

Raimund Kastenzholz. Sprachgeschichte im West-Mande. Methoden und Rekonstruktionen. -- Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 281 S.

The publication of Raimund Kastenzholz's book marks a new stage in Mande comparative studies. It is the very first attempt to carry out a step-by-step reconstruction of one major branch of the Mande language family. An advantage of this study is that it has been performed on considerable data: there are about 200 roots reconstructed. Publications by previous authors concerning reconstruction of Proto-Mande or its sub-branches were based, with some rare exceptions, on just Morris Swadesh's 100 word list. This book is the first serious attempt (at least, among published works) to reconstruct a Proto-Mande vocabulary.¹

Another positive point that distinguishes this book is an attempt to reconstruct the inlaut consonant system. Authors of all previous published works focussed on the initial consonants only.²

The author explains his version of the inner classification of the Mande language family, which is based on the principle of «shared lexical innovations».³ This classification was announced in his previous works [Kastenzholz 1991/92, 1996], but it is in this book that Kastenzholz's approach and criteria have been presented explicitly. I shall just mention the principal innovations of this classification as compared with the most widely known previous one [Dwyer 1989]:

1) Bɔbɔ is included in West Mande; more precisely, it now constitutes now one sub-branch with Soninke-Boso (in previous classifications, it had either been either included in the Eastern group [Dwyer 1989; Bimson 1979], or considered as a separate branch within Mande);

2. Jɔ (Jɔwulu, previously unclassified) is included in the North-Western subgroup of West Mande, together with the Soninke-Samogo branch.⁴

In these points, Kastenzholz is close in these points to a more recent and less known classification by Grégoire and de Halleux [1994]. The main difference between them is the position of the Bɔbɔ-Soninke and Sembla subgroups. Kastenzholz lumps them together into a larger subgroup which is considered to be the first split of Western Mande. As a result, South-Western Mande becomes more closely related to «Central Mande», i.e. Manding-Koranko-Vai-Jɔgɔ-Sooso. Grégoire and de Halleux put the «Samogo-Sembla» group the same distance from both Bɔbɔ-Soninke and «Central Mande», and South-West Mande is regarded as the first split of what Kastenzholz calls «West Mande».

In addition to this, Kastenzholz suggests new names for Mande subdivisions, and his terms are more elegant than those used by his predecessors. The «Western» group is subdivided into

¹ An important exception is Konstantin Pozdiazkov's dissertation *Mande Languages: A historical comparative analysis*. Moscow: Institute of Linguistics, 1978, 149 + 210 p. (in Russian). The first volume of this dissertation contains a step-by-step phonological reconstruction of the system of initial consonants of Proto-Mande; the second volume is a Mande Etymological Dictionary based on the data of all major sources published up to mid-1970s. Unfortunately, this work has never been published in extenso. Although R. Kastenzholz discusses K. Pozdiazkov's classification of Mande languages in his 1991/92 paper, it is not even mentioned in the reviewed book.

² The only exceptions seem to be articles [Pozdiazkov & Vydrine 1986-88] which, however, dealt with only one Mande sub-branch, namely Manding. Gérard Galtier's dissertation [1980] can also be mentioned in this regard, although this author did not attempt to reconstruct proto-phonemes stricto sensu.

³ Kastenzholz applied the methods elaborated by Fang-Kuei Li (Classification by vocabulary: Tai dialects. // *Anthropological linguistics* 1, 2: 16-21). In fact, the underlying principles are about the same as those used by Konstantin Pozdiazkov (for a brief presentation of his method see: [Pozdiazkov, 1991]) and Sergei Starostin [Starostin, 1989]. The latter works, however, are much more strict, more formalized, and provide better possibilities for verification of results.

⁴ Now Raimund Kastenzholz includes Jɔ into the Sembla subgroup [personal communication].

North-Western, Central, and South-Western branches; the «Eastern» group includes the «Mani-Bandama» and «Volta-Niger» branches. These terms are at least consistent: non-compound terms are reserved for larger subdivisions, and compounds designate smaller branches. The only exception is the Central subbranch, which can be justified by the fact that the subbranch is really central within the Mande family, both by the number of languages and number of speakers in the group.

