

ETHNORÊMA

Lingue, popoli e culture

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Ethnorêma, dal greco *ethnos* ‘popolo, etnia’ e *rhêma* ‘ciò che è detto, parola, espressione’, ma anche ‘cosa, oggetto, evento’. Nella linguistica pragmatica *rema* sta ad indicare la parte di una frase che aggiunge ulteriore informazione a quello che è stato già comunicato (il *tema*).

Ethnorêma, from the Greek words *ethnos* ‘people, ethnicity’ and *rhêma* ‘what is said, word, expression’, but also ‘thing, object, event’. In linguistics, *rheme* indicates the part of a sentence that adds further information about an entity or a situation that has already been mentioned (the *theme*).

Ethnorêma è la rivista dell’omonima associazione. L’associazione senza scopo di lucro Ethnorêma intende promuovere attività di studio e ricerca nel campo linguistico, letterario, etnografico, antropologico, storico e in tutti quei settori che hanno a che fare, in qualche modo, con le lingue e le culture del mondo.

Ethnorêma is the journal of the association of the same name. The Italian non-profit association Ethnorêma works to promote study and research activities in the fields of linguistics, literary enquiry, ethnography, anthropology, history and in all those sectors which have to do, in some way, with the languages and cultures of the world.

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Dedica a Klaus Wedekind, Andrzej Zaborski ed Ezio Tonini III

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*“Since there is no real silence,
Silence will contain all the sounds,
All the words, all the languages,
All knowledge, all memory.”*

Dejan Stojanovic

This issue of *Ethnrorêma* is dedicated to three friends who recently passed away:

Dr. Klaus Wedekind, Prof. Andrzej Zaborski and fratel Ezio Tonini



Klaus Wedekind



Andrzej Zaboski



Ezio Tonini

Thank you, Klaus, Andrzej and Ezio. It has been a privilege to have known you.

Moreno Vergari

Editorial Director of *Ethnrorêma*

The Ongota language – and two ways of looking at the history of the marginal and hunting-gathering peoples of East Africa

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SOMMARIO

L’articolo tenta una ricostruzione delle origini della più piccola entità etnica dell’Etiopia e una delle più piccole in Africa: gli Ongota. I circa cento membri di questo gruppo etnico vivono in un solo villaggio, Muts’e, sulle rive del fiume Weyt’o, nell’Etiopia sudoccidentale. Gli Ongota sono interessanti sia dal punto di vista etnografico che da quello linguistico. Sono uno dei pochissimi popoli a non aver sviluppato pastorizia e agricoltura tra le numerose popolazioni dell’Etiopia sudoccidentale; un numero limitato di anziani parla una lingua a tutt’oggi non classificata all’interno dei gruppi linguistici dell’area, cuscitico, omotico (entrambi afroasiatici) e nilo-sahariano.

La lingua di comunicazione quotidiana degli Ongota è lo ts’amakko (cuscitico orientale, gruppo Dullay). Il passaggio allo ts’amakko è il risultato degli attuali stretti legami sociali, ma l’analisi comparata del lessico ongota mostra che nella loro storia si sono succeduti periodi di interscambio con altre popolazioni dell’area. Sulla base delle fonti storiche orali è possibile individuare un’affiliazione con i Maale, una popolazione di lingua omotica settentrionale che vive a nord degli Ongota.

Due ipotesi storiche vengono analizzate per rendere conto delle peculiarità degli Ongota e della loro lingua. La prima ipotesi (“top-down”) vede negli Ongota un gruppo originario di cacciatori raccoglitori la cui lingua è l’ultima traccia di un gruppo linguistico scomparso e, quindi, geneticamente isolata. Sulla base del secondo scenario (“bottom-up”) il gruppo Ongota sarebbe invece un gruppo minoritario che per motivi ambientali, come la massiccia presenza della mosca tsetse, avrebbero abbandonato la pastorizia per dedicarsi maggiormente alla caccia e alla pesca.

L’affascinante scenario “top-bottom” non pare in effetti sostenibile, e, sulla base di un’accurata analisi del lessico, si propende piuttosto per una soluzione “bottom-up”, ovvero un’origine degli Ongota in quanto gruppo marginale o fuori casta.

Keywords: *Ethiopia, Hunter-gatherers, Language death, Cushitic, African prehistory*
ISO 639-3 code: bxe

1. Introduction¹

A great number of marginal communities are found in East Africa, most notably along and in the proximity of the Rift Valley. Almost everywhere, from Ethiopia to Tanzania, one finds specific occupational outcast groups (usually tanners, blacksmiths, experts in traditional medical and magical practices, and so on), as well as hunting and

¹ We gratefully acknowledge the collaboration of Sophia Thubauville (Frobenius Institut, Frankfurt a.M.) who accompanied Graziano Savà on a short survey fieldwork in the Ongota village of Muts’e in August 2007 and kindly allowed the authors to include her map of the Ongota history of movements. We also thank Bonny Sands (Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff) for her comments and corrections to an earlier version of this article. Graziano Savà’s research on Ongota was funded by the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Documentation Programme. The included data on Ts’amakko come from Savà (2005). This publication is the result of a PhD project financed by the CNWS, University of Leiden. Fieldwork was also supported by the Dutch organization WOTRO. Savà is greatly indebted to these institutions for their fundamental support.

gathering communities, to which fishermen and bee-keepers must be added.

It is at least convenient (even if not easy, nor maybe theoretically sound) to draw a separating line between the occupational outcast groups and the hunting and gathering communities on the basis of their ethnic and linguistic affiliation: the former are found by and large *within* a broader ethnic and linguistic community, of which they share typical cultural and socio-political traits; on the other hand, hunting and gathering communities may better be considered separate entities; they are (often geographically, but even more culturally) distinct from the neighboring dominating group – to which, of course, they are tightly connected by a complex net of political obligations and economic interests.

Our interest and our considerations will be strictly limited to the hunting-gathering groups. But even a cursory discussion of all the peoples who fall, one way or another, under this rubric in East Africa seems an impossible task within the limits of a single article. Only a few general traits will be discussed:

- language shift towards the language of a dominating group is widespread: there is evidence (as the present article will detail with regards to a specific group in Southwest Ethiopia) that language shift can even be cyclic;
- ethnic assimilation to a neighboring pastoral community is equally common, although it must not be confused with language shift: a group can either shift its language affiliation without assimilating itself (i.e., without losing its distinctiveness), or retain its language but accept a new ethnic identity.

But it is in regard to the very origin of the hunting-gathering groups that two opposite historical hypotheses have been put forward and still dominate the field.

Broadly speaking, the hunter-gatherers of East Africa have been subject to two radically different models of analysis. The first considers them as “relics” – i.e., as the last remnants, a sort of living testimony, of a pristine way of life of hunting and gathering, submerged elsewhere by pastoralism and agriculture. This approach is all the more strengthened when the group in question is not only ecologically, economically and culturally deviant from the mainstream of the surrounding populations, but also linguistically apart. In this view, hunter-gatherers are supposed to be “cultural survivors” precisely because they are, or are considered to be, “linguistic survivors”. Their origin, is claimed, can be traced following a classical genealogical tree, leading from an original starting point all the way down to present times. We call this a top-down model.

A good example of this approach is Nurse’s (1986) reconstruction of the past history of the Dahalo, a group of about 300 people living along the coastal forest strip of Northern Kenya, not far from Lamu: traces of Dahalo presence (in the form of possible loans) are traced by Nurse as far as the Central Kenya Highlands. The contrary hypothesis, i.e., that many of them were loanwords *into* Dahalo (while a majority of putative Dahalo loans were probably the product of casual resemblance) was not taken into consideration. The result is a fascinating, but unproven historical reconstruction where the hunter-gatherers of today are the last representatives of prehistoric groups assimilated by advancing pastoral and agricultural peoples, like the tips of sunken islands. It seems to us that in this and many other cases a top-down model, at least in its extreme form, cannot be applied successfully, and a different line of analysis is needed.

The second approach has the hunter-gatherers as marginal groups, and often as former pastoralists who were forced to adopt a despised way of subsistence after having lost their cattle as a result of war or epidemics. Such a view receives further support by the observation that the marginal, outcast groups of East Africa are constantly renewed and enriched through the influx of genetic (and very possibly linguistic) material coming from neighboring peoples: individuals, either men, women or children, may and often are cast off of their group for a number of reasons, mainly having to do with the infringement of group solidarity and codes (Stiles 1988). There is no single starting point, and a genealogical tree is ill-suited to represent the genesis of these groups. This model of analysis can be called “bottom-up”.

The two models suit different interests and methodologies, and are largely irreducible to each other. On the other hand, it is well possible to imagine the models as extreme points along a continuum, with extreme and moderate cases. We can imagine, e.g., that the group would be reinforced with population inflow and that the language would be reinforced with linguistic material.

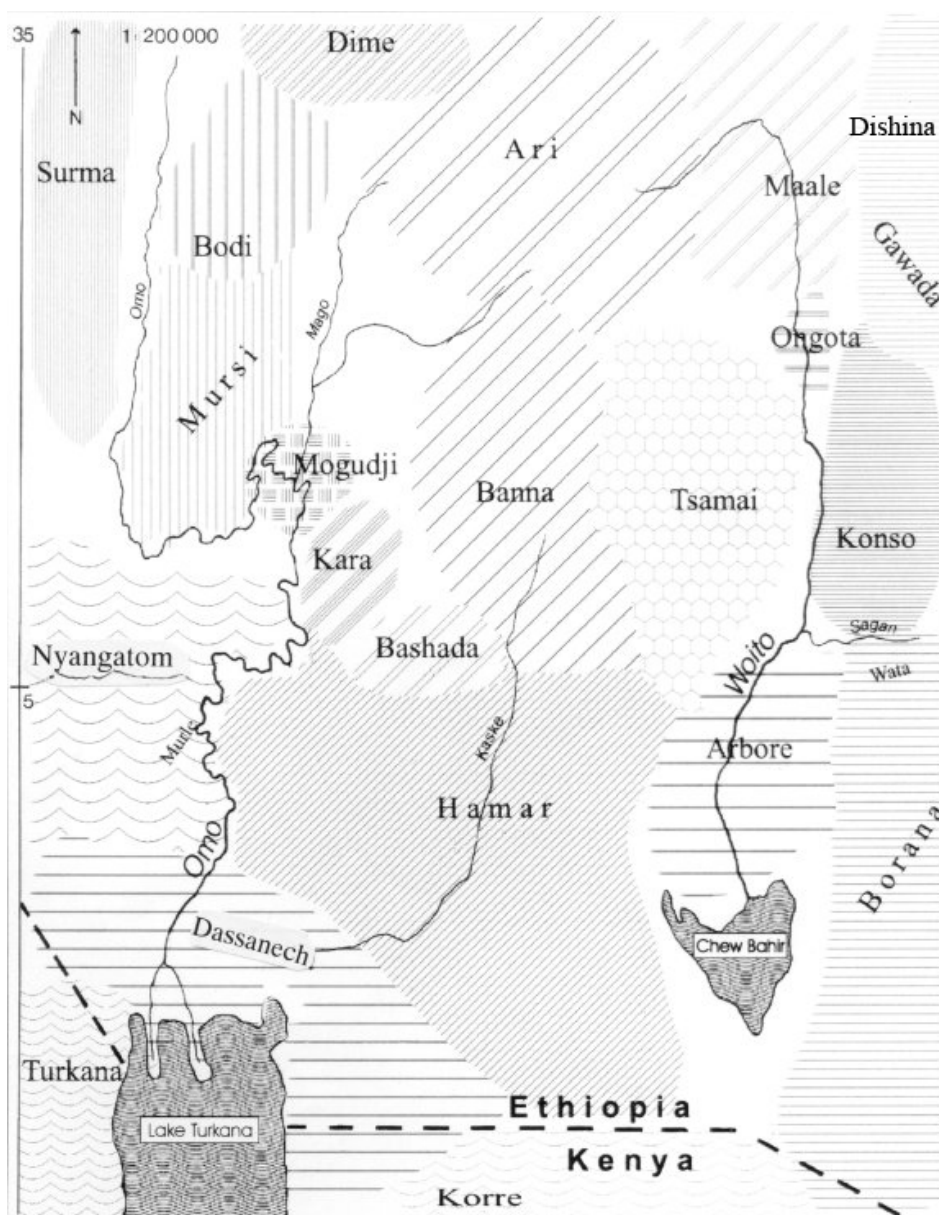
In this article, it is argued that a bottom-up model may better account for the ethnic and linguistic history of the Ongota. As detailed below, the Ongota have largely replaced their ancestral language with the Cushitic language of their pastoral neighbors, the Ts’amakko, while a bare handful of elders still speak the Ongota language, which is so different from neighboring Cushitic and Omotic languages that it has so far resisted classification. In another radical example of top-down approach, Fleming (2006) claimed that Ongota represents a separate branch of the Afroasiatic phylum – therefore dating back thousands of years. This hypothesis may be matched at the ethnographic level with the (completely unwarranted) suggestion, found in a travel report from 1896 (Donaldson Smith 1896), that the Ongota are the remnants of an archaic pygmy population of hunter-gatherers.

The Ongota are still fairly unknown – a “new entry” in the world of hunter-gatherer communities – and the problems surrounding their language and past history are very complex indeed. The following sections will present in more detail the Ongota and the ethnolinguistic evidence pointing to their origin.

2. The Ongota

The Ongota (mainly known locally as Birale) are a small population of about 100 living in Southwest Ethiopia, in the village of Muts’e along the Weyt’o River (some 35 minutes walking distance from the bridge along the road leading from Konso to the Omo Valley).² The village is within the territory of the Ts’amakko (or Tsamai), who speak one of the Dullay varieties of East Cushitic (Savà 2005). Other neighboring populations are the Gawwada and other Dullay-speaking groups to the East, the Maale to the North, and the Arbore to the South (see Map 1. below). All their neighbors speak East Cushitic languages, except for the Maale, whose language is North Omotic. Additional groups in contact are the Hamar, the Banna (both groups being South Omotic speakers), the Konso and the Boraana (East Cushitic speakers).

² The Weyt’o river of Southwest Ethiopia (locally called *Dullay*, *Dullayho*, etc.) is of course not to be confused with the now extinct Weyto language, spoken by hippopotamus hunters in the Lake Tana. It was probably a Cushitic language (Dimmendaal 1989), later superseded by an occupation jargon based upon Amharic.



Map 1. The Ongota and the neighbouring peoples mentioned in the text
(adapted with changes from: www.southethiopiaresearch.org)

The Ongota are known in the area for their linguistic and ethnographic uniqueness. Their traditional language, called *ʔiifa ʔongota*³, is different from any other in the area, and it is still unclassified, although many proposals have been put forward.

Ongota is also very endangered, since the community speaks Ts'amakko for everyday communication. This is also the language taught to children. About ten elders still have a knowledge of the Ongota traditional language (Fleming et al 1992/92, Savà and Tosco 2000, and Fleming 2006).

Today the Ongota are socially dominated by the Ts'amakko. The influence is so strong that it is hardly possible to find any Ongota cultural trait not derived from the

³ The transcription of Ongota adopted in the present paper uses the standard International Phonetic Alphabet. The only exceptions are: <j> = /ɕʝ/, <c> = /tʃ/ and <š> = /ʃ/.

Ts'amakko. The two groups actually intermarry and the Ongota take part in the weekly Ts'amakko market in Weyt'o town.

However, the Ongota can be described ethnographically as the only hunter-gatherers in an area characterized largely by pastoralism and agriculture. They practice fishing, hunting, collecting wild plants, as well as apiculture; however, these non-agropastoralist activities are not peculiar to the Ongota in South-West Ethiopia: most of the surrounding people hunt, collect some plant and produce honey, and, as is well known, hardly any community survives by eating exclusively wild animals and plants, and it is no surprise that the Ongota essentially live on cultivated maize and vegetables and keep some chickens, goats and sheep. They are also good producers of bananas, which together with honey are marketable goods. Fishing is the only practice that the Ongota do not share with neighboring peoples; actually, Ongota are the only group for which fish is not a taboo food.

This does not necessarily mean that the Ongota were originally hunter-gatherers and have absorbed alternative forms of food production. Alternatively, they might have had a pastoralist past and for some reason gave up animal husbandry. There are some indications supporting this view. Savà and Thubauville (2010) have found out that older Ongota women have no special knowledge of wild plants⁴. This may help proving that the Ongota are not originally hunter-gatherers. According to Melesse Getu (1997), and as confirmed by the Ongota themselves to Savà and Thubauville in 2007, a massive presence of the tse-tse fly (the biological vector of *trypanosomiasis*) along the Weyt'o River prevents Ongota from breeding cows. For this reason the only domestic animals the Ongota breed are goats and sheep, beside chickens. This may either suggest that the Ongota were earlier pastoralists forced to give up cattle-keeping, or, to the opposite, the incomplete acculturation of an hunter-gatherer group. The whole story, it will be suggested, is much more complex.

Still according to Melesse Getu (1997), the presence of firearms in the forest of the Weyt'o river valley and desertification resulted in drastic impoverishment of fauna and flora. Moreover, fish has decreased during the last years – the main reason being the building of a dam which serves the irrigation system of a large cotton farm near the village of Weyt'o and through which little fish can pass. This means that environmental conditions might have posed the Ongota serious problems if their life was mainly based on hunting and gathering.

The solution to our dilemma – where do the Ongota come from? and what have they been in the past? – might come from the analysis of ethnographic and linguistic data, to which we turn in the following sections.

3. Internal evidence: The myth of the Ongota origins

The Ongota have a traditional myth on their origins. This has been recorded, but not published, by Savà and Tosco (2000 and 2006). The storyteller was Mole Sagane, the former chief of the community. Until his death in January 2008 he was a respected and charismatic elder and one of the last few speakers of the Ongota language.

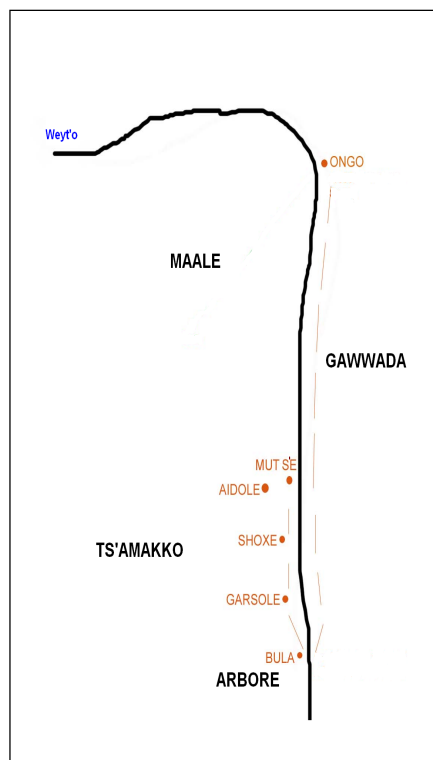
The story tells that the original Ongota group was living in the Maale area. They were killing and stealing cattle using sticks with poisoned tip. Apparently, they already were composed of different sections, each one going back to a different people, ranging, for

⁴ Bonny Sands (p.c.) informs us that a similar situation obtains among the Hadza in Tanzania, and suggests a population bottleneck around 110 years ago which may have caused the loss of some specialized knowledge.

example, from the North Omotic Maale to the South Omotic Banna, to the East Cushitic Boraana and Dihina (the latter one of the Dullay-speaking groups).

They were eventually chased away by the Maale and forced to move southwards along the Weyt'o River. The people started walking along the riverbed and eventually found their way blocked by a large boulder. The people asked the wisest men of each clan how to break it apart. All of them tried their divinations, but to no avail. Since the wise men failed, someone suggested trying with a small boy. They chose one, blessed him and gave him a rhino's horn. The boy touched the boulder with the horn and it immediately split apart. The Weyt'o river could flow southwards and the Ongota could move on. The Ongota followed the river till its end (the Weyt'o river runs dry somewhere to the South of the Ongota settlement in semidesert areas), where they met the Arbore people. After staying there for some time, they were again forced to move, this time northwards, till they settled in the general area where they are found nowadays.

The following map, created by Sophia Thubauville, reconstructs the movement of the Ongota from the Maale area to their present location. Only the places that could be localized with the help of Maale and Ongota people are shown.



Map 2. The movements of the Ongota along the Weyt'o River, according to the Ongota myth of the origins (by Sophia Thubauville)

It is interesting to note that the wise men of each section – i.e., of the different peoples – fail to split the boulder; a child does – one could interpret this as the symbolic expression of a new ethnic identity. Only the Ongota could set the river free, not the original peoples as represented in the tribal sections. The myth, centered, as it is, on the Weyt'o, may be seen as the Ongota version of the hunter-gatherer topophilia: it certainly symbolizes the strong symbiotic link between the Ongota and the river.

While the pastoralists exploit the land beyond the riverbanks, it is the Ongota who really live around and from the river: from it the Ongota get their identity.

From the myth one can see that the Ongota consider themselves a mixture of people coming from surrounding communities. Each Ongota clan retraces its origin from one population, except one which claims four separate connections:

Clan	Origin
<i>baritta</i>	Boraana
<i>ozbikko</i>	Arbore
<i>ʃamaddo</i>	Gawwada
<i>reegakko</i>	Dishina
<i>hizmakko</i>	Maale, Gabo, Hamar and Boraana

It is important to remember that a claimed multiethnic origin is not at all unknown in the area. Further to the West, along the lower course of the Omo, the Dhaasanac have a partially similar story, although the bulk of the Dhaasanac claim to derive from the south and to have submerged a local population of fishermen (Tosco 2007, following and elaborating Sobania 1980). If further research will show that the multiethnic origin has actually an ideological basis in the area, it will be possible to analyze this part of the Ongota myth of the origins as an adaptation of their history to a pattern common among the neighboring pastoralist peoples. This adaptation is also evident from the names of the clans, which are found among the Ts'amakko and the Gawwada (and possibly other groups, although relevant data are missing in this regard).

We have seen that the myth embraces two aspects of the origins of the Ongota: their geographic origin, which is claimed to be strictly local, centered around the Weyt'o River, and their ethnic composition, which is reported as multiethnic from the very beginning. The local geographic origin of the Ongota is compatible with a top-down model (the Ongota as the pristine inhabitants of the area), while the multiethnic origin points to the bottom-up approach. Of course, even the plurality of ethnic origins does not exclude a priori the existence of an original, nuclear group of hunter-gatherers, and the strength of the myth as a proof is further weakened by its not uncommon character. Still, at least two points seem to be clear and cannot be dismissed: the Ongota themselves do *not* consider themselves as the first inhabitants of the area and do *not* see themselves as original hunter-gatherers.

4. External evidence: Ancient contacts with the Maale

The Maale are highland pastoralists, living to the North of the Ts'amakko and the Ongota in an area ranging in altitude from about 1,000 to 2,800 meters above sea level (Azeb Amha 2001: 1). The Ongota myth of origin shows that they used to live among the Maale. Other pieces of information confirm this early relation: the Ongota reported to Savà and Thubauville (2006) that they moved a lot in their (recent?) history. They still remember the names of about 30 settlements they settled and abandoned. The first are located north of their present location, towards the Maale highlands. The present one, Muts'e, is on the Weyt'o river. Before Muts'e the Ongota were living in Aydolle, which is the village visited in 1991 by a few members of the team who authored

Fleming et al (1992). The place lies just some hundred meters from Muts'e towards the forest. A few abandoned huts can still be recognized.

A Maale tradition about the Ongota was collected by Sophia Thubauville in November 2007. Contrary to the Ongota myth of origin, the Maale say that the Ongota were once part of the Maale. To the Northeast of the Maale territory there is also a place called Ongo. Maale people still go and dance there to celebrate a good harvest. There is a good memory of the Ongota, and the Maale are proud to know that an offspring of their community can be found somewhere along the Weyt'o River.

We also owe a few interesting pieces of information to the American traveler Arthur Donaldson Smith, who visited South-West Ethiopia at the end of the 19th century. The following excerpts of his report are relevant to our discussion:

'We came to a large and warlike tribe called the Arbore, inhabiting half of the valley above Lake Stephanie [...]'

[talking about the people that they heard of] They were Burle, Dume, Mali, Borali in succession towards the north, and then the Bunno, Dime, Ario, and Amar to the west (Donaldson Smith 1896: 224).

'Dume, Mali and Borali are pygmies. The Dume conquered the Burle eight years before.' [emphasis ours]

Several populations listed by Donaldson Smith in the preceding quotes and elsewhere can still be found in South-West Ethiopia. Not so with the Burle, Dume and Borali, although Fleming et al (1992) propose to connect the name Borali to Birale, which, as anticipated, is the ethnic name presently given to the Ongota by neighbouring populations. This would imply, once again, that according to Donaldson Smith the Ongota were living North of the Maale area (referred to by him as "Mali").

5. The Ongota as a marginal group

We believe that the present assimilation of the Ongota to the Ts'amakko and the early affiliation to the Maale are just the two most recent episodes in a long history of Ongota subordinate relations with dominant populations of the area. From each dominant group the Ongota have assimilated cultural traits and linguistic elements.

Similarly, the Boni of the Kenya-Somali border (Tosco 1994) have preserved, with due changes, the South Somali dialect of their previous "masters," the Garre – even though they are politically dominated today by the Oromo. The ethnonym Boni, an adaptation of Somali *boon* 'hunters', nowadays widely used in Kenya (Heine 1977), is matched by a parallel denomination as *Waata* among the Oromo and as *Aweer* ~ *Aweera* in the group itself; all these terms simply mean "hunters". All these ethnyonyms indicate that, at least since the split from the Somali, one is confronted with an occupational group which is *also* a separate ethno-linguistic entity.

Just south of the Boni, the Dahalo speak a Cushitic language (either of the Southern or the Eastern branch) but a very limited portion of the vocabulary (approximately 50 words) contains four click phonemes: voiced vs. voiceless nasal, and with or without labio-velarization (cf. Maddieson, Spajić, Sands and Ladefoged 1993 for a phonetic analysis of Dahalo), and this may be interpreted as a very old lexical layer: obviously, the very presence of a phonological clicks in an otherwise orthodox Afroasiatic language may suggest that we are dealing here with the "original" layer, and the only surviving evidence of what was once a Khoisan language (and notwithstanding the fact

that the very existence of Khoisan as a genetically valid group is today more and more rejected; cf. Güldemann and Voßen 2000). In its turn, this would also be the northernmost relic of the original Khoisan-speaking population of East Africa, prior to the advent in the area of food-production (Tosco 1991, 1992). The extreme top-down model expressed by Nurse (1986) and briefly discussed in Section 1. above seems to follow naturally from such an interpretation.⁵

All these cases indicate that change of linguistic and ethnic affiliation seems instead quite common in the area, for hunter-gatherers and pastoralists alike (cf. Tosco 1998 for an analysis of such changes in terms of the catastrophe theory).

Coming back to the Ongota, it can be argued that, as seen in Section 4., the Maale consider the Ongota to have been “a part” of their people, which could lend support to the hypothesis that they were actually pastoral peoples driven for unknown reasons to hunting and gathering. An outcast group is still “part of a people,” which in this part of East Africa means being bound by ritual and legal obligations and economic interests, and not by a putative common ethnic origin or linguistic behavior (cf. again Tosco 1998). Similarly, occupational minorities of Ethiopia are still part of an “ethnic group” while being heavily marginalized: indeed, cultural assimilation and subordination to a dominant group distinguish the social history of the outcast groups all over Southern Ethiopia (cf. Freeman and Pankhurst 2001), and possibly beyond because the largely unknown outcast groups found among the Somali seem to share a similar history. All these groups are characterized by their skill in handcraft and the power of manipulating clay, iron and hide give them supernatural attributes. For this reason they are very useful, but despised and feared at the same time. Marriage with an outcast person, for example, is forbidden or at the very least frowned upon. The Ongota are not specialized in any handcraft, but there is at least some indication that in the past they might have been attributed magical powers. During their stay in the South Omo area in 1973 Jean Lydall and Ivo Strecker heard

‘[...] some interesting news of people called the Birale who live on the east of the Birale mountain, close to the river. The Tsamai refer to them as *hajje*⁶ and consider them to be powerful magicians’ (Lydall and Strecker 1979: 111).

Since they do not keep big herds of cattle and have a strange traditional language of their own, the Ongota are looked upon in scorn by the neighboring pastoralist groups (Savà and Tosco 2000: 65). On the other hand, they are allowed to intermarry with the Ts’amakko and the Gawwada. In the context of these ambiguous social relations with their neighbors, the Ongota will most probably decide to abandon for good their status of a socially despised group by starting keeping cattle and becoming *bona fide* pastoralists. They eventually might be accepted as a new Ts’amakko clan, thus completing the assimilation process.

6. Why Ongota is different

As mentioned in Section 2., the traditional language of the Ongota, *ʔiifa ʔongota*, is different from all the other languages in the area, which belong to the Cushitic and

⁵ Incidentally (and ironically) the very name “Dahalo” is considered derogatory by the group itself; the only native alternative seems to be *guho g^wittso* “little people” (Tosco 1991): certainly not what you would expect for an original and widespread population.

⁶ *Hajje* in Ts’amakko is the plural form of the noun *hajo*, which means a person with magical powers.

Omotic subgroupings of Afroasiatic and, more far apart, from the Surmic subgrouping of Nilo-Saharan. From the morphological point of view, the language is strikingly different. It shows an uncommonly poor and isolating morphology: gender and number have no formal expression on nouns; there are no person and tense verbal suffixes; expression of tense is based on tonal accent change. Moreover, the relatively few grammatical elements have forms not attested in the area: morphological exponents, such as deictic suffixes, determiner suffixes, adjectival endings and most verbal derivation extensions. Also items belonging to other word classes, such as pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, clitics and postpositions cannot be etymologically linked to any neighboring group.

One of the most interesting distinctive morphological features is the absence of verb inflection, which is so characteristic of neighboring Cushitic and Omotic languages. The subject is only indexed by preverbal pronominal clitics. Tense is expressed by placing the tonal accent on the rightmost syllable of the verb, in which case the tense is past, or in the preceding one, in order to express non-past tense. The non-past position of the accent in monosyllabic verbs is on the pronominal clitic, as shown in the following example:

<i>cata</i>	<i>ka = cák</i>	vs.	<i>cata</i>	<i>ká = cak</i>
meat	I = eat.PAST		meat	I = eat.NON-PAST

The closest parallel is possibly found in Hamar, a South Omotic language spoken not far from Ongota to the West. Verbs in Hamar are not inflected for the person of the subject, which is indexed by means of preverbal clitics (Cupi, Petrollino, Savà and Tosco 2013). On the other hand, Hamar has a complex system of aspect and tense suffixes, many of which probably derived from old copulas or auxiliaries.

Considering the area in which it is spoken and the typology of the neighboring languages, one would also expect Ongota to have a rich nominal morphology. Instead, the language does not show any trace of the complex Cushitic and Omotic system of number and gender. For example, in Ts'amakko a basic noun can be derived for singulative and plurative by means of derivational suffixes: from the noun *kar-o* "dog" one can obtain *kar-itto* "one male dog", *kar-itte* "one female dog" and *kar-re* "dogs". Ongota operates with a simple singular/plural opposition. Plurality, moreover, is either lexicalized (for instance: *ayma* "woman"/ *aaka* "women") or expressed by the word *bad'd'e* "many" following the noun (*kara bad'd'e* "fishes").

There is no published work devoted to comparative Ongota morphosyntax. Some notes are found in Blažek (1991, 2001 and 2005), Savà and Tosco (2003), and Fleming (2006). Blažek finds similarities in the pronominal series between Ongota and some Nilo-Saharan languages, while Savà and Tosco adopt the more conservative view that Ongota is an East Cushitic language of the Dullay subgroup on the basis of some tone accent similarities in verbs. One should also mention that Aklilu Yilma (p.c.) sees in Ongota's poor morphology an indication that the language is a creolized pidgin. He supports this view with the local legend of the multiethnic origin of the Ongota discussed in Section 3.

Most of the Ongota comparative studies have focused on lexicon. This is characterized by a mass of Ts'amakko loanwords that entered the Ongota as recorded from its last speakers. Among them one could also find words from other Dullay varieties.

According to Fleming (2006), however, for the Ts'amakko-like words belonging to some core and cultural lexicon the direction of borrowing could have been the opposite – from Ongota into Ts'amakko.

According to Blažek (2005), the contribution of Ts'amakko to the Ongota lexicon consists of 295 lexemes, while parallels with neighbouring Cushitic (such as Oromo and other East Cushitic languages) and Omotic (such as Hamar and other South and North Omotic languages) amounts to only about 15 entries each. Blažek considers each classified group of words as a lexical stratum. In his opinion, the oldest has Nilo-Saharan origin; he himself had isolated the similarities with Nilo-Saharan languages in an older paper published later (Blažek 2007).

There have been of course other attempts at Ongota classification by lexical comparison: Bender (1994) lists Ongota as “unclassifiable” since, according to lexicostatistic techniques, it shares less than 5% with any other language. However, he later defined Ongota as “hybridized Cushitic” (p.c.). On his part, Ehret (p.c., 2002), on the basis of unpublished comparative work, favors a South Omotic affiliation.

In order to explain the uniqueness of Ongota, the top-down model suggests that the Ongota language is genetically a linguistic isolate spoken by a hunter-gatherer group. This is, in its essence, the boldest attempt at classification so far: Fleming (2006) proposed that Ongota is Afroasiatic, although *a separate branch* of it, on a par with Cushitic, Berber, Semitic, etc.

Our idea, instead, is that Ongota's complex history of domination by different groups got reflected in the language, with different superimposed strata. The linguistic import of the constant influx, of different individuals, families and maybe whole sections, resulted in a language that is very deviant from any other language in the area. The following section will provide some evidence to this effect.

7. Tapping into the Ongota lexicon

The uncertainty on the genetic status of Ongota tells us that the classification of Ongota is a very hard, maybe unfeasible, task. All the proposed hypotheses are very interesting, but do not provide definite evidence, and all the attempts share the methodological pitfall of not being based on a reconstruction of Ongota. Many similarities and relevant etymologies, therefore, look very impressionistic and may be put into question (see Savà and Tosco 2007 for a critical appraisal of the reconstructions in Fleming 2006).

Savà and Thubauville (2010) have tried to classify a corpus of Ongota lexemes trying to spot the linguistic traces of contact between the Ongota and the groups that they most likely met during their journeys. Their corpus consists of a selection of about 700 Ongota lexical items, much larger than the one used by Blažek (2005). The words come from Savà and Tosco (2000) with some integration from Fleming *et al.* (1992/93). In order to accept a borrowing Savà and Thubauville (2010) required a particularly high and unquestionable level of similarity. Whenever possible, the comparisons were checked against Blažek (2005) and Fleming (2006).

7.1. Ts'amakko borrowings

About 200 words in the recorded Ongota vocabulary are evident Ts'amakko borrowings. There are also cases of loanwords shared by other Dullay dialects, but it

seems safer to consider all of them borrowed into Ongota through the intermediacy of Ts'amakko – also on the basis of the fact that there are no cases of Dullay lexemes in Ongota *not* shared by Ts'amakko.

Many of these loans appear unchanged in Ongota, while others show some degree of phonological and morphological adaptation.

Examples of the former, which seem to point to a late borrowing phase (and complete bilingualism at the societal level, are *ge?* 'to belch,' *gufa?* 'to cough,' *kol* 'to come back,' *malal* 'to be tired,' *palde* 'iron arrow,' *sarba* 'calf,' and many others.

Limited changes in the phonological make-up of Ts'amakko loans in Ongota include vowel length reduction (as in *bositte* from Ts'amakko *boositte* 'hair of chest'), vowel height change (as in *gunture* from Ts'amakko *gontore* 'eland,' or *merja* from *mirja* 'kudu'), dental assimilation of glottal stop (as in *moqotte* from *muq'o?te* 'frog,' or *oršatte* from *orša?te* 'rhinoceros'), and nasal change (as in *kunkumitte* from *kumkumitte* 'cheek').

In quite a few words, final /a/ replaces the Ts'amakko gender affixes -o (M) and -e (F); a few examples are *baara* from *baaro* 'armpit' and *irgaša* from *irgašo* 'axe,' as well as *qola* from *qole* 'cattle' and *kurruba* from *kurrube* 'crow.'

Irregular cases of consonant alternation are also found, as in *talaña* from *salañ* 'four,' or *luqqa* from *lukkale* 'chicken,' as well as various irregular internal changes, as in *gawarsa* from *gawarakko* 'bateleur (*Theratopius ecaudatus*)' and *sayra* from *sawro* 'dik-dik.'

More serious changes involve the word shape of Ts'amakko loans in which the singulative affixes are lost: Ongota final -a replaces the masculine singulative suffixes -ko, -akko and -atto (as in *karawa* from *karawo* 'colobus monkey,' or *damša* from *damšo* 'giraffe'), while the singulative affix is dropped without replacement in *bor* from *bor-ko* 'stomach'; the feminine singulative suffix -te is similarly dropped in *ħalo* from *ħaal-te* 'calabash cup' (with final -o in Ongota). Even more important, because they may hint at a previous phase of incomplete bilingualism and a more limited knowledge of Ts'amakko, are rare cases such as *wuyyam* 'to call' from Ts'amakko *wuyy-am* 'to be called' (regularly derived from *wuyy* 'to call').

7.2. Non-Ts'amakko borrowings from neighboring languages, lookalikes and apparent isolates

Only 40 items are considered as borrowings from neighboring languages and language groups other than Ts'amakko. Among those with the highest level of similarity with the geographically closest languages we find:⁷

Ongota	Hamar (South Omotic)	gloss
<i>buusa</i>	<i>busa</i>	'belly'
<i>adab</i>	<i>atab</i>	'tongue'
<i>laba</i>	<i>laba</i>	'wide'
<i>ooma</i>	<i>oom</i>	'bow'
<i>gaʃ</i>	<i>gaʃ</i>	'bite'

⁷ The transcription of the different languages follows the sources.

Ongota	Aari (South Omotic)	gloss
<i>goola</i>	<i>goola</i>	‘local beer’
<i>wanna</i>	<i>waanna</i>	‘good’

Ongota	Maale (North Omotic)	gloss
<i>naʔa</i>	<i>naʔi</i>	‘child’
<i>baliti</i>	<i>baliti</i>	‘forehead’
<i>toiti</i>	<i>toiti</i>	‘eldest son’

(more tentative for the geographical and semantic distance is the connection of Ongota *šub* ‘to kill’ with, e.g., Dizi *šubo*, Nayi *šubo*, Sheko *šub*, Koyra *šúpe*, all meaning ‘to die,’ or with Bench *çup/çuk* ‘to slaughter’)

Ongota	Borana (East Cushitic)	gloss
<i>arba</i>	<i>arba</i>	‘elephant’
<i>gaara</i>	<i>gara</i>	‘mountain’
<i>meela</i>	<i>miila</i>	‘leg’
<i>olla</i>	<i>olla</i>	‘village’

Ongota	Konso (East Cushitic)	gloss
<i>aama</i>	<i>ama</i>	‘breast’
<i>armata</i>	<i>armayta</i>	‘mucus’

In other cases the similarity is with other members of the Konsoid group, such as *romini* ‘red,’ which finds connection in Bussa *rooma* and Diraasha *room/êr-roma*. According to Blažek (2005), there are also borrowings from South Cushitic languages. Three of them are particularly interesting:

Ongota	gloss	Dahalo	Iraqw	Burunge	gloss	Kw’adza	gloss
<i>c’aʃaw</i>	‘water’	<i>tl’ááʃa</i>			‘river, lake’	<i>caʔamuko</i>	‘small streambed’
<i>q’umo</i>	‘container’		<i>qumi</i>		‘travelling gourd’		
<i>c’aʃa</i>	‘stone’		<i>tl’aʃa-nu</i>	<i>tl’aʃu</i>	‘stone’	<i>tlayiko</i> , pl.	‘stone’
						<i>tlayaʔo</i>	

It is not likely that the Ongota borrowed words from languages spoken as far away as Tanzania. If not just the product of casual resemblance, one could use the difficult classificatory position of Dahalo (which could actually be East Cushitic, as argued for by Tosco 2000) in order to speculate that Ongota borrowed them from (or shared them with?) an unknown and geographically closer East Cushitic language.

Lookalikes between unrelated languages can always be found and they can easily get in the way of language comparison; thus, we find at least a couple of similarities with different Nilo–Saharan languages:

Ongota	Mimi	North Mao	Kanuri	gloss
<i>maara</i>	<i>maar</i>	<i>meri</i>		‘boy’
<i>itima</i>			<i>timi</i>	‘tooth’

Justifying the presence of these resemblances as due to anything other than sheer similarity is very difficult since the languages are spoken as far away as Nigeria. Also accepting Blažek’s (2005) idea that Ongota is originally a Nilo–Saharan language does not make matters much easier, since the languages belong to different Nilo–Saharan subgroups. Moreover, Nilo–Saharan sub-grouping, and the very existence of Nilo–Saharan as a linguistic family, are of course a debated matter.

