# STUDIEN ZUM HORN VON AFRIKA

Herausgegeben von

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Band 2

# Tigre Studies in the 21st Century
# – Tigre-Studien im 21. Jahrhundert

Edited by / Herausgegeben von

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# Table of Content / Inhaltsverzeichnis

*Society, Traditions and Institutions / Gesellschaft, Tradition und Institutionen*

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# Preface

The Tigre language was among the many fields of study Enno Littmann worked on intensively. It is the third largest Ethiosemitic language (second only to Amharic and Tigrinya), and within the wider Semitic language family it ranks fifth, taking Arabic and Modern Hebrew into account as well. Tigre is spoken over a wide area in the northern, western and eastern lowlands of Erythrea as well as in some adjacent parts of Sudan, i.e. in the provinces Kassalā und al-Baḥr al-Aḥmar ‚Red Sea‘.

Littmann contributed numerous works that increased our knowledge of Tigre beginning with his doctoral thesis "Die Pronomina im Tigre – ein Beitrag zur äthiopischen Dialektkunde" (*ZA*, 12 (1897)). This found its natural continuation in his voluminous work on the "Verbum der Tigresprache" (*ZA*, 13 (1898) – 14 (1899)). And he progressed further with his five-volume collection of traditional Tigre texts of which vols. I and II were *Tales, customs, names and dirges of the Tigrē tribes*, vols. III.– IV.A./IV.B. *Lieder der Tigrē-Stämme* (Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia, Leiden 1910–1915). Finally he co-authored with Maria Höfner the large *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (Wiesbaden 1962).

He would have been pleased had he lived on to see that this minority language with only little substantial literature has now developed into a fully fledged literary language that in Erythrea is only second to Tigrinya as far as volume, literary importance and presence in the media are concerned. He would have been surprised that in addition to the literary production an indigenous field of Tigre studies had developed as well. I shall only mention the two encyclopaedic dictionaries by Musa Aron: the monoglot Tigre dictionary *Kəbət-ḵālāt Təgre* (Asmara 2005) and the Tigrinya dictionary of Tigrinya and Tigre personal names (*Mäzgäbä-ḵalat səmat ertrawyan Təgrəññan Təgrän*, Toronto 1994), both of which deserve greater recognition from us.

How much Tigre is promoted scientifically as well in today's Erythrea is demonstrated by the two conferences that preceded our Enno-Littmann Conference by only a few months: *Maḥbar gomāt gemām fan həgyā Təgrāyət / First Assessment Symposium on Art Works in the Tigre Language* (19.–21.12.2008) and the *1 [ḵadāmā]y wāʿlā Təgrāyət ʿəggəl / 1ˢᵗ Conference for Standard-Tigre*. The second conference of this kind took place in 2009.

The conference contributions dealing with Tigre were so substantial that we decided to publish them in an extra volume. And to make this volume also more accessible to Tigre speakers we have added to every contribution an abstract translated

into Tigre. I am grateful to my doctoral student Saleh Mahmud Idris from Erythrea for his excellent work. Saleh was also kind enough to assist us in our seminars where Tigre texts were linguistically analysed. His native speaker's knowledge proved invaluable when unravelling the finer points of the language since grammars and dictionaries are simply not adequate enough to enable to understand modern texts. This makes our *Institute of Semitic and Arabic Studies* the only University based Institute in the world where Tigre courses are offered. Taking account of the numerous publications in recent years Tigre can be seen as the youngest Semitic big-corpus language.

Also of great importance for Tigre studies is the discovery of the Ethiopist Nachlass of Enno Littmann in the *Austrian Academy of Sciences* (Vienna), v. the subsequent contribution. Littmann's Nachlass also contains material by the Swedish missionary Richard Sundström (1869–1919). From this we can still expect further publications.

We regret that our colleagues Paolo Marrassini and Andrzej Zaborski did not live to see the publication of these Proceedings. Paolo Marrassini's contribution was kindly edited by Alessandro Bausi for which we owe him great thanks.

Enno Littmann's great importance for the linguistic analysis of Tigre is recognised in Erythrea too. This is clearly shown by the volume published by Musa Aron and Dässale Bäräkät entitled *Merās – mən ʿādāt gabayəl Təgre la-tḥayabat zəḥrat ʿInheritance – Treasure collected from the Traditions of the Tigre Tribes*' (Asmara 2010) in which they incorporated a revised version of some texts Enno Littmann had published in his *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia*.

I am glad to see that our third *Enno Littmann Conference* with its contributions concerning Tigre has also found some resonance in Erythrea as well as is evidenced from the enclosed report from the Tigre newspaper *Eratrəya Ḥaddās* of sänä (June) 3ʳᵈ 2009, p. 7. The title of the contribution by ʿUmar Abib: *Fənge maṭḥan wa-walatta* "Between the Grindstone and its Daughter, i.e. between the two Grindstones" points to the great obstacles that must be overcome in order to gain recognition and promotion as a fully fledged literary language vis-à-vis competing languages like Amharic, Arabic and Tigrinya.

For his cooperation in this volume and its design I express my gratitude to Hatem Elliesie and also to Markus Falk for formatting, Sina Nikolajew for typesetting and further formatting and in equal measure to Rüdiger Köppe for his editorial support in the publishing house.

Rainer Voigt

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# Vorwort

Zu den vielen Gebieten, über die Littmann intensiv gearbeitet hat, gehört das Tigre, die drittgrößte äthiosemitische Sprache (nach dem Amharischen und Tigrinischen), die innerhalb der semitischen Sprachgruppe die fünftgrößte gesprochene semitische Sprache darstellt, wenn man das Arabische und Neuhebräische miteinbezieht. Sie wird über ein weites Gebiet im nördlichen, westlichen und östlichen Tiefland von Erythräa sowie in angrenzenden Teilen des Sudan (d.i. in den Provinzen Kassalā und al-Baḥr al-Aḥmar ‚Rotes Meer') gesprochen.

Zur Kenntnis des Tigre hat Littmann zahllose Arbeiten vorgelegt, angefangen mit seiner Doktorarbeit über „Die Pronomina im Tigre – ein Beitrag zur äthiopischen Dialektkunde" (*ZA*, 12 (1897)), die mit der umfangreichen Arbeit über das „Verbum der Tigresprache" (*ZA*, 13 (1898) – 14 (1899)) ihre natürliche Fortsetzung fand, bis hin zu der umfassenden Sammlung traditioneller Tigretexte in dem fünfbändigen Werk I.–II. *Tales, customs, names and dirges of the Tigrē tribes*, III.–IV.A./ IV.B. *Lieder der Tigrē-Stämme* (Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia, Leiden 1910–1915) und dem mit Maria Höfner verfassten großen *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (Wiesbaden 1962). Damit hat Littmann die Grundlage zur Erforschung der Sprache und der traditionellen Literatur sowie zu ihrer lexikologischen Erschließung gelegt.

Er hätte sich sicherlich gefreut, zu erleben, dass sich diese Minderheitensprache mit einer wenig umfangreichen Literatur zu einer ausgebildeten Literatursprache entwickelt, die in Erythräa den zweiten Rang nach dem Tigrinischen in Umfang, literarischem Gewicht und Medienpräsenz einnimmt. Er wäre überrascht gewesen, dass sich über die literarische Produktion hinaus eine indigene Tigreistik entwickelt hat. Es seien nur die beiden enzyklopädischen Wörterbücher von Musa Aron erwähnt: das einsprachige Tigre-Wörterbuch *Kəbət-ḳālāt Təgre* (Asmara 2005) und das tigrinische Wörterbuch der tigrinischen und tigreischen Personennamen (*Mäzgäbä-ḳalat səmat ertrawyan Təgrəññan Təgrän*, Toronto 1994), die beide bei uns noch größere Beachtung verdienten.

Wie sehr das Tigre im heutigen Erythräa auch auf wissenschaftlichem Niveau gefördert wird, zeigen die beiden Konferenzen, die wenige Monate vor der Enno-Littmann-Konferenz (d.i. im Dezember 2008) in Asmara abgehalten wurden: *Maḥbar gomāt gemām fan həgyā Təgrāyət / First Assessment Symposium on Art Works in*

*the Tigre Language* und die *1 [ḳadāmā]y wāˤlā Təgrāyət ˤəggəl / 1ˢᵗ Conference for Standard-Tigre*. Die zweite Konferenz dieser Art fand 2009 statt.

Die große Bedeutung von Enno Littmann für die Erforschung des Tigre wird auch *in Erythräa selbst gesehen. Davon zeugt der von Musa Aron und Dässale Bäräkät* herausgegebene Band *Merās – mən ˤādāt gabayəl Təgre la-ṭḥayabat zəḥrat* 'Inheritance – treasure collected from the traditions of the Tigre tribes' (Asmara 2010), in dem auch Texte, die Littmann in seinen *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia* herausgegeben hat, in einer revidierten Fassung erschienen sind.

Die dem Tigre gewidmeten Beiträge waren so substantiell, dass wir uns entschlossen haben, diese in einem getrennten Band herauszugeben. Um diesen Band auch den Tigre-Sprechern näherzubringen, haben wir jedem Beitrag ein Resümee in Tigre angefügt. Dafür sei meinem Doktoranden Saleh Mahmud Idris aus Erythräa gedankt. Er hat uns auch im Unterricht bei unserer Tigrelektüre seine muttersprachliche Kompetenz zur Verfügung gestellt, ohne die wir manches nicht verstanden hätten, sind die Grammatiken und Lexika doch nicht ausreichend, um moderne Texte verstehen zu können. Damit ist das *Seminar für Semitistik und Arabistik* weltweit die einzige universitäre Einrichtung, an der Kurse für das Tigre angeboten werden, das nach den zahlreichen Publikationen der letzten Jahre als jüngste semitische Großkorpussprache bezeichnet werden kann.

Von großer Bedeutung für die Tigrestudien ist auch die Entdeckung des äthiopistischen Nachlasses von Enno Littmann in der *Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, s. den nachfolgenden Beitrag. Littmanns Nachlass enthält auch Unterlagen des schwedischen Missionars Richard Sundström (1869–1919). Hier harrt noch Tigrematerial der Veröffentlichung.

Wir bedauern, dass die Kollegen Paolo Marrassini und Andrzej Zaborski das Erscheinen des Bandes nicht mehr erleben durfte. Paolo Marrassinis Beitrag wurde dankenswerterweise von Alessandro Bausi redaktionell bearbeitet.

Dass die dritte Enno-Littmann-Konferenz mit den Tigre-Beiträgen auch in Erythräa Resonanz gefunden hat, belegt der beigefügte Bericht aus der tigreischen Zeitung *Ertarəya Ḥaddās* vom 3. sänä (Juni) 2009, S. 7. Der Titel des von ˤUmar Abib verfassten Beitrages *Fənge maṭḥan wa-walatta* ‚Zwischen dem Mahlstein und seiner Tochter, d.i. zwischen den beiden Mahlsteinen' verweist auf die großen Hindernisse, die es zu überwinden galt, um gegenüber konkurrierenden Sprachen, wie dem Amharischen, Arabischen und Tigrinischen als vollwertige Literatursprache Anerkennung und Förderung zu erfahren.

Für die Mitwirkung an diesem Band und seiner Gestaltung danke ich Herrn Hatem Elliesie, für die Formatierung Herrn Markus Falk, Frau Sina Nikolajew für Typesetting und Layout sowie Herrn Rüdiger Köppe für die redaktionelle Betreuung im Verlag.

Ohne die großzügige und dankenswerte Unterstützung der *Deutschen Forschungs-gemeinschaft*, die schon die Tagung gefördert hat, hätte der Band in dieser Form nicht erscheinen können.

Rainer Voigt

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# Der Littmann-Nachlass im Archiv
# der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

Hatem Elliesie, Stefan Sienell,
Roswitha Stiegner & Bogdan Burtea[*]

*Abstract*

According to Enno Littmann's last will, his notes and records, including those of Richard Sundström, on Egypt, Eritrea and Ethiopia were handed over to Maria Höfner for further research, after his death on 4 May 1958. She used the materials to finalize the Tigre-German-English Dictionary which was published in 1962. Afterwards, Maria Höfner kept all notes and records in her house in Graz (Austria) until her death on 5 November 1992. Those records turned out to belong to the Archives of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. This paper describes from different perspectives, how the scientific community has dealt with it ever since. After a presentation on the Tǝgre-panel on the III International Enno Littmann Conference in Berlin in April 2009, presented by Roswitha Stiegner from Austria, and a conference report by Adam ʿAli in *Eratrǝyā Ḥaddās* on 3 June 2009 (on its page 7), the director of the Archive invited Hatem Elliesie and Bogdan Burtea from the Freie Universität Berlin to Vienna for the cataloguing of all materials between 2009 and 2010 which turned out to be in the Archives. Both scholars were able to identify most of the published and unpublished manuscripts, notes, correspondence etc. After all, the paper presents some insights into the archived materials.

## A. Einleitung

Als Prof. Dr. Enno Littmann[1] am 6. November 1952 sein Testament aufsetzte, verfügte er u.a. Folgendes:

> Meine wissenschaftlichen Aufzeichnungen aus dem Orient, vor allem aus Abessinien und Ägypten, sollen einem deutschen Orient-Institut überwiesen werden. Welches Institut gewählt wird,

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[*] Hatem Elliesie (Freie Universität Berlin), Stefan Sienell (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften), Roswitha Stiegner (Universität Wien), Bogdan Burtea (Universität Zürich, vormals Freie Universität Berlin).

[1] Zu Enno Littmann siehe Voigt: Enno Littmann (2005), S. 247–264; Kleiner: Littmann (2007), S. 588–590.

darüber sollen Professor H. Scheel, Professor R. Paret und Dr. A. Schall nach gemeinsamer Beratung entscheiden. Meine Originalzeichnungen von Inschriften aus Syrien und Abessinien, soweit sie noch vorhanden sind, sollen der Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris überwiesen werden.

Erläuternd erklärte Littmann:

Das erste Recht auf Bearbeitung und Veröffentlichung meiner wissenschaftlichen Aufzeichnungen aus Abessinien soll Fräulein Dr. Maria Höfner zustehen. Diese Aufzeichnungen nebst denen von R. Sundström, die sich in meinem Besitze befinden, sollen ihr nach meinem Tode übergeben werden, und sie mag sie so lange behalten, wie sie es für nötig hält. Nach Empfang soll sie ein Verzeichnis an das von den Herren Scheel, Paret und Schall gewählte Institut übermitteln; die Originale soll sie erst dann dahin abgeben, wenn sie mit der Bearbeitung fertig ist.[2]

Nach Littmanns Tod am 4. Mai 1958 wurde sein Testament am 2. Juni eröffnet und die Verfügung dahingehend erfüllt, dass Maria Höfner die fraglichen Unterlagen erhielt. Über die Anlage eines Verzeichnisses und einen Beschluss der Herren Helmuth Scheel (1895–1967), Rudi Paret (1901–1983) und Anton Schall (1920–2007), wohin die Forschungsunterlagen nach der Bearbeitung durch Höfner übergeben werden sollten, gibt es keinerlei Nachrichten. Höfner selbst behielt die Unterlagen bei sich und arbeitete auch mit ihnen, denn sie waren wertvolle Zeugnisse für das gemeinsam von Littmann und Höfner bearbeitete *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache*, dessen Lieferungen 1–3 1956–1958 erschienen und das, nach dem Tode Littmanns 1958 von Höfner allein weitergeführt, mit dem letzten Faszikel 1962 abgeschlossen wurde. Die von Littmann erhaltenen wissenschaftlichen Aufzeichnungen bewahrte Höfner gemeinsam mit der ihr ebenfalls nur treuhänderisch überlassenen Sammlung Glaser zuletzt in ihrem Wohnhaus in Graz auf.[3]

## B. Verbleib des Nachlasses

Als Höfner im November 1992 verstarb, veranlasste Prof. Dr. Walter Dostal in seiner Eigenschaft als Mitglied der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften die sofortige Überstellung eines großen Schrankes in dem – der Fachwelt seit Jahrzehnten bekannt – alle Inschriften, Abklatsche als umfangreichster Teil der Sammlung E. Glaser und damit wertvollstes „Basis-Element" bei der Entstehung und Entwicklung einer neuen Wissenschaft, der Sabäistik, sorgsamst verwahrt waren, zurück an den rechtmäßigen Eigentümer, die Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften,

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[2]   Testamentarische Verfügungen Littmanns nach dem Schreiben des Bezirksnotariats I Tübingen, Nachlassgericht, an Höfner vom 13. Juni 1958. Vgl. hierzu Enno Littmanns Briefe vom 2. und 4. August 1942 im Archiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (AÖAW), *NL Littmann*, 3/22.

[3]   Vgl. Sienell: Zur Geschichte der Sammlung Glaser (2014) [in Vorbereitung].

verbunden mit einer kurzzeitig erforderlichen Verwahrung durch bzw. bei Walter Dostal in Wien. Die immer auch darin enthaltenen Tagebücher Glasers waren noch zu Lebzeiten Höfners Walter Dostal zu Bearbeitung überlassen worden. All diese Schätze konnten sodann gemeinsam 1996 von ihm an das Archiv der Akademie übergeben werden. Einige weitere Unterlagen, zumeist den Südarabien-Forscher Wilhelm Hein (1861–1903)[4] betreffend, verblieben bis zum Jahre 2007 an der ÖAW-Forschungsstelle Sozialanthropologie (seit 2010: Institut für Sozialanthropologie) und wurden dann im Akademie-Archiv wieder mit den übrigen Unterlagen vereinigt.

Im Archiv wurde seit dem Jahre 2002 an einer Ordnung und einer fachgerechten Aufbewahrung der „Sammlung Glaser" gearbeitet, die sich bis dahin immer noch in den Umzugskartons aus dem Jahre 1996 befanden. Hierbei wurde – wie ein Vergleich mit dem von Höfner 1944 publizierten Verzeichnis der Sammlung Glaser ergab[5] – schnell klar, dass sich darunter auch etliche Unterlagen befanden, die nicht Teil der Sammlung Glaser waren. Sie wurden als Provenienz Enno Littmann erkannt (und provisorisch in drei Archivkartons eingeschachtelt), konnten jedoch in Ermangelung der für die Verzeichnung notwendigen Fach- und Sprachkenntnisse nicht weiter archivarisch erschlossen werden. Eine Anfrage nach eventuell vorhandenen Littmann-Unterlagen durch Frau Dr. Roswitha Stiegner Anfang März 2009 offenbarte dem Archivar, Herrn Dr. Stefan Sienell, dass die *scientific community* seit langem vergeblich nach diesen Aufzeichnungen gesucht hatte.

Erstmals hatte Prof. Dr. Rainer Voigt vom Seminar für Semitistik und Arabistik der Freien Universität Berlin bereits im Jahre 2005 nach dem Verbleib von handschriftlichen Aufzeichnungen und wertvollsten wissenschaftlichen Dokumenten, insbesondere die Tǝgre-Sprache und -Kultur betreffend, aus Enno Littmanns Hand bei Roswitha Stiegner als letzter Schülerin von Maria Höfner (1900–1992, zuletzt Professorin in Graz) nachgefragt. Wiederholt wurde bis 2008/2009 von Rainer Voigt sowie 2009 von dessen Wissenschaftlichem Mitarbeiter, Herrn Hatem Elliesie, die Bedeutung dieses unauffindbaren Littmann-Nachlasses unterstrichen – wie auch zusätzlich durch ähnliche Anfragen von Prof. Dr. Walter W. Müller (Marburg) und zuletzt noch 2008 von Dr. Wolbert Smidt (Hamburg). Wiederholt blieben akribische Nachforschungen auf dem Dachboden der einstigen Villa Höfners erfolglos. Ein letzter Versuch am 27. Februar 2009 konfrontierte Stiegner mit der Aussage der Universal-Erben über eine „Entsorgung im Rahmen des Umbaues."[6] Trotzdem, doch ohne Hoffnung, ging eine kurze diesbezügliche E-Mail an den ihr seit einiger Zeit

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[4]    Siehe Sturm: *Leben für die Forschung* (2007).

[5]    Höfner: *Die Sammlung Eduard Glaser* (1944).

[6]    „kein Auftrag bzgl. des wissenschaftlichen Nachlasses bzw. der Bibliothek weder mündlich (noch zu Lebzeiten Höfners), noch schriftlich (Testament) [...]. Wir hatten nie über diese Dinge gesprochen [...] hatten weder Kenntnis noch Interesse an einem – selbst für eine Akademiker-Familie so exzentrischen Fach."

persönlich bekannten Leiter des Archivs der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Stefan Sienell, mit der sofort darauf folgenden, o.a. ersehnten „Offenbarung"! – Eine erste Einsichtnahme im Archiv (23./24. und 30. März 2009) brachte Stiegner die Bestätigung: Es waren die seit Jahrzehnten verschollenen Manuskripte und sonstigen Unterlagen Enno Littmanns, worüber sie sodann am 3. April 2009 im Rahmen der III. Enno-Littmann-Konferenz des Seminars für Semitistik und Arabistik an der Freien Universität Berlin auf dem ersten reinen Tigre-Panel[7] der glücklichen internationalen *scientific community* berichten durfte. Daraufhin konnte Rainer Voigt endlich diesen Littmann-Nachlass erstmals am 18. Mai 2009 anlässlich seiner Gastvorlesung an der Universität Wien einsehen. Nach einer ersten Sichtung konnte man mit Hatem Elliesie und Dr. Bogdan Burtea zwei Spezialisten gewinnen, die sich der Erschließung des Nachlasses annahmen. In drei Wien-Aufenthalten an der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zwischen September 2009 und Juli 2010 wurden die notwendigen Verzeichnungsarbeiten erledigt, so dass nun ein komplettes Bestandsinventar vorliegt, das nicht nur das überlieferte Material erschließt, sondern dieses erstmals auch fachgerecht verwahrt wird, zitierfähig und damit künftig für weitere Kolleginnen und Kollegen leichter erschließbar und verwertbar ist.[8]

Wegen weiterer Nachlassteile, die sich im Besitz der Witwe Elsa Littmann (-Nöldeke) befanden, wandte sich Littmanns Enkel, Dr. Thomas Fischer, Akademischer Rat an der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Abteilung für Geschichtswissenschaften, im Frühjahr 1981 informell an Prof. Dr. Robert Göbl, ob die Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften an einer Übernahme dieses Nachlassteiles interessiert sei. Er charakterisierte das Material, von „etwa 4–5 mannshohen Aktenschränken" in einem Bericht vom 3. April 1981 wie folgt:

(1)  einen Koffer (mittlerer Größe) mit allen Handschriften (ein Verzeichnis von Prof. Dr. Murad Kamil liegt bei);

(2)  die Original-Manuskripte meines Großvaters (allerdings ohne dasjenige seiner Übersetzung von ‚Tausendundeinernacht', das auf seinen Wunsch hin nach seinem Tode vernichtet worden ist;

(3)  zahlreiche Handexemplare eigener Schriften meines Großvaters (mit Notizen und einliegenden Sonderdrucken, Korrespondenzen u.a.m.), auch Separata;

(4)  einige Schriften anderer Gelehrter (Rudolf Tschudi), z.T. mit handschriftl. Eintragungen meines Großvaters;

(5)  die äußerst vielfältige und reichhaltige Korrespondenz, leider in einem unübersichtlichen Zustande, doch scheint neben persönlichen Zeugnissen eine Reihe namhafter Gelehrter zu überwiegen (nicht nur Orientalisten);

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[7]  Elliesie / Breyer: Tigre (2011), S. 3.

[8]  Das Bestandsinventar ist online verfügbar unter: www.oeaw.ac.at/biblio/Archiv/pdf/Littmann.pdf (zuletzt eingesehen am 16.10.2013).

(6)   (offenbar mehrere ?) Karteien und Materialsammlungen (nebst weiteren Unterlagen, z.T. auch aus dem Nachlaß Friedrich Veith).[9]

Littmanns Witwe wandte sich im Juli 1981 selbst an die Akademie und schrieb:

Mein Enkel, der, wie ich selbst, diesen Nachlaß der Wissenschaft erhalten wissen möchte, hat mit einem Mitglied Ihrer Institution gesprochen, den Nachlaß in würdiger Weise zu erhalten! Bei einer Sichtung und Überstellung an Ihre Akademie würde mein Enkel Ihnen sicher zur Verfügung stehen. Allerdings erst nach meinem Ableben!

Die Akademie dankte Anfang August 1981 für das Offert und schrieb desweiteren:

In Beachtung des von Ihnen genannten Übergabedatums hoffe ich, daß dieser Zeitpunkt in sehr, sehr ferner Zukunft liegt, darf aber wohl schon heute sagen, daß die Akademie um diesen Nachlaß bemüht sein wird, zählte Ihr Gatte doch zu den ersten Semitisten Deutschlands und war er der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften nicht nur in seiner Eigenschaft als Ehrenmitglied, sondern auch durch seine Forschungen über die südsemitischen Sprachen und die Mitbetreuung des von Frau Prof. Maria Höfner vorbereiteten Wörterbuches des Alt-Südarabischen besonders verbunden.[10]

Zu einer entsprechenden testamentarischen Verfügung seitens der Witwe zugunsten der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften ist es jedoch nicht gekommen. Im Testament der am 6. Juni 1983 verstorbenen Elsa Littmann (-Nöldeke) heißt es:

Der gesamte wissenschaftliche Nachlaß von Enno Littmann ist Thomas Fischer zu übergeben, er soll bestimmen, was für die Familie erhalten werden soll und was wissenschaftlich noch nicht ausgewertet ist. Für diese nicht ganz leichte und langwierige Arbeit ist ein Honorar [...] ausgesetzt. Auf keinen Fall soll Tübingen etwas aus dem Nachlaß erhalten, da sich die Bibliothek beim Verkauf der Littmannschen Bücher so schäbig benommen hat.[11]

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[9]   AÖAW, *Arabische Kommission*, K. 2, Mappe „Ablehnung der Übernahme des Nachlasses Enno Littmann, 1981–1984". Im Aug. 1983 verfasste Fischer einen sechsseitigen „Bericht über die vorläufige Sichtung des wiss. Nachlasses von Enno Littmann im Hause seiner am 6. Juni 1983 zu Tübingen verstorbenen Gemahlin Elsa Littmann, geb. Nöldeke", ebda.

[10]   AÖAW, *Personalakt Enno Littmann*.

[11]   Wie Anm. 9, zitiert nach dem Schreiben Fischers vom 4. Juli 1983. Den letzten Passus erläuternd schrieb Walter W. Müller am 17. August 1983 an die Akademie: „Littmanns umfangreiche Privatbibliothek wurde nach seinem Tod von der Witwe der Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen zum Kauf angeboten. Dieser Kauf kam jedoch nicht zustande, zum einen, weil der geforderte Preis wohl zu hoch war, zum anderen, weil die Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen in den dreißiger Jahren die Bibliothek von Theodor Nöldeke erworben hatte und damals bereits als Sondersammelgebiet die Orientalistik betreute; die meisten Bücher wären somit als Dubletten angefallen. Ich erwähne dies nur, um verständlich zu machen, warum aus Sicht der Witwe Tübingen aus dem Nachlass nichts erhalten soll. Die Bibliothek Littmann wurde dann von E. J. Brill aufgekauft und verkauft, wobei die Universitätsbibliotheken in Tübingen und in Los Angeles Vorkaufsrechte erhielten. Auf diese Wei-

Am 12. November 1983 sichtete schließlich Walter W. Müller vom Seminar für Semitistik der Universität Marburg/Lahn den Nachlass[12] und berichtete zwei Tage später ausführlich der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften[13], wo man sich – nach Einholung weiterer Stellungnahmen zu diesem Bericht – entschied, diese Nachlassteile nicht zu übernehmen. Sie wurden von Fischer zunächst provisorisch bis Ende 1985 in der Universitätsbibliothek Bochum hinterlegt und schließlich aufgrund einer vertraglichen Vereinbarung aus dem Jahre 1986 von der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Handschriftenabteilung, im Jahre 1991 übernommen und dort als Nachlass 245 geführt.[14]

## C. Skizzierung des Inhaltes

Die jüngste Verzeichnung der Nachlassbestandteile im Archiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften ermöglicht nun neue Einsichten in die Erforschung des Təgre, der fünftgrößten aktiv gesprochenen semitischen Sprache[15]. Neben zahlreichen bisher unveröffentlichten Manuskripten besteht für die wenigen Təgreisten in den nächsten Jahren der besondere Reiz auch darin, die grammatikalischen Ausführungen auszuwerten. Ohne die großartigen wissenschaftlichen Leistungen Enno Littmanns schmälern zu wollen, sind die im Nachlass befindlichen Vorarbeiten von Richard Sundström für die Gesamtleistung der Erforschung der bzw. des Təgre neu zu bewerten: Nach der Durchsicht aller Dokumente lässt sich nämlich feststellen, dass es sich um einen *Nachlass in einem Nachlass*, genauer um einen Teilnachlass (Sundström) als Bestandteil eines Teilnachlasses (Littmann) handelt.[16] Wie dieser Teil seines Nachlasses zu Littmann gekommen ist, lässt sich wohl nicht mehr nach-

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se konnte das, was Tübingen noch nicht besaß, erworben werden, während ein großer Teil der Bücher nach Los Angeles gelangte."

[12] Bestätigt durch Walter W. Müller in einem Schreiben an Bogdan Burtea am 4. Oktober 2010: „Wie aus [dem vorliegenden] Aufsatz hervorgeht, bin ich 1983 mit der Sichtung des Nachlasses Littmann betraut gewesen, der jedoch die Abessinien betreffende Teile nicht mehr enthielt, da dieselben in Verwahrung von Maria Höfner übergegangen waren. Davon wußte ich nichts, denn bei meinen wiederholten Besuchen bei ihr in Graz zwischen 1964 und 1992 habe ich mich gelegentlich nur mit dem Nachlaß von Eduard Glaser beschäftigt, und Maria Höfner selbst hat in ihrer Grazer Zeit nur noch auf sabäistischem Gebiet gearbeitet. Umso erfreulicher ist es, daß jetzt dieser Teil des Nachlasses wieder aufgefunden wurde, der ja, nicht zuletzt wegen der Materialien von Sundström, noch von wissenschaftlichem Interesse sein dürfte."

[13] Wie Anm. 9.

[14] Frdl. Nachricht von Dr. Ralf Breslau, Handschriftenabteilung, vom 1. Juli 2010.

[15] Voigt: Zum Tigre (2008), S. 173.

[16] Richard Gustaf Sundström wurde am 18. August 1869 in Sånga (Schweden) geboren. Er verstarb am 16. Juni 1919 in Kärän (Eritrea). Lindahl: Sundström (2010), S. 767f.

zeichnen, auch nicht aufgrund von Littmanns Nachruf auf Sundström.[17] Interessant ist jedoch, dass Littmann in diesem Nachruf einen umfangreichen Nachlass von Sundström beschreibt, in dem er nicht nur dessen Übersetzungstätigkeit ins Təgre würdigt (mehrere Bücher des Alten Testaments sowie Schriften, die für die Mission bestimmt sind, wie Erbauungsbücher, eine Kirchengeschichte, Predigten) sondern besonders seine verdienstvolle Arbeit zu den Təgre-Volksgruppen erwähnt:

> Von größter Bedeutung für unsere Kenntnis der Tigrê-Stämme und ihrer Überlieferungen sind folgende Manuskripte, die druckfertig von seiner Hand vorliegen: Geschichte der ʿAd-Taklês, der Habâb, der ʿAd-Temâriâm, der Bêt-Djûk, der beiden Mänsaʿ-Stämme, der Mâriâ, der Zên, der Turk, der Hedârab, der Balau, der ʿAd-Zamât (Bilên), der Sâwrâ, der ʿAd-Schêk, die Geschichte der Schlacht von Adua, der Stämme des nordabessinischen Hochlandes, anderer kleinerer Stämme, eine größere Sammlung von Liedern verschiedener Art.[18]

Diese, von Littmann *en détail* aufgezählten Manuskripte sind bisher allerdings nur vereinzelt veröffentlicht worden. Die Mehrzahl wartet weiterhin noch auf ihre Entdeckung.

Littmann wie auch Höfner konnten nachweislich in ihren Studien und bei der Bearbeitung des Təgre-Wörterbuches[19] auf den reichen Fundus Sundströms wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse zurückgreifen. Dies offenbart sich unter anderem an umfangreichen schwedisch-təgreschen Wortlisten[20] sowie einem Manuskript zu einem nach dem *Fidäl*-Alphabet sortierten Təgre-Schwedischen Wörterbuch[21], auf denen Littmann, und später Höfner[22], offensichtlich aufbauten[23].[24] Gleiches lässt sich beispielsweise auch an dem Manuskript „ሰለሙን፡ ንጉስ፡ እግል፡ ንጉስ፡ ምሊሊክ፡ከአፎ፡ ከም፡ተወልደዩ።  [*Salamun nəgus ʾəgəl nəgus Məlilik kaʾafo kam tawaldayu.*]" anschaulich nachzeichnen: Hierzu findet sich sowohl eine erste Übersetzung von Sundström auf Schwedisch[25] als auch die deutsche Entsprechung „Wie Salomo den König

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[17]  Littmann: Richard Sundström (1955), S. 26–30.

[18]  Id.: Richard Sundström (1955), S. 29.

[19]  Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (1962).

[20]  Vgl. u.a. AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/7; AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/8 (A–H).

[21]  AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/6 (B).

[22]  Siehe AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 6 und 7, d.h. zwei große schwarze Kisten (Karton 6: Buchstabe ሀ–ነ [ha–na] / Karton 7: አ–ፈ [ʾa–fa]), der sog. Wörterbuch-Zettelkatalog für Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (1962).

[23]  Vgl. AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 3/20 (A) [96 (Notiz-)Zettel zur Təgre-Grammatik mit zahlreichen Təgre-Beispielen und Anmerkungen auf Deutsch]; AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 4 (D) [345 Zettel in Təgre mit deutschen Anmerkungen].

[24]  *Expressis verbis* diente bspw. AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/7 (Ordlista), als eine Referenzgrundlage für Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (1962). Vgl. ebda., S. XV, Sigle „SO".

[25]  AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/9.

Menelik erzeugte" von Littmann[26]. Ebenso dürften Littmanns deutsche Ausführungen zur Təgre-Grammatik[27] in großen Teilen auf der sorgsam durchstrukturierten handschriftlichen schwedischen Grammatik von Sundström[28] basieren, die ihrerseits im gegenwärtigen wissenschaftlichen Diskurs noch nicht wahrgenommen wurde.