The book consists of six chapters.

1. Introduction: Inventory of the Mande languages and evaluation of the data available for each of them.

2. Overview of the history of Mande comparative studies.

3. Methodological basis of genetic classification (method of «shared lexical innovations») and its practical application to West Mande language data.

4. Methods of historical comparative linguistics and their application to West Mande data: regular correspondences, recursive methods, use of the data from dialects. In this chapter, the author validates his abstention from reconstructing vowel (which seems to be justified within the framework of Kastenholz's methodological approach, although hardly acceptable as a definitive principle of Mande comparative language studies). Much attention is paid to the problem of initial consonant permutation in Mande which the focus of a lively scholarly discussion for many years. Kastenholz singles out two permutation types: the Soninke type and the South-Western Mande (SWM) type. He considers them genetically independent of each other (an opinion I share). Of these two types, Kastenholz considers the SWM type as «basic» and proceeds from the supposition that SWM inherited this kind of permutation from Proto-Western Mande or even Proto-Mande (which seems doubtful to me; this question will be discussed below).

5. Inner reconstruction. When dealing with this problem, Kastenholz limits himself mainly to the survey of types of word-final nasality in different West Mande languages (in fact, I wouldn't regard this study as a true inner reconstruction). In addition, he discusses once more the chronological attribution of initial consonant permutation of the SWM-type in Mande.

6. This chapter, the largest in the book (about half of the total volume), deals with a step-by-step reconstruction of the Proto-Central/South-Western Mande consonant system and its vocabulary: first, Proto-SWM (214 roots reconstructed, some of them at the level of Proto-Mende/Lɔɔma only), then Proto-Central Mande (186 roots), finally, Proto-Central/SWM (187 roots). Unfortunately, Kastenholz provides no table summarizing the phonetic reflexes and their correspondences, and I so have to do it myself (cf. Table 1, Table 2).

It also seems also expedient to bring the proto-phonemes reconstructed by Kastenholz into charts:

Proto-Central/South-Western Mande

	Anlaut					Inlaut		
*p	*t	*tʷ	*k	*kp	*p, *Np?	*t, *Nt	*k, *Nk	
*b/ɓ	*d/dʰ	*j/y	*g/w,ɣ		*b?, *Nb	*d?, *Nd	*g	
*f	*s	*sʷ				*s		
						*r *l		
*m	*n	*ɲ			*m	*n		

Proto-South-Western Mande

Anlaut

Inlaut

*p	*t		*k	*kp	*Np	*t,*Nt	*k,*N	*kp,*Nk
							k	p
*b/β	*d/ɗ	*j/y	*g/w,ɣ		*b?,*Nb	*d?,*Nd	*g	
*f	*s	*sʸ			*f,*Nf	*s *sʸ		
						*r *l		
*m	*n	*ɲ ?			*m	*n		

Proto-Central Mande

		Anlaut					Inlaut	
		*t	*tʸ	*k	*kp	*Np?	*t,*Nt	*k,*Nk
*b/β	*d/ɗ	*j/y	*g/w,y			*Nb	*d?,*Nd	*g
*f	*s	*sʸ ??				*f? *b?	*s	
							*r *l	
*m	*n	*ɲ					*n	

Now, let us pass to shortcomings. In methodology, the main weakness is a too mechanistic application of the «step-by-step reconstruction» method, with no more than lip-service paid to the internal reconstruction. Kastenholz's reconstruction of proto-phonemes and regular correspondences are too simplistic if compared with the reality of West Mande languages. One could say that Kastenholz sweeps the most difficult problems under the carpet, but they resurrect as soon as the narrow limits of his list of the roots are exceeded. As for the problems which have been treated, the solutions suggested in the book are not always convincing. Without pretending to advance an alternate reconstruction of the Proto-SWM/Central Mande phonological system, let us consider only the most controversial points of the work.