Still, the vast majority of the items taken into consideration by Savà and Thubauville resist classification, and this does suggest an ancient hunter-gatherer group with a yet unknown linguistic affiliation. Some examples of these apparently unaffiliated words include: *axaco* ‘sun,’ *binta* ‘wild animal,’ *cak* ‘to eat,’ *dabaša* ‘baboon,’ *fa?* ‘to add,’ *howwa* ‘ear,’ *miša* ‘name,’ *na?* ‘to give,’ *noqot* ‘to look at,’ *tip* ‘to die,’ *xa?* ‘to do.’

8. Conclusions

The Ongota myths of origin and the traditions of their Northern neighbors, the Maale, may be summarized as follows:

- the Ongota are the descendants of different peoples – or better, of various sections of peoples – who joined together. The Ongota clan names are in effect the same, apparently, as those found all over the area;
- the Ongota lived originally to the north of their present location, in the territory of the Maale (an Ometo-speaking – i.e., North Omotic – group);
- the Ongota were engaged in stealing cattle at the expenses of the Maale;
- the Ongota forced their way (or were forced to move) southwards along the Weyt’o river and have lived in close association with it since then;
- Ongota women do not have any special knowledge of wild plant collection;
- the Ongota cannot keep cattle due to the presence of the tse-tse fly in the area.

The Ongota are presently assimilating to the Ts’amakko pastoralists. While the Ongota language is apparently in a terminal state (and is reported as ‘nearly extinct’ by Ethnologue), the Ongota are also hardly distinguishable from their pastoral neighbors from a cultural point of view. No reliable data on the Ongota economy are available, but economic assimilation to the Ts’amakko has so far been hampered by the lack of cattle, or, in other words, of “hard currency”.

The Ongota language, like any other language, reflects the contact history of its speakers. We abstain from expressing a final opinion on its classification; certainly, continuous influence from different languages has resulted in a very divergent language with an unusual isolating character and a unique lexicon. The presence of a good number of Ts’amakko loanwords shows a particularly strong and maybe quite

ancient relation with the people speaking this language. We assume that the same happened with other groups to which the Ongota were affiliated.

The presence of a fairly substantial number of unclassified words (as seen in 7.2.) yields plausibility to the possibility of an original hunter-gatherer group which came in contact with a number of different peoples and languages, to the point of radically changing its language affiliation. This would make the Ongota resemble a bit both the Dahalo and the Boni of Kenya: just like the Dahalo, the Ongota would have preserved a tiny lexical layer of their original language, and just like the Boni they would have shifted their language to that of their dominating language group (the present one – the Ts'amakko – in the case of the Ongota; a former one – Southern Somali Garre – in the case of the Boni). Nothing among the meager available data seems to force such an analysis, and just like for all the other hunter-gatherer groups it is close to impossible to detect the full range of the prehistoric contacts. Weighting the pros and cons of competing hypotheses, the simplest (albeit maybe least fascinating) one remains to project the present state of affairs in the past and to conclude that the Ongota are *not* a remnant hunter-gatherer population. The real difference between the Ongota and the pastoralists in the area is the absence of cattle rather than the alleged hunter-gathering life-style of the Ongota, who were originally an outcast community which has been wandering in the area around the Weyt'o river and affiliating itself in the course of time to different dominant pastoralist groups.

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‘Afar-Saaho dialectology: a methodology

Didier Morin¹

SOMMARIO

Il proposito di questo articolo è quello di confermare ed estendere le conclusioni basate su un corpus già pubblicato da questo autore². Partendo con un testo in ‘afar meridionale³ e la sua traduzione in Saaho settentrionale e meridionale⁴, seguito da quattro leggende popolari in saaho settentrionale e meridionale, questo scritto identifica un insieme di isoglosse che caratterizzano una catena dialettale⁵ i cui componenti, per quanto concerne la sintassi, sono isomorfi. L’inedito corpus mostra differenze (e similitudini) con l’afar e tra le due varietà di saaho menzionate. Sono proposte sedici isoglosse.

Keywords: *folktales*, *‘Afar-Saaho dialectology*, *Northern and Southern Saaho*
ISO-639-3: aar, ssy

ABBREVIATIONS. Ø: zero morpheme; f: Feminine; imp: Imperfect; impv: Imperative; int: Interrogative; m: Masculine; n: Noun; nS: Northern Saaho; pl: Plural; pos: Possessive; pp: Postposition; pr: Personal pronoun; pt: Particle; s: Singular; sS: Southern Saaho; v: Verb; var: Variant; 1 pl: First personal plural pronoun; 2 pl: Second personal plural pronoun (etc.).

Defining isoglosses

The proposed methodology is based on the French concept of “dialect”, a term primarily used for geographic varieties historically related to the same language. This concept differs from the Anglo-American one for which “dialect” describes any variety of language (geographical but also sociolinguistic, etc.). The French concept of dialect also includes spoken varieties of a dialect which in its turn is the regional form taken by a language. For instance, in our terminology, there is no “Ginda‘ dialect”, but a “parler de Ginda’” [the way of speaking nS in Ginda’] whose peculiarities are analysed in the frame work of the Northern Saaho dialect as a whole.

When defining dialects the problem is how to select relevant features among a theoretically unlimited number of variations that also include idiolectal usages. The proposed hierarchy puts the lexical stratum at the lowest level since it is virtually open to any innovation, while the morphological and phonetic isoglosses are much more conservative. As a whole the list of isoglosses offers a selection in which what is relevant for defining nS excludes what is relevant for sS.

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² Morin, 1994 and 1995.

³ *Op. cit.* 1995: 278 sq. Hereafter sA stands for Southern ‘Afar, nA for Northern ‘Afar.

⁴ We will not repeat here the arguments which allowed to recognize two Saaho dialects only (see our Bibliography). We chose here to concentrate on the methodological aspects which justify our approach in ‘Afar-Saaho dialectology.

⁵ Mahaffy (1952).

Notice that nS is in polarity with sS and vice versa but this opposition does not hinder mutual comprehension. If field-work should reveal a sS feature in the nS data it would indicate that the informant has been in contact with a dialectal variety which in the context of Saho communities may be the result of seasonal migrations, resettlement and sedentarization or any other reasons. Among these is the long war for Independence which modified the sociology and traditional way of life in Eritrea and in the surrounding areas where Saho speakers lived before. As an example, one may mention fishermen of the Eritrean coast who settled in Djibouti in the 70s. Around the same period we met a truck driver assistant who was a native sS speaker and who was able to adapt his speech according to the various usages on its way from Asmara to Massawa. In contact with nS speakers he pronounced the nS ejective consonants. When reaching the Samhar plain he could use the few words of *təgre* he knew which combined with Arabic explained his mixed speech in the multilingual area where he travelled.

For this reason the labels “nS” and “sS” do not ignore the clan denominations but it seems better to reserve these traditional references to local usages which operate as “signs of reconnaissance” which do not function as linguistic (i.e. regular) discriminants properly. As in ‘Afar, the capacity that speakers have to differentiate themselves “from one canton to another (‘Afar *da‘arak da‘ar*)” increases in the Saaho mountainous areas.

It implies the lexicon. For example, ‘*aso* “fever, malaria” is a pan-‘Afar-Saaho item, but the Taruu‘a Moosata-‘Áre for unknown reason use *hindá* which elsewhere in ‘Afar as in Saaho means “generosity”⁶. Metathesis may also participate in the dialect differentiation: see nS *gáhre* “surprise”, sS *gárhe*. The same variants are also found in ‘Afar.

Prosody is also a way for speakers to indicate discreetly their clan origin to their interlocutor: *af* “mouth” has many plural form: *áfof*, *áfuf*. sS (Hádu) speakers insist on the initial stress *áfof*, when sS Irob pronounce *afóf*. Generally speaking our Taruu‘a informants insisted on the fact that the stress on *áfof* and generally speaking on nouns was pronounced weaker than in sS.

In the verb morphology, *kitin* var. *kiton* “you are” is found in all Saho dialects except in Taruu‘a where *kitin* is only used. But the same Taruu‘a speakers use *maltin* or *malton* “you don’t have” in the conjugation of *male*. The central Saho-speaking communities, labelled as “Mina” use nS and/or sS features especially in the lexical domain, contradicting the polar opposition. As for Taruu‘a *kitin/kiton*, this label “Mina” refer to secondary clan discriminants which help the speakers to recognize that they are of Dásamo, Dabri-Meela or Ga‘aso origin among other Saaho speakers. But the use of nS or sS items in these Central varieties hinders to consider “Mina” as a dialect *per se*. An example of this intermingled situation is offered by pl. “tongues”: sS *ánrob*, *árrob*, *árrab*; nS (Taruu‘a) and Mina *ánrab*, *ánrub* but also *árrob*, *ánrob* which are pan-Saaho. ‘Asawrta prefers *arraabá* (as in ‘Afar).

It seems better to refer to the Taruu‘a variety and not to ‘Asawrta when investigating the nS corpus, since the latter claim that they do not speak Saho (*Saahot waani*) but “a separate ‘Asaurta language” (‘*Asaurtat ziiḍo*). Due to the fact that the Irob variety is geographically close to Northern ‘Afar, it appears less relevant than

⁶ Moosata-‘Áre use *laggas* (f. *laggaasít*) “generous” (*hindale*).

Ḥádu to define sS features, although some Hadu live in mixed settlements with ‘Afar. The Saaho dialectal hierarchy consists in three levels:

- a. Pan-‘Afar-Saaho forms: [A = S].
- b. Pan-dialectal Saho (pS) forms: [nS = sS].
- c. Interdialectal regular oppositions: [nS # sS].

Due to this intermingled linguistic situation, it seems more relevant to define a selected (i.e. systematic) number of isoglosses instead of trying to take into account any variation.

Corpus and informants

After first contacts with Saho speakers during short travels in Eritrea in the years 1970-1972, I had the opportunity to make a more systematic research during a four-years stay in Egypt and the Sudan (1991-1994). The present data were collected in Cairo with two informants, Mr Ibraahiim Ismaa‘iil, (Ḥádu, ‘Asa‘aliila), born in San‘afé, and Mr Saaleḥ ‘Osman (Taru‘a, Sará-‘Áre) of the Samhar plain. In addition to them, Mr Adamu ‘Umar, of the same clan and geographic origin, joined the work during a short period. Being newcomers in Egypt where they had entered two years before, apart from becoming fluent speakers of Arabic, those three did not pass enough time abroad to forget their traditional background, so that I consider the data gathered in Cairo as accurate as if they had been collected in Eritrea. We worked intensively during the years 1991 and 1992 concentrating on folk-tales in both Saho varieties. Choosing traditional oral literature – since it is less sensible to innovation – seemed relevant to provide stable and even possibly archaic clues for defining isoglosses between Saaho dialects. Since that period one imagines that new isoglosses could be added but we think that they would have enriched our data without invalidating them.

The methodology of the texts collection has been the following one. A version in nS or in sS was given by one of the two informants, then the other informant provided a translation in his native dialect. The first of the five folk-tales is in ‘Afar. It was recited by our informant and friend, Ḥamad-La‘de *b. šeh* Ḥasan in 1978.

Since the reference (i.e. first) versions are either in nS or in sS, one can see when reading the whole corpus that there is no contradiction between any of these “original” texts and their translations. In a few cases, one may note the influence of the first on the latter. It can be due to the fact that informants worked all together. Such is, e.g., sS *ged* (nS *gedda*) “when” instead of *gul* (I, 56); or the “anteriority marker” in sS (*aadigih* “having known” from perfect *aadigeh* “I knew”) which characterizes only nS (I, 54). Also (see I, 47) sS *adda-t* (instead of *adda-d*) is under the influence of ‘Afar. Since I did not change anything in the collected texts, these few contradictory clues may represent less than 5% of the data.

Lists of isoglosses

Parts of the tables below are found in Morin (1994, 1995). To these lists are added the isoglosses found in the corpus. As such, they constitute a selection and for this reason are not exhaustive.

Ia. Table of consonants ('Afar-Saaho)						
<i>f</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>ħ</i>	<i>h</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>g</i>	‘	
	<i>ɖ</i>					
	<i>ṭ</i>	<i>ɣ</i>	<i>čʻ</i>	<i>ḳ</i>		
<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>					
	<i>l</i>					
	<i>r</i>					

Notice that nS includes 22 consonants, with four ejectives /ṭ, ɣ, čʻ, ḳ/ borrowed from northern Ethio-Semitic. The spirantized realizations of some stops⁷ are found among bilingual Tigrinya-Saaho speakers. This phonetic variants are not found in the two informants' pronunciation, since they had no real practice of Tigrinya.

Instead, sS uses 16 consonants (without the ejectives and the prepalatals *š*, *ž*). In this dialect, *š* is a free variant of *s*, *r* of *ɖ* in intervocalic position: *guɖa* ~ *gura* “I want”, a variant also found in Southern ‘Afar of Awsa and Ba‘adu regions. The 15 consonants system of ‘Afar is the most economic, with the absence of *ž*, except in few ancient nouns. In nS, sS and ‘Afar, *w* and *y* are the realization of the vowels /u/ and /i/ in consonantic position, so that they do not appear in the table of consonants above. Saaho and ‘Afar have the same vocalic system with five short or long vowels (Saho *bado* “proximity”/ ‘Afar *baado* “land”):

Ib. Table of vowels					
<i>i</i>		<i>u</i>		<i>ī</i>	<i>ū</i>
<i>e</i>		<i>o</i>		<i>ē</i>	<i>ō</i>
	<i>a</i>			<i>ā</i>	

A culminative stress opposes homonyms, masculine and feminine (nS *ħuggátto* “neighbour”/ fem. *ħuggattô*). Five phonetic isoglosses and the decreasing number of shared features illustrate the degree of divergence inside the dialectal chain.

⁷ The official orthography includes digraphs such as [rh] which may create ambiguity: *garhe* (*gar-he*), a metathesis of *gahre* “surprise” can be read erroneously as /gaɖe/. Northern Saaho [qh] *laqhco* “ear ring” must be considered as a variant of pan-Saaho-‘Afar *laq’o* “silver, ancient silver currency”. The second element *h* represents the spirantized pronunciation of the ejective /ḳ/ by bilingual speakers (Saaho-Tigrinya). This pronunciation has not been recorded in our informant’s practice.

⁸ Except in loanwords, mainly from Arabic.

	Saaho			‘Afar	
	Northern	Central	Southern	Northern	Southern
A. Ejectives	+	-	-	-	-
B. /š/ corresponding to /s/	+	+	-	-	-
C. /z/ corresponding to /d/	+	+	+	-	-
D. No vowel deletion before stress	+	+	+	+	-
E. Final unstressed /e/o/	+	+	+	-	-
Number of shared features	5	4	3	1	0

Opposing the isogloss B (A *s* / nS *š*) is constant when it appears as a relevant variant in nS (personal pronoun 2 pl *šin*, var. *šin*) and a free variant in sS. Its realization depends on the degree of bilingualism in Arabic.

The sixteen isoglosses are found in the corpus here after. Their distribution in the different tables has been made in order to define a coherent bundle of isoglosses, and not according only to their linguistic status. Such is the case of the postposition (isogloss 2, A *-k* / S(nS) *-ko* which has been separated from the other postpositions. The reason is that sS uses *-k* or *-ko*, so that the opposition *-k* to *-ko* is not relevant to oppose nS and sS but ‘Afar to Northern Saaho. Also, the vowel quantity in ‘Afar nouns as CVCVC *lubak* “lion” which may have a long final vowel CVCVVC-V *lubāka* is not systematic in sS contrary to nS. For this reason it has not been included in the list. The opposition between (‘Afar subjunctive /u/, Saaho /o/) has been excluded from the list since it is not found in the corpus but is relevant in the ‘Afar - Saaho opposition⁹.

In table II six morphological isoglosses (1-6) illustrate the opposition between ‘Afar and Saaho as a whole.

II. Morphological isoglosses separating ‘Afar and Saaho	
Postpositions:	1. A <i>-t</i> / S <i>-d</i> 2. A <i>-k</i> / S (nS) <i>-ko</i> 3. A <i>kah</i> / S <i>akah</i>
Deictics:	4. Demonstratives: A <i>a-</i> / S <i>ta-</i>
Subject-Verb Agreement:	5. sg / pl.
Noun predicate final vowel	6. A <i>+</i> / S <i>Ø</i>

In table III four morphological isoglosses (7-10) illustrate the opposition between nS and sS.

III. Morphological isoglosses separating nS and sS	
Singulative:	7. nS <i>atto</i> / sS <i>ayto</i>
Postpositions:	8. nS <i>Vlle</i> / sS <i>VI</i> 9. nS <i>Vdde</i> / sS <i>d</i> 10. nS <i>akko</i> / sS <i>ak</i>

⁹ See Morin (1994: 1995: 102).

Six features separate nS and sS. Features 13 to 16 operate at the level of the phrase as a whole and not of the Noun only.

IV. Phrase markers separating nS and sS

Noun phrase modifier	11. “Genitive”
Noun phrase coordination	12. Vowel lengthening in sS / nS Ø
Negation marker	13. nS <i>mi</i> / sS <i>ma</i>
Relative clause particle ¹⁰	14. nS <i>ya</i> / sS <i>yya, hiyya</i>
Anteriority in dependent clause	15. nS <i>ih</i> (< <i>eh</i>) / sS Ø
Dependent clause marker	16. Subordinating conjunctions

“Genitive” is chosen for simplicity reason, knowing that there is no “genitive case” in ‘Afar-Saaho “since there is no case properly”¹¹. “Genitive” refers to a sequence possessor-possessed marked by morphemes suffixed to the possessor. Interestingly many isoglosses have their counterpart in ‘Afar showing the historical link between the geographically most distant dialects of the domain¹².

These 16 oppositions are illustrated with examples taken from the five folk-tales here after. Their occurrences are indicated in bold in the texts. Cross-references in the tables are indicated like this: for instance the correspondence A *t* / S *d* is indicated as nS, I, 37, which means that it is found in the text n° I, parag. 37 in Northern Saaho. When a paragraph does not contain any clue (see V. 19) the opposition between nS and sS consists in lexical differences which, as already said, are not stable and as such are excluded from relevant isoglosses.

1. A *t* / S *d*: I, 37; I, 42; I, 43; I, 58.
2. A *k* / S *ko*: I, 7; I, 8; I, 15; I, 38; I, 44; I, 51; I, 52; I, 57; I, 59; II, 2.
3. A *kah* / S *akah*: I, 10.
4. A *a* / S *ta*: I, 17; I, 22. *To* may correspond to *ta*: I, 38.
Pronouns: sS *ae* / nS *aim*: I, 25; I, 29; I, 39; I, 40. II, 4; II, 7. IV, 8. V, 13, V, 20.
sS *amae* / nS *amaim*¹³: I, 11; I, 21; I, 41; I, 56. III, 8; III, 17; III, 18; III, 21. V, 2; V, 3; V, 25. sS *ama* / nS *ama(a)*: IV, 6.
5. Subject-Verb Agreement: I, 3; IV, 11; V, 3; V, 21.
In ‘Afar, the agreement is normally the fem. sg.: *labhá rabté* “men (*labhá*) died (*rabté*)”, when the subject is a grammatically feminine collective. The verbal agreement is the masc. sg. for grammatically masculine collective subjects: *agabí yaní* “they are (*yaní*) women (*agabí*, from *agábu*). In some case, it is the plural, especially when the subject is not mentioned: *rabén* “they died”. In sS the agreement follows ‘Afar: sS *luboká baddé* “the lions died”; *agabí rabé*, whereas it is optional in nS: *lúbok baddé* or *baden*; *saw rabté* or *rabén*. nS uses sometimes the

¹⁰ This particle (-y) is postposed to the head noun in ‘Afar whereas in Saaho it marks the predicate of the relative clause, Morin (*op. cit.* 1994: 265; 1995: 125).

¹¹ Cf. Hayward in Parker (1985: 225-227).

¹² See Morin (1994; 1995).

¹³ The paradigm includes: sS *tae, amae, tamae, woe* / nS *taim, amaim (amaayim), tamaim, woim*.

- plural as a polite form. This is a loan to Ethio-Semitic: IV; V, 3: *yabba lubak laḥuten* “father Lion got sick (pl.)” is similar to Amharic *ambässa ammämu*.
6. Noun predicate CVC followed by a final vowel CVC-V: A + / S Ø: I.
 7. nS *atto* / sS *ayto*: I, 5; I, 8; I, 42; I, 44.
 8. nS *Vlle* / sS *VI*: I, 8; I, 44; I, 45; I, 49; I, 57; I, 58. II, 3; II, 6; II, 11; III, 5, III, 9; III, 21; III, 23. IV, 20. V, 4; V, 18.
 9. nS *Vdde* / sS *d*: I, 28; I, 29; I, 46; I, 48; I, 49; I, 52; I, 54; I, 55; I, 56; I, 58. II, 5; II, 8; II, 9. III, 10; III, 22. IV, 5; IV, 10; IV, 15; IV, 18. V, 14. Var sS *l*: *gabla-l/gabla-dde*; sS *t*: *gabla-t*: I, 28, I, 29.
 10. nS *akko* / sS *ak*: I, 8; II, 2. III, 1, IV, 3.
 11. “Genitive” in noun phrase: nS *t*: *baaḍo-t reezanto* “the chief of the country”. In a chain of annexion, *hi*: ‘*Asa Kaamil-ih abba-hí abba-hí iná* “the mother of ‘Asa Kaamil’s grand-father”; sS *(i)h*: ‘*Asa Kaamil-ih ḍayló* “‘Asa Kaamil’s children”; *ik, h*: ‘*Asa Kaamil-ík abbá-h abbá-h iná*”: I, 1; I, 14; I, 15; I, 35; I, 43; I, 47; I, 57. II. The same modifiers *h, hi, k*¹⁴ are found in ‘Afar.
 12. Vowel lengthening before conjunction *kee* is optional in nS, obligatory in sS as in A: I, I, 7; II; III, III, 1: III, 23; IV, IV, 1.
 13. nS *mi* / sS *ma*: I, 2; I, 9; I, 10; I, 11; I, 36; I, 40; I, 46; I, 47; I, 50. III, 3. V, 12.
 14. nS *ya* / sS *yya, hiyya*: I, 8; I, 23; I, 24; I, 54. II, 8. IV, 6; IV, 10.
 15. nS *ih* (< perfect 3 p.sg. *eh*) / sS *ø*: I, 19; I, 24; I, 38; I, 41; I, 44; I, 45; I, 46; I, 47; I, 50; I, 54; I, 55; I, 56. II, 5; II, 11. III, 18; III, 20; III, 21; III, 22; III, 24.; IV, 8; IV, 9; IV, 10; IV, 12; IV, 13; IV, 14; IV, 17; IV, 19. V, 14; V, 25.
 16. The conjunctions here after are those found in the texts. In other contexts, their meanings may vary. They are postposed to the verb of the dependant clauses or used as clitic postpositions in their free or bound forms¹⁵
Object clause *(i)m*: I, 10: *kah aḥe-m mayyu* “I do not give you”, from the noun *(i)m* “thing” used as a conjunction, frequently in combination with another conjunction (see *mfanah, mik sarra, mkiah, mko basol*).
— “apart from”: (nS) *kiyah*, I, 10.
— “where”: (sS) *el...l*; (nS) *-lle... (i)lle*: I, 5; I, 8; I, 16; I, 47.
— “when”: (sS) *gul, ged*; (nS) *gedda*¹⁶: I, 6; I, 11; I, 23; I, 28; I, 48; I, 50; I, 51. II, 2; II, 10. III, 6. nS *wakte*: III, 7.
— “before”¹⁷: sS *kkah*: III, 9; *mko basol*: III, 5 *afti gabolle*: III, 4; III, 5; III, 13; III, 17. *ggidah*: III, 4 / nS *dan*: III, 4.
— “after, later” (sS) *sarrah, mik sarra, lakal*; (nS) *leddelle*¹⁸: I, 8, I, 41. V, 11. nS *mkiyah*: I, 10.
— “for”: sS *ggidah*; nS *dan*: III, 4.
— “until”: (sS) *mfanah*; (nS) *dan*: I, 45.
— “since, as”: sS *k(ii)* / nS *mko*: I, 11; I, 25; I, 27. II, 5.
— “as for”: sS *k(ii)* / nS *mko*: V, 10.
— “if”: *k(ii)*: I, 30. V, 16 / (nS) *mko*: I, 17; I, 31; I, 34; I, 38. sS and nS *do*: V, 24.

¹⁴ Including assimilation when the possessor has a stressed final vowel: (sS and A) *wakari-s saga* as in ‘Afar.

¹⁵ Cf. Vergari 2003: 28-31; Morin, 1995: 110-124.

¹⁶ In some contexts, it means “if” (see its variant *do*).

¹⁷ Finality “with the intention to” is also associated with the temporal meaning: “before eating it” means also “with the intention to eat it”.

¹⁸ Var. *ledelle*.

Transcriptions

In order to help the reader who may be not familiar with the ‘Afar and Saaho orthographies, we use the same conventions: long vowels are doubled; as for the consonants, the same symbols are used, in particular for the voiced pharyngeal /‘/: *wa‘di* “when”; the voiceless pharyngeal /ħ/: *ħado* “meat” and retroflex /ɖ/: *iɖig* “know”. Verbs are quotate in the Imperative (2 p.s.). The phonemic stress is indicated especially when it helps to avoid ambiguity (see IV *abuusumá*).

CORPUS

The corpus consists of five unpublished oral texts. The ‘Afar version of the first one is the only already published one¹⁹ For each of them, the original version is indicated after the title between brackets. This folk-tales have no title properly. The five ones have been chosen for convenience according to their first sentence.

- I. *Wakrii kee lubaaka* (‘Afar).
- II. *Wakkarii kee kaakoyta* (sS).
- III. *Dummuu kee ‘anɗaawa* (sS).
- IV. *Abuu kee abuusumá* (sS).
- V. *Alluula akotta abte* (nS).

I. TITLE.

- A. *Wakrii kee lubaaka.*
- sS. *Wakkarii kee lubak.*
- nS. *Wakarii kee lubak.*
- La Renarde et le Lion*
- The she-Jackal²⁰ and the Lion*

I, 1.

- A. [*the story-teller*] – *Wakriħ ayra taadigeeni?*²¹
- sS. – *Wakkariħ siiħo taadigeeni?*
- nS. – *Wakarit siiħo taadigiini?*
- *Connaissez-vous la malice de la Renarde?*²²
- *Do you know the she-Jackal’s trick?*

I, 2.

- A. [*the audience*] – *Ma naadigaay gabbatenno.*
- sS. – *Ma naadigeey a‘ikkine lino.*
- nS. – *Mi naadigeek(i) na‘akkano kinno.*
- *Nous ne savons pas mais nous essaierons.*
- *We do not know but we will try.*

¹⁹ Morin (1995: 278-289) includes five Saaho folk-tales: (nS) *Awur dalaá, Yabba Hasan kee Yanna wakari, Guggaa kee Wakari, Okoli rakbe* (Morin, 1995: 264-277); (sS) *Nagra* (Morin 1999: 172-175).

²⁰ In the various dialects, the epicene (lexical) form for “jackal” is a feminine: ‘Afar *wakrí* (pl. *wakārá*); nS *wakarí* (pl. *wáker*); sS *wakkarí* (pl. *wákker*). In narrative style (see text I), it is sometimes used as a masculine so that it appeared easier to use in translations “renard”/ “renarde” instead of “chacal” which has no feminine in French, although there is no “renard” in Africa.

²¹ With interrogative long final vowel.

²² The French translation is found after the 1995 ‘Afar version.

I, 3.

A. Dumah lubak kee wakri siita luk **gedde**-yen.

sS. Zamaan lubak kee wakkari tittaa lih **tede**-yen.

nS. Kalḥa lubak kee wakari shittiya lih²³ **geden**.

Jadis, le Lion et la Renarde s’en furent ensemble, dit-on

A long time ago, the Lion and the she-Jackal went together, people said

I, 4.

A. Admoh siita beenih.

sS. Gaatoh tittaa lih yeden.

nS. Gaatoh šittiya lih **geden**.

Ils allèrent ensemble à la chasse.

They went together for hunting.

I, 5.

A. Admoh **elle** **geden** rikel,²⁴ lubaakay ala gee, wakriiy danan gee’yyen.

sS. Gaatoh **el** yedenil, lubak gaalay**to** gee, wakkari danan geyte.

nS. Gaatoh **alle** **gedenille** lubak gaal**atto** gee, wakari zanan geyte.

Là où ils allèrent chasser, le Lion trouva une chamelle, la Renarde trouva un âne.

Where they went for hunting, the Lion got a she-camel, the she-Jackal got a donkey.

I, 6.

A. Wakri danan gee wa‘diina hay, dananak gamad kibbi hee.

sS. Wakkari danan geyte **gul**, dananak deega emegiise.

nS. Wakari zanan geyte **gedda**, zananak kamus edde emeg akkišše.

Lorsque la Renarde eut trouvé l’âne, elle remplit le fondement de l’âne.

After she got a donkey, the she-Jackal filled the donkey’s arse.

I, 7.

A. Burtak kibbi, badok kibbi heeh iyyen.

sS. Buuree-kee tabaašir**ko** emegiise.

nS. Buure-kee tabaašir**ko** akkišše.

De terre, elle le remplit, de craie, elle le remplit, dit-on.

She filled it with earth, she filled it with clay.

I, 8.

A. Taadige badok dananak gamad kibbi hee wa‘dina, lubaakal yemeete: — Kaala²⁵ daamoytaay yi dananak ḥado xaytite kortam tablee? kaak iyye.

sS. Ama tabaashir**ko** dananak deega emeggiise **gul**, lubaakal yemeete: — Ku gaalay**to** rukuta, yi dananak ‘eedoko ḥado kulusiyya taw‘em tablee? **ak** ye.

nS. Ama tabaashir**ko** kamus emeg akiššemik **leddelle**, lubaakal temeete: — Ku gaal**atto** rukuta, yi zanank**o** kamus**ko** ḥazo kulusya taw‘em tablee? **akko** ye.

Lorsque ladite craie eut rempli le fondement de l’âne, [la Renarde] vint chez le Lion: – Ta chamelle est décharnée; mon âne, de son fondement, ne vois-tu pas la graisse sortir? lui dit-elle.

²³ Var. *luk* is conjugated: Sg. 1 *luk iné*; 2 *lituk tiné* (or *lii tiné*); 3 *luk tiné*; pl. 1 *linok niné*; 2 *litin tinín*; 3 *luk yinín*.

²⁴ The comma indicates the limit of a rhythmic unit as defined in Morin (1995).

²⁵ [*ku ala].

When the so-called clay had filled the donkey's arse, the [she-Jackal] went to the Lion: – Your she-camel is fleshless, don't you see the fat coming out of the arse of my donkey? said she.

I, 9.

A. Wallah able anikii, yoh ma taḥaa? iyye.

sS. Wallah ablik anekiy, yoh **ma** taahe(y)e²⁶? ye.

nS. Wallahi abliyuk anekiy, yoh **mi** taahaye? ye.

– *Par Dieu que je la vois! Ne me la donneras-tu pas? dit-il.*

– *By Jove, for sure I see it! Won't you give it to me? said he.*

I, 10.

A. Koh maḥaa, tet akmeemik sarra, koh **kah** aḥem mayyu.

sS. Koh maḥa(y)e, tee²⁷ beeto liyo, koyyah **akah** aḥaem ma liyo.

nS. Koh maḥaye **akah** koh aḥaem mayyu, tee beetam **kiyah**.

– *Je ne te la donne pas, puisque, plus tard, je compte la manger, voilà pourquoi je ne te la donne pas.*

– *I don't give it to you since²⁸ later I plan to eat it, that is the reason why I don't give it to you.*

I, 11.

A. – Illaawillah! yaḥḥuy! kaak iyye lubak, kodde ma ḥabak, woysa atu faḍinnaanim koh abeyyo hay, iyyeehiy,

– Koh abiddileh iyveh, taadige wakri ala beete.

sS. – Illa wa illah! yohḥuy, ak ye lubak, kod **ma** ḥabak(i), **amae** sarrah, atu faḍinnaanim koh abeliyok, ye,

– Koh aybiddile ye, ama wakkari gaalayto beysite.

nS. – Illa wa illah! yohḥuw, ak yedḥe lubak, kolle **mi** ḥabakii, **amaimik** sarra, atu faḍinnaanim koh abo kiyokii.

– Koh aybaddalo kinnikii, ama wakari gaalatto biššitte.

– *Par Dieu! Donne-la moi lui dit le Lion, puisque je ne te lâcherai pas, ensuite je ferai pour toi tout ce que tu voudras, lui dit-il.*

– *By Jove! Give it to me, said the Lion, since I won't leave you, after I will do everything you want, said he.*

– *Je te l'échange, dit-elle, et ladite Renarde emporta la Chamelle, dit-on.*

– *I accept, said she, and the she-Jackal took away the she-camel, people say.*

I, 12.

A. Taadige wakri ala beete wa' diina, lubak gile luk suge.

sS. Ama wakkari gaalayto beysitte **gul**, sikkiin liik yine.

nS. Ama wakari gaalatto biššitte **gedda**, lubak sikkiin luk yine.

Lorsque la Renarde eut emporté la Chamelle, le Lion se trouva en possession d'un couteau, dit-on.

When the she-Jackal had taken away the she-camel, the Lion got a knife.

²⁶ Verb “to give” is a pan-‘Afar-Saaho verb. The conjugation in sS is characterized occasionally by the presence of palatal w or y: sS *koh aḥayik ané* “I give you”; “he gave” *yohowé* [yoho^wé] whereas in nS the presence of these palatals is regular and the occurrence of w vs. y is a simple conjugational variant: *ohowé/ohoyé* “I gave”.

²⁷ Tee refers to the Lion's cow.

²⁸ In nS the conjunction *kiyah* has an oppositive meaning: “apart from the fact I intend to eat it”.

I, 13.

A. Woo gile af luk suge.

sS. **Ama** sikkiin, af liy tine.

nS. **Amaa** sikkiin lilligi tine.

Ce couteau était aiguisé, dit-on.

This knife was sharp, people said.

I, 14.

A. Wakrii, ‘amayto**h** iddiima geeh.

sS. Wakkari ‘amayto**h** iddim geyte.

nS. Wakari ‘amayto**t** ‘amba geyte.

Quant à la Renarde, elle trouva des gousses de Delonix reclinata, dit-on.

As for the she-Jackal, she got husks of Delonix reclinata, people said.

I, 15.

A. Woo ‘amayto**h** iddiimakaa, morootom ḥabbat luk suge.

sS. Ama ‘amayto**h** iddim**ik** morootom liy sugte.

nS. Ama ‘amayto**t** ‘amba**ako** morootom liy ‘ambalte.

Ces gousses de Delonix reclinata, elle en avait quarante unités, dit-on.

She got forty husks of Delonix reclinata, people said.

I, 16.

A. Woo morootom ḥabbat luk suge wa‘diinay, woo laḥ edde yasguudeemih fayḍihii, lubak gile yeyyee‘eh:

sS. Ama morootom liik **el** sugel, lubak sikkiin yeyyee‘e, gaal**ayto** ed yarḥado yeh.

nS. Ama morootom liik **alle** ‘ambaltelle lubak sikkiin yeyyee‘e, gaal**atto** akah yarḥado yih:

Lorsqu’il eut ces quarante gousses, le Lion, impatient d’égorger cette bête, brandit donc son couteau.

While the she-Jackal had these forty husks, the Lion, eager to slaughter his animal, brandished his knife.

I, 17.

A. – Atu inkitto litho, **a** gile kok addigilleele**kii**, morootom ḥabbat liyo anuuy, tiya yok tiddigillee**k**, tiyat heeliyo, tiya yok toddigillee**k**, tiyat heeliyo, kaak iyye wakri.

sS. – Atu inkitto lito, **ta** sikkiin kok aggidilele**k**, anu morootom ḥabbat liyo, tiya yok tiggidile**mko** tiya baaheliyo, tiya yok tiggidile**mko** tiya baaheliyo, ak te wakkari²⁹.

nS. – Atu inketta lito, **ta** sikkiin kok yaggidileele**kii**, anu morootom ḥabbatiya liyo, tiya yok tiggidile**mko**, tiya baaheliyo, tiya yok tiggidile**mko**, tiya aalle liyo, ak te wakari.

– Toi, tu n’en as qu’un, puisque ce couteau se cassera malgré toi; moi, j’en ai quarante, si celui-ci se casse, je prendrai celui-là, si celui-ci se casse, je prendrai celui-là, dit la Renarde.

– You, you have only one knife but it will break in spite of you; as for me, I got forty, if this one breaks, I will take that one, if that one breaks, I will take another one, said the she-Jackal.

²⁹ Var. tiyo yok taggidile ged.

I, 18.

- A.** – Woo morootom ḥabbat yahḥuy, atu inkitto haysit, kaak iyye lubak.
sS. – Ama morootom ḥabbat yohḥuw, atu tiya beysit, ak ye lubak.
nS. – Ama morootom ḥabbatiya yohḥuw, atu tiya beššit, ak ye lubak.
 – *Donne-moi les quarante, toi, garde celui qui est unique, dit le Lion.*
 – *Give me those forty, you will keep the single one, said the Lion.*

I, 19.

- A.** – Dumah danan faḍdeeh, danan kohḥeeh³⁰ immay, a way kaadu gile koh maaha, morootom gile koh maaha, kaak iyye wakri.
sS. – Awwalah danan gurteh, danan kohḥoe³¹, kaado sikkiin koh maahay, morootom sikkiin koh maahay, ak te wakkari.
nS. – Awwalah zanan faḍdih, zanan kohḥoe, kaado sikkiin koh maahay, morootom sikkiin koh maahay, ak te wakri.
 – *Précédemment, tu as voulu l’âne, à part le fait que je te l’ai donné, maintenant je ne vais pas te donner de couteaux, je ne vais pas te donner quarante couteaux!, dit la Renarde.*
 – *Before you asked for the donkey, despite the fact that I gave it to you, now I won’t give you any knives, I will not give you forty knives, said the she-Jackal.*

I, 20.

- A.** – Wonnal yahee waytam, tu malikii, yahḥuy, wallah, yot ḥab, kaak iyye lubak.
sS. – Yoh taḥao faḍdaaḍo, faḍe waytaado lem malekii, yohḥuy, yoh ḥab, ak ye lubak.
nS. – Yoh taḥao faḍdaaḍo, faḍe waytaado lem malekii, yohḥuw, yoh ḥab, ak ye lubak.
 – *Puisqu’il n’y a rien que tu ne puisses me refuser, donne-les moi, par Dieu! Laisse-les moi! dit le Lion.*
 – *Since there is nothing you could refuse to me, give them to me, by Jove! Leave them to me, said the Lion.*

I, 21.

- A.** Morootom ḥabbat kaak yeḥeeh, idḍiimak, woysarra, gileey wakri beeteh.
sS. Morootom ḥabbat akah toḥoe idḍiimik, **amae** sarrah sikkiin wakkari beysitte.
nS. Morootom ḥabbatiya akah toḥoe ‘ambaako, **amaimhi** sarrah wakri iši biššitte³².
Elle lui donna effectivement les quarante unités, les gousses, ensuite, le couteau, la Renarde l’emporta.
Indeed she gave him the forty things, the husks, then, the knife, the she-Jackal took it with her.

I, 22.

- A.** Bennaanim beytay, a way **a** ḥado elle haynakke gurrusnah nan iyyeenih, ‘arwa gorrisen.
sS. Abinnaanim abay, kaado **ta** ḥado el haynakke goronisno yeenih, ‘arwa goronisen.
nS. Abinnaanam abakii, kaado **ta** ḥazo alle haynakke goronišno yeenih, ‘arwa goronišen.
Sur ces entrefaites, se disant qu’ils devaient maintenant chercher un lieu où mettre cette viande, ils cherchèrent des maisons, dit-on.

³⁰ [*koh eḥeeh].

³¹ [*koh oḥoe].

³² Var. *beššitte*. sS *beysitte*.

Meanwhile, thinking that they should find now a place where to keep that meat, they looked for houses, people said.

I, 23.

A. Woo ‘arwa gorrisen wa‘diinaay, lubaakaay nagay tan gablay inkaafa le gee, rob ḥaḍe waytaah waḥ ḥulse wayta gee‘yyen.

sS. Ama ‘arwa goronisen **gul**, lubak me‘e gabla inkaf **leyya**³³ gee, rob ḥaḍe waytayya galla‘o sayse waytayya gee³⁴.

nS. Ama ‘arwa goronišen **gedda**, lubak me‘e galba inkaf **leya** geye, rob ḥaḍe waytaya galla‘o sayše waytaya geye.