Insbesondere der grammatische und lexikalische Teil des Sundström-Nachlasses scheint Littmann besonders interessiert zu haben. Der Nachlass enthält mehrere Manuskripte und Hefte aus der Feder von Sundström, welche sich ausschließlich mit der Grammatik der Təgre-Sprache beschäftigen. Dabei lassen sich erste Versuche von ausgereiften und vollständigen Beschreibungen unterscheiden. Zu den ersten zählen wohl einige Hefte in AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/2: Heft C und D mit Notizen zur Təgre-Grammatik auf Schwedisch sowie das Heft E, das ein Təgre-Lehrbuch mit Paradigmata enthält. Neben den neun Notizheften zur Təgre-Grammatik in AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/3, sind besonders die sieben Hefte A–G in AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/4, hervorzuheben. Die Ausgereiftheit der grammatischen Darstellung dieser zusammenhängenden sieben Hefte wird durch die detailreiche, mit Hilfe von Paragraphzeichen (§) markierte, Strukturierung des Inhalts deutlich hervorgehoben. Das ganze Konvolut, das 294 Manuskriptseiten umfasst, folgt der traditionellen Gliederung einer Schulgrammatik oder eines Lehrbuchs. Heft A und die ersten Seiten des Hefts B beschäftigen sich mit „I. Elementarlehre" und beginnen mit „Schriftzeichen und Laute / §1 Das Alphabet". Der zweite und umfangreichste Teil „II. Formenlehre" (§§11–66) erstreckt sich vom Heft B bis Heft F. Die letzten Seiten des Hefts F und das ganze Heft G befassen sich mit „III. Syntax", wobei dieser Teil unvollständig zu sein scheint, da die „Nominalen Konstruktionen" und darunter besonders „§67 Der Artikel" den größten Raum einnehmen. Schon dieser kurze Blick auf seine im Littmann-Nachlass befindenden Werke erlaubt uns in diesem Kontext, Richard Sundström als einen der bedeutendsten Təgreisten des ausgehenden 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts zu würdigen.[29]

Bemerkenswert und hilfreich sind in diesem Kontext letztlich noch die 16 Briefe von Sundström zwischen 1901 und 1919 aus Gheleb [tgr. *Gäläb*, tə. *Galab*], Örebro und Cheren [*Kärän*][30] und − für den sachgerechten Umgang mit dem schwedisch-

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[26]  AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/9.

[27]  Vgl. AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 3/20 (A) [96 (Notiz-)Zettel zur Təgre-Grammatik mit zahlreichen Təgre-Beispielen und Anmerkungen auf Deutsch]; AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 4 (D) [345 Zettel in Təgre mit deutschen Anmerkungen].

[28]  AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/B [am Ende]-E; AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/4; AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/5; AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/6 (A).

[29]  Siehe, in diesem Zusammenhang, u.a. Sundström: *Kännedom* (1909); Sundström / Littmann: *En sång på tigre-språket* (1904); Sundström: *Dərsān Dāwəd* (1925); id.: *Dərsān Dāwəd wa-Kətāb* (1925); id.: *I libro di Isaia* (1925).

[30]  AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 3/22.

təgreischen-Material – dessen Erläuterungen zu den „Bokstáfvar for transkribering" [„Buchstaben zum Transkribieren"].[31]

Dass sich an dem Nachlass im Archiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften aber nicht nur Təgreisten im engeren Sinne erfreuen können, spiegelt sich beispielsweise in AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 3/18A, wider: Littmanns besondere Leistung liegt insbesondere auch darin, zur Phonologie und Klassifikation der Təgre-Verbalformen weitere semitische Sprachstrukturen beispielsweise aus dem Arabischen, dem Tigrinischen und des Gəʿəz einzubeziehen. Das gerade dieser kontrastive Ansatz in der Erforschung und in der Beschäftigung des Təgre ertragreiche wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse liefern kann, ist erst wieder im jüngsten wissenschaftlichen Diskurs deutlich geworden.[32] Die zahlreichen, nur teilweise publizierten Abschriften und Manuskripte in Altamharisch, Amharisch, Arabisch, Gəʿəz, Tigrinisch und Təgre, welche Enno Littmann unter anderem während der Princeton Expedition nach Abyssinien gesammelt hat, stellen eine unschätzbare Quelle zu Leben und Kultur der Təgre am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts dar.[33] So wurden z.B. Manuskript IV (መእተዪ። ናይ። አምር። እት። ምድር። ትግሬ። [*Maʾatayi nāy amər ʾət mədər Təgre*; Einführung in die Kenntnis bezüglich des Təgre-Landes])[34],[35] Manuskript V[36], AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 2/15[37] und AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 2/16[38] für das vier bzw. fünf Bände umfassende Standardwerk, der *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia*,[39] verwendet. Darüber hinaus konnte in *NL Littmann*, 2/13 F, eines der von Littmanns muttersprachlichem Gewährsmann „Naffaʿ [wad] ʿOtmān"[40] stammenden Manuskripte, auf welche Maria Höfner im Wörterbuch ausdrücklich „unter der Sigle ‚Mscr' [auf Seite XIV] Bezug nimmt, identifiziert werden. Bisher nicht auffindbar waren allerdings die im Wörterbuch unter den Siglen „ST I" und „ST II" aufgeführten,[41] von Sundström gesammelten Təgre-Texte.

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[31] AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 1/1 (a).

[32] Vgl. Voigt: Zum Tigre (2008), S. 173–193.

[33] Bulakh: Die Tigré (2006), S. 73.

[34] Manuskriptseiten 1–20 wurden in Littmann: *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia* (PE), III (1913), S. XI–XXIV publiziert.

[35] AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 2/10.

[36] AÖAW, *NL Littmann*, 2/10: Bspw. Ms. S. 3, No. 3 = PE III, S. 126; Ms. S. 10, No. 11 = PE III, S. 302; Ms. S. 12, No. 13 = PE III, S. 675; Ms. S. 13, No. 16 = PE III, S. 676; Ms. S. 14, No. 17 = PE III, S. 193; Ms. S. 14, No. 18 = PE III, S. 194; Ms. S. 35, No. 39 = PE III, S. 533.

[37] Siehe PE III, S. 536ff.

[38] Təgre-Texte zu PE I.

[39] PE I, PE II, PE III, PE IVA, PE IVB [insges. 2339 S., davon PE I und III mit Tigre-Texten 868 S.].

[40] Zu Naffaʿ siehe Littmann: Erinnerungen an Naffaʿ (1918), S. 587–591; Lusini: Näffaʿ (2007), S. 1097.

[41] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (1962). Vgl. ebda., S. XV.

## D. Perspektive

Dass „jeder neue Təgretext uns nicht nur neue Einsichten beschert, sondern auch neue Probleme aufwirft", hatte Rainer Voigt bereits an anderer Stelle treffend zum Ausdruck gebracht.[42] Der nun erschlossene und „der Wissenschaft wieder zugänglich[e]"[43] Littmann-Nachlass im Archiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften könnte demgemäß einiges dazu beitragen.

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   *B. Lieder der ˀAd-Temāryām, ˁAd-Hebtēs (Ḥabāb), ˁAd-Taklēs und kleinere Stämme*, S. 588–1098, 1915 [= PE IVB].

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[42]   Voigt: Zum Tigre (2008), S. 191.

[43]   Elliesie / Breyer: Bericht (2009), S. 187f.; Elliesie / Breyer, Tigre (2011), S. 3.

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*Tigre abstract*

### ውርስ ኤኖ ሊትግን ዲብ እርሺፍ አካደምየት አስትርያ

ኤኖ ሊትግን እት መስር፡ ኤርትርየ ወአቶብየ እንዴ ሸቄ ለጅምዐየ ናይ ሪቻርድ ሱንድስትሮም ለከምክም ክቱብ ወተሳጀል ሐቆ ሞቱ ዝያድ በሐስ እግል ቲዴ እቡ እግል ግሪያ ሆፍነር ክምሰል ሀበየ እት ዮም 4 ማዮ 1958 እንዴ ኢመይት ለሐድገየ ናይ ደንጎበ ቆል አትዋራስ ለአክድ፡፡ ግሪያ ሆፍነር ህዬ ምኑ እንዴ ትከበተት ለዲብ ሰነት 1962 ለትጠብዐ ቃሙስ ትግሬ-ጀርመን-ኢንግሊዚ እግል ተአታምም ትነፍዐት እቡ፡፡ ሐቆሁ አስክ አምዕል ሞተ (ወርሕ 11/1992) ኩሉ ለክቱቡ ወተሳጀል ዲብ ቤተ እት ግራዝ (አውስትርየ) ከራቱ፡፡ እት ደንጎበ እሊ ለኤኖ ሊትግን ሐድገየ ክቱብ ወተሳጀል ዲብ እርሺፍ አካዳምየት አውስትርየ በጽሐ፡፡ ከግድም እሊ ወረቀት እሊ ዑለማእ ምን ዶል ለሀይ እንዴ አምበተው ውርስ ኤኖ ሊትግን ከፈ ክም ትንፈዐው እቡ እብ ለትፈናተ አግቡይ ትሽሬሕ፡፡ ሮዝቪታ ስቲግነር ዲብ እት ወርሕ አብሪል ሰነት 2009 እት በርሊን ለገብአ ሳልሳይ እድንያይ ሙእተመር ኤኖ ሊትግን ወረቀት ሐፈለ ቀደመት ወአድም ዐሊ ዲብ ጀሪደት ኤትሪየ ሐዳስ ናይ ዮም 3 ዮንዮ 2009 (ገጽ 7) ተቅረረ ናይለ ሙእተመር ሐፈለ ቀደመ፡ ሙዲር ናይለ እርሺፍ (ስቴፋን ሲኔል) እግል ሐቲም ኢሊዚ ወበግዳን ቡርቲያ ምን ሐር ጃምዐት በርሊን (ጀርመን) እግለ ክቱብ ወተሳጀል እንዴ ዐረበው ዐላይም እግል ሊደው ዲቡ እት ፍንጌ ሰነት 2009 ወ 2010 ዲብ ቪነ (አውስትርየ) ዐዝመዮም፡፡ ክልኢቶም ምኤምረት ምን ኤኖ ሊትግን ለሐድገዬ ክቱብ፡ መትፋቀዲ ወጀዋባት...፡ ቀደም እለ ለትጠብዐ ወለኢትጠብዐ እግል ልፈናቱም ቀድረው፡፡ እለ ወረቀት እለ እት ደንጎበ ለእተ እርሺፍ ሕፉዝ ለሀለ ሐጃት ሚ ክም መስል ሱረት ዓመት ተህይብ፡፡

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*Language and Literature /
Sprache und Literatur*

# The Prefix ʾ*at*- in Tigre

Maria Bulakh[*]

*Abstract*

The morphological causatives in Tigre are formed either with the prefix ʾ*a*- or ʾ*at*-. The present contribution focuses on the latter element. The analysis of all the verbs with the prefix ʾ*at*- collected in the dictionary by Enno Littmann and Maria Höfner reveals the necessity of drawing distinction between two elements: ʾ*at*-₁, which emerges before guttural consonants as an allomorph of ʾ*a*-, and ʾ*at*-₂, which is an independent causative morpheme. At first, the morphocombinatorial properties of ʾ*at*-₁ and ʾ*at*-₂ are investigated and compared. It is proposed that the prefix ʾ*at*-₂ is to be analyzed diachronically and, in most cases, synchronically, as the combination of the causative ʾ*a*- and passive/reflexive *t(ə)*-. Secondly, the semantics of ʾ*at*₂- is investigated: all its meanings are reducible to the combination of the semantics of ʾ*a*- and *t(ə)*- (sometimes with specific development of the causative component). Thirdly, attention is paid to the argument structure of the causative verbs employing ʾ*at*₂-, which is preliminary compared to the structure of the verbs with the prefix ʾ*a*-. No cardinal differences have been detected. Finally, in the discussion of the diachronic aspect of ʾ*at*-₁ and ʾ*at*-₂, the following conclusion is drawn. Only ʾ*at*-₂ can be reliably traced to a common Ethio-Semitic stage. ʾ*at*-₁ is a secondary development in Tigre, paralleled by similar, albeit not identical, developments in other modern Ethio-Semitic languages.

## A. Introduction

In Tigre, as elsewhere in Ethio-Semitic, one finds alongside the causative prefix ʾ*a*- (which has cognates in all Ethio-Semitic languages and beyond) another causative marker, namely, the prefix ʾ*at*-, which is an internal Ethio-Semitic development. The aim of the present contribution is to highlight the functions of the prefix ʾ*at*- in Tigre and to explore its relationship to the prefix ʾ*a*-.

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The material for the study is drawn from the dictionary of E. Littmann and M. Höfner (LH); whenever possible, the Tigre texts which served as sources for this dictionary were consulted. The present work thus reflects the state of the language as it was recorded ca. one hundred years ago. Obviously, a study relying on modern sources and contemporary fieldwork may yield different results (which is partly due to the language change and partly to the scantiness of data used here). It may be hoped, nevertheless, that the present article will provide a good starting point for such a comprehensive study. The article is organized along the following lines:

In section A, a brief survey of the verbal system of Tigre will be given. In section B, I will survey the previous descriptions of the stems with the prefix *ʾat-* in Tigre. In section C, the morphocombinatorial properties of the element *ʾat-* will be considered and a distinction between two functionally different types of the element *ʾat-* will be drawn. In sections D and E, I will present the results of a systematic perusal of LH and the available printed sources. The semantics and the syntax of the verbs with the prefix *ʾat-* will then be discussed (sections D and E respectively). Some preliminary observations on the functional difference between *ʾat-* and *ʾa-* will be made. In section F, some observations on the origin and development of the prefix *ʾat-* in Ethio-Semitic will be ventured.

Before I proceed to the discussion of the semantics of the prefix *ʾat-* in Tigre, a few words must be said on the Tigre verbal system, as well as on the notation of the verbal stems adopted in the present work. The verbal stems of Tigre are designated here according to the notation system of LH, whose structure is adopted also in Raz 1983: the four types of verbal bases (*ḳatl*, *ḳattal-*, *ḳātal-* and the frequentative stem *ḳatātal-*) are marked as 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Raz' A, B, C and D).[1] Thus, there are four stems without prefixes (01-04) and several augmented stems employing the same bases.[2] The augments are designated as follows: A for *ʾa-*, T for *t(ə)-*, AT for *ʾat-* and ATA for *ʾatta-*.[3] This notation system is a convenient tool allowing one to classify all possible verbal patterns of Tigre. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that different stems may have different morphological status. Thus, only one of them (01) is used exclusively for non-derived verbs. The stem 02 (*ḳattala*) is sometimes employed as a derivational means (to produce verbs with the intensive or causative meaning from 01), but on the whole it can also be treated as a non-derived stem. The stem 03 (*ḳātala*) occurs both as a non-derived stem and as a productive morphological means (to express intensive or iterative meanings).[4] Finally, the frequentative

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[1]   Verbs with four or more radicals usually form bases 1 and 3 only.

[2]   Sometimes with slight modification, such as the change *ḳatl-* > *ḳtal-* in the base 1 before the prefix *ʾa-*.

[3]   A few other, non-productive, verbal prefixes are found in Tigre: *ʾan-*, *ʾas-*, *ʾasta-*, designated as AN, AS, AST respectively in LH.

[4]   See Leslau 1945, pp. 3–5. For a brief statistical evaluation of 02 and 03 stems and their functions in Tigre (based on the data of LH) cf. Bulakh / Kogan 2011, pp. 26–29.

stem 04 (ḳatātala) is normally a derived stem with the iterative meaning. The pre-fixed stems are typically derived stems. To be sure, for each of them some roots can be found that do not occur in any of the 0-stems (such as A1 ʾabḥaza 'to come upon, to inflict', LH 267), but such cases are statistically insignificant.

Most prefixes can be treated as independent morphemes, notwithstanding the formal changes in the base triggered by their addition. Prefixes can be combined with different bases, whose choice may depend on the base of the source verb or may be lexically determined: 01 bašla 'to boil (v.i.)' > A1 ʾa-bšala 'to boil (v.t.)' (LH 283; note the change in the morphological structure of the base), 02 waǧǧaba 'to be excellent' > A2 ʾawaǧǧaba 'to distinguish, to commend' (LH 447), 03 sāfara 'to depart' > A3 ʾasāfara 'to cause to depart' (LH 201); 01 ḳalʿa 'to disclose, to manifest' > T2 təḳalləʿa 'to be open, to appear' (LH 234), 01 batka 'to cut (off), to hew down' > T2 təbattaka 'to be cut off' (LH 287f.; note that passive/reflexive prefix t(ə)- always triggers the change from base 1 to base 2), 02 kaššana 'to cook a meal of onions' > T2 təkaššana pass. (LH 407f.).

In a few other cases, it is only the combination of a certain prefix with a certain stem that can be defined as a special complex morpheme whose function cannot be reduced to the semantics of the base and the prefix. Thus, the stem T3 is frequently employed to form reciprocal verbs from the stems 01-03[5], but the reciprocal meaning cannot be ascribed to the prefix t(ə)- alone as no such meaning is known for the T2 stem. Some verbs labeled as T3 in LH are formed through the addition of the passive/reflexive prefix t(ə)- to a non-derived verb of the type 03 (T3 təsārā 'to be cured' < 03 sārā 'to cure', LH 178), but many others, through the application of the reciprocal pattern təḳātala to this or that consonantal verbal root (T3 təzābaṭa 'to fight each other' < 01 zabṭa 'to beat', LH 499–500).

These considerations lead us to the problem of establishing the source of deriva-tion for a given Tigre verb. Is a verb T3 təkāfala 'to divide among each other, to share' derived from 01 kafla 'to divide', from T2 təkaffala 'to be divided' or from 03 kāfala 'to distribute (to many people)' (LH 425)? Quite often, no straightforward answer to this and similar questions can be given. As far as the subject of the present study is concerned, one has to decide whether an AT-verb is derived from a T-verb or from an 0-verb. From the morphological point of view, it is tempting to regard all AT-verbs as derived from T-verbs through the addition of the causative prefix ʾa-: ʾa- + t(ə)ḳattala > ʾatḳattala; ʾa- + t(ə)ḳātala > ʾatḳātala, etc. Still, for quite a number of verbal roots this solution is unacceptable: the corresponding T-stem is either ab-sent or cannot serve as a source of derivation for the AT-stem on semantic grounds. For instance, the verb AT3 ʾaššākara 'to make drunk' should be considered a causa-tive to 01 šakra 'to get drunk' (LH 222f.) for the simple reason that no T-stem is

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[5]    Leslau 1945, pp. 11f.

recorded for this root. Similarly, the verb AT3 *ʾatfāgara* 'to cause to go out' is much more likely to be derived from 01 *fagra* 'to go out' than from T3 *təfāgara* 'to be remote' or T2 *təfaggara* 'to pass over' (LH 674f.). In some cases, different meanings recorded for an AT-verb can be explained in terms of different sources of derivation: cf. AT3 *ʾatwādaḳa* = A1 *ʾawdaḳa* 'to cause to fall, to throw over' < 01 *wadḳa* 'to fall' vs. AT3 *ʾatwādaḳa* 'to miscarry (birth)' < T3 *təwādaḳa* 'to be miscarried (birth)' (LH 445). At the same time, the semantics of 0- and T-verbs are often so close that it is virtually impossible to determine which of the two should be considered as the derivational source of the corresponding AT-stem (cf. columns 3 in the tables 1–3).

## B. Previous Research on *ʾat*-Stem in Tigre

According to Littmann,[6] the prefix *ʾat*- occurs with each of the four types of verbal bases. Thus, there are AT1, AT2, AT3 and AT4 stems in Tigre. Littmann observes, however, that the stem AT1 is quite rare and mostly restricted to verbs with gutturals as their first radical. The semantics of AT1 is mostly that of simple causative. For AT2 and AT3, Littmann surmises original reflexive-causative semantics, but admits that in most cases such verbs are glossed as simple causatives. He thus attributes to the prefix *ʾat*- the semantics of simple causative and of reflexive-causative.

Leslau,[7] with more materials at his disposal, provides the following information on the prefix *ʾat*-.

1. Structure:
   – the prefix *ʾat*- is combined with the bases 3, 4 and 2 only (Leslau doubts the authenticity of the AT1 verbs quoted in Littmann 1898);
   – in the *Grammatica della lingua tigré* (1919), there is one more base (-*ḳātātal*-) used with this prefix (verbs of this type quoted in Leslau 1945: 13 are absent from LH);
   – when the source of derivation has the base 2, the attachment of the prefix *ʾat*- can be accompanied by the change to the base 3.

2. Semantics:
   – the usual meaning of the AT-stems is causative;
   – in some cases, the prefix *ʾat*- (rather than *ʾa*-) is the only means of producing a causative verb (therefore, it has a general causative semantics); this is the case of
   a) verbs with the base 4, as well as verbs which occur in a T-stem, but not in a 0-stem;

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6    Littmann 1898, pp. 171f., 174–176. Based on various, mostly lexicographical, sources.
7    Leslau 1945, pp. 12f.

b)   verbs with gutturals as their first radical in the dialect of Massawa (data from Munzinger 1865);

–   apart from simple causative, the stems AT3 and AT4 can display more specific meanings, such as adjutative ('to help to do something') or causative of reciprocal (e.g., 'to cause them to kill one another');

–   causative of reciprocal is the "principal and original meaning" of AT3 and AT4.

Leslau's conclusions are based exclusively on the materials published by Littmann (1910–1915). Therefore, many relevant verbs later registered in LH (which subsumes a broader corpus of texts and lexicographic sources) escaped his attention (this affects, in particular, Leslau's claim that AT-verbs as simple causatives to verbs with initial gutturals are restricted to the dialect of Massawa).

Raz[8] posits the following major functions of the AT-stems:

–   all AT-stems function as causatives to intransitive T-verbs;

–   AT3 functions as causative of reciprocal,[9]

–   AT4 functions as causative to 04 (in view of the absence of A4) or to T4;[10]

–   all AT-stems can function as causatives to 0-verbs with initial gutturals, alongside with A-stems in which the sequence H*a*H changes to H*ā*; it is only in such cases that the AT1-stem is possible.

## C. Morphocombinatorial Properties and Semantics of *ʾat-*

## I. Morphocombinatorial Properties of *ʾat-*

Among the 409 AT-verbs recorded in LH, quite a few are given as belonging to the AT1-stem.[11] The available examples can be subdivided into two groups: verbs where no distinction between AT1- and AT2- is possible and those which could produce AT2-stems.

The former group includes multiradicals (with four or five root consonants, such as *ʾaṣṣarṣara* 'to cry aloud, to call', LH 638) and verbs with a guttural as their second

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8    1980, pp. 73f.; 1983, pp. 54f., 58.

9    In the example quoted by Raz, the source of derivation is a T3-verb with a reciprocal meaning. Still, some examples can be gleaned from LH where the verb with a causative-reciprocal meaning is derived from a non-reciprocal verb. In such cases, the pattern *ʾatḳātal-* can be treated as a single causative-reciprocal morpheme: *ʾatkābata* 'to cause to meet each other, to cause to receive each other' < T2 *təkabbata* 'to receive, to accept, to meet' (LH 411).

10   In the example quoted by Raz, the source of derivation is a T4-verb. Some examples of AT4-verbs derived from 0-verbs can be found in section C.III below.

11   Thus against Leslau 1945, p. 13, with fn. 67, and in agreement with Littmann 1898, p. 174 and Raz 1983, pp. 57, 58.

radical (which cannot be geminated in Tigre). Needless to say, such verbs can hardly be seen as true representatives of the AT1-stem.

The latter group mostly consists of verbs with a guttural as their first radical, like *ʾatḥamada* 'to pay honour' (LH 63) or *ʾatʿaraga* caus. < *ʿarga* 'to ascend' (LH 462).[12] The remaining three AT1-verbs belonging to this group are *ʾatmarəḫa* 'to make lead' (LH 112), *ʾatfanā* caus. to T3 *təfānā* 'to make one's will, to agree' (LH 668) and *ʾatfagəʿa* (LH 675, with no gloss nor textual evidence).[13] Thus, the phonologically unconditioned AT1 verbs in Tigre are extremely few.

There are 63 triradical AT1-verbs in LH (of them 59 with initial gutturals), 100 triradical AT2 verbs (including verbs with gutturals or semivowels as their second radical), and 191 triradical AT3 verbs. As for the triradical AT4 verbs, they are fairly rare: only 10 examples could be gleaned from LH.

For multiradical roots, 35 AT1 verbs have been detected, and only 10 AT3 verbs. The bases 2 and 4, as is well-known, cannot be combined with multiradical roots.

## II. Two Prefixes: *ʾat₁-* and *ʾat₂-*?

Let us have a closer look on the behavior of the prefix *ʾat-* in triradical verbs with initial gutturals (henceforth referred to as H1-verbs). As shown in C.I, apart from a few exceptions this is the only type of triradical verbs which employs the stem AT1. Can there be an explanation for this distribution? Two features of the Tigre verbal system allow one to give a positive answer to this question. Firstly, the simple causative prefix *ʾa-* cannot be attached to a H1-verb without undergoing a morphophonemic change, making the A1-stem homophonous with the corresponding 03-stem: compare 01 *ḥalfa* 'to pass', A1 *\*ʾaḥlafa* > *ḥālafa* 'to make pass' (LH 58) with 01 *ḥalta* 'to drive away', 03 *ḥālata* 'to drive far away' (LH 3) or 01 *ḥalba* 'to milk', A1 *\*ʾaḥlaba* > *ḥālaba* (caus.) with 03 *ḥālaba* (intensive) (LH 54).[14] Secondly, the prefix *t(ə)-* is never combined with the base 1 in Tigre. Therefore, an AT-verb derived from a T-verb is equally unlikely to be combined with the base 1.

A plausible solution would be to consider *all* triradical AT-verbs as morphological derivatives of T-verbs, except for the H1-verbs.[15] In the latter case, the prefix *ʾat-* is employed as an allomorph of *ʾa-* (chosen in order to avoid the homonymy between

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[12]   Of course, some of the multiradical verbs, which belong to the first group, have initial gutturals two.

[13]   Still more dubious is *ʾatnašga* 'to content (?)' (LH 327), for which an alternative and more plausible form AT2 *ʾatnaššaga* is also adduced.

[14]   Sporadically, *ʾa-* causatives from H1-verbs with no modification of the prefix are also recorded in LH, e.g. *ʾaḥablaka* A1 caus. to *ḥablaka* 'to turn, to wind' (LH 78). Still, such cases are extremely rare and one can only wonder what phonetic realization is behind them.

[15]   As already suggested in Littmann 1898, pp. 171, 174.

03 and A1 verbs), and the source verbs mostly belong to 0-stems rather than T-stems. Since the base 1 is never used in T-stems, this base is only compatible with AT-stems of H1-verbs.

In the framework of this hypothesis, one has to posit two homonymous prefixes: ʾat1-, which appears before gutturals and is a phonologically conditioned allomorph of ʾa-, and ʾat2-, which can appear before any consonant but is never (or extremely seldom) combined with the base 1 in a triradical verb. Unlike ʾat1-, the prefix ʾat2- is an independent morpheme. The function of the element -t- in these two elements is different, at least synchronically. ʾat2- can be analyzed as a combination of ʾa- and t(ə),[16] and thus, -t- is a meaningful element, conveying the semantics of passive and related meanings. In ʾat1-, the element -t- functions as a consonantal insertion serving to avoid the sequence of two gutturals (a similar function of -t- in intervocalic position is well-known in Tigre and other Ethio-Semitic languages)[17].

The distribution of the two elements is not complementary: both can appear in the H1-verbs of the bases 2-4 and in multiradical H1-verbs. In the framework of the present study, no attempt at distinguishing between ʾat1- and ʾat2- in this position is undertaken, and hence, quite frequently the general term "prefix ʾat-" will be employed. However, a perusal of the available material may give some glimpses on the distribution of the stems. Table 1 displays verbs with initial gutturals which are likely semantic sources of derivation for the AT1-verbs recorded in LH. Each column reflects the sources of derivation from certain stems. Whenever the choice between verbs of different stems as possible sources of derivation is difficult, several stems are quoted.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | AT1 < 01 | AT1 < T2 | AT1 < 01/02/T2 | AT1 < A1(/T2) | non-verbal forms as source of derivation |
| 1 | ḥalta 'to pursue' | taḥallala 'to be covered' | ḥammala 'to neglect' / taḥammala 'to be absent-minded' | ʾāmara 'to know' taʾammara 'to become known' | ḥataf bela 'to rave' |
| 2 | ḥalka 'to exert oneself' | taḥaddā 'to marry (used of women)' | ḥalba 'to milk' / taḥallaba 'to be milked' | ʾātā 'to bring' | ʾemān 'confidence' (> AT1 ʾatʾamana 'to seek confidence, to check') |
| 3 | ḥamma 'to growl; to look after' | taḥammada 'to be praised' | ḥamā 'to abuse' / taḥammā pass. 'to incur abuse' | ʿārafa 'to rest' | |

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[16]   An analysis brought forward already in Littmann 1898, pp. 171, 174.
[17]   Cf. Bulakh / Kogan 2010, pp. 284f., fn. 18.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | *ḥarma* 'to beat' | *taḥaṣṣaba* 'to be washed' | *ḥarsa* 'to plough' / *taḥarrasa* 'to be ploughed' | | |
| 5 | *ḥarba* 'to flee' | *taʾassara* 'to be bound, to be captured' | *ḥašla* 'to bind' / *taḥaššala* pass. | | |
| 6 | *ḥadra* 'to murmur' | *taʿaǧǧaba* 'to be astonished' | *ḥakfa* 'to embrace' / *taḥakkafa* pass. | | |
| 7 | *ḥadʾa* 'to become quiet' | *taʿallā* 'to be driven away' | *ḥabʾa* 'to hide (v.i.)' / *taḥabbəʾa* 'to hide (v.i.)' | | |
| 8 | *ḥadga* 'to advise' | | *ḥatma* 'to seal' / *taḥattama* pass. | | |
| 9 | *ḥamka* 'to be weak' | | *ḥanṣa* 'to pierce' / *taḥannaṣa* pass. | | |
| 10 | *ḥarra* 'to be partly burned' | | *ḥazā* 'to seek' / *taḥazzā* pass. | | |
| 11 | *ḥarā* 'to choose' | | *ḥayā* 'to heal (v.i.)' / *taḥayā* pass. | | |
| 12 | *ḥarda* 'to slaughter' | | *ḥadra* 'to dwell' / *taḥaddara* 'to be inhabited' | | |
| 13 | *ḥasra* 'to be sad' | | *ḥadga* 'to leave' / *taḥaddaga* pass. | | |
| 14 | *ḥabra* 'to assemble' | | *ḥafra* 'to dig' / *taḥaffara* pass. | | |
| 15 | *ḥabṭa* 'to swell' | | *ʿabā* 'to be great' / *taʿabbā* | | |
| 16 | *ḥazana* 'to mourn' | | *ʿaṣba* 'to be in distress' / *taʿaṣṣab* 'to be distressed' | | |
| 17 | *ḥagla* 'to want, to miss' | | | | |
| 18 | *ḥačra* 'to be short' | | | | |
| 19 | *ḥaṣā* 'to engage, to betroth' | | | | |
| 20 | *ḥafna* 'to be hot' | | | | |
| 21 | *ʾasla* 'to lie in the shade' | | | | |
| 22 | *ʾakla* 'to be enough' | | | | |
| 23 | *ʾakā* 'to be bad' | | | | |
| 24 | *ʿarga* 'to ascend' | | | | |
| 25 | *ʿasā* 'to rebel' | | | | |
| 26 | *ʿakla* 'to fold (the leg)' | | | | |

| 27 | ʿakba 'to guard' | | | |
| 28 | ʿabra 'to be-come waste' | | | |
| 29 | ʿazza 'to be strong' | | | |

Table 1: AT1 stems for H1 verbs[18]

These data can now be compared with the picture obtained for the AT2-stem of H1-verbs.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | AT2 < 02/01 | AT2 < T2 | AT2 < T2/02/01 | non-verbal forms as source of derivation |
| 1 | 02 ḥallala 'to rock (v.t. and i.)' | taḥayaba 'to be given, to receive (presents)' | ḥalba 'to make incisions in the skin, to bleed (v.t.)' / taḥallaba 'to be bled' | ḥataf bela 'to be mistaken' |
| 2 | 01 ḥarba 'to flee' | taḥallala 'to be unable' | ḥalma / taḥallama 'to dream' | ḥəkān 'buttermilk' |
| 3 | 02 ḥawaka 'to excite' | taḥallaga 'to have syphilis' | ḥalā 'to sing' / taḥallā pass. | |
| 4 | 01 ḥadda 'to thunder' | taʿayara 'to be insulted' | ḥammasa / taḥammasa 'to swim' | |
| 5 | 02 ḥarraba 'to give a meal' | | ḥaššama / taḥaššama 'to honor' | |
| 6 | 01 ḥasā 'to rub ears of grain betwen the hands' | | ḥaṣṣara 'to fence, to enclose' / taḥaṣṣara pass. | |
| 7 | 02 ḥabbasa 'to take prison-er' | | ḥaṣṣana 'to spare' / taḥaṣṣana 'to take care of oneself' | |
| 8 | 02 ḥawana 'to be weak' | | ḥaddasa 'to renew' / taḥaddasa pass. | |
| 9 | 02 ḥawaza 'to become fat' | | ʾakkaba 'to gather' / taʾakkaba 'to be gathered' | |
| 10 | 01 ḥesa 'to be better' | | ʾawada 'to have claims; to owe' / taʾawada 'to be owed; to owe' | |
| 11 | 02 ḥarrama 'to forbid' | | ʿallaba 'to count, to reckon' / taʿallaba pass. | |
| 12 | 02 ʾallama 'to cheat' | | ʿammaṣa 'to be violent' / taʿammaṣa 'to be oppressed' | |

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18   In the choice of the source of derivation, I mostly followed the indications of LH, both direct (such as "caus. to 01") or indirect (the semantics of the source word and the derived word). Sometimes, when the dictionary gives no clues as to which of the two stems is more likely to be the source of derivation, the text usage was consulted (for instance, the verb ʾatḥarā 'to cause to choose' is as-sumed to be derived from 01 ḥarā 'to choose' rather than from T2 taḥarrā 'to be chosen' since the agent of the non-causative clause is encoded as the direct object of the causative verb: wa-rabbi ʾəgəl gabil ʾarwām mən kəlʾe ʾəllan gabay ʾatḥarayom (PPEA I, p. 86, l. 24) 'and the Lord made the tribe of ʾarwām choose from these two ways'). Whenever textual evidence contradicts the indications of LH, the latter are disregarded. Generally speaking, all examples with 01 as a more or less certain source of derivation are displayed in column 1, whereas dubious cases are collected in column 3.

| 14 | 02 ʾabbara 'to be old' | | ʿallala 'to jubilate' / taʿallala 'to be jubilated' | |
| 15 | 02 ʾabbasa 'to sin' | | ʿarḵa 'to be (half-)naked' / ʿarraḵa / taʿarraḵa 'to be naked' | |
| 16 | 01 ʾazma 'to be silent' | | ʿarrā 'to reach' / taʿarrā | |
| 17 | 01 ʿarba 'to go astray' | | ʿassara 'to keep back' / taʿassara pass.; 'to abstain (from work)' | |
| 18 | | | ʿanfa 'forcer' / ʿannafa / taʿannafa pass. | |
| 19 | | | ʿora 'to be blind' / taʿawara | |
| 20 | | | ʿera 'to come home' / taʿayara 'to be inhabited' | |
| 21 | | | ʿadā / taʿaddā 'to go over' | |

Table 2: AT2 stems for H1 verbs

The data displayed in tables 1 and 2 can be finally confronted with table 3, which shows the sources of derivation of triradical AT2-verbs which are not guttural-initial.[19]

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | AT2 < 01/02 | < T2 | AT2 < 01/02/T2 | < A1 | non-verbal forms as source of derivation |
| 1 | 01/02 laḥaba 'to sweat' | təlaḥama 'to be joined together' | laḥaga 'to mix and dilute' / təlaḥaga pass. | ? ʾabʿā 'to heal (v.i.)' (unclear case; the meaning of AT2 is 'to cause a cow to care for her calf'; no 0- or T-verbs are recorded) | kaʿas 'broken meat in the animal's stomach' |
| 2 | 02 laḵḵaṭa 'to pick up' | təlabbasa 'to set out early in the morning' | laḥaṣa 'to bark (trees)' / təlaḥaṣa pass. | ? ʾabḥaza 'to come upon, to inflict' (AT-verb is synonymous with A1-verb) | dəmmuʿ 'participant' (no 02-verb is registered, although it could be reconstructed as a source of derivation) |
| 3 | 01 ḵaṭra 'to drop, to trickle' | təlabbā 'to be accustomed to ploughing' | laḵma 'to gather, to pluck' / təlaḵḵama 'to gather, to seek, to pluck' | ? ʾagḥaṣa 'to open the mouth wide' (AT-verb is synonymous with A1-verb) | |
| 4 | 01/02 waḥaza 'to flow, to stream (v.i.)' | təmakkəḥa 'to brag' | lawaḵa 'to rejoice' / təlawaḵa 'to be glad' | | |

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[19] Some verbs with uncertain source of derivation were not included here, such as ʾatgammara 'to disperse' (LH 568).

