister. From Karimojong *a-pese* “girl”.

**purung:** grass. Origins unclear.

**puthia:** blue. Specifically from Karimojong *e-pusia-na* (contrast Teso *-pus* “light blue” (Vossen 1982), Turkana *a-pus* “blue” (Ohta 1989), *-pus* “grey” (Vossen 1982)) < Proto-Teso-Lotuko-Maa *\*pus* “grey, (bluish-)”. According to Ehret, this is borrowed from Proto-Southern-Nilotic *\*puus* (“grey-white, of cattle”), although the latter has relatively sparse attestation (Rottland cites only Bongom in Kalenjin *pu:s*, Datooga *bu:sje:n*); compare also Proto-Kuliak *\*boc'an* (Ik *b|ósán*, Nyang’i *bos|án*).

**redik:** swim. Origins unclear. Slightly tempting to compare Boraana Oromo *daaka*; or, indeed, to envision some sort of derivational process from **ret** below.

**ret:** wet. Origins unclear; compare perhaps Nandi *ro:t* “flow”, Bari *ro-ju* “refresh (with water)” < Proto-Nilo-Saharan *\*rò:lrō:*, or Ik *ɪlálát-és* “to make wet”.

**rimirim:** wizard. Surely to be linked with Karimojong *aki-rimirim* “to go round and round, wander”, despite difficult semantics.

**riono:** night. Probably Luo; compare Luo *otiñó*, Labwor *oteno*. (Cf. converse sound change in **akopito**.)

**ritha:** to marry. Origins unclear; tempting to seek some prefix + Karimojong *akiitar*.

**ru:** lion. No similarities are apparent under the gloss given, but note Proto-Kalenjin *\*ru* “to lie down”. It is difficult not to assume a confusion of “lion” and “lying”.

**sanan:** sleep. From Karimojong *akisanan* “lie down straight”.

**telegai:** tree. Origins unclear; conceivably connected to Proto-Kalenjin (and Proto-Southern Nilotic) *\*kεεt*, eg Nandi *ketit*, or even Nandi *törökwet* “cedar”.

**terema:** bow. Origins unclear.

**timu:** black. Origins unclear; compare perhaps Proto-Kuliak *\*im|an* (Tepeth *im|an*, Nyang'i *im|εn*). Not particularly close to Proto-Kalenjin (and Proto-Southern Nilotic) *\*tʊ[ʊ]R*, eg Nandi *tui*.

**torom:** nose. Origins unclear; not particularly close to Proto-Kalenjin (and Proto-Southern Nilotic) *\*ser*, eg Nandi *serut*.

**tubo:** cut. From Karimojong *akitub*, Turkana *akitub*. Similar words are found in other Nilotic languages, eg Lango *tòmmò*, Alur *thumo*.

**tuth:** gazelle. From Kuliak; cf. Ik *túś* "klipspringer" (Heine 1999); Proto-Kuliak *\*tUs* "mountain-goat" (Ik *tos*, Nyang'i *tus*) (Heine 1972).

**we:** give. Origins unclear, and the word's shortness makes false positives easier to find; compare perhaps Karimojong *amekin* "to present", Ik *may-*, Alur *mīyò*, Luo *mī'yo*, Lango *mīyò*; or Turkana *areikin*; or even Hadza *k<sup>w</sup>e*.

**woth:** clever person. From Karimojong *eos*; Nandi *utat* / *\_ut-á:t*, *ut-a:tí:n/*, Proto-Kuliak *\*nauc'an* (Ik *nɔɔs-an*, Nyang'i *nausan-εt*) are similar but, particularly in view of **puthia**, less plausible.

**yo:** mother-in-law. See **iyoo**.

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