Lorsqu’il eurent cherché ces maisons, le Lion trouva une bonne grotte à une seule entrée, où la pluie n’entre pas, où le froid ne pénètre pas, dit-on.

Having looked for these houses, the Lion found a good cave with a single entry where the rain didn’t get in, where the cold didn’t get in, people said.

I, 24.

A. Wakriiy affara booha le gable gee, robuuy aysede waytaah, waḥaay ayseede waytaah waḥ ḥulse wayta gee iyyen.

sS. Wakkari le affar ife gabla geyte, rob deese wayta, galla‘o deese waytayya geyte.

nS. Wakari le affar ife le galba, rob kee galla‘o deese waytaya geyte³⁵.

Quant à la Renarde, elle trouva une grotte à quatre entrées, qui n’arrête pas la pluie, qui n’arrête pas le froid, dit-on.

As for the she-Jackal, she found a cave with four entries which didn’t stop the rain, which didn’t stop the cold.

I, 25.

A. – Ya ‘am lubakow, anu gee**hik**, atu maḥa geytee? kaak iyye wakri.

sS. – ‘Ammi lubakow, anu gee**kii**, atu **ae** geyte? ak te wakkari.

nS. – ‘Ammi lubakow, anu gey**ekii**, atu **aim** geyte? ak te wakari.

– *O mon oncle Lion, puisque moi j’ai trouvé, toi, qu’as-tu trouvé? lui dit la Renarde.*

– *O uncle Lion, since I got what I wanted, you, what have you found? said the she-Jackal.*

I, 26.

A. – Anu kaadu me‘e gabla gee hay, iyye lubak.

sS. – Anu kaado me‘e gabla gee, ye lubak.

nS. – Anu kaado me‘e galba geye, ye lubak.

– *Moi aussi, j’ai trouvé une bonne grotte, dit le Lion.*

– *Me too, I got a good cave, said the Lion.*

I, 27.

A. – Abalu wa**ak**, ‘ambaley hay! iyye wakri.

sS. – Ablo liy**ok**, sug! teḍḥe wakkari.

nS. – Ablo liy**kii**, ‘ambal! te wakari.

– *Comme je vais venir la voir, attends donc, dit la Renarde.*

– *Since I come to see it, wait for me there, said the she-Jackal.*

³³ Here sS is influenced by ‘Afar *afa*: *inkafa* “a single door”. [*inki af le-ya: single-door-it has-which], instead of sS *ife(y)* or *iffēy* “door”; nS *ife*. See I, 49.

³⁴ Var. *ink afle rob ḥaḍe wayta galla‘o sayse wayta galba gee*.

³⁵ Or: *rob kee galla‘o saysinniḥeyya geyte*.

I, 28.

A. Lubak gee gablat bossu'yyeh, ossokoottu hee wa'di: "Yah! Faylissama inkaafa le gablaa?" kaak iyye wakri.

sS. Lubak gee gablat boodde, tossokoote **ged**: "Yoh faylissam inkafle gabla!" ak te wakkari.

nS. Lubak geye galbadde muute, basak adde te **gedda**: "Yille faylišsam inkafle galba!" ak te wakri.

Lorsqu'il eut jeté un œil sur la grotte qu'avait trouvée le Lion, et l'ayant trouvé à son goût: – Pouah! Ce que tu me vantes, c'est une grotte à un seule entrée!

After taking a glance to the Lion's cave, and having appreciated it: – Ugh! What you praised to me is a cave with a single entry!

I, 29.

A. – Maḥaay wakrew? A gablat kaadu makeyni haytam faḍḍaa? kaak yedḥe'yyen lubak.

sS. – **Ae** wakkari? Ta gablat kaado umaaneh **ae** ed bahto faḍḍaa, ak ye yen lubak.

nS. – Wakkari, **aimiii**? Ta galbadde kaado umaane **aim** adde bahto faḍḍaa, ak yedḥe yen lubak.

– Quoi donc, ô Renarde? Quel défaut as-tu encore trouvé à cette grotte? lui dit le Lion.

– What else do you want, O she-Jackal? Which fault have you found to this cave? said the Lion.

I, 30.

A. – Leh tan inkaafak afat daffa kok iyyeenik, maa afak aw'etto hay? yedḥe'yyen wakri.

sS. – Le ink afad dif kok yeenimko **ae** abe litoo, awli afak³⁶ aw'e lito? tedḥe yen wakkari.

nS. – Inkaafa leyadde dif kok yeenimko, **aim** abto lito awlahi ifeeko taw'o lito? tedḥe yen wakri.

– Si quelqu'un se poste devant l'unique entrée, par où sortiras-tu? dit la Renarde.

– If someone stands in front of the single entry, how will you escape? said the she-Jackal

I, 31.

A. Ahak yeyse araḥaay geyte, yuybullu heey! kaak iyye lubak.

sS. **Taeko** yayse araḥ geytemko, yo uybulluy, ak ye lubak.

nS. **Taemko** yaššarah³⁷ geytemko, yuybulluy, ak ye lubak.

– Quel endroit meilleur que celui-ci as-tu trouvé? Montre-le moi, dit le Lion.

– What better place than this one have you found? Show it to me, said the Lion.

I, 32.

A/sS/nS. Marḥaba! iyye wakri/te wakkari/te wakri.

– Volontiers, dit la Renarde.

– With pleasure, said the she-Jackal.

³⁶ Var. awlaako.

³⁷ [*yašše arah].

I, 33.

A. Kay affaraafa³⁸ le gablah fan yufkuneenih iyyen.

sS. Tee affaraafle gablah fanah yeden.

nS. Te affara ifele galba fanah yeden.

Ils se dirigèrent vers sa grotte à quatre entrées, dit-on.

They made their way towards her cave with four entries, people said.

I, 34.

A. – A afak yot boositeenik akaafak aw‘eyyoooh, woo afak yot boositeenik, taafak, too afak, kaadu wottaafak³⁹ aw‘eyyom maa tablaa ? yedhe-yyen wakri.

sS. – Ta afko yod boodenimko, to afko aw‘eliyo, to afko yod boodenimko, ta afko, to afko, kaado tama afko aw ‘eliyom **ma** table? **ak** te wakkari.

nS. – Taa afko yedde muenimko, to afko aw‘eliyo, to afko yedde muenimko, ta afko, to afko, kaado tama afko aw‘eliyom **mi** table? **akko** te wakari.

– Si l’on me guette de cette entrée-ci, je sortirai par ce trou-là, si l’on me guette de cette entrée-ci ou de cette entrée-là, ne vois-tu pas aussi que je pourrai sortir par ce trou tout là-bas? dit la Renarde.

– If somebody waylays me from this entry, I will go out through that hole, if somebody waylays me from this or that entry, don’t you see that I will be able to escape through that hole over there ?said the she-Jackal.

I, 35.

A. [*the story-teller*] – Wakrih ayra taadigeeni?

sS. – Wakkarih siiho taadigeeni?

nS. – Wakarit siiho taadigiini?

– Connaissez-vous la malice de la Renarde?

– Do you know the she-Jackal’s trickiness?

I, 36.

A. [*the audience*] – Ma naadigaay gabbatenno.

sS. – **Ma** naadigey a‘ikkine lino.

nS. – **Mi** naadigeek(i) na‘akkano kinno.

– Nous ne savons pas mais nous essaierons.

– We do not know but we will try.

I, 37.

A. Wakri kaat abah yan ayra inti-ḍeera kaa bahsissaah, isih geyaamak elle wakri geyaamah, bakersimak raa‘a lubak kee wakriiy inkayrat kaa badsa.

sS. Wakkari kaad abta dudsiiini inti-ḍeḍḍan kaa bahsiisa, iseh ellemko wakkari lemih lahuutak raa‘a, wakkari le inki dudsiiinod kaa taylayle.

nS. Wakari ak abta dudsiiini inti-ḍeḍḍan kaa bahšiiša, išeh lemko wakari lemih bakarak raa‘a, wakari dudšiiinodde kaa taylaye⁴⁰.

La ruse qu’emploie la Renarde: elle excite l’envie du Lion et, avec ce qu’il possède, voulant ce que la Renarde a, le Lion est là à convoiter, et la Renarde l’égare par cette seule ruse.

³⁸ [*affara afa].

³⁹ [*wotti afa].

⁴⁰ [tayla^ye].

Here is the she-Jackal's trick: she excites the Lion's envy, and while he has got more, he wants what the she-Jackal got, the Lion covets what she has, and the she-Jackal cheats him with this trick alone.

I, 38.

A. A afak ḥuleenik too afak ka'teyyok wadirihiiy, ḥibaara faḍḍintam kinnim, kassa lubak: – Sa'litawuy, tonna tekkek gabah yoo sangelissah tanimmay, anu gee gabla atu beetay, kaarah ka 'am lubaakah ḥab koo hay, yeḍḥe yen lubak.

sS. Ta afko⁴¹ saenimko to afko ka'ite liyokkah yeedegemko sarrah kat yaanam faḍḍitmtam kinam yeedege lubak: – Ya 'as sa'alow, ama gina tekkemko teedegēh, yi hambareerisa tanekii, anu gee gabla atu beysit, ku arah ku 'ammi lubakah akah ḥab, yeḍḥe yen lubak.

ns. To afko saenimko to afko aw'o kudo kinni, yeedegem leddelle kaṭ yaanam faḍḍitmtam kinam yeedege lubak: – Ya 'asa sa'alow ama gina tekkemko teedegih, yi hambareerisak tanekiiy, anu geye galba atu biššit, iši galba ku abba-ša'alah ḥab, yeḍḥe lubak.

Si on entre par cette ouverture, comme après je pourrai filer par cette autre, la prudence est requise, pensa le lion: – Mon gentil neveu, puisqu'il en est ainsi, outre que tu as excité exprès mon envie, prends, toi, la grotte que, moi, j'ai trouvée, cède ta place à ton oncle, dit le Lion.

If someone enter this way, since after I will be able to escape by that one, prudence is required, thought the Lion: – My gentle nephew, since that is the case, apart that you excited my envy on purpose, take the cave that I found and give up your place to your uncle, said the Lion.

I, 39.

A. – May? ya 'am lubak, aasaanim inkih yot ḥab ittak, makinam kot ḥaboo hay yeḍḥe wakri.

sS. – Ae? 'ammi lubakow, aysinnaananim inkoh yoh ḥab taḍḥem ayḍḍo lem⁴² koh ḥabo? teḍḥe wakkari.

nS. – Aimii? abba lubakow ašinnaanim onkoh yoh ḥaba taanam ayḍḍa lem šinah ḥabo, teḍḥe wakri.

– Quoi donc, ô Oncle Lion? puisque tu m'as pris tout ce que j'avais de meilleur, comment pourrais-je te laisser quelque chose? dit la Renarde.

– What do you want, O uncle Lion? since you already took from me the best I had, how could I leave you anything else, said the she-Jackal?

I, 40.

A. – Maḥaa hay 'unḍa num kooy, ku 'ammi yoo hinnaa yeḍḥe-yyen lubak.

sS. – Ae hay, atu 'inḍa tiya, anu ku 'ammi ma kiyo? yeḍḥe yen lubak.

nS. – Aimih⁴³ atu 'inḍašša mi kito? Kobbahi⁴⁴ ša'al mi kiyoó? yeḍḥe yen lubak.

– Hé! Quoi! Toi, tu es petit, et ne suis-je pas ton oncle? lui dit le Lion, dit-on.

– Well! You are small, and am I not your uncle? said the Lion, people said.

⁴¹ For *ta afā-ko "that door", afā var. of sS ifēy "door" (nS next parag. ifēe, see Vergari, 2003: 98).

⁴² [*ae iḍḍa lem].

⁴³ The final stress is the interrogative form.

⁴⁴ *Ku abba-hí.

I, 41.

A. – Woysa wakri danittem heeleeh “aadigak woysa...bet hay” yedhe-yyen.

sS. – **Amae sarrah** wakkari beysittamah timmigideh “maadigek **taysarra**⁴⁵ beysit, ak te wakkari, kok faḍak sugem **ta** gina kinni”.

nS. – **Amaimik leddelle** wakari biššitaššah timmingidih “**taimik leddelle**, “biššita, ak te wakari, ‘ambalem **amaim** kinni”.

Après, la Renarde faisant celle qui veut conserver: “Je ne sais pas, et puis... prends-la donc”, dit-elle, dit-on.

After that, the she-Jackal pretending she wanted to keep her cave: “I do not know...take it then, said she, people said, since it is what you want from me”.

I, 42.

A. Ala luk gablat hullu-yyeeh, addak kakkuḥḥu isit heeh iyyen, wakri.

sS. Gaalayto lih gablad sayse addaako me‘eetih ised alifte yen, wakkari.

nS. Gaalatto lih galbadde orobtih addaako me‘e ginah išedde alifte.

Ayant fait entrer la chamelle dans la grotte, la renarde se calfeutra dedans, dit-on.

After putting the she-camel in the grotto, the she-Jackal made herself snug inside, people said.

I, 43.

A. Lubak is kee ‘amaytoḥ idḍimaa kee danan luk affaraafa le gablat raa‘eeh iyyen.

sS. Lubak isee kee ‘amaytoḥ idim kee danan lih affar afle gablad raa‘e.

nS. Lubak išee kee ‘amaytot ‘ambaa kee zanan lih affara ifele galbadde raa‘e.

Le Lion, lui, et ses gousses de Delonix et son âne, s’installa dans la grotte à quatre entrées, dit-on.

As for the Lion and his pods of Delonix and his donkey, he installed himself in the cave with four entries.

I, 44.

A. Wakri isaala biḍaadḍa heeh, woo wa‘diik yussuguudeeh, addal ḥado faḥ haysite-yyen.

sS. Wakkari isi gaalayto toḍoweh ama gulko turḥude, addal isi ḥado tenne.

nS. Wakri iši gaalatto tuḍḍih ama waḳteeko turḥude, addalle iši ḥazo tennee.

La Renarde entrava sa chamelle, puis l’égorgea, et mit la viande à bouillir, dit-on.

The she-Jackal hobbled the she-camel then she slaughtered her and boiled the meat, people said.

I, 45.

A. Lubaakah ‘amaytoḥ idḍimi danan kirkirre kaah ḥineeh, asguudeh aḍḥuk, katlal dananak beeyi hannaamih tii burukku-yyyah, kirkirak ḍiineh iyyen.

sS. Lubak ‘amaytoḥ idḍimid danan ḥukuukak ḍiine, arḥudik yane **yeh**, danan gurdubal beynaanti kartum ye, tiyaako tiyad raa‘ak, ama morootom gaba kalla ak isam **fanah** ḥukuukak ḍiine.

nS. Lubak ‘amaytot ‘amba zananalle ḥukuukak ḍiine, arḥudiyuk ane **yih**, zanan gurgumalle beynanti kartum ye, tiyi aggidilinnaan **gedda** tiya baahak, ama morootom gaba kalandan alle ḥukuukak ḍiine.

⁴⁵ *tae sarra.

Quant au Lion, les gousses de Delonix refusaient de lui couper l'âne alors qu'il comptait l'égorger. Toutes celles qu'il appliquait sur la gorge de l'âne se cassaient. Dans l'intention de couper il s'évertua avec quarante d'entre elles, jusqu'à la nuit, dit-on.

As for the Lion the pods of Delonix refused to cut the donkey as he wanted to slaughter it. Each of them he pressed on the donkey's throat but broke, while he wanted to kill it, he tried in vain until night with forty of them, people said.

I, 46.

A. Liggak ma ḥattiminnay tohut eddaanih⁴⁶, bar ḍokot 'ida rob, kaḍḍa rob keenit yemeete-yyen.

sS. Dab'oko **ma** ḥattiminna, **amaed aneh**, bar 'afuura yaggife mango rob tenat yemeete.

nS. Zab'oko **mi** ḥattiminna, **amaimidde**⁴⁷ anih, bar 'afuura yagdife mango rob tenadde yemeete.

Il dut se passer de dîner, et là-dessus une pluie à noyer les geckos, une grande pluie tomba sur eux, dit-on.

He had to do without dinner, and then a rain that could drown the wall geckos, a big rain fell on them, people said.

I, 47.

A. Wakri aliffi hee gablak addal wah ma yablaay rob ma yablaay, asaalah kikiḥ-iyah, lubaakah waahaḥ ḍiineeh, roobul ḍiineeh, affaraafat inkih kaal tumfuḍḍukeeh, dano kaa tibbiḍeeh, adaadareh, liggeeh suge-yyen.

sS. Wakkari alifteh tane gablah addat galla'o ma table, rob **ma** tabley, asalah rabta, lubakah galla'o akah maysadaynna, rob akah maysadaynnay⁴⁸, affar afko inkoh **el** yufrure aḍaḍak laḥuusutak daba'**eh** ḍiine.

nS. Wakari aliftih tane galbahi addadde, galla'o **mi** table, rob **mi** table, ásalah kimih aḍḥi ḍinte, lubakah galla'o akah mi deysinna, rob akah **mi** deysinna, affar ifeeko onkoh **alle** yufrure aok⁴⁹ araridak zaba'**ih** ḍiine.

La Renarde au fond de sa grotte ne voit pas la pluie, elle ne voit pas le froid, elle n'arrête pas de rire. Le Lion mourait de froid, mourait de pluie, elle s'engouffrait sur lui par les quatre orifices, le froid le saisissant, il souffrit terriblement, il dut se passer de dîner, dit-on.

From the back of her cave, the she-Jackal does not see the rain, she does not feel the cold, she can't stop laughing. The Lion was dying of cold, it rushed on him through the four entries, the cold caught him, and he suffered dreadfully, he had to do without dinner.

⁴⁶ [*edde anih].

⁴⁷ amaim edde.

⁴⁸ -y of punctuation.

⁴⁹ Var. of aḍḥuk.

I, 48.

- A.** Waḥ nabaam kaak ‘ansarse wa‘di, ‘aḍgabbii kee ibattek inkih aḍaaḍitah wa‘di, wakrig gabla fan geḍe-yyen.
- sS.** Galla‘o guubul **ed** ḥaffusse, ‘aḍwaa kee ibaabo kakah **ed** isse **gul**, wakkarih gabla fan yede.
- nS.** Galla‘o gubud **adde** duddubusse, ‘aḍiḍ kee laakuk kaḱkaḱ **adde** išše **gedda**, wakarit galba fan yede.
Quand il fut transi de froid, quand il se mit à claquer des dents et à trembler de tous ses membres, il s’en fut à la grotte de la Renarde, dit-on.
Chilled with cold, with his teeth chattering, shaking all over, he went to the she-Jackal’s cave.

I, 49.

- A.** Lubak afiḍḍikol sollu-yyeh: – Wakrew yi sa‘alitaw kee! afa yoh fak, waḥ yoh ‘idehiik, afa yoh fak, nabam kaah deeriteh, nabam kaak ‘iiy-yeeh immay wakri afa kaah ma faka, addal hawweerisaamaksah kaa lih ma yaaba-yyen.
- sS.** Lubak amarkeeko⁵⁰ baabal solla ye: – Wakkari yi ‘asa sa‘alow, baab yoh fak, galla‘o yo tiggifek, iffey yoh fak, mangom tee ḍaa‘ime, mangom **ed** deereh anik, wakkari awlaako afa akah fakta, addal ‘ii tam maḍigeey, akkeeko kaa lih ma waanissa.
- nS.** Lubak amarkeeko baaballe daw ye: – Wakari yi ša‘alawoo, afa yoh fak, galla‘o yoo tigdifekii, afa yoh fak, mangom tee ḍaa‘ime, mangom **adde** zeere anuk, wakari awlaako afa akah fakta, addalle waḍiki‘iššam maḍigi, akkeeko kaa lih ziḍḍimtam.
Le Lion, sur le seuil, dit: – O Renarde ! Ma gentille nièce! Holà ! Ouvre-moi ta porte! Puisque le froid me tue, ouvre-moi ta porte! Il la suppliait instamment de l’aider, mais malgré ses appels au secours, la Renarde ne lui ouvrait pas sa porte, mis à part ses jappements, elle refusait de lui parler, dit-on.
From the door-step, the Lion said: – O she-Jackal, My gentle niece! Hallo! Open your door to me! Since the cold is killing me, open your door to me! He implored her urgently to help him, but in spite of his calls for help, the she-Jackal did not open him her door, apart from the calls for help, she refused to speak to him, people said.

I, 50.

- A.** Saaku baaḍo maahisse wa‘di, ḍongolah ma yanak, lubak rabennaa geḍee-yyeeh, wakri afa ḥaalih fakka heeh, bafullu yeh kaah suge-yyen lubak.
- sS.** Ḍaḥiine baaḍo maḥte **gul**, andaḥa **ma** yanek, lubak rabee yedee? **teh**, wakkari bab ‘inḍaa ḥeelih faak isse, lubak kafeh **teh** suge.
- nS.** Ḍaḥiine baaḍo maḥte **gedda**, wašamo waak **mi** yanekii, lubak rabe yede? **tih**, wakari bab ‘inḍaati ginah fakte, lubak kafih akah ‘ambale.
Lorsque le matin se leva, comme il n’y avait aucun bruit, elle se demanda: le Lion est-il mort ou s’en est-il allé?, et la Renarde ouvrit doucement la porte. Le Lion, raide mort, se trouvait devant elle, dit-on.

⁵⁰ [*ama rike-ko].

When morning rose, since everything was silent, she thought: Is the Lion dead or has he gone?, and the she-Jackal opened quietly the door. The dead Lion was in front of her, people said.

I, 51.

A. Rabem gitti kaak hee wa‘di, galbo kaak kalla haasiteeh, kay ɣado edde gablat werri haysiteeh, galbo kaak ɗinkiyitti heeh yani wa‘di, dalhi ɣadok san beyak ɗikki kaal iyyeh: – Wakrew ɣadok yoo ɗa‘misay, yeɗhe-yyen.

sS. Rabem sellisse **ged**, anada ak tesse‘e, kaa ɣado gablal hirgit isite, anada inkitta, isite ged, dalhi ɣado urel solla teel ye: – Wakkari ɣadok yi ɗa‘amis, yeɗhe yen.

nS. Rabem teedege **gedda**, anada ak tesse‘e, kaa ɣazo galbadde hirgit iŝitte, ɗarbat tekeye⁵¹ gedda, nanguli ɣazo urelle daw teelle ye: – Wakarii ɣazoko, yi ɗa‘amiŝ, yeɗhe yen.

Lorsqu’elle se fut assurée qu’il était bien mort, elle le dépeça, elle mit sa peau à l’intérieur de sa grotte. Lorsque la peau eut été mise à sécher, l’Hyène, attirée par l’odeur de la viande, s’en vint: – O Renarde, fais-moi goûter de cette viande, dit-elle, dit-on.

After making sure that he was dead, she cut up his skin and put it inside her cave. After she put the skin to dry, the Hyena attracted by the flesh smell came: – O she-Jackal, let me taste this meat, said she⁵², people said.

I, 52.

A. Wakri afat kaah gareeh, ɣaalih kaa lih yaabak: – Us! tibbi ɗiɣ! ya ‘am lubak ɗiinit yanik, net mugsin iyyeh, ɣadok dagokke kaak aɗuwwu heeh, ayka amakkek daffey hay tal‘amma kok aabbelek, wonnah ufkunay akum, yeɗhe yen wakri.

sS. Wakkari afad akah garayte, ‘inɗa ɣeelih kaa kih waanisse: – Us! tibbi ɗeɣ! ya ‘ammi lubak ɗiinid yanek, nod mugusin, ɣadoko ‘unɗurke akah toɣowe: – tamarkeeko dife(y)ay maɣato kok yaabbeek, tuu lal ufkunay bet, teɗhe yen wakkari.

nS. Wakari afadde akah garayte, ‘inɗaa tih kaa lih ziɗɗimte: – Us! sik eɗeɣ! ya abba lubak ɗiinak yane, nedde mugsin, ɣazoko ‘inɗahikke akah toɣoih tamakkeeko difey, maɣatto kok yaabbekii, ama ulalle wajheeko gaɣtih bet, teɗhe yen.

La Renarde vint à sa rencontre sur le seuil, en lui parlant doucement: – Chut! Tais-toi! Mon oncle Lion est endormi, ne nous le réveille pas! dit-elle. Lui en ayant servi un peu: – Dis donc, assieds-toi par là car s’il entend ta mastication... tourne-toi comme ça et mange, dit la Renarde.

The she-Jackal came to meet him on the door-step, and speaking to him gently: – Hush! Shut up! My uncle Lion is asleep, do not wake him up! said she. Serving him a bit of the meat: – Look here seat over there because if he hears you chewing... turn yourself that side and eat, said the she-Jackal.

I, 53.

A. – Me‘e hay dalhi.

sS. – Me‘e ye dalhi.

nS. – Me‘e ye nanguli⁵³.

⁵¹ Verb sS (imp. 2 sg.) *ikéy*, pl. *eké(y)a*; nS *ekéya*, pl. *ekeyaanta* “to put to dry on the soil”.

⁵² Hyena is lexically a feminine.

⁵³ Here, nS *nangula* (var. *yangula*) “spotted-hyena” is not differentiated from “stripped-hyena”, although the latter is known as *šulettá*, and the first as *bédál* (pl. *bédol*).

- *Bien, dit l’Hyène.*
- *It’s ok, said the Hyena.*

I, 54.

- A.** Too ḥado yattakammeeh yan wa‘di, lubaakak kale galboy kaftek geera dalḥuk geerat aḍuwwu heeh, kaḍdam edde ḍongollu-yyeeh, ḥaḍḍat lubak galbo nabaam diseeh: – Akkee! ya ‘am lubak akkee!, yeḍḥe yen wakri.
- sS.** **Ama** ḥado bettisiitah, lubakah kalteḥ tane anada kaftē taneyya sarra dalḥi sarraḍ oḍoyyiisse, mangom **ed** andaḥteḥ, ḥoḍḍad ‘aadaako kaa tibbiḍeh, waḍḥo mangom kaad tootoke: – Kee ‘ammi lubakow!, teḍḥe yen wakkari.
- nS.** **Amaa** ḥazo beetak, lubakko **kaltih** yane qarbat kaftih taneyahi geera nanguli geradde akko tuḍuwe, mangom aad(e) andaḥtiḥ iloh ‘aazaako, waḍḥo mangom **adde** tootoke: – Kee! ‘ammi lubakow! teḍḥe yen wakari.
- Pendant qu’elle mangeait, il attacha la peau séchée du Lion à la queue de l’Hyène, et faisant un grand bruit, il frappa à toute force la peau du Lion avec un bâton: – Debout, mon oncle ! Debout, dit la Renarde, dit-on.*
- While she was eating, he attached the dry skin of the Lion to the Hyena’s tail, and making a lot of noise, he stroke violently the Lion’s skin with a stick: – Get up, my uncle! Get up, said the she-Jackal, people said.*

I, 55.

- A.** Karḥit yan dalḥuuy ḍiinit yani kaak iyyes suge wakrim makeyni, gabah yot ugsak me‘ee iyyeh, wariggiteh iyyen.
- sS.** Garḥed yane dalḥuk, ḍinid yane ak **teḥ** sugte wakkarim makoyta, aadigeh yod ugussek “yod ugutemko me‘e”? yeh wariggite.
- nS.** Garḥedde yane nangulak, ḍiinidde yane, ak **tih** ‘ambalte wakarit maylaleyti, aadijih yedde ugusse yedde ugutemko me‘e? **yih** berrige.
- Surprise, l’Hyène, à qui la Renarde avait prétendu malignement qu’il dormait, se demanda: Est-ce bon pour moi qu’il le réveille exprès?, et elle prit peur, dit-on.*
- Quite surprised, the Hyena to whom the Jackal had asserted malignantly that he was sleeping, wondered: Is it good for me if she wakes him intentionally? And she became frightened, people said.*

I, 56.

- A.** Ka‘te wa‘di, geera kaak yoḍee galbo galabak rade kaak ḥinteeh, woysa tama galbo kakaw kaak ittee.
- sS.** Ka‘ite **ged**, sarraḍ ak yoḍoweh yane waḍḥi akah rade ḥine, **amae** sarra ama waḍḥi kakaw kaad ye.
- nS.** Tire **gedda**, geeradde ak teḍih tane waḍḥi akah rado ḥine, **amaimih** sarrah ama waḍḥi kakaw **adde** ye.
- Lorsqu’elle eut sauté sur ses pattes, la peau attachée à sa queue refusa de se détacher de son corps, et en plus cette peau faisant vlan! vlan!*
- Jumping on her legs, the skin attached to her tail refused to come off her body, and besides this skin was making bang! bang!*

I, 57.

A. Abe wariggah wadirih wagga ma haannaay, fooḥah fan kaḍdam yardeh yan wa‘di, wakri isi gabla afak kaak ḍongoleeh: “Keey keey! koo ḥabtam hinnak boolok rad, keey keey! koo ḥabtam hinnak boolok rad”, kaak yeḍhe yen.

sS. Abe wariggah sabbatah, sarral kuluḥ minna, nefil mangom yerde yen, wakkari isi gablak afko akah andaḥte: – Keey keey! koo ḥabtam hinnak, boolko rad, koo ḥabtam hinnak, boolok raad, kee kee! ko ḥabtam **ma** kiiy ki, boolok rad ak teḍhe yen.

nS. Abe berriiḡih, sarralle kuluḥ minna, wajḥi gabolle mangom yerde gedda, wakkari iṣi galbaḥi afko akah andaḥte: – Kee kee! ko ḥabtam **mi** hin kii, bolko rad, ko ḥabtam **mi** hin kii, ak teḍhe yen.

Avec la peur qu’elle avait, sans prendre garde, lorsqu’elle se mit à courir droit devant elle, la Renarde, du seuil de sa grotte, l’appela: – Hé! Hé! Puisqu’il ne te laissera pas, jette-toi dans le ravin! Hé! Hé! Puisqu’il ne te laissera pas, jette-toi dans le ravin! dit-elle, dit-on.

Frightened, without notice, when she began to run straight ahead, the she-Jackal, from the door-step of his grotto called her: – Hi! There! Since he won’t leave you, jump into the ravine! Hi! There! Since he won’t leave you, jump into the ravine!, said she, people said.

I, 58.

A. Taadige dalḥi wariggite wa‘di, hayyek me‘e iyyeh, galbo geerat edde luk boolok amok fiḍḍi-yyeh, ḍiironul butukka ye iyyen.

sS. **Ama** dalḥi hankabite, “me‘e hay” **yeh**, waḍḥo geeraḍ lik, bolaamoko⁵⁴ ka‘ite, ḍiidoḍul butukka ye⁵⁵.

nS. **Amaa** nanguli berriige, “me‘e hay” **yih**, waḍḥo geeraḍde leya lih, bolot amoko tire, diirorulle yiggidile ye.

Ladite Hyène était terrorisée, cela vaut mieux, se dit-elle, et avec la peau au bout de la queue elle se jeta du haut du précipice, et elle se cassa le dos, dit-on.

The Hyena was terrorized, that is the best thing to do, she thought, and with the skin at the end of her tail, she jumped from the top of the ravine and she broke her back, people said.

I, 59.

A. Dalḥi ḍiiron ullullu too saakuk luk raa‘e-yyen.

sS. Dalḥi ḍiidoḍ ullullu **ama** daḥiineeko lih raa‘e.

nS. Nanguli diirortii gudda **amaa** maḥko lih raa‘e.

Depuis ce jour, l’Hyène a l’échine courbée, dit-on.

Since that very day, the Hyena got a bent backbone, people said.

⁵⁴ [*boloh amoko].

⁵⁵ Or *butuk* ye. The informant considers *butuk* as « more descriptive » than *iggil*: ‘aadal yiggidile.



II. TITLE.

sS. Wakkarii kee kaakoyta.

nS. Wakarii kee kaakotta.

La Renarde et le Corbeau.

The she-Jackal and the Crow.

II. 1.

sS. Basoh, wakkari ala liy tine, yen.

nS. Kalḥa wakari ala liy tine, yen.

Jadis, la Renarde avait des chèvres, dit-on.

Long ago, the she-Jackal had goats, people said.

II. 2.

sS. Kaakoyti, ala ḍalta **gul**, ḍaylik arrob ak beeta yine.

nS. Kaakotti ḍalta **gedda** ḍaylko anrab akko beetak yine.

Le Corbeau, quand elles mettaient bas, mangeait les langues des cabris.

The Crow when they delivered used to eat their kids' tongues.

II. 3.

sS. Kamaan, wakkari ḥanel ḥabtal, kaakoyti ḥanak beetam kee ḥaḍamak kii yine.

nS. Waa ḥan alle ḥabtalle ḥanak yaa‘ubem kee ḥaḍam akkuk yine.

Egalement, quant au lait que la Renarde laissait, le Corbeau le buvait ou le renversait.

Also, concerning the milk left by the she-Jackal the Crow used to drink it or to spill it.

II. 4.

sS. Yanna wakkari kaakoyti **aek** abamiḥ sabbatah kaa tin‘ibeh tine.

nS. Yanna wakari kaakotti **amaimik** abamhi sabbatah kaa tin‘ibeh tine.

Tante Renarde, à cause de ce que le Corbeau faisait, se fâcha contre lui.

Aunt Jackal for that reason got angry with him.

II. 5.

sS. Aa gul⁵⁶, garhed, kaa geyto ilaala tinemko, lelle‘ko tiyah garhed kaa geyteh, kaa tibbiḍe.

nS. Manda gahredde kaa geyto asibbiḍi tinemko, uli maḥ gahredde kaa geytiḥ, kaa tibbiḍe.

A tout moment, comme elle l’attendait pour le prendre par surprise, un jour, l’ayant eu par surprise, elle s’en saisit.

While she was constantly waiting to catch him doing it, one day, having caught him, she seized him.

II. 6.

sS. El kaa tibbiḍel, kaa esserte:

nS. Alle kaa tibbidelle, kaa esserte:

En saisissant le Corbeau, elle lui demanda:

Having seized the Crow, she asked:

⁵⁶ Aa gul, litt. this moment: “when”, “at any time”. The nS *manda* shares an etymological link with Beja *minda* “moment”.

II. 7.

sS. – **Ae** umaanimko, atu ni‘ibtoḥ koh umam? ak te.

nS. – **Aimii** ummaanimko, atu ni‘ibtom, waa koh umam, ak te.

Quelle est de toute chose, celle que tu détestes le plus?, dit-elle [la Renarde].

Above all things, what do you hate most, said she [the she-Jackal]?

II. 8.

sS. Kaakoyti ak ye: – Anu ni‘ibyoh yoyyah umam buh⁵⁷ le ifad yi hayteh bolko yi ‘iddam kinni.

nS. Kaakotti alle yedebbee: – Anu ni‘ibyoy yettah umam buhute gaybedde yi haytih boloko yi‘iddam kinni ak ye.

Le Corbeau lui dit: – Moi, ce que je déteste le plus est que tu me jettes du haut de la falaise dans le récipient où tu m’a mis, où reste du lait.

The Crow said to her: – As for me what I hate most is that you throw me from the top of the cliff in the vessel where you put me and where is still some milk.

II. 9.

sS. Yanna wakkari rumma yekkeleenih, ifad haenih bolko kaa ‘iden kaakoyta.

nS. Yanna wakari rumma tekkelih⁵⁸ gaybedde kaa haytih boloko kaa ‘idde.

Tante Renarde pensant qu’il disait vrai, l’ayant mis dans un récipient, jeta le Corbeau du haut de la falaise.

Aunt Jackal thinking that he had said the truth, after putting him in the milk-vessel threw the Crow from the top of the cliff.

II. 10.

sS. Ifi ḍaal radeh akah fakkite **gul**.

nS. Gaybi ḍaalle radih akah fakkite **gedda**.

Le récipient tomba sur les pierres où il s’ouvrit.

The vessel fell on the stones and opened up.

II. 11.

sS. Kaak! Kaak! yeh, ‘aranal yedeh yisillime, kaakoyti.

nS. Kaak! Kaak! yih, ‘aranelle yedih yisillime, kaakotti.

Le Corbeau s’envola au ciel en croassant et s’y réfugia.

The Crow cawing flew to the sky where he took refuge.

⁵⁷ *Buh* “brown (see v. *buhut*) milk deposit found in the *ifa*”: *ifi buh baaha* “the milk vessel is dirty.”

⁵⁸ *sS* plural *yekkeleenih* is used as a polite form, not in *nS* *tekkelih*.



III. Title.

sS. Dummuu kee ‘anḍaawa.

nS. Dummuu kee furta⁵⁹.

Le Chat et la Souris.

The Cat and the Mouse.

III. 1.

sS. Dummuu kee ‘anḍaawa fanad gi‘a maraa tine.

nS. Dummuu kee furtat fantadde gi‘a maraa⁶⁰ tine.

Il y avait depuis bien longtemps dispute entre le Chat et la Souris.

For long there was a dispute between the Cat and the Mouse.

III. 2.

sS. Dummu ‘anḍaawa beeta tine⁶¹.

nS. Dummu furta beeta tine.

Le Chat mangeait la Souris.

The Cat used to eat the Mouse.

III. 3.

sS. Inkinnah ḥadol ak raddeh, ḥabaa **ma** tine.

nS. Tee ḥazo liba‘addih⁶² ḥabaa **mi** tine.

Il avait coutume de ne se jeter que sur cette viande, il ne la laissait pas.

He was accustomed to eat only that meat, he did not leave it.

III. 4.

sS. Goronisa tine tee bettaggidah.

nS. Bettandan goroniša tine.

Il la cherchait pour la manger.

He looked for her to eat her.

III. 5.

sS. Dummu ‘anḍaawa **el** geytal tabbiḍe **el** digiraa tine bettaamko **basol**.

nS. Dummu furtalle **alle** ‘ataba tine **alle** geynanille bettamak **afti gabolle**.

Lorsque le Chat attrapait la Souris, c’était pour jouer avec avant de la manger.

When the Cat caught the Mouse, he played with her before eating her.

III. 6.

sS. Tabbiḍe **gul** kee ḍiḍiyta **gul** ak kii tine.

nS. Tabbiḍe **geddaa** kee ḥaddigiišša **gedda** ak, kii tine.

Tantôt il l’attrape, tantôt il la laisse partir, il lui faisait ainsi.

One time he catches her, another time he leaves her, he used to do so.

⁵⁹ Also nS ‘anzawa. As with furta, the two nouns make no distinction between mouse and rat.

⁶⁰ Final length [marā] is intensive: for a long time. Without intensivity the nS “Concomitant” opposes masc. –ak (máarak yiné) and fem. már-a tiné (Morin 2003: 138).

⁶¹ With a masculine subject: beetak yine.

⁶² *Liba‘addi “being accustomed”, from lubbi “heart” and ‘aad “custom”. Vergari (2003: 124) indicates nS lab‘aade “to become accustomed”. In the folk-tale vowel [i] occurs in nS: masc. lib‘aade; (f.) lib‘adde. The sS equivalent being lab‘aade; (f.) lab‘adde.

III. 7.

sS. ‘Anḍaawa dummu tee ḍiḍiyta **gul** kuda tine, kudinnaan hiddal **ed** kataytah abbiḍi tine.

nS. Furta dummu te ḥaddigiışšiinan **wakṭe** kuda tine, kudinnaan wakṭe **adde** taṇḍebidiḥ abbiḍi tine.

La Souris, que le Chat laissait partir, s'enfuyait, à chaque fuite, l'ayant poursuivie, il la saisissait.

The Mouse that the Cat let go, runned away, each time, he pursued her and caught her again.

III. 8.

sS. **Amae** isaa⁶³ tine tinemko beeta tine.

nS. **Amaayim** iša tinemko beeta tine.

Après avoir fait longtemps comme ça, il la mangeait.

After having done so for a long time, he ate her.

III. 9.

sS. Dummu ‘anḍaawal aba tine digir beetek**kah**.

nS. Dummu furtalle aba tine ‘atab beetinniḥi⁶⁴.

Le Chat jouait ainsi avec la Souris avant de la manger.

The Cat used to play with the Mouse before eating her.

III. 10.

sS. Missila ra‘e ḥaylaalii kee ḥaylamali fanad.

nS. Missilah ra‘e ḥaylale tiyaa kee ḥaylahin tiyahi fanad**de**.

Il existe un proverbe à propos du fort et du faible.

There is a proverb concerning the strong and the weak.

III. 11.

sS. Dummu digirih lem, ‘anḍaawa rabah le yaanah.

nS. Dummulle ‘atab kinnam furtalle rabi kinni yaanah.

Ce qui est jeu pour le Chat signifie la mort pour la Souris.

What is a play for the Cat means the death for the Mouse.