1. Kastenholz hypothesises the existence of a consonant permutation of the SWM type at the Proto-Western Mande level. This allows him to explain the great variability in the correspondences of the SWM *g- and *j- in different languages of the Central Branch (Manding, Vai, ɔɔɔ, Jeri) and the Soninke: *k-*, *w-*, *y* and; *j-*, *y-*. According to his hypothesis, after the mechanism of permutation had stopped functioning in these languages, some random words were conserved with «strong» initial consonants (*k-*, *j-*), and others with «weak» ones (*w-*, *y-*; *y-*).

This hypothesis seems heuristically weak. Firstly, because of its randomness: normally, degradation of a permutation system should have had a systematic character (originally purely phonetic, positional variants could be reinterpreted as semantically bound or grammatically conditioned). A situation where in each particular language, consonants of one and the same permutation degree would be conserved, is more natural. Otherwise, we should look for different phonetic, syntactic and semantic conditions. Secondly, if we accept Kastenholz's hypothesis, it seems strange that reflexes of different degrees of permutation were conserved in the Central Mande languages for *g-/ɣ-, *w-* and *j-/y-, but not for *d-/ɗ- and *b-/β-.

I would tentatively suggest another explanation of «weak» reflexes of *g- in Central Mande languages: their appearance is due to the presence of nasal elements in proto-forms of these words. These elements may be absent in Kastenholz's sample languages (p. 95: Mende, Manding, Vai, ɔɔɔ/Jeri; p. 106: Mende, Lɔɔma, Manding, Soninke), but they appear as soon as data from more languages are adduced.⁵ The weakening of an initial consonant in the

⁵ «Egg» appears in the form *ɣãĩN* in Lɔɔma-Weima, *kãĩ/ɣãĩ* in Liberian dialects of Lɔɔma; «to laugh» is *gẽẽ/ɲẽẽ* or just *ɲẽẽ* in various Lɔɔma dialects, etc. There are still some SWM words with initial *g- manifesting no trace of nasals, which are provided by Kastenholz with weak correspondences in the Central Mande languages: Mende /*gílé*/ «dog», /*gó*/ «to speak», /*gòlá*/ «forest». However, I doubt that *wùlú* «dog» in various Central Mande languages is a reflex of the same root as the SWM word; the Vai form *wó* «to speak» may correspond to Lɔɔma *boN*, *buN* «to do»;

presence of a nasal is well attested in West Manding,⁶ cf.: Proto-Western **ń-jéké* «fish» -- Maninka *jéé*, Bamana *jége*, Mandinka *jée*, *yée*, Wasolon *njége*, *jége*, Bamana-Beledugu (West.) *njéké* [Galtier 1980, 376], Maninka-Kenieba *yége*; Mende *jé*.

2. I cannot agree with Kastenholz's argument against the reconstruction of a velar element in the syllable-final position of some words in Proto-Mende-Lóoma (PML). He suggests instead a nasal element, *-N*, and postulates a velar initial consonant of the definite suffix: *{-gi}*. Firstly, the syllable-final velar element appearing in Lókó, Lóoma, and Bandi is also attested in contact with other suffixes having a *-V* structure: *-a* («indefinite plural»), *-a* (perfective marker). Following Kastenholz's logic, we should also postulate a *{-ga}* form for these morphemes, which seems to me shaky. Secondly, reconstructing of the definite suffix form as **-gi* is not supported by the external evidence: a noun morpheme *{-E}* (*-e*, *-ε*, *-i*) is attested in many other Western Mande languages (Sooso, Koranko, Mógófin, Lele, Vai, Kónó, Soninke), but the velar element appears nowhere.