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 01/02 *gaḥara* 'to coal (v.i.), to glow' | *təmayā* 'to pass the night' | *maḥala* / *təmaḥala* 'to swear' | |
| 6 | 01/02 *gaḥā* 'to be sad' | *təraggasa* 'to wander about' | *raḥā* 'to become free' / *təraḥā* pass. | |
| 7 | 01/02 *ṭaḥara* 'to rage' | *təsaʾala* 'to ask' | *raʾa* 'to see' / *təraʾā* 'to be seen' (unclear case: the meaning of AT2-stem is 'to be prominent') | |
| 8 | 01/02 *naʿara* 'to instigate to rebellion' | *təkaṣṣaba* 'to be angry' | *sahama* 'to draw a lot' / *təsahama* pass. | |
| 9 | | *təbakkara* 'to bring forth for the first time' | *ḳaḥaba* 'to commit adultery (of women)' / *təḳaḥaba* 'to have illicit sexual intercourse' | |
| 10 | | (*tə*)*baggasa* 'to depart' | *bəʾsa* 'to be angry' / *təbaʾasa* 'to become angry' | |
| 11 | | (*tə*)*taʿasa* 'to repent' | *kaḥada* 'to dispute' / *təkaḥada* 'to quarrel, to oppose' | |
| 12 | | *tənabbala* 'to wish' | *kammara* 'to accumulate' / *təkammara* 'to be heaped up' | |
| 14 | | *tənayata* 'to be in good spirits' | *waḳḳala* 'to be high' / *təwaḳḳala* 'to be heightened' | |
| 15 | | *təkarrā* 'to descend' | *waʿala* 'to pass the day, to stay' / *təwaʿala* 'to pass the day, to wait the whole day' | |
| 16 | | *təkattala* 'to seek protection' | *waṣṣara* / *təwaṣṣara* 'to curdle (v.i.)' | |
| 17 | | *təwallaba* 'to turn (v.i.)' | *gaʿaza* 'to emigrate' / *təgaʿaza* 'to wander slowly from place to place' | |
| 18 | | *təwarraba* 'to depart in the afternoon' | *farrara* / *təfarrara* 'to go out' | |
| 19 | | *təwarrada* 'to bet, to be at law' | *faḳda* 'to remember' / *təfaḳḳada* pass. | |
| 20 | | *tədaḳḳaba* 'to be strong' | | |
| 21 | | *tədabbara* 'to be placed on one side in order to be killed (animal)' | | |
| 22 | | *təgallala* 'to be stupid' | | |
| 23 | | *təgassā* 'to sit down' | | |

| 24 | | *təgaddəʿa* 'to be weak' | | | |
| 25 | | *təṭaʿasa* 'to repent' | | | |
| 26 | | *təč̣awaga* 'to distort itself (face)' | | | |

Table 3: AT2 stems for non-H1-verbs

One can easily notice that verbs likely derived from 0-stems are predominant among AT1-verbs of H1-type, somewhat less numerous in AT2-verbs of H1-type and quite rare among non-H1-verbs. Conversely, the percentage of AT-verbs likely derived from T-verbs is low for H1-verbs (it is somewhat higher among H1 verbs belonging to AT2 than to AT1, although the difference is not significant) and high for the rest of the verbs.

| | general number | likely derived from 0-stems, derivation from T-stems improbable (column 1) | possibly derived from T-stems (columns 2 and 3; partly column 4) |
|---|---|---|---|
| H1-verbs: AT1 verbs | 57 | 29 | 24 |
| H1-verbs: AT2 verbs | 44 | 17 | 25 |
| Non-H1-AT2 verbs | 58 | 8 | 45 |

Table 4: Comparison between H1 and non-H1 verbs

These data are in full agreement with Littmann's suggestion: the majority of non-H1-verbs of the AT-stems are derived from T-stems, whereas the H1-verbs with the prefix *ʾat-* can be derived either from 0-stems or from T-stems.

Interestingly, there exist several AT1-verbs which, on semantic grounds, can only be considered to be derived from T-stems (see the excursus on the semantics of *ʾathaddā* in section 4.4 as well as *ʾathadga* in section 4.1.c). How should these verbs be interpreted? Do they reflect formal readjustment (AT2 > AT1, the latter pattern becoming typical for H1-verbs)[20] or rather semantic reinterpretation (a causative to a 0-verb reanalyzed as a causative to a T-verb)? Both paths of development are not improbable.

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[20]   Note the verb AT1 *ʾathamala* 'to render absent-minded, careless' < 02 *hammala* 'to neglect; to tire' (LH 6), in which the attachment of the prefix *ʾat₁*- has apparently triggered the change of the stem from 2 to 1.

## D. The Semantics of the Prefix *ʾat-* as an Independent Morpheme and as Part of AT3-Stem

### I. *ʾat-* in AT1 and AT2 Stems

Both AT1 and AT2 are rarely attested for one and the same root. Only two such pairs could be detected in LH: *ʾatharaba – ʾatharraba < harba* 'to flee' (LH 10f.) and *ʾathatafa – ʾathattafa < hataf bela* 'to rave' (LH 17). Therefore, one can claim with a fair degree of certainty that the AT2-stem was not used as a special derivational means semantically opposed to the AT1-stem (note that the 02-stem, as mentioned in section A, is sometimes used as a morphological means to derive verbs from the 01-stem). It is thus the prefix *ʾat-*, attached either to base 1 or to base 2, which conveys the new morphological meaning.

What is this morphological meaning? If we have to do with *ʾat₁*-prefix, it is supposed to coincide with the semantics of the prefix *ʾa-*, which can be used as a simple causative marker but also can convey a number of common sub-varieties of causative meanings (declarative, permissive, indirect causative etc.). The meaning of *ʾat₂-* is expected to mirror its morphological structure, that is, to combine the semantics of *ʾa-* and *t(ə)-*. Since the latter morpheme is also polysemic, the semantic richness of *ʾat₂-* becomes even more prominent.

The majority of AT1 and AT2-verbs recorded in LH are described there as simple causatives to 0-verbs or T-verbs. Verbs with the prefix *ʾat-* functioning as causatives to A-verbs are quite rare: AT1 *ʾatʾatā* 'to make to be brought (home)'[21] < A1 *ʾātā* 'to bring, to bring home' < 01 *ʾatā* 'to enter' (LH 371); AT1 *ʾatʿarafa* 'to let rest' < A1 *ʾārafa* 'to rest, to have a rest' (LH 463); perhaps also AT2 *ʾatbaʿā* 'to cause a cow to care after her calf' < A1 *ʾabʿā* 'to heal (v.i.)' (LH 293, with a peculiar semantic development).

Whenever the meaning of an AT1/AT2-verb is not reducible to the causative semantics combined with the meaning of the source verb, it can be attributed to one of the following semantic categories.

### 1. Declarative

Two relatively convincing cases have been discovered in LH:

- AT1 *ʾatʾakā* 'to make appear worse'[21] < 01 *ʾakā* 'to be bad' (LH 377),
- AT2 *ʾatgallala* 'to make a fool of' < T2 *təgallala* 'to be stupid' (LH 560).

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[21]  In PPEA III, LH 685, p. 24.

## 2. Adjutative

There is only one more or less convincing example, whose meaning is, however, drawn from Sundström's wordlists and is not supported by any textual evidence:

–    AT2 *ʾatḥallaba* 'to assist in bleeding' < T2 *taḥallaba* 'to be bled' (LH 3).

## 3. Reflexive Causative

Two convincing cases have been elicited from LH:

–    AT1 *ʾatḥadga* 'to take advise' (i.e. 'to let himself be advised') < 01 *ḥadga* 'to advise' (LH 26),
–    AT2 *ʾatraʾā* 'to be prominent' (i.e. 'to let himself be seen') < 01 *raʾā* 'to see' (LH 156).

The reflexive meaning of these AT-verbs should obviously be traced to the semantics of the prefix *t(ə)*-. In this context, it is of special interest that combination of reflexive and causative meaning is registered for an AT1-verb *ʾatḥadga* – apparently displaying the prefix *ʾat₁*- which, in the framework of the hypothesis outlined above (section 3.2.), cannot go back to the combination of *ʾa*- and *t(ə)*-. In this case, one has to suspect here a shift from base 2 to 1 in a H1-verb (cf. the end of section C.II).

## 4. *ʾat₁*- and *ʾat₂*- as Semantically Void Morphemes

In some cases, a verb belonging to the AT1 or AT2 stems appears to be synonymous with its source of derivation. In such cases, the prefix *ʾat*- may be considered a semantically empty element. Interestingly enough, such verbs can be intransitive and, more specifically, inactive intransitive.

–    AT1 *ʾatḥasara* 'to be sad' < 01 *ḥasra* 'to be sad' (LH 72; a transitive meaning is also registered in LH, namely, 'to dishonour, to humble', with no textual illustration),[22]
–    AT2 *ʾatnaʿara* 'to bring about (revolt)' < 01/02 *naʿara* 'to instigate to rebellion' (LH 335),
–    AT2 *ʾatʾallama* 'to outwit' < 02 *ʾallama* 'to cheat' (LH 350),
–    AT2 *ʾatʾawada* 'to claim' < 02 *ʾawada* 'to have claims' (LH 380),
–    AT2 *ʾatwaḥaza* 'to stream down' (LH 432) < 01/02 *waḥaza* 'to flow, to stream' (LH 432),

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[22]    The 01- and AT1-verbs seem to be interchangeable: compare PPEA III, L. 110, l. 3 (*ʾi-ʾəngomməm wa-ʾi-naḥassər* 'we do not mourn and we are sad', 01) and obviously the same expression in PPEA III, L. 595, l. 108 (*wa-lāli ʾəgomməm lāli kəllā ʾatḥassər* 'and I mourn in the night, I am sad the whole night', AT1).

- AT1 *ʾatʿankafa* 'to scandalize' < 01 *ʿankafa* 'to scandalize' (LH 472f.),
- AT2 *ʾaṭṭaḥār* 'rage' < 01/02 *ṭaḥara* 'to rage, to grow wild' (LH 609).

Some verbs apparently derived from A-stems also belong here: AT2 *ʾatbahaza* = A1 *ʾabhaza* 'to come upon, to inflict' (LH 267), AT2 *ʾatgaḥāṣ* 'opening the mouth wide' (LH 566).

## 5. Semantically Irregular Formations (Lexicalized Verbs)

Some AT-verbs are lexicalized and do not represent any regular shift of meaning with respect to any other stem:

- AT1 *ʾattargaza* 'to step with strength' < *tərgəz bela* 'to stand firm' (LH 310),
- AT1 *ʾathabhaba* 'to urge to go away', cf. 01 *habhaba* 'to be hungry; to blow up', T1 *tahabhaba* 'to grow tired' (LH 15),
- AT2 *ʾatʿarrā* 'to throw javelin', cf. 02 *ʿarrā* 'to reach' (LH 461),
- AT2 *ʾatgammara* 'to disperse', cf. 02 *gammara* 'to border', T3 *təgāmara* 'to barter by wholesale' (LH 568).

For some verbs, no source of derivation could be found: AT1 *ʾatʾoʾā* 'to expect with hope' (LH 379).

Finally, some AT1- and AT2-verbs are denominative (cf. tables 1–3, last columns).

As one can infer from this analysis, the prefix *ʾat-* is typically employed as a simple causative marker (with 0- or, mostly, T-stems as the source of derivation). A few other meanings related to the causative one (declarative, adjutative, reflexive causative) are but marginally represented and should be considered sporadic developments of the causative semantics rather than manifestations of a specific meaning characteristic of the element *ʾat-*. In a number of cases, this prefix has no detectable meaning at all.

## II. The Semantics of AT3

### 1. AT1/AT2 Verbs as Source of Derivation for AT3?

Not infrequently, AT3-verbs are produced from roots for which AT1 or AT2 stems are also attested. 48 such verbs have been detected in LH.

For some roots, different AT-bases are glossed as synonymous. There are 15 roots belonging to this category, such as AT3 *ʾatḥārā* = AT1 *ʾatḥarā* 'to cause to choose' (LH 70), AT3 *ʾatbāgasa* = AT2 'to make depart' (LH 298), AT3 *ʾatnāyata* 'to encourage' = AT2 *ʾatnayata* 'to encourage' (LH 337).

In 33 cases the meaning of the AT3-verb differs from that of the corresponding AT1/AT2-verbs. Quite often, this difference can be accounted for by different sources of derivation.

Two AT3-verbs are treated in LH as derived from AT2-verbs. The AT3-stem is then described as intensive: AT3 ʾaṯḥālama (LH 53), glossed as intensive to AT2 ʾaṯḥallama (in its turn, a causative to 01 ḥalma or T2 taḥallama 'to dream') and AT3 ʾatlābā (LH 40), glossed as intensive to AT2 ʾatlabbā 'to accustom the young cattle to ploughing'.[23] This semantics is clearly conditioned by two factors: the intensive meaning of the base 3[24] and the use of the AT3-stem as the causative to 03 and T3. Thus, AT3 ʾaṯḥālata is the causative to 03 ḥālata 'drive far away' in the same way as AT1 ʾaṯḥalata is the causative to 01 ḥalta 'drive away': an AT3-verb, functioning as a causative to an intensive 03-verb, can well be considered as intensive with respect to an AT1-verb. This path of semantic development can be easily extrapolated to ʾaṯḥālama, for which no corresponding 03-verb is attested.

Significantly enough, the majority of AT3-verbs – 151 examples altogether – have no counterparts among AT1 or AT2-verbs and hence are clearly derived from other stems. Numerous AT3-verbs (with or without AT1-/AT2-counterparts) are to be treated as simple causatives to T3 or 03-verbs: AT3 ʾaṯḥāsaba 'to superintend' < T3 təḥāsaba 'to seek protection' (LH 73), AT3 ʾaṯḥāṣā 'to cause a mutual engagement' < T3 taḥāṣā 'to engage mutually' (LH 103), AT3 ʾatlāḵama caus. to T3 təlāḵama intens.; 'to devour'(LH 36f.), AT3 ʾamāṣəʾa 'to cause to meet' < T3 təmāṣəʾa 'to come, to arrive, to meet' (LH 145), AT3 ʾatbāraka 'to let communicate' < T3 təbāraka 'to have fellowship' (LH 278), AT3 ʾatʾāgama 'to make hesitate' < T3 taʾāgama 'to hesitate' (LH 386), AT3 ʾatʾābā 'to set at variance' < T3 taʾābā 'to fight each other' (LH 369), AT3 ʾathadagādaga caus. to 03 hadagādaga intens. to 01 hadagdaga 'to trot, to trample' (LH 27), etc.

There are, however, some AT3-verbs whose meaning cannot be described simply as causatives with respect to their source of derivation. As in the case of AT1 and AT2-verbs, a systematic perusal of LH allows one to detect some AT3-verbs which are not simple causatives: their semantics is either a development from the causative semantics (declarative, adjutative etc.) or is a result of a combination of the causative meaning with that of the T3-stem (i.e., the reciprocal one).

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[23] In PPEA III, L. 444, l. 3 it is used in the meaning 'to tame (elephants)'. One can only wonder what kind of intensive semantics can be seen here. An iterative meaning is rather to be postulated instead (given the fact that the the direct object is in plural), or one can just regard this verb as derived from 03 lābā 'to tame' (ibid.), with no change of meaning (cf. section 4.2.f.).

[24] Cf. Raz 1983, p. 53.

## 2. Declarative

Unlike the AT1- and AT2-stems, the AT3-stem is often attested as declarative (11 examples in LH):

– AT3 ʾatḥāmaḳa 'to show that somebody is weak, to make ashamed' < 01 ḥamḳa 'to be weak' (LH 61),
– AT3 ʾatḥāsā 'to call somebody a liar' < 02 ḥassā 'to lie' (LH 74),
– AT3 ʾatḥāṭara 'to declare to be brave' < 01 ḥaṭra 'to be brave' (LH 100),
– AT3 ʾatrāzama 'to be sorry' (i.e. 'to consider it heavy') < T3 tərāzama 'to be heavy' (LH 160),
– AT3 ʾatḳāraba 'to consider close',[25] cf. 01 ḳarba 'to be near' (LH 241f.),
– AT3 ʾatkanāčaba 'to make small, to call small' < *kančaba 'to be small and meagre' (not in LH), cf. ḳənčub 'small and meagre' (LH 254),
– AT3 ʾatbāzəḥa 'to consider to be much'[26] < 01 bazḥa 'to be plenty, numerous' (LH 293),
– AT3 ʾatʿābā 'to consider great, important' < ʿabā 'to be great' (LH 470),
– AT3 ʾatgālala 'to make a fool of' < T2 təgallala 'to be stupid' (LH 560),
– AT3 ʾaṣṣānəʿa 'to consider strong' < 01 ṣanʿa 'to be strong' (LH 642),
– AT3 ʾatfādaba = ʾatḥāṭara 'to declare to be brave' < 01 fadba 'montrer du courage'[27] (LH 673).

## 3. Adjutative

Only three AT3-verbs with adjutative semantics can be found in LH, which is comparable with the number of adjutative AT1-/AT2-verbs:

– AT3 ʾatlāmača 'to assist in grinding', cf. 02 lammača 'to grind a second time', T2 təlammača pass. (LH 35),
– AT3 ʾatlādada 'to help to bind', cf. 02 laddada 'to bind together', T2 təladdada, T3 təlādada pass. (LH 47),
– AT3 ʾatbākā 'to partake in the lamentation for the dead', cf. 01 bakā 'to weep, to deplore', T2 təbakkā 'to be deplored', T3 təbākā 'to lament' (LH 291).

## 4. Causative Permissive

This meaning seems to be attested only once. The difference with respect to simple causative is in the degree of involvement of the causer in the action caused: the caus-

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25 In PPEA III, L. 162, l. 2.
26 Cf. PPEA III, L. 659, p. 3.
27 'To show/demonstrate courage'.

er does not directly instigate the agent to perform the action, but rather does not prevent him from doing it: AT3 ʾatfānā (LH 668) 'to allow one make a testament'[28] < T3 təfānā 'to make one's will' (LH 668).

Two more examples of permissive usage have been gleaned from the texts: AT3 ʾatmāšara < 01 mašra 'to keep back some milk (cow when milked)' (LH 122) and AT3 ʾatnāṣafa 'to let dry up' < 01 naṣfa 'to become dry, to give no milk' (LH 345). Both occur in the same sentence[29] where the permissive nuance is evident from the context: ʾənday latnāṣufā wa-ʾənday latmāšurā 'without allowing her (the cow) to be dry and without allowing her to keep back milk'. In none of the two cases is the permissive meaning registered in the dictionary. It remains to be explored whether these verbs can also be employed as non-permissive causatives.

## 5. Causative Reciprocal

Since many of T3 verbs in Tigre are reciprocal in their meaning, it is not surprising to find that many AT3-verbs are attested as causatives to reciprocal verbs: AT3 ʾatḥāṣā 'to let be engaged to one another' < T3 taḥāṣā 'to engage mutually' (LH 103), AT3 ʾatmāṣəʾa 'to cause to meet' < T3 təmāṣəʾa 'to meet' (LH 145), etc.

In six cases, the causative reciprocal meaning can be ascribed to the stem as a whole, the source of derivation being neither causative nor reciprocal:

- AT3 ʾatbāyata 'to make each other hunger, to ruin one another' < 01 beta 'to hunger' (LH 294),
- AT3 ʾatʾāmara 'to become acquainted' < A1 ʾāmara 'to know', cf. T2 taʾammara 'to become known, renowned' (LH 354),
- AT3 ʾatkābata 'to cause to meet each other, to cause to receive each other' < T2 təkabbata 'to receive, to accept, to meet' (LH 411),
- AT3 ʾatgānaḥa 'faire rencontrer' < 01 ganḥa 'to see, to look at' (LH 587),
- AT3 ʾaṭṭākara 'to entertain (feed) each other' < T2 təṭakkara 'to be entertained (fed)', 01 ṭakra 'to give to drink, to entertain (feed etc.)' (LH 614),
- AT3 ʾaṣṣābaṭa 'to sew together' < 01 ṣabṭa 'to catch, to hold fast' (LH 640f.).

This list can probably be supplemented by one more example, viz. AT3 ʾatkātama 'to cause to make a seal, to conclude a treaty' (LH 413), where the meaning 'to conclude a treaty' has likely developed from the causative reciprocal meaning 'to cause to make a seal between each other' (the situation implying equal participation of two parties).

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[28]  In PPEA III, L. 518, l. 21; Rodén 1913, p. 21, ll. 30f.
[29]  PPEA III, L. 259, p. 3.

## 6. AT3-Stem as a Semantically Void Morpheme

Not unlike AT1 and AT2, verbs belonging to the AT3 stem are often adduced as practically synonymous with their source of derivation (T, 0 or even A-stem):

- AT3 *ʾatḥāgā* 'to converse' < T3 *təhāgā* 'to talk, to speak' (LH 28),[30]
- AT3 *ʾatmākāt* 'to handle the shield', cf. T2 *təmakkata* 'to fight', 02 *makkata* 'to hold the shield', A1 *ʾamkata*/A2 *ʾamakkata* 'to take as a shield' (LH 133),
- AT3 *ʾatrāyama* 'to be far away', cf. 01 *rema* 'to be far' (LH 161),
- AT3 *ʾatḵālaṭa* 'to cheat', cf. T3 *təḵālaṭa* 'to cheat, to outwit' (LH 235),
- AT3 *ʾatḵāmata* 'to view, to look at, to ponder, to espy', cf. 03 *ḵāmata* 'to espy', A1 *ʾaḵmata* 'to pay attention, to observe, to reflect' (LH 238),
- AT3 *ʾatḵāraba* 'to be close',[31] cf. 01 *ḵarba* 'to be near' (LH 241f.),
- AT3 *ʾaǧǧāgəḥa* 'to sit down, to endure' < 01 *ǧagḥa* 'to sit down (on the ground)', cf. A1 *ʾaǧgəḥa* 'to sit down for a while' (LH 557),
- AT3 *ʾatʾālām* 'deception' < 02 *ʾallama* 'to cheat' (LH 350),
- AT3 *ʾatḵālala* 'to go aside, into the surrounding', cf. 01 *kalla* 'to go around', T2 *takallala* 'to go around' (LH 390),
- AT3 *ʾatgāməḥa* 'to fall on one's knees' < 01 *gamḥa* 'to kneel down' (LH 567),
- AT3 *ʾaṭṭārəʿa* (LH 612) 'to accuse',[32] cf. 01 *ṭarʿa* 'to complain, to accuse' (LH 612).

The verb AT3 *ʾatḥādara* can be used in the meaning 'to accept (guests)' (cf. PPEA III: L. 67, l. 4), same as T2 *taḥaddara* 'to receive (as a guest)' (LH 95).

A specific variety of this subgroup is constituted by verbs which appear to be derived from A-stems (the corresponding 0- and T-stems are either missing or do not seem to be semantically related) without any change of meaning:

- AT3 *ʾassāḵara* = A1 *ʾasḵara* 'to boast' (LH 181),
- AT3 *ʾatnāḵada* = A1 *ʾanḵada* 'to twinkle with the eyes' (LH 329),
- AT3 *ʾatnāṣara* = A1 *ʾanṣara* 'to spy' (LH 344),
- AT3 *ʾatnāfara* 'to knock off' < A1 *ʾanfara* 'to break off (v.t.)' (LH 346),
- AT3 *ʾatgāwəḥa* = A1 *ʾagwəḥa* 'to set out early in the morning' (LH 591),
- AT3 *ʾatfātana* 'to try' (cf. 01 *fatna* 'to seduce; to attempt', T2 *təfattana* pass., T3 *təfātana* 'to make trial of one another').

Cf. also AT3 *ʾatmāšāš* 'omission of answering' < A1 *ʾamšaša* 'to be silent, to give no answer' (LH 122; rather than < T2 *təmaššaša* 'to be silenced', ibid.).

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[30] The meanings adduced in the dictionary are admittedly not quite identical, but in available texts both stems are used as practically full synonyms.

[31] In PPEA III, L. 653, l. 7.

[32] In PPEA III, L. 248, l. 21.

## 7. Semantically Irregular Formations (Lexicalized Verbs)

Lexicalized AT3-verbs whose meaning cannot be derived from any other stem via regular semantic developments are as follows:

- AT3 ʾatmaḵārǝḥa 'to attend, to take care of', cf. AT1 maḵrǝḥa 'to deliberate, to come to an agreement', T1 tǝmaḵrǝḥa 'to be determined' (LH 124),
- AT3 ʾatwāyana 'to reflect, to muse' < T3 tǝwāyana 'to intend, to be willing' (LH 444),
- AT3 ʾazzāmara 'to boast', cf. 02 zammara 'to sing' (LH 495),
- AT3 ʾaṭṭārā 'to transgress the usual measure, to surpass', cp. 01 ṭarā 'to be raw, fresh, course' (LH 612),
- AT3 ʾaṭṭāḵara 'to swing in all directions (sword)', cf. 01 ṭaḵra 'to give to drink, to entertain (feed etc.)' (LH 614),
- AT3 ʾaṣābaba 'to oppress', cf. 01 ṣabba 'to be narrow' (LH 640).

One AT3-verb appears to be denominative: AT3 ʾatrāḵā 'to foam (milk)', cf. rǝḵot 'scum (of milk)' (LH 152).

There is, finally, one AT3-verb for which no evident source of derivation has been found in LH:[33] AT3 ʾaddāraša 'to stride in stately manner' (LH 519).

As one can see, the AT3-stem can function as simple causative morpheme. It can also display declarative meaning (somewhat more often than the AT1/AT2-stem). The semantics of adjutative (three cases), intensive (two cases) and permissive (one case) are clearly sporadic extensions of the causative meaning. Not unlike the AT1 and AT2-verbs, some AT3-verbs are either synonymous with their source of derivation or semantically irregular (lexicalized). There are no causative-reflexive AT3-verbs. Conversely, the causative-reciprocal meaning is quite well represented.

## III. The AT4-Stem and its Semantics

AT4-verbs are not numerous in Tigre. Only ten such verbs have been registered in LH:

| | |
|---|---|
| ʾatḥalālaka caus. to 04 | causative < 04 ḥalālaka 'to insert oneself a little or in vain' |
| ʾatḥarārama caus. to 04 | causative < 04 ḥarārama 'to weed occasionally' |
| ʾatlakākā caus. to T4 | causative < T4 tǝlakākā 'to call each other' |
| ʾatḥalālafa 'to cause to go everywhere' | (?) iterative < AT1 ʾatḥalafa 'to cause to pass' |
| ʾatḵabābala 'to go to and fro' | (?) iterative < AT3 ʾatḵābala 'to return (v.i.)' |

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[33]   Although one can surmise here a backward formation from ʾaddārāš 'large house' (LH 519), in itself a borrowing from Tigrinya addaraš 'large room for banquets' (KT 1531), Amharic addaraš 'hall, reception room' (K 1741).

| ʾatbaʾāʾasa ? | ? < 01 bəʾsa 'to be angry' or T1 təbaʾasa 'to become angry' or T3 təbāʾasa 'to fight' or AT2 ʾatbāʾasa 'to feel angry' |
|---|---|
| ʾazzabābā caus. to T4 | < T4 təzabābā 'to buy much' |
| ʾaddafāfəʾa 'to console (one after another)' | < T4 tədafāfəʾa 'to feel to be consoled' |
| ʾatǧaḥāḥara caus. to T4 | < T4 (tə)ǧaḥāḥara recipr. |
| ʾatfarārəḥa 'to frighten, to threaten' | (?) < 01 farḥa 'to be frightened' |

Table 5: AT4-verbs and their sources of derivation

The derivational processes leading to the emergence of these verbs are quite similar to those I have just analyzed in the case of the AT1-AT3-stems. The sources of derivation are mostly 04-verbs with gutturals as the first radical, T4-verbs, sometimes other AT-verbs. Two of the available AT4 verbs are apparently causatives to 04-verbs with initial gutturals (thus, employing the prefix ʾat₁- rather than ʾat₂-). Four are causatives to T4-verbs. The rest do not display the base 4 in any other derivate from the same root. Two AT4 verbs appear to be iteratives to other AT-verbs, which is not surprising given the fact that the base 4 is mostly employed to form iteratives in Tigre (in a similar way, the intensive meaning has been recorded for some AT3-verbs, cf. section D.II.2). Only in one case (ʾatfarārəḥa 'to frighten') there are no corresponding AT-verbs, so the verb appears to be derived from 01 farḥa (as far as one can judge from LH and the available text samples, it is a simple causative rather than a causative-iterative). No examples of AT4-verbs derived from A-verbs have been registered.

## IV. The Semantics of AT-Verbs in Comparison to A-Verbs

My perusal of LH has shown that for many non-H1-verbs there exist both A-stems and AT-stems. Moreover, many AT-verbs are adduced as full synonyms for the corresponding A-verbs (thus, 34 AT-verbs are glossed in LH simply as "= A1/A2/A3").

In some cases, textual evidence allows one to detect some differences between A- and AT-verbs employing the same root, even when their glosses in LH are identical. These differences may affect semantics, syntactic behavior or combinatorial properties of the verbs in question.

Let us consider, for example, various stems of the root ḥdy. The 01-verb ḥadā means 'to marry, to take wife', T2 təḥaddā is glossed as 'to marry (used of women)'. The T2-verb is obviously a passive to the 01-verb, which means that in the act of marriage the bridegroom is perceived by the speakers as the agent and the bride, as the patient.[34] Both A1 ḥādā and AT1 ʾatḥadā are explained as 'verheiraten'/'to marry

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[34]   This syntactic behavior is well compatible with the original semantics of the verb, viz. 'to lead (the wife into one's house)', cf. Arb. ḥadā which means, *inter alia*, 'reconduire quelqu'un, p. ex. la

(v.t.)' – thus, causatives to 01. A closer inspection of the relevant passages confirms that both verbs are indeed causative in meaning: their subjects do not encode the persons married, but rather those who organize the match. The precise meaning of these verbs is thus 'to cause somebody marry somebody'. But it also shows that the syntactic behavior of these verbs is not identical and their sources of derivation are different. Thus, AT1 *ʾathadā* is regularly used when the patient causee is encoded as a direct object (and thus refers to the woman).[35] Conversely, in the passage where A1 *hadā* is used the direct object refers to the bridegroom, encoding the agent causee. This distribution of objects corresponds to the distribution of subjects of the 01- and T2-verbs and clearly indicates that the A1-verb is the causative to 01 whereas the AT1-verb is the causative to T2.

Nevertheless, in most cases the semantic difference between A-verbs and AT-verbs could not be elicited either from the dictionary or from the available texts:

- A1 *ʾaškara* 'to make drunk' – AT3 *ʾaššākara* 'to make drunk' (LH 223),
- A1 *ʾamḥala* 'to cause to swear' – AT2 *ʾatmaḥala* 'to cause to swear' (LH 110),
- A1 *ʾamsā* = AT3 *ʾatmāsā* 'to pass the evening' (LH 121),
- A1 *ʾaksana* = AT3 *ʾatkāsana* 'to make sleepy' (LH 246),
- A1 *ʾakṭara* = AT2 *ʾatkaṭṭara* 'to drip (v.t.)' (LH 262),
- A1 *ʾakmara*, A2 *ʾakammara* = AT2 *ʾatkammara* 'to make accumulate' (LH 395).

The same can sometimes be observed when no corresponding 0-stem is at hand:

- A1 *ʾanṣara* – AT3 *ʾatnāṣara* 'to spy, to look into distance' (LH 344),
- A1 *ʾagḥaṣa* 'to gape, to open the mouth wide' – AT2 *ʾatgaḥaṣa* 'to open the mouth wide' (LH 565f.).

Should one suspect for such pairs of verbs some kind of more subtle semantic difference which went unnoticed by the authors of the LH? There is indeed one such possibility, suggested by the comparative data, which should be considered here.