III. 12.

sS. Abaa yeneenimko dummu kee ‘anḍaawa wagaraanam guren.

nS. Amae aba yiniinimko dummu kee furta ‘irḳe abanam faḍen.

Après avoir fait ainsi, le Chat et la Souris cherchèrent à pactiser.

After having done so, the Cat and the Mouse looked for peace.

III. 13.

sS. “Wagaaraggid**ah** waasiibo abnoy” yeḍḥen yen.

nS. “‘Irḳe yakko waasibo abno” yeḍḥen yen.

“Pour pactiser, faisons alliance”, dirent-ils, dit-on.

“In order to make peace, let us arrange a marriage”, said they, people said.

⁶³ Intensive long vowel “doing much”.

⁶⁴ Negative 3 p. s. of the perfect of verb *beet* “eat”: before eating.

III. 14.

sS. Waasibo⁶⁵ aboona yewweefegen.

nS. Waasibo aboona yewweefekin

Ils s’accordèrent pour s’allier par mariage.

They agreed to make an alliance through marriage.

III. 15.

sS. ‘Andaawa baḍa taḥao dummu mar‘asitto.

nS. Furta baḍa taḥao dummu mar‘išitto.

Que la Souris donne sa fille pour que le Chat l’épouse.

Let the Mouse give her daughter so that the Cat marries her.

III. 16.

sS. Mar‘a takko bar yeedegen.

nS. Mar‘a takko bar yigiri‘in.

Ils choisirent la nuit des noces.

They chose the night of the wedding⁶⁶.

III. 17.

sS. Dummu **amae** akah abak sugtem, mar‘ah ma kiy ‘andaawa bettaggidah.

nS. Dummu **amaim** akah aba tinem mar‘a ma hin, furta betto tih kinni.

Ce pourquoi le Chat faisait cela, ce n’était pas pour la noce, c’était pour manger la Souris.

The reason why the Cat did so, was not for the wedding, it was in order to eat the Mouse.

III. 18.

sS. ‘Andaawa **amae** teḍeg**h** bodad⁶⁷ fotte**h** sugte.

nS. Furta **amaim** teḍeg**ih** horor fatt**ih** ‘ambalte**h**.

La Souris sachant cela, elle s’était creusé un trou.

Knowing that, the Mouse had dug a hole for her own sake.

III. 19.

sS. Dummu waraddih **el** orobtel horrisak temeete:

nS. Dummum waradde**h** **alle** orobte**lle** horišša temeete:

Le Chat arriva en chantant là où les gens s’étaient réunis pour faire la noce.

The Cat arrived singing where the people had gathered for the wedding.

III. 20.

sS. “Yalli naab**eh**⁶⁸ ḥado ‘aasir lino”, aik temeete dummu.

nS. “Yalli no**h** ab**ih** ḥazodde ‘aašiir lino”, aḍ**hi** yemeetin.

“Nous avons la chance que Dieu nous a donné de la viande”, dit en venant le Chat.

“Luckily God provided us with meat”, said the Cat while coming.

⁶⁵ Alliance concluded through marriage.

⁶⁶ Litt. *They knew when would be the night for the wedding.* In Ns: *they decided (irgi‘) when would be the night.*

⁶⁷ *Bodad* “hole”, var. of *boodo* (pl. *boodad*; nS *boozo*, pl. *boozoz*). nS (and sS) *hóror* is a smaller hole. *Hodom* (var. *hudum*, pl. nS *hodaami* [hodâmi], sS *hudumá*) means a deeper hole, a cavity.

⁶⁸ [*no**h** ab**eh**].

III. 21.

sS. ‘Anḍaawa **amae el** teeḍeegel teeḍegeh bodadad **el** fotte sugtel is uulako **el** tedebe.

nS. Furta **amaim alle** teeḍegelle teeḍegih horor fattih ‘ambalteh, iš(i) ulako **alle** tedebe.

*La Souris sachant cela, dudit trou qu'elle s'était creusée, répondit de son côté:
Knowing that, from the hole she had dug for herself, the Mouse replied:*

III. 22.

sS. “Oy! Needegeh bodad dagne nane”, tee bodad sayte.

nS. “Oy! **Amaim** kinnim needegih horor fatinnih nane, tee hororudde akko sayte.

*“Eh! Sachant cela, nous avons creusé un trou”, dit-elle en entrant dans son trou.
“Hey! Knowing this we dug a hole”, said she entering her hole.*

III. 23.

sS. Dummuu kee ‘anḍaawa wagari to ginal raa‘e, birik a bar ma wagarinnon.

nS. Dummuu kee furtat sulhi tolle raa‘e.

*La paix entre le Chat et la Souris en resta là, de cette nuit⁶⁹, ils ne furent plus en paix.
The peace between the Cat and the Mouse stopped at that point.*

III. 24.

sS. ‘Anḍow teketteh bakite ḍaḍḍemko **ama** ginal tisillime⁷⁰.

nS. Furut inkille yekettih bakite ḍaḍḍemko **amaa** ginah raa‘e.

*Les Souris rassemblées faillirent mourir, mais furent sauvées de cette façon.
The Mice that had gathered there were near to die but were saved this way.*



IV. Title.

sS. Abuu kee abuusumá.

nS. Abuu kee abuusumá.

*Oncle et nièce
Uncle and niece.*

IV. 1.

sS. Yangula laa liy tine.

nS. Nanguli laa luk yine.

*L’Hyène possédait des vaches.
The Hyena had cows.*

IV. 2.

sS. Wakkari laad loynah ḥabe.

nS. Wakari laa ašiššo⁷¹ ḥabe

*Elle laissa la Renarde à la garde des vaches.
She left the she-Jackal in charge of the cows.*

⁶⁹ Litt. *de la nuit passée* (bir-ik) *cette nuit* (a bar).

⁷⁰ Coll f. ‘anḍow implies feminine verbal agreement. Vergari (*op. cit.*: 61) indicates nS plural m. ‘anzuu. sS (also in nS) coll. m. *fúrut* implies the masculine.

⁷¹ Verb *ašiš* “to keep watch”, see “be jealous” (Vergari, 48): with a jealous care. sS m. *asíso* “temporary guard”; f. *asissó*; nS m. *ašišo*; f. *ašiššó*.

IV. 3.

sS. Wakkari rugaageko aklusinnaan tiya **ak** arḥudik bakkisse.

nS. Wakari ruwaageko aklusinnaan tiya **akko** arḥudi bakte.

La Renarde extermina en les égorgeant tous les veaux gras des vaches.

The she-Jackal killed and slaughtering all the fatted calves of the cows⁷².

IV. 4.

sS/ nS. Inki ‘aḍame‘e ‘asagalin⁷³ ruga ak ḥabte.

Elle ne laissa vivant qu’un veau à la belle robe blanche et rouge.

She left alive a single calf with a nice white and red coat.

IV. 5.

sS. Aki rugaage inkoh bakkisse waḍaaha inkid teskette, yen.

nS. Aki ruwaage onkoh bakte waḍoḥ inkidde askatti tine, yen.

Ayant exterminé tous les autres veaux, elle rassembla les peaux de ces veaux morts en un endroit, dit-on.

After exterminating all the other calves, she collected the skins of these dead calves in one place, people said.

IV. 6.

sS. **Ama** ḥabte inki rugah nabaa dogol malḥina ife **leyya** akah abte.

nS. **Amaa** ḥabte inki rugah naba dagge malḥiina af **leya** akah abte.

Laissant celles-ci, elle construisit un enclos à sept grandes portes pour le seul veau.

Leaving them, she built an enclosure with seven big doors for the single calf.

IV. 7.

sS. Yanguli safarko gaḥeh, tee essere:

nS. Nanguli gedoko gaḥe⁷⁴. Te essere:

L’Hyène revenant de voyage, lui demanda:

Coming back from a journey, the Hyena asked:

IV. 8.

sS. – Yi sa‘alah wakkari, yi laa ḍayloh **ae** baaḥeh yanee?

nS. – Wakari, yabuusuma⁷⁵, yi laa **aim** ḍalih yane?

O Renarde, ma nièce, mes vaches, quels veaux ont-elles mis bas?

O she-Jackal, my niece, about my cows, what kind of calves have they delivered?

IV. 9.

sS. – Yi ‘as aabow, sin laa inkoh ḍaleh inkoh inki gina le, ‘asagalin rugaage baaḥeh yane, ak te.

nS. – Yi ‘as abow, šin laa inkoh ḍaleh, onkoh inki gina le ‘asagalin ruwaage baahih yane, ak te

– *O mon cher Oncle, vos vaches ont toutes mises bas des veaux à robe bicolore d’une seule sorte? dit-elle.*

⁷² These cows staying alive.

⁷³ ‘asa (red), gale “strip”: with red strips on a white coat.

⁷⁴ In sS (as in ‘Afar), *ih* marks the anteriority of *gaḥe-h* “having returned...”, which is not marked here in nS, so that a final point is used instead of a coma.

⁷⁵ Alternatively to *wakari yi sa‘la-hi* “she-jackal my-sister-of”: my sister’s daughter.

– *O my dear Uncle, your cows have all delivered calves with the same two colours coat? said she.*

IV. 10.

sS. Kaso, inki ruga **ħabteh** taneyya dogolud hayteh akah andaħte:

nS. Kasow, inki ruga habtih taneya daggedde haytih akah andaħte:

Le soir, avec le seul veau qu'elle avait laissée dans l'enclos, elle fit du bruit et appela à son propos:

In the evening, with the single calve she had left in the enclosure, the she-Jackal made noise and said about it:

IV. 11.

sS. – Abow! Ama, rugaage sin ayballao, ak te.

nS. – Waabow, amanta⁷⁶, ruwaage šin ayballao, ak te.

O Oncle! Venez, que je vous montre les veaux, dit-elle.

O my dear Uncle, come, let me show you the calves, said the she-Jackal.

IV. 12.

sS. Yanguli yamiite⁷⁷ **gul**, uli gul ulafko, uli gul ulafko, uli gul ulafko teyyee'eh, kaa tuybulluwe.

nS. Nanguli yemeete **gedda** uli waħte, uli afko tayyaa'ih kaa taybulee.

Lorsque l'Hyène vint, se montrant tantôt à cette porte, tantôt à celle-là, tantôt à cette autre, elle le lui fit voir.

When the Hyena arrived, showing herself through this door, through that door, through that another one, she showed her.

IV. 13.

sS. Inki ruga kinam šakkitamko **teh**, ak te:

nS. Inki ruga kinam šakkitamko **tih**, ak te:

Pour éteindre tout soupçon à propos du seul veau restant, la Renarde dit:

In order to lull suspicion about the sole calf alive, the she-Jackal said:

IV. 14.

sS. – Siinak minniyo, yi 'as aabow, sin laa inki gina le 'asa 'asgalin rugaage baaheh yanee?

nS. Šinak minniyo, yi 'as abow, šin laa inki gina le 'asagalin ruwaage baahih yanee?

Ne vous avais-je pas dit, mon Oncle, que vos vaches avaient mis bas des veaux d'une seule sorte de robe bicolore?

My Uncle, didn't I tell you that your cows had delivered calves with the same red and white coat?

IV. 15.

sS. Yanguli rumma yekkele. Bar, sifra arer afad akah abte.

nS. Nanguli rumma yekkele. Bar, ğintima bol-t-afadde⁷⁸ akah abte.

⁷⁶ *Amanta*, polite plural of nS Imperative *amo* when addressed to elders, here to the uncle.

⁷⁷ The vowel of the Perfect basis is short in sS and nS: *emete, temete, yemete, nemete, temeten, yemeten* or *yemeten*. It is long or short in the Imperfect according to the paradigm: *amate tamate, yamate*, etc. Var. *amiite, tamiite, yamiite, namiite, tamiitin* (or *tamitin*), *yamitin* (or *yamiiten*).

⁷⁸ **Bol-t-afa-dde*; "precipice-of-mouth-at" ('Afar *boolo*); sS *arer*.

L’Hyène crut que que c’était vrai. A la nuit, la Renarde se fit une couche au bord d’un précipice.

The Hyena believed this was true. At night, the she-Jackal prepared her couch on the verge of a precipice.

IV. 16.

sS. – Aabow, ak te, kakaḥ ya maḥaadi yanek bar intibiha, ak te.

nS. – Waabow, ak te, kakaḥ ya maḥaadi yaneki, bar ḥat idiga, ak te.

– O Uncle, dit la Renarde, comme on entend le bruit que font des rôdeurs, veillez cette nuit, dit-elle.

– O Uncle, said the Jackal, since one hears prowlers’ noise, keep awake this night, she said.

IV. 17.

sS. Ḥan akah bahteh yiddirireenih, ḍiinen.

nS. Ḥan akah bahtih yiddirireenih ḍiinen.

Ils dînèrent du lait qu’elle apporta, ils passèrent la nuit.

They dined with the milk that the she-Jackal brought, they slept.

IV. 18.

sS. Bar, wakkari laahi waḍaaha kakaḥ **ed** isse **gul** laa gilite.

nS. Bar, wakari laat waḍoh⁷⁹ kakaḥ addišše⁸⁰ **gedda** laa gilite.

A la nuit, lorsque la Renarde fit du bruit avec les peaux des veaux, les vaches prirent la fuite.

At night, when the she-Jackal made noise with the skins of the calves, the cows ran away.

IV. 19.

sS. Yanguli, kasow, wakkari ak **teh** tanemih kakaḥ ya maḥaadi yemetem yekkeleh, kudak ane **yeh**, bolko radeh, rabe yen.

nS. Nanguli kaso wakari ak **tih** tanemih kakaḥ ya maḥaadi yemeetiinim yekkele, kudak ane **yih**, bolko rade.

L’Hyène à qui la Renarde avait dit de veiller crut que c’étaient des rôdeurs qui étaient venus et faisaient du bruit, courut et tomba dans le ravin.

The Hyena, to whom the she-Jackal had said to stay awake, thinking that there were prowlers who were making noise, ran and fell into the ravine.

IV. 20.

sS. Wakkari to ginal abi laa nagarte, yen.

nS. Wakari to ginalle abi laa tewrise, yen.

La Renarde, de cette façon, hérita, dit-on, des vaches de son oncle.

In this manner the she-Jackal inherited her uncle’s cows, people said.

⁷⁹ Vergari (op. cit. 174) warxhit [wadḥit].

⁸⁰ *waḍoh kakaḥ edde išše «she made (išše) noise (kakaḥ) with (edde) the skins (waḍoh)».



V. Title.

nS. Alluula akotta abte.

sS. Alluula akokotta abte.

L'assemblée des animaux.

The meeting of the animals.

V. 1.

nS. Kalḥa tinem tine, uli **gedda** umboka alluula akotta abte.

sS. Kalḥa tinem tine, uli **gul** umboka alluula akotta abte.

Jadis, tous les animaux se rassemblèrent quelque jour.

Long ago, all the animals met together some day.

V. 2.

nS. **Amaimidde** yanna wakari aalih **adde** mangalinna.

sS. **Amaedde** yanna wakkari eelih **edde** mangalinna.

Tante Renarde ne se mêla pas de cette affaire.

Aunt Jackal did not get involved in that matter.

V. 3.

nS. **Amaim** aḍḥi, yabba lubak laḥuuten.

sS. **Amae** akkuk, yabba lubak laḥuute.

Ceci dit, Père Lion tomba malade.

Now, Father Lion got sick.

V. 4.

nS. Umboka alluula maḥṣiiṣih **alle** amiiti tine.

sS. Umboka alluula aaginah maaḥeenim yabloona **el** amiiti yenen.

Tous les animaux vinrent pour le visiter.

All the animals came to visit him.

V. 5.

nS. Ḥasan kee wakari zooba kii yinin.

sS. Ḥasan kee wakkari araaka kiy yinen.

Ḥasan [l'Hyène] et la Renarde étaient amis.

Ḥasan [the Hyena] and the she-Jackal were friends.

V. 6.

nS. – Abba Ḥasanow, yabba lubak ahaa aḍḥi maaḥeeni?

sS. – Kee, abba Ḥasanow, yabba lubak ah aḍḥi maaḥeeni?

Eh! Compère Ḥasan, que dit-on de Père Lion ce matin?

Hey! Comrade Ḥasan, what do people say about Father Lion this morning?

V. 7.

nS. – ‘Ambal, uroona aḍḥi yanin.

sS. – Uroona kab yeenih yaniiniki, ilal.

Attends donc! Il va mieux.

Wait a minute, he is much better.

V. 8.

nS. Wakari rabo akko aṣebbiri tine.

sS. Wakkari rabo akko ilala tine

La Renarde [qui] s’attendait à ce qu’il mourût [répéta].

The she-Jackal expected him to die [said again].

V. 9.

nS. – Koye, abba Ḥasanow, yabba lubak aha⁸¹ aḍhi maaḥeeni?

sS. – Kee, ya ‘am Ḥasanow, yabba lubak ahe aḍhi maaḥen?

Eh!, Compère Ḥasan, mais que dit-on de Père Lion ce matin?

Hey! Comrade Ḥasan, what do people say about Father Lion this morning?

V. 10.

nS. – Kaafa yekkemko yaṣṣiin dawdaw aḍhi maaḥeen.

sS. – A saaku tekkek yaysen dawdaw aik maaceenih yanin.

– Pour ce qui est d’aujourd’hui, il allait mieux, il s’est levé avec énergie⁸²

– As for today, he got better and rose with much energy.

V. 11.

nS. Amaimik ledelle yanna wakari mangom temḥesebe.

sS. Amaeko lakal yanna wakkari mangom temḥesebe.

Après cela, Tante Renarde demeura très pensive.

After that, Aunt Jackal remained very thoughtful.

V. 12.

nS. – Abba Ḥasanow kaado aha abo ul im ul im yee lih **mi** taanaa?

sS. – Abba Ḥasanow kaado ah abo ul im ul im yoo lih **ma** taanaa?

– Compère Ḥasan, pourquoi ne fais-tu pas avec moi ce que je dois faire

– Comrade Ḥasan, why don’t you do with me what I have to do?

V. 13.

nS. – **Aim** ko lih aḍho, maḥṣiiṣ iššo waytak hinnaa, kaado **aim** koh aboo?

sS. – **Ae** kollih owwa akah yaneka ubuul isso waytak hinnaa?

– En ce qui te concerne, puisque tu refuses, n’est-ce pas, de rendre visite [au lion], que puis-je faire pour toi?

– As for you, since you refuse to visit the Lion, isn’t it, what can I do for you?

V. 14.

nS. Yanna wakari amḥesibinannamko, garaballe tedih baska bahtih ḥangalko **adde** muute.

sS. Yanna wakari amḥesibinannamko, garabal tedeh baska bahteh ḥangalko **ed** booddeh⁸³.

Tante Renarde, après être restée pensive, partit dans la forêt, portant du miel, elle se posta sur une petite colline [et dit au Lion:].

Aunt Jackal, after remaining deep in thought, went to the forest and carrying honey took up position on a hill [said to the Lion].

⁸¹ nS *aha* “what”, var. *ahe* (as in sS).

⁸² Litt. *he woke up making noise.*

⁸³ nS *muut*, sS *bood*, A *boosit*.

V. 15.

- nS/sS.** – Abba lubakow, aaginah maḥteenii?, ak te.
 – *Père Lion, comment allez-vous ce matin?, dit-elle.*
 – *Father Lion, how do you do this morning?, said she.*

V. 16.

- nS/sS.** – Uremko kwagdafo⁸⁴ kinni, ak ye.
 – *Si je guéris, je te tuerai, dit-il.*
 – *If I recover, I will kill you, said he.*

V. 17.

- nS.** – Abba lubakow, šin dawa wagiyo hinna?
sS. – Abba lubakow, sin dawa wagiyo ma kaa?
 – *Père Lion, n'étais-je pas parti vous chercher des remèdes?*
 – *Father Lion, I had gone to find remedy for you, didn't I?*

V. 18.

- nS.** – Umboka baaḍolle heel⁸⁵ ayyuk mare rabiyyoh tatiminiinii?
sS. – Umboka baaḍol heel aik mareh, raba yoh tatmin yeenii?
 – *J'ai passé partout dans le pays [pour vous porter remède] et vous espérez la mort pour moi?*
 – *I have gone everywhere in the country [to get remedy for you] and you hope to see my death?*

V. 19.

- nS.** – Šekko šekille, ḥaakimko ḥaakimille hinnaa, heel ayyuk mare.
sS. – Šekko šekille, ḥaakimko ḥaakimille ma kaa, heel aik mare⁸⁶.
 – *Je suis allé de guérisseur en guérisseur, de médecin en médecin, n'est-ce pas?*
 – *I have gone from herbalist to herbalist, from doctor to doctor, isn't it?*

V. 20.

- nS.** – Kaado, **aim** kok yeenii?
sS. – Kaado, **æ** kok yeenii?
 – *Alors, que t'ont-ils dit?*
 – *So what did they tell you?*

V. 21.

- nS.** – Baska kinni, ten⁸⁷ dawa yok yen.
sS. – Baska kinni, ku dawa yok yen
 – *C'est le miel qui est votre remède m'ont-ils dit.*
 – *Honey is your remedy, they told me.*

⁸⁴ [*ko agdafo].

⁸⁵ *hel edeḥ* “to go from one place to another”. Intensive with vowel lengthening: to go every where in the country.

⁸⁶ In proverbs, the difference of postpositions, here sS / nS *elle*, may disappear.

⁸⁷ Plural of politeness instead of *ku*.

V. 22.

nS. – Kaado bahteehi?

sS. – Kaado bahte hay?

– *Alors, tu l’as apporté?*

– *So, you brought it?*

V. 23.

nS/sS. – Yoo, ak te.

– *Oui, dit-elle*

– *Yes, said she.*

V. 24.

Ns – **Amaim do**, amo, ak ye

sS. – **Amae do**, amo, ak ye.

– *Si cela est, viens, dit-il.*

– *If it is so, come, said he.*

V. 25.

nS. Yanna wakari, yabba lubako **amaayim tih** ak tew‘e.

sS. Yanna wakkari, yabba lubakow **amahe teh** ak tede.

Tante Renarde, de cette façon, s’enfuit de Père Lion.

Thus, Aunt Jackal escaped from Father Lion.

Conclusion

As a whole, nS, sS and ‘Afar appear to be highly isomorphic. Sometimes no difference is found between the dialects (see parag. I, 18; I, 20). The sixteen isoglosses identified in the corpus are proposed as a basis for classifying oral or written productions in the related languages. Other isoglosses can be investigated in the domain of Verb Morphology especially. They might add new arguments to the proposed methodology.

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Code-switching and code-mixing among multilingual Eritrean communities:¹ examples and motivations

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SOMMARIO

Questo studio cerca dare una risposta alla domanda ‘perché si ricorre al code-switching?’, analizzando alcuni esempi in cui la commutazione di codice e il code-mixing si verificano in comunità multilingui dell’Eritrea. Vengono esaminate sette situazioni di commutazione, concentrandosi principalmente sul fattore motivazione. In ciascuno degli esempi sono implicati uno o più fattori. Alcuni sono legati alla funzione del linguaggio, cioè perché una certa varietà viene usata al posto di altre. Altri sono legati agli utenti del linguaggio, p. es., chi parla a chi, mentre altri ancora sono determinati dalla natura della situazione, vale a dire dove stanno parlando. Anche se gli esempi sono pochi, essi mostrano l'utilizzazione della commutazione di codice nell'esprimere solidarietà, nel manifestare la propria identità, nel mantenere un atteggiamento neutrale, nel segnalare formalità e status sociale, nel dimostrare potere e autorità. In uno degli esempi viene segnalato l'utilizzo della commutazione di codice nel quadro di una forma di citazione del discorso diretto per attirare l'attenzione degli ascoltatori, e per ottenere precisione.

Key words: *Code-switching, Code-mixing, Eritrean multilingual communities*
ISO 639-3 codes: aar, arb, ssy, tig, tir.

Introduction

People may switch between one language/code and another because they lack the necessary vocabulary to express their ideas in the first language or their addressee does not understand that language. But are these the only reasons why people resort to code-switching or code-mixing? For instance, Wardaugh (2006: 104) writes “A number of answers have been suggested, including solidarity, accommodation to listeners, choice of topic, and perceived social and cultural distance.”

Linguistic choices in most cases show the influence of one or more of the following components (Holmes 1992, Wardaugh 2006). The first component is related to the participants. Who is speaking and whom are they speaking to? The linguistic choice varies based on whether the interaction took place between close friends or people less intimately acquainted, between superior and subordinate, or between young and old, and so on. The second component is the setting or social context of the interaction: where are they speaking? This refers to the degrees of formality dictated by solidarity and status relationships. Some formal settings, such as meeting places and courthouses, influence the choice of the code regardless of who is speaking to whom.

¹ Eritrea is a country located in northeastern Africa along the west coast of the Red Sea, bordered by Sudan on the north and west, and by Ethiopia and Djibouti on the south. The indigenous Eritrean languages are Afar, Arabic, Bidhaawyeet (Beja), Bilin, Kunama, Nara, Saho, Tigre, and Tigrigna. English is the language of education beyond grade five. The former colonial languages of Italian and Amharic are also spoken by some individuals in restricted domains.

The third and final component, the topic under discussion in the present study, is the function of the language: why are they speaking? Are they speaking to give or ask for a favour? Are they speaking to convey information or to create some feeling? Wardhaugh (2006: 101) for example points out:

Code-switching (also called code-mixing) can occur in conversation between speakers' turns or within a single speaker's turn. In the latter case it can occur between sentences (intersententially) or within a single sentence (intra-sententially). Code-switching can arise from individual choice or be used as a major identity marker for a group of speakers who must deal with more than one language in their common pursuits. As Gal (1988: 247) says, 'codeswitching is a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create, evoke or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligations.'

Carol Myers-Scotton (1993: 3) defines code-switching as “the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded variety or (varieties) in utterances of a matrix variety during the same conversation.” She adds “CS may take on any level of linguistic differentiation (language, styles, or dialects/registers).” A related communication strategy not treated in this article is pausing. An interdisciplinary study of code-switching and pausing by Penelope Gardner-Chloros, Lisa McEntee-Atalianis, and Marilena Paraskeva found that, like code-switching, pauses are also rationally motivated and “provide evidence of lexical and grammatical processing, e.g. demonstrate self-monitoring in the form of prefacing repetitions and repairs, and usually occur at predictable grammatical boundaries” (Gardner-Chloros et al. 2013: 22).

This article attempts to address the issue of why people employ code-switching through analysis of examples in which code-switching and code-mixing take place, mainly from the experiences of multilingual Eritrean communities. Some of the examples are the exact utterances of acquaintances, close friends, and relatives of the author, whereas others are drawn from experiences common within Eritrean society. Careful effort has been made to transcribe the exact wording of the speakers and to write them as they were uttered originally.

The second step is describing the situation in which the code-switching or code-mixing took place. This step paves the way for the analysis and helps the reader to make his/her own judgement regarding the analysis. Based on the situation, an interpretation of the motivation is given. Some of the examples of code-switching may have been motivated by more than one factor. In such cases, an attempt has been made to account for only the major motivations involved.

Examples, analysis and interpretations

Example 1:

Baqla በቅለ is small, remote village found in the Northern Red Sea region of Eritrea. Its inhabitants speak the Ḥabāb ሐባብ dialect of the Tigre language. The Ḥabāb dialect, like those of Mārya ሻላላ ሻላላ and Beni-‘Āmār/Min‘Āmār ሻላላ ሻላላ, does not distinguish between *ṣ* and *ʃ* and between *d* and *z*, respectively. In each case only the

first member of the pair is used, both in its place and in place of the other. Accordingly, *ṣahāy* ጸሓይ ‘sun’ is pronounced as *ṭahāy* ጠሓይ and *zanab* ረብሽ ‘tail’ as *danab* ደብሽ.

In the written variety of the Tigre language, however, *ṣ* and *z* contrast with *ṭ* and *d*, respectively, in minimal pairs. Accordingly, they are treated as distinctive phonemes. Students start to use them distinctively when they discuss their school materials. They also incorporate them in their writing when they prepare assignments for their teachers. School teachers, radio broadcasters, administrators, army officers, and other civil servants use these phonemes in their speech as well as in their writing, because either they are speakers of the dialects where the phonemes are distinguished or they acquired them through education. Hence, government institutions are regarded as if they were using the dialects where these phonemes are distinguished, although they are actually only incorporating the use of these phonemes in all dialects of the Tigre language represented therein.

The ordinary people of the village of Baqla use their Ḥabāb dialect, which does not distinguish between *ṣ* and *ṭ* and *z* and *d*, respectively, in their daily life. Nevertheless, they are aware of the function of the ‘standard’ Tigre in which these sounds are used as four distinctive phonemes. Let us now examine the following utterances made by newly-elected local parliament member Ibrāhim, a resident of the village of Baqla, as he was preparing to chair his first meeting of the village, in and by his friend Osman. (Note: Tigre is in italics and English translation inside inverted commas. Description is inside parentheses and relevant sounds are in bold.)

Ibrāhim: (After meeting his friend Osmān on his way to the chair.) *malhay mən ’aya maṭ’aka?* ‘Oh friend, where did you come from?’

Osmān: *mən ṭabra* ‘from Ṭabra’

Ibrāhim: *ṭabra dālmat ta mām?* ‘Does Ṭabra have rain?’

Osmān: *rabbi ḥammadna, ’ade lātu ṭamu’ la’ala sata.* ‘We thanked God, whoever was thirsty has now drunk [satisfied].’

Ibrāhim: (He is now in the position of the chairman) *kulkum māṣ’ām mən təhallu ’əḡtama’na ’əḡəl na’astabze. yom ’əb kusus barāməḡ taṣwir zəra’at ’əḡəl nəhdag tu.* ‘If you all are here we may start our meeting. Today we will discuss agricultural development programs.’

In the first two utterances, when Ibrāhim was discussing daily life with his friend Osmān, they used the dialect of Ḥabāb. He said *maṭ’aka* ‘you 3sgm came’ instead of *maṣ’aka*, and *dālmat* ‘it has got rain’ instead of *zālmat*. Just a minute later, when he reached the chairperson’s chair, he switched into ‘standard’ Tigre. His motivation for this code-switching may be the type of interaction. He used the Ḥabāb dialect with his friend to discuss their daily life informally, and the ‘standard’ variety to discuss the more formal topic in the formal setting, i.e., the agricultural development projects in the meeting place.

His code-switching could also be attributed to another motivation. Ibrāhim is now a member of parliament, which means a rise in his social status. In line with this new social position he has to speak Tigre in the way educated people speak it. What makes this claim more convincing is his decision to use these two phonemes without adequate knowledge of their proper usage. He hypercorrectly replaced all *t* and *d* by *ʃ* and *z* respectively. As a result he said *naʼastabze* ‘let us start’ instead of *naʼastabde*, and *taṣawər* ‘development’ instead *taṭawər*. This shows that his code-switching was not the result of his mastery of the variety, but only of his awareness of its function and status.

The Ḥabāb dialect is used at home and in other non-formal settings to discuss daily life matters. It is used by non-educated peasants in all aspects of life, even though some of them attempt to use the standard variety in formal situations. On the other hand, the written standard variety of Tigre is used in all formal circumstances by people who have some educational background. Similarly, there is an attempt to use the standard variety by people who think that they have made a step up in social status. This could mark the beginning of a diglossic situation, a situation in which two varieties of a language, one serving as the high variety (H) and the other as the low variety (L), coexist based on the dimensions of formality or social status.² It may also be the beginning of the convergence of the spoken dialects into the written standard variety.

Example 2:

Hāni, the son of a friend, was six years old at the time of the situation we will discuss in this example. Hāni was born to a Tigre-speaking father and a Tigrinya-speaking mother. His parents are bilingual in Tigre and Tigrinya. Both of them use English to discuss their academic topics. In addition, his father also speaks Arabic and Saho. Hani was born in a multilingual environment. Nevertheless, he learned only Tigrinya with native competency. Between the ages of four and five parents and family friends were encouraging him to speak Tigre. As a result, by the age of six he was able to speak it.

Hāni uses Tigre only in situational conditions. For example, he never uses Tigre with his mother, because he thinks she does not know Tigre, even though she was one of the few people whom I ever knew who spoke Tigre as their second language with native-like fluency. He speaks Tigre with his father’s parents and sometimes with his father. Despite my continuous insistence to speak with him in Tigre, he does not use Tigre with me, because he knows that I know Tigrinya.

One day, however, Hāni was willing to talk to me in Tigre. On that day his father was on a long trip outside Asmara and his mother was teaching at a nearby school. Hāni was alone at home having some quarrel with his peers in the compound where they live. When I came to see him, and greeted him in Tigrinya, he immediately replied to

² In this essay, the dimension of formality refers to a situation in which one variety of a language is used for formal purposes and the other for non-formal purposes. The dimension of social status refers to a situation in which one variety of a language is used by the educated or elite, whereas the other is used by the uneducated.

me in Tigre. (Note: Tigrinya is in small caps, Tigre in italics, and English translation inside inverted commas).

Me: KÄMÄY ᵀALOKA HĀNI? ‘How are you Hāni?’

Hani: *Gurruᵀm, ᵀabuye Saleḥ, kafo ḥalleka?* ‘I am fine. How are you uncle Saleh?’

Me: (with mixed feelings of surprise and happiness) *Marḥaba bu Hāni. ᵀana sannī ḥalleko. ᵀanta kafo ḥalleka?* ‘You are welcome Hāni. I am fine. How are you?’

Hani: *ᵀana gurruᵀm ḥalleko.* (A long pause) ‘I am well.’

I thought he was going to tell me something secret about their quarrel and thus wanted to avoid revealing the secret to the other children by using Tigre, a language that the other children do not understand. But he said nothing of that type. Instead Hāni said:

Ġelato³ tazābe ᵀagalye? ‘Can you buy me ice-cream?’

I bought the ice-cream for him. After I bought him the ice-cream, I expected him to switch into Tigrinya, but he did not. He requested me in Tigre *ᵀasək yemma tēmaṣṣəᵀ mäsalye ṣənah* ‘stay with me until my mum comes back home.’ Our communication of that day started and ended in Tigre. Another day, when I visited the family in the presence of his parents, Hāni was back to his old habit. He was no longer motivated to talk to me in Tigre.

On that particular day, when he spoke to me in Tigre, Hāni was in need of someone to talk to. He wished to avoid both his aggressive peers and his loneliness. In other words he was asking for a favour. The other days, in the presence of his parents, he was providing a pleasure, because we were enjoying his talk in general and the way he speaks Tigre in particular. This example shows that people may switch codes based on whether they are asking for or providing a favour. When they provide a favour, they tend to use the language/code which is associated more with their identity, or at least with what they think they know best. When they ask for favour, on the other hand, they switch to the language that they think might best serve the purpose, regardless whether it is their favourite language or not.

The reason why Hāni switches from Tigrinya to Tigre when he talks to his father’s parents seems to be clear. It could be due to the change of participants in the conversation. Since his father’s relatives do not speak Tigrinya, or at least he thinks that they do not know the language, he feels compelled to speak to them in a language which they understand. It could also be seen from the dimension of solidarity and shared ethnicity. He wants to show his father’s side that he is one of them by using their language in order to receive the highest degrees of affection, care, and acceptance. To expect a six-year-old child to understand a very complicated concept such as ethnicity and to behave in such a sophisticated way might defy credibility. But the child does not need to understand what ethnicity is or know who belongs to each

³ The word *gelato* ‘ice-cream’ is a loanword from Italian in many Eritrean languages.

ethnic group. He can simply understand it on the bases of the first attention he might have received when he used Tigre for the first time or the other way round.

Even adults most of the time do not resort to code-switching as a result of a conscious decision. Janet Holmes, in her book *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, argues that people employ code-switching even when, attitudinally, they oppose such a practice. She supports her argument by, among others, an example of university students in Hemnesberget⁴ who were recorded while unconsciously switching between the local dialect and standard Norwegian according to the topic. According to Holmes, when they heard the tapes they showed disapproval of their own behaviour and promised not to switch in such a way in the future. In the same line of argumentation, Wardhaugh (2006: 105), referring to Blom and Gumperz (1972), writes:

Tape recordings revealed switches to Bokmål to achieve certain effects. Moreover, the participants were not conscious of these switches, and even after such switching to Bokmål was pointed out to them and they declared they would not do it again, they continued to do so, as further tapings revealed.

Since code-switching seems to be part of humans' unconscious manipulation of language, it does not make much difference whether the speaker is a child or an adult. In fact, Jennifer A. Vu, Alison L. Bailey, and Carollee Howes, from the University of California, who studied 97 pre-school children of Mexican-heritage in the USA, found that very early in life children employ code-switching strategically for socio-pragmatic and non-linguistic purposes, such as filling gaps in lexical knowledge, by borrowing single words from the other language, and seeking affiliative interaction.

Example 3:

I recently visited one of my relatives (Idris) who asked me to help his first-grade son (Musa) with reading readiness activities. Musa was busy playing with some toys. (Note: In the following conversation Arabic is in small caps and Tigre is in italics.)

Idris: *Na'a Musa, 'abuka Saleh salām ballu.* 'Musa, come here greet your uncle Saleh.'

Musa: (No response)

Idris: *Na'a walye fādāb, Ustaz Saleh 'əgəl la'afhəmakka māṣə' halla.* 'Come here my clever boy, teacher Saleh is here to help you.'

Musa: *Yəbba, 'ana aze 'əttalhe həlleko.* 'Dad, I am now playing.'

Idris: TA'ĀL YĀWILĒD. 'Hey, you little boy, come here.'

Musa: (quietly responded to the order/warning in Arabic and came to us).

⁴ "Hemnesberget, [is] a small Norwegian town of 1,300 inhabitants located close to the Arctic Circle" (Wardhaugh 2006: 105).

Some Tigre-speaking parents make the switch from Tigre to Arabic in order to give warnings such as ʾASKUT YĀWILĒD ‘Hey you little boy! Shut up!’ to their children, who do not respond to the same warning in Tigre, even when the parents’ competence in Arabic is limited and the children do not understand Arabic. The children take Tigre as the language of intimate relations and Arabic—or probably any other language which is not their home language—as the language of power and authority. The switch from the home language to languages such as Arabic or Tigrinya signals that there is a change in the seriousness and determination of their parents. The children understand that reluctance to respond appropriately to this kind of signal can lead to undesired consequences. It is highly probable that Musa’s positive response to the order in Arabic is due to this motivation.

Example 4:⁵ The use of quotations

Some bilingual Eritreans use sentences or phrases in another Eritrean language in the form of direct speech to make their stories vivid and/or humorous, as in example 4b, or for purposes of precision, as in example 4a. This type of code-switching coincides with the findings of Carla Jonsson’s (2010) research, in which she found the use of quotations one of the five most important loci in which code-switching is frequently used.

Example 4a: (Tigrinya is in small caps and Saho in italics)

Suleman: *Aḥmado*, “*Mäḥarillä aduwaaki*, ‘SULEMAN NĀBAKA SĀDIDUNNI’ *akkerheḥ.*” ‘Ahmed, “go to Mehari and tell him, ‘Suleman has sent me to you.’”

Example 4b: (Tigrinya is in small caps and Afar in italics)

Kimal ‘*Asab genḍa iggidih gital nenketteh ibayto ambālak nen. Too uddur tirāfik yemeeteh*, “ABZI ʾONTAY TĒGABRU ʾALĀKUM?” *iiyeh didda nee hee.* ‘Yesterday we were gathered in the street waiting for transport in order to go to Assab. The traffic police came and frightened us, saying “What are you doing here?”’

Example 5: (Note: Tigre is in small caps and Tigrinya in italics)

Tesfay: *Nāta qwāl’a ḥakkəmənna do wäsidkəya?* ‘Did you take the girl to the hospital?’

Meryem: ʾəwwe wäsidäyya. ʾab kăbabi vagina gele infection ʾallowa ʾilom. ‘Yes, I took her. “She has some infection around the vagina,” they said.’

Tesfay: (At this moment their daughter came into the room) MI TU SABABU BELAW? ‘What did they say was the cause?’

⁵ Examples 4a and 4b were provided by my colleague Suleman Mohammed from the Saho panel in the Ministry of Education of the State of Eritrea, who speaks both Saho and Afar.

Meryem: 'ጎጅ NAQĀSAT NADAFAT LAMAṢṢƏ' fungus 'ጎጅጊ LƏGBA' QADDƏR BELAW. 'It could be because of fungus which has developed due to lack of hygiene,' they said.