Another explanation seems more appropriate. In PML there were two morpheme/syllable structures: *CV* and *CVN* (here I agree with Kastenholz). The final *-N* was realized as a velar nasal *-ŋ* before the pause and before a vowel: *CVŋ*, *CVŋ-i*, *CVŋ-a*. At the next stage, there strengthened a tendency to open-syllable structure. As a result, **CVŋ > CV* before a pause, and in the position before a vowel, a re-syllabication took place. Because of the absence of a *ŋ* in the system of syllable-initial consonants,⁷ the re-syllabication came together with the transformation of **-ŋ* into *ng-*: **CVŋ-i > CV-ngi*, **CVŋ-a > CV-nga*. It is this situation that we find in Bandi and Lókó. In Mende any difference between two original types of syllable has vanished altogether: the definite suffix has only one form, *-i*, while the other suffixes (perfective and indefinite plural markers) have two free variants, *-a ~ -nga*.⁸ In Lóoma a loss of pre-nasals (**NC- > C-*) occurred, which affected the suffixes too: **-ngi > -gi*, **nga > -ga*.

3. Many questions arise from the analysis of Kastenholz's reconstruction of particular proto-phonemes. Let us consider them one by one.

3.1. According to Kastenholz, the initial *x-* in Sooso and Yalunka regularly corresponds to SWM **g-*. There are, however, some reliable examples for the correspondence Sooso, Yalunka *x-* = SWM **k-*. E.g.: Sooso, Yalunka (S, Y) *xúru* «educate» = Mende, Lóoma *kóló* (M, Lm) «obedience» = Kpelle (Kp) *kolo* «to serve»;⁹ S *xera* = PSWM **kéra* (= Mn *kéla*, *céla* = Bm *kíra*) «Prophet».¹⁰ Even if they don't refute the correspondence S, Y **x-* = PSWM **g-*, they should somehow be explained.

to speak». For the word «forest», I reconstruct a different initial Proto-SWM consonant: **gwàlá*, and not **gòlá*.

⁶ Some problems concerning the morphological reconstruction of Western Mande were discussed in [Vydrine 1989, 1994]; unfortunately, in the reviewed book these problems were disregarded.

⁷ I agree with Kastenholz that the initial *ŋ-* in SWM languages is a recent phoneme.

⁸ Lókó seems to be moving in the same direction as Mende. When working with young Lókó informants in Freetown in April 1996, I found that they tend to eliminate the difference between both types of syllables, while old people still preserve it. However, it may be the result of strong Mende interference in the context of a big city.

⁹ Undoubtedly, reflexes of the same root are Bamana (B) *kólon*, Maninka (Mn) *kólo*, Mandinka (Mk) *kíлуу* «educate», and Koranko *kólo* «tame». Therefore, I cannot agree with Kastenholz's supposition [p. 190] that they go back to the same root as S *kólón*, Y *kólóŋ*, **PSWM *kólóN* «know».

¹⁰ There are also some other correspondences which seem less reliable: S, Y *xóri* = PSWM **káléN* = Manding *kólo* «bone»; S, Y *xáli* = PSWM **kírán* (?) = Manding **kála* «bow».

3.2. Not convincing is Kastenholz's attempt to interpret two different types of comparative series in Central Mande as reflexes of one and the same proto-phoneme **k* in different conditioning environments: (1) S, Y *k-* or *x-* = Vai, Kɔŋɔ, Jɔŋɔ, Jeri, Koranko *k-* = Manding *s-* before /i/, /e/, /u/, /o/, (2) S, Y, Vai, Kɔŋɔ, Jɔŋɔ, Jeri, Koranko *k-* = Manding *k-*, in all other cases [pp. 190-194]. At the same time, Kastenholz himself provides comparative series of type (1) where the consonant is followed by /a/ («elephant» *kàma* = *sàma*, «snake» *kâa* = *sâa*), and there are numerous series of type (2) where the consonant is found before /i/, /e/, /u/, /o/. There seems to be no other way than to postulate two different proto-phonemes at the Proto-Western Mande or even Proto-Mande level: **k* for type (2) and **k'* or **g'* for type (1). The latter proto-phoneme yielded **g-* (before *-i* ?) or **k-* in PSWM; it seems to have yielded *k-* in Soninke, *g-* in Boso-Tieyaxo, and *g-* in some East Mande languages. Cf. Bamana *nsònsán* = Soninke *kànjaane/kànjaaN* = Boso-Tieyaxo *góngén* «hare, rabbit» (**n-k'ònk'a-nV* ?); Manding *sà* «to die» = Bisa *gà* «to dry, to die» = Bɔkɔ *ga* «to die» = Beng *gále* «to die», *gàgàlé* «to dry» = Soninke *kara* «die» = (?) Boso-Tieyaxo *gɔlé* «extinguish» = S, Y *xára* «to dry» (**k'à-LE* ?), etc.