The presence of two causative morphemes (corresponding to (ʾ)*a*- and (ʾ)*at*- in Tigre) characterizes most of Ethiopian Semitic. The semantic opposition between these stems is usually described in the available grammars as follows: the former is claimed to be the neutral marker of causation, whereas the latter is said to express indirect causation (that is, causation which does not imply a direct participation of

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nouvelle mariée, à la maison de son mari' (BK I 1404). Such a distribution of the semantic roles for the verb 'to marry' is of course not a peculiarity of Tigre, cf. e.g. Givón 1976, pp. 326f. for similar "male chauvinist" verbs in Tswana (Bantu) and Swahili.

[35] Or, in one passage (PPEA I, L. 23, l. 25), to a man who was thought by the marriage-makers to be a woman and was given as a bride to the relatives of the bridegroom.

the causer in the activity caused).[36] This distribution appears to be a natural consequence of the former prefix becoming non-productive and verbs marked with ʾa- becoming more and more similar to lexical causatives.[37]

Is there any trace of a similar semantic opposition in Tigre? The AT-verbs do frequently occur in situations when the causer does not bring about the event by direct contact with the causee, but rather employs some indirect means (such as orders). Consider, for example: ḥaḳohā ʾəgəl la-sab la-kāssatu məsəl ʾansom wa-wəlādom ʾət baʿat la-ḫāyut ʾatlākafayom[38] 'And then he caused the people who had accused him (lit. 'his accusers'), together with their wives and children, to be thrown into the lions' cave'. But is it indeed justified to claim that the prefix ʾat- is the marker of indirect causation, opposed to ʾa- as either semantically neutral or the marker of direct causation?

Hardly so. On the one hand, in some examples AT-verbs are clearly employed when contact causation is involved: wa-ʾət ləṣabbəṭ ʾəlom **lassātəyom**[39] 'and while he serves to them, he **makes them drink**'; wa-səgəhā la-balluʿ ḥəyāyt ʾəb ḳəblat ʾəndo **ʾaddabbarawā** ḥarrudā[40] 'And one slaughters the animals whose meat is edible (lit. 'whose meat they eat'), after one **has put them on one side** towards the *qibla*'. On the other hand, A-verbs can express indirect causation. Consider, for instance, the following example from Rodén:[41] kantebāy ʿəndər **latharrəm** ʾəlu wa-nādā **lanādde** 'the chief **lets** the flute **be played** to him and **has** an announcement **called out**'. For both verbs, AT1 ʾatharama and A1 ʾanādā, the semantics of indirect causation can be postulated, their syntactic behavior being obviously identical: the direct object encodes a patient causee, whereas the agent causee remains unexpressed.[42] Even more convincing are the following two passages, where two more or less identical situations of indirect causation are encoded by an A-verb in one case and by the corresponding AT-verb in the other: mərəbbəʿotāt ʾəgəl lide ʾət səməṭ la-dəgge ʾəban **lakammər** ʿalā[43] 'He was **making** (people) **collect** stones at the side of the village in order to build

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[36]   Cf., e.g., Meyer 2005, pp. 198f., and 2006, pp. 73–75 for the semantic difference between ʾa- and ʾat- in Zay and Wolane, respectively. For the general notion of direct vs. indirect causation v. Shibatani / Pardeshi 2002, pp. 139–140 (with further references).

[37]   Cf. Shibatani / Pardeshi 2002, pp. 139f. for the correlation between lexical vs. morphologically productive causatives and direct vs. indirect causatives respectively.

[38]   Norlén / Lundgren 1925, p. 90, l. 20.

[39]   PPEA I 192, p. 16.

[40]   PPEA I 198, p. 23.

[41]   Rodén 1913, p. 144, l. 25.

[42]   In the other passage quoted in LH 9 for AT1 ʾatharama (Mt 6: 2) semantics of indirect causation is at least not excluded.

[43]   Rodén 1913, p. 58, l. 15.

square houses' vs. *ʾəb ʿələb ʾadāmu ʾət raʾas gəməʾ ʾəban ʾəgəl* **latkammər** *gamā*[44] 'He decided to **make** (people) **collect** big stones according to the number of his men'.

All in all, one has to admit that AT-verbs can sometimes function as full synonyms of A-verbs, although a more thorough investigation, including field-work, might disprove or modify this statement.

## E. Syntax

## I. Syntax of AT-Verbs

On the syntactic level, the patient causee of an AT-verb (that is, the patient of the embedded sentence) is encoded as a direct object. This means that it appears as a pronominal object suffix (example 3), or as an unmarked noun (example 1) or as a definite noun marked with a dative preposition *ʾəgəl* and a resumptive object pronoun (example 2):

1) *mālu la-latgāle*[45] 'who lets **his property** be taken',
2) *ḥaḳoḥā* **ʾəgəl la-sab** *la-kāssatu məsəl ʾansom wa-wəlādom ʾət baʿat la-ḥāyut ʾatlākafay-om*[46] 'And then he caused **the people** who had accused him (lit. 'his accusers'), together with their wives and children, to be thrown to the lions' cave',
3) *wa-ʾamat sənnat hədāy ʾəndo baṣḥat mən ʾi-təthadde ka-ʾatkaḥabay-ā mən gabbə*[47] 'And when the maid reaches the age of marriage, if she does not marry and if it happens that he (i.e., the master) brought **her** to prostitution ...'.

As it is typical for causative constructions in many languages,[48] the agent causee (that is, the agent of the embedded sentence) does not surface in the majority of the examples – as in the above sentences (1–3). Still, several examples with the agent causee appearing as an argument of an AT-verb have been found:[49]

4) *wa-manābitu lassāmə*[50] 'And he makes his lords listen',
5) *təgabbəʾi ʾəlā tathāgəyāmā*[51] 'You will enter to her, you will converse to her' (lit. 'you will make her speak'),

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44   Rodén 1913, p. 24, l. 3.
45   PPEA III, L. 100, l. 15.
46   Norlén / Lundgren 1925, p. 90, l. 20.
47   Rodén 1913, p. 100, l. 14.
48   Nedjalkov 1969, p. 49, Comrie 1976, pp. 271–275.
49   One could expect the nominal agent causee to be attached as a prepositional phrase (cf. a similar syntactic behavior of AT-verbs in Tigrinya as described in Palmer 1960). However, I was unable to detect such constructions in the available texts.
50   PPEA III, L. 82, l. 9.

6)  *wa-ləṣabbəṭ ʾəlom lassātəyom*[52] 'And while he serves to them, he makes them drink',

7)  *ʾəttā ʾanəs ʾəgəl kəlʾitom ḥalib latbāšərāhom*[53] 'There the women let both of them drink milk',

8)  *salas la-ʿankar ʾatbāyəʾāʾā*[54] 'Let it enter in three divisions',

9)  *gonā natbakkərrā la-ḥənotā*[55] 'At our place we let her bring forth her foetus for the first time',

10) *wa-kəlʾe bərkā wa-kəlʾot mənkəbā wa-bəsotā ʾəndo ʾatbāṣaḥattā təsəʾəmmā*[56] 'And after she has made her touch her two knees and her two elbows and her forehead, she kisses her',

11) *kadam la-ʾaddām lattaṣwurā ka-latʾatəwā wa-ʾəndo warʿawā ʾət ʾakānā karrəwā*[57] 'At first they make people carry it and bring it and after they've sprinkled it, they put it back at its place',

12) *ʾəllom sab ʿad ʾəmya mən ʾatkatlakkum tom ...*[58] 'If I make these people of the village of my mother follow you ...',

13) *wa-ʾəgəl la-səgā ʾatḥadagawom*[59] 'And they made them leave the meat',

14) *ʾənās dāwrāy ʾatḥaṣekanni*[60] 'You let a vagabond man engage me'[61].

As one can see, the agent causee is encoded as the direct object in these sentences. It is worth noticing that the sources of derivation in these cases are 0-verbs rather than T-verbs. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a transformation of a non-causative sentence with a T-verb into a causative sentence with an agent causee encoded as a direct object since in the argument structure of T-verbs, the agents are normally neither subjects nor direct objects.

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51  PPEA I, p. 22, l. 25.
52  PPEA I, p. 192, l. 16.
53  Rodén 1913, p. 116, l. 21.
54  PPEA III, L. 582, l. 8.
55  PPEA I, p. 237, l. 3.
56  PPEA I, p. 100, ll. 18f.
57  PPEA I, p. 221, l. 22.
58  Rodén 1913, p. 76, l. 31.
59  PPEA I, p. 80, ll. 17–19.
60  PPEA III, L. 505, introduction.
61  The embedded sentence is *ʾənās dāwrāy ḥaṣeni* 'a vagabond man engaged me', i.e. 'got engaged to me'; the complementation pattern of the verb *ḥaṣā* may be thought to be the same as of *hadā* 'to marry' (cf. section D.IV), that is, the male participant is always encoded as the subject and is perceived as the agent, whereas the female participant is the patient and fills the syntactic slot of the direct object (unfortunately, no textual evidence in support of this syntactic behavior is known to me).

Also the patient causee can surface in the causative clause alongside the agent causee, also filling the slot of the direct object. In most cases, either the agent or the patient causee is pronominal and is expressed by a pronominal object suffix attached to the causative verb (note that in this position the difference between direct and indirect pronominal objects is neutralized). Only in the sentence (7) both the subject and the object of the embedded sentence figure as independent noun phrases: the former is marked as a definite object, with the preposition ʾəgəl and the resumptive pronoun; the latter is unmarked. On the whole, Tigre appears to lack morphological means of distinguishing between the agent and the patient causee, whose identification is determined pragmatically. One may suppose that whenever both agent and patient causee surface as direct objects of a causative verb, there may be certain assymetries in their morphosyntactic behavior similar to those postulated by Alsina for Chicheŵa.[62] However, the available data are definitely too scanty to detect any tendencies of this kind.

One example of a different complementation pattern has been observed for an AT3 verb: ka-ʾəlu latgādulā[63] 'and they make him fight with her'[64]. Here, both arguments of the verb in the embedded sentence are pronominal, and one of them appears in the causative sentence as a pronominal suffix attached to the verb, whereas the other is introduced by the dative preposition ʾə(gə)l. The source of derivation is a reciprocal verb təgādala 'to fight with each other', which implies that both participants have the semantic roles of agents. Accordingly, the causative sentence can be analyzed as follows: the pronominal object of the AT-verb corresponds to the subject of the T-verb, whereas the argument introduced through the preposition ʾəl- corresponds in the argument structure of the T-verb to what Palmer[65] calls a reciprocator (one of the agents of a reciprocal verb which is not encoded as a subject).

When the corresponding 0-verb (or, in its absence, the immediate source of derivation) is an intransitive active verb, and the agent causee is left unexpressed, the causative verb appears to behave as an intransitive: wa-ḥətā tā la-ʾəbbā natkātəl[66] 'and it is her through which we let (people) follow' (i.e., through which we acquire clients).

Finally, the pronominal suffix attached to the AT-verbs may occupy the slot of an indirect object and encode neither the agent nor the patient of the embedded sentence, but rather the beneficiary of the causative sentence: wa-la-ḥətkā ʾathadenəhom[67]

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[62]   Cp. Alsina 1992, p. 549.
[63]   PPEA III, L. 259, l. 2.
[64]   The analysis of the phrase is based on the translation offered in PPEA IV, p. 391, comment: "sie lassen es [das Kalb] mit ihr ringen" ("they let it [the calve] wrestle with her").
[65]   Palmer 1960, p. 110.
[66]   Cf. PPEA III, L. 67, l. 5.
[67]   PPEA I, L. 23; ll. 20f..

'And we gave away your sister for them as a bride' (the direct object is not the agent causee, i.e., not the agent of the non-causative verb *hadā* 'to marry'); *yomdi ḥarabit ʾəbəlli mi ʾi-latḥāləfanni*[68] 'Let Ḥarabit today not transport with it anything for me'.

## II. Does the Syntax of AT-Verbs Differ from that of A-Verbs?

A comprehensive overview of the A-verbs in Tigre lies beyond the scope of the present article. It seems useful, nevertheless, to make some observations concerning the syntactic behavior of A-verbs in comparison to AT-verbs.[69]

It appears that these two types of causative verbs do not differ significantly as far as syntax is concerned. Similar to AT-verbs, the direct object of an A-verb may encode either a patient causee (e.g.: *dabābiku ʾašlaka* 'It made its hair-dress be braided')[70] or an agent causee (e.g.: 5: *la-gāmme ʾəndo ʾamrəḥawā* 'After they made the frontlet of the chieftain [i.e. the chieftain] lead [them] ...')[71]. An A-verb may also govern two direct objects (one encoding the patient causee and the other, the agent causee), especially if one of them is a pronoun attached to the verbal stem as a pronominal suffix ( *wa-ləbās walat ʾalbasatto* 'and she made him wear a girl's dress')[72].

It remains to be investigated which of these constructions is the most typical one for A-verbs and whether one may detect some tendencies in their syntactical behavior which make them different from AT-verbs. In principle, one should expect the agent causee to surface more often in causative sentences with A-verbs. Indeed, the source verbs from which the causative A-verbs are derived usually have subjects which encode agents. These subjects can be either transformed into direct objects of the derived causative verb, or omitted entirely. As for the AT-verbs, the majority of them (that is, all *ʾat₂*-verbs) are causatives to T-verbs (as we have seen in section C.II). This means that their source verbs are quite frequently morphological passives and do not encode agents as their subjects. It is only natural that the argument structure of the corresponding causative verbs does not have a slot for agent causee. To confirm or refute this prediction, a more detailed research with a special emphasis on the A-verbs of Tigre is needed.

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68  Rodén 1913, p. 27, ll. 16f.
69  Or, more concretely, to *ʾat₂*-verbs, as no semantic difference is expected to exist between the prefix *ʾa-* and its allomorph *ʾat₁*-. Still, within the present section I will speak about AT-verbs in general: as explained above, it is not always easy to distinguish between *ʾat₁*- and *ʾat₂*-.
70  PPEA III, L. 530, l. 28.
71  PPEA III, L. 408.
72  PPEA I, L. 22, ll. 18f.

## F. Some Considerations on the History of the Prefix ʾat- in Tigre

What is the origin of the prefixes ʾat₁- and ʾat₂- in Tigre? Are they etymologically independent homophonous morphemes or do they go back to one single element which gradually came to be used in two different functions? And if the latter assumption is correct, which of the two functions is more ancient? Before approaching these questions, a look on their cognates elsewhere in ES is in order. In most of modern ES, there are cognate morphemes for both ʾat₁- and ʾat₂-.[73] Following the terminology of that article, ʾat₁- and its cognates will be henceforth referred to as "allomorphic *ʾat-", whereas ʾat₂- and related forms will be labeled "morphological *ʾat-".

Allomorphic *ʾat- is absent from Tigrinya; it is found throughout South ES except for Amharic and Argobba. In Selti, allomorphic *ʾat- is scarcely distinguishable from morphological *ʾat- since the element ʾat- has become the only productive causative morpheme.

As for morphological *ʾat-, its reflexes are registered more or less throughout modern ES. They usually function as causative morphemes semantically opposed to the cognates of the causative prefix ʾa-.[74] Their combinatorial properties, however, are not uniform. In Tigrinya, Amharic and Argobba,[75] morphological *ʾat- is restricted to the bases 3 and 4, whereas no allomorphic *ʾat- is present. In the rest of ES, the prefix *ʾat- can also be combined with the base 2, but never with the base 1.[76] This restriction appears to affect both allomorphic and morphological *ʾat-.[77]

Two important observations can be made now. Firstly, it is only morphological *ʾat- (that is, one going back to the combination of the causative marker *ʾa- and the passive/reflexive marker *ta-), which can be found in all modern ES[78]. Secondly, the combinatorial properties of the South ES cognates of the allomorphic *ʾat- are not identical to those of their Tigre counterpart, as they are never combined with the base 1.

These data can be interpreted in the following way. The causative morpheme *ʾat- emerged from the combination of the causative *ʾa- and the passive/reflexive *ta-

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[73] Cf. Bulakh / Kogan 2010, pp. 290–292, with further references.

[74] Differently from Tigre, the verbs with morphological *ʾat- in South ES are fairly often derived from 0-verbs (cf. Ueno 2001, pp. 116f. for Chaha).

[75] Leslau 1941, pp. 104f.; 1995, pp. 486f.; 1997, pp. 61f.

[76] Cf. Leslau 1958, p. 33 for Harari; Meyer 2005, p. 199 for Zay; Meyer 2006, p. 75 for Wolane; Gutt 1997, p. 935 for Selti; Leslau 1956, p. 116 for Gafat; Hetzron 1977, pp. 72f. for Gunnän-Gurage.

[77] Cf. Meyer 2006, p. 76 for H1-verbs attaching the prefix ʾat- and changing their base from 1 to 2: ʾaǧē 'pierce' – ʾatēǧē 'make to pierce'.

[78] Its prominence in individual languages is admittedly uneven.

quite early in the history of ES (albeit after the split of Proto-ES[79] since no trace of such combination is attested in Gəʿəz). Conversely, the use of the same element as an allomorph of the common ES causative marker *ʾa- before gutturals or vowels is not pan-ES. One can therefore regard the allomorphic *ʾat- as a secondary development of the morphological *ʾat-, most probably emerging independently in Tigre and in South ES:[80] in the former, the prefix ʾat- in the new function became compatible with the base 1, whereas the latter chose to change the base from 1 to 2 after the attachment of the allomorphic *ʾat-.

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[79] Within the present paper, the existence of a proto-Ethio-Semitic stage is adopted as a working hypothesis. For the scantiness of common morphological innovations supporting this hypothesis cf. Bulakh / Kogan 2010, pp. 274–276.

[80] In Amharic and Argobba, where the morphological *ʾat- is rather marginal and not combined with the base 2, the function of allomorphic *ʾat- is fulfilled by the third causative prefix, as-, specific for these two languages. The element as- may have ousted the more archaic *ʾat- here (in which case, the allomorphic *ʾat- would be a common South Ethio-Semitic trait). An important argument in support of this hypothesis involves the combinatorial properties of the prefixes as- in Amharic and Argobba: they are not compatible with the base 1, which may be seen as feature inherited from the prefix *ʾat-. As for Tigrinya, one can safely claim that no allomorphic ʾat- was ever present in this language, in view of the fact that the prefix ʾa- is well compatible with the H1-verbs in this language (as in ʾaʾbäyä < ʾabäyä 'to refuse', KT 1465).

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*Tigre abstract*

ምን ቀደም ከሊማት ለትትወጨል አት- ዲብ ህግየ ትግሬ

ዲብ ትግራይት ሰበብ ዲብ ብዕዳም ለጀሬ ውዳይ/አተውዳይ (Causative) እብ "አ-" አው "አት-" ልትሸራሕ። እሊ ክቱብ እሊ ዲብ "አት-" ሌጠ ቱ ለለአተርግዘ። ለምን ቃምስ ኤኖ ሊትማገን ወግሪያ ሆፍነር ለትረከበ እብ "አት-" ለለአነብት ከሊማት ውዳይ ኩሉ ሰኒ ዶል እንጋንሑ። ክልኤ ጅንስ "አት-" በሀለት "አት-₁" ወ "አት-₂" ክም ህለየ እንፍህም። "አት-₁" እት ቀደምለ እብ (ዐ፡ ሐ፡ አ፡ ሀ) ለለአነብት ከሊማት ውዳይ ሌጠ ለትለጥእ መንታይት "አ-" ተ። "አት-₂" ላኪን ረሕ ለቀድረት መአሽራይት ዲብ ብዕዳም ለጀሬ ውዳይ ተ። ስልፍ ጠባይዕ መትከዋን ከሊማት "አት-₁" ወ "አት-₂" ሰኒ ፈተሽናሁ ወአትጀገርናሁ። ውጨል "አት-₂" ክም ፍገሪት መትሓባር አተውዳይ "አ-" ወመአሽራይ ግቡእ/ኖስ (passive/reflexive) "ት-"፡ ለበዝሕ ዶል እብ ገቢይ ዐቦት ተአሪካይ ተሓሊል ወሐት-ሐቴ ዶል ህዮ እብ ገቢይ ተሓሊል ዐቦት እት ሐቴ እምር መርሐለት እግል ትትርኤ ይማም ቅዱም ህለ። ሐቆ እሊ "አት-₂" ለተህይብ መዐነት ፍትሸት ህሌት። ኩሉ መዓነሁ ክም ፍገሪት መትሓባር "አ-" ወ "ት-" (ሐት-ሐቴ ዶል ክም ነቲጀት ሕዱድ ተጠውር አተውዳይ) እግል ልትሸራሕ ቀድር። አሰሩ ሸክለ ናይለ "አት-₂" ለነስእ አተውዳይ ከሊማት ውዳይ ምስለ ሸክለ ናይለ "አ-" ለውጵል ከሊማት ውዳይ እንዴ አትመጣወርን አትጀገርናሁ። እት ፍንጌ ክልኢቶም አሳሲ ፈርግ ኢረከብን። እት ደንገበ ተአሪካይ ዐቦት "አት-₁" ወ "አት-₂" እት ነህድግ እትሊ ለተሌ መከምከሚ በጸሕነ። "አት-₂" ሌጠ ተ እት ብዕዳት ሀገጊ ሴም ኤርትርየ ወአቶብየ ለትትረከብ። "አት-₁" ክም ካልአይ ደረጀት ዐቦት ለትትርኤ ዲብ ትግራይት ሌጠ ለትጠወረት ውጨል ተ። ዲብ ብዕዳት ሀገጊ ሴም ኤርትርየ ወአቶብየ አክለ-ሕድ እግለ ለኢመስለ ተጠውር ልትመጣወረ።

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# Anmerkungen zur Palatalisierung im Tigre

Bogdan Burtea[*]

*Abstract*

Palatalization occurs in Tǝgre both as synchronic as well as diachronic phonetic phe-
nomenon. Diatopically palatalization in Tǝgre also exhibits different stages (e.g. the
Mansāʿ dialect vs. peripheral dialects). But the phonetic shift of some Tǝgre sibilants
cannot only be explained by palatalization alone but they also display labialization. Tǝgre
shares this phonetic feature with Tǝgrǝñña, the adjacent Ethiosemitic language.

## A. Einleitung

Als Präliminarien müssen der Behandlung der Palatalisierung im Tǝgre zwei umfas-
sendere Themen vorausgeschickt werden, in deren Rahmen die Lautwandel betrach-
tet werden müssen, erstens die Verwendung des Kriteriums Palatalisierung für die
Klassifikation des Äthiosemitischen[1] und zweitens die häufig gesehene Ursache der
Palatalisierung im sog. kuschitischen Substrat.[2]

## B. Zur Palatalisierung allgemein

Palatalisierung bezeichnet sowohl in der synchronischen als auch in der diachro-
nischen Sprachwissenschaft mehrere Vorgänge:

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Voigt zu seinem 70. Geburtstag gewidmet.

[1]  Siehe z.B. Cohen: *Études d'éthiopien méridional* (1931), S. 16, „Le passage partiel des dentales aux
prépalatales est moindre dans le Nord que dans le Sud."

[2]  Ullendorff: *The Semitic Languages of Ethiopia* (1955), S. 67, „Palatalization has become one of the
distinctive characteristics of the modern Ethiopian languages, and examination of the Cushitic sub-
strata later on will show that it is this non-Semitic influence which bears chief responsibility for this
development."

## I. Assimilative Palatalisierung

Die Verlegung der Artikulationsstelle von Okklusivlauten nach vorne, nach der Gaumenmitte zu bzw. bis an den vorderen Teil des Gaumens (lat. *palatum*) wird als Assimilationserscheinung erklärt. Wenn man die Paare *tu*:*ti* oder *ku*:*ki* (dt. *Kuh*:*Kiel*) oder *ach* [x]:*ich* [ç] betrachtet, merkt man bei der Aussprache, dass die Vokalposition (vorn, hinten) assimilativ auf den Konsonanten wirkt.

(1)  *tu* [tʷu] : *ti* [tʲi]
–    *ku* : *ki*, z.B. dt. *Kuh* [kʷuː] : *Kiel* [kʲiːl] d.h. /k/ [k, kʷ, kʲ]
–    *ach* [ax] : *ich* [ıç]

Das bedeutet, dass im Deutschen das Phonem /k/ mehrere phonetische Realisierungen hat, die abhängig von der vokalischen Umgebung sind, aber eine rein phonetische Variante bilden. Man unterscheide die rein phonetische Variante des deutschen *ach*- und *ich*-Lautes im Gegensatz zur phonologischen Trennung.

Dasselbe lässt sich für das Äthiosemitische behaupten. Wie Voigt[3] gezeigt hat, führt die Opposition /ku/:/ki/ durch die Zentralisierung der beiden hohen Vokale zu der Opposition /kʷə/:/kʲə/, die sich in dem phonemischen Gegensatz /kʷ/:/k/ widerspiegelt, wobei das palatale Element den unmarkierten Teil der Opposition darstellt. Diese phonemische Opposition betrifft im Altäthiopischen die Velarlaute *k*, *q*, *g* und *ḫ* [x] und findet sich in der graphemischen Repräsentation wieder.

(2)  /ku/ : /ki/ → /kʷə/ : /kʲə/ → /kʷ/ : /k/
–    /k/, /q/, /g/, /x/ : /kʷ/, /qʷ/, /gʷ/, /xʷ/
–    *ḫəlq* /xəlq/ ‚Ende' vs. *ḫʷəlqʷ* /xʷəlqʷ/ ‚Zahl'[4]

## II. Mouillierung

Die sekundäre oder zusätzliche Artikulation, bekannt auch als Mouillierung oder Jotierung, beschreibt die zusätzliche Eigenschaft bestimmter Konsonanten unabhängig von ihrer Artikulationsart und -stelle, wenn sich zur Hauptartikulation noch gleichzeitig der mittlere Teil des Zungenrückens gegen die vordere Hälfte des harten Gaumens hebt. Das Russische zeigt bei vielen Konsonanten eine zusätzliche palatale Artikulation, wodurch der phonologische Gegensatz zwischen harten und weichen Konsonanten entsteht.

*brat* ‚Bruder' : *brat'* ‚nehmen'

Die palatalen Velare im West-Gurage und Muher sind sogar phonemisch in drei Reihen vertreten, die Minimalpaare bilden:

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[3]    The Development of the Old Ethiopic Consonantal System 1989.
[4]    Voigt: The Development of the Old Ethiopic Consonantal System (1989), S. 640.

(3)   Velare /k/, /q/, /g/, /x/
–    palatalisierte Velare /k'/, /q'/, /g'/, /x'/
–    Labiovelare /kʷ/, /qʷ/, /gʷ/, /xʷ/
–    /x/ : /xʷ/ *xəm* ‚that' : *xʷəm* ‚thousand' (Chaha, Eža, Muher)[5]
–    /g/ : /g'/ *gäddärä* ‚put to sleep' : *g'äddärä* ‚be lenient toward someone' (Eža)[6]
–    /q/ : /q'/ (*tä*)*qäbbärä* ‚be buried' : (*tä*)*q'äbbärä* ‚accept' (Mäsqan)

## III. Morphophonologische / Synchrone Palatalisierung

Dieses Phänomen betrifft im Amharischen die morphologisch bedingte Palatalisierung von Dentalen, Sibilanten sowie *l* und *n* vor *-i* und *-e*.

(4)   Imperativ fem. von *käffätä* ‚öffnen': *kəfäč*(*i*)
–    Konverb 1. Sg. von *mälläsä* ‚zurückbringen': *mälləšše*
–    *qättil*-Bildung von *aṭṭärä* ‚kurz sein': *aččir* / *aččər* ‚kurz'

## IV. Historische / Diachrone Palatalisierung

Der wichtige Unterschied zur synchronen Palatalisierung ist, dass das Ergebnis historischer Palatalisierung palatale Laute sind, die sich von den rein palatalisierten unterscheiden z.B. /ti/ [tʲ] > /č/ [c]. Beispiele aus dem Äthiosemitischen:

(5)   Amh. *'əǧǧ* < *'*əde= St. pronominalis von G. *'əd* ‚Hand'
–    Amh. *aššä* ‚reiben' < G. *ḥasäyä*
–    Gur. *č̣əyä* ‚stinken' < G. *ṣe'a* / *ṣ̌e'a,* vgl. auch Tña. *č̣ä'e*


## C. Palatalisierung im Təgre

Təgre (auch Tigré) bezeichnet die nördlichste äthiosemitische Sprache, die im Norden und Westen Eritreas einschließlich der Massawa-Region und der Dahlak-Insel gesprochen wird bzw. das Volk, das in diesen Gebieten angesiedelt ist. Die Zahl der Təgre-Sprecher beträgt etwa 800.000.[7] Das Təgre weist mehrere dialektale Varietäten auf, von denen der Mansāʿ-Dialekt bisher am besten erforscht ist. Wenn nicht anders angemerkt, beziehen sich die folgenden Beispiele auf den Mansāʿ-Dialekt. Im Təgre unterscheiden sich grundsätzlich zwei Formen von Palatalisierung:

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[5]   Leslau: Outline of Gurage Phonology (1992), S. 38.
[6]   Beide Beispiele aus id.: Outline of Gurage Phonology (1992), S. 62f.
[7]   Grimes: Ethnologue. Languages of the World (2000), S. 108.

## I. Morphophonologische Palatalisierung

Diese Palatalisierung betrifft zwei isolierte Fälle:[8]

### 1. Palatalisierung durch das Pronominalsuffix 1. Sg.

Suffigierung durch -ye, das pron. Suff. 1. Sg., von Nomina und Präpositionen, die mit einem dentalen oder sibilanten Laut enden.

(6) *bet* ‚Haus' → *\*betye > bečče* ‚mein Haus', im Dialekt von Sāḥil *bete*,[9]
   vgl. auch Mansāʿ-Təgre *masāničče* ‚meine Freunde' und Təgre der Beni-Amer
   *masānitye*[10]
– *ʿad* ‚Dorf' → *ʿağğe* ‚mein Dorf'
– *səməṭ* ‚Seite' → *səməčče* ‚meine Seite'
– *raʾas* ‚Kopf' → *raʾašše* ‚mein Kopf'
– *maḥāz* ‚Fluss' → *maḥāžže* ‚mein Fluss'
– *gaṣ* ‚Gesicht' → *gaččе* ‚mein Gesicht', vgl. Təgre der Beni-Amer *gaṭ* → *gaṭye*
– *nos* ‚selbst' → *noše* ‚ich selbst', vgl. Təgre der Beni-Amer *nose / nosye*[11]
– *ʾət* ‚in, zu' → *ʾəčče* ‚zu mir'
– *mən* ‚von' → *məňe* ‚von mir?'[12]

Die Palatalisierung von *l* findet sich im Dialekt von Habab:[13]
– *ʾəye* ‚zu mir' (< *\*ʾəl-ye*)
– *ʾəgəye* ‚für mich' (< *\*ʾəgəl-ye*)

### 2. Palatalisierung der Pluralendungen einiger Nomina

Die Pluralendung von einigen wenigen Nomina wird ebenso palatalisiert:[14]

(7) *ḥam* ‚Schwiegervater', Pl. *ḥamač*; vgl. Arg. *ḥamač*, Har. *ḥamāči*
– *ʾab* ‚Vater', Pl. *ʾabač / ʾabayt*
– *ʾaf* ‚Mund', Pl. *ʾafač / ʾafayt*
– *talāy* ‚Hirte', Pl. *talač / talayt*
– harmāy ‚Räuber', Pl. harmač / harammit

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8   Untypische Palatalisierung des *ṭ* liegt im folgenden Beispiel vor, *maṭṭa* ‚am Ohr ziehen (widerspenstiges Tier), *mač ʾabala* ‚das Schwert ziehen, zuschlagen', Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 144.
9   Morin: Y a-t-il un lexique Beni-Amer (1996), S. 258.
10  Id.: Y a-t-il un lexique Beni-Amer (1996), S. 262.
11  Beaton / Paul: A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Tigre Language (1954), S. 13.
12  Littmann: Die Pronomina im Tigre (1897), S. 197.
13  Elias: *Tigre of Habab* (2005), S. 24.
14  Raz: Tigre Grammar and Texts (1983), S. 18.

- *karay* ‚Hyäne', Pl. *karač* / *ʾakarrit*
- *fatāy* ‚Freund', Pl. *fatač* / f. *fatačət*
- *ʿaqqaytāy* ‚Soldat', Pl. *ʿaqqač*
- *ʿāli* ‚Flüchtling, Verbannter' / Pl. *ʿāylāy*, coll. *ʿallač* ‚Hörige, Vasallen'
- *ʿabi* ‚groß' / f. *ʿabbāy* / Pl. *abayi* / *ʿabbač*[15]

Die ersten drei Nomina gelten bekanntlich als Nomina tertiae *w*, vgl. *ʾabuye* ‚mein Vater', *ʾabawənā* ‚unsere Väter'. Die Pluralformen auf -*yt* dokumentieren den Lautwandel –*wt* > -*yt*.[16] Die Endung -*yt* wird dann palatalisiert.

Bei den meisten Beispielen handelt es sich um Nomina, die von einer Wurzel tertiae infirmae bzw. tertiae *y* abgeleitet werden, wie *talāy*, *karay*, *fatāy*, *ʿāli*, *ʿabi*, bei denen der dritte Radikal die Endung -*t* palatalisiert: *\*-yt* > -*č*. Der lange a-Vokal wird verkürzt.

Bei *harmāy* handelt es sich um ein Singulativum ‚ein Räuber', von dem die Pluralform *harmač* < *\*harmāyt* gebildet wird.

*ʿaqqaytāy* ‚Soldat' ist eine Singulativbildung auf -*tāy*, die sich als ein Nomen tertiae infirmae *\*ʿaqqay* rekonstruieren lässt, von dem in Anlehnung an Beispiel (7) der Plural oder das Kollektivum *ʿaqqač* gebildet wird.

## II. Historische Palatalisierung

Da Lautwandelerscheinungen wie die von der Palatalisierung verursachten eine Verschiebung mehrerer Konsonanten (Konsonantenreihen) betreffen, ist es hilfreich, uns das Konsonantensystem des Altäthiopischen sowie das des Təgre zu vergegenwärtigen.

Der diachrone Konsonantenblock des Altäthiopischen (Gəʿəz) ist hier in Anlehnung an Voigt[17] triadisch nach der Artikulationsart dargestellt, a Außerhalb des Konsonantenblocks befinden sich die Nasale መ *m* und ነ *n*, die Liquida ለ *l* und ረ *r*, die Halbvokale ወ *w* und የ *y* (sowie ፐ *p* und ጰ *p̣*, die nur in Fremdwörtern vorkommen).

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[15] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 470.