Meryem and her husband Tesfay are a multilingual couple. They speak Tigrinya, Tigre, and English. Additionally, Tesfay speaks Amharic. They use Tigrinya in all aspects of life except for academic purposes, for which they use English. Sometimes they switch to Tigre, particularly, when they want to hide something from their children, who did not speak that language. Their other, and perhaps the most important, switch is from Tigrinya/Tigre into English to avoid saying taboo words in those languages. Words for sex organs and sexual activities in Tigrinya and Tigre are taboos to the extent that one cannot utter them even to one's self. The words in English might also give similar feelings to native speakers of English. For Meryem and Tesfay as second-language speakers of English, however, the English words for things and notions that are considered taboos in Tigre and Tigrinya have less taboo significance. Accordingly, they prefer to use them instead of the corresponding terms in Tigre and Tigrinya.

It is also very common for old Asmarinos to switch to Italian, when they are angry, to say dirty and abusive words. They do so, probably, as a means of euphemism, i.e., in order to avoid saying the bad words in their own language.

Example 6: The following conversation took place between two Eritrean Ĝeberti men. (Tigrinya is in italics, Arabic in small caps, and English inside inverted commas.)

Nur-Hussien: 'anta 'əti Moḥammed Ḥagos'si ḥišuwo do? zəḥaläfä qädam 'azyu tädakimu şāniḥunni. 'Did Mohammed Hagos's health improve? Last Saturday, I found him in a very deteriorated [health condition].'

Abdu: 'aysäma'kan dəkə? təmali ĜUM'AT 'əndəyu TĀRAḤIMU. 'Didn't you hear [about him]? He [has got mercy] passed away last Friday.'

Nur-Hussien: ALLAH YARḤAMU. 'ətom dāqqu män 'alayi 'alləwom? 'May Allah endow him with his mercy. Is there someone who takes care of his children?'

Abdu: 'Ali 'əti wäddi Sə'əddi ḥaftu BĀRAK ALLAHU FIHI, yəḥəggəzom 'əyu. 'Ali the son of his sister Siedi, may he get the blessing of Allah, helps them.'

Ĝeberti (Ĝäbärti **ጎጅቲ**) are Tigrinya-speaking Muslim Eritreans. They lived for centuries among the majority Christian Tigrinya speakers in the highlands of Eritrea and the neighbouring Tigray region of Ethiopia. They speak the Tigrinya language exactly in the same way as their Christian brothers do, except for a few cases in which they mix in Arabic words and phrases. Most of these Arabic words and phrases fall within the spiritual domain of language use. It seems more appropriate to categorize these words and phrases in the category of code-switching than borrowing, because their Tigrinya counterparts are still in use. Furthermore, they use them only when the involved speakers and listeners are all Muslims or close friends. One of these words is

the word for Friday, which is *‘arbi* in Tigrinya. None of the Ğeberti uses the word *‘arbi* for Friday. Instead they use *ġum‘at*, the Arabic word for Friday.

Friday is the holy day in the Islamic world. For this reason, at first glance, one might think of this situation as one involving code-switching motivated by the topic of religion. This interpretation leads to a conclusion that Friday is a Muslim holiday and should be named in the language of the Koran. But this is not the case among the other Muslims of Eritrea. For example, those Tigre-speaking Muslims who learned Tigrinya as a second language see nothing wrong with using *‘arbi*. Similarly, both Muslim and Christian speakers of the Bilin language use *‘arəb*, the Bilin word for Friday. None of them attempts to use the day’s name in the language of the Koran or the language of the Bible. Taking these facts into consideration, the motivation of the use of *ġum‘at* by the Ğeberti people should be something else rather than the function dimension.

It seems more reasonable and convincing to interpret their motivation as an expression of group membership rather than code-switching motivated by topic. They are telling the world that they are Muslims, unlike most of the Tigrinya-speaking population. The reason they chose Friday instead of any of the other six days of the week to be the symbol for their distinctive group membership could be because Friday can tell the intended identity more easily than the other days. Other Arabic tags which have no religious connotations such *‘abšur* instead of አጃኻ *‘aġġoka* ‘be courageous’, as well as non-linguistic expressions, are also used by the Ğäbärti to demonstrate their distinctive identity from their Christian brothers.

Example 7: (Tigre is in italics, Tigrinya in small caps, and English in side inverted commas.)

Musa: *‘Ādəm laġibu ‘arqab bədibu* (a big explosion of laughter). ‘There is a scorpion in Adem’s pocket.’

Osman: *‘Ādəm ‘akəl ‘əlli ṭamma‘ kəmsal tu na‘ammər yə‘alna*. ‘We didn’t know that Adem was mean to this extent.’

Suleman: *lākin ṭamma‘ kəmsal tu kafo ‘Āmarkum?* ‘But how did you know that he is mean?’

Musa: *‘ənde teḥagazka missed call⁶ mən təwadde dibu ‘iballəs dibka*. ‘When you are in need and give him a missed call, he doesn’t respond.’

Saleh (me): *sanni māsyaām?* ‘Good evening?’

(All together): *Marḥabābu Ustaz ker māsi?* ‘You are welcome Professor. How is your evening?’

⁶ When there is not enough prepaid balance in your mobile phone to make long calls, you can simply call your friend and cancel the call before your friend picks it up. Your friend takes this ‘missed call’ as a message which shows that there is not enough balance in your account, so he/she calls you back. Some mean people, however, can do this even when they have enough money or they may not call you back. This is the background information of their jokes.

Osman: *walat gabʼat mængabbəʼ lākin ʼagid balləs diba* (a big explosion of laughter).
‘If the caller is a girl, however, he calls back immediately.’

Adem: *ʼəlli wədāyu kəm tu ʼana ʼəsbāt bəye*. ‘I have evidence that this is his own behaviour.’

Birhane: *Yahaw sanni māsyām?* ‘Good evening guys?’

(Group): *Marhaba Birhane*. ‘Welcome Birhane.’

Birhane: *mi tu laʼashəqakum lahalla? həbruna*. ‘Why are you laughing? Let’s join you.’

Osman: *ʼĀDƏMʼSI WÄDDI YƏKUN GUAL missed call ZƏGÄBÄRÄLÄY ʼƏMƏLLƏS ʼƏYE YƏBƏL ʼALLO. ʼƏNTAY RƏʼƏYTOK?* ‘Adem is saying that he responds to whoever gives him a missed call, regardless of whether it is a boy or a girl. What is your opinion?’

Birhane: *hassāy tu. ʼamʼəl hatte kəmsal ʼaba ʼəgəlna ʼĀmna missed call wəday dibu belnaha. ʼəgla balsa diba*. ‘He is a liar. One day when he didn’t respond to our missed calls, we asked Amna to give him a missed call. He called her back immediately.’

(All together laughed with great joy): *HƏĞĞI KƏTʼƏMMÄN ʼALLOKA*. ‘Now you have to accept it.’

Example 7 was recorded in one of the teashops of the town of ʼAfʼabät አፍብት in northern Eritrea. A group of school teachers were engaged in an intimate discussion making jokes about each other’s deeds and speech. They were using Tigre, which happened to be their common mother tongue. Since they were my acquaintances, I joined them. Neither the topic nor the language changed. A few minutes later, one of their colleagues called Birhane joined us. Birhane is a native Tigrinya-speaker who also speaks Tigre, but with quite a recognizable accent. With the arrival of Birhane the discussion started to shift into Tigrinya without a change in topic. Within a few minutes it became all-Tigrinya with the exception of Birhane, who insisted to make his contribution to the discussion in Tigre. Why did they switch to Tigrinya? And why did Birhane insist on speaking Tigre despite the others’ shift into his mother tongue?

Generally it is considered impolite among Eritreans to exclude a person in the group by using a language that he/she cannot understand in a condition where the choice of language/code that accommodates everyone in the group is available. In such situations people in Eritrea tend to switch to what Myers-Scotton (1995) calls the ‘unmarked choice’ as opposed to the ‘marked choice’.⁷ Quite often the unmarked choice is Tigrinya, but sometimes, in the lowland regions, Arabic, Tigre or even one of the other Eritrean languages, depending on the kind of the group involved, may serve as the unmarked code. From this perspective, the group’s switch to Tigrinya can

⁷ According to Myers-Scotton 1995 and Wardhugh 2006, the marked-unmarked distinction does not carry any connotation of prestige, unlike the distinctions of high-low, standard-substandard, and language-dialect.

be accounted for as an automatic code-switching to the unmarked choice in order to accommodate Birhane. They know that Birhane can speak and understand Tigre, but that is only part of their conscious knowledge. In their unconscious pre-programmed pattern of behaviour, which is responsible for code-switching in the majority of cases, Birhane is a Tigrinya speaker and he should not be excluded from the discussion by the use of Tigre, a language that most Tigrinya speakers do not master.

Birhane's response on the other hand, can be accounted for from a different perspective. Tigre is the intimate language of the group of teachers with whom he has been very much associated for the last several years. In his interpretation Tigre is the language that expresses 'we-type' solidarity among an intimate group of members, while Tigrinya is the 'they-oriented language' used for impersonal out-group as well as formal communications. The teachers' switch to Tigrinya to accommodate Birhane, which was meant to facilitate communication, yielded the opposite feeling in him. He felt alienated, because their switch associated him with the 'they-oriented language'. He continued to use Tigre to show his group-membership identity. Their switch to Tigrinya might also have signalled to him that they underestimated his competence in the Tigre language. Accordingly, he wanted to prove that he is capable of using Tigre for this kind of communication.

Conclusion

In this short paper, seven situations of code-switching practices, focusing mainly on motivating factors, were examined. In each of the examples one or more factors are involved. Some are related to the function of the language, i.e., why a certain variety is used instead of others. Others are related to the users of the language—who is speaking to whom—while still others are dictated by the nature of the setting, i.e., where the speaking takes place. Though the examples are few in number, they show us the use of code-switching in expressing solidarity, declaring identity, maintaining neutrality, signalling formality and social status, and showing power and authority. In one of the examples the skillful dramatic usage of code-switching in a form of direct speech quotations to attract the audience's attention is reported. Furthermore, the use of code-switching to send warning signals to children is discussed in one of the examples.

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Lingusitic Violence against Women as Manifested in Sexist Amharic Proverbs.

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SOMMARIO

Prendendo spunto dalla mancanza di lavori precedenti sull'argomento, questo lavoro cerca di esplicitare le implicazioni dei proverbi amarici di argomento sessuale mirati a svalutare le donne. I dati necessari sono stati ottenuti attraverso interviste ad informanti, e ulteriormente arricchiti consultando opere scritte. Gli informanti sono stati selezionati con un campionamento finalizzato, consultando cinque uomini e cinque donne di 50-65 anni, sotto l'ipotesi che potessero fornire al ricercatore dati relativamente validi, avendo avuto l'esperienza di tutta una vita nell'uso paremiologico. I dati così ottenuti sono poi stati analizzati, concentrandosi in via primaria sulla descrizione e interpretazione dei diversi proverbi. Lo studio giunge alla conclusione che questi ultimi rappresentano diciassette diversi temi, identificati come unità di analisi di contenuti latenti. Questa costellazione paremiologica, cioè i temi dei contenuti latenti, risulta implicare una realtà prestabilita a carattere patriarcale, che promuove il dominio degli uomini sulle donne praticamente in tutti gli ambiti della vita. A ciò si collega la denigrazione, l'oppressione e lo sfruttamento di queste. La società presa in esame è permeata dalla convinzione che le donne siano inferiori agli uomini, e questa ideologia di genere prevenuta in favore dei maschi si riflette in un uso sessista dei proverbi, equivalente ad una violenza linguistica contro le donne.

Keywords: *gender, proverb, sexist, violence*
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1. Introduction

According to Fasold (1990), sex-based linguistic variation is a prime example of the sort of social function that is fulfilled by language. Despite decades of feminist consciousness-raising, sexist language use still exists in many cultures. Sexist language is characterized by devaluing either of the two sexes, women being the usual subjects of devaluation in such a language use in virtually all cultures.

Jernigan (1999) contends that sexist language use has different dimensions. One of the major dimensions concerns the use of gender-specific titles and pronouns which can subtly influence our thoughts and expectations about gender roles and appropriate occupations and goals for the two sexes. The other category of sexist language is the use of linguistic forms (words, phrases, or sentences) in order to reinforce the idea of male superiority and female inferiority. In this case, sexist language use often suggests an inherent male dominance and superiority in many fields of life. Such implications are powerfully reflected through the use of sexist proverbs. According to Ssetuba (2002:1), a proverb is regarded as “a noble genre of oral tradition that enjoys the prestige of people’s wisdom and philosophy of life; proverbs are considered to be the analytic tools of thought as they are used to tell people what to do and how to act”.

As Fasold (1990) states, sexist language, and, by extension sexist proverbs, encourage discrimination and can discourage women from pursuing their dreams, hence disempowering them. Women disempowerment refers to the situation whereby women are forced to occupy a disadvantaged and inferior position within a society by depriving them of the power or authority to assume the opposite position. Sexist proverbs do so through their devastating semantic effect. By semantics we mean the conventional meaning conveyed through linguistic items (Yule 1996). Hence, sexist proverbs are said to have an overwhelming effect on woman disempowerment.

In the Ethiopian context, there are a number of sexist Amharic proverbs which disempower or subjugate women. However, this does not mean that there are no proverbs which are articulated in a way that they appreciate or empower women. The Amhara society has its own proverbs by which it reflects its positive views about women. Such proverbs are not the concern of this study, as they are not considered threats to women's normal social function. The present study is, therefore, intended to analyze the types and dimensions of semantic contents embedded in different Amharic sexist proverbs which are phrased in a way that they disempower/subjugate women.

In order to achieve the intended objective, data were collected from the target society by involving living informants, on the one hand, and by taking part in day-to-day discourse within the target society, on the other hand. Such data collection methods were further supplemented by document review (consulting different written materials, including Amharic text books and a book entitled *Amharic Proverbs* (cf. Emawayish et al., 1982). A total of ten informants (five men and five women) were purposively selected. These ranged in age from 50 to 65, so as to secure as many proverbs as possible, since elderly people are deemed to be rich in proverbial knowledge and usage. These informants were all from rural sites where Amharic is spoken as the only language, and almost all of them (except for one) were engaged in an agricultural livelihood. The following table presents detailed background information pertaining to the informants.

Table 1: Informants' background

No	Informant	Gender	Age	Educational level	Livelihood
1	Informant one	M	55	Uneducated	Farmer
2	Informant two	M	53	Can read and write/ Priest	Farmer
3	Informant three	M	64	Uneducated	Farmer
4	Informant four	M	58	Uneducated	Farmer
5	Informant five	M	65	Can read and write/Priest	Farmer
6	Informant six	F	51	Uneducated	Farmer/Housewife
7	Informant seven	F	62	Uneducated	Farmer/Housewife
8	Informant eight	F	57	Uneducated	Farmer/Housewife
9	Informant nine	F	50	Diploma	(Amharic) teacher
10	Informant ten	F	64	Uneducated	Farmer/Housewife

2. Sexist Amharic proverbs meant to subjugate women

This section deals with the description and interpretation of the sexist Amharic proverbs by way of disclosing the central meanings attached to the different target sexist proverbs, hence, a qualitative analysis. The target proverbs are subcategorized into various themes, which serve as units of analysis. For the sake of simplicity and to avoid repetition, only representative examples are addressed within the analysis, the

entire proverbial corpus corresponding to each category being indicated numerically in the following table.

Table 2: The number and percentage of proverbs under different themes identified as units through latent content analysis.

S.No.	Type of theme	Number of proverbs	Percentage
1	Hegemonic masculinity	19	12%
2	Evilness	16	10%
3	Women's dependence on men	15	9%
4	Lack of intelligence and critical thinking	15	9%
5	Suitability for subjection to domestic violence	13	8%
6	House wifization/Domesticity	12	7%
7	Segregation of activities	11	7%
8	Attachment to negative communal attributes	11	7%
9	Opportunistic and non-reliable behavior	10	6%
10	Non-trustworthiness/Infidelity	10	6%
11	Cowardice	8	5%
12	Talkativeness	7	4%
13	Lack of decision-making power and practicality	4	2%
14	Voracious eating	4	2%
15	Low social status/Inferiority	4	2%
16	Supersexines	4	2%
17	Irresponsibility/Negligent behavior	3	2%
Total		166	100%

We can observe from the table that out of the total 166 target proverbs, the identified themes subsume varying numbers of proverbs, ranging from the least, 3 (2%), which correspond to the theme signifying women's irresponsible behavior, to the highest, 19 (12%), corresponding to the theme which signals women's exclusion by virtue of promoting hegemonic masculinity. The figures imply that the target speech community tends to devalue women primarily by declaring hegemonic masculinity. A considerable number of sexist proverbs are also found to converge on the themes reflecting women's evil nature, women's dependence on men (men's control over women), and women's lack of intelligence and critical thinking; the theme which adheres to the labeling of women as evil creatures subsumes 16 proverbs, comprising 10% of the total corpus, while the themes signifying women's reliance on men and women's lack of intelligence and critical thinking subsume 15 proverbs, each which account for 9% of the total corpus. The latent contents of the different target proverbs affiliated with the aforementioned 17 themes are discussed below in detail.

2.1. Proverbs reflecting women's dependence on men

Proverbs categorized under this heading suggest that society considers the proper place of women that of seeking support from men, especially from their husbands. The support modality may be material, physical, psychological, and/or intellectual. This perspective of viewing women to be non-self-reliant promotes the unlimited power of men to be exercised on women in terms of controlling them and doing things for them, as if women were unable to address their concerns on their own. Such a societal perception of women's dependence on men arguably leads to suppression, dominance,

and violence by jeopardizing women's social power and status. Let us consider the following example proverbs.

- (1) a. **ሚስትና ዳዊት በብብት**
mistənnā dawit bābəbbət
'A wife and psalms should be kept under one's (a man's) armpit'
- b. **ሴትና በቅሎ እንደገሪዋ ነው**
setənnā bāk'lo əndägäriwa näw
'A woman and a mule behave like their trainer'
- c. **የሴት አገሯ ባሏ ማደሪያዋ አመሏ**
yäset agärwa balwa madäriyawa amälwa
'A woman's country is her husband and her livelihood is her character'
- d. **ወንድ ልጅ በተሾመበት ሴት ልጅ በተዳረችበ**
wänd lədz bätəfoməbbät set lədz bätadarät'fəbbät
'A man is in his kingdom as a woman is in her marital destination'
- e. **አለባል ሴት ወይዘሮ አለማንገቻ ከበሮ**
aläbal set wäyzäro alämanggät'fa kəbäro
'A lady without a husband is like a drum without suspenders'
- f. **አለሰራ አይበላ እንጅራ አለባል ቆጥ አይሰራ**
aläsəra ayəbbälla əndzära aläbal k'ot' ayəssärra
'A perch¹ cannot be made without a husband as food cannot be eaten without work'
- g. **ባል የሌላት ሴት የመንገድ ዳር እሸት**
bal yäləllat set yämängäd dar əfät
'A husbandless woman is like a ripened fruit near a main road'
- h. **በጋለሞታ ቤት ሁሉ ይጣላበት**
bägalämota bet hullu yət't'allabbät
'Everyone fights for a widow's home'
- i. **ሴት ከገለሞትች አውራ ዶሮ ይዞራታል**
set kägälämmotät'f awra doro yəzoratal
'If a woman becomes widowed, even a cock hovers around her'
- j. **ነፍስ በፊጣሪዋ ሴት ባሳዳሪዋ**
näfs bäfät'ariwa set basaddariwa
'As a soul is in its creator, a woman is in her master'

All of the examples cited above, in one way or another, reflect men's control over women. For instance, the example in (1a) articulates that a woman must be kept under a man's armpit just as is the case for psalms (a prayer book). This clearly entails that men are expected to impose their power in order to control women by following their every move. This ultimately deprives women of their freedom and independence. The example in (1b) dictates that women need guidance from men; women are viewed as behaving in the way in which they are trained by men, which implicitly means women are incapable of doing things in the absence of men's intellectual support. Women are

¹ ቆጥ 'Perch', in this context, refers to a kind of traditional sleeping place, especially in the rural sites of Amhara, constructed approximately half-way between the floor and the roof of a house. It can also be used as a place where hens and roosters sit at night.

also considered as depending on their husbands in order to survive. The examples in (1c and d) encode that women's livelihood is primarily based on the existence of their husbands.

Proverbs given in (1e and f) may be interpreted to mean that women are meaningless or at least insignificant without men (their husbands). This is viewed to be analogous to the existence of a drum without suspenders and eating without working. In the same fashion, women are viewed as disguised unless they get married. In order for women to be respected and psychologically rescued, they are expected to have husbands; otherwise they are more and more likely to experience sexual assault by everyone (male) as reflected by the examples (1g, h, and i). The worst scenario is the fact that women are assumed to be in a creation-creator relationship with men. The proverb in (1j) tells us about such a society's view concerning the relationship between men and women; this is performed by means of analogy to the relationship between God and the soul.

2.2. Proverbs reflecting women's lack of intelligence and critical thinking

In the target socio-cultural setting, women are viewed as possessing few or no intellectual qualities and little critical thinking ability. All the proverbs categorized under this theme portray women as lacking objectivity in how they think and what they do. Let us illustrate this by the following data.

- (2) a. **ሴት ምን ታውቃለች አዋቂ ትወልዳለች እንጅ**
set mən tawk'allätʃʃ awak'i təwäldallätʃʃ əndʒ
 'A woman does not know anything, but she gives birth to a knowledgeable child'
- b. **ለሴት ምክር አይገባትም**
läset məkər aygäbatəmm
 'A woman cannot understand advice'
- c. **ብልህ ሴትና ቀንዳም አህያ አይገኙም**
bələh setənnä k'ändam ahəyya ayəgäñnumm
 'It is impossible to get a wise woman and a donkey with horns'
- d. **ከባልሽ ታረቂ ቢሏት ልመና መሰላት**
käbaləʃ taräk'i bilwat lömmäna mässälat
 'When advised to make peace with her husband, she thinks that it is a special request'
- e. **ሴት ሲያጭጭላት ያረሱላት ይመስላታ**
set siyafwatʃʃ'ullat yarräsullat yəməslatall
 'If a man boasts by whistling, his wife considers him a wonderful farmer'
- f. **በፋሲካ የተቀጠረች ገረድ ሁሌ ፋሲካ ይመስላታል**
bäfasika yätäk'ät't'ärätʃʃ gäräd hulle fasika yəməslatall
 'A maid servant employed at Easter thinks that it is always Easter'
- g. **የቄስ ሚስት አወቅሽ አወቅሽ ቢልዋት መጻፍ አጠበች**
yäk'es mist awak'ʃ awak'ʃ bilwat mäś'af at't'äbätʃʃ
 'A priest's wife washes a book when she is repeatedly told that she is clever'

- h. **ከባልዋ ብትጣላ ብልትዋን በካራ**
käbalwa bəttət't'alla bəltwan bākarrā
 ‘While she quarrels with her husband, she hurts her vulva with a knife’
- i. **እንስራዋን ረስታ ወደወንዝ ወረደች**
ənsərawan rästa wädäwänz wärrädätʃtʃ
 ‘Having forgotten her pot, she goes to a river’

All these proverbs directly or indirectly deny women’s intellectual capacity and wisdom. The examples in (2a, b, and c) directly assert that women lack intelligence to the extent that they are compared with an animal which is considered the most stupid by the society, i.e., a donkey. The society thinks that getting a wise and intellectual woman is like getting a donkey with horns, which is quite unrealistic. The examples in (2d, e, and f) present the message that women lack objectivity in the way they think. Women are viewed as thinking in a way such that they cannot distinguish between good and bad phenomena. They are represented equating advice with a request even if the advice is to their own advantage, for instance, making peace with their husband.

Women are also portrayed as failing to critically evaluate things or phenomena, so that they tend to be cheated in superficial matters. For example, if a husband boasts with whistles, a wife considers him a wonderful farmer, no matter how lazy he might be. Finally, the proverbs given in (2g, h, and i) deny women’s objectivity in what they do. Women are assumed to do things which would have negative impacts on themselves by virtue of lacking critical thinking. For instance, a wife is assumed to hurt her own vulva with a knife by thinking that it would offend her husband. Similarly, it is presumed that if a wife is repeatedly acknowledged for what she does, she tends to wash a book, an operation which is not expected of a normal person, in order to be further appreciated.

All the aforementioned scenarios clearly indicate that women are perceived by the society as lacking intelligence, wisdom, artistic qualities, and critical thinking. The proverbial expressions implicitly suggest that women cannot learn. Through such expressions, the community reflects its ideology that trying to teach women is all worthless and futile. This, in turn, dictates parents to teach their sons and not their daughters, hence, disempowering women.

2.3. Proverbs which reflect attachment of women to negative communal attributes

At a very basic level, the proverbial utterances grouped under this theme have some thematic feature which they share with those which are presented in the preceding section. This common feature has something to do with the reading related to lack of intelligence and critical thinking. Nonetheless, the following proverbs are distinguished from the previous ones basically because the message they hold could apply to both men and women. Despite the fact that the intended meanings can be attributed to both sexes, the proverbs are grammatically phrased by referring exclusively to women. This grammatical attachment of women to negative communal attributes obviously devalues women. The following proverbs exemplify this kind of female subjugation.

- (3) a. **ትለብሰው የላት ትከናከው አማራት**
täläbsäw yällat tækkänannäbäw amarat
 ‘She who does not have anything to wear wishes to have veils’
- b. **የሌላት እራት ደም ምሳ አማራት**
yälellat ərat dämmo məsa amarat
 ‘She who does not have anything for dinner wishes to have something for lunch’
- c. **አላንድ የላት ጥርስ በዘንዘና ትነቀስ**
aland yällat t’ərs bāzānāzāna tənnäk’k’äs
 ‘She who has only a tooth gets tattooed with a pestle’
- d. **አይነጋም መስልዋት ከቋት አራች**
ayənägamm məsəlwat kāk’wat arratʃf
 ‘She defecated on a mill thinking that the day does not come back’
- e. **የራስዋ ሲያር የሰው ታማስል**
yāraswasiyarr yäsaw tammassəl
 ‘She takes care of others’ while hers gets scorched’
- f. **የቆጡን አወርድ ብላ የብብትዋን ጣለች**
yäk’ot’un awärd bəla yäbəbbətwan t’alätʃf
 ‘She who seeks to own something from the perch² loses what she has already held in her armpit’
- g. **ስታብጀው ውላ ባትላ**
səttabädzdzäw wəla batāla
 ‘Having spent the day in preparing, she destroyed it with dregs’
- h. **ግማሹን ተላጭታ ግማሹን ተቀብታ**
gəmmafun tālatʃ’ta gəmmafun tāk’äbbəta
 ‘She gets half of her head shaved and half of it buttered’
- i. **ጾማ ጾማ ለጸሎተሀሙስ እርጎ ትልስ**
s’oma s’oma läs’älotä hamus ərgo tələs
 ‘Having been fasting, she licks yogurt on the prayer Thursday, the day just before good Friday’

The target society utters any of these proverbs to address unexpected activities which could be performed by either of the two genders. For example, the proverbs in (3a, b, and c) are sarcastic utterances which can be articulated to ridicule somebody, irrespective of gender distinction, in situations where s/he aspires, thinks, or does beyond what is expected in the current state of affairs (status quo). If someone fails to critically think and be objective in what s/he does, s/he tends to aspire to something that is hardly possible to achieve. In such cases, s/he becomes the target of gossip by means of proverbs of the type presented in (3a-c).

The society also expresses its observation about one’s lack of ability to think/plan ahead. The proverb in (3d) reflects this view by analogy to a woman who defecates on a mill thinking that because the day will not return, she will not need the mill any more. The rest of the proverbs, i.e., (3e-i) also deliver a message associated with one’s (male or female) lack of intelligence and critical thinking. The example in (3e), for instance, is meant to convey the reading that someone fails to understand priorities, so

² See previous note.

that s/he jeopardizes his/her own fate while devoting to help others in an illogical manner.

As noted earlier, the constellation of proverbs under this theme reflects the society's perspective about negative qualities which can be attributed to everyone. However, since the society is predominantly patriarchal, it tends to associate such negative attributes only with women, at least at the surface level of the proverbs. If the proverbial utterances are articulated by using masculine marked predicates, they do not make sense and the intended message tends to lose its strength. The proverbs get their explanatory power only if they are expressed with reference to feminine gender. This is evidently due to the fact that the society stereotypes women to be linked with negative attributes, such as lack of intelligence and critical thinking, as opposed to men, who are assumed to inherently possess a higher level of intelligence, artistic ability, critical thinking, and so on. This gender-biased ideology has led to addressing people characterized by stupid behavior or deeds with proverbs phrased in a way that they grammatically point at women. This unquestionably turns out to be disempowering to women.

2.4. Proverbs which reflect women's house-wifization/Domesticity

This theme subsumes proverbs which reflect the society's ideology that women should be attached to (traditional) domestic activities. Such a stereotypical view of women's domesticity is used as justification for mistreating and exploiting them. Men are meant to dominate and control influential positions within the society by restricting women to domestic spheres, where they serve mainly as wives and mothers. The following data support this fact.

- (4) a. **የሴት ቀበጥ የበቅሎ መድን ለመሆን ገበያ ትወጣለች**
yäset k'äbät' yäbäk'lo mädən lämähon gäbäya təwät'allätftj
 'A brat woman goes to market in order to mediate a mules sale'
- b. **ሴት ይወዷል ማጀት ያንጎዳጉዷል**
set yəwädwal madzät yangodaggudwal
 'Loving a woman leads to hovering around the kitchen'
- c. **ሴት በማጀት ወንድ በችሎ**
set bämadzät wänd bätfəlot
 'As a woman is in a kitchen, a man is in a court'
- d. **የሴት ሞቷ በማጀቷ**
yäset motwa bämadzätwa
 'A woman's death is in her kitchen'
- e. **ሴት ለቤት ወፍጮ ለዱቄት**
set läbet wäftf'o läduk'et
 'As a woman is to home, so a mill is to powder'
- f. **ቤት ያለሴት ከብት ያለበረት**
bet yaläset käbt yaläbärät
 'Home without a woman is like cattle without a corral'

- g. **አይብ ከአግዋቱ ልጅ ከእናቱ**
ayəb kagwatu lədz kännatu
 ‘As cheese is with its whey, so a child is with his mother’
- h. **በቅሎ ገዝቶ መጭ መጭ ሚሴት አግብቶ ምሳየን አምጭ**
bāk’lo gäzto mätf’ mätf’ mist agbəto məsayen amtj’
 ‘Buying a mule is riding as marrying a wife is ordering lunch’
- i. **እንጨት እይሸከሙም ላመድ እርጊት አያገቡም ላትወልድ**
əntfät ayəffäkkämm lamäd arogit ayagäbumm latwäld
 ‘It is not good to carry a [piece of] wood as it turns to ash and to marry an old woman as she cannot give birth’
- j. **የታደለች ሴት በፊት ትወልዳለች ሴት**
yätaddälätfj set bäfit təwäldallätfj set
 ‘A lucky woman gives her first birth to a girl’

All of these proverbs are phrased to reflect the society’s belief that men and women assume different roles, which have great affinity with public and domestic spheres, respectively. The examples in (4a-f) clearly disclose the fact that the target society views women, as opposed to men, as unsuited public activities. A woman is portrayed as being affiliated with the kitchen within her home as she is thought of being especially suited for cooking and other domestic tasks. If a woman tends to participate in public spheres, she is considered deviant. The proverb in (4a), for example, implies that going to market for the selling of cattle is a man’s job; and if a woman intends to mediate cattle’s sale, she is stereotypically labeled a brat.

The example proverbs given in (4g-j) indicate that women are expected to serve men as wives and mothers. They are supposed to cook food items at home. A wife is compared to a mule serving for transportation; this carries the clear implication that men exploit women through the act of domesticity. Again, women are used as instruments for reproduction and are expected to perform the task of child rearing. If a woman is infertile, the society neglects and discourages her to the extent that she should not get anyone to marry her, since she cannot succeed in perpetuating the lineage. An infertile woman is compared to firewood soon turning to ash, as in the example (4i).

Generally, the constellation of proverbs under this heading demonstrate that the target society views women as suited only for domestic roles. The ramifications are that the society has a socially established reality which deliberately narrows women’s vision and relegates their economic and social positions to the secondary levels. This is done by introducing a cult of domesticity in order to limit women’s chance of competing in the outside world with men, so that women are left with the only option of depending on men for all decisions in the world outside the home.

2.5. Proverbs indicating segregation of sexes

In this context, segregation of sexes is used to refer to the situation whereby the target society assumes men and women should perform distinct activities. This notion of separate role assignment suggests that women should not engage in certain activities which are meant to be performed by men (but not the other way round). Such an act of segregation even extends to the level of dichotomizing some natural phenomena, such as behavior and physical appearance, as the domain of only one of the sexes. The

following proverbs indicate that the society subjugates women by limiting their activities and behavior to those not performed by men.

- (5) a. **ሴትና ውሻ በእንክሻ**
setonna wəſfa bänkəſfa
‘Women and dogs defend by biting’
- b. **የሎሌ እልቃሽ የሴት ቀዳሽ**
yälole alk’af yäset k’äddaf
‘A vassal mourner is like a woman sanctifier’
- c. **የሀምሌ ብራ የባልቴት ወበራ**
yähamle bərra yäbaltet wäbära
‘A cleared-up July is like a communal labor of elderly women’
- d. **የፈረሰኛ ጥለት ለባሽ የሴት ትምባሆ ጎራሽ**
yäfaräsäjjna t’älät läbaf yäset təmbaho goraf
‘A cavalry wearing decorative bands is like a woman chewing tobacco’
- e. **የሴት መጠጥ ደፋር የወንድ አይናፋር**
yäset mät’ät’t’ däffar yäwänd aynaffar
‘A woman fond of liquor is like a shy man’
- f. **ለሴት ጠላ ለፈረሰ ቆላ**
läset t’älla läfaräs k’olla
‘Local beer is to a woman as the lowlands are to a horse’
- g. **የሴት ረዥም የግቅ ውዥምዥም አያስጎመዥም**
yäset räzzəm yämak’ wəzəmzəm ayasgomäzzəm
‘A tall woman and an over sized garment are not attractive’
- h. **የሴት አመዳም የአሮጌ ሆዳም**
yäset amädam yaroge hodam
‘An ugly woman is like a greedy elder’
- i. **የሴት በራ የበቅሎ ደንባራ**
yäset bära yäbäk’əlo dänbarra
‘A bald woman is like a startled mule’

The examples in (5a-f) externalize the societal belief that women are not in a position to handle some activities and/or their consequences. Proverb (5a) expresses the belief that women fail to beat others by fists unlike men. The major defense mechanism that women resort to is assumed to be biting just like dogs. This implies that defending oneself is attributed to men and women are viewed as incapable of doing so.

Activities such as sanctifying, chewing tobacco, and drinking liquor are also linked to men. It is believed that finding women to perform such activities challenges the status quo. In some cases, women could engage in the activities, but the end result would be disastrous to them. For instance, the examples given in (5d, e, and f) tell us that if women dare to chew tobacco or to drink much liquor, the consequences would possibly be self-detrimental. Such women are equated with a horse in the lowlands which is likely to die quickly. This is, however, assumed to be manageable for men; no matter how much liquor a man takes in, he is expected to handle the effect.

Similarly, the proverbs in (5g-i) display the society’s stereotyped segregation of some natural phenomena. A woman, unlike a man, is disregarded if she is ugly, bald, or too tall. These attributes are preferred to be possessed by men. This discloses the fact that

the society intends to subjugate women even by challenging physical appearances that are naturally determined for them. The same attribute is viewed differently according to gender: it is taken as something bad and destructive when it is attached to women, but it is acceptable when it characterizes men, hence, disempowering women via segregation.

2.6. Proverbs reflecting the acceptability of subjecting women to domestic violence

In the target socio-cultural setting, and evidently in many other cultures, women are vulnerable to domestic violence. Apart from doing tiresome physical labor, they are beaten by their husbands in situations where disagreement arises in the home environment. The society has socialized this phenomenon and takes it as something normative, so that people, including women themselves, do not consider it crime or abuse. The following data show that there is a long-lived act of abusing women within the domestic sphere.

- (6) a. **ሴትና አህያ የማችሉት የለማ**
setənnā ahəyya yāmāyʃəlūt yällämm
‘A woman and a donkey can tolerate everything’
- b. **የድንጋይን ጦርነት፣ የሸሮን ቀለብነት፣ የሚስትን ባርነት**
yädəngayən t’orənnät yäʃəron k’älläbənnät yämistən barənnät
‘Conflict using stone is analogous to supplies of mush and slavery of a wife’
- c. **አህያና ሴት ቢረግጥዋት አይከፋት**
ahəyyanna set birägət’wat aykäfat
‘A woman and a donkey do not refuse being trampled’
- d. **እናት ትረገጣለች እንደመሬት**
ənnat tərriägät’allätʃʃ əndämäret
‘A mother is trampled like the earth’
- e. **ሴትና አህያ በዱላ**
setənnā ahəyya bādulla
‘A woman and a donkey are controlled by a stick’
- f. **ከሸንጎ ቢረታ ከቤት ሚስቱን ሙታ**
käʃāngo birräta käbet mistun mätta
‘When a man was beaten in a forum, he went home and beat his wife’
- g. **ማንን ታሸንፋለህ ቢሉት ሚስቱን አለ**
mannəntaʃʃännəfalläh bilut misten alä
‘When a man is asked over whom he enjoys victory, he said, “my wife”’
- h. **አማቱን ምታ ቢባል ሚስቱን በየት አልፎ አለ**
amatun mətā bilut misten bəyät alləfə alä
‘When a man is ordered to hit his mother-in-law, he said “how can I skip over my wife”’
- i. **የምታሸንፈውን ምታ ቢባል ወደሚስቱ ሮጠ**
yämməttaʃʃännəfawən mətā bilut wädemistu rot’ä
‘When a man is ordered to hit the person over whom he has won, he runs to his wife’

The proverbs in (6a and b) disclose the fact that women are socially viewed as servants. They are thought of as complaining for nothing despite the overwhelming burden they experience in fulfilling the family's needs. Worse, women are considered as slaves and are equated with supplies of mush, which is the most frequently accessed (abused) food within the society. As indicated by proverb (6c), women are assumed to enjoy beating, especially at the hands of their husbands. By virtue of considering this ideology, men believe that women can be corrected from their wrong deeds only through physical punishment. Women are compared to the earth, which people always trample, to convey the message that they are suitable for beating. What is worse, a woman is taken to be analogous to an animal which is considered the most stupid within the society, i.e. a donkey, and both a woman and a donkey are supposed to tolerate beating.

There are situations where a husband projects his failure to succeed in a public concern on his wife after he is back home. Proverb (6f) suggests this. This implies that women are used as instruments to regulate men's disturbed feelings via physical punishment. Women, especially wives, are perceived by the society as being subordinates to men (husbands) and any husband believes that he can beat his wife to the extent that husbands immediately think of their wives in times when they are looking for someone against whom they can win. Proverbs in (6f-i) reflect this socially established reality.

To sum up, the conglomeration of proverbs related to the current theme demonstrate that the target speech community has long established a reality which dictates that women are eligible for domestic violence. Women, specifically wives, are abused at home in many ways, the worst scenario being beating. This fact is externalized by the society's long-lived folk literature, in general, and by its proverbs, in particular. The target proverbs are constructed in a way that they can promote the necessity and perpetuation of domestic violence against women. This is, therefore, taken as another obvious form of women's devaluation through the use of sexist proverbs.

2.7. Proverbs reflecting hegemonic masculinity

The notion of hegemonic masculinity refers to the material and social representation of the psychosocial and physical potency of men in a sexist society (cf. Hussein 2005). The stereotype about what constitutes masculinity is emphasized in the proverbs of the target speech community. The proverbs under this theme play an important role in reinforcing the socio-cultural ideals of masculinity, such as competitiveness, dominance, forcefulness, endurance, self-reliance, and readiness to take risks. The following examples directly or indirectly communicate notions related to this.