3.3. The situation is similar to the one concerning the dentals. There are two other types of comparative series in Central Mande: (1) initial *s-* in all the languages; (2) Sooso, Yalunka, Jɔŋɔ, Jeri, Vai, Kɔŋɔ, Koranko *s-* = Mandinka *l-* or *s-* = Maninka *l-* = Bamana *d-*. Kastenholz brings them both to one proto-phoneme, **s-*, without any attempt to explain the reasons of its split («**s* > *s*, sometimes > *l*») in the Manding languages.

I don't see any reason preventing the reconstruction of a different proto-phoneme (**d'* or **d''*) for type (2). This solution is also preferable for typological reasons: phonetically, transformations **d' > s*, **d' > l*, **d' > d* look much more plausible for Mande languages than **s > l*, **s > d*. In Mandinka, where this proto-phoneme has two reflexes, they seem to be phonetically conditioned: **d' > l*, **N-d' > s*. Further evidence favouring this reconstruction comes from SWM, where we have **d-* in the type (2).¹¹ The only exception is, to my knowledge, **d'òNtáN* «stranger»: Mende *hótá*, Lɔkɔ *hóotáN*, Bandi *sotaN*, which may be a borrowing from Proto-Vai-Kɔŋɔ-Dama.

I guess, one of Kastenholz's reasons to postulate the split of **s* in Manding (*s* or *l* in Maninka and Mandinka, *s* or *d* in Bamana) was the existence of two comparative series types for his **t'*: (1) PSWM **t/l* = S, Y *t = s* in all other Central Mande languages; (2) PSWM **t/l* = S, Y *t = Jɔŋɔ s* or *y = Vai, Kɔŋɔ s = Koranko s* or *l = Mandinka, Maninka l = Bamana d* or *j* [p. 205]. However, Kastenholz provides no comparative series of type (2) which seem reliable: most probably, each of his series Nos. 112-115 is composed of two or even three different roots.

3.4. Kastenholz disregards one specific type in SWM: Mende, Lɔkɔ, Bandi *d/l* = Lɔɔma *z/y* = Kpelle *n/l*. I have in my data 10 reliable comparative series for this type in various phonological surroundings. In my 1989 article I postulated a particular PSWM phoneme **d'*. Curiously enough, Kastenholz mentions one of these PSWM lexemes (**d'ɔku* «earth») as external evidence for Central Mande [p. 199], but in the section dealing with the reconstruction of PSWM this type passed unnoticed.

¹¹ Apart from two PSWM roots mentioned by Kastenholz on p. 204, **da/la* «lie down» and **dɔɔlu/lɔɔlu* «five», there are some others: PSWM **dɔ/lɔ* «enter» = Sooso *sóo* = Jɔŋɔ, Jeri *sɔ́*; PSWM **N'-dàNtǎ* or **N'-dàNtǎ* «vein» = PC **N'-dúlu* «root» = Vai *sú'ú* = Mandinka, Koranko *súlu* = Maninka *lilin* = Bamana *dilin* = Bamana S-E dial. *ndili* = Jula-Kadiolo *niri* [Galtier 1980, 362].