[16] Brockelmann: *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* (1908), S. 280: ‚Auch im Tigrē geht *i̯* im Auslaut öfter in *ǧ*, dann in *č* über: *ʾafau̯* > *ʾafai̯* [...] > *ʾafaǧ* »Münder«'. Brockelmann hat nicht die Mitwirkung der Pluralendung -*t* erkannt.

[17] Voigt: *The development* 1989, S. 634.

|  | stimmlos | emphatisch | stimmhaft |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Labiale | ፈ *f* (ፐ *p̣*) | (ጰ *ṗ*) | በ *b* | መ *m* |
| Dentale | ተ *t* | ጠ *ṭ* | ደ *d* | ነ *n* |
| Alveolare | ስ *s* | ጸ *ṣ* | ዘ *z* | ረ *r* |
| Laterale | ሠ *ś* | ፀ *ṥ* | - | ለ *l*, የ *y* |
| Velare | ከ *k* | ቀ *ḳ* | ገ *g* | ወ *w* |
| Uvulare | ኀ *ḫ* | - | - | - |
| Pharyngale | ሐ *ḥ* [ħ] | - | ዐ *ʿ* |  |
| Glottale | ህ *h* | አ *ʾ* | - |  |

Der Konsonantenblock des Təgre stellt sich wie folgt dar:

|  | frikativ | stimmlos | emphatisch | stimmhaft |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Labiale | ፈ *f* | (ፐ *p̣*) | (ጰ *ṗ*) | በ *b* | መ *m* |
| Dentale |  | ተ *t* | ጠ *ṭ* | ደ *d* | ነ *n* |
| Palatale |  | ቸ *č* | ጨ *č̣* | ጀ *ǧ* |  |
| Alveolare | ሽ *š* | ስ *s* | ጸ *ṣ* | ዘ *z* | ለ *l*, የ *y*, ረ *r* |
| Velare |  | ከ *k* | ቀ *ḳ* | ገ *g* | ወ *w* |
| Pharyngale |  | ሐ *ḥ* [ħ] | - | ዐ *ʿ* |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Glottale | ህ *h* |  | አ *ʾ* |  |  |

Außerhalb des Konsonantenblocks befinden sich die Nasale መ *m* und ነ *n*, die Liqui-
de ለ *l* und ረ *r* sowie die Halbvokale ወ *w* und የ *y*.

Bei den Alveolaren sind folgende Erscheinungen zu beachten:[18] Der stimmlose
Sibilant *s* des Altäthiopischen (der auf drei unterschiedliche Konsonanten des Urse-
mitischen zurückgeht, den allgemeinen Sibilanten *$*s^1$* [σ], den stimmlosen ursprüng-
lich affrizierten Laut *$*s^3$* [ᵗs] und den stimmlosen Interdentalen *$*ṯ$* [θ]), und der Late-
rallaut des Altäthiopischen *ś* (ursemitisch *$*s^2$* [ɬ]) fallen im (Proto-)Təgre infolge der
Delateralisierung von *ś* in *s* zusammen. Dasselbe gilt für die beiden emphatischen
Laute des Altäthiopischen *ṣ* und *ṥ*, die im Təgre durch *ṣ* vertreten werden. Im Fol-
genden werden mehrere Təgre-Beispiele angeführt, die von der bereits vorgestellten
Norm abweichende Zugehörigkeiten zeigen. So entsprechen den altäthiopischen *s*
und *ś* im Təgre der frikative Alveolar *š* [ʃ] sowie den beiden Emphatica *ṣ* und *ṥ* des
Altäthiopischen der emphatische Palatal *č̣* im Təgre.

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18    Zu der historischen Entwicklung der Sibilantenreihe (Alveolare) sowie der Lateralreihe vom Alt-
      äthiopischen zum Təgre siehe Leslau: *Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez* 1987, S. XXV.

| Gəˁəz | Proto-Təgre | Təgre |
|---|---|---|
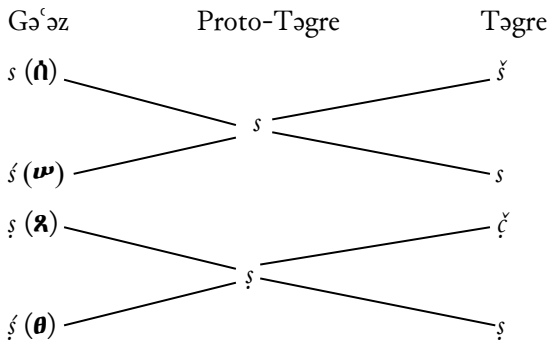


**1. G. *s* → T. *š***

(8) Bereits früh wurde man auf die Palatalisierung des *s*-Lautes im Dialekt von Massawa aufmerksam. Das Imperfekt von *gesa* ‚gehen' wird palatalisiert: *ˀəše təgayəš halleka* ‚Wo gehst du hin?'[19] Vgl. auch *gāššāy* und *gāššā,* f. *gāššāyt*, coll. *gāššāt*, pl. *gāššotāt* ‚Wanderer, Gast, Fremdling'[20], *gəššənnat* ‚Fremdlingschaft'. Verwandt sind G. *gesä / geśä* ‚am Morgen tun', Tña. *gesä* ‚in ein fremdes Land reisen' und weiter Har. *gīš* ‚morgen', Gur. *gēs* ‚der nächste Tag'.

Auch die neueste Untersuchung von Saleh Mahmud[21] bestätigt dieses Phänomen im Dialekt von Samhar, wo /s/ nach der Sequenz [jə] zu [ʃ] palatalisiert wird. Vgl. *ḫāyəs > ḫāyəš* ‚besser'.

Interessant ist ebenfalls der Plural von *sayəf* ‚Schwert': *ˀašyāf* und *ˀašāf*.[22]

Hier noch erwähnenswert wäre das Interrogativpronomen *ˀəše / ˀiše / ˀaše* ‚wo', das auf das altäthiopische *ˀayte* zurückgeht. Im Dialekt von Mansāˁ sind nur Formen mit Suffixen belegt: *ˀəšwo*, *ˀəšwā*.[23]

Andere Beispiele:

(9) T. *bašla* $0_1$ ‚kochen (intr.), reif werden'[24] < G. *bäsälä* ‚gekocht sein'; Tña. *bäsälä*, Amh. / Gaf. *bässälä*, Har. *bäsäla*, Gur. *bäsälä*.

– T. *kašba* $0_1$ ‚beschneiden'[25] < G. *käsäbä* ‚beschneiden'; Tña. *känsäbä / känšäbä*.

– T. *ˁašla* ‚sich versammeln, schwärmen (Bienen)' und *ˀəšəl* ‚Schwarm'[26], vgl. – Tña. *ˁasälä* ‚schwärmen'; Amh. *asäl* ‚Honig' aus dem Arab. *ˁasal* ‚Honig'.

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[19] Littmann: Das Verbum der Tigresprache (1897/1898), S. 149.

[20] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 597.

[21] Saleh Mahmud: Tigre dialects (2005), S. 58.

[22] Littmann: Das Verbum der Tigresprache (1897/1898), S. 149.

[23] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 364.

[24] Ibid., S. 283.

[25] Ibid., S. 407.

- T. *šaglā* ‚Sykomore'[27] < G. *sägla*; Tña. *sägla*.
- T. *šilan* ‚eine Pflanze'[28] < G. *silan / səlan* ‚Dill'; Tña. *šəlan*.
- T. *wəšaṭe* ‚das Innere'[29] < G. *wəsaṭi*.

1988 machte Voigt auf die sog. Sibilantenanomalie in Təgrəñña[30] aufmerksam (d.h. in erster Linie auf die Tatsache, dass die Kardinalzahlen von fünf bis neun ein *š* statt eines *s* haben) und führte dieses Phänomen auf die Labialisierung zurück,[31] eine andere sekundäre Artikulation von *s* in einer Wurzel oder in einem Morphem, welches die Labiale *b*, *f*, *m*, die Labio-Velare *k^w*, *q^w*, *g^w* oder die Halbvokale *w* und/oder *u* enthält. Dies gelte nicht nur für den Lautwandel *s^w > š* sondern auch für *ṣ^w > č̣* und *z^w > ǧ*.

$$
\begin{array}{l}
s^w > š \\
ṣ^w > č̣ \\
z^w > ǧ
\end{array}
\left/ \; - \;
\left\{
\begin{array}{l}
\text{/b/, /f/, /m/} \\
\text{/k}^w\text{/, /q}^w\text{/, /g}^w\text{/} \\
\text{/w/, /l/, /u/}
\end{array}
\right\}
\right.
$$

In allen sechs Beispielen kommt entweder der Labial *b*, der Liquid *l* oder der Halbvokal *w* vor.

(10) T. *šəkna* ‚Fuß, Huf'[32] < G. *säk^wäna / säkona* ‚Fußsohle, Huf'; Tña. *šäk^wäna*, *šäkona*. Hier wirkt die Labialisierung suprasegmental.
- T. *šəkkar* ‚Zucker'[33] < G. *sokär / śokär*; Tña. *šəkk^war / šukk^war*. Das *o* des Altäthiopischen enthält ein labiales Element (*o = äw/wä*), das suprasegmental wirkt.

(11) Folgende Beispiele zeigen keine eindeutige Erklärung für den Lautwandel G. *s → T. š*.
- T. *na'aša* ‚klein sein'[34] < G. *nə'sä*; Tña. *nä'asä* (aber *nə'əštoy / nə'əstoy* ‚klein'), Amh. *annäsä*, Har. *anäsa*, Gur. *anäsä* ‚klein sein'.
- T. *qanṭaša* ‚abpflücken, abreißen'[35] < G. *qänṭäsä* ‚abpflücken, abreißen'; Tña. *qänṭäsä*, Amh. *qänäṭṭäsä*, Gur. *q^wənäṭäsä*.
- T. *nakša* 0₁ ‚beißen, stechen'[36] < G. *näsäkä* ‚beißen'; Tña. *näkäsä* (mit Metathese), Amh. *näkkäsä*, Arg. *näkkäsa*, Har. *näxäsa*, Gur. *näkäsä*.

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[26] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 465.

[27] Ibid., S. 228.

[28] Ibid., S. 205.

[29] Ibid., S. 438.

[30] Voigt: Labialization and the so-called sibilant Anomaly in Tigrinya (1988).

[31] Interessanterweise spricht Voigt (Labialization and the so-called sibilant anomaly in Tigrinya 1988, S. 534) mit Hinweis auf O. Rössler von ‚palatalizing' effect of labiality'.

[32] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 223f.

[33] Ibid., S. 223.

[34] Ibid., S. 332.

[35] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 254.

- T. *šanāfil* ‚Hosen'[37] < G. *sänafil*; Tña. *šänafil*, Amh. *sänafil*.
- T. *ḥaṭṭaša* 0₂ ‚niesen'[38] < G. *ʿaṭäsä* ‚niesen'.
- T. *šakra* 0₁ ‚sich betrinken, (be)trunken sein'[39] < G. *säkrä* ‚betrunken sein';
  Tña. *säḵärä*.
- T. *ṭašša* ‚schwach, verschleiert werden (Augen)'[40] < G. *ṭäsäsä* ‚müde, schwach
  sein'.

Eine auffallende Gemeinsamkeit der ersten vier Wurzeln ist aber, dass sie ein *n* enthalten.

## 2. G. *ś* → T. *š*

Wie bereits erwähnt, geht das *ś* im G. auf den ursemitischen Laterallaut \**s²* [ɬ] zurück, der bekanntlich im Arabischen und Akkadischen durch Delateralisierung zu *š* [ʃ] wurde. Auf die lautliche Ähnlichkeit zwischen palatalen und lateralen Lauten im Altäthiopischen macht Voigt aufmerksam: „Ein palatalisierter Zischlaut wäre demnach mit Lateralzeichen wiedergegeben worden, weil zwischen palatalen und lateralen Lauten eine größere lautliche Ähnlichkeit bestand als zwischen den palatalen Lauten und den Interdentalen bzw. Sibilanten."[41] Folgende Beispiele zeigen den Lautwandel G. *ś* → T. *š*:

(12) T. *šərnāy* ‚Weizen'[42] < G. *śərnay* ‚Weizen'; Tña. *sərnay*, Amh. *sənde*, Arg. *sərray*; vgl. auch Bil. *šinrāy*, Afar *sirray*.

Mögliche Erklärung: Durch Delateralisierung des *ś* (semitistisch \**s²*) fallen die beiden ursemitischen Laute \**s¹* und \**s²* im Altäthiopischen zusammen in /s/. Das *s* gefolgt von *ə*, was im Tǝgre in einer geschlossenen Silbe als kurzes [i] ausgesprochen werden kann,[43] wird palatalisiert:

- *sə* [si] > *sʲə* > *šə*

(13) T. *šabḥa* ‚fett, dick sein'[44] < G. *śäbḥa* ‚fett sein, werden'; Tña. *säbḥe* ‚fettig sein', Amh. *säbba* ‚fett sein', Har. *säbaḥa*.

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[36] Ibid., S. 333.

[37] Ibid., S. 221.

[38] Ibid., S. 100.

[39] Ibid., S. 222f.

[40] Ibid., S. 613.

[41] Voigt: Die Entsprechung der ursemitischen Interdentale im Altäthiopischen (1994), S. 109f.

[42] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 212.

[43] Vgl. bei Morin: Y a-t-il un lexique Beni-Amer (1996), S. 262, den Hinweis auf die Aussprache von [ə] als [i] im Tǝgre der Beni Amer.

[44] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 216.

Mögliche Erklärung: Die altäthiopische Verbalform *śäbḫa* gehört zu der sog. intransitiven Verbalklasse, die das Vokalisierungsschema der regelmäßigen Verben im Tǝgre aufweist. Bekanntlich geht diese Verbalklasse auf ein \**śabiḥa* oder ein \**śabuḥa* zurück. Nach der Delateralisierung von \**ś* könnte das \**i* für die Palatalisierung verantwortlich sein: \**śabiḥa* > \**sabiḥa* > \**sʲabǝḥa* > *šabḫa*. Andere Erklärung: Labialisierung durch *b* als zweiten Radikal.

(14) T. *šarq* ‚(Sonnen)aufgang‘[45] < G. *śärq* ‚Aufgang (Gestirne)‘; Tña. *säräqä* ‚anfangen‘, Amh. *särräqä* ‚aufgehen (Gestirne)‘, aber T. *sarqa* ‚aufgehen (vom Neumond)‘[46], dann ist *šarq* ein arabisches Lehnwort oder von der arabischen Aussprache beeinflusst.

(15) T. *ḥašar* ‚Stroh‘[47], < G. *ḥaśär*; Tña. *ḥasär* und Amh. *asär* ‚Stroh‘.

(16) In einigen Wurzeln ist die Palatalisierung von *ś* durch den palatalen Radikal /y/ verursacht worden:

– T. *šena* ‚urinieren‘[48], < G. *śenä*; Tña. *šenä / šänä*, Amh. *šänna / šännä* (Wurzel *śyn*).

– *śena* > *sena* > *sʲena* > *šena*

(17) T. *ḥariš* ‚Nashorn‘[49] < G. *ḥariś / ḥaris*; Tña. *ḥariš*, Palatalisierung durch das *i* vor dem Sibilanten.

In den folgenden Beispielen kommen ein *b*, ein *m* oder *w* vor, die für die Labialisierung verantwortlich sind. Das *o* von *śok* enthält ebenfalls das labiale Element *w* (*o* = *äw*).

(18) T. *šarba* ‚verschlingen (Meer), aufsaugen‘[50] < G. *śäräbä / säräbä* ‚trinken, austrinken‘; Tña. *säräbä / säräbä* ‚trinken‘.

– T. *šok* ‚Dorn(en)‘[51] < G. *śok*; Tña. *ʾǝšok̲*.

– T. *šamǝʿ / šamʿā* ‚Wachs‘[52] < G. *śämʿ*; Tña. *šämʿi*, Amh. Arg. Gur. *säm*.

– T. *šawet* ‚Ähre, Korn‘[53] < G. *śäwit*; Tña. *säwwit / šäwwit*, Amh. *ǝšät*.

(19) Beispiele von Palatalisierung mit unklarer Entstehung:

– T. *našta* ‚zerstören‘[54] < G. *näśätä / näsätä*; Tña. *näsätä*.

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45  Ibid., S. 211.
46  Ibid., S. 177.
47  Ibid., S. 75.
48  Ibid., S. 227.
49  Ibid., S. 67.
50  Ibid., S. 211f.
51  Ibid., S. 226.
52  Ibid., S. 210.
53  Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 225.

- T. *šaggara* 0₂ ‚halten, auffangen; mit Schlingen fangen', *šāgara* 0₃ ‚aufhalten, auffangen'[55] < G. *šägärä* ‚mit einem Netz fangen, einfangen, sich verfangen'.
- T. *šaṭṭaqa* 0₂ ‚spalten, durchfahren (Meer), einsteigen'[56] < G. *šäṭäqä / säṭäqä* ‚spalten'.

## 3. G. *ṣ* → T. *č̣*

(20) T. *č̣əḥəm / ṣəḥəm* ‚Bart'[57] und Təgre der Beni-Amer *ṭiḥim*[58] < G. *ṣəḥm* ‚Bart'; Tña. *č̣əḥmi*, Amh. *ṭim*, Bil. *č̣ehum*.
- Erklärung: Dem G. *ṣəḥm* liegt eine *qitl*-Form zugrunde, deren Vokalisierung die Ursache für Palatalisierung liefert: *$^*$ṣiḥm > $^*$ṣ́əḥm > $^*$č̣əḥm > č̣əḥəm*.
- Alternative Erklärung: Labialisierung durch *m*.

Interessant sind die dialektalen Unterschiede in folgenden Beispielen:

(21) T. *ṣəfər / ṣifər* ‚Fingernagel'[59] aber Təgre der Beni-Amer *č̣əfər / č̣ifir*[60] < G. *ṣəfr*; Tña. *ṣəfri*, Amh. *ṭəfr*. Die Palatalisierung ist möglicherweise durch das *i / ə* [i] bzw. *f* zustande gekommen.

(22) T. *č̣əbʿət*, pl. *ʾač̣ābəʿ* ‚Finger'[61], *ṣəbʿat*[62] und Təgre der Beni-Amer *č̣abʾit* < G. *ʾaṣbaʿt*; Tña. *ʾaṣabəʿ*, Amh. *ṭat*, Gur. *atebät*. Labialisierung durch *b*, das spirantisch ausgesprochen wird.

(23) T. *ḥač̣ra* ‚kurz, klein sein'[63] < G. *ḥaṣärä*; Tña. *ḥaṣärä*, Amh. *aṭṭärä*, Har. *ḥaṭara*. Erwähnenswert ist auch die Form T. *ḥač̣ir* ‚kurz', deren Vokalisierung mit *i* die Ursache für Palatalisierung ist. Vgl. auch Amh. *ač̣ir / ač̣č̣ər* ‚kurz'.

(24) T. *mač̣ra*[64] */ māǧra*[65] ‚kauen, zerbeißen' < G. *mäṣärä / mäṣṣärä / mäṣ́ärä* ‚kauen, kratzen'; Amh. *moč̣č̣ärä*, *mʷač̣č̣ärä* ‚kratzen'.

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[54] Ibid., S. 326.
[55] Ibid., S. 229.
[56] Ibid., S. 230.
[57] Ibid., S. 622, 633.
[58] Beaton / Paul: A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Tigre Language (1954), S. 47.
[59] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 650; Morin: Y a-t-il un lexique Beni-Amer (1996), S. 261.
[60] Id.: Y a-t-il un lexique Beni-Amer (1996), S. 261; Nakano: *A Vocabulary of Beni Amer Dialect of Tigre* (1982), S. 61.
[61] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 627.
[62] Munziger: Vocabulaire de la langue tigré (1865), S. 49.
[63] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 101.
[64] Ibid., S. 144.
[65] Munziger: Vocabulaire de la langue tigré (1865), S. 17.

(25) T. *qarča* ‚schneiden, scheren‘[66] und auch *qarṣa* 0₁ ‚abhauen, einhauen‘ / *qarraṣa* 0₂ ‚Haare abschneiden, scheren‘, < G. *qäräṣä* / *qʷäräṣä* ‚einschneiden, eingravieren, schneiden, scheren‘; Tña. id., Amh. *qʷärräṭä* ‚abschneiden‘, Arg. *qorräṭä*, Bil. *qarač*. Die Labialität wirkt hier suprasegmental.

(26) T. *galča* ‚aufdecken‘[67] < G. *gäläṣä* ‚offenbaren, aufdecken, öffnen‘; Tña. id., Amh., Gur. *gälläṭä*, Arg. *gälläṭa*, Bil. *galaṭ*.

(27) T. *gəmčuy* ‚krumm, verkehrt‘[68]< G. *gämäṣä* ‚biegen‘; Tña. *gämäṣä* ‚lügen‘, Amh. *gämmäṭä* ‚schlecht von einer abwesenden Person reden‘.

Vier der hier aufgelisteten Beispiele (21, 23, 24 und 25) haben einen *r*-Radikal. Es scheint, dass das *r* die Palatalisierung (oder Labialisierung) des benachbarten Radikals begünstigt (siehe auch 14 und 15). Die übrigen Beispiele zeigen ein *b*, *f*, *m* oder *l* in der Wurzel, die für die Labialisierung verantwortlich sind.

Weitere Beispiele (28)-(32) mit labialisierenden Elementen:

(28) T. *balač bela* ‚aufglänzen, blitzen‘[69] < G. *bäläṣä* ‚funkeln, glänzen‘; Tña. *bəlləč bälä*.

(29) T. *bačbača* ‚einrühren, mischen‘,[70] < G. *bäṣbäṣä* ‚umrühren‘; Amh. *bäṭäbbäṭä* ‚umrühren‘.

(30) T. *čəgraf* ‚Peitsche‘[71] < G. *ṣəgʷraf*; Tña. *čəgraf*.

(31) T. *qaṣ, qač* ‚Floh‘[72] < G. *qʷənṣ*; Tña. *qʷənṣi / qʷənči*, Amh. *qunəčča* (die Labialisierung wirkt suprasegmental).

(32) T. *ṣafʿa / čafʿa* ‚ins Gesicht schlagen, ohrfeigen‘[73] < G. *ṣäfʿa*; Tña. *ṣäfʿe*.

(33) T. *načča* ‚abzupfen, abreißen, zausen‘[74] < G., *näṣäyä* ‚ausreißen‘; Tña. id., Amh. *näččä* (Palatalisierung durch das y).

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66  Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 244f.
67  Ibid., S. 565.
68  Ibid., S. 570f.
69  Ibid., S. 273.
70  Ibid., S. 300.
71  Ibid., S. 630.
72  Ibid., S. 264.
73  Ibid., S. 650.
74  Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 344.

**4. G. ś́ → T. č̣**

(34) T. ʾəč̣č̣at / coll. ʾəč̣ay / pl. ʾač̣uy ‚Baum'[75] und Təgre der Beni-Amer ʾič̣āy / ʾəč̣əy[76] und ʾič̣yat[77] < G. ʾəś́ ‚Baum, Holz'; Tña. ʾənṣäyti / ʾənč̣äyti / ʾəč̣äyti ‚Holz', Amh. ʾənč̣ät, Arg. ʾənč̣ed, Har. inč̣i, Gur. äč̣ä.

(35) T. ʿač̣əm / ʿaṣəm[78] und ʿāč̣im[79] und noch ʿaṣim / ʿač̣im / ʾač̣im[80] ‚Knochen' < G. ʿaś́m / ʿaṣm; Tña. ʿaṣmi, Amh. aṭənt, Gur. aṭəm ‚Knochen'.

Mögliche Erklärung: Die Palatalisierung geht auf die Nachbarschaft von *i* bzw. *ə* [i] zurück.

(36) T. ramač̣ ‚heiße Asche' und rammač̣a ‚angezündet, aufgereizt werden'[81] < G. rämäś́; Tña. rämäṣ, Amh. rämäṭ ‚heiße Asche'.

(37) T. č̣afəʿ / ṣafəʿ ‚Kuhmist'[82] < G. ś́əfʿ ‚Kot, Mist'.

(38) T. č̣awaga 0₂ ‚das Gesicht verziehen'[83] < G. ś́ogä, täś́äwgä ‚trotzig, wild sein'; Tña. täṣäwwägä ‚zornig blicken'.

(39) T. č̣arq ‚Lumpen, Lappen, Stoffstück'[84] < G. ś́ärq; Tña., Har. č̣ärqi, Amh. Gur. č̣ärq.

(40) T. wanč̣əf ‚Schleuder'[85] < G. wäṣäfä / wäṣṣäfä ‚schleudern mit einer Schleuder'; Tña. Amh. Gur. wänč̣əf.

Erklärung für (36), (37), (38) und (40): Labialisierung durch die *m-*, *f-* und *w-* Radikale.

**5. Andere Fälle**

(41) G. z → T. ǧ:
– T. zənnār / ǧənnar[86] < G. zənnar ‚Gürtel', aus arab. zunnār ‚Gürtel'.
– T. ǧafar ‚Rand'[87] < G. zäfär ‚Rand'; Tña. id. (Labialisierung durch f).

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[75] Ibid., S. 490.

[76] Morin: Y a-t-il un lexique Beni-Amer (1996), S. 260.

[77] Nakano: A Vocabulary of Beni Amer Dialect of Tigre (1982), S. 765.

[78] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 491.

[79] Nakano: A Vocabulary of Beni Amer Dialect of Tigre (1982), S. 114.

[80] Morin: Y a-t-il un lexique Beni-Amer (1996), S. 261.

[81] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 149.

[82] Ibid., S. 631.

[83] Ibid., S. 628.

[84] Ibid., S. 625.

[85] Ibid., S. 441.

[86] Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigré-Sprache* (1962), S. 500.

(42) G. ṣ (Arab. ṣ) → T. š:
–   T. qamiš ‚Hemd‘[88] < G. qāmiṣ; Tña. qämiṣ / qämiš, Amh. qämis, aus Arab.
    qamīṣ, Deemphatisierung und Palatalisierung durch i.
–   T. qənšəl ‚Schakal‘[89] < G. qʷənṣəl ‚Fuchs, Schakal‘; Amh. qʷənṣəl ‚Fuchs‘, Bil.
    qʷanšalā, Deemphatisierung und Labialisierung durch w (qʷ).

(43) G. z → T. š:
–   T. mərkuš ‚Stab‘[90] < G. mərgʷəz ‚Stab‘; Tña. mərkus ‚Krücke, Stütze‘. Verlust
    der Stimmhaftigkeit und Labialisierung durch w (gʷ).

(44) G. q → T. č:
–   T. qāč̣ala 0₃ ‚läuten‘[91] < G. qaqel ‚kleine Glocke‘; Tña., Amh. qač̣əl (Palatali-
    sierung durch e).

(45) G. ṭ → T. č̣:
–   T. qanč̣aba ‚klein sein‘[92] und qač̣ba ‚kneifen, abkneifen‘[93] < G. qāṭäbä ‚kürzen‘
    und qänṭäbä ‚durchbohren, kneifen‘; Tña. qänṭäbä ‚abschneiden‘.

## D. Zusammenfassung

1. Die Palatalisierung ist ein Phänomen, das die Təgre-Sprache wie die anderen äthi-
osemitischen Sprachen sowohl in synchroner als auch in diachroner Hinsicht erfasst
und geprägt hat.[94]
2. Obwohl es verfrüht ist, ein Urteil darüber zu fällen, scheint es innerhalb des Təgre
selbst unterschiedliche Palatalisierungsgrade zu geben (der Mansāʿ-Dialekt vs. periphe-
here Dialekte).
3. Da Palatalisierung im Təgre in den meisten Fällen sprachintern zu erklären ist, ist
das vermutete kuschitische Substrat als deren Ursache eher unwahrscheinlich. Eine

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[87]   Ibid., S. 558.
[88]   Ibid., S. 23ff.
[89]   Ibid., S. 252.
[90]   Ibid., S. 115.
[91]   Ibid., S. 263.
[92]   Ibid., S. 254.
[93]   Ibid., S. 263.
[94]   Dazu meint mit Recht R. Voigt: „The criterion of palatalization is not well suited to be used in the
      classification of this particular group of languages (i.e. äthiosemitische) since the increase in mor-
      phological palatalization is a gradual feature. Palatalization started in Tigre and Tigrinya, in Tigre
      (with its remarkable palatalization with the 1ˢᵗ sg. nominal suffix) and Tigrinya (with its remarkable
      palatalization in the numerals), and then continued to make its way South up to Amharic and other
      languages", s. Voigt: North vs. South Ethiopian Semitic (2010), S. 580.

Untersuchung der Palatalisierung in den kuschitischen Sprachen selbst steht noch aus und würde diese Frage eindeutig beantworten.

4. Für den Lautwandel bestimmter Sibilanten ist neben der Palatalisierung eine andere sekundäre Artikulation verantwortlich – die Labialisierung. Dieses Charakteristikum scheint Tǝgre mit Tǝgrǝñña zu teilen. Es bleibt zu hoffen, dass weiterführende Forschung in dieser Richtung unsere Kenntnis über die Stellung des Tǝgre innerhalb des Äthiosemitischen erweitern wird.

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   Id.: Die Entsprechung der ursemitischen Interdentale im Altäthiopischen, *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65. Geburtstag. Vol. 1. Semitische Studien unter Berücksichtigung der Südsemitistik*, (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 54), hrsg. von W. Heinrichs und G. Schoeler, Beirut: Steiner 1994 S. 102–117.

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*Təgre Abstract*

እብ ነጋድ ለለትነጠቅ አክራን ትግራይት ለከሰስ አቅመቾት

ዲብ ተአሪከ ትግራይት ገጽ-ሐር እንዴ አቅበለነ ምን እንገነሕ ወዙ ለህለ ንዛም መፋግር አክራን ምን እንጋንሕ፡ ንጥቀት እብ ነጋድ ዲብ ክልኢቱ መራሕል ትግራይት እንረክበ። ንጥቀት እብ ነጋድ እብ ዕን ጆቅራፍያይ መካሪት ምን እንርእየመ ዲበ ናይ ምግብ ለህጀት መንሳዕ ወዲበ ናይ አጥራፍ ለህጀት እንረክበ። ዲብ ንዛም መፋግር አክራን ትግራይት መትበዳል አክራን እብ ንጥቀት እብ ነጋድ ሌጠ ለለትሸረሕ እንዴ ኢገብእ፡ ንጥቀት እብ ክናፍርመ ለከምክክም ቱ። እሊ አውሳፍ መፋግር አክራን እሊ ዲብ ትግሬ ወትግርኛ እብ ሕበር ለለትረከብ ቱ።

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# Linguistic Stratification in Tigre

Paolo Marrassini (†)[*]

*Abstract*

Tigre is one of the most recently documented Ethiopian Semitic languages, but nevertheless it shows some archaic features, which allow us to trace a kind of "linguistic archaeology". These features in part need not to be interpreted in a genealogical sense, but can be due to geographical vicinity (which becomes highly problematic from the moment of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Semites, in the 3rd or 2nd millennium B.C.) or parallel development: Also the real relationship between "Old" and "Modern" South Arabian (Modern South Arabian showing many features more archaic than "Old South Arabian"), and simply "South Arabian" (= Semitic of the Arabian Peninsula, irrespective of its epoch) should be taken into consideration. Even the imperfect *yaqattal, in several Semitic languages (including Ethiopic), can be the result of late phonological and morphological developments, whereas the possible lack of any nominal flexion could point to a recent situation similar *to that of* Modern South Arabian (the reverse hypothesis, that of a situation older than the creation of the nominal flexion in Semitic, seems to be less probable). Surely the total absence, in Tigre as well as in Ethiopic, of any of the various kinds of article created in the Syro-Palestinian area and in the Arabian Peninsula at the end of the 2nd millennium-beginning of the 1st is a clear demonstration that Ethiopic as a whole detached from the rest of Semitic before that period.

As one of the most recently documented Ethiopian Semitic languages, and one of the nearest to the original Semitic model among them, Tigre is in the a little embarrassing situation of being (like so many other languages in the world) at the same time old and new, a kind of a linguistic "puer senex" so popular in Ethiopian hagiography. Of this contradictory situation Tigre perhaps represents the most striking Ethiopian Semitic (ES) example, not showing for the past linguistic stages the least

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even fragmentary documentation,[1] very differently from Amharic, Harari and also from Tigrinya.[2]

Just because of this, one feels encouraged to search in Tigre different properly linguistic levels, its possible *linguistic stratification*, which, outside every elementary one-dimension genealogical assignment, could make it a really historical body. Taking into account, besides the image of the genealogical tree created in 1863 by August Schleicher (himself a botanist) – also the concept of the *Sprachverwandtschaft*, created by Hugo Schuchardt from 1868 to 1917, that of the *Wellentheorie*, created by Johannes Schmidt in 1892, and that of the *Sprachbund*, proposed by Trubetzkoy in 1928 at the Linguistic Conference in The Hague, applied by himself to the Indo-European languages in 1939 (Trubetzkoy 1939), but already to "Hamitic" by Brockelmann in 1932 – not to speak of the possibility of *parallel development*, a very serious

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[1] Cp. anyway Zaborski 1972; of the 19th cent. also the texts in Raz 1992.

[2] For *Amharic*: a) the 12 war songs in honor of Ethiopian kings (the oldest is in honor of king ʿAmda Ṣəyon, who reigned 1314–1344); b) the morphological and lexical Amharisms in the historical Chronicles, the language of which was considered as a particular kind of Geez (the *ləssanä tarik* "the language of history"); c) the various texts of the 17th cent.: i) the small theological treaties against Catholics, in particular the Jesuits; ii) the magico-medical treatises; iii) the *säwasəw*; iv) the writings of Hiob Ludolf. Bibliographical selection: Appleyard 2003; Brzuski 1967; 1983; Cowley 1974 (cp. Getatchew Haile 1980); Cowley 1977; 1983; Getatchew Haile 1970; 1979; 1983; 1991; Goldenberg 1976; Guidi 1889; Kane 1983; 1986; Leslau 1964; Littmann 1914; 1942–1943; 1947; Richter 1997; Strelcyn 1960; 1961; 1964a; 1964b; 1968; 1972; 1981.