- (7) a. **ሴት የወለደ መቀመቅ ወረደ**
set yäwellädä mäḳ'ämäk' wärrädä
 'Someone who delivers a baby girl goes down to a hell'
- b. **ሴት አግብቶ ሴት ቢወልዱ የት አለ ንግዱ**
set agbäto set biwäldu yät allä nägdu
 'Marrying a woman and giving birth to a baby girl offers no benefit'
- c. **ከሴት ጠብደል የወንድ ኮሰማና ይሻላል**
käset t'äbdäl yäwänd kosmanna yəšsalall
 'A skinny man is better than a huge woman'

- d. **ሴት ውፍረት እንጅ ትልቅነት የላትም**
set wəfrät əndzi təllək'ənnät yällatəmm
 'A woman has a huge body but not greatness'
- e. **ከሴት ልብ የወንድ ሳምባ ይሻላል**
käset ləbb yäwänd samba yəጃፋል
 'A man's lung is better than a woman's heart'
- f. **አላባት ቢዛቁን ይባክን**
alabbat bizak'k'un yəbakkən
 'Dedication without a father is wastage'
- g. **እላባት ኅመን ባግዋት**
alabbat gommän bagwat
 'Absence of a father offers cabbage with whey'
- h. **ተእናት ቀን ይሻላል**
tännat k'än yəጃፋል
 'Good fortune is better than a mother'
- i. **አባት የሌለው ልጅ መዝጊያ የሌለው ደጅ**
abbat yälelläw lədz mäzgiya yälelläw dädzdz
 'A child without a father is like a compound without a door'
- j. **ማን ይሙት ጠላት ማን ይኑር አባ**
mann yəmut t'älat mann yənur abbat
 'Who should die? an enemy; and who should survive? a father'
- k. **ወንድምና ወጥ ማስፈራራያ ነው**
wändəmmənnä wät' masfärariya näw
 'A brother and stew are used for threatening'

In all these examples, it is articulated that men are preferred over women, as the society holds the view that women are unable to fulfill the various male-associated societal demands. The proverbs (7a and b), for instance, point out that the society views a woman's birth as a mess. The implication is that women are considered to be less significant within the society than men, whose birth is celebrated with a higher level of familial satisfaction. It is also understood that even a non-prestigious man is far more valued than women. The proverbs in (7c-e) clearly evoke this meaning. Even though a woman appears physically huge, no one trusts her to accomplish fruitful tasks pertaining to any social sphere, such as confrontation, competitiveness, decision making and taking risks; this is deemed to be better done by a man who is physically less visible since men are presumed to inherently possess the aforementioned attributes. The examples provided in (7f-j) picture men as the masterminds of the society, who manage the normal functioning of the system within the family, in particular, and within the community at large. Someone who grows up in the absence of a father, for example, is thought not to be successful in his/her endeavors (cf. 7f and g). This has the implied meaning that women are not as good as men in terms of serving as role models to their children; and even good fortune is taken to be better than women in shaping the lives of children. This is clearly disclosed by the examples (7h and i). Children growing up in a woman-led family are believed to face an inordinately large number of hardships. The overall connotation of the proverbs related to the current theme involves the society's advocacy of the idea that men can manage their engagements, which may even be quite difficult in whatever kind of field

they are deployed; women are, however, prejudicially assumed to fail in doing so. This view, in turn, results in an ideology whereby men are preferred for survival at the cost of women.

2.8. Proverbs reflecting women's talkativeness

Within the target society, women are presumed to spend their time in talking about worthless matters. Regardless of their active vocalizations, the society portrays women as gossipers and chit chatters. This societal labeling of women is manifested proverbially in the following examples.

- (8) a. **የሴት ጉልበቷ ምላሷ**
yäset gulbetwa məlaswa
'A woman's power is her tongue'
- b. **የማይመስል ነገር ለሚሰትህ አትነገር**
yämmaymäsaḥ nägär lemistəh attəngär
'Do not tell your wife a stupid matter'
- c. **የበሬ ዶሰኛ የሴት ወሬኛ**
yäbäre dosäñña yäset wärejña
'A wild ox is like a talkative woman'
- d. **ወሬኛ ሚስት ዘርዛራ ወንፊት**
wärejña mist zärzarra wänfit
'A talkative woman is like a sieve with dispersed holes'
- e. **የበሬ ዳተኛ የሴት ምላሰኛ አታምጣ ወደኛ**
yäbäre datäñña yäset məlasäññaatamt'a wädäñña
'A sluggish ox and a talkative woman, do not bring to us'
- f. **የሴት ክፉ ምላሰኛ የበሽታ ክፉ መጋኛ**
yäset kəfu məlasäñña yäbäffəta kəfu mäggəña
'The worst woman is a talkative one and the worst disease is a devil possession'
- g. **የሴት ክፉ አፈኛ የጎረቤት ክፉ ምቀኛ**
yäset kəfu afäñña yägoräbet kəfu mək'k'äñña
'The worst woman is a talkative one as the worst neighbor is a jealous one'

As hinted earlier, women are stereotyped to be weak and powerless both physically and psychologically. In order to hide such obvious weaknesses, they are supposed to be given to much talk even about stupid and non-feasible issues. This is taken to be their compensatory defense mechanism. The example in (8a) suggests this view. As communicated in the proverb (8b), women are notorious for being unable to keep secrets. They are judged to be quick to disclose confidential matters; the proverb depicts that it is advisable not to tell women about an issue as long as the issue is wished to be kept confidential. The level of women's talkativeness is magnified by creating different analogies. As in the example in (8 d), talkative women are represented as analogous to a sieve with dispersed holes. Note that a sieve with dispersed holes does not filter the required cereal seed from unwanted residuals; it leaks whatever is put into it. This analogy implies that women cannot discern what is mysterious from what is not; they tell everyone about everything. This may possibly

result in dangerous situations, such as strife among members of a family or a neighborhood. The society pronounces this by comparing talkative women with a demon possession, as in the proverb given in (8f).

2.9. Proverbs reflecting women's evil nature

This category is composed of various proverbs which are intended to denigrate women as an evil sub-species of humanity characterized by trouble-making. In such a representation women are identified by sinful and horrible nature. This destructive quality of women is viewed to extend to the level of leading men to be engaged in unexpected and dangerous affairs. Let us consider the following examples.

- (9)
- a. **ሴት የላከው ጅብ አፈራም**
set yälakäw dzəb ayfäramm
‘The one sent by a woman does not fear a hyena’
 - b. **ሴት የላከው ሞት አየፈራም**
set yälakäwmot ayfäramm
‘The one sent by a woman does not fear death’
 - c. **ሴት ከጦር ሜዳ ታስቀራለች**
set kät’or meda task’ärrallätftf
‘A woman advises a man not to go to a war front’
 - d. **ከሴት መምከር ደግሶ መስከር**
käset mämkär däggəso mäskär
‘Seeking advice from a woman is like getting drunk at one’s own party’
 - e. **እሳት ከበረበረው ሴት የመከረው**
əsat kəbäräbbäräw set yämäkkäräw
‘The one who experiences a fire attack is better than the one whom a woman advises’
 - f. **የሴት ምክር የእሾህ አጥር**
yäset məkər yäšoh at’ər
‘A woman’s advice is like a fence of thorns’
 - g. **ሴት የፈረደበትና አህያ የጋጠበት መሬት ውሃ አያፈ**
set yäfärrädäbbätənnā ahəyya yägat’äbbät märet wəha ayafälk’əmm
‘Land where a woman has given a verdict and where a donkey has grazed does not yield any water’
 - h. **ሴት አማት የመረዘው ኮሶ ያነዘዘው**
set amat yämärräzäw koso yanäzzäzäw
‘The one whom a mother-in-law poisons is like the one who goes numb because of traditional medicine’
 - i. **ከሴት ነገር ከበቅሎ መደንበር አይጠፋም**
käset nägär kəbäk’lo mädänbär ayt’äfamm
‘As a mule cannot be free of startling, a woman can never be free of trouble making’
 - j. **ሴት ያመጣው ጠብ አይበርድም**
set yamät’t’aw t’äb aybärdəmm
‘Strife caused by a woman does not end’

- k. የእናትን ክፋትና የደመናን ጥግት ባለቤት ያውቃል
yännatən kəfatənnā yädämmānan t’əmat baläbet yawk’all
 ‘The one who experiences knows a mother’s spite and thirst on a non-sunny day’

All of these proverbs emphasize the bad side of women. The examples in (9a and b) clearly spell out the patriarchal pronouncement of the dangers that presumably surface as a result of women’s agency within the society. The proverbs disclose the fact that the society holds a view that women are masterminds of wicked instigation; women cause men to rush to perform tasks without the fear of danger. This implies that men take both psychological and physical risks in response to women’s evil provocation.

In a similar fashion, the proverbs given in (9c-f) reveal the society’s representation of women as inherently fail to reflect good qualities of humanity. Women are portrayed as putting a tight rein on men’s dedication to confrontation and success. Even though women may provide advice to men, their advice is thought to lead men to hell; seeking advice from women in times of difficulty is tantamount to adding fuel to an already-burning fire so as to extinguish it. Women’s thoroughly devilish nature is further magnified by the examples in (9g and h), which reflect women’s association with wrong deeds that are cursed. In these proverbs the society intends to promote a message explaining that whatever a woman does, it ends up as an annoyance and danger to the society. As communicated in the proverbs (9i and j), women and trouble-making are analogous to two sides of the same coin. The society discloses this ideology by comparing women to mules; as a mule is identified by an inherent tendency to be startled, so a woman is characterized by trouble-making (cf. 9i). This manifests the societal view that trouble-making is a behavior intrinsic to women, even to the extent that a danger instigated by women is viewed to be hardly possible to handle, as indicated by example in (9j).

In the target society, it is normative that mothers are expected to love their children; they are supposedly thought to nourish children by providing whatever is good, even by sacrificing themselves. However, the society paradoxically believes that mothers are not free of harshness, including harshness directed toward their children, due to their womanhood. Though the harsh and evil treatment of their children may not explicitly surface, children are presumed to encounter their mothers’ abusive treatment. As shown in (9k), the implicit nature of women’s mal-treatment of their children is compared with the extreme thirst that one experiences on a non-sunny day, though superficially it seems that cloudy seasons do not cause such a situation, hence, magnifying the inherent evil nature of women.

2.10. Proverbs reflecting women’s opportunistic and non-reliable personality

All the proverbs grouped under this heading suggest that the target society identifies in women opportunistic, inconsistent, and unreliable behaviors. The society stereotypically characterizes women as changing their views to take advantage of nurturing situations, no matter what adverse effects the situations may impose on others. This patriarchal ideology is manifested in the following example proverbs.

- (10) a. **ገበያ ቢያመቻት ልጇን ሸጠቻት**
gäbäya biyamätʼʼfat lədzwan fätʼätʼʼfat
 ‘When she gets a good market value, she sells her daughter’
- b. **ሴትና ዶሮ ዱሮ ሲሄዱ ቤታቸውን ይከዱ**
setänna doro dur sihedu betatʼʼfäwən yəkedu
 ‘A woman and a chicken forget their home when they go to a forest’
- c. **ውሽማዋን ብታየው ባሏን ጠላችው**
wəʼšmawān bəttayäw balwan tʼällatʼʼfəw
 ‘When she sees her adulterer, she hates her husband’
- d. **ጨረቃና ሴት ዛሬ ብርሃን ነገ ጽልመት**
tʼʼäräkʼanna set zare bərhan nägä sʼəlmät
 ‘The moon and a woman are brighter today and darker tomorrow’
- e. **ትፈጭ የነበረች ማንጉዋለል አቃታት**
təfätʼʼ yänäbbärätʼʼtʼʼ mangʷaläl akʼatat
 ‘She who used to grind failed to winnow’
- f. **ፊጨታ የነበረች ላመልማሎ ኮራች**
fätʼʼtʼʼ itta yänäbbärätʼʼtʼʼ lamälmallo korratʼʼtʼʼ
 ‘She who used to grind refuses to spin’
- g. **አግብታ ብትመለስ የውሀ መንገድ ጠፋት**
agbēta bəttəmmälläs yäwəha mängäd tʼäffat
 ‘When she comes back from her husband, she forgot the way to a known river’
- h. **እናቷ ዘንድ ሄዳ ከመጣች ከንብላው በቀር ስራ አጣች**
ənnatwa zänd heda kämätʼʼ tʼatʼʼtʼʼ kännəblaw bākʼär səra atʼʼ tʼatʼʼtʼʼ
 ‘After she came back from visiting her mother, she tended to do nothing but eat’

As signaled in examples (10a-c), the society pictures women as opportunistic creatures. They are thought of as being merciless in the sense that they trample others as long as doing so might give them some advantage. Women’s opportunistic personality is presumed to lead them even to deny their home, children, and husbands, so long as they think that there is some other overwhelming benefit. This implies that they tend to secure their advantage at the cost of denying humanity. The proverb given in (10b) seems to have another implied meaning, i.e., it promotes a strict view according to which men should exercise their power in order to control women. This act of controlling is implicitly indicated to be in the form of prohibiting women from public exposure. This indirectly declares men’s superiority and women’s subordination, hence, subjugating women. Women are also proverbially denigrated as inconsistent and unreliable in nature. They are assumed to behave in some way in some situations and they tend to automatically change their behavior in some other situations. The proverbs in (10d-h) clearly depict this biased view of the society. As communicated in these examples, women are presumed to hide their history once they join another episode in their life to the extent that they pretend as if they forget the way to a known river in a village where they grew up fetching water when they are back after sometime staying elsewhere. This non-reliable (changing) behavior of women is compared with a natural phenomenon, i.e., the status of the moon which oscillates between being brighter and darker.

2.11. Proverbs reflecting women's cowardice

Within the target society, there exists a long-lived prejudiced representation of women as lacking the attributes of charisma, boldness, and bravery. Boldness is considered an expression of wholeness since a bold individual is assumed to be able to manage anything through charismatic confrontation. Since the society is characterized by patriarchy, these positive qualities are attached to men, while women are generally considered inherent cowards. The following data illustrate this prejudiced identification of women.

- (11) a. **ፈሪ የእናቱ ልጅ ነው**
fāri yännatu ləḍጅ nāw
 ‘A cowardly man is a son of his mother’
- b. **ወንድ ልጅ ተወልዶ ካልሆነ እንዳባቱ ስጡት አመልግሎ ይፍተል እንደቱ**
wänd ləḍጅ tewäldo kalthonäändabbatu sət’ut amälmalo yəftäl əndännatu
 ‘If a boy does not become as brave as his father, give him a spin so that he can weave like his mother’
- c. **ተሴት ትብሱ ትመለሱ**
täset təbsu təmmälläsu
 ‘You came back with no success as you (M) are sillier than even a woman’
- d. **ሴት ጅብ ትፈራለች አጥር ትመዛለች**
set dʒəb təfärallätʃf at’ər təmazzallätʃf
 ‘A woman fears a hyena and pulls down a fence’
- e. **አረጉዴ ባሌ ገደለ በጎራዴ**
ärägude bale gäddälä bägorade
 ‘Oh my God! My husband killed someone with a sword’
- f. **የቄስ ምንደኛ የሴት ብትረኛ**
yäk’es mändäገገna yäset bəttərəገገna
 ‘A priest with pay and a woman with a stick are senseless’
- g. **የካህን አፋር፣ የአህያ እውር፣ የሴት ደፋር አይረባም**
yäkähən affar yahəyya əwwər yäset däffar
 ‘A shy priest, a blind donkey, and a brave woman are senseless’

The constellation of proverbs given above conveys the societal view that women cannot be characterized by boldness and bravery. In the normal state of affairs, a man is expected to be bold and brave. If this status quo is violated by a situation in which a man turns out to be coward, he is categorized as a woman. This is clearly communicated in examples (11a and b). Someone (a man) who fails to confront and beat somebody else in times of strife is ridiculed by being compared with a woman, as in proverb (11c). Offendingly, if a woman proves her boldness, she is considered deviant and is given the nick name ‘manlike’ which jeopardizes her social value as a woman. Such an unreasonable labeling of brave women as deviant is apparently articulated in proverbs (11f and g). In these examples, a brave woman is compared with a blind donkey and a shy priest, which are both unpleasant. Apart from the proverbial utterances, the term woman in its Amharic version is connotatively attached to cowardice. This indicates that the society has established a reality of labeling

women as silly and cowardly members of the community, as opposed to men, who are considered the de facto possessors of bravery. The act of labeling women as lacking charisma, boldness, and bravery, in turn, encodes an implied reading that women cannot safeguard themselves against attacks by others, including attacks by animals, such as hyenas and snakes. This tells us that the society evidently takes for granted that men are the ones who rescue women in times of trouble. Once again, this promotes the perpetuation of inequality between the two genders by subjugating women.

2.12. Proverbs reflecting women's non-trustworthiness/Infidelity

This theme encompasses proverbs by which the target society reflects its patriarchal ideology of labeling women as unfaithful and unreliable members of the society. Women are portrayed as pretentious, mischievous, liars, and untrustworthy in many respects. They are compared with animals and things which are hard to catch, due to their unpredictable behavior and/or nature. The following are examples of proverbs which are phrased to communicate this socially established fact.

- (12) a. የምትነቃነቅ ግንድና የምትስቅ ሴት ልብ ሩቅ ናት
yämmättännäk'annäk'gändanna yämmättəsək' set læbb ruk' nat
 'The center of a moving tree and the heart of a smiling woman are far away'
- b. ሴት ካልዋሸች ባሏን ትወዳለች
set kalwaffätſf balwan tawäddallätſf
 'If a woman does not lie, she likes her husband'
- c. ሴትና ቤት አይታመንም
setanna bet ayəttammänəmm
 'Women and home are unbelievable'
- d. ሴትና ድመት የኔ ናት አይልም
setanna dämmät yäne nat ayəbbaləmm
 'No one can say that a woman and a cat are mine'
- e. ለሴትና ለጉም አይዘናጉም
läsetanna lägum ayəzzänaggumm
 'It is not good to be careless for a woman and a mist'
- f. ሴት ያመነ ጉም የዘገነ
set yammänä gum yäzäggänä
 'One who trusts a woman is like one who holds mist'

All these proverbs designate the society's perspective of denigrating women as deceptive and unbelievable creatures. The examples in (12a and b) reveal the fact that the target society identifies women as behaving in a pretentious and unrealistic manner. Even though a woman may smile, she does not approach others from her heart; women pretend as if they were open-hearted by using their thorny mask, i.e., smiling. This pretentious behavior of women's is thought to extend to the level of trying to deceive their husbands by acting as if they do not love them, the fact, on the ground being completely different. Proverbs (12c-f), in a similar vein, disclose the societal ideology that it is hard, if not impossible, to trust women. The proverbs

instruct the society not to be fooled and deceived by women. This implies that whatever women say or do, or in whatever manner they behave, they can never be fully genuine. They may even cheat their husbands by committing adultery with somebody else as indicated in (12d), which claims that women cheat through adultery by comparing them with a cat, a domestic animal which renders the service of rat catching for everyone in the neighborhood. Women's mischievous nature is further magnified by comparison with mist, which no one can catch. As communicated by examples (12e and f), women are quite crafty and unpredictable, so that no one is supposed to trust them. Men are advised to carefully watch out for women's moves. This in turn implies that the society views women as demanding men's control in order for the society to enjoy a genuine, healthy and normal communal life.

2.13. Proverbs reflecting women's lack of decision-making power and practicality

This theme concerns the societal conspiracy against women's participation in making decisions that concern their own lives, in particular, and the community, more generally. Women are stereotyped as lacking the capacity to decide and make things operational. This indirectly encourages men to snatch women's power and decide on their behalf about issues which directly or indirectly affect their existence. The following proverbs communicate such a masculine biased idealization of the target society.

- (13) a. **ሴት ብታውቅ በወንድ ያልቅ**
set bəttawk' bāwänd yalk'
 'Though a woman proposes, a man decides'
- b. **ግዑራት ነው ሴትነት መስራት ነው ወንድነት**
mawrat nāw setənnät mäsrat nāw wändənnät
 'Talking is womanly while doing is manly'
- c. **ወንድ ባለ በእለት ሴት ባለች በአመት**
wänd balä bälät set balätʃf bamät
 'If something is said by a man, it gets completed within a day, but if it is said by a woman, it takes a year'
- d. **የግትሄድ መበለት ዞራ ዞራ ትሰናበት**
yämmattəhed määbällät zora zora təssänabbät
 'A girl who does not go says goodbye now and then'

Proverb (13a) clearly depicts a society in which women are discouraged from taking part in decision-making scenarios. A woman may bring about an idea which would be much more spectacular and fascinating than the one which a man could think of. But, when it comes to decision making, men appear on the forefront and pose their own speculations, without giving space to women's ideas, regardless of their potential value. The proverbs in (13b-d) suggest the society's representation of women as lacking the ability to bring things into effect. Women are pictured as talking much and doing little or nothing in terms of operationalizing social concerns. Practicality is taken to be a man's attribute, while talkativeness is attributed to women as in (13b); and whatever is said by women is less likely to be operational, as opposed to what is articulated by men, which gets completed within a short period of time (cf. 13c). In general terms, proverbs grouped under this theme reflect the society's patriarchal

ideology that women are not born with the capacity for decision making and practically realizing things. The society has broken the bridge which would help women to cross the biggest chasm prohibiting them from joining decision-making spheres. This is done by linguistically portraying women as powerless in terms of decision making. As such, the only choice left to women appears to be accepting whatever men decide, irrespective of its consequences for women's interests and preferences. This is unquestionably meant to disempower women, since their voices are not heard and incorporated in decisions that affect their own lives.

2.14. Proverbs reflecting women as voracious eaters

The proverbs associated with this theme indicate the society's prejudice against women by denigrating them as causes of economic deficiency and poverty in the broadest sense. Men are viewed as the productive members of the society in contrast, with women receiving the opposite idealization. Let us illustrate this view by the following data.

- (14) a. **ከሴት ሆዳም ያንድ አመት በረዶ ይሻላል**
käset hodam yand amät bärädo yəſſalall
 'A seasonal disaster is better than a woman who is a voracious eater'
- b. **እርግን ጠምቃ ፈጅቶው ጠልቃ**
ərm^wan t'äm^k'a fädzdzätʃəw t'älk'a
 'She prepared local beer for the first time and exhausted it on her own'
- c. **ሴትና ፊረስ የሰጡትን ይቀምስ**
setanna färäs yäsät't'utən yək'äms
 'A woman and a horse taste whatever they access'
- d. **የሴት ልብዋ እንጅ ሆድዋ አይመርጥም**
yäset läbwa əndzi hodwa aymärt'əmm
 'A woman's heart is selective, but not her abdomen'

The data articulate women's representation as voracious eaters in the eyes of the society. This results partly from the stratification of men and women in different patterns of space. As noted earlier, women are assumed to be engaged in domestic spheres, whereas it is assumed that men should dominate public enterprises. This in turn leads to blaming women for spending the whole day eating whatever food is available at home. They are assumed to exploit and exhaust supplies on hand prior to the arrival of the next harvest season. The expected fate of the family members is, therefore, hunger. As indicated in proverb (14a), the degree of women's voracious eating is compared a seasonal disaster which destroys the entire harvest while it is on the farm land. Proverbs (14c and d) supplement the idea that women are characterized by eating too much; they compare women to a domestic animal that spends the whole day and night eating such as horse, as in example (14c).

The worst scenario is the fact that the society assumes that women eat whatever they are provided without prioritizing one or the other sort of food (cf. 14d). There exists a belief that some food items (for example Injera with fungi accumulates) are less likely to be given to men, especially husbands. If a wife offers her husband such food, he believes that she has eroded his dignity. Women, by contrast, are supposed to eat any sort of food, whether rotten or fresh, without worrying about their social status. The

society's belief about women's non-selective eating behavior identifies women as catalysts of societal economic deprivation.

2.15. Proverbs reflecting women's low social status

This theme is composed of different proverbs which collectively convey the society's view of women's frustration, low self worth, and inadequacy. In other words, the proverbs disclose that the society holds a view that women and men are not equal; women are marginalized to assume low social status and are considered to be inferior to men, who are viewed to inherently occupy the top most position within the hierarchy of social stratification. The following proverbs signify such a societal representation of women.

- (15) a. **ለርስት ሴቶች እንኳ ይምቱለታል**
lärəst setotʃtʃ ənkʷa yəmotullätall
 'Even women fight for an estate'
- b. **ወንዶች ምን ያወራሉ የሚመጣውን ሴቶች ምን ያወራሉ ያለፈውን**
wändotʃtʃ mən yawärallu yämmimät'awən setotʃtʃ mən yawärallu yalläfäwən
 'Men talk about the upcoming issues, while women talk about the past'
- c. **ሴትና ፊረስ እንደኩራ ውሀ እያደረ ማነስ**
setənnā färäs əndekure wəha əyyaddärä manäs
 'A woman and a horse get lower and lower like a stagnant water as time goes by'
- d. **ሴትና ዶሮ ሳያብድ አይውልም**
setənnā doro sayabd aywələmm
 'A woman and a chicken can never spend a day without getting crazy'

Proverb (15a) conveys the message that an estate is something that everyone should confront, since it is an expression of identity. The implied meaning of the proverb, however, is that women are not as courageous as men to take part in confrontations. It indicates that men are the default front-liners for various undertakings that require one's scarification. Similarly, proverb (15b) reveals the society's prejudice against women via inferiorization. The proverb is intended to convey the meaning that women, unlike men, tend to be engaged in silly and worthless enterprises. It is known that talking about what is already passed yields few or no results. Regardless of this fact, women are portrayed as focusing on past events, while men anticipate the future; men's tendency is supposedly much more appreciative and life-changing than women's, which hinders one's progress to success. Both proverbs (15a and b) also denigrate women as inferior. Women's inferiority is assumed to get worse instead of improving as time passes. This is reinforced by comparing women with the water level in a pond which gradually gets lower and lower (cf. 15c). Such a stereotypical inferiority relating to women serves as the ideological grounds for their mistreatment and exploitation by virtue of limiting their roles to domestic spheres. This promotes men to control almost all influential positions within the society. It is quite evident that inferiorization of the subordinate group by the dominant one results in deprivation and disadvantages, hence, disempowering the subordinate, in this case women.

2.16. Proverbs reflecting women's irresponsibility/Negligent behavior

Another form of denigrating women exercised by the target society is found out to be labeling them as being irresponsible and negligent members of the society. They are assumed not to properly accomplish tasks due to their carelessness and inconsiderate behavior. The following proverbial utterances clearly reflect this view of the society about women.

- (16) a. **ውሃ ልትቀዳ ሄዳ እንስራዋን ረስታ መጣች**
wəha lətk'āda heda ənsərawan rästa mät't'atʃf
 'Having gone to fetch water, she came back without her pot'
- b. **ዘር ልትበደር ሄዳ እህል ቢሽት መጣች**
zär ləttəbäddär heda əhəl sifət mät't'atʃf
 'Having gone to borrow seeds, she came back while cereals ripen'
- c. **ሴትና ቁስ ቀስ**
setəmma k'es k'äss
 'A woman and a priest are sluggish'

All of these examples illustrate the society's designation of women as lacking responsibility. Proverbs (16a and b) state that women are not concerned with what they should do in the required time frame. They neglect their duties or tend to perform them haphazardly. This negligent and irresponsible behavior is viewed as extending to the level of coming back home having forgotten the pot after going to a river to fetch water, on the one hand, and coming back when the harvest season approaches after going to borrow seeds to be sowed on the other hand. Women's negligence and irresponsibility are also thought to be manifested in their sluggish execution of activities. Though women may be engaged in doing some activities, they are presumed not to accomplish them as soon as they are required to do so. In this regard, women are compared with priests, whom the society characterizes as being slow in all respects. This is clearly depicted in the example (16c).

2.17. Proverbs reflecting women's supersexiness

This theme subsumes proverbs which are meant to convey the society's stereotyping of women as super-sexy. Women are viewed as being concerned with sexual activities much more than other issues. The following proverbs are reflections of such a prejudicial denigration of women.

- (17) a. **የሴት ልቧ ብልቷ ላይ ነው**
yäset ləbwa bəllətwā lay näw
 'A woman's heart is in her vulva'
- b. **የሴት ጋለምታ ባለትዳር ታፋታ**
yäset galāmota balätədar taffata
 'A widowed woman causes married couples to separate'
- c. **አመንዝራ ካሏት ብትቆርብም እያኗት**
amänzəra kalwat bətk'orbəmm ayamənwat
 'Ones a woman is judged as an adulterer, no one ever trusts her, even if she receives a holy communion'

- d. **ሸርሙጣ ስታረጅ አቃጣሪ ትሆናለች**
färmüt'a səttarädz ak'k'at'ari təhonallätšif
 'When a prostitute gets older, she becomes an agent for prostitution'

All these examples are phrased in line with the society's conceptualization that women are attached to extraordinary sexual desires. As communicated in proverb (17a), women are portrayed as measuring things in terms of their sexual gratification. According to this proverb, women's thoughts are tailored to fit with their sexual fantasies. A woman is assumed to nourish and respect her husband only if she secures her sexual benefits from him; otherwise, she tends to look for some other man for merely sexual purposes, due to her being weak-hearted. If a woman is widowed, she is thought not to be able to tolerate life without sex. Such a woman is expected to hover around men, who might offer to fulfill her desires. She is assumed even to seduce married men. This arguably disturbs the life of the man, as his wife turns out to be jealous; in such a conceptualization, women are considered causes of divorce and related social unrest. Hence, the connection between women and social crises pertaining to their destructive sexual activities, as in example (17b). As indicated by proverbs (17c and d), the society believes that women's extraordinary sexual desires are something inherent. For this reason, women are viewed as unable to refrain from voraciously thinking about sex even in situations when they cannot realize the desire. Proverb (17c) reveals that the society does not take for granted that women stop adultery even if they receive holy communion. A promiscuous woman may stop having sexual intercourse; but, psychologically, she is thought to remain tightly attached to it; she is believed to trigger others to engage in adultery and to be a cause for prostitution. This entails the society's belief that women are inseparably linked to exaggerated sexual enterprises, be it psychological or practical (cf. 17d).

3. Conclusion

This research undertaking has aimed to disclose the manifestation of disempowerment or violence in sexist proverbs as used for or about women. The target society for this study is predominantly patriarchal; hence, violence against women is taken for granted. Within the target socio-cultural setting, linguistic violence serves as an instance of power-play enacted by men in their relationships with women. The society generates sexist proverbs for the unfair portrayal of women. Even women themselves are found to adapt to such linguistic oppression and abuse, which declare their secondary citizenship. This is in line with Adetunji (2010), who stipulates that linguistic violence is a concept used to capture the psychological and social use of any instance of language to abuse, offend, or hurt somebody or people. The emphasis is on the linguistic representation of two people or groups asymmetrically, along the lines of power or status, whereby one person or group occupies a higher, and therefore oppressive, position in relation to the other.

The society has long accumulated a significant number of proverbial utterances which pertain to the denigration, exclusion, and exploitation of women. This situation has created and reinforced socially established realities and expectations as to how men and women should act and behave. This in turn is a reflection of the society's gender ideology affiliated to its patriarchal nature. This tallies with the articulation by Hussein (2005) who contends that in gendered cultures, expectations about how men and

women behave in their society are the most fundamental distinctions made between people rooted in patriarchy.

As an aspect of sexist language use, the target proverbs are found to powerfully communicate the society's masculine-favored gender ideology. They portray women as inferior and powerless compared to men in virtually all spheres of life. This has created a societal norm whereby women and men are conceived as assuming different rungs of social status and clear cut roles which seldom overlap. Men are perceived to occupy prestigious positions within the society, such as managing economic resources outside the home and taking part in decision-making engagements, while domestic activities and reproductive roles are taken for granted to be under the de facto control of women. The situation in the target society seems to share features of other African cultures. According to Hussein (2005), gender ideology in Africa is largely determined in line with sexist proverbs and the gender ideology loaded in such proverbs usually reflects the dichotomous place of men and women in different socioeconomic configurations.

The linguistic representation of women in all the scenarios addressed in this study is tailored in a way that women are disempowered or subjugated. As noted above, women are portrayed as powerless and inferior. Such deprivation of power and influence is reflected by proverbs which are meant to deny women's participation in decision making in every aspect of their lives. This in turn confines women to depend on the powerful members of the society, men. This complies with Weber (1946), cited in Cheryl (1999), who states that in traditional social-science approaches, power is often related to our ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their own wishes or interests. It is emphasized that power is taken as influence and control.

Apart from power, women of the target society are proverbially pictured as lacking positive and socially valued attributes. This is an apparent indication of women's disempowerment via linguistic violence. Chamberlin (2011) is in favor of the idea that disempowerment relates to an individual or a group lacking various positive attributes. The writer has identified such positive qualities to include: self-esteem, having decision-making power, having access to information and resources, having a range of options from which to make choices (not just yes/no, either/or), assertiveness, a feeling that the individual can make a difference (being hopeful), learning to think critically and seeing things differently (e.g., learning to redefine who we are (speaking in our own voice), learning to redefine what we can do, and learning to redefine our relationships to institutionalized power), effecting change in one's life and one's community, etc. Women of the target society are denied all these qualities and/or rights. The society has long established a reality which dictates that such attributes inherently belong to men. This is clearly manifested in its sexist proverbs, hence, subjugating women and declaring gender inequality acceptable.

4. Implications for policy and/or social-work practice

As noted earlier, the target society for this study has an established system of patriarchy. In order to reflect this socially established reality, the society largely makes use of sexist proverbs which dictate how men and women should behave and relate to each other. The relationship mainly takes a form of dominance and subordination by which men, the dominant groups, exercise their oppression and prejudice against women, the subordinate groups. This phenomenon has been perpetuated for so long

primarily due to the society's lack of awareness about the fact that men and women can equally take part in virtually all spheres of the societal life. Hence, there is great potential for social workers to penetrate into the target society so as to perform a task of re-education through repeated awareness campaigns, so that the society's male-biased gender ideology might be compromised, which might in turn pave the way for gender equality to be introduced.

Critical feminist theory informs that it is imperative to figure out the ways in which an individual or group of individuals is oppressed in order for appropriate actions to be taken, so that the oppressed can be emancipated from the oppression. In light of this, the present study has attempted to pinpoint one aspect of linguistic violence against women, the use of Amharic sexist proverbs in the devaluation of women. However, there are still other forms of sexist Amharic language use pertaining to women's subjugation which require investigation. These include grammar, narratives, riddles, idiomatic expressions, and myths. Hence, social workers can also be involved in researching the ways in which women of the target society are disempowered by the employment of such dimensions of sexist Amharic language use.

5. Recommendations

As pointed out above, there is a long-lived patriarchal ideology within the target society and this ideology is largely reflected in the use of sexist proverbs. Women are proverbially portrayed as powerless, inferior, and marginal members of the society; hence, they experience linguistic violence. In order to compromise this deep-rooted male-biased gender ideology, which disempowers women, the following recommendations are offered to concerned bodies.

1. The target society lacks awareness about the fact that women can think and participate in the way men can in almost all spheres of life. As such, the society still believes that women are inferior to men and reflects this through its sexist proverbs. Hence, a continuous awareness creation campaign should be launched so that the long-lived masculine-biased gender representation of the society can be undermined, which can, in turn, help introduce the notion of gender equality. This can be done by employing government media (for those who can have the access to media broadcast), on the one hand, and by deploying professional social workers for face-to-face discussion with the community (especially for people who are deprived of the access to media), on the other.
2. As indicated earlier, language is a powerful tool for establishing and perpetuating social realities. In this regard, sexist proverbs take the lion's share and are considered to be the most powerful socialization tools. The target proverbs for this study favor the societal male-biased gender ideology. Such proverbs are evidently incorporated in different books, such as Amharic novels and short stories, textbooks and other reference materials prepared for Amharic language learning at various grade levels. The inclusion of sexist proverbs in such books, especially in teaching and learning materials, should be challenged by concerned bodies so that children do not internalize a male-biased gender ideology, as a school is one of the major environments which mold children's personality and

perspective. Hence, those individuals who participate in Amharic textbook preparation and writers of various genres of Amharic literature should be selective in terms of incorporating proverbs by focusing on gender-neutral ones so that the new generation tends to internalize the idea of gender equality.

3. Women themselves often accept the societal masculine-biased ideology and behave accordingly, even articulating the very sexist proverbs that are meant to devalue them. This arguably emanates, at least partially, from lack of well-organized initiatives to empower women. Hence, concerned bodies, including professional social workers, should work hard on empowering women of the target society through capacity-building schemes, such as training, which can build up women's awareness through face-to-face discussions, so that women can more realistically hold a view that they are equal to men in all societal spheres of life and they become less inclined proverbially to represent themselves as inferior and marginal members of their society. They may even challenge male-biased gender representations articulated by men.

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MONDOFOTO

Italian in the linguistic landscape of Asmara (Eritrea)

Photos and notes by Moreno Vergari





2



3



















Description of the signs:

	Italian	Tigrinya ¹	other languages on the signs
Fig. 1	PASTICCERIA GIARDINO	ፓስቲቸሪያ ጃርዲኖ [pasticčariya ġardino]	
Fig. 2	DENTISTA	ሓኪም ሰኔ [ħakim sənni]	Arabic
Fig. 3	ARROTINO	መሰሐል ካራን መቐሰን [məšhal karran məqäsən]	—
Fig. 4	ELETTRICISTA	ኤለትሪቸስታ [ˈelättričista]	
Fig. 5	RIVELLINI (trademark)	ሪቨሊኒ [Rivällini]	English
Fig. 6	BAR TRE STELLE	ባር ሰለስተ ኮቕብ [bar sälästä koqob]	English (“Bar”)
Fig. 7	SESEN PASTICCERIA	ሰሰን ቤት ሙቕር መግቢ [sesen bet muqur mäḡbi]	

¹ The transliteration of Tigrinya is based on the system used in the Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. The pronunciation of geminated consonants changes from person to person and, consequently, the transcription used here is not always exact.

Fig. 8	PENSIONE STELLA	ኮቕብ መዕረፍ ኣጋይሽ [kokob mä'räf 'agayəš]	Arabic
Fig. 9	PENSIONE PISA	መዕረፍ ኣጋይሽ ፒዛ [mä'räf 'agayəš Piza]	
Fig. 10	RISTORANTE SAN GIORGIO	ቤት መግቢ ቅ. ጊዮርጊስ [bet mägbi Q ² . Giyorgis]	Arabic
Fig. 11	CAVALLO ROSSO RESTAURANT	ቤት መግቢ ካቫሎ ሮሶ [bet mägbi kavallo rosso]	English (“Restaurant”)
Fig. 12	LA GELATERIA	ላ ጀላተርያ [la ġəlattärya]	
Fig. 13	BIELLA ³ ASMARA CAFE	ቤላ ኣስመራ ካፈ [bela 'Asmära kaffä]	English (“Cafe”) ⁴
Fig. 14	CASA DEL FORMAGGIO	ቤት መሸጣ ፎርማጃ [bet mäšätta formaġġo]	
Fig. 15	PIZZERIA ERITREA	ፒሰሪያ ኤርትራ [pissäriya 'Erətra]	Arabic
Fig. 16	PIZZERIA NAPOLI	ፒሰሪያ ናፖሊ [pissäriya Napoli]	
Fig. 17	FOTO OTTICA BINI	ፎቶ መነጻር ዓይኒ ቢኒ [foto mänäššär 'ayni Bini]	
Fig. 18	FARMACIA CENTRALE	ፋርማሲ ሰንትራል [farmasi säntral]	English (on the window) ⁵
Fig. 19	AUTOSCUOLA JET	ት/ምዝዋር ማኪና ጆት [t ⁶ /məzwar makina ġät]	
Fig. 20	LA FERRAMENTA	ላ፡ ፊራሬ[...]ፕንታ [la ferra[...]nta]	

² The initial ቅ. [q.] is an abbreviation of ቅዱስ [qəddus] ‘saint, holy’.

³ The word “Biella” is an incorrect spelling of the Italian word “Bella” (= beautiful), probably due to the common practice of transcribing the letter /e/ of the 5th order of the Tigrinya alphabet as /ie/.

⁴ Or from Italian *caffè* ‘coffee’, used also a synonym of ‘bar’ (but normally not selling alcohol).

⁵ The Tigrinya transcription reflects English “Central Pharmacy”, not Italian “Farmacia Centrale”.

⁶ The ት [t] is an abbreviation of ትምህርቲ [təmhərti] ‘school’, thus ትምህርቲ/ምዝዋር [təmhərti/məzwar] ‘driving school’.

⁷ In the store sign the letter መ [mä] had fallen off.