3.5. Oversimplified is Kastenholz's reconstruction of intervocalic dentals, both in Central Mande and in SWM.¹² In the latter branch, original oppositions of inlaut dentals (*-t-, *-d-, *-l-, *-r-, an probably *-d') have vanished in most of the languages; all of these proto-phonemes have converged in -l-. Only the poorly documented Lɔkɔ, and some dialects of Kpelle (the southwesternmost Boporu dialect in Liberia and the northeasternmost Kɔnɔ dialect in Guinea), have preserved the distinction between -r- and -l-. Moreover, there is a tendency in modern Lɔkɔ to replace intervocalic -r- by -l-: my old informants distinguished between these phonemes, while young people tended to produce only -l-.¹³ For this reason, only Kpelle dialect data can serve as reliable data for this opposition. As soon as Kpelle-Kɔnɔ (KpK) data is included, we find that the correspondence «PSWM *-l- = Sooso -t- = Mandinka -t-», postulated by Kastenholz, does not hold water: PSWM *pɔrɔ (KpK pɔrɔ, Lɔkɔ pɔlɔ) = Mandinka pòtoo «mud»; PSWM *jara «lion» (KpK yara, Lɔkɔ yara) = Sooso yàtá, Yalunka jàtá, Mandinka jàta, etc.

Much more archaic and complicated is the situation in Central Mande, and especially in the Manding languages. However, Kastenholz abstains from any attempt to untangle this puzzle or, at least, to summarize results of previous research in this field ([Galtier 1980; Pozdniakov & Vydrine 1986-88]). It is doubtless that without a detailed analysis of the Manding evidence, including sophisticated methods of internal reconstruction, any reconstruction of Proto-Central or Proto-Western intervocalic dentals is doomed to failure.

3.6. In the subsystem of SWM intervocalic labials [pp. 166-168], there is at least one well represented type of comparative series not mentioned in the book that contradicts Kastenholz's thesis about the fall of intervocalic -f- in Kpelle: Mende -v- = Bandi -h- = Lɔkɔ -h- = Lɔɔma -v- or -β- = Southern Kpelle -f- = various dialects of Northern Kpelle -h-, -h^v-, or -ø- (= SWM *-f- ?): «flea» (*kpaɸiN), «small bat, house bat» (*deɸVN), «gangway plank» (*kpaafa), «frog, toad» (*dofo). There are also some types, each of them represented by a single comparative series, which also need interpretation: «spirit of the dead» Mende ngàfâ = Lɔkɔ ngɔɸɔN = Bandi nàafúaN = Lɔɔma-Liberia gɔ́βé, Lɔɔma-Koluma gove = Kpelle-S gɔ́ɸe; «spend a day» Mende tùvâ = Lɔkɔ tùbâ = Bandi tùvâ = Lɔɔma tuwɔ, tuwa, Vekema dialect tubo = KpS tua = KpK tuko, towa, and some others.

Kastenholz's handling of his type *-b- > *-β- [p. 167] is contestable. Firstly, I don't share his doubts concerning the words «three» and «onion» in SWM.¹⁴ Contrary to what he writes, «three» (*saba or *caba) is not a word which can be easily borrowed (numerals under 5 belonging to the basic lexical stock); as for «onion», it is exactly the unpermutable initial y- of this word that convinces me in its original (non-borrowed) character. As it was suggested in [Vydrine 1989], unpermutable weak initial consonants in SWM regularly correspond to prenasalized consonants in Bamana and some Maninka dialects. And we find the pre-nasalized forms in Manding: Wasolon, Birigo-kan (south of Kita), Western Beledugu njàbá [Galtier 1980, 383], which allow reconstructing the Proto-Western Mande form as *N-jàbá.¹⁵ Secondly, with a bit more data, Kastenholz's comparative series 106 «extinguish» and 126

¹² It should be recognized that this is mainly not primarily the fault of Kastenholz: he just had insufficient data.

¹³ I don't know whether it is characteristic of all Lɔkɔ dialects or if it is due to Mende influence in the capital. Anyway, in the Lɔkɔ New Testament (Ngilimayaa Nyie Gɔɔ na. Landɔɔɔ Haa na nhu. Messengers of Christ – Lutheran Bible Translators, Inc. Orange, California, U.S.A. 1983), -r- is absent.

¹⁴ Unfortunately, in his reconstruction, Kastenholz does not attempt to utilise the heuristic potential of ancient borrowings which can often indicate the right direction of phonetic changes.