For *Harari*: a) the *Kitāb al-Farāʾiḍ* "The Book of the Religious Precepts", edited in Arabic characters with Latin transliteration and an Italian translation, together with a grammatical sketch, by Enrico Cerulli in 1936, from a MS of 34ff., perhaps of the 18th cent., but showing a very old stage of the language; b) the *Zaharatt ḫalifāt kasidā* 'The Song of the Four Caliphs' (i.e. the four Sunnite caliphs Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman, and ʿAli), a long poem of about 5,000 verses according to Cerulli 1968, p. 132; but Prof. Giorgio Banti told me some years ago that this should be a printing mistake for "500" (although in the edition by Cerulli the number is printed in letters, not in figures); in fact Dr. Alessandro Gori tells me that the text has been published and translated into German (without identifying it) by Wagner 1983, pp. 53–216 (542 verses); c) the wedding songs of the 18th cent., in a language not too different from today's. Bibliography: Leslau 1937; 1947; 1970, pp. 500f.; Cerulli 1936, pp. 282–421; Cohen 193, pp. 328–354.

For *Tigrinya* extensive documents written in old Tigrinya are for the moment wanting, but of course much could be extracted from the "tigrinized" Geez of many local docments; some genuine Tigrinya words can be extracted from works like the *Maṣḥafa məṣṭira samāy waməṣṣṣəsṣ*, an apocalyptic work of the 15th cent., by Baḥayla Mikāʾēl (or by his pupil Yəsḥaq), which quotes some Tigrinya (called *ḥabāsi*) words (*falfal zawəʾətu baḥabāsi ḥarmaz bəhil*; *yəberd zawəʾətu baḥabāsi namr bəhil*; *fənfənt wabanagar ḥabāsi zəʾəb bəhil*; *madgəl zawəʾətu dəb*; *ḥarāwyā zawəʾətu maflas*; *ʾarwe zasəmu taman banagara ʾagʿāzi*) or from the historical Chronicles (e.g. *zälägya*, a fence, equivalent of Amharic *qänṭäfa* in the "Chronicle" of Sarṣa Dəngəl).

danger for every genealogical reconstruction, already pointed out by Meillet in 1900 (Meillet 1921).

In fact, the isoglosses which are considered as being specific of South Semitic (SS), including Tigre, against Arabic are not necessarily genetic, and can also be due to geographical contiguity or to parallel development: the 1st singular and 2nd persons of perfect *-k*,[3] a morpheme typical of an old-SS substrate on which a "*t*"-Arabic superstrate was superimposed, as it can be easily seen in the Arabic of the South of the Peninsula (besides Behnstedt, Diem and Rossi in Contini 1994 see also Prochazka 1974); the plural of the nouns with *-i-* before possessive suffixes (see below), a phenomenon which simply does not exist in Arabic.

This lack of documentary precision can be in some way compensated by inserting the linguistic phenomena of Tigre in a historical sequence, in order to produce a kind of pre-historical linguistic archaeology. As a general example, leaving aside for the moment the problem of the imperfect, let us take into consideration the other two isoglosses. The *-k* in the perfect may show that Ethiopic separated after a period in common with the rest of SS (although it could also be the product of parallel development) but the *-i-* after the plural of nouns before possessive pronouns already shows a problem: as a regular phenomenon it is present in Geez and South Ethiopic, but not in Tigre (except in isolated cases of different origin, see below) and in Tigrinya (Tna). As this *-i-* is present also in Modern South Arabian (MSA; nothing of course can be said of the vocalism of OSA), it must have been a common SS feature present in Ethiopic before its separation (although theoretically also in this case a parallel development cannot be entirely excluded); see below.

So, what should above all be taken into account is a more accurate historico-linguistic background, first of all the very concept of "South Arabian" (SA), which has to be better clarified (although in a very elementary way). It is the development of the studies itself which has brought, in fact, into a blind alley, by identifying[4] two theoretically different terms, "South Arabian" (SA) and "Old South Arabian" (OSA), making them to become virtually identical, in the unified term of "South Arabians"

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[3]   One of the *loci classici* of the SS comparison (Cantineau 1932, pp. 180f.; Leslau 1943, pp. 7f.; Müller 1964, p. 53; Garbini 1984, p. 146; Appleyard 1996, pp. 205, 214f., 225), it has been considered by Cantineau "une preuve sérieuse de l'unité du groupe sudarabique à une certaine époque"; but contrary to him and to many others, it cannot be considered a *genetic* mark of South Semitic (because of the possibility of a remote expansion due to geographical contiguity), as Goldenberg has clearly shown quoting the parallel developments in neo-Assyrian and Samaritan Aramaic, and in stressing the influence, in SS, of the suffixed pronouns (as already Nöldeke in 1904, and Angelo Canini in 1554). So, in Goldenberg's (1977, p. 477) own words, isogloss "much less neat than one would desire", speaking also of *Systemzwang*, i.e. parallel development.

[4]   Both because of the old theory by Glaser, Conti Rossini, and so many others, as well of the otherwise highly meritorious activity of R. Schneider and A. J. Drewes.

valid for both: as simply "South Arabians", they can be found almost interchangeably among many scholars. But of course on the one side, "South Arabian" can indicate the languages and cultures of the Semites in the south of the Arabian Peninsula in every epoch (beginning with the 3rd and the 2nd millennia BC: in the end, the "South Arabian" of Christian 1919–1920, Cantineau 1932[5] and others) – on the other, "Old South Arabian" must indicate a particular South Arabian culture and language in the 1st millennium BC (here in fact Sabaic) – 1st AD, which can have very little to do with their ancestors of two or three millennia before. The *modern* languages of this same area (MSA) have the advantage of not suffering of such a confusion just because of the explicit adjective *they have*, but *in compensation* they are faced with a different problem, that of being still partly considered, because of the denomination itself, as the recent stage of these old languages – even if this has never been demonstrated, and in many cases the modern languages appear to be older than the old ones. So, the elimination (or the drastic reduction) of the Sabaic exaggerations of Conti Rossini, which concern the second value of the term, have nothing to do, in principle, with the South Arabian presence in the Peninsula and in Ethiopia implied in the first. In fact, the general term of "South Arabia(n)" in the larger sense is unavoidable if one thinks of an "original seat" of the Semites in Asia, and not in Africa.[6]

If we are looking for the possible Semitic antecedents of Ethiopic, we can feel free, if one may say so, from the problems of the 1st millennium BC, and all the more from those of the 1st millennium AD. Notwithstanding the not very old textual documentation, all these periods *could be* too late for these antecedents. Unfortunately, we are not able to give a date for this (or these) Semitic migration(s) from the southern part of Arabia, but an important novelty of the last decades has been the progresssive discovery of a complex civilization in South Arabia during the 3rd and the 2nd millennia BC.[7] This of course permits to think to any migration (or to a series of continuous passages) from the South (or Center-South) of the Arabian Peninsula *before* OSA, by *Semitic* peoples who had still little or nothing to do with OSA in

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[5]   Who included in this term also Ethiopic.

[6]   E.g., if one maintains that Abyssinian anthroponymy is mainly made by Semitic names, as Drewes 1998, pp. 129 and 130 does (cp. also Drewes 1998, p. 128, fn. 1: "ce n'est pas le nombre des noms propres sudarabiques attestés en Ethiopie qui importe ... mais le fait qu'il y a un nombre important de noms propres qui ne sont pas attestés dans les documents épigraphiques de l'Arabie du Sud"), and at the same time excludes that these names come from Arabia, he should not avoid giving his opinion on what their origin is, and cannot help thinking of an African origin of Abyssinian Semitic, i.e. of the Abyssinian Semitic languages as "Semitic in its cradle", as in Hudson and others. For "Semitic origins" in the syro-palestinian region see (more or less explicitly) de Vaux 1958, Fronzaroli 1960, Widengren 1960, Aro 1963, Tyloch 1975, and Diakonoff 1981.

[7]   See Edens / Wilkinson 1988; Tosi 1986; for Oman cp. Berthoud / Cleuziou 1983; Cleuziou / Costantini 1980; Hastings / Humphries / Meadou 1975.

the strict sense of an exactly defined, and later, people (or peoples), culture, and language.

Besides, the presence of the sea, separating Ethiopia from the rest of SS in the Arabia Peninsula, makes any geographical explanation, if not impossible, surely highly problematic; so, any linguistic feature in common between Ethiopia and the rest of SS should be ascribed, in principle, to a common period before the arrival of the Semites in Africa (needless to say that this "common period" can be genetically valid for ES, but is not in itself a proof of a genetic unity of SS as a whole). As OSA shows its usual problems of identification due to the lack of vocalization[8] it is clear that more attention should be paid to the isoglosses which connect MSA with Ethiopic, and perhaps to the plurality of (Semitic?) peoples or regions documented in the aksumite age: *Ḥbs²t* ("Abyssinia"); *ʾAgʿāzi* (pl. *ʾAgʿāziyān*), perhaps to be located in Akkele Guzay, Eritrea;[9] *ʿAgāma*; *Tigrites*; *Adulitans*: and maybe others.

Also the present state of documentation is to be taken into account: whereas for Tigre we dispose of two good and not so old tools[10] the same cannot be said of Modern South Arabian, where one cannot utilize any comprehensive recent instrument for comparison, despite the excellent studies by A. Lonnet and M.-C. Simeone-Senelle on single linguistic phenomena. Also to the "new language" (or, if one prefers, "new dialect") of the Dahlak islands[11] should be obviously attached the importance it deserves.

From the point of view of an elementary method, as in textual criticism, to test the validity of the current classifications, which unfortunately are almost in their entirety of a *genealogical* kind, we can state that every single innovating and significant feature (in philology, *conjunctive error*) which is not shared by at least another Ethiopian Semitic (or simply Semitic) language, is devoid of any value for classification, and it only represents a private (so to speak) direction of a single subject, unable to form a family (in philology, *lectio singularis*). As already said, we must also take into account the presence of parallel development between different, even unrelated, languages (in philology, *polygenetic errors*).

With all this in mind, our kind of "archaeological" linguistic investigation can start from its oldest and unsuspected features.

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[8]  Not to speak of the possible more recent arrival of the Sabaeans, see Garbini 1984b.
[9]  They appear in the Sabaic inscription CIH 541, about the middle of the 6th cent.; a comparison has been suggested with *Ygʿdyn* (an adjective or an ethnic term employed in connection with the title of "king" (*mlkn ṣrʿn ygʿdyn*) in the Sabaean inscriptions of Ethiopia, and (without much justification in my opinion) with the people of the Agᵂezat in the Geez inscription of ʿEzānā *RIÉ* 187 = *DAE* 9.
[10] Leslau 1945 and Raz 1983.
[11] Cp. for the moment Simeone-Senelle 2005.

## A. *yaqattal

In fact, nothing could be considered as more archaic, in the Semitic verb, than the famed imperfect form *yaqattal,[12] which is present in all the Semitic languages of Ethiopia.[13] Of course, if *yaqattal is an archaism, it can be considered a SS isogloss only in the *system* formed by it together with the perfect qatala[14] – it is this *system* that could be considered (perhaps a little paradoxically) as a kind of innovation.

But many facts seem to militate against this opinion, because in Ethiopic and in MSA one can speak, for this form, of a secondary formation, for entirely different reasons – quite apart from the fact OSA probably did not possess *yaqattal[15]:

1) for Ethiopic, a morphological reason, according to the theory of the "réemploi des matériaux" (in turn due to the tendency of renewing the imperfect) of J. Kuryłowicz[16] and M. Cohen,[17] by making use of the old intensive stem, almost completely out of use already in Geez. Although this cannot be taken for granted, a hint in the same direction (which has been perhaps not sufficiently stressed) could be the phonetic shape of the Ethiopic form yəqattəl, where a Semitic *yaqattal should have been preserved as such; the Ethiopic form yəqattəl perfectly corresponds to the Semitic imperfect of the intensive stem, which is *yuqattilu;[18]

2) for MSA, a phonological one, according to the theory of D. Cohen,[19] which can be summarized as follows:

Transitive iqotel in the indicative, subjunctive iqtel; intransitive irkob (that is, without vowel between the 1st and the 2nd radical) both in the indicative and in the subjunctive. The subjunctive (in both the transitive and the intransitive verbs) regu-

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[12] For SS see Cantineau 1932, pp. 181–183, 195–200; Leslau 1943, p. 8; Müller 1964, p. 53; Garbini 1984, p. 146; Rodgers 1991, p. 1325; Appleyard 1996, pp. 205f., 209–213, 225 and 226. Strictly "North-West Semitic" is Kottsieper 2000.

[13] yəqattəl in Geez and in Tigrigna, ləqattəl in Tigre, yə-qattəl, yə-qatəl or i-qatəl in South Ethiopic; as it has been said above, gemination is preserved in Geez throughout, but it is eliminated in Tigre before the pronominal suffixes of 1st and 2nd person (e.g. tə-qatl-a-nni), and in Tigrinya also before the pronominal suffixes of 3rd person, and the verbal endings (so, e.g. tə-qatl-o, tə-qatl-u); in Harari it takes the form i-qatl-i: in any case, also in Ethiopic, what *always* is present in all the languages is a vowel (here again a) between the 1st and the 2nd radical.

[14] Hetzron 1972, p. 16; 1974, p. 189.

[15] Nebes 1994, pp. 74f.

[16] Kuryłowicz 1949, pp. 47–56; 1961, pp. 48–85.

[17] Cohen 1953 and 1959.

[18] See lastly Cohen 1984, p. 67. But this is not so decisive, because Semitic also possessed *yaqattil and *yaqattul forms; besides, there has been a process of unification in the prefix in Ethiopic, because all the prefixes have vowel ə (except the causative yā-), even that of the subjunctive, which originally had surely a (yaqtul).

[19] Cohen (who only examines śḥeri) 1974; 1984, pp. 62–78 and *passim*.

larly derived from Semitic *yaqtul* (without final -*u*) > *iqtel*; the indicative (which, contrary to the subjunctive, is different in the transitive and the intransitive verbs) had, as in Semitic, a final -*u* (*yaqtulu*); so, as in NW Semitic and in Arabic, two different forms (transitive *yaqtulu* and intransitive *yiqtalu*), existed in MSA; in the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabic dialects show a marked weakness of the vowel *u*, whereas the vowel *a* is usually very stable; that is why the intransitive form *yiqtalu* remained, whereas the transitive form *yaqtulu* underwent a significant change (well documented in the Arabic dialects of today in the Peninsula), that is the fall of the short unstressed *u* in open syllable: *yaqtulu* > *yaqtlu*; impossibility of maintaining 3 consecutive consonants, and the final -*u* (which did not exist in the subjunctive) moves back to eliminate this inconvenience, according to the well known phenomenon called in French "réssaut" ("backleap"). The decisive step towards a form similar to *yaqattal*, that is the insertion of a vowel between the 1st and the 2nd radical, is done here: *yaqtlu* > *yaqutlu*; fall of the final unstressed short vowel, an universal phenomenon in almost all the Semitic languages except Ethiopic: *yaqutlu* > *yaqutl*; secondary and very usual phenomena (not only in MSA): *ya-* > *i-*; *u* > *o*; insertion of a vowel in order to avoid 2 final consonants: ("segolization") *iqotel*.

The opinion of D. Cohen was energetically contradicted by Goldenberg[20], but already Ewald Wagner in 1968 had arrived to something more or less similar. To this, other similar phenomena of production of a vowel between the 1st and the 2nd radical, again *outside the verbs with 2nd laryngeal*, can be added, phenomena discovered: by Ben Hayyim in 1952 for Samaritan Hebrew and Samaritan Aramaic; for Palestinian Aramaic, and for the Babylonian vocalization of Biblical Hebrew, one year later by Goshen-Gottstein 1953 and 1959 for Mandaic; in 1958 by Meyer for Qumran Hebrew; in 1962 by Garbini for Punic. Whatever the explanation of the origins of similar vowels could be (Qimron 1986 and Morag 1988) what interests us here is the *possibility* of a secondary formation of *yaqattal* for phonological reasons;

3) the case of Akkadian remains, for which things are even less clear, but the proposal of a semantic privative opposition here in Akkadian (and now, also in Eblaic), held by Rundgren in 1959 remains suggestive. As for Afro-Asiatic, the so-called "forme d'habitude" in Berber,[21] can hardly be considered a primary form.

Anyway, in all these three cases, far from being a kind of miraculous preservation, in recent sources, of an old form,[22] *yaqattal* could be the result of a (late) parallel development, *possibly* to be ruled out from the real archaisms of SE and of Tigre.

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[20] Goldenberg 1977, pp. 475–477 and 1979.

[21] Inserted in the comparison of the Afro-asiatic verbal systems by Otto Rössler in the Fifties.

[22] E.g. Meyer 1958.

## B. Nominal Flexion

Speaking again of a very old situation (although here perhaps referring to a less ancient period), another series of phenomena connected with the final vocalism seems to exclude that Tigre (together with Tigrinya, and differently from Geez) ever possessed a nominal flexion:

1) the *-i-* after the plural of nouns before possessive pronouns is maybe one of the better known SS isoglosses (see above). According to Goetze[23] this *-i-* is in all probability a remnant of the oblique case of the plural. This is made almost sure, in my opinion, by the analogous phenomenon of NW Semitic, where a binding diphthong *-ay-*, or a palatal vowel *-e-*, derived from the dual (cp. Garr;[24] for the priority of the dual instead of the plural, due to the parts of the body, see Nöldeke[25]) is employed. This *-i-* exists in Geez, but it is not found in the rest of North Ethiopic;[26] surely it existed also in South Ethiopic where it has caused the palatalization of the plural ending *\*-āt*, that is *\*-āt-i-* > *-āč* (Har.), *-oč* (Amh. and others).[27] Cantineau considered this "une innovation singulière qui peut être considérée comme une bonne preuve de l'unité primitive du domaine"[28], but also in this case any *genetic* value for SS is not proved, because this phenomenon could have been produced in a comparatively late period, and thanks, again, to geographical continuity: a similar phenomenon, that is the dual oblique ending *-ay-* before pronominal suffixes (on which see below) is present in NW Semitic, appearing some millennia after the NW Semitic unity had already come into being.

It is difficult to admit that this morpheme (like any other) has left no trace at all in modern North Ethiopic, and it is perhaps easier to suppose that declension was entirely lost, even in its not any more functional remnants, at the stage when Tigre

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[23]  Goetze 1946, pp. 126f.

[24]  Garr 1985, p. 93.

[25]  Nöldeke 1904, p. 51.

[26]  In Tigre some isolated cases of plural *-äč* exist, but they seem to have an entirely different origin. According to Leslau 1945, p. 178 in Tigre *-äč* is limited to nouns in *-y* and biliterals trying to imitate them as "triliterals"; Raz 1983, p. 18 (after Palmer) says that there are only 9 nouns with this kind of plural, and that it is derived from *-ayt* (of which some of these names also show a form). No trace of this palatalized *t* in the plurals of Tigrinya, both in Leslau 1941 or in Mauro da Leonessa 1928.

[27]  This palatalization has not been caused, as it could appear at a first sight, by any original *i* of the ending *-\*āt-i*, because in Ancient Harari the plural ending is already *-āt*, and not *-āč* nor *-\*āti*. The *o* of *-oč* is strange, as there is no regular passage *a > o* in Amharic; but of course clitics can show peculiar phonetic transformations, and, besides, many *a > o* in the plural appear in MSA, whereas in Tigre *ot-āt* is the plural of the substantives ending in *-at* in the singular (e.g. *ʿamat* "year", pl. *ʿamotāt*), and the Tigrinya classes of nouns ending in *-ā* or in *-ay* have a plural *ot* instead of *-āt* (e.g. *gʷaytā* "lord" > pl. *gʷaytot*, or *bəṣay* "companion" > pl. *bəṣot*).

[28]  Cantineau 1932, p. 184.

and Tigrinya began to form, a situation without any (more?) connection with Geez, and similar, instead, to MSA;

2) more or less in the same direction brings us the absence of the final -a in the first member of the construct state.[29] The final -a in the first member, typical of Geez, is absent, or nearly so, from SE, although M. Cohen[30] maintained that some words with this kind of construct state in Amharic have no correspondence in Geez. If we take into account Tigrinya and Tigre, we find no trace of this -a except again in loans from Geez. One should really wonder why, in such a *protected* position like that of the first term of a construct state, this -a has disappeared in such a general and complete way.[31] Theoretically speaking, this could indicate an old "primitive" genetival construction, made by the simple juxtaposition of the two members, like that of Tigre and of Harari (in this latter case with the typical SE sequence modifier-modified,[32] in fact the contrary of the old construct state, in which the succession was of course modified-modifier). In some cases maybe a construction similar to OSA *hgr-n Marib* could be presupposed, in which the construct state is substituted by an appositional construction, with the first term in the determinate state; but in OSA this appears when the second term of the toponym is a proper name. This situation seems to suggest that Tigre and Tigrinya never possessed this final -*ä*, and in this case still more than in the other mentioned before, SE presents a state of affairs which seems to be *older* if compared with modern NE.

Both cases here quoted point towards a situation which seems to be similar to that of MSA. In this case, we should suppose a vawe (or several vawes, or a stillicide) of Semitic populations from South Arabia to Ethiopia later than that represented by the sole ancient survivor of it, i.e. Geez. Theoretically speaking, also the reverse situation, that of a stage "without declension", preceding the development of this latter, could be imagined, for the sole final -a calling into account the -a of the old sub-

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[29] Leslau 1951, pp. 217f. as an "archaic feature" of SE only speaks of the -a of the accusative.

[30] M. Cohen 1936, pp. 88f. and 1939, pp. 94f.

[31] In Tigrinya the case of onomastics seems to show some difference, because we meet the same strong Geez influence, due of course to religious reasons, in the personal names, in which the final -*ä* is *always* preserved (and compare also the many personal names ending in -*ä* both in Tigrinya and Amharic, like Hayle, Habte, Amsale, Sable etc., as against the personal names of genuine Tigrinya origin like *Barakatʾab*, *ʿAyni ʿAlam* etc.). But if we take into account the toponyms, in which the religious influence of christianity has been much less deep, and many of which can well be in fact pre-Christian, we find that many of the first members of these toponyms are *without* this -*ä*, as in *Bet Gabrəʾel*, *Bet Giyorgis*, *May ʾAron*, *May ʾƏgziʾ*, *May Angog* ("iguana"), *Falag Daʿro*, etc. (the material in Conti Rossini 1938). Of course, this distinction between Christian and pre-Christian influence is not valid for Tigre.

[32] E.g. *amīr gār* "palace", *nagāš waldi* "the son of the king", lit. "king-son".

stantives and personal names of Old Akkadian and Eblaic, but such an "antediluvian" situation does not seem very probable.[33]

Another element which tends to exclude a derivation of Tigre, together with Ethiopian Semitic and Modern South Arabian, from OSA is the very presence of a well-developed system of external plurals which co-exist with that of the internal plural: in fact it is almost impossible to think that such a system of external plurals could have developed from the five or six examples present in OSA,[34] which notoriously makes an extraordinarily developed use of internal plural (even these five or six examples have a parallel form of internal plural). Besides, from the chronological point of view Tigre (together with the rest of North Ethiopic, and with Modern South Arabian) clearly holds an intermediate position, between the pan-Semitic archaism of external plural, and the innovation of the internal one, which can be assigned again, more or less, to the second millennium BC.[35]

In the field of phonology, the general picture tends to exclude a connection between Tigre (and more generally Ethiopian Semitic) and MSA in the field of the interdentals[36]: if these phonemes are proto-Semitic, as the Akkadian and Eblaic evidence clearly demonstrates, the evolution in Tigre and in Ethiopic is fully in keeping with the few instances of evolution to sibilants in OSA,[37] which is of a "quasi-Cannanite/Akkadian" type, but not with the tendency of MSA to evolve them in dentals, which is of an "Aramaic" type.[38] A retrograde step of MSA towards original interdentals, and afterwards the beginning of a contrary evolution into dentals[39] would be unthinkable. Of course, given the very recent age of the documentation of both Tigre and MSA, no concrete chronological conclusion can be drawn from this fact, but perhaps some indication about a stage which is, in fact, typologically older can be drawn on the basis of the concept of "tendance" in Martinet[40].

## C. Definite Article

Both these phenomena, if eventually they existed, can be put in a period of remarkable antiquity (at least at the epoch of the oldest Sabaean inscriptions on Ethiopian

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[33]  Cp. the witty considerations of Goldenberg 1974, p. 244.

[34]  Beeston 1962, pp. 34f.; 1984, p. 32.

[35]  See Corriente 1972, pp. 89f. and *passim*; for further bibliography see the review by Fronzaroli 1974.

[36]  For them see Voigt 1991 and 1994.

[37]  See Beeston 1984, p. 58 for Ḥaḍramawt.

[38]  Marrassini 2002, p. 1787.

[39]  More or less like that which in the early studies on Aramaic one was obliged to admit, if one maintained that the signs for the sibilants really indicated these phonemes themselves, instead, in part and because of lack of appropriate signs, just the original interdentals also.

[40]  Martinet 1955, pp. 326ff.

soil, 8th cent. BC.[41] Surely later is the case of the definite article,[42] which is *lä-* in Tigre (see below), and which indicates a clear separation of Tigre from the other Semitic (and of course SS) languages. As it is well known, all the Semitic languages of the 3rd and of the 2nd millennium BC did not know any specific morpheme to indicate definiteness. Towards the end of the second millennium BC an innovation of paramount importance was begun in the Semitic-speaking countries of the Near East, the appearance of the definite article, previously unknown in Semitic; whatever the ultimate origin of this phenomenon can be,[43] it is sure that the creation of a definite article begins in NW Semitic with the inscription of Yehimilk, about 950 BC, after some interesting antecedents, towards the end of the second millennium, in the use of a demonstrative element *hn* of Ugaritic, which in many cases has already the value of a definite article.[44]

It is well known that the definite article is a suffixed *-ā* or *-aʾ* in Aramaic, a suffixed *-n* in OSA and Harami, a prefixed first laryngeal *ʾ/h* + vowel *a* + a nasal, labial or liquid *n* or *m* or *l* (with variations) – these consonants may frequently interchange in the Semitic languages[45] – in Canaanite, Pre-Islamic North Arabic, Old Arabic, but also in many dialects of today's Southern Arabia:

## I. NW Semitic, and West and South of the Arabian Peninsula

Some examples will suffice:

i)    suffixed *-ā* in Aramaic, *-n* OSA, Harami;[46]

ii)    prefixed: in NW Semitic: *hn-* (probably) in Hebrew (original *h-* with gemination of the first radical consonant, and dissimilated in *han-* before laryngeals, which frequently cannot be geminated – or original *han-*, assimilated to the first radical? But there are many Greek and Latin transcriptions like *Amm-*), *hn-*, *ʾn-* (probably) in Phoenician and Punic.

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[41]   Or even earlier, if one follows the theory of Drewes - Schneider which admits that the passage to dentals already happened before these inscriptions.

[42]   Frequently quoted to illustrate the linguistic complexity of non-Akkadian and non-Ethiopian Semitic from the 1st millennium BC onwards: see e.g. Beeston 1981, pp. 180ff.; Robin 1991–1993, pp. 102f.; 2001, pp. 541f.

[43]   Some scholars (e.g. Pennacchietti 1968, p. 73, fn. 7 [see Voigt 1998, pp. 235f.] and Loprieno 1980, pp. 1f.), think to the Egyptian article *p-*, and/or the Greek article.

[44]   See Loprieno 1980 and Cunchillos 1983; among the most recent and important articles, Voigt 1998 and Tropper 2001.

[45]   E.g. *n/l* in the 3rd person of the imperfect in East Aramaic; *m/n* in the plural endings of the perfect (2nd person Hebr. *-tem*, Syr. *-ton*), etc.

[46]   Note that in Arabic *-n* indicates exactly the contrary, because it marks indefiniteness.

iii)  in the Peninsula:
*a)*  *ḥn-* in the Himyaritic of Qāniya;
*b)*  *an-*, *am-* in the Himyaritic of al-Hamdāni;
*c)*  *am-/m-* today, in the entire belt between the highland and the Red Sea,[47] but in ancient times also to the interior, for example among the Murrah near Medina,[48] and among the Ṭayyiʾ[49];
*d)*  *ʾim-* today, in various regions of internal Yemen, and of Dathina;
*e)*  a "curious" (Robin) *b-* today,[50] in a region of NW Yemen (already indicated as speaking an unintelligible language according to al-Hamdāni); (ʾ)*ā/ē-*, *h/ḫa-* in MSA.

## II. North Arabic

Very uncertain documentation, because of the brevity of the texts, and of the consonantal writing. Note also that in the case of a personal name (PN) the form of the article is not necessarily that of the people to which the bearer belongs, because PNs can migrate according to fashion, religion or other reasons:

i)  prefixed *ḥn-/ḥ* (see the problem above):
*a)*  Tell el-Masḫuṭa (near Ismaʿiliya, Egypt), 5th cent. BC, dedication of a king of Qedar (see above) to the deity *ḥn-ʾlt*;[51]
*b)*  perhaps Hasaean, on the Persian Gulf: *ḥn-*. But only PNs with the same deity are attested, and the only case outside PNs has final *-n* as in OSA;
*c)*  Thamudic (at least in part): *ḥ-* (no example of *ḥn-*);
*d)*  Lihyanite: *ḥ-*, but *ḥn-* before *ʾalef* and *ʿayn* (and facultative before *q*);[52] causative *h-*;
*e)*  Safaitic: *ḥ-* (only two cases of *ʾl*) and *ḥn-*, which appears before laryngeals; causative *ʾ-*;

ii)  prefixed *al-*:
*a)*  the name of deity Allāt, at Tell el-Masḫuṭa above, and in the Greek historian Erodotus (5th cent. BC): *\*al-* o *\*hal-*;

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[47]  Behnstedt 1985, map no. 8.
[48]  Rabin 1951, p. 35, parr. 4r, s, t.
[49]  Brockelmann 1908, p. 317, who interprets it as an old demonstrative element.
[50]  Behnstedt 1985, map no. 8.
[51]  But note *\*al-* o *\*hal-* in the very name of Allāt.
[52]  The inscription Jaussen Savignac 71 = Caskel 91 quoted as an example of *ḥl/l-*, according to Robin 1991–1993, p. 102, has only one sure case of definite article, i.e. *ḥn-ʾḫnkt*, clan of the authors which at Qaryat al-Faw appears as *ʾl-*. Instead, the name of the place has *ʾl* (*ʾl-Ḫgr*; cp. Beeston et al. 1973) but in Robin's opinion the entire reading is dubious.

b)   the texts of Qaryat al-Faw, the oldest (about 200 BC) according to Robin, those from the 1ˢᵗ cent. BC according to Macdonald; causative ʾ-;

c)   Ḥigrā 267 AD;

d)   en-Namāra 328 AD.

Of course it is difficult to reduce all these forms to a single common origin. The only fact which really pools these Semitic languages the *common tendency* towards the expression of definiteness, begun between the end of the 2ⁿᵈ and the beginning of the 1ˢᵗ millennium BC, for unknown reasons, as we have said; so, this phenomenon is one of parallel development, and/or of linguistic geography, but not of genealogy.

Instead, an important question of genetic value is that Ethiopic clearly did not take part in this development of the definite article. Ethiopic does not possess any specific, *original and common*, morpheme to indicate definiteness (for Amharic -*u* see below). The means Ethiopic employs to indicate definiteness are:

1) the pronominal suffix of the 3ʳᵈ person, which indicates not true possession, but anaphora (i.e. reference with what has already been said, or is understood). Outside Geez, this system has generally survived in SE, either fully and directly (that is, in both principle of formation and phonetic exponent), or only in the principle of formation (that is, only in the principle of employing the possessive pronoun, although in a new grammatical form), as in Harari -*zo* (possessive pronoun 3 masc. sing., similar to the relative pronoun) and in part of Gurage.

i)   in Geez -*(h)u/-u* (and corresponding fem. sing. -*(h)ā*, masc. pl. -*(h)omu*, fem. pl. -*(h)on*): e.g. the repeated example *ḥalamku ḥəlma wakamazə ḥəlmu* "I had [lit. "I dreamed"] a dream, and the dream [not: "his dream"] was so", Genesis 37:24);

ii)  in Amharic and in Argobba masc. sing. -*u/-w*, fem. sing. -*wa*;

iii) in Harari -*zo* (possessive pronoun 3 masc. sing., similar to the relative pronoun);

iv)  in Gurage: Muher *\*w* without gender differentiation (the possessive pronoun is different: masc. -*əwxta*, -*əxwta*, fem. -*əxʾta*); in other dialects the possessive suffix, although it is different from the old one, e.g. in Chaha (3 masc. sing. -*äta*, 3 fem. sing. -*äxʾta*) and in Ennemor (3 masc. sing. -*xwa*, 3 fem. sing. -*š-a*), or the independent pronoun, suffixed to the noun (Chaha 3 masc. sing. *xuta*, 3 fem. sing. *xʾita*; Ennemor 3 masc. sing. *xuda*, 3 fem. sing. *xʾida*); in other a final -*i*, with or without differentiation of gender (Selṭi fem. -*te*; possessive pronouns 3 masc. -*ka*, fem. -*ša*; Zay masc. -*ni*, fem. -*nay*); a promiscuous usage is also attested, e.g. Muher article -*we*, but with expressions of time the possessive suffix -*əwxta*, like *bäsost känäwxta* "on the (lit. "his") third day";

2) the demonstrative pronoun ʾəzu/a "this", ʾətu/a "that" in Tigrinya (where -u is very rare today), e.g. ʾətu bəʿray "the ox";

3) the demonstrative element lä- in Tigre. The origin of this lä- is discussed. According to Hetzron,[53] it "may be a very archaic element, possibly identical with the 'emphatic lamed' in biblical Hebrew and other ancient Semitic languages"; according to Leslau[54] is the element lä which is found in the relative pronoun lä and also in the far demonstrative pronoun lähay (ha is a Semitic demonstrative element, ay not exactly known); for Brockelmann[55] it is the old la- of the accusative.[56] But in fact the presence of -zo in Harari, a possessive pronoun 3rd masc. sing. which is connected with the relative z- (see above), seems to favor the hypothesis of Leslau (and so to suggest a more recent phenomenon?); besides, this lä- of Tigre seems to be an old demonstrative element (many times still meaning "this"), but which is also relative[57].

4)    the element -š in Gafat, derived from the old particle *-s which indicates relevance or insistence (Geez -ssä, Tigrinya -s[i]).

So, it is sure that when the gigantic movement which brought to the creation of the definite article in the early first millennium BC (and possibly already at the end of the 2nd) began, Ethiopic was already separated from South Semitic.[58] Of the many forms of the definite article in the Semitic languages of Syria-Palestine and of Arabian Peninsula, no trace is found in the Ethiopian languages. In the Arabian Peninsula the existence of the definite article cannot be materially demonstrated before the oldest OSA inscriptions, that is before more or less the 8th cent. BC. Of course we cannot suppose that the article was created just in the precise day immediately preceding the first OSA inscription; still, the maximum we can propose on this basis, as a *terminus ante quem* for the separation of Ethiopic from SS, is the end of the 2nd millennium BC.