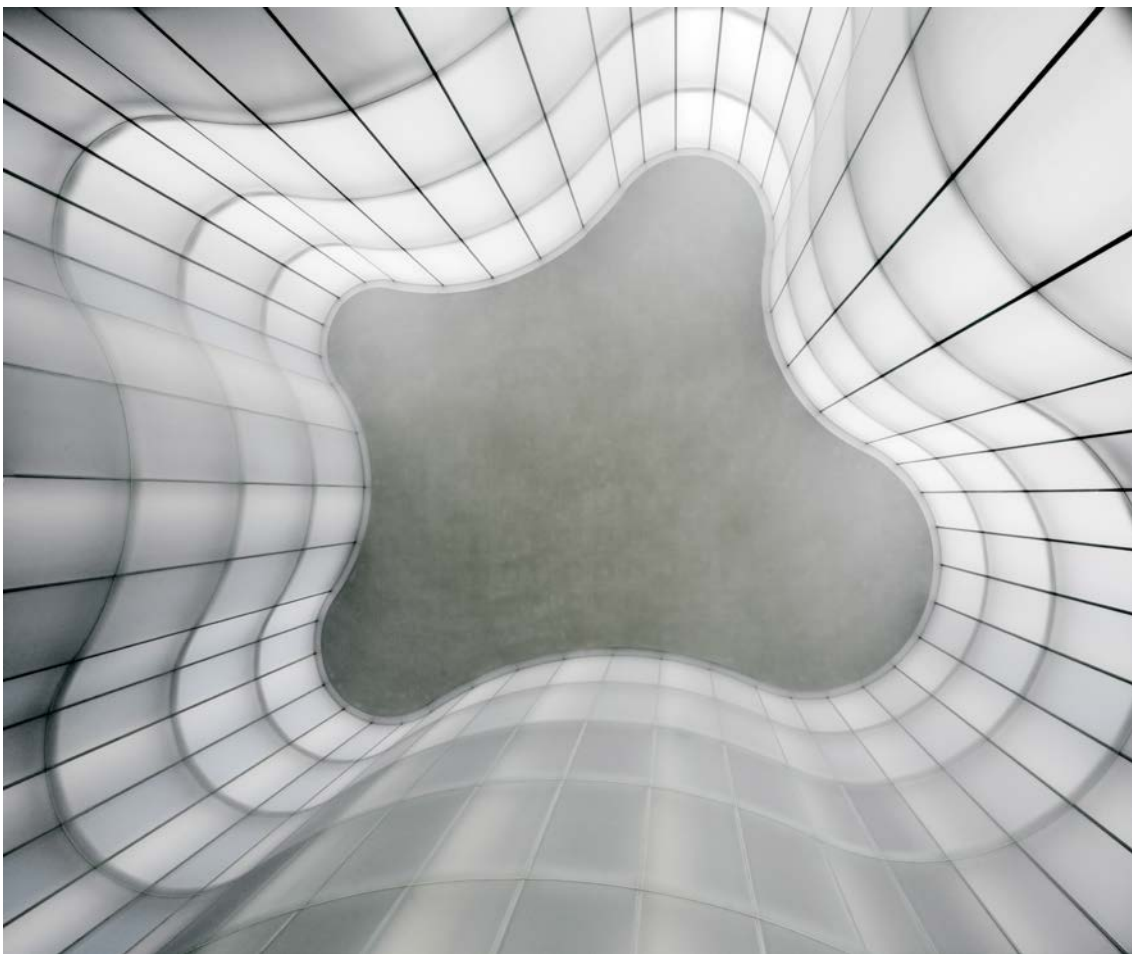
RELAZIONI

Il MUDEC: Arte Africana e Esposizioni Universali a Milano

Maria Pennacchio

Il MUDEC, Museo delle culture, che si propone di diventare in Italia un punto di riferimento per la divulgazione dell'arte di tutti i continenti, ha aperto i suoi spazi a marzo 2015 con due grandi mostre "Mondi a Milano" e "Africa", a testimonianza dell'antico legame di Milano con le Esposizioni Universali e con le culture di tutto il mondo.





“*Africa. La terra degli spiriti*” (27 marzo – 30 agosto 2015), è una delle due mostre che ha inaugurato l’apertura del Mudec. Essa è dedicata all’arte africana dal Medioevo a oggi, ed è stata allestita in varie sale tematiche mostrando come l’arte africana, erroneamente definita ‘primitiva’, nasce da tradizioni formali precise. I cosiddetti ‘selvaggi’ avevano prodotto un’arte capace di parlare ai grandi maestri delle avanguardie, e destinata a cambiare la stessa storia dell’arte occidentale. Gli oltre 200 pezzi proposti vengono collegati alla cultura africana della vita, della morte, del rispetto degli antenati e della divinazione, spiegando come, attraverso i manufatti, si interrogano gli spiriti della terra e del vento e si cerchi di placare i demoni quando minacciano la vita degli uomini e degli animali.



Figura magico-religiosa Atelier Vili, Repubblica Democratica del Congo, XIX secolo Legno, metallo, specchio e materiale vario, altezza cm 33 Tervuren, Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale, inv. EO.1967.63.224 Credito: © RMCA Tervuren / photo R. Asselberghs.

Questa figura del museo di Tervuren si differenzia dalle grandi statue a uso magico-religioso, solitamente monocrome e cosparse di chiodi. Nella veduta laterale. Le forme levigate del personaggio sono dinamicizzate dai rilievi delle costole e della spina dorsale. La grande testa ovale ha lineamenti regolari, ma è ruotata oltre a essere rara per i colori rosso, bianco e nero (colori di morte, secondo

W. MacGaffey). Queste caratteristiche rendono l'opera una presenza anomala nell'universo dell'arte congolese, dominata dalla frontalità.



Cucchiaio Artista Dan della regione di Man, Costa d'Avorio, XIX - inizio XX secolo Legno e metallo, altezza cm 52 Collezione Marceau Riviere Provenienza: Jean-Marie Talleux; Olivier Le Corneur.

Un grande cucchiaio, simbolo delle donne che, in un villaggio Dan, si distinguevano per la generosità e per l'impegno al servizio della comunità. Il cucchiaio poteva essere di due tipi: con il manico a forma di collo e testa umana o di ariete, oppure con le gambe e il busto per l'impugnatura.

La mostra **AFRICA. La terra degli spiriti** del Comune di Milano-Cultura e 24 ORE Cultura – Gruppo 24 ORE, a cura di Ezio Bassani, Lorenz Homberger, Gigi Pezzoli e Claudia Zevi, è stata allestita da Peter Bottazzi con una suddivisione in 6 sale tematiche. Di seguito la presentazione delle sale a cura degli organizzatori.

SALA 1

IN CUI SI NARRA COME, DOPO AVERLA COLONIZZATA, GLI EUROPEI SCOPRIRONO L'AFRICA E IL SUO LINGUAGGIO E COME DA ALLORA L'ARTE OCCIDENTALE NON FU PIÙ LA STESSA.

“Vent’anni fa sembrava che l’arte moderna avesse esaurito le sue energie e stesse morendo per una lenta asfissia. L’ispirazione e la vitalità dell’Impressionismo se n’erano andate. Picasso e Matisse avevano rivelato il loro talento, ma né l’uno né l’altro aveva ancora manifestato compiutamente la propria personalità. Qualche nuovo motivo, qualche fertile influenza erano indispensabili perché sia l’uno che l’altro potessero mettere a frutto i propri talenti.... È stato allora che, come per miracolo, l’arte di una regione lontana, incompresa e disprezzata, apparve all’orizzonte, e tutto quanto ne fu trasformato. In un tempo incredibilmente breve le energie compresse furono liberate, una nuova e intensa vitalità si manifestò in tutti i campi dell’estetica; e l’arte europea, che era sembrata appassita, fiorì una volta di più...” Paul Guillaume, da L’art nègre e le avanguardie del ’900, Parigi, 1926.



Alberto Giacometti nel suo atelier di rue Hippolyte Maindron 46, Parigi, 1926 circa

SALA 2

IN CUI SI NARRA DELLE ANTICHE TRADIZIONI, DELLA RICCHEZZA E DELLA FAMA DEI RE E DEI POPOLI AFRICANI.

Il Regno del Benin nacque intorno all’anno 40 a.C. A partire dal 1470 con una rapida espansione militare, giunse a occupare l’odierna Nigeria. I viaggiatori europei del XVI e XVII secolo, a cominciare dall’olandese O. Dapper, diffusero in Europa la notizia di

un potente “Impero del Benin”, governato da un sovrano influente e ricco di palazzi sontuosi, coperti di piastre di bronzo istoriate. Nel 1897, una spedizione punitiva britannica a seguito di un incidente diplomatico conquistò il Regno del Benin, mandò in esilio il suo re, radendo al suolo l’omonima capitale. Gli ufficiali inglesi si trovarono di fronte a splendide opere d’arte in bronzo e in avorio e uno dei più enormi bottini di guerra di tutti i tempi fu inviato via mare in Inghilterra. Il governo inglese, tramite intermediari, vendette le opere d’arte, tra cui migliaia di placche in rilievo, a vari musei e corti europee coprendo in questo modo i costi della spedizione contro il Regno del Benin.

A partire dalla fine del XV secolo, i navigatori portoghesi entrati in contatto con gli abitanti della costa occidentale dell’Africa e notate le capacità artistiche delle popolazioni, commissionarono loro opere in avorio, allora diffusissimo in Africa. Gli oggetti di straordinaria raffinatezza entrarono nei palazzi dei maggiori sovrani europei. Tra i meravigliosi oggetti l’olifante d’avorio con lo stemma dei Medici e i cucchiai delle antiche collezioni medicee di Firenze, annotati nel 1560 fra i beni di Eleonora di Toledo, moglie del duca di Toscana Cosimo I de’ Medici.



Tre cucchiai Atelier Bini o Edo, Antico regno del Benin, Nigeria, XVI secolo Avorio, altezza cm 25, 24,8 e 25,7 Firenze, Museo di Antropologia ed Etnologia, Sezione Museo di Storia Naturale, Università Degli Studi di Firenze, inv. 216/2; 216/1; 216/3 Provenienza: appartenuti al Granduca Cosimo I de’ Medici dal 1555.

SALA 3

IN CUI SI TRATTA DI DIVINAZIONE, DI ANTENATI, DI MORTE, DI MAGIA E DELL’ARTE DI CONVIVERE CON GLI SPIRITI.

In Africa non esiste una netta separazione tra umano e divino, come non esiste una differenziazione ontologica tra natura e uomo. Gli esseri umani per sopravvivere devono conoscere, dialogare e cercare di controllare ciò che non è visibile elaborando vari sistemi di divinazione. Al dio supremo creatore, ci si rivolge attraverso spiriti intermediari, responsabili dei vari aspetti della vita. Accanto agli spiriti della natura, che regolano gli equilibri delle piante, dei fiumi, delle montagne, anche gli Antenati della comunità vengono venerati per ottenere prosperità e continuità. L’energia vitale, che permea gli elementi della natura, pervade anche l’uomo e regola i rapporti all’interno della comunità. Gli Antenati rafforzano l’energia vitale dei vivi, allo scopo di guidarne il percorso nel gruppo sociale.



Figura magico-religiosa, Nkisi nkondi Atelier Kongo, Repubblica Democratica del Congo, XIX secolo
Legno, metallo, fibra, tessuto, vetro, altezza cm 85 Lisbona, Museu Etnogr.fico – Sociedade de Geografia
de Lisboa, inv. SGL-AB-924.

SALA 4

IN CUI SI TRATTA DEL POTERE, DEL PRESTIGIO, DELL'IMPORTANZA DELLA TRADIZIONE E DEL TRADIMENTO ALLA CORTE DEL RE.

I re mantenevano presso la loro corte atelier specializzati con scultori in legno, vasai, tessitori, fonditori e fabbri, che realizzavano oggetti prestigiosi, in particolare troni ricoperti di perle di vetro e cipree, nonché altri oggetti che davano lustro alla società di corte, rispecchiando la dignità e la grandezza del monarca.

Anche i dignitari nella gerarchia dei regni del Congo – per esempio nel regno di Luba – dispongono di simboli visibili di potere: troni con cariatidi, sfarzose mazze con figure intagliate nel manico o all'estremità, alcune armi come le asce da cerimonia dai foderi riccamente ornati.



Gruppo regale commemorativo di Kamwa Mars, re di Baham. Scolpito da Kwan e ornato di perle da Kandep, Baham, Camerun, 1934 circa Legno, tessuto, perline di vetro, altezza cm 223 Collezione privata. Credito fotografico: © Gerhard Merzeder / Collection Jean David.

SALA 5

IN CUI SI NARRA DELL'IMPORTANZA DEGLI OGGETTI E DELLE PAROLE,
SI PARLA DI ARTISTI, E SI SCOPRE CHE IL SAPERE SI PUO' TRASMETTERE
ANCHE UTILIZZANDO STRUMENTI DIVERSI DALLA PAROLA SCRITTA.

Le piccole sculture africane non sono studi per opere più grandi, sono spesso di una monumentalità che presenta, in versione miniaturizzata, le soluzioni formali dei 'giganti', e ne conservano la qualità, al punto da far dimenticare la loro reale dimensione.

Anche i piccoli amuleti, i gioielli, e gli oggetti della vita quotidiana hanno sempre un'eleganza che va al di là della loro semplice funzione. Nessun oggetto d'uso è mai troppo piccolo per non essere realizzato con estro artistico.

I risultati delle ricerche più recenti hanno dimostrato che presso le popolazioni

africane esiste un ideale di bellezza ben definito, oltre che un vocabolario formale che si articola in forme e oggetti realizzati in atelier o gruppi di artisti, confutando l'opinione corrente, secondo cui nell'arte africana non esistevano principi formali e singoli artisti, bensì solamente "laboratori tribali" con artigiani che vi lavoravano in forma anonima e esteticamente indifferenziata.



Coppia di gemelli, Ere ibedji Atelier Yoruba di Igbuke a Oyo, Nigeria, inizio XX secolo Legno, perline di vetro, altezza cm 34 Collezione privata Credito: "© Collezione Mottas, Losanna / foto Daniel Muster"

SALA 6
IN CUI SI TRATTA DI INIZIAZIONI E SEGRETI, DEL POTERE DELLE
MASCHERE E DELLA FASCINAZIONE DELLE DANZE

Le maschere, tra gli oggetti africani, sono quelli più snaturati dal contesto originario. Da una parte prive dei corredi di piume, paglie e tessuti che camuffavano completamente il corpo del portatore, dall'altra perché immobili.



Maschera Atelier Suku, Repubblica Democratica del Congo, inizio XIX secolo Legno, altezza cm 40
Zurigo, Museum Rietberg, Inv. EFA 1 Credito fotografico: © Museum Rietberg, Zurigo / foto Rainer
Wolfsberger.

Le maschere devono muoversi accompagnate dalla musica e possono assumere l'identità di spiriti, di antenati o di eroi; possono uscire durante le feste pubbliche o esibirsi solo per pochi membri di alcune società segrete.

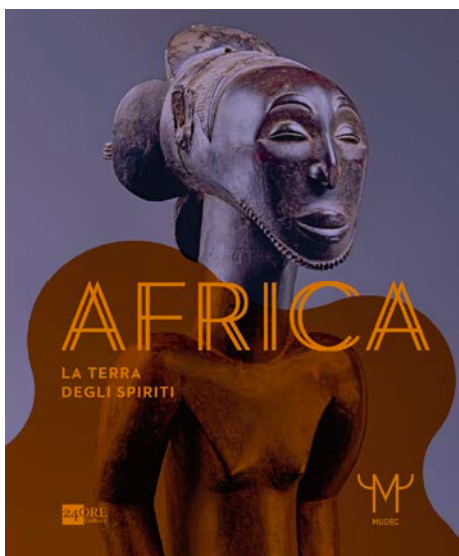
Sono vietate agli occhi dei profani e spesso hanno avuto un ruolo attivo nelle guerre, durante le razzie e contro la stregoneria. Figure mascherate, come gli Zangbeto in Bénin, escono di notte comunicano il loro arrivo tramite strani suoni, dando voce agli spiriti notturni. I passanti terrorizzati devono nascondersi, perché minacciano di morte chi li spia dalle porte e dalle finestre e ancora oggi sono gli ambigui guardiani di molti quartieri urbani.

*VIENI E RIPORTAMI IL NERO,
IL NERO CHE HAI RIPORTATO
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Il catalogo presenta anche una sezione dedicata alla descrizione e alla collocazione delle principali etnie africane e una timeline che rappresenta le tappe fondamentali degli studi sull'Africa, dal mito alla storia.

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“*Mondi a Milano*” (27 marzo - 19 luglio 2015) è un percorso che descrive il legame intercorso tra il patrimonio del museo e la storia delle grandi Esposizioni internazionali del passato, accompagnando il pubblico alla scoperta del gusto collezionistico che è stato il secondo asse portante del patrimonio museale civico in tema di Raccolte Etnografiche. La città nel tempo ha accolto e divulgato al grande pubblico le diverse culture non europee nel corso dei suoi più importanti eventi espositivi: dalle mostre di arti industriali nella seconda metà dell’Ottocento, concepite alla stregua delle Esposizioni Universali, fino alla loro riformulazione nelle Biennali e Triennali degli anni Venti e Trenta del Novecento.



Figure e volti che animavano “Il Cairo a Milano” Cartolina Milano, Civica Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli.

Anche in questo caso l’allestimento è stato organizzato seguendo delle tematiche.

1. L’Esposizione storica d’arte industriale del 1874

Il 4 luglio 1874 viene inaugurata a Milano, presso il salone dei giardini pubblici l’Esposizione storica d’arte industriale.

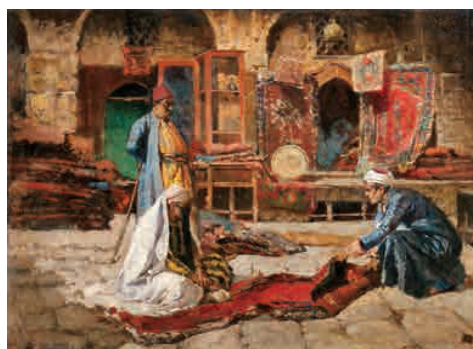
Tra i manufatti più apprezzati nelle Esposizioni universali di quegli anni vi sono i bronzi dell’estremo oriente, una categoria corrispondente all’idea di arte applicata all’industria e alla quale, non a caso, viene dato molto spazio all’Esposizione del 1874. In questo campo le manifatture cinesi e giapponesi avevano raggiunto una perfezione tecnica contro cui l’Europa non poteva competere. Le opere, all’epoca importate, sono per lo più bruciapfumi, elementi d’altare, vasi per i fiori e piccola statuaria con soggetti sacri.



Elmo con figure e ornati di sbalzo a fondo dorato con ageminatura in argento. Ferro, bronzo dorato, rame, lacca, 21 x 29 x 32 cm. Giappone, periodo Edo (1603-1868), XVII secolo. Milano, Museo delle Culture.
Bollitojo da tè, smalto cloisonné, giapponese antico. Rame, cloisonné, 16 x 16 x 14 cm. Giappone (Nagoya), 1860-1868 c. Milano, Museo delle Culture.

2. L'Esposizione nazionale del 1881

Il 5 maggio 1881 si apre a Milano l'Esposizione nazionale. Allestita ai giardini pubblici di via Palestro, su un'area di 162.000 metri quadrati, di cui 56.000 coperti, la manifestazione attira oltre 7.000 espositori e un milione e mezzo di visitatori.



Abito di foggia orientale appartenuto a Pompeo Mariani. Milano, Museo delle Culture.
Francesco Hayez, Vaso di fiori sulla finestra di un harem, 1881. Olio su tela, 124x95cm. Milano, Pinacoteca di Brera.
Uberto Dell'Orto, La scelta del tappeto, 1881. Olio su tela, 52 x 62 cm. Milano, collezione privata.

Nell'Esposizione delle Belle Arti, organizzata in simultanea nel vicino Palazzo del Senato, erano numerose le opere di artisti decisamente ispirati da visioni e atmosfere orientali: tra questi Pompeo Mariani, Uberto Dell'Orto, Sallustio Fornara e Francesco Hayez.

3. Il retroscena delle Esposizioni: la guerra d'Africa

Fra il 1885, data dello sbarco delle truppe italiane nel porto di Massaua e il 1896, anno della sconfitta di Adua, si gioca la prima fase dell'avventura coloniale italiana, contesto delle iniziative espositive milanesi.



La guerra in Africa. I dervisci del Mahdi disarmano, uccidendone due, i Basci-Bouzouchi assoldati dal colonnello Saletta, 1885. Milano, Civica Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli.

Le truppe italiane in Africa. Rissa fra soldati di fanteria italiana ed indigeni ad Assab, 1885. Milano, Civica Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli.

Attraverso la retorica delle immagini degli eccidi e delle battaglie si cercava di legittimare la missione civilizzatrice delle annessioni coloniali al fronte delle barbarie e della ferocia di abissini e somali.



Campagna d'Africa ovvero tiramento generale, in "La Rana", n.16, Lit. Franc. Casanova e Figli, Bologna, 1888 Milano, Civica Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli.

E così le ripetute sconfitte, da Dogali all'Amba Alagi ad Adua, diventano, nella mitografia di dipinti e stampe, una sequenza di episodi eroici di abnegazione e ardimento militare.

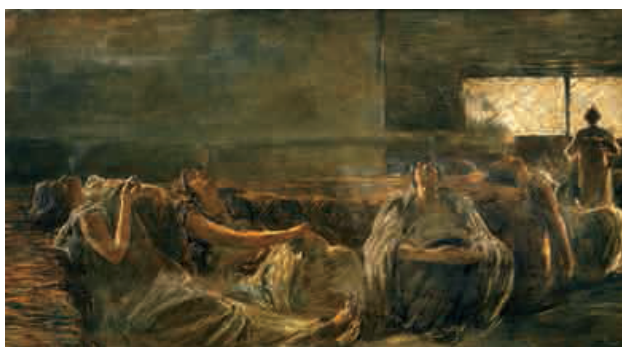
4. La mostra egiziana

Il 16 maggio del 1891 all'Arena civica si insedia una vera e propria carovana beduina. I giornali raccontano della ricostruzione di una porzione di deserto con le annesse rovine di un tempio egiziano.



Il Cairo a Milano, veduta complessiva 1906 Cartolina. Besana in Brianza, collezione Claudio Romeo

Non manca poi l'aspetto commerciale, con un caffè arabo e un bazar. Interpreti di primo piano sono il pittore Gaetano Previati – con le sue Fumatrici di hashish evocatrici delle estasi di orientali e paradisi artificiali – e scultori quali Ernesto Bazzaro e Paolo Troubetzkoy, con le loro figure di cammellieri, beduini e filatrici.



Gaetano Previati, Fumatrici di hashish, 1890-92. Olio su tela, 80 x 150 cm. Piacenza, Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi.

Salotto in stile egiziano, di Giuseppe Parvis, in L'esposizione italiana del 1881 in Milano, Sonzogno, Milano [1881] Milano Civica Biblioteca d'Arte.

5. I circhi umani: l'esposizione dell'“Altro” a Milano

Sin dal tempo dei Romani, le popolazioni sconfitte vengono portate in esposizione come bottino di guerra dopo il trionfo.

Ma nell'Ottocento, all'apice del colonialismo, questa pratica diventa un vero e proprio spettacolo per un grande pubblico e spesso messo in scena durante le esposizioni.



Le adriade viventi dell'Equatore alla Fiera dei Tivoli Milano, Civico Archivio Fotografico.

A Milano, alla cosiddetta fiera del Tivoli, alla fine del 1800 sono presenti numerose attrazioni dal gusto esotico, come le Adriade viventi dell'Equatore.

Dal 1891, ciclicamente si assiste in città ai “villaggi-spettacolo”, fino agli episodi più grandiosi del 1906, come La via del Cairo a Milano, il Villaggio eritreo e in seguito i padiglioni coloniali alla Fiera campionaria.

6. Le Esposizioni riunite, 1894

Le Esposizioni riunite si sviluppano tra il Castello Sforzesco e lo spazio retrostante della Piazza d'Armi, già trasformata nel Parco Sempione, in una serie di padiglioni progettati dai migliori architetti allora attivi a Milano: Luca Beltrami, Luigi Broggi, Giuseppe Sommaruga.

Un'attrazione speciale è rappresentata dalle tre Capanne Scheibler, dal nome del conte Felice, cacciatore, i cui trofei venatori (uno dei quali tradizionalmente collocato sullo scalone del Museo di Storia naturale di Milano) costituiscono, insieme ad alcune armi esotiche, l'arredo delle capanne.



Chizzolini, Facciata dell'architettura d'ingresso delle Esposizioni Riunite, 1894. Milano, Civico Archivio Fotografico, Collezione Lamberto Vitali.

7. Esposizione internazionale del Sempione, 1906

La prima vera Esposizione internazionale della città si apre nel 1906 e coincide con l'apertura del tunnel ferroviario del Sempione, che porta direttamente Milano sulla scena europea, facendone un centro di modernità e dinamismo.

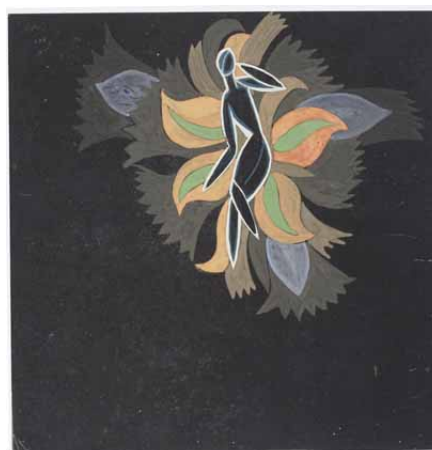
E' inoltre la prima volta che si portano a Milano "frammenti" di Paesi lontani, e si ha la sensazione che il mondo sia arrivato in città. Così accade con la ricostruzione di un quartiere del Cairo, di un villaggio eritreo e del Wild West Show di Buffalo Bill, spettacolari allestimenti.



Il cast del Wild West Show in posa all'Arena, 1890.

8. Orientalismi ed esotismi nelle Esposizioni a Monza

Nel primo dopoguerra le Esposizioni internazionali di Monza “istituzionalizzano” l'importanza delle arti decorative in Italia, incontro tra l'industriosità artistica e l'interesse per i mondi lontani.



Bruno Munari per M.G.A. Piatto con giraffa Faenza, Museo internazionale delle ceramiche.
Marcello Nizzoli Studio per scialle Arlecchino, Ditta Piatti. 1925-27 Tempera su cartoncino nero, 28 x 28 cm Parma, Università di Parma, Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione.



Vittorio Zecchin Gazzella 1921-23 c. Arazzo ricamato in seta su seta, 103,5 x 95 cm Venezia, collezione privata.

Fra le produzioni di successo ispirate da influssi esotici spicca l'“arte del filo”, l'arredo per la casa, dai mobili bizantini di Zecchin a quelli di legnami brasiliani di Buzzi, per arrivare alla ceramica e al vetro di Murano. Dilaga infine la moda del soprammobile in sembianze d'animale esotico, dalle gazzelle alle fiere.

9. Vivere in colonia

A partire dagli anni Trenta la cultura italiana si confronta con i suoi mondi coloniali: l'Africa non è più fonte di ispirazione estetica ma quasi un prolungamento del paesaggio italiano e della sua economia produttiva. La Mostra dell'Attrezzatura coloniale, allestita per la VII Triennale di Milano del 1940 da Carlo Enrico Rava, è il

punto d'arrivo di questo processo, mostrando quanto la nuova cultura dell'abitare abbia fatto proprie le questioni ambientali e climatiche e le ha tradotte in nuove soluzioni architettoniche. Così come nell'arredamento: i mobili pieghevoli, progettati da diversi architetti, illustrano la stessa idea di leggerezza e praticità espressa, per esempio, dalla sedia Tripolina o dalla lampada Mitragliera di Franco Albini.



Alpago Novello, Ottavio Cablati, Guido Ferrazza Piano regolatore per la città di Bengasi: sistemazione del lungomare, 1930-33 c. China su lucido, 40,5 x 50,5 cm Parma, Università di Parma, Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione, Sezione Progetto, Fondo Alpago Novello.

10. Dalla Casa araba alla Casa mobile

Nel 1933, Luigi Piccinato realizza per la V Triennale un modello di Casa coloniale: il pubblico viene introdotto in una serie di ambienti pensati per la vita in colonia. Si vuole sottrarre la nuova architettura agli stereotipi d'esotismo d'inizio secolo ed entrare pienamente nel dibattito sul razionalismo come espressione ufficiale dello Stato.

Le colonie diventano l'oggetto di studi, di ricognizioni, di campagne fotografiche in cui gli stessi architetti sono coinvolti e interessati: sia per evidenziare le tracce di una continuità con la Roma imperiale, sia per sperimentare in quelle condizioni climatiche estreme la giustezza di un'architettura semplice e funzionale, smontabile, prefabbricabile e attenta all'uso delle risorse naturali locali.

Quel confronto tra “mondi” che sino al 1906 aveva trovato la sua scena a Milano in un’ottica letteraria e di fantasia, si conclude con un ribaltamento che pone al centro lo stesso territorio africano e le sue culture.



Luigi Piccinato, casa coloniale: “Il patio da nord”, 1932 c. Acquarello e matita su cartoncino, 52 x 70 cm
Roma, Archivio Piccinato, Dip. Pianificazione, Design e Tecnologia dell’Architettura, Università di Roma La Sapienza.

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Il catalogo, che si avvale del comitato scientifico e del contributo di docenti universitari e specialisti del periodo, affronta il tema, analizzando come i diversi appuntamenti che videro coinvolta la città influenzarono il modo di percepire l’estetica di manufatti e immagini provenienti dai mondi lontani, rielaborandone le suggestioni nell’arte, il design, la fotografia e la cultura dell’epoca in generale.

COMITATO SCIENTIFICO – Fulvio Irace (Politecnico di Milano, Facoltà di Design), Anna Mazzanti (Politecnico di Milano, Facoltà di Design), Mariagrazia Messina (Università degli studi di Firenze), Antonello Negri (Università degli Studi di Milano), Carolina Orsini (Museo delle Culture), Marina Pugliese (Servizio Polo Arte Moderna e Contemporanea) e Ornella Selvafolta (Politecnico di Milano, Facoltà di Architettura I).

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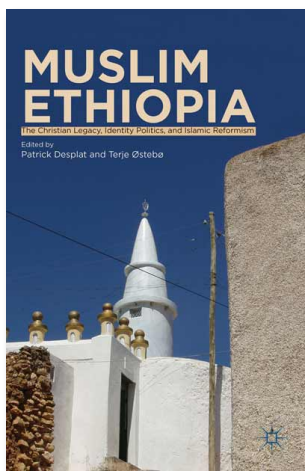
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RECENSIONI



PATRICK DESPLAT, TERJE ØSTEBØ (edited by), *Muslim Ethiopia. The Christian Legacy, Identity Politics, and Islamic Reformism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 267 p. ISBN 978-1-137-32529-7

Nella loro introduzione i curatori del volume, Patrick Desplat e Terje Østebø, esordiscono sostenendo che lo studio dell'Islam in Etiopia è stato troppo a lungo trascurato. Si tratta di un'affermazione solo in parte condivisibile. Se paragoniamo la letteratura sull'Islam in Etiopia con la letteratura disponibile sull'Islam in altri paesi africani, il caso etiopico è sicuramente indagato. Non solo può contare sui contributi di studiosi del calibro di J. Spencer Trimingham, Enrico Cerulli e Joseph Couq ma, negli ultimi

anni, la letteratura sull'Islam in Etiopia ha conosciuto un vero e proprio rinnovamento grazie ai lavori di Hussein Ahmed, Haggai Erlich, Jon Abbink, Alessandro Gori e gli stessi Desplat e Østebø. È comunque vero che molto rimane ancora da fare e che esistono ampie aree che devono essere indagate.

Questa curatela raccoglie le relazioni di un workshop tenuto a Bergen (Norvegia) nel settembre del 2010. Conformandosi all'orientamento ormai prevalente, anche questo lavoro rifiuta l'idea di un'identica etiopica *tout court* cristiana e propone una lettura capace di restituire all'Islam il giusto peso nella storia del paese. Il percorso proposto è prevalentemente rivolto verso l'attualità e si concentra sulle dinamiche sociopolitiche dell'Islam in una serie di località abbastanza variegata (Addis Ababa, Harar, Wollo, Bale, Gurage, Afar e Somalia) a partire dal 1991. L'arrivo al potere dell'Ethiopian Peoples's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), e la conseguente liberalizzazione del discorso religioso, hanno favorito, come sostenuto da Abbink¹, il ricongiungimento dell'Islam etiopico con l'Islam globale, ma anche una crescente influenza dei movimenti riformisti².

I dieci contributi organizzati nelle tre parti del volume, affrontano alcuni temi trasversali ritenuti particolarmente importanti per il futuro delle varie società islamiche presenti nel paese. In primo luogo, l'attenzione dei curatori è andata ai rapporti fra cristiani e musulmani. La narrazione ufficiale sembra volere veicolare l'idea che in Etiopia Islam e Cristianesimo abbiano dato vita a un raro equilibrio, basato sul rispetto della diversità e la tolleranza reciproca. Questa immagine rassicurante presenta, però più livelli di problematicità e, senza cadere nell'esagerazione opposta, deve essere rivista, lasciando spazio anche alle tensioni e incomprensioni che esistono fra i due campi. I tre contributi ospitati nella prima parte del volume s'interrogano sulla relazione fra i musulmani, lo Stato e la società. Il confronto dialettico con una storia

¹ Jon Abbink, "Religion in Public Spaces: Emerging Muslim – Christian Polemics in Ethiopia", *African Affairs*, 110, 439, 2011, pp. 253-274.

² Terje Østebø, "The Question of Becoming: Islamic Reform Movements in Contemporary Ethiopia", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 38, 4, 2008, pp. 416-446.

del paese che, fino al 1974, li ha marginalizzati e considerati alla stregua di “stranieri”, ha prodotto una tensione identitaria che può essere risolta solo attraverso una radicale rivisitazione del ruolo delle comunità islamiche nella storia d’Etiopia.

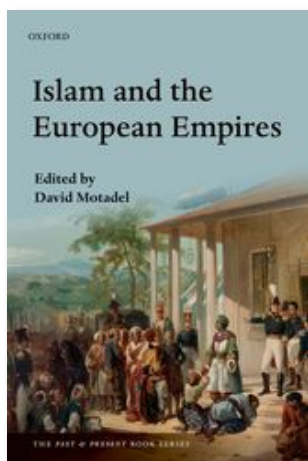
Il secondo elemento di riflessione proposto dai curatori riguarda la dialettica tra le pratiche religiose, così come maturate nel tempo, e le nuove dinamiche interne alla comunità musulmana. La libertà religiosa e la laicità dello Stato sono ora riconosciuti a livello costituzionale, offrendo nuove opportunità organizzative a molte realtà islamiche. Questi nuovi spazi sono stati utilizzati anche da correnti riformiste, sempre più presenti e influenti nel paese. I movimenti d’ispirazione riformista hanno stimolato un vivace dibattito sulla liceità di varie pratiche “tradizionali”, promuovendo una riflessione ricca di ricadute a vari livelli. Minako Ishihara, ad esempio, si concentra sul pellegrinaggio a Faraqasa alla luce delle dinamiche interetniche e interreligiose in atto nel paese. Zerihun A. Woldeselassie, invece, si sofferma sulle pratiche di venerazione *wali* tra i Silte dell’Etiopia meridionale mentre Patrick Desplat affronta il tema del “wahhabismo” a Harar.

La terza parte del volume si propone di collocare le vicende dei musulmani d’Etiopia nel più vasto contesto regionale. In realtà i tre contributi che ne fanno parte si concentrano esclusivamente sulla Somalia. Haggai Erlich, Stig Jarle Hansen, Roland Marchal e Zakaria M. Sheikh offrono degli spaccati molto interessanti dell’Islam somalo. L’obiettivo, però, di analizzare le relazioni fra musulmani in diverse regioni del Corno d’Africa è solo parzialmente conseguito.

La parte finale del volume è costituita da un *post-script* di Terje Østebø che, per dimensioni, risulta un ulteriore capitolo. Più che una conclusione, il *post-script* è un tentativo di aggiornamento su alcune delle questioni affrontate dal volume. Secondo Østebø, nei tre anni intercorsi fra il workshop e la pubblicazione degli atti, il governo etiopico ha mostrato una crescente preoccupazione per quello che viene sempre più percepito come un “pericolo islamico”. La ricetta proposta dal governo etiopico per contrastare “l’estremismo” islamico è stata quella di sostenere un “Islam governativo”, attraverso l’interferenza costante negli affari interni della comunità musulmana e con l’aperto sostegno all’organizzazione Al-Ahbash. Dopo le elezioni nazionali del 2005, il governo ha rivisto profondamente la propria apertura democratica. Di conseguenza, negli ultimi dieci anni il governo ha limitato al massimo gli spazi di libertà e aggregazione al di fuori dell’EPRDF. L’Islam è finito presto nel mirino delle autorità, divenendo un inquietante osservato speciale. Il volume si chiude restituendo in pieno il senso d’incertezza che avvolge la questione religiosa in Etiopia. Dopo aperture e speranze, un quadro interno e internazionale molto complesso lascia intuire la delicatezza e la fragilità degli equilibri religiosi nel paese.

Pur tradendo in più punti una redazione affrettata (il volume, ad esempio, non fa cenno della morte di Meles Zenawi), il lavoro coordinato da Desplat e Østebø coglie con precisione alcuni dei punti nodali e delle sfide che attendono l’Islam etiopico nel nuovo millennio.

Massimo Zaccaria (Università di Pavia)



DAVID MOTADEL (ed.), *Islam and the European Empires*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 312 p. ISBN 978-0-19-966831-1

Nella sua brillante introduzione David Motadel, curatore di questo volume, ricorda come, se non mancano studi sull'Islam nei vari imperi coloniali, a mancare è ancora un'opera comparativa sulla storia dell'Islam negli imperi europei. L'obiettivo del volume è quello di compiere un primo passo in questa direzione, invitando alcuni storici a ragionare il più possibile in termini comparativi. Di fronte ad un tema così ricco e importante, ma anche straordinariamente complesso, non sorprende che il curatore dell'opera dichiari che il suo contributo rappresenti solo un

primo tentativo d'inquadramento.

Motadel ha organizzato i quattordici capitoli che compongono il volume in tre parti. La prima riguarda le logiche dell'accomodamento. Attraverso l'analisi del caso russo, britannico, francese, olandese e tedesco, viene evidenziato come i vari imperi tentarono di cooptare le istituzioni islamiche nell'amministrazione dei territori con una consistente presenza islamica. Il percorso privilegiato fu quello di una progressiva istituzionalizzazione dell'Islam, vale a dire la promozione di un processo d'istituzionalizzazione dell'Islam che spesso si spinse fino alla creazione di cariche e strutture prima sconosciute. Le personalità e istituzioni islamiche che favorirono questo processo trovarono ampi spazi d'azione all'interno di sistemi molto propensi a incoraggiare forme di collaborazione. Emblematico a questo proposito è il caso francese, che favorì l'integrazione delle strutture religiose all'interno dell'amministrazione statale nei suoi domini nordafricani, anche se con un'intensità differenziata a seconda dei possedimenti.

In numerosi contesti le potenze imperiali investirono energie e risorse nell'ottimizzazione del hajj, sicure di fornire un servizio particolarmente gradito e capace di suscitare consenso. Gli articoli di John Slight ed Eric Tagliacozzo su, rispettivamente, le politiche britanniche e olandesi nei confronti del pellegrinaggio, offrono due prospettive nuove su questo tema, basate su un prezioso lavoro d'archivio. Ugualmente molto interessante è il lavoro di R. D. Crews sull'Islam nell'impero russo, in cui viene analizzata la pluralità di strategie messe in campo da Mosca nella gestione delle relazioni con i suoi circa venti milioni di sudditi musulmani.

Più in generale, la prima parte del volume mette in evidenza l'ampia gamma di strategie promosse dagli imperi europei per cooptare le strutture islamiche nell'amministrazione coloniale. Il quadro che emerge è quello di un Islam che non solo fu tollerato ma che sviluppò numerosi punti di convergenza con i vari domini coloniali. Da questa relazione il mondo islamico riuscì a ricavare spazi che contribuirono sensibilmente alla sua diffusione in molte aree del globo.

La seconda parte del volume ospita contributi dedicati all'anticolonialismo di matrice islamica. La resistenza islamica alla dominazione europea è stata per decenni un soggetto particolarmente caro agli studiosi. Utilizzando le conoscenze che si sono accumulate dagli anni '70 a oggi, i contributi raccolti in questa parte del volume offrono, in primo luogo, un prezioso bilancio del lavoro svolto su questo tema. Con una scelta parzialmente controcorrente, gli autori di questa seconda parte del volume,

pongono l'accento sul carattere religioso di molti movimenti anticoloniali. Nel suo articolo, ad esempio, Benjamin D. Hopkins rileva la predominanza del fattore religioso su quello materiale ed economico in molte delle rivolte islamiche che divamparono nell'impero britannico.

Gli studi esistenti hanno già messo in evidenza come le *turuq* abbiano rappresentato in molte situazioni il fulcro della resistenza anticoloniale. A questo proposito il contributo di Knut Vikør offre un'interessante comparazione tra l'azione di Abd al-Qadir in Algeria e Ahmad al-Sharif al-Sanusi in Libia. In entrambi i casi Vikør evidenzia come il fattore religioso rimanga un elemento fondamentale per la piena comprensione dei due movimenti.