¹⁵ Kastenholz pays no attention to the problem of prenasalized initial consonants in Manding and the nonpermutable initial consonants in SWM. I am convinced, however, that this is one of the key problems in Mande reconstruction.

«axe» fall out of the **-b- > *-b-* type: «extinguish» in Mende is *ndúfě* (I don't know where Kastenholz's form *-díbé* comes from. The intervocalic *-f-* is also corroborated by the Bandi form *ndífěⁿ*, though not attested by Kastenholz); «axe» in Lɔɔma was written by Koelle in mid-19 century as *zɛfa*, which prevents us from reconstructing **-b-* in this word.

3.7. Of special interest is the root (or roots?) for «meat, animal» (pp. 61-62). Kastenholz postulates two different proto-stems: one for the reflexes with internal *-g-* (Bamana, Koranko *sògo*, etc.), and the other for those with *-b-* (Maninka *sòbo* = Mandinka *sùbu*, = Sooso, Yalunka *sùbé*, etc.). The decisive evidence for this solution has been the Jalkuna data. In this language both reflexes are represented: *sibi* «meat», *sigɛ* «animal». However, this evidence does not seem sufficient to me. Firstly, we cannot exclude possibility that the language has two different reflexes for the same root (one being borrowed from a related language); cf. the similar situation in Bamana, where the proto-root **kpán* «fly, jump» is represented by two competing forms, *pán* «jump, fly» and *gán/gwán* «jump, limp, flee away». Secondly, there exist some other comparative series representing the type *-g- = -b-*, e.g.: Mandinka *siiboo* = Maninka *sìbó*, *sòbó* = Bamana *sùgó*, *sìgó* «dream»; Maninka *túban* = Bamana *ntúgan* (in Bamana dialects also *ntúfan*, *ntúban*) «turtle-dove». I would postulate for this type a proto-phoneme **-gb-*.

4. I have to recognize that I am partly responsible for one of Kastenholz's misfires myself. On pp. 182-183, he discusses the reinterpretation of a weak consonant *z* in Lɔɔma from the series *s/z* as a strong consonant from the series *z/y*. He provides four examples: *zulu.bu/yulu.bu* «hyena», *zíé.wù/yíé.wù* «spider», *zíná/yíná* «male», *zà/yà* «today». In reality, all these words in Lɔɔma do not participate in the initial consonant permutation and have only one variant, with *z-*. This irregularity needs explanation, but the explanation must be different from what Kastenholz suggests (I guess, here again we deal with traces of ancient morphemes). Unfortunately, in my book of 1987 which was used by Kastenholz as the main source for Lɔɔma, the absence of permutation was indicated for only one of the words, namely *zíná* (this remark was in Russian).

Apart from the «conceptual» drawbacks, the book has numerous inconsistencies and errors in the presentation of the data: wrong vowels, consonants and tones, non-marking final nasal in SWM languages, contradicting forms,¹⁶ unjustified forms included in comparative series.¹⁷ They somewhat downplay the importance of this work.

All my objections notwithstanding, Raimund Kastenholz's new book is not a failure! To the contrary, I am of the opinion that this ground-breaking work marks a great advance in the field of Mande comparative studies, and it is only natural that a major break-through is followed by criticism aimed at polishing off the rough edges (recall how much Greenberg's classification of African languages was criticized, although even today it remains the departure point for any comparative study). I am sure that this book will be for many years a reference point for subsequent studies in the field for many years to come.

¹⁶ E.g., «insult» in Jeri is written as *kèleⁿ* on the p. 144 and as *kèli* on p. 95 (the latter form is not attested in [Kastenholz 1992]); similar cases are pretty numerous.

¹⁷ E.g., the Bamana form *kòɲɔɲ* (in fact, the tone of this word is high, *kónɔɲ*) «gift to a customer» is erroneously included in series No. 140 «greet» (p. 211); it should be included in series No. 141 «regale». The Maninka form of the word for «belly» (series 117, p. 206) is not only *fùrú*, but also *fùdú*, which is of great importance for the reconstruction of intervocalic dentals. The Sooso form *gètén* «to rush» does not belong in series No. 44 «to heat» (p. 195) because it contradicts the Maninka evidence. In Maninka, both verbs are represented, *gbàndí* «to heat» and *gbèdén* «to rush», etc.

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**Table 2. Reflexes of Proto-Central/South-Western Mande consonants in modern languages: Inlaut
(according to Raimund Kastenholtz)**

C/SW	SWM	Mend	Lk	Bd	Lm	Kp	Centr Man.	Soso Yal.	Jeri Jɔgɔ	Vai	Kɔnɔ	Kor	Mdk	Mnk	Bam
*g	*g	y,w, [g]	g	ɣ,w,ø	ɣ,w	ɣ,ø	*g	g	g	ø	ø	g	y,w,ø	ø	g
*d ?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	r	l	‘	?	l	l	l	l,r
*Nd	*Nd	nd	?	nd	d	n	*Nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	n, nt?
*l ??	*l	l	l,r	l	l	l	*l	l	l	‘	ø	l	l	l	l
*r ??	*r	l	r	l	l	l, [r]	*r	r	r	‘	ø	r	r	r	r
*b	*b	w, β (?)	w	y, w_U	β, w_U	β	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	b	b,f
*Nb	*Nb	mb	mb	?	b	m ~ mb	*Nb	mb	?	mb	mb	mb	mb	mb	m, (mb)
*k	*ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	*k	x	g	ø	ø	g	ø	ø	g
*Nk	*Nk	ŋk	ŋk	ŋk	k	ŋ	*Nk	ŋx	g?	ø	ŋg	ŋk	ŋk	ŋk	ŋk
*kp	*kp	gb	gb	b	β	ɣ,w,ø	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
*Nkp	*Nkp	kp	?	?	kp	ɣ,ŋ	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
*t	*l	l	l,r	l	l	l	*t	t	r	‘	ø	r	t	r,d	r
*Nt	*Nt	nt	nt	nt	t	n, (nd)	*Nt	nt	?	nd	nd	nd	nt	nd	n,nd
*s	*s	j	?	?	z	s	*s	s,ø	s	s	s	s	s	s	s
*sʸ	*sʸ	h,y	?	h	z	y,ø	*s	s,ø	s	s	s	s	s	s	s
*p	?	?	?	?	?	?	*b ?? *f ??	b,m	b, ø	f	f,m	b,w,f, ø	b,mp		
*Np	*Np	p	?	?	p	m ~ mb, m	*Np ?	mb	?	?	?	?	mp	?	mp,m

C/SW	SWM	Mënd	Lk	Bd	Lm	Kp	Centr Man.	Soso Yal.	Jeri Jɔgɔ	Vai	Ƙɔnɔ	Kor	Mdk	Mnk	Bam
?	*f	v	?	h	v	ø	?								
C/SW	SWM	Mënd	Lk	Bd	Lm	Kp	Centr Man.	Soso Yal.	Jeri Jɔgɔ	Vai	Ƙɔnɔ	Kor	Mdk	Mnk	Bam
?	*Nf	f	?	?	f	m	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
*n	*n	n	n	n	n	n	*n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
*m	*m	m	?	ṽ,ø	m	m	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

Explantations to the tables: CSW = Proto-Central/South-Western Mande, SWM = Proto-South-Western Mande, Centr Mande = Proto-Central Mande, Mënd = Mènde, Lk = Lɔkɔ, Bd = Bandi, Lm = Lɔɔma, Kp = Kpelle, Yal = Yalunka (Djallonke), Mdk = Mandinka, Mnk = Maninka, Bam = Bamana.

Permutable consonants are divided by a slash. Competitive reflexes of one proto-phoneme are divided by a comma; if there is a complementary distribution, the condition is indicated, e.g.: γ , w_U, η _N = «w before rounded vowels, η before nasals, γ in all other contexts». Free variants are divided by ~. Dialectal variants are given in square brackets.