

## **Bantu-Khoisan contact in Southern Africa: reconstructing prehistoric contact situations**

Hilde Gunnink (UGent)

Pre-colonial Southern Africa is characterized by two language groups: Bantu languages, who arrived through southward migrations in the last two thousand years, and Khoisan languages, spoken by some of Southern Africa's first inhabitants. Contact between these two groups led to the demise of most Khoisan-speaking communities, but also to extensive contact-induced changes in Southern African Bantu languages. In this talk, I give an overview of Bantu-Khoisan contact, which linguistic features Bantu languages adopted from their Khoisan-speaking neighbours, and the social, cultural and economic circumstances under which these different ethnolinguistic populations interacted. Using historical linguistic methods, I show that certain Khoisan-derived features in Bantu languages date back to earlier reconstructed stages of the languages, suggesting a certain time-depth, and giving insight into how Bantu-Khoisan interactions changed throughout time.