L'analisi della regione caucasica, proposta da Michael A. Reynold, è particolarmente interessante in quanto vi si contesta che la resistenza anticoloniale sia stata in buona parte monopolizzata dalla *tariqa Naqshbandiyya*. Secondo Reynold, invece, la matrice della resistenza è più complessa e si ricollega in buona parte agli influssi riformisti, particolarmente evidenti nella regione fra il XVII e il XVIII secolo. Anche nel Caucaso sarebbe possibile scorgere evidenti tracce di quegli influssi riformisti già presenti nel Medio Oriente nel XVII secolo. Motadel, ispirandosi al lavoro di Michael Kemper, rileva come in molti casi l'enfasi sulle propensioni anticoloniali delle *Turuq* appaia eccessiva, mentre sarebbe opportuno affiancare alla resistenza espressa dalle confraternite quella proveniente dai movimenti riformisti islamici, *wahhabiyya in primis*. Mettendo in guardia dal pericolo di proporre automatismi troppo vincolanti, Motadel segnala come il revivalismo islamico sia stato fra le forze più determinate nella lotta anticoloniale. Molte autorità imperiali erano coscienti, infatti, che, in determinate situazioni, era proprio dai movimenti riformisti che scaturiva l'opposizione più determinata al dominio coloniale.

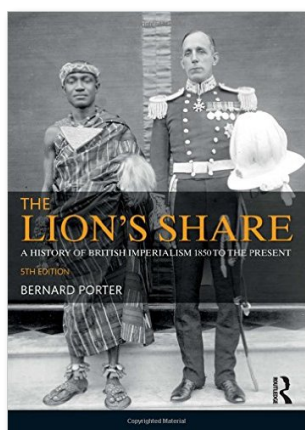
La terza parte del volume si confronta col tema della produzione della conoscenza sull'Islam in epoca coloniale. Lo scopo del curatore vorrebbe essere quello di evidenziare il legame fra le concezioni dell'Islam elaborate dagli studiosi occidentali e le scelte politiche operate dai vari colonialismi. I contributi che formano questa sezione riescono solo in parte a centrare l'obiettivo fissato da David Motadel. Prevale, invece, la riproposizione di analisi in buona parte già conosciute, e la trattazione del tema è per lo più condotta secondo schemi e modelli convenzionali e privi di vera originalità. L'eccezione è rappresentata dall'articolo di Cemil Aydin sull'Islam e gli imperi europei visti dal Giappone. Grazie ad un ricorso massiccio a fonti in giapponese, Aydin fornisce un affascinante spaccato dell'orientalistica nipponica fra le due guerre.

Complessivamente questo volume riesce a offrire una valida panoramica degli studi sulle politiche islamiche dei vari imperi europei. Il saggio introduttivo di David Motadel si distingue per competenza e lucidità. Grazie anche a una bibliografia impeccabile, il saggio introduttivo è destinato a diventare un punto di riferimento fondamentale per gli studiosi interessati a questo tema.

Rimangono delle perplessità su alcune scelte generali. In primo luogo, gli esempi proposti non sono esaustivi. La decisione di includere l'impero zarista, tedesco e olandese nella trattazione amplia efficacemente una letteratura troppo a lungo legata al solo caso britannico e francese. Nessuna giustificazione teorica è invece fornita a sostegno dell'esclusione del caso italiano, austro-ungarico, portoghese e spagnolo. Tutti stati che dominarono territori con popolazioni musulmane e che continuano a essere regolarmente tralasciati dalla letteratura anglosassone che a volte, si sospetta,

abbia una percezione molto vaga di queste realtà. Si potrebbe addirittura estremizzare questo rilievo critico allargando il possibile cono di luce anche sull'impero ottomano che dovette gestire le relazioni fra forme molto diverse di Islam. La questione di come un impero islamico si regolò sulle questioni religiose non è così assurda come potrebbe sembrare, tanto più che l'impero ottomano ebbe una forte proiezione europea. È però il capitolo di Cemil Aydin sugli studi islamici in Giappone, uno dei più interessanti e riusciti del volume, ad aprire, forse inavvertitamente, una piccola falla nel rigoroso criterio d'inclusione adottato dal volume e racchiuso in maniera perentoria nel suo titolo. Se, infatti, la raccolta affronta il rapporto fra Islam e imperi europei, il caso giapponese, per quanto interessante, non finisce per esulare dagli ambiti del volume?

Massimo Zaccaria (Università di Pavia)



BERNARD PORTER, *The Lion's Share. A History of British Imperialism 1850 to the Present*, Harlow, Pearson, 2012, 387 p. ISBN 978-1-4082-8605-0

Quando nel 1975 uscì la prima edizione di questo volume, gli studi sull'imperialismo britannico stavano conoscendo una stagione di profondi cambiamenti. Fu negli anni '60 che, dopo un periodo marcato dal silenzio sul passato coloniale, Ronald Robison e John Andrew Gallagher rimisero al centro del dibattito l'impero, dando vita alla Cambridge School of Historiography. Fra i punti più cari a Robison e Gallagher vi era una rivalutazione del ruolo giocato dalla periferia, abbandonando così una trattazione tutta centrata sulle politiche delle grandi capitali imperiali. Al momento dell'uscita, il libro di Bernard Porter si confrontava e voleva sintetizzare la ricca bibliografia stimolata dalle suggestioni di Robison e Gallagher e proponeva una lettura del periodo imperiale che ne metteva in luce l'intima complessità.

Questa quinta edizione, pubblicata nel 2012, arriva aggiornata, rivista in molti punti e con un nuovo capitolo finale. Non si tratta di una sfida da poco. Da qualche anno il tema dell'impero è tornato di moda come testimonia una produzione a tratti tumultuosa, marcata da correnti e interpretazioni che hanno rimesso in discussione più di una certezza.

Dal punto di vista editoriale, la quinta edizione del volume di Bernard Porter, uscita a distanza di quasi quarant'anni dalla prima, rappresenta una scelta quantomeno singolare. Il contesto che aveva fatto da sfondo alla prima edizione non solo è radicalmente mutato, ma anche l'approccio agli studi imperiali ha conosciuto trasformazioni radicali. In un mercato sempre più specializzato e competitivo, operazioni di questo tipo sono rarissime perché per lo più destinate a un sicuro fallimento. In questo caso, però, la Pearson ha accettato i rischi e ha incluso il volume di Porter nel proprio catalogo. Una decisione intrigante, ma in buona parte giustificata dalla cura con cui Porter ha continuamente aggiornato il suo testo.

Se gli imperi sono stati una costante nella storia dell'umanità, definire con precisione cosa sia impero non è semplice. Porter, ad esempio, si sofferma a lungo su

quest'aspetto ma poi non produce una definizione particolarmente originale del termine, lasciando al lettore l'impressione che la parola abbia una valenza sostanzialmente autoesplicativa. È difficile, comunque, non concordare con Porter quando afferma che l'impero britannico fu un'entità estremamente complessa, non certo un impero monolitico e coerente. Il vero punto comune era rappresentato dalle necessità del sistema produttivo britannico. Negli anni '50 del XIX secolo, lo scambio tra Gran Bretagna e paesi europei riguardava solo un terzo della produzione. Il resto, ovvero i due terzi delle importazioni ed esportazioni, avveniva oramai con il resto del mondo. Fino a questa data l'impero britannico era stato in buona parte "informale", la situazione cominciò a mutare quando altre potenze europee si affacciarono sulla scena coloniale. Secondo Porter, fu la paura di perdere il predominio industriale a spingere la Gran Bretagna verso un maggior coinvolgimento diretto. Nel 1870 erano già evidenti i segnali di un declino della capacità competitiva britannica. Di qui la tesi che l'imperialismo per la Gran Bretagna fu un sintomo di debolezza più che un segnale di forza. Nel 1900 la Gran Bretagna continuava a essere la principale potenza industriale, ma il distacco nei confronti dei paesi concorrenti si era ridotto drasticamente. Stati Uniti e Germania si trovavano ormai a ridosso dell'economia britannica e si apprestavano al sorpasso in diversi settori. Mentre le risorse si riducevano, a causa della sempre minore competitività del sistema britannico, il paese doveva impegnarsi sempre più direttamente per impedire che le altre potenze europee si appropriassero dei mercati africani e asiatici. Londra fu costretta a un'esposizione maggiore per contrastare l'azione di altre potenze europee, non per una scelta deliberata. Nella ricostruzione di Porter l'espansione britannica fu quindi il frutto di fattori prevalentemente esterni, posizione che ha attirato su Porter più di una critica.

Dove i toni si sono fatti veramente incandescenti, è stato a proposito del posto dell'impero nella società britannica. Tra il 1870 e il 1900 più di sette milioni di persone emigrarono dalla Gran Bretagna, non tutti diretti verso le colonie, ma in buona parte sì. L'impero dava lavoro a ventimila amministratori, quasi centocinquantomila soldati e ad altre decine di migliaia di persone a vario titolo. Dal 1880 in poi l'impero cominciò a essere sempre più presente nella vita quotidiana della Gran Bretagna, constatazione che però non ha indotto Porter a rivedere la tesi di una sostanziale indifferenza del pubblico britannico verso le questioni imperiali. Non si tratta di un'affermazione di poco conto. Nel 2004 Porter aveva suscitato un dibattito estremamente vivace con il suo *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, un volume che chiamava in causa buona parte del lavoro svolto da post-colonial studies, cultural studies e new imperial history. A essere messa in discussione era la centralità dell'impero nella vita dei sudditi britannici, che Porter descrive come per lo più apatici, disinteressati e sommamente ignoranti di questioni imperiali. Salvo qualche piccolo aggiustamento di tiro, anche in questo volume Porter riconferma la sua visione.

Uno dei punti di forza del volume risiede nella sua capacità di indagare il lungo processo della decolonizzazione. Porter dedica a quest'analisi ben tre capitoli, quasi un quarto del volume. Il primo di questi capitoli prende in considerazione il periodo 1939-70 che, di solito, rappresenta la parte finale della maggior parte delle trattazioni disponibili. Al termine della prima guerra mondiale l'impero britannico raggiunse la massima estensione territoriale. Ma se la guerra aveva portato nuovi territori, in molti dei vecchi, l'aiuto fornito durante il conflitto aveva suscitato neanche troppe velate aspirazioni all'autogoverno.

La conclusione della guerra aveva stimolato la comparsa di movimenti nazionalisti sempre più radicali e in India, Medio Oriente e Irlanda, la Gran Bretagna era stata costretta a fare importanti concessioni. Al di là della vittoria sul campo il paese si era chiaramente indebolito. Un declino lento, ma che occhi esperti sapevano notare. Tra gli anni '20 e '30 la produzione industriale ristagnò e il commercio si ridusse, la dipendenza del paese dai territori coloniali aumentò sensibilmente. Agli occhi dei più, l'impero diventava la soluzione ai problemi britannici. Questa constatazione non bastò, però, a garantire all'impero un'adeguata copertura finanziaria per lo sviluppo d'infrastrutture e il potenziamento delle capacità produttiva. La linea dominante rimase quella che l'impero doveva essere autosufficiente.

La seconda guerra mondiale mostrò ulteriormente la precarietà dei vecchi equilibri. In alcune realtà, in primis l'India, la situazione era chiaramente insostenibile, in altri paesi i movimenti nazionalisti erano in fermento. Negli stessi anni, inoltre, le basi morali dell'impero cominciarono a essere discusse in termini sempre meno compiacenti. L'anacronismo dell'idea imperiale apparve evidente ad alcuni politici che proposero con sempre maggiore convinzione l'idea di un Commonwealth.

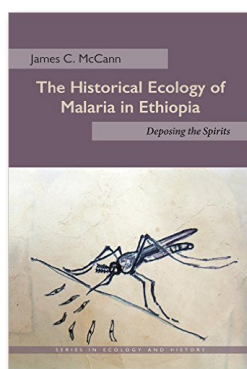
Nel giro di un decennio divenne chiaro che l'impero britannico non aveva futuro e molti paesi ottennero l'indipendenza. Alla fine degli anni '70 la presenza britannica era oramai circoscritta a Hong Kong, Gibilterra, mentre presentava alcune situazioni particolarmente problematiche (Rhodesia).

La quinta edizione include un dodicesimo capitolo che prende in considerazione l'impegno britannico in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan e Iraq. Prova della forte originalità di un volume che vuole proporre una lettura del fenomeno imperiale che si spinge fino all'attualità. In che rapporto sono questi impegni militari con il vecchio spirito imperiale? Ci troviamo di fronte a una parte integrante della storia imperiale britannica oppure a un frammento di un passato ormai concluso?

Porter ricorda come, nel XXI secolo, il dibattito su un'ipotetica stagione imperiale inevitabilmente chiama in causa gli USA. La Gran Bretagna di Tony Blair (1997-2007) si è impegnata a fondo a livello internazionale ma sempre coordinandosi con gli USA. Una "special relationship" che mette allo stesso tempo in luce le nuove frontiere e i limiti della politica estera britannica. Nonostante le tante somiglianze, tra vecchia e nuova espansione coloniale, Porter non ritiene che la chiave di lettura principale consista in un semplice cambio di testimonial (da UK a USA).

Dopo quarant'anni il volume di Bernard Porter, con le sue ripetute mutazioni, risulta ancora stimolante, provocatorio e mai scontato. Improntato a uno spiccato gusto per la polemica e corroborato da uno stile incisivo e accattivante, il volume di Porter ha ancora molto da dire. L'impressione, però, è che qualche volta Porter utilizzi lo stile e la polemica, dove eccelle, per sopperire alla mancata solidità del suo impianto probatorio. È chiaramente un'opera che ha fatto e che continua a fare discutere e riflettere, ma che non sembra riuscire a mettere in crisi i propri avversari intellettuali.

Massimo Zaccaria (Università di Pavia)



JAMES C. MCCANN, *The Historical Ecology of Malaria in Ethiopia*. Series in Ecology and History, Ohio University Press, Athens 2014, 196 pp., 32 Figures, 4 Tables, ISBN 978-0-8214-2147-5.

J. McCann, noto etiopista, storico dell'agricoltura e degli ambienti ecologici dell'Africa sub-sahariana, dopo i suoi ultimi lavori sul mais (*Maize and Grace*, 2005) e sulla cucina soprattutto etiopica (*Stirring the pot. A History of an African Cuisine*, 2009), ci offre una nuova monografia, ben documentata e scritta in modo brillante e piacevole, come le

precedenti, che hanno ricevuto premi nella saggistica storica. Si tratta del risultato di una lunga indagine multidisciplinare sulla storia della malaria in Etiopia e sui moderni tentativi di eradicarla. Per cinque anni l'A. ha diretto un team di ricerca, che si è valso anche di collaboratori e specialisti locali; egli ha fatto interagire in modo rigoroso storia dell'agricoltura, archeologia, ecologia, e bioscienze, dall'epidemiologia e malattie tropicali, alla botanica e genetica.

J. McCann segue l'evoluzione storica della malaria, con la documentazione disponibile nelle diverse fasi storiche, servendosi anche delle fonti orali e di storie di vita, nei diversi ambienti ecologici, a partire dai bassopiani, area elettiva della malattia.

Con un approccio comparativista richiama i tentativi delle diverse società di coesistere con essa, o in epoca contemporanea i programmi scientifici messi in atto per sradicarla e l'intrecciarsi tra le spiegazioni locali di etno-medicina e quelle scientifiche. La storia epidemica in Etiopia si inserisce, dunque, con le sue specificità in una lotta globale contro la malaria, che in età moderna parte dalla teoria dei germi per arrivare a una nuova spiegazione scientifica che identifica vettore e parassita. La storia europea delle zone malariche nel Mediterraneo, specie in Italia, è ben presente all'A. ed è richiamata nella trattazione sul piano comparativo. Le campagne alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale per eradicare la malaria con il DDT, come avvenne in Sardegna e in Corsica, furono sperimentazioni di cui si fece esperienza e che vennero ripetute in Etiopia.

In questa lunga storia, complessa e difficile, emerge la dinamicità e la capacità plastica della malattia, che induce l'A. a farsi sedurre da metafore che lo accompagnano sul piano retorico nella trattazione, distribuita in sei capitoli. La lotta tra le società umane vulnerabili e la malaria diventa come una partita a scacchi o una danza di scacchi, dove le mosse degli umani, spesso deboli e contraddittorie provocano le risposte dei vettori e del parassita, nelle diverse variazioni genetiche: ogni mossa inizia una nuova fase di un gioco drammatico, che apre speranze o rassegnazione adattiva. Drammatica e sconcertante nelle sue conseguenze per gli umani e nelle continue trasformazioni, la partita si apre a nuove svolte e non sembra avere mai una conclusione. In particolare l'A. analizza nel quarto capitolo *Tragedy of the Jeep* il periodo tra il 1959 e il 1991, documentando i tentativi di intervento, le campagne, i fallimenti e i cambi di rotta nel paese.

La storia della malaria sfida le capacità di analisi di uno storico dell'agricoltura e dell'ambiente e anche l'epidemiologo. Sono in gioco sistemi complessi che però vanno colti su scala locale. L'area intorno al Lago Tsana, con la crescente espansione urbana di Bahr Dar è uno dei luoghi analizzati con particolare cura e dettagli. Siamo qui in un ambiente ecologico liminare, intorno ai 1500 metri, dove l'occorrenza epidemica

diventa stagionale, ha fasi di decrescita e altre di reviviscenza, che sfidano la comprensione delle possibili variabili.

Le spiegazioni popolari, che si possono cogliere solo su scala locale, costituiscono una parte importante del lavoro, soprattutto nel secondo e nel terzo capitolo. Le stesse etichette linguistiche offrono indizi sulle spiegazioni ed eziologie locali: a partire dall'antico ge'ez con il termine *woba* che si incontra anche nei dizionari moderni fino al *Kane*, come *wäba*, insieme a *nedad*, con i suoi derivati, tutti termini che individuano, piuttosto che la biologia scientifica dell'infezione, i sintomi, dal tremore febbrile alla sensazione di fuoco acceso dentro. Centrali diventano figure di religiosi e guaritori locali come il *däbtära* Asres, letterato religioso che già era stato intervistato dall'antropologo Jacques Mercier nelle sue ricerche (*Asrès, le magicien éthiopien*, 1988). Nell'esplorazione dei sintomi, nella riflessione sulle occorrenze stagionali, nelle variazioni tra i diversi ambienti si sono sviluppate sia credenze nell'azione di specifici spiriti maligni, degli *zar*, sia più effettuali pratiche mediche, basate sulla sperimentazione di proprietà della flora locale. I "paesaggi mentali" della malaria vengono da McCann ricomposti a partire da indizi e da frammenti di testimonianze e di esperienze, che – c'è da osservare – sono tutte di abitanti del *däga*, dell'altopiano. Per la loro antropologia delle genti, storicamente i *q'älla*, le terre basse, sono state identificate come terre straniere, pericolose, mortifere, da cui tenersi lontani, anche per la presenza endemica della malaria (non a caso un genere di spiriti implicati hanno il nome di *q'älla*). Restano fuori, per ora, dai "mindscapes" della malaria, descritti da McCann, le pratiche e le eziologie delle genti dei bassopiani. Ad esempio, i Kunama che abitano in una zona eminentemente malarica, nel bassopiano occidentale eritreo, hanno dovuto incorporare l'epidemia e le febbri stagionali nel loro paesaggio mentale, nella gestione quotidiana dei loro corpi e delle fasi del lavoro agricolo: per essi la malaria è *toka*, che come il *nädad* delle lingue semitiche d'altopiano, richiama il sintomo del fuoco, del bruciare, e *tokina* è colui che ha dentro il calore febbrile.

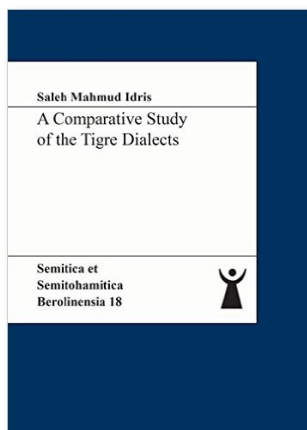
Nel capitolo V (*Malaria modern*) si richiamano tre studi di laboratorio, pubblicati a partire dal 2000. La località di Bir Sheleko è stata teatro di test sul campo per verificare l'ipotesi di un nesso tra reviviscenza della malattia e lo sviluppo della coltura del mais in Etiopia, che sta espandendosi anche a danno di altre colture locali con conseguenze non facilmente prevedibili: alcune evidenze statistiche indicherebbe una correlazione tra questa diffusione e la nuova vulnerabilità ecologica e una inaspettata reviviscenza della malaria.

A dispetto dei programmi, la capacità reattiva di vettore e parassita, nei sue vari tipi, dimostrata in tutte le fasi analizzate, rende difficile pensare a una eliminazione della malaria. Appare, piuttosto, plausibile che con essa si debba convivere attenuandone gli effetti e accettando di conseguire solo vittorie parziali e talvolta reversibili. Una nuova mossa in questa "danza" su scala globale, che ha dovuto prender atto della complessa biologia del *Plasmodium falciparum*, è consistita nelle ricerche dell'*Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine* che sviluppò studi, già iniziati nel periodo maoista, sulle cure vernacolari nel sud-est asiatico e in Cina: vi si sperimentarono le proprietà antimalariche della artimisinina (estratto della *artimisia annua*), creando per il trattamento di prima scelta una *Artemisinin-based Combination* (ACT).

Si arriva all'epilogo con la sintesi, riassumibile nella frase "We have some tools, some hope, no panacea". Con questa realistica aspettativa, condivisa con i ricercatori etiopici alle prese con i multiformi ambienti ecologici d'Etiopia e con la mobilità locale delle specie del parassita (almeno sei), McCann conclude la sua affascinante

storia ambientale che arricchisce la nostra conoscenza delle dinamiche dei sistemi ecologici dell’Africa sub-sahariana e in particolare dell’Etiopia. Anche gli studiosi europeisti troveranno un utile materiale comparativo e un contraltare storico e narrativo in questo lavoro africanista.

Gianni Dore (Dipartimento di Studi sull’Asia e l’Africa mediterranea – Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)



SALEH MAHMUD IDRIS, *A Comparative Study of the Tigre Dialects*, Aachen, Shaker Verlag, 2015 (Semitica et Semitohamitica Berolinensia, 18), v+264 p. ISBN 978-3-8440-3438-7.

Questa preziosa monografia di Saleh Mahmud Idris, compimento di una ricerca di dottorato condotta presso la Freie Universität di Berlino sotto la direzione di Rainer Voigt, appare a un solo anno di distanza dal lavoro di David L. Elias, *The Tigre language of Ginda'*, Eritrea. Short grammar and texts (cf. *Ethnorema* 2014, pp. 122-124) e conferma, quindi, l’interesse che da qualche anno lo studio del Tigré (Təgrāyət) e della sua articolazione dialettale sta

riscuotendo all’interno della comunità scientifica internazionale. Rispetto al suo predecessore, che ha realizzato una dettagliata descrizione di una precisa varietà linguistica regionale del Tigré, quella parlata ai bordi orientali dell’altopiano, sulla strada tra Asmara e la costa del Mar Rosso, lo studioso eritreo ha perseguito un obiettivo sostanzialmente diverso, ovvero «to identify determining linguistic feature that can be used in comparing and contrasting dialectal differences among different regional varieties of the Tigre language» (p. 13). In altre parole, la ricerca di Saleh ha puntato a fornire uno strumento aggiornato che permettesse finalmente di fondare su dati linguistici sicuri la conoscenza dell’estensione e dell’articolazione delle varietà dialettali del Tigré. Dunque, i capisaldi del metodo sono stati, da un lato, l’inchiesta linguistica di campo (pp. 1-15), la più ampia che sia mai stata condotta sull’area in questione, toccando decine di località e coinvolgendo un numero ancora più alto di informatori, dall’altro, le regole della linguistica sincronica comparativa, segnatamente quelle che attengono all’indagine dialettologica.

Il paragrafo iniziale, in cui viene offerta una rassegna critica della letteratura scientifica prodotta sul Tigré a partire dai lavori di Enno Littmann, Carlo Conti Rossini e Wolf Lesalu (pp. 16-36) permette al lettore di apprezzare per contrasto la definizione e la rilevanza degli obiettivi che Saleh si è posto con la sua ricerca e con la monografia che ne è scaturita. Applicandosi con la competenza del parlante nativo allo studio di opere prodotte nell’arco di più di un secolo, il ricercatore eritreo vi ha colto ricorrenti incoerenze in materia di fonologia, grammatica, sintassi e lessico, dovute sia alla scarsa consapevolezza dell’articolazione dialettale della lingua (anche da parte degli studiosi maggiori), sia all’adozione sistematica, come riferimento normativo, di una parlata specifica, quella dei Mansa', che per iniziativa europea è stata semplicemente identificata col Tigré, sebbene qua e là gli studi abbiano registrato la presenza di dati

aberranti (rispetto a una ‘norma’ presunta), proprio perché dovuti a variazione dialettale.

In effetti, il problema della standardizzazione del Tigré, in vista del suo uso scolastico, giornalistico e letterario, è stato ben presente alle menti dei dirigenti del futuro Stato eritreo già a partire dalla fine degli anni Settanta del secolo scorso. In particolare, l’esigenza di creare una terminologia per la descrizione e lo studio della lingua e la necessità di adottare un riferimento normativo a partire dal suo ‘uso vivo’ hanno indotto intellettuali e uomini di governo a promuovere la pubblicazione di libri e l’organizzazione di incontri di studio che favorissero l’emergere di una *koiné diàlektos* del Tigré piuttosto che riconoscere la prevalenza di una variante sull’altra. Il processo è sostanzialmente ancora in corso e la qualità del suo esito dipenderà in larga misura dalle politiche linguistiche eritree dei prossimi anni, in particolare dalla capacità e dalla volontà di costruire dall’interno le strutture grammaticali e il patrimonio lessicale del Tigré standard, senza ricorrere forzatamente ad apporti esterni, in particolare quelli dell’Arabo e del Tigrino.

L’inchiesta linguistica di campo (condotta essenzialmente nel biennio 2011-2012) ha permesso a Saleh di individuare e studiare le 14 aree maggiori del Tigré parlato in Eritrea, nelle quali si può dire che vivano – con qualche approssimazione – altrettante comunità: Beni ‘Āmər (‘Aqurdat), ‘Algaden (Kwələntebāy), Mārya Qayaḥ (Malabso), Mārya Şallām (‘Asmāt), Ḥabāb (Naqfa), ‘Ad Temāryām (‘Af ‘abat), ‘Ad Takles (Habaro), Mansa‘ (Galab), Bet Ğuk (Karan, Ḥamalmālo, Wāzəntat), genti del Samhar di Zəla/Zula, Gənda‘ e Waqiro, abitanti dell’area di Dərfo-Gələ‘ e isolani delle Dahlāk. Questo dato permette di apprezzare subito il progresso di conoscenze fornito dal lavoro di Saleh, che per la sua ricerca si è servito di una base documentaria molto più diversificata rispetto a quelle raccolte in occasione di tutte le precedenti indagini.

Prodotta per ogni area una lista lessicale, frutto delle rispettive inchieste linguistiche, con competenza e precisione lo studioso eritreo ha sottoposto il materiale all’analisi comparativa, sostenuta da un repertorio esauriente di proiezioni cartografiche e rappresentazioni tabellari (pp. 37-84), da cui è scaturita l’individuazione di svariate isoglosse dialettali. L’analisi si è poi concentrata sullo studio degli elementi fonetico-fonologici (pp. 85-108), morfologici (pp. 109-129) e sintattici (pp. 130-135). La trascrizione scientifica di otto brani fra i moltissimi raccolti e registrati direttamente dall’autore (pp. 136-212), in rappresentanza di altrettante varietà dialettali (Beni ‘Āmər, ‘Algaden, Samhar di Zəla/Zula, Bet Ğuk di Ḥamalmālo, Dahālək di Dahlāk Kabir, Dahālək di Dəḥəl, Mārya Şallām e Ḥabāb), occupa la parte più corposa del volume, nella quale gli otto testi sono riportati su tre linee che contengono – rispettivamente – la traslitterazione, le glosse morfematiche e la traduzione inglese.

Con la necessaria cautela, Saleh propone quindi una ripartizione delle varietà dialettali del Tigré in tre blocchi continentali maggiori: 1) quello nord-occidentale, comprendente il più ampio numero di parlate (Ḥabāb, ‘Ad Takles, Mārya Qayaḥ, Mārya Şallām e Beni ‘Āmər); 2) quello sud-orientale, corrispondente al bassopiano del Samhar (Zəla/Zula, Gənda‘ e Waqiro); 3) quello centrale dei Mansa‘ e dei Bet Ğuk. A parte vanno considerati i dialetti degli ‘Ad Temāryām e dell’area di Dərfo-Gələ‘, che mostrano una situazione mescolata, probabilmente a causa della diversa origine dei gruppi che abitano le rispettive aree; e quello degli ‘Algaden, che rivela tratti specifici e a sé stanti. Anche alla luce di questa nuova analisi il Dahālək rivela uno statuto del tutto peculiare, al punto da meritare una classificazione autonoma: così, implicitamente si riconosce che l’origine di questa varietà linguistica, non mutualmente intelligibile

con le parlate continentali, forse non è neppure riconducibile allo stesso processo glottogenetico che ha dato vita al Tigré.

Se l'esistenza di una varietà di Tigré del Samhar (sud-est) è stata riconosciuta fin dai tempi del lavoro di Werner Munzinger ("Vocabulaire de la langue Tigré", in appendice a August Dillmann, *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopiae*, Lipsiae, T.O.Weigel, 1865) su base puramente lessicale, e trova nella storia della regione una conferma ai fatti linguistici; se l'area di nord-ovest, per la sua coerenza geo-politica, giustifica la condivisione di una variante dialettale sostanzialmente unitaria; è l'area centrale che continua a porre qualche interrogativo, riguardante la possibilità stessa di una sua definizione. Basti pensare che il dialetto dei Mārya Qayaḥ (stanziate poco più a sud dei Mārya Ṣallām e confinanti con questi, ma anche con i Mansa' e i Bet Ğuk), pur mostrando alcuni tratti comuni con il resto del blocco di nord-ovest, non condivide con esso la sua più caratteristica trasformazione fonetica, ovvero la duplice sostituzione /t/ < */s/ (ad es. ṭaḥāy per ṣaḥāy, 'sole') e /d/ < */z/ (ad es. danab per zanab, 'coda'). Se, per la loro relativa semplicità, i due fenomeni possono essersi verificati isolatamente, in contesti diversi e lontani, è la loro compresenza che ne definisce il carattere sistemico e – conseguentemente – la rilevanza da un punto di vista classificatorio (si vedano le puntuali osservazioni dello stesso Saleh nel suo precedente contributo "Tigre Dialects", in *Journal of Eritrean Studies*, 4, 2005, pp. 45-73).

Il lettore interessato allo studio dell'articolazione dialettale di una delle maggiori lingue semitiche 'viventi' (la quinta per numero di parlanti dopo Arabo, Amarico, Tigrino ed Ebraico moderno) troverà in questo lavoro di Saleh una mole impressionante di nuovi dati, che forniscono non solo «an empirical basis for comparative analysis of regional varieties of the Tigre language at different linguistic levels» (p. 1), ma anche elementi di riflessione per una maggior comprensione dei fatti stessi. Grazie a ricerche come questa, che combinano l'acquisizione di nuovi dati testuali con un'impeccabile analisi linguistica, lo studio specialistico compie un definitivo balzo in avanti e si pongono le premesse per il raggiungimento di gradi ancora più alti di conoscenza in un terreno vastissimo e ancora poco praticato della semitistica sincronica.

Gianfrancesco Lusini (Università di Napoli "L'Orientale")

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a cura di Moreno Vergari



BARBARA AIRÒ e MASSIMO ZACCARIA (a cura di) *I confini della cittadinanza nel nuovo Medio Oriente*, Roma, Viella, 2015, 241 pp., ISBN 978-88-6728-481-8.

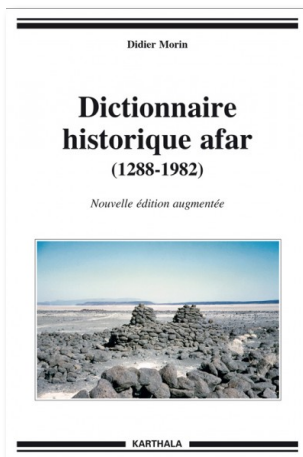
Secondo volume della collana Asia Major del Centro Studi per i popoli extra-europei “Cesare Bonacossa” dell’Università di Pavia, dopo quello curato da Gian Paolo Calchi Novati (*Uguali e diversi. Diaspore, emigrazione, minoranze.* – 2014). Dopo l’introduzione dei curatori (pp. 7-13) il volume presenta quattordici contributi di altrettanti autori: Barbara Airò, Enrico Bartolomei, Martina Censi, Carola Cerami, Giovanni Cordini, Giorgio Del Zanna, Marco Demichelis, Barbara De

Poli, Antonio M. Morone, Gianluca Paolo Parolin, Paola Pizzo, Annemarie Profanter, Caterina Roggero, Massimiliano Trentin e Massimo Zaccaria.

L’opera si propone di analizzare il discorso sulla cittadinanza in Medio Oriente, campo di ricerca di recente interesse e approfondimento, anche alla luce dei recenti fenomeni delle rivolte arabe che “hanno profondamente mutato gli equilibri politici e sociali della regione mediorientale e nordafricana proponendo una nuova idea di cittadinanza”. Tali eventi non devono però far dimenticare “che la complessità e la ricchezza del tema cittadinanza impongono approcci teorici e analisi capaci di mettere ugualmente in luce come altri fattori contribuiscano a definirne il concetto”.

Il volume quindi vuole soffermarsi su questa dimensione storica del mondo islamico anche considerando “le trasformazioni legate al processo di globalizzazione e, in modo particolare, alla mobilità umana che chiama in causa il concetto di diritti umani, cittadinanza e partecipazione politica, non solo delle persone che si mettono in movimento, ma anche delle realtà che vengono attraversate”.

Sinossi e indice del volume sono disponibili nella pagina dedicata sul sito dell’editore Viella: www.viella.it/libro/9788867284818.



Didier MORIN, *Dictionnaire historique afar (1288-1982)*, Nouvelle édition augmentée, Parigi: Karthala, 2015, 472 pp. ISBN 978-2-8111-1045-1.

Didier Morin è senz’altro uno dei maggiori studiosi delle lingue, della storia e della cultura del Corno d’Africa in generale, e dell’Afar in particolare, con un notevole numero di pubblicazioni alle spalle (vedi anche l’articolo in questo numero di *Ethnorêma*). Questo volume è un importantissimo contributo alla storiografia ‘Afar, che esce ora in una edizione notevolmente riveduta e ampliata rispetto alla precedente (oltre 170 pagine in più), del 2014. Arricchiscono le oltre 340 pagine del dizionario (pp. 31-

374), che coprono un periodo storico di circa 700 anni, anche un'ampia introduzione (pp. 1-27) e tre appendici: *I. Formation du texte historique de style oral* (pp. 377-393); *II. «Chronique de l'Awsa (1763-1873)»* (pp. 395-406), con testo arabo (pp. 407-422); *III. Conférence de Gawwani* (pp. 423-424), con testo amarico (pp. 425-434). Concludono il volume le 17 pagine di bibliografia e di fonti (molte inedite) (pp. 435-451), sette mappe (pp. 453-461), una spiegazione della trascrizione usata nel libro (pp. 463-466), una tavola delle abbreviazioni e dei simboli (p. 466) e l'indice (467-470).

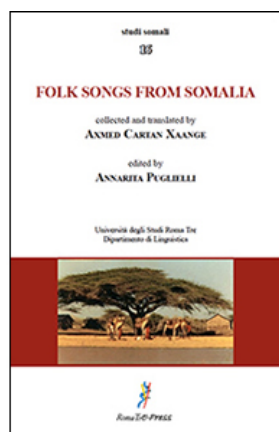


Archivio Somalia / Somalia Archive
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L'archivio, che si avvale del motore di ricerca ArcAdiA del Sistema Bibliotecario dell'Università degli Studi di Roma Tre (<http://dspace-roma3.caspur.it/handle/2307/723>)

consta, al momento della consultazione (13/01/2016) di ben 3126 documenti, di cui 1481 immagini, 705 libri, 632 articoli, 274 capitoli di libri, 225 documenti audio, 68 documenti inediti e 31 video, tutti dedicati alla Somalia nel contesto del Corno d'Africa.

Il sito è curato dal Centro di Studi Somali, sempre di Roma Tre, che ha un suo sito dedicato (<http://host.uniroma3.it/centri/CentroStudiSomali/>) e che pubblica anche la rivista periodica *Studi Somali* (vedi sotto).



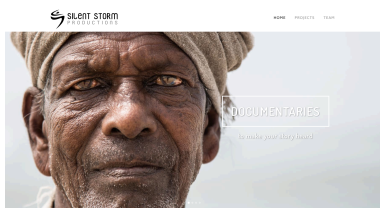
AXMED CARTAN XAANGE, Annarita PUGLIELLI (eds.) *Folk songs from Somalia*, Studi Somali 16, Roma: Roma TrE-Press, 2014, 115 pp. ISBN 978-88-97524-11-3.

“This book presents a collection of folk songs belonging to the nomadic society of the central and north-eastern Somalia. The 191 songs contained in this volume range over a great variety of song types (nursery songs, work songs, entertainment songs) and witness an important aspect of Somali oral literature. They were recorded and translated by Axmed Cartan Xaange, who grew up in the pastoral community in the north-eastern part of the country. With this

collection the author aimed at preserving a valuable patrimony of the Somali people, for the benefit of both Somali and foreign readers.” (dalla presentazione).

Axmed Cartan Xaange aveva già pubblicato anche la raccolta di favole *Sheekooyiin*, sul numero 11 di *Studi Somali*, anch'esso curato da Annarita Puglielli.

Il volume è disponibile in formato cartaceo *on demand* oppure gratuitamente in formato pdf all'indirizzo <http://ojs.romatrepress.uniroma3.it/index.php/folksongs>.



Silent Storm Productions

<http://silent-storm.com/>

Il sito che andiamo a segnalare è quello di una società indipendente di produzione di video, documentari e altri prodotti multimediali che aspira a mettere in evidenza le esperienze di singole persone, comunità e organizzazioni non governative di tutto il mondo per promuovere il dialogo e lo scambio. Con un approccio antropologico, i curatori del sito, e autori essi stessi di vario del materiale pubblicato, si prefiggono di far aumentare il livello di consapevolezza “about the silent storm of unheard voices, ignored stories, unsung heroes and undisclosed best practices that do not get enough attention in traditional media.”

Attualmente sono 10 i progetti visualizzabili sul sito:

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Beyond the Façade. Worse than hate, is indifference

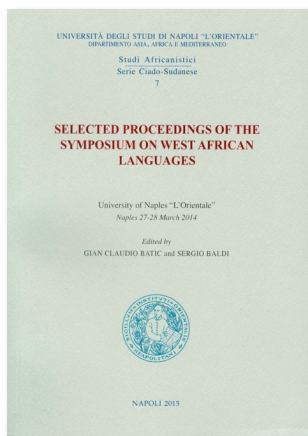
Let me be me. Not man, not woman, but *hijra*

Minorities of India. Preserving minorities around the world

Gods for a week. When Shiva enters your body

Euregio's Cube. Working together, beyond national borders

Per un profilo degli autori Sarah Trevisiol e Matteo Vegetti si veda alla pagina <http://silent-storm.com/team/>.



Gian Claudio BATIC, Sergio BALDI (eds.) *Selected Proceedings of the Symposium on West African Languages (Naples, 27-28 March 2014)*. Studi Africanistici, Serie Ciado-Sudanese, 7, Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”, 2015, pp. 341, ISSN 1828-5910.

Atti del primo *Symposium on West African Languages* (SyWAL2014) tenutosi presso l’Università degli Studi “L’Orientale” di Napoli il 27 e 28 marzo 2014. Il convegno, promosso dal Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo della stessa Università, e organizzato da Sergio Baldi, Gian Claudio Batic e Alessandro Suzzi Valli, ha visto la partecipazione di studiosi provenienti da Austria, Camerun,

Francia, Germania, Ghana, Italia, Nigeria, Polonia e Stati Uniti, che hanno presentato ben 22 relazioni, di cui 20 sono pubblicate in questo volume.

Sono quattro le sezioni in cui è diviso il volume, che rispecchiano le stesse sessioni tematiche del Convegno: *Description and analysis*; *Description and analysis: The Bole-Tangale languages*; *Language, society and culture* e *Chadic and linguistic theory*, a cui va aggiunta la nota bio-bibliografica su Claude Gouffé, scomparso nel 2013, di S. Baldi e H. Tourneux.

Il volume fa parte della collana di Studi Africanistici, Serie Ciado-Sudanese che è giunta, con questo contributo, alla sua settima pubblicazione.

Per un elenco dei precedenti numeri della collana si veda alla pagina: http://www.unior.it/index2.php?content_id=8062&content_id_start=1

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