At a very recent stage of linguistic development brings us the genetival construction of Tigre. Whereas in the construct state the SE languages have the simple juxtaposition of the two members, or a morpheme yä- (which is probably from zä-, or maybe even from lä- [see above]; in both cases, it comes from a construction already existing in Geez), Modern North Ethiopic has nay (Tigre and Tigrinya) or zero. If this nay is derived from old *nəway "goods, vessels, property" we are faced with an innovation which is typical of modern Semitic, parallel to the genitive with m/bataʿ (and others) in some modern Arabic dialects.[59]

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[53]   Hetzron 1972, p. 20.
[54]   Leslau 1945, p. 183 and 190.
[55]   Brockelmann 1908, p. 420.
[56]   In turn disappeared from Tigre (which in its place has today ʾel, ʾegel). See also Testen 1998.
[57]   Leslau 1945, p. 183.
[58]   This is also the sense of the famous letter of Beeston quoted by Ullendorff 1955, pp. 9f., fn. 30.
[59]   Cp. in general Harning 1980.

As for the loss of the prefix of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons of the imperfect in Śḥeri, Soqoṭri and in Tigre,[60] the explanation should be that of a parallel development.

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[60] Leslau 1943, p. 8; Johnstone 1968, pp. 515–525; 1980, pp. 466–470. According to Raz 1983, p. 56 "in colloquial speech there is a distinct tendency to omit the prefixes of the verb in the imperfect". Leslau 1945, p. 6 limited this phenomenon to the 3rd persons (3rd masc. sing., 3rd masc. and fem. pl.). At the International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in Hamburg in 2003, Rainer M. Voigt pointed out a similar phenomenon in dialectal Tigrinya, published in Voigt 2006.

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*Tigre abstract*

### መትከዋን በረይ ህግየ ዲብ ትግራይት

ትግራይት ሐቴ ምን እትሊ ቅሩብ አውቃት ለትደረሰየ ህጊጊት ሴም ናይ እለ መንጠቀት ምንመ ትገብእ "ዕልም-አሳር ህግየ" እግል ነአትአስር ለለአቀድረነ ጠባይዕ ሐፈዞት ዲብ እሱል ቀዳም ብዲበ። እሊ ጠባይዕ እሊ ምን አስለ ለሐፈዘት እቱ ቱ ሌጠ እግል ልትበሀል ላኪነ ላዝም ኢኮን። እብ ሰበብለ ምስለ ብዕዳት ህጊጊት ለሀለ እግለ ግውርኖት ለመጽአ እግለ ልግበመ ቀድር። እለ ሐለት እለ ምን እሱል ሴም ላቶም ሽዐብ ዲብ 3ይት አው 2ይት አልፍየት ቀደም መትወላድ ዒስ ቀየሕ በሐር ሽንከት ምውዳቀ ክም ተዐየው ለአምበተት አው እብ መጦረ ትጠወር ለጸንሐት እግል ትግበእ ትቀድር።

ከግድም እለ ወረቀት እለ እት ትግራይት ለልትረከብ ወለኢልትረከብ ገዲም ከፍል ከሊማት (Morphemes) እቱ እንዴ ተንከበት ለናይ አማን ሞላዶ ህጊጊት ሴም ተአትአስር። ክም መሰል ለእት ደነግብ 2ይት ወመአንበት 1ይት አልፍየት እት ሲርየ-ፈለስጢን ለልትበሀለ ህጊጊት ለትጠወረ አጅናስ Articles ዲብ ህጊጊት ግእዝ ወትግሬ ኢሀለዮቱ ግእዝ ምነ ብዕዳት ህጊጊት ሴም ቀደም ለመደት ለሀ ክም ትፈርዐት ለለአርኤ ክምሰለ ቱ ትከምክም።

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# Relations between Verb Types and Internal Plurals in North Abyssinian Semitic

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*Abstract*

Type A, type B and type C in North Abyssinian Semitic languages correspond to stem I and stem II (in the case of the first two) and to stem III and quadriradicals (in the case of type C) in other Semitic languages. Stems II and III were originally variants. They are described in the literature as reduplicatives, reciprocal plurals and/or verbal plurals. In North Abyssinian Semitic languages too, type B and type C verbs can function as verbal plurals, reduplicatives or reciprocals. However, there are also reduplicative and reciprocal stems which are connected to the verb types. In fact, I assume the derivation of type B and type C from type A via the reduplicative stem. The reduplicative stem and the nominal internal plural have the pattern *cacācvc* (which becomes *cäcacvc* in Gəʿəz and Tigrinya): a pattern which unifies the nominal and verbal internal plurals.

## A. Introduction

In this article, North Abyssinian Semitic refers to the commonly known as North Ethio-Semitic languages. These languages are Tigre, Tigrinya and Gəʿəz. As there are no Tigre speakers in Ethiopia, I prefer to call them North Abyssinian Semitic. The verbs of North Abyssinian Semitic languages can be classified as type A, type B (which correspond to the I stem (unmarked) and intensive stem (II stem) respectively in other Semitic) and type C. As we can see from our discussion in the sections below, quadriliterals may be derived from verbs of type B. According to the criteria of gemination (consonant), however, stems which correspond to stem III and to quadriliterals in other Semitic are included in type C.[1] Different scholars have the view that the verb types of Eritrean and Ethiopian Semitic languages (unlike those of other Semitic) are listed in the lexicon independent from each other. They are re-

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[1]   Cf. also Tesfay, 1997, 2002, 2003 for Tigrinya and Bender et al. 1976 for Amharic.

garded as lexically determined. It is assumed that a verbal entry is marked in the lexicon as only one type, i.e., if it occurs in one type it will not occur in another type.[2] Synchronically speaking, Eritrean and Ethiopian Semitic verb types can be regarded as lexically determined,[3] the process of lexicalization of piel has probably gone farthest in the case of Eritrean and Ethiopian Semitic languages. However, this is only relative. Even in other Semitic languages like Arabic and Akkadian, we find some verbs occurring in a II stem without a I stem.[4] According to Rubio 2006, these can be explained in different ways: Some could be denominatives derived from nouns while others may be deverbatives, i.e. regularly generated 'secondary' stems, based on lost I stem verbs.

Several scholars seem to agree that:

i)    Stem II and stem III were originally (i.e., in Proto-Hamitosemitic) variants.[5]
ii)   Reciprocals are plurals on a par with nominal plurals.[6]
iii)  An /-a/ infix can be employed to mark nominal and verbal plurality.[7]
iv)   Reduplication can indicate plurality and is an affixation (or infixation) of a skeletal morpheme.[8]
v)    The definition of reduplication can include the Semitic "doubling" or "gemination" processes.[9]

Besides, there are also scholars who believe that both stem III and stem II can be derived from a third form like *qatlala* (by reduplicating the last radical of *qatala*). According to these Semitists, a reduplication of the final radical resulted in a form like *qatlala* (in Proto-Semitic) which formed Proto-Semitic *qat'ala* and then *qat'ala* > *qattala* and *qat'ala* > *qātala*.[10] According to McCarthy and Prince[11] and McCarthy[12], (a) the derivation process of broken plurals involves the mapping of an initial syllabic trochee (e.g. *qin* in the singular *qindiil* "lamp") which is circumscribed from the singular onto an iambic broken plural template *cvcvv* as in *qanaadiil* (b) the derivation of the reciprocal (verbal plurals like *qātala*) involves the affixation (adjunction) of a

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2    Cf. Gragg 1997; Gensler 1997; Hudson 1991; Leslau 1988.
3    Cf. McCarthy 1982, pp. 216–227 for the criteria of lexical idiosyncratic information in forming lexical entries from other lexical entries). According to Greenberg 1991, p. 579.
4    Cf. Kouwenberg 1997.
5    See also Zaborski 1999 among others.
6    See also Benmamoun 2003 among others.
7    Cf. Greenberg 1955 among others.
8    Cf. Marantz 1982, pp. 437, 456, 457, 480.
9    Cf. Marantz 1982; Greenberg 1991.
10   Cf. Ryder 1974, p. 26.
11   McCarthy / Prince 1990.
12   McCarthy 1993.

mora to the initial syllable of a triliteral form. Hence, *kaatab* is derived by adjunction (affixation) of a mora to the initial syllable of *katab*[13]. Benmamoun[14] discusses the issue of plurality in nouns and verbs. The central idea of Benmamoun[15] is the phenomenon of broken plurals (which includes nominal and verbal plurality) in both nominal and verbal plural systems. He modifies the proposal given by McCarthy and Prince and takes the imperfective template as a basis. According to him, the imperfective and the imperative share their stem vowels and the former is the basis for deriving the latter. However, the imperfective and the imperative of North Abyssinian or Eritrean Semitic languages do not share their stem vowels and this holds true for many Semitic languages.[16] Benmamoun[17] wants to have a unified analysis of both plurals which does not have to distinguish between the two. None the less, he believes that in the case of the nouns the basis is the singular while in the case of the verbs the basis is the imperfective. There are scholars who believe that the basis of the broken plural is the singular. We will, however, see later in our discussion that this may not be true. It appears to me that Fassi-Fehri[18] is correct in saying the "vowels of the singular are not transferred to the plural in a significant sense."

The aim here is to indicate the relationship of Abyssinian Semitic verb types and try to find an unifying form or stem for the nominal and verbal plural forms. Thus, different stems of the languages in question will be discussed.

## B. Verb Types in Semitic and Afro-Asiatic

According to Zaborski,[19] the third class of Arabic, i.e. *qātal-a / yu-qātil-u* was originally, i.e. in Proto-Hamitosemitic, intensive, a variant of *qattala- / yuqattilu*. Swadish[20] enumerates the plural meanings as 1. temporal repetition 2. spatial dispersion 3. action by many 4. action on many.[21] In Afroasiatic languages, intensity can be indicated by gemination of consonants as in Arabic *qat'a'a* "he cut off" and *qat't'a'a* "he cut into pieces" or modification of vowels as in Bedja *kitim* "to arrive" and *kātim* "to arrive repeatedly".[22] According to Greenberg,[23] stem II (D stem) marks different kinds of

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[13] Cf. also Benmamoun 2003.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Cf. Lipinski 1997 among others.
[17] Benmamoun 2003.
[18] Fassi-Fehri 2003, p. 159.
[19] Zaborski 1999, p. 49.
[20] Swadish 1946.
[21] See also Greenberg 1991.
[22] Cf. also Zaborski 1997b, 1999, 2003; Ryder 1974; Dolgopolsky 1988, p. 202.
[23] Greenberg 1991.

verbal plurality. Moreover, Greenberg[24] identifies an /a/ as a marker of plurality in Afroasiatic languages. This is the most common marker of plural nominality in Afroasiatic and survives in the broken plurals of Semitic such as Arabic, Tigrinya, Tigre and Gǝʿǝz. In Bedja (Cushitic), for instance, ʾadābil / ʾadābabil "I collected (several times)" vs ʾadbil "I collected" and Berber, for instance ilākkǝm (< ilākakǝm) "he follows," the presence of an /-ā-/ infix which marks verbal plurality appears to be more frequent.[25]

## C. Verb Types in Eritrean Semitic

In Abyssinian Semitic the verbs are classified into A, B and C types. They differ from each other depending on the extent to which their forms geminate their penultimate radicals. A type B verb geminates its penultimate radical throughout, a type C verb never geminates its penultimate radical in any of its verbal conjugations, while a type A verb geminates its penultimate radical in 1sg, 2ms, 3ms, 3fs and 1pl of the imperfective form.

## I. Type A

Gǝʿǝz, Tigre and Tigrinya type A verbs correspond to the stem I (unmarked or simple stems) in other Semitic languages and can be intransitive as in mäṣʾä "he came," or transitive as in qätälä "he killed."

## II. Type B

Gǝʿǝz, Tigre and Tigrinya type B verbs correspond to the stem II or intensive stems in other Semitic:

1. They can have coexisting verbs in type A (i.e., sharing the same consonantal). For example we have dagma "he repeated" and daggama "he told" in Tigre, ḥagʷälä "he perished" and ḥaggʷälä "he ruined" in Gǝʿǝz, sägädä "he bowed" and säggädä "he pushed down" in Tigrinya. In the above examples, the ungeminated and geminated second radical forms are type A and type B verbs respectively. As in Tigrinya and Gǝʿǝz, Tigre dagma and daggama are type A and type B verbs respectively, Besides, the type B forms like the latter (i.e., daggama) and the type C form like dāgama "to tell" (3ms, perf.) can have the same associative meanings.

2. They can be used as denominatives. For example, in Gǝʿǝz, we have type B verbs like läbbäwä "he possessed understanding," and ʿayyänä "he fixed the

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24   Greenberg 1955.
25   Cf. Rubio 2006, p. 132.

eye upon" which are derived from *ləbb* "heart" and *ʿayn* "eye" respectively. In Tigrinya, we have type B verbs such as *läbbämä* "he is wise" and *ħakkämä* "he gave medical treatment" which are derived from *ləbb* "heart" and *ħakkim* "medical personel" respectively. Moreover, in Tigre we have type B verbs like *mässälä* "he told a proverb" and *ʾassara* "he followed trace" which are derived from *masal* "proverb" and *ʾasar* "trace" respectively.

3.  The transitive verbs can be derived from the intransitive forms by doubling the second radical.

The languages can have related intransitive and transitive verbs as in *dora* "he went around," *dawara* "he turned" (glides do not geminate) in Tigre and *zorä/zäwärä* "he went around," *zäwwärä* "he drove" in Tigrinya (in North Abyssinian Semitic languages laryngeals and pharyngeals do not geminate).

## III. Type C

In North Abyssinian Semitic languages, type C verbs can be divided into triliterals and quadriliterals.

## 1. Triliterals Type C

Eritrean Semitic triliteral type C verbs can correspond to stem III in other Semitic. In Tigre, these verbs can normally be derived from either type A or type B[26] and are used with (1) the expression of increase of force or intensity of the action denoted by the underlying verb of type A (as in *sābara* "he broke into pieces"), (2) the notion of a causation for verbs whose initial radical is laryngeal (and hence lack *ʾa*-A formation) as in, for instance, *ħālafa* "he caused to pass," "he removed" vs *ħalafa* "he passed" (3) stylistic variant of type A or type B where the type A does not exist as in *tākala/takla* "he planted," *kālasa/kallasa* "he terminated".[27] In Tigrinya and Gəʿəz, we have forms like baräxä "he blessed" and *maräxä* "he took a prisoner." According to Dillmann,[28] this stem was once used more extensively in Gəʿəz and can be regarded as a variety of the intensive stem in Proto-Afroasiatic. Moreover, he says currently it is not common and in number of ways is replaced by the form *täcacäcä* (e.g. *täkafälä*) in Gəʿəz. In Tigrinya too, type C is not common and seems to me, as in Gəʿəz, that the form *täcacäcä* is replacing it.

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[26]  See also Leslau 1945, pp. 4f.
[27]  Cf. Raz 1983.
[28]  Dillmann 1907.

## 2. Quadriliteral Type C

Verbs of this type have four radicals or a pair of reduplicated consonants regarded as radicals. I assume quadriliterals can be derived from type B verbs. However, for reasons indicated above, they are classified as type C verbs. There is no gemination of consonants in this type, and hence, these verbs are classified as type C.[29] One of the radicals is always an alveolar or liquid as in *mälbäsä* "he became a handicap."

As indicated earlier, stem II and stem III (which correspond to type B and type C in Abyssinian Semitic) were originally variants. According to some scholars, type C (stem III) may be assumed to be a secondary development of South and West Semitic as it is absent in East Semitic.[30] According to Rubio,[31] however, "the D stem was perhaps first marked by an (-*a*-) infix denoting plurality which caused the gemination of the following consonant in order to preserve the stress and the vocalic morpheme itself." According to him, eventual reanalysis of gemination as a real marker of plurality could be assumed. There are also scholars who assume that the intensive stem, i.e., the geminated stem (D stem or stem II) and stem III were originally in complementary distribution.[32]

In Tigre, type B and type C may occur as variants[33] as in *šākara/šakkara* "he praised," *kālasa/kallasa* "he terminated," *dāgama/ daggama* "he told." Moreover, Tigre conative or type C verbs, such as *sābara* "he broke repeatedly," and *sabābara* "he broke repeatedly," serve to express frequency, repetitions and intensive actions. Furthermore, we can observe below that in Tigre, Tigrinya and Gəʿəz, a reflexive-passive morpheme like *tä-* followed by type C or a reflexive-passive morpheme like *tä-* followed by reduplicative stem may have similar meanings as in (4.1–4.2) below.

## D. Frequentative Stem

The frequentative stem serves to express a frequentative, repeated or intensive action. In Tigre, the frequentative stem can be formed 1. from every verb of type A and type B with a reduplicated second radical and *ā* as in *sabara* "he broke" and *sabābara* "he broke frequently or repeatedly;" 2. from quadriliteral type C with the vowel *ā* following second radical as in *marāmara* "he examined thoroughly." As indicated above, the value of the frequentative stem can (in Tigre) be expressed by the triliteral type C stem as in *māsala* "he used proverbs frequently," *sābara* "he broke in small pieces." In Tigrinya too, the frequentative stems can be formed from every verb of

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[29]  Cf. also Tesfay 1997, 2002, 2003 for Tigrinya; Bender 1976 et al. for Amharic.
[30]  Cf. Lipinski 1997, p. 386.
[31]  Rubio 2006, p. 132.
[32]  Cf. Zaborski 2003.
[33]  See Raz 1983, p. 53.

type A, type B, and quadriliteral type C (in a way similar to that of Tigre). For instance, *säbärä* "he broke" and *säbabärä* "he broke into pieces, completely or repeatedly," *wäddä'ä* "he finished" and *wädadä'ä* "he finished" (in *wäddä'ä* and *wädadä'ä* the latter can indicate separate smaller works but it may also mean the same as *wäddä'ä*), *fänṭäħä* "he dismantled" and *fänaṭäħä* "he dismantled" (the latter can indicate separate actions but may also mean the same as *fänṭäħä*). As in the case of Tigre, we observe a reduplication of the middle radical followed by the infixation of "a" in the triliterals of type A and B and an infixation of the vowel following the second radical in the case of quadriradicals.

## E. Prefixes *tä-/tə-/ta-/t-* and their Stems

North Abyssinian Semitic languages have the prefixes *tä-/ta-/tə-/t-* (variants of the same origin). These prefixes and their stems can have a reflexive-passive function as in (4.1) and can serve to express reciprocal actions as in (4.2) below.

### I. The Reflexive-passive Stem

Tigre has the reflexive-passive stem of the verbs of type A, type B and type C. In the case of type A and type B, *tə-* or *t-* (or in some dialects *ta-*) are prefixed to the stem with a geminated second radical as in *təkaffala* "he was divided" for type A (in the perfective), *təbaddala* "he was changed" for type B (in the perfective). In the reflexive-passive stem of triliteral type C, we observe the prefixation of the reflexive-passive marker to *cācvc* as in *təbāraka* "he was blessed." In quadriliteral type C, we see the insertion of *ā* after *c²* in stems of quadriliterals as in *marmara* "he examined" *təmarāmara* "he consulted one another" and form the reflexive-passive stem (of quadriliterals). The reflexive-passive marker may be omitted as in *sallaba* "he was robbed," *qabbara* "he was buried," *kallasa* "he was finished," *dāgama* "he was told."[34] The reflexive-passive of Tigrinya and Gəʿəz have the forms *tä-cäc(ä)cä* (type A), *tä-cäccäcä* (type B), *tä-cācäcä* (triliteral type C) and *tä-cäccäcä* (quadriliterals). The reflexive-passive stems of Tigrinya and Gəʿəz type A stems are different from those of Tigre because in the latter, the reflexive-passive morpheme is attached to the geminated penult (Tigrinya, probably the only language among Eritrean and Ethiopian Semitic languages, has an internal passive in the imperfective form. But the prefixation of *tä-* is more common way of passive stem formation).

The principal meaning of the reflexive-passive stem is that of reflexive as in *təħaṣṣaba* "he bathed" (in Tigre) or passive as in *täqät(ä)lä* "he was killed" (a passive of Tigrinya *qätälä*). Some of the verbs have only stems with the reflexive-passive morpheme *tä-* or its variants as in *tä-x'äyyämä* "he felt bad, became vengeful" in Tigrinya

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[34]   Cf. Leslau 1945, p. 10.

(i.e., there is no *x'äyyämä* or *qäyyämä* verb in the language). Moreover, we observe the same situation in the verbs *tähassäyä* "he exulted" in Gə'əz, *täfässä(ə)ḥä* "he became proud" in Tigrinya. Some of the stems may have only reflexive stems as in *tämäkkä(ə)ḥä* "he praised oneself" in Tigrinya or Gə'əz.

As indicated earlier, the principal meaning of the verbs with the prefixes *tə-/t-/ta-/tä-* is that of passive or reflexive. But this stem may also be used to express the doing of something for and to oneself as in Gə'əz *täsäkmä* "he took any thing upon ones shoulders" and Tigrinya *täsäkkämä* "he carried, took responsibility." Besides, the reflexive-passive stem can be employed as a denominative as in *tabakkara* "he had a first calf" from *bäkur* "first child" in Tigre or *täšällämät* "she got ornaments" from *šälləmat* "ornaments" in Tigrinya.

## II. Reciprocal Stem

As indicated above, the reflexive-passive morpheme prefixed to type A, type B and type C transitive stems can express passive or reflexive meanings. In the same way, the reflexive-passive morpheme followed by a conative stem may express only a passive meaning as in *täbaräxu* "they were blessed" (a passive form of *baräxu* "they blessed") or only a reflexive meaning as in *täsatäfä* "he shared or participated in something."

However, the basis of the simple triliteral type C or frequentative stem preceded by *tə-*, *t-*, or *ta-* in Tigre and *tä-* in Tigrinya and Gə'əz (as in *tä-sabäru* or *tä-säbabäru*) serve to express a reciprocal action of all verb types. It can show 'an action or actions against each other,' or 'an action done commonly or together' as in *tafāgägu* "they left each other," *təsālamu* or *təsalālamu* "they greeted each other," *təgāladu* "they concluded a covenant" in Tigre; *tägādäfu* "they left each other," *täx'aläsu* "they struggled to achieve something" in Tigrinya; *täqatälu* "they killed each other" in Gə'əz. In the case of quadriliterals, the reflexive-passive morpheme (i.e., *t-/ta-/tə-* in Tigre and *tä-* in other North Abyssinian Semitic languages) prefixed to a stem with /-a-/ (or /-ā-/ in Tigre) infixed after the second radical (or consonant functioning as a radical) function as a reciprocal stem.

This stem is employed in expressing ideas like 'contending,' 'fighting,' quarelling' as in *täqawämä* "he opposed someone," *täba'asä* "he fought," *täfatäḥä* "he divorced" in Tigrinya and Gə'əz. The idea of 'dividing,' 'separating,' 'binding,' 'collecting' can be conveyed by this stem and some of the verbs may be used in the plural and in the singular[35] as in *tärakäbä* "he and other(s) met or became together," *täzaräb-ä* "he spoke (said) something or to someone," *täzäraräb-ä* "he spoke with someone." The forms *tä-*, *ta- t(ə)* followed by conative or frequentative stems as *tə-/tä-sabäru* or *tə-/tä-säbabäru* have, I assume, originally the same meaning and function. But in the

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35    See also Dillmann 1907.

course of time the languages may lose one or the other of the forms or meanings. For instance, in Gəʿəz we have *täsamʿä* while in Tigrinya we have *tä-sämamʿä* whose meanings are basically the same. In Tigrinya, the forms *täzaräb-ä* and *täzäraräb-ä* had similar meanings. In the course of time, however, they started to differ in meanings.[36]

## F. Broken Plural Forms

Tigrinya has the broken plural *cäcacvc* which is common and basic, and other forms of broken plurals of Tigrinya can be derived from it.[37] At times, the singular has different plural forms. For instance, the word *därho* "hen" has the plural forms *därawəh* "hens," *däräwwəh* "hens," *därahut* "hens" and *därhut* "hens." The forms *därawəh* and *därahut* are variants with *cäcacvc* pattern and *därhut* is derived from *därahut* (by deleting the vowel *a* between the segments *r* and *h* in *därahut*). The forms *därawəh* and *däräwwəh* are variants too. Very interestingly, we can observe the presence of vowel *a* (which corresponds to Proto-Semitic *ā*) followed by ungeminated *w* in the former and the gemination of consonant w preceded by *ä* (which corresponds to Proto-Semitic short *a*) in the latter. It may be very interesting to compare the vowel *a* in forms like *därawəh* with the long vowel in stem III and the consonant gemination in forms like *däräwwəh* with the geminated second radical in stem II.

The basic plural form of Tigre (*a* and *ā* in Tigre correspond to *ä* and *a* respectively in Tigrinya and Gəʿəz) and Gəʿəz is similar to that of Tigrinya.[38] The *cv* pattern is also almost the same as the basic Arabic broken plural.[39] However, the plural and the singular in North Abyssinian Semitic languages do not seem to have direct relationships. The singulars have different number of consonants while their plurals have *cäcācvc* (derived from *cacācvc*) in Tigrinya and Gəʿəz or *cacācvc* in Tigre. Different vowels can be inserted into the *v* in *cv* pattern. Let us observe the following:

i)   The vowel in the last syllable in the plural *cv* pattern (i.e., the *v* in *cäcacvc/cacācvc*) is usually ə as in:
a)   *mänbär* "chair", pl. *mänabər*
b)   *därho* "hen", pl. *därawəh*
c)   *rəʾsi* "head", pl. *ʾaraʾəs*
d)   *käwḥi* "rock", pl. *ʾaxawəh*
e)   *dəmmu* "cat", pl. *dämamu* (< *dämaməw*)

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[36]   See also Mengistu 2002 for Amharic; Rubio 2006 for Bedja and Berber.
[37]   Tesfay 2003.
[38]   Cf. also Raz 1983; Leslau 1945 for Tigre and Dillmann 1907 for Gəʿəz.
[39]   Cf. McCarthy 1982.

    f)    *qəččʼa* "a kind of bread", pl. *qäčačʼu* (< *\*qäčačʼəw*)

    g)    *ʿašša* "fool", pl. *ʿayašu* (< *\*ʿayašəw*)

    h)    *ʿətro* "jar", pl. *ʿataru* (*ʿataru* < *\*ʿatarəw*)

    i)    *danga* "calf", pl. *dänagu* (< *\*dänagəw*)

    j)    *gʷal* "girl", pl. *ʾawaləd*

    ii)   The vowel in the last syllable of the plural *cv* pattern may also correspond to the vowel in the last syllable of the singular as in the case of the vowels *i* or *u* in:

    a)    *miʾti* "hundred", pl. *ʾamaʾit*

    b)    *qändil* "lamp", pl. *qänadil*

    c)    *ʿamil* "client", pl. *ʿamawil*

    d)    *mändil* "handkerchief", pl. *mänadil*

    e)    *ʾəffun* "maize", pl. *ʿafafun*

    f)    *bərur* "silver", pl. *bärawur*

    g)    *ħəlum* "valley", pl. *ħalalum*

    iii)  The *v* in (the last syllable of the) plural pattern can correspond to the vowel after the third consonant of the singular as in *šarmutʾa* "prostitute", *šäramutʾ* "prostitutes."

## G. Basic Broken Plural Form and the Reduplicative/Frequentative Stem

As indicated above, Tigrinya, Gəʿəz and Tigre have similar basic broken plural patterns. They are *cävacvc* (< *cacācvc*) in Tigrinya and Gəʿəz and *cacācvc* in Tigre. Besides, Tigrinya and Tigre have reduplicative or frequentative stems similar to their basic broken plural pattern in participles and verb conjugations. In Tigrinya, for instance, the forms *qätatälä* "he (has) killed repeatedly), *qätatilu* "he (has) killed repeatedly," *yəqätatəl* "he kills repeatedly," *yəqätatəl* "let him kill repeatedly," *qätatəl* "kill repeatedly," are repetitive or frequentative forms of *qätälä* (perfective), *qätilu* (gerundive), *yəqättəl* (imperfective), *yəqtäl* (jussive) and *qətäl* (imperative) respectively. The passive forms of the above indicated verbs have similar frequentative or repetitive stem patterns together with prefixes and/or suffixes. We also have participles like *qätali* "killer" and *qätatali* "one who kills repeatedly." Moreover, we have *ʾaxbari* (*k* > *x*) "respectful" and *mäxbäri* "respectful." However, the form with *mä-* may have additional meanings. For instance, *mäxbäri* may mean 1. one who respects or respectful, 2. reason or cause for respect. The word *mäṣḥafi* may mean 1. reason or cause for writing, 2. place for writing (e.g. a chair), instrument to write on (paper), 3. instrument to write with (e.g. a pen) and so on. The word *mäwṣəʾi* (a participle) may mean 1. exit, 2. reason or cause for going out and so on. We can have *mäwaṣəʾti* "someone who collaborates in going out with or goes out together with," and this is

a form similar to the *cv* pattern of the broken plural. The word *mänbäri* could mean 1. a place or instrument to live on, 2. reason or cause for living and so on. The word *mänbäri* has different meanings. But *mänbär* (< *mänbäri*) has only one of the possible meanings and that is a place to sit on or a chair. The plural of *mänbär* "chair" is *mänabər* "chairs" and this is actually a broken plural. The word *mäṣḥaf* is derived from *mäṣḥafi*. But the meaning of the former is limited to one of the possible meanings: a book (currently the meaning of *mäṣḥaf* "book" is not something to write on, it is something to be read and hence has made a shift of meaning).

Participles have verbal and nominal features. It is very interesting to observe similar patterns indicating plurality in verbs, participles and nouns.

Phonologists distinguish between true and false geminates, and the former are said to show integrity and inalternability (they are not affected by phenomena such as epenthesis and are immune to rules of change). In segmental phonology, geminates can be indicated by the feature [+long], but they can also constitute a sequence of two identical feature matrices. In autosegmental phonology, they can be represented as a single phonological element linked to two consecutive skeletal slots.[40] Acccording to Rubio,[41] both analyses have their own shortcomings and there are cases where we find /cc > nc/. As indicated in Greenberg,[42] partial or complete reduplication or an affix can indicate plurality in verbs. Greenberg[43] calls the Arabic second form or Hebrew *Piel* (with geminated second radical) reduplicated (partially) second radical stem.[44] According to Greenberg,[45] the stems with geminated or reduplicated second radical can show plurality similar to those found in other languages hitherto considered to exhibit verbal plurality. The most common overall characterization of *Piel* in grammars of Semitic languages is "intensive," which is very close in meaning to repetition or spatial dispersion. It can indicate plurality of objects in the transitive verbs and plurality of subjects in the intransitive verbs. These uses coincide with the basic meanings of plural verb formation we see in languages which have verbal plurality.[46] Piel has, as common characteristics of verbal plurality, partial reduplication and temporal repetition.[47]

Rubio[48] points out that gemination is an iconically grounded morphological device with a high level of productivity in Semitic, but it is far less productive in other

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[40] Cf. Kenstowicz 1994.
[41] Rubio 2006, p. 131.
[42] Greenberg 1991.
[43] Ibid.
[44] See also Marantz 1982 for similar view.
[45] Greenberg 1991.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Rubio 2006).

Afroasiatic groups. On the other hand, grammatically significant reduplication is rare in Semitic except in Ethiopic and Modern Hebrew but quite wide spread in other Afroasiatic languages. In Cushitic languages, nominal plurality can be indicated by partial reduplication.[49] In the frequentative stems of type A and type B, there is a reduplication of the second radical followed by /-a-/. In the frequentative stems of quadriliteral verbs we see the vowel /-a-/ following the $c^2$. The frequentative stem serves to express frequentative, repeated or intensive actions.[50] Greenberg,[51] identifies an /-a-/ infix that happens to be the most common marker of nominal plurality in Afroasiatic and survives in several Semitic languages like Arabic and North Abyssinian Semitic. Rubio[52] believes this /-a-/ infix can be employed to mark verbal plurality. According to Fassi-Fehri,[53] verbal reduplication as a mark of verbal plurality is amply documented in various languages, and Arabic is an instance of languages in which plural morphology in verbs and nouns is essentially the same.

## H. Formation of Type B and Type C Verbs
##    and their Relationship to Type A Verbs in Eritrean Semitic

Intensity can be indicated by gemination of consonants or modification of vowels in Afroasiatic. In Arabic, intensity can be indicated by gemination of the penultimate consonant as in *qaťaʿa* "he cut off" and *qaťťaʿa* "he cut into pieces," while in Bedja intensity is indicated by the modification of the stem vowel as in *kitim* "to arrive" and *kātim* "to arrive repeatedly" and also *dir* "to kill" and *dar* "cause to carnage / to massacre".[54]

As indicated above, North Abyssinian Semitic type A, type B, triliteral type C and quadriliteral type C verb stems correspond to verbs of stem I, stem II, stem III and quadriliteral stems respectively of other Semitic languages. The derivation of Ethio-Eritrean Semitic verb types from the basic forms could be a point of argumentation.[55] In Gǝʿǝz, Dillmann[56] indicates that there are very few roots yielding a first and second stem which are both in use together. The fact that the verb types are regarded as lexical items listed in the lexicon and belong to the domain of vocabulary can, for the majority of the verbs, be accepted. We can not form a geminated stem from

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[49]   Cf. Zaborski 1986.
[50]   See also Leslau 1945, p. 10.
[51]   Greenberg 1955.
[52]   Rubio 2006, p. 131.
[53]   Fassi-Fehri 2003.
[54]   Cf. also Zaborski 1999.
[55]   Cf. Gensler 1997.
[56]   Dillmann 1907.

every verb of type A in North Abyssinian Semitic.[57] Nonetheless, verbs of type B and type C may have corresponding verbs of type A in North Abyssinian Semitic too. In Tigre, type C verbs are met in the expression of (a) increase of force or intensity of the action denoted by the underlying verb of type A and (b) the notion of causation for those verbs whose initial radical is laryngeal or pharyngeal.[58] In Tigrinya, we have intransitive verbs of type A which correspond to transitive type B verbs of the same root consonants as in:

1.  ia)    *qäräb-ä* "he came near" – ib *qärräb-ä* "he made ready"
    iia)   *sägäd-ä* "he bowed" – iib *säggäd-ä* "he pressed powder etc. downward and repeatedly"
    iiia)  *zäwär-ä* "he went round" – iiib *zäwwär-ä* "he drove"
    iva)   *qätän-ä* "it became liquid" – ivb *qättän-ä* "he made (it) liquid"
    va)    *mäliʾ-u* "he became full" – vb *mälliʾ-u* "he made full, added"

The verbs in (1ia–va) are intransitive type A verbs, while those in (1ib–vb) are transitive type B verbs. It is well known that type B verbs have geminated penultimate radical throughout. The stem II, which corresponds to type B of North Abyssinian Semitic, is called intensive in consideration of its function to express repetition or spatial dispersion and in showing plurality of the subject in the case of intransitive verbs and plurality of object in the case of transitive verbs.[59] It is also assumed that the alternation of vowel and consonant gemination was originally a phonotactic variation in the realization of the intensive stem II-III. It can be assumed that there was originally only one intensive stem with lengthening either of the consonant or of the vowel, and with a secondary conative or reciprocal meaning which finally led to semantic difference between the two, i.e. between stem II and stem III,[60] which correspond to type B and triliteral type C of North Abyssinian Semitic languages respectively. According to Rubio,[61] the intensive stems, stem II and stem III, were in complementary distribution and originate from the same underlying verbal form.[62]

According to Lipinski,[63] stem III verbs (which correspond to triliteral type C verbs) are absent in ancient languages of East Semitic. In Tigrinya and Gəʿəz too, stems of triliteral type C are not common (about 100 verbs in Tigrinya). This may be

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57  Cf. also Rubio 2006, p. 130, for similar cases in Arabic and Akkadian.
58  Cf. Raz 1983, p. 53.
59  Cf. also Greenberg 1991; Gensler 1997; Lipinski 1997, pp. 382–387; Benmamoun 2000.
60  Cf. Lipinski 1997, pp. 382–387.
61  Rubio 2006.
62  See also Zaborski 1999, 2003 among others.
63  Lipinski 1997.

because their function is taken over by the stem *tä-*+type C.[64] In Tigre, however, forms like *sābara* (type C) can be derived from type A or type B verbs.[65]

There are cases where the difference between the verb types is not clear[66] as in, for instance, *dafna* (type A) and *dāfana* (type C) "buried (3ms)" in Tigre, *qʷaṣär-ä* along with *qʷäṣär-ä* "to lay a snare" in Gǝʿǝz and (2ixa) and (2ixb) in Tigrinya. In these examples, it is possible either not to notice the semantic differences or to regard the difference between them as dialectal. Nonetheless, (2i–viii) indicate that triliteral type C verbs indicate longer duration of time or processes. Let us see some examples:

2. i)      *laṣäy-ä* "he shaved"
   ii)     *safir-u* "he felt hungry"
   iii)    *nafäx'-ä* "yearned"
   iv)     *nabäy-ä* "he took care of"
   v)      *watiyu* "he sang or acted as a singer"
   vi)     *zaräyä* "water steadily flowed in a brook"
   vii)    *galäb-ä* "he galloped"
   viii)   *zaläyä* "he collected stones and put them in a row for irrigation"
   ixa)    *qʷäṣär-*ä "he tied" – ixb *qʷaṣär-ä* "he tied one with another / he tied two ends together"

In (2i–viii), the triliteral type C verbs show continuity of processes of shaving (2i), craving for food (2ii), yearning (2iii), taking care for someone (2iv), singing (2v), flow of water (2vi), galloping (2vii), and effort for irrigation (2viii). As indicated above, intensity can be indicated by gemination of the penultimate consonant in Arabic as in *qataʿa* "he cut off" and *qatťaʿa* "he cut into pieces" which can be compared to Tigrinya verbs in (1ib–vb). Furthermore, we have seen that in Bedja, intensity can be indicated by the modification of the stem vowel as in *kitim* "to arrive" and *kātim* "to arrive repeatedly" and also *dir* "to kill" and *dar* "cause to carnage / to massacre," which may be compared to Tigrinya verbs in (2i–viii), which indicate longer duration of time or processes. Observe also the following:

3. ia)     *\*wasiʾ-om* ib *täwasiʾ-om* "they exchanged ideas"
   iia)    *\*qaläs-u* iib *täxʾaläs-u* "they struggled / they fought each other"
   iiia)   *\*qaläħ-ä* iiib *täqaläħ-ä* "it is publicized"
   iva)    *\*zatiy-om* ivb *täzatiy-om* "they listened to each other's advice"
   va)     *\*nagäfä* vb *tänagäfä* "he disengaged himself"
   via)    *\*wanäyä* vib *täwanäy-ä* "he sported with one another"

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[64]  See also Dillmann 1907 for similar suggestion.
[65]  Cf. Leslau 1945.
[66]  Cf. also Leslau 1945: 5.

viia)    *qālad viib təqālad-u "they concluded a covenant"
viiia)   *fāgar viiib təfāgar-u "they left each other"

The pattern *cacvc* with * in (3ia–iva for Tigrinya, 3va–via for Gəʿəz and 3viia–viiia for Tigre) are only possible and not actual verbs. But the pattern *cācvc* (which becomes *cacvc-* in Tigrinya and Gəʿəz) preceded by *tä-* (or *ta-/t-/tə-* in Tigre) as in (3ib–viiib) could show frequency, repetition or reciprocity. Let us also see the following examples:

4.    ia)    *qätäl-u* "they killed" – ib *täx'atäl-u* "they killed each other"
      iia)   *näxäs-u* "they bit" – iib *tänaxäs-u* "they bit repeatedly / frequently / each other"

(4ia) and (4iia) are actual verbs. But, the morpheme *tä-* is prefixed to a possible verbal pattern *cacvc-* such as *qatäl-* as in (4ib) and (4iib). In Tigrinya, the meaning of *tä-cacvc-* (as in 4ib) is related to a reflexive-passive form of the stem with a reduplicated penultimate radical as in (5ic) and (5iic). Observe the following Tigrinya examples:

5.    ia)    *säbär-u* "they broke" – ib *säbabär-u* "they broke repeatedly"
      ic)    *täsäbabär-u* "they were broken repeatedly / frequently / into pieces" or "they broke each other"
      id)    *täsabär-u* "they severely hit or punch each other"
      iia)   *wäg'ä* (< *wägä'ä*) "he stabbed"
      iib)   *wägagä'ä* "he stabbed repeatedly"
      iic)   *täwägagä'ä* "he was repeatedly stabbed / stabbed each other"
      iid)   *täwagä'ä* "he fought (against another)"
      iie)   *täwägagi'na* "we repeatedly stabbed one another"

In Tigre too, we have words like *təsaläm-u* or *təsälaläm-u* "they greeted each other." We observe that *tə-* + type C and *tə-*+reduplicative stem have similar meanings. In Tigre, we have a frequentative form similar to that of Tigrinya as in (5ib) above which serves to express frequentative, repeated or intensive action. Tigre also has the reciprocal stem *təsābar-* and *təsabābar-* followed by verbal affixes such as *-u* (words like *täqawäm-*, *täqatäl-*, both in Tigrinya and Gəʿəz, do not have the form *cacäc-* such as *qawäm-*). Originally, Tigrinya *tä-c¹äc²ac²äc³-ä*, *tä-c¹ac²äc³-ä* and also Tigre *tə-c¹ac²āc²ac³-a*, *tə-c¹ac²ac³-a* may have the same meanings as in Tigre *tə-salālam-u* and *təsālam-u* "they greeted each other," or with slight difference in meanings as in Tigrinya *tä-zaräb-ä* "he spoke to someone," and *tä-zäraräb-ä* "he spoke with someone," or *tä-zärarib-na* "we spoke to each other." But we may also have only one of the forms as in Tigrinya and Gəʿəz *tä-qawäm-ä* "he opposed." In Tigrinya, we have the word *tä-sämamäʿ-ä* "he agreed with someone" (but not *tä-sam'ä*) while in Gəʿəz we have the word *tä-sam(a)ʿ-ä* (and not *tä-sämamäʿ-ä*). I assume the form *tä-*

*cäcacäc-ä* as in *täwägagäʾä* (5iic) has become *tä-cacäc-ä* as in *täwagäʾä* (5iid). In other words, *tä-c¹äc²ac²äc³-ä* (e.g. *täwägagäʾ-ä*) had become *tä-c¹ac²ac²äc³-ä* (e.g. *tä-w¹ag²ag²äʾ³-ä*) by regressive assimilation which later became *tä-c¹ac²äc³ä* (e.g. *tä-w¹ag²äʾ³-ä*) by deleting one of the *c²* slots. In *tä-c¹äc²ac²äc³-ä*, the morpheme *tä-* is prefixed to a pattern *cäcacäc-ä*, while in *tä-cacäc-ä* the morpheme *tä-* has become part of the pattern *cäcacäc-ä*. Thus, in the case of the latter *tä-* may be listed in the lexicon to be treated as part of the root.

Synchronically speaking, North Abyssinian Semitic verb types can, as indicated above, be listed in the lexicon as lexical items. However, we can also observe the derivation of verb types from other verb types (see also the discussion above).

On the other hand, we may expect denominal verbs. It is possible to derive type B and type C verbs from nouns related to Tigrinya, Tigre or Gǝʿǝz or from nouns borrowed from foreign languages. Here are examples:

6. ia) *samna* "soap"
   ib) *säbbän-ä* "he put clothes in soapy water / make the clothes soapy"
   iia) *firma* "signature" – iib *färräm-ä* "he signed / he put his signature"
   iiia) *tǝlyan* "Italian" – iiib *tällän-ä* (in some dialects also *täylänä*) "he looked like or became Italian"
   iva) *säytan* "satan" – ivb *säytän-ä* "he became satan / evil"
   va) *sǝdri* "span" – vb *säddär-ä* "he used span for measurement"
   via) *fälasi* "monk" – vib *fälläs-ä* "he became monk"
   viia) *mänkäs* "chin" – viib *mänkäs-ä* "he had big chin"
   viiia) *qadra* "ley" – viiib *qadär-ä* "it became ley"
   ixa) *wata* "traditional singer" – ixb *watäy-ä* "he acted like wata"
   xa) *sisay* "food" – xb *sässäy-ä /sasäy-ä* "he gave (distributed) food"
   xia) *tǝrgum* "translation" – xia *tärgʷämä* "he translated"
   xiia) *ʿayn* "eye" – xiib *ʿayyänä* "he fixed the eye upon"
   xiiia) *lǝbb* "heart" – xiiib *läbbäwä* "he possessed understanding"
   xiva) *ʾasar* "trace" – xivb *ʾassara* "he followed the traces"
   xva) *masal* "proverb" – xvb *massala* "he made a proverb"

In the above examples we see Tigrinya words as in (6i–x), Gǝʿǝz words as in (6xi–xiii) and Tigre words as in (6xiv–v). From roots related to borrowed nouns in (6ia), (6iia), (6iiia) (6iva) and (6xia), we can form type B or quadriliteral type C verbs in (6ib), (6iib), (6iiib) (6ivb) and (6xib) respectively. From roots related to Tigrinya, Gǝʿǝz and Tigre nouns in (6va), (6via), (6viia), (6xiia), (6xiiia), (6xiva) and (6xva), we form type B verbs in (6vb), (6vib) and quadriliteral type C verbs in (6viib) and type B verbs in (6xiib), (6xiiib), (6xivb) and (6xvb) respectively. Besides, from roots related to (6viiia), (6ixa), and (6xa), we derive triliteral type C verbs in (6viiib), (6ixb) and (6xb) respectively. In (6xb), we get type B and triliteral type C forms related to the root in

(6xa). In (6viia) *m-* is prefixed to the root *nks* "bite" to form *mänkäsi* "a means, place or reason for biting" which later became *mänkäs* "chin." But in (6viib), the consonant *m* has become part of the root and can be regarded as the first radical of the root. It can be noted that in (6ib–viib), both type B and quadriliteral type C verbs have the same *cv* patterns.

Moreover, quadriliteral type C verbs may be derived by reduplication which may be followed by dissimilation. As in other Semitic languages, there are biliteral words such as *mär-* which can be reduplicated to form the pattern $c^1\ddot{a}c^2c^1\ddot{a}c^2$- (i.e. as in *märmär-ä* "he examined") and fit in the *cv* pattern of type B verbs. These reduplicated consonants can be listed in the lexicon as radicals of the root. But the pattern $c^1\ddot{a}c^2c^1\ddot{a}c^2$- may be changed into $c^1\ddot{a}c^2c^3\ddot{a}c^4$- as in[67] $q^w\ddot{a}rq^w\ddot{a}r$-ä > $q^w\ddot{a}nq^w\ddot{a}r$-ä "eyes went abnormally deep" by dissimilation.

We noted earlier that quadriliteral verbs may be derived from roots related to nouns borrowed from foreign languages as in *mänkos-ä* (> *mänkʷäs-ä*) "he became a monk" (borrowed from Greek). Furthermore, we can have Tigrinya quadriliterals related to nominals followed by adjective forming suffixes. The following are examples:

7.  ia)    *rəʾsi* "head" +-*an* > *raʾsan* "big headed"
    ib)    *raʾsän-ä* "he became big headed"
    iia)   *ħənzi* "poison" + -*am* > *ħənzam* "poisonous"
    iib)   *ħanzäm-ä* "it became poisonous"
    iiia)  *ħamli* "vegetable" + -*äway* > *ħamläway*
    iiib)  *ħamläwä* "it became green" "green"
    iva)   *näfri* "a type of acute contagious disease"
    ivb)   *näfräyä* > *näfrärä* "he fled"+-*ay*
    va)    *saʿri* "grass" +-*ay*
    vb)    *saʿräyä* > *saʿrärä* "it became green"

In (7ia), the noun *rəʾsi* "head" and the adjective forming suffix -*an* form the adjective *raʾsan* "big headed." In the same manner, the noun *ħənzi* "poison" and the adjective forming morpheme -*am* form *ħənzam* "poisonous" (7iia). In (7iii), *ħämli* and -*äway* form the adjective *ħamläway* "green." The consonants *rʾn* in (7ia), *ħnzm* in (7iia) and *ħmlw* in (7iiia) have become the consonants of roots in (7ib–iiib) respectively. In other words, the consonants in the suffixes, i.e. *n* in (7ib), *m* in (7iib) and *w* in (7iiib) have become part of the roots of the verbs. Thus, the consonants *rʾn* in *raʾsan*, *ħnzm* in *ħənzam*, and *ħmlw* in *ħamläway* could be used as roots for the quadriliteral type C verbs *raʾsvn-*, *ħanzvm-* and *ħamlvw-* respectively. In (7ivb) and (7vb), the segment *y* becomes *r* by regressive assimilation.

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[67]    Cf. Lipinski 1997, p. 405 for Semitic examples such as Aramaic *qašqeš* > *qarqeš* "he knocked").

In Tigrinya, we may get an alveolar consonant by degemination. For instance, in some dialects it is possible to say *bänt'äsä* "he cut" instead of *bät't'äsä* "he cut" or *mä'ankor* instead of *mä'akkor* "buttock." Thus, quadriliteral type C verbs may also originate from triconsonantal roots such as *cäccäc*. Let us also see the following examples:

8.  i)     *makkina* "car" > *mankina* "car"
    ii)    *mäkkära* "trouble" > *mänkära* "trouble"
    iii)   *wäťťär-ä* "he questioned" > *wäntär-ä* "he questioned"
    iv)    *šabbat* > *sänbät* "sunday" (< Jewish Sabath).
    v)     *\*akattib* > *akantib* "I am writing"
    vi)    *Idris* > *Indris* (the name *Idris* in Wollo Amharic dialect)

In (8i–iii), the forms without *n* are more common, while in (8iv) only the form with *n* is used. In (8i–iv), the quadriconsonantal forms are derived from triconsonantal forms by dissimilation. In (8v), we have a Bedja verb *akantib* derived from *\*akattib* by dissimilation (i.e. *tt > nt*). In Ethiopia, speakers of Wollo Amharic dialect say *Indris* (a name of person) instead of *Idris* as in (8vi). In the same manner, at least some of the quadriliteral type C verbs may be derived from triliteral type B verbs by dissimilation.[68]

The function of type B and triliteral type C verbs are assumed to be originally the same.[69] In the examples indicated in (1–5) above, we have tried to show the relationship among verb types. I think they can be derived from type A verbs via the pattern *cäcacvc-*. Observe the following:

9.  ia)    *qäräb-ä* "he became near"
    ib)    *qäraräb-ä* "he made ready"
    ic)    *qärräb-ä* "he made ready"
    iia)   *mäl(ä)'-ä* "he became full"
    iib)   *mälalä'-ä* "he added"
    iic)   *mällä'-ä* "he added"

Thus, since (9ib) and (9iib) are semantically almost the same as (9ic) and (9iic) respectively, I assume we can derive (9ic) and (9iic from (9ia) and (9iia) (type A verbs) respectively via the stems with the reduplicated penultimate radical as in the following:

10.  *qäraräb-ä* > *\*qäräräb-ä* > *qärräb-ä*

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68   Cf. also Lipinski 1997, p. 407.
69   Cf. Rubio 2006; Zaborski 1999; Lipinski 1997, pp. 382–387.

Both *qäraräb-ä* and *qärräb-*ä are actual and possible semantically related words. It seems to me that the latter can be derived from the former. In the case of *qrb*, we have type A and type B forms. But we have also many verbs occurring in a type B without a type A. Tigrinya verbs like *wässix-u*, a verb occurring in type B without type A, have the forms *wässix-u* "he added" and *wäsasix-u* "he added (usually repeatedly but in small amounts)." I think the derivation of verbs like *wässix-u* via *wäsasix-u* from type A can be assumed. As indicated in Rubin,[70] we can assume deverbatives, i.e., regularly generated 'secondary' stems, based on lost type A stem verbs.[71] It appears to me that it is not difficult to understand the derivation of type B from type A verbs in (10). I believe other verbs of type B can be derived in this manner. But we can expect semantic changes and the verbs of type B can be listed in the lexicon as lexical entries.[72]

Besides, it seems to me that it is possible to derive triliteral type C verbs from onomatopoetic words such as *zäwän* (11i) as in *zäwän bäl-ä* "he went around," from type A verbs as in (11ii–iii) and from quadriliterals as in (11iv) via the pattern *cäcacvc*.

11. ia)    *zäwän*   ib *\*zäwawän-ä > zawawän-ä –* ic *zawän-ä* "he went around"
    iia)    *märän-ä* "he roped" – iib *\*märarän-ä –* iic *marän-ä* "he roped or tied"
    iiia)   *märäw-ä* "he dug" –iiib *\*märaräw-ä –* iiic *maräw-ä* "he dug"
    iva)    *zämzäm-ä* "he scalloped" – ivb *zämazäm-ä > \*zamazäm-ä –* ivc *zazäm-ä* "he scalloped"

Lipinski (1997) suggests that stem III of Semitic have not been identified in Paleosyrian (a term used by him to indicate a group of dialects represented by documents attested at Ebla, Tell Beydar, and Mari as well as in Kish area of Central Mesopotamia) Amorite, Ugaritic and Akkadian and are considered secondary development of South and West Semitic.[73] In Tigrinya and Gəʕəz triliteral type C verbs, which correspond to Semitic stem III, are few in number. However, this may be due to the fact that the stems are gradually disappearing and the form *täcacäc-ä / täcäcacäcä-ä* is taking their place.[74]

Triliteral type C verbs usually indicate processes or actions which take longer duration and can have meanings similar to the stems with *cäcacvc-*. We can derive triliteral type C verbs from *cäcacvc-*, i.e. *cäcacvc- > cacacvc- > cacvc*.

In Tigre, we have the form *sabābara* "broke thoroughly" and *sābara* "broke into pieces." In Tigrinya, however, the forms *cäcacvc-* and *cacvc-* do not normally co-

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[70]   Rubin 2006.
[71]   Cf. also Rubin 2006; Kouwenberg 1997 for similar explanations regarding Arabic and Akkadian deverbatives.
[72]   Cf. also McCarthy 1982, p. 227.
[73]   See also Lipinski 1997, p. 386.
[74]   Cf. Dillmann 1907, p. 154.

occur. In (11ii–iii), for instance, the triliteral type C forms in (11iic–iiic) are more common than the type A forms in (11iia–iiia), while the *cäcacvc*-forms in (11iib–iiib) are not used by speakers. In (11ivb), the pattern *cäcacvc*- exists since the words (i.e. *zämzäm-ä* "he scalloped" in (11iva), *zämazäm-ä* "he scalloped frequently" in (11ivb) and *zazäm-ä* "he scalloped, he finished" in (11ivc) have some meaning differences.

We have seen earlier that words like *tä-x'ätatäl-ä* can be changed to *tä-x'atäl-ä*. In the same way, we may assume verbs like *baräx-ä* to derive from *bäraräx-ä*. We may assume *bäraräx-ä* to become *bararäx-ä* and finally *baräx-ä* by deleting one of the c-slots of the reduplicated radicals. According to Professor J. Lowenstamm (personal communication), we may consider consonant gemination equivalent to vowel length.[75] Thus, type B (stem II) and type C (stem III) may be of the same origin and the vowel *a* in verbs, such as *baräx-ä*, may correspond to the consonant length in verbs such as *bättän-ä*.[76] It can also be noted that in North Abyssinian Semitic, the morpheme *tä-* is frequently prefixed to possible (not actual) words of type B *cäccvc-*, e.g. *tä-x'ämmätä* "he sat down," and triliteral type C *cacvc-* e.g. *täx'awämä* "he opposed."

In the literature, it is assumed that the form *qatal* is developed from a verbal noun.[77] As indicated in Tesfay (forthcoming), Tigrinya Type A verbs may be derived (a) from the nominal pattern *cacvc* such as *gabar* and from *cəcac* (<*ccac*) by zero derivation (b) by deleting $c^2$ of reduplicated quadriliterals as in $l^1äw^2l^1äw^2ä > läläwä$ "he rolled on fire, mud etc." $f^1äw^2f^1äw^2ä > fäfäwä$ "he rolled on fire, mud etc.," $m^1äy^2mäy^2ä > mämäyä$ "he selected," $q^1äy^2q^1äy^2ä > qäx'äyä$ "acted stingily."

In this article too, we may have the following assumptions regarding the derivation of verbs of type B and C of North Abyssinian Semitic:

12.  i)       Type B verbs can be derived from roots related to:
     a)       indigenous nouns as in (6vb–vib)
     b)       borrowed nouns as in (6ib–iiib)
     c)       type A verbs via *cäcacvc* as in (9) and (10)

     ii)      Triliteral type C verbs can be derived from roots related to:
     a)       onomatopoeic words via *cäcacvc* as in (11ic) from (11ia),
     b)       type A via *cäcacvc* as in (11iic) and (11iiic) from (11iia) and (11iiia) respectively

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[75]  Cf. also Lipinski 1997, p. 386 for the equivalence of -*vvc* (long vowel+c) and -*vcc* (vowel+geminated c).

[76]  Cf. also Castellino 1962, pp. 122–126; Lipinski 1997, pp. 382–387; Ratcliffe 1998, p. 188; Tesfay 2002; Tesfay 2003.

[77]  Cf. Retsö 1989 among others.

c)      quadriliteral type C verbs via *cäcacvc* as in (11ivc) from (11iva), or *\*zäwzäw* > *\*zäwazäwä* > *zazäwä* "it leaned" and *qärqära* > *qärax'ärä* > *qarax'ärä* > *qax'ärä* "clamp"

d)      nouns as in (6viiib–xb) from (6viiia–xa) respectively

e)      quadriliteral verbs whose $c^2$ is a laryngeal followed by deleting their laryngeal $c^2$ as in *marärä* (< *ma'rärä*) "he went early" and *masänä* (< *ma'sänä*) "he suffered from chronic disease"

iii)      Quadriliteral type C verbs can be derived from roots related to:

a)      reduplicaton of $c^1vc^2$ as in $m^1är^2m^2är^2ä$ "he examined"

b)      reduplication of $c^1vc^2$ followed by dissimilation as in $q^wärq^wärä$ > $q^wänq^wärä$ "he has eyes relatively sank"

c)      borrowed nouns with four consonants as in (6ivb) from (6iva)

d)      nouns or verbs as in (8i–v) with geminated penult by dissimilation

e)      adjectives composed of nouns followed by suffixes as in (7)

f)      triliterals preceded by *m-* as in (6viib) from (6viia)

# I. Unifying Nominal and Verbal Internal Plurals

Several scholars agree that gemination (as in stem II), vowel length (as in stem III), reduplication and reciprocality can indicate plurality. Many scholars also agree nominal and verbal plurals must be treated in the same manner. Several scholars tried to have a unifying analysis of both plurals.

Semitists assume the derivation of *qattala* (stem II) and *qātala* (stem III) from some third form.[78] As indicated in Ryder,[79] some of them assume the derivation of *qātala* and *qattala* from *qatala* as in *qatala* > *qatlala* (by reduplication of the last radical) > *qat'ala* (in Proto-Semitic) and finally *qat'ala* > *qattala* and *qat'ala* > *qātala*. McCarthy and Prince[80] derive the reciprocals (verbal plurals like *qātala*) by affixation of a mora to the initial syllable of *qatal* (perfective). According to McCarthy and Prince,[81] however, the derivation process of broken (internal) plurals involves the mapping of an initial syllabic trochee (as in *qin* in *qindiil*) which is circumscribed from the singular onto an iambic broken plural template *cvcvv* (as in *qanaadiil*). Benmamoun[82] modifies the proposal given by McCarthy and Prince[83]. According to him, the basis of the verbal plural must be the imperfective and not the perfective.

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78    See Ryder 1974, p. 26.

79    Ryder 1974.

80    McCarthy / Prince 1990.

81    Ibid.

82    Benmamoun 2003.

83    McCarthy / Prince 1990.

Benmamoun[84] argues that the basis is singular in the case of nouns and imperfective in the cases of verbs. Nonetheless, even Benmamoun's analysis does not seem to hold good. In North Abyssinian languages, we have seen in (V) above that singular nouns with 2, 3 or 4 consonants have the *cäcacvc* (<*cacācvc*) / *cacācvc* pattern in the plural. In the case of verbs, imperfective and imperative (in North Abyssinian Semitic) do not share their stem vowels (against Benmamoun's assumption).

According to Zaborski,[85] *qātal-a/yu-qātil-u* and *qattal-a yuqattil-u* were, in Proto-Hamitosemitic, variants. He also says that the active participle *qātil* of Semitic languages is genetically connected with the imperfect *yu-qātil-u*, and there were denominal verbs of *qātal-a/yu-qātil-u* and *qattal-a/yu-qattil-u*. In the spirit of Zaborski,[86] I assume the verbal plural can be related to an ancient form like *qatvl* (which can include not only perfective and imperfective forms but also nominals). A form like *qatvl* can have a reduplicative form like *qatātvl* which is similar to the broken plural *cacācvc* that occurs as a plural form of nouns and participles. As indicated above, several nouns and participles have plural forms with *cäcacvc* (< *cacācvc*) or *cacācvc* pattern. It appears to me that it is possible to assume *qatātala > qātala* and *qatātala > qattala*. Thus, I assume stem II and stem III can be derived from *cacācvc-* (as in *qatātal-a* "he killed repeatedly" or *qatātilu* "he killed repeatedly") which is similar to the nominal internal plural *cacācvc* pattern. In fact, in Tigre, the form *qātal-a* and *qatātal-a* have similar meanings. In Tigrinya *qärräb-ä* "he prepared" and *qäraräb-ä* "he prepared" have similar meanings. In different Eritrean and Ethiopian Semitic languages, a passive morpheme followed by a form of type C or reduplicative stem have similar meanings. In North Abyssinian Semitic languages except Tigre, the form *tä-+cäcacvc* and *tä-+cacvc* (i.e., *tä-+*reduplicative stem of type A and type B and *tä-+*triliteral type C) have the same or similar meanings. In Tigre too, the form *t/tə/ta-+*cacācvc and *t/tə/ta-+cācvc* (i.e., *t/tə/ta-+*reduplicative stem of type A and type B and *t/tə/ta-+*triliteral type C) have the same or similar meanings (see also the discussion above).

The reduplicative stems of different verbal conjugations (as in *qätatäl-ä* from *qätäl-ä* in the perfective, *qätatil-u* from *qätilu* in the gerundive, *qätatəl* from *qətäl* in the imperative and so on) indicate that different vowels can be inserted in the *v* following the reduplicated second radical in the case of triradicals. In the case of verbs with four consonants, however, different vowels can be inserted in the *v* following the third consonant as in *mänat'äl-ä* "he snatched repeatedly" and *mänat'il-u* "he snatched repeatedly," *yəmänatəl* "let him snatch repeatedly, he snatches repeatedly." We see the same *cv* pattern in the perfective, imperfective, gerundive, imperative, and

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84    Benmamoun 2003, p. 61.
85    Zaborski 1999.
86    Ibid.

the jussive simple and derived stems (triradicals and quadriradicals). In Tigrinya, for instance, the perfective stem *qätäl-ä* "he killed," the imperfective stem *yə-qättəl* "he kills," the gerundive stem *qätil-u* "he killed," the imperative stem *qətäl* "(you) kill," as well as the jussive stem *yə-qtal* "let him kill" have the form (-)*cäcavc*(-) (derived from -*cacācvc*-) in the reduplicative stem. The reduplicateive stems of *qätäl*-, -*qättəl*, *qätil*-, *qətäl*, and -*qtäl* become *qätatäl*-, -*qätatəl*, *qätatil*-, *qätatəl*, and -*qätatəl* respectively. As indicated earlier, such a *cv* pattern can be observed in the participles too.

We have indicated above that the *cv* pattern in the nominal internal plurals is *cäcacvc* (<*cacācvc*) / *cacācvc*. Observe also the following:

13   i)       *ħaṣin* "iron", pl. *ħaṣawən*
     ii)     *makkina* "car", pl. *mäkayən*
     iii)    *wəħiĵ* "river", pl. *wäħayəz*
     iv)    *därħo* "hen", pl. *däraħut*
     v)     *därħo* "hen", pl. *därawəħ*
     vi)    *käwħi* "rock", pl. *ʾaxawəħ*
     vii)   *mänbär* "chair", pl. *mänabər*
     viii)   *gʷal* "girl", pl. *ʾawaləd*
     ix)    *dəmmu* "cat", pl. *dämamu* (< *dämaməw*)
     x)     *qändil* "lamp", pl. *qänadil*
     xi)    *tämän* "snake", pl. *tämamən*
     xii)   *wäräĵa* "gentle", pl. *wärazut*

The examples in (13i–xii) have different number of consonants in their singular forms. In the plural, however, they all have (in some of them -*əw* > *u*) *cäcacvc*. In order to fit into the pattern, different consonants are inserted in the plural forms. In (13i), *w* is inserted. In (13ii–iii), *y* is inserted. In (13vi), *ʾa-* is affixed. In (13ix, 13xi), the second consonant (i.e., *m*) is reduplicated. (13vii) and (13x) have four consonants each and no other consonant is added. However, the *v* position is filled by different vowels (i.e., *ə* in (13vii) and *i* in (13x)). In (13viii), *ʾa-* and *d* are added (which indicates that it is related to *wld* "child"). As we can see from (13iv) and (13v), *därħu* "hen" has the plural forms *därawəħ* "hens" and *däraħut* "hens." In the former, *w* is infixed, while in the latter, the last consonant position is filled by *t*. In (13xii) too, the last consonant *c*-slot is filled by *t*.

The prefixes *ʾa-* (as in *ʾaxawəħ*) and *mä-* (as in *mänabər*) may be connected to *ʾa-* (as in *ʾaqtäl-ä* "caused or helped to kill someone" (3ms) or *\*ʾat-qätatäl-ä* > *ʾaqqätatäl-ä* / *ʾaqqatäl-ä* "he became a cause or assisted in killing each other") and to *mä-* (as in *mänbäri* "cause for living" or *mänabər-ti* "someone who lives together with"). In

addition to the role of filling the *c*-slots, they may have a causative function.[87] However, the segments *w*, *y*, *t* and the reduplicated segment *m* (see the examples in 13i–xii) do not seem to have such function.

It does not appear to me that there is a direct relationship between the plural and singular forms (as in the case of *ʾawaləd* "girls" and *gʷal* "girl" or *därahut* / *däräwəh* "hens" and *därho* "hen"). If, on the other hand, we compare both nominal and verbal plural patterns, we can also observe the following:

1. The variant plural forms such as *därawəh* and *däräwwəh* can be compared to stem III and stem II respectively (see also the discussion above).

2. The reduplication of the second radical in *säbabär-ä* corresponds to the reduplicated consonant in *tamamən* "snakes" (plural of *tämän* "snake") and insertion of *w* in *därawəh* "hens" (plural of *därho* "hen"). As suggested above the segments *w*, *y*, *t* and *ʾ* are, I assume, inserted to fill *c*-slots in the pattern. In quadriradicals (as in *mänṭäl-ä* "he snatched" and *mänaṭäl-ä* "he snatched repeatedly" and in nouns with four consonants, (as in *mänbär* "chair" and *mänabər* "chairs"), the addition of new consonantal segments are not needed. However, the infixation of *a* following the second consonant occurs in the nominal plurals and in the reduplicative forms (verbal plurals) of triradical and quadriradical verbs.

Thus, *cäcacvc* (< *cacācvc*) / *cacācvc* can be the internal plural pattern common for both nominal and verbal forms.

Furthermore, stem II and stem III are assumed to be variants in Proto-Afroasiatic and can indicate intensity, repetitiveness, frequency and/or plurality. The data from Afroasiatic languages, such as Bedja and Berber languages, indicate that they can be related to the reduplicated forms shown above. In Eritrean and Ethiopian Semitic languages, the meaning of *t/tə/ta/tä-*+reduplicative stem and *t/tə/ta/tä-*+triliteral type C can be similar or the same, and according to Dillmann,[88] have substituted (or are on the way to substitute) triliteral type C verbs. In Tigre, the reduplicated form *cacācvc* and triliteral type C form *cācvc* can have the same meanings. Thus, it seems clear that triliteral type C, type B (originally a variant of triliteral type C and indicated in the literaure as a verbal plural, reciprocal or reduplicated form) and the reduplicated stems are related. In fact, I think it is possible to assume the derivation of type B and triliteral type C from type A via the reduplicative stem.

Moreover, we can observe from our discussion above that the last vowel in *cäcacvc* (< *cacācvc*) / *cacācvc* can be realized as *ə*, *ä*, *i*, *u*, *a*. We know that *ə* and *ä* in Eritrean

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[87]  Cf. also Fassi-Fehri 2003 for the discussion regarding the prefix *ʾa-*, transitivity, causativity and plurality.
[88]  Dillmann 1907.

and Ethiopian Semitic languages can correspond to short *i/u* and to short *a* respectively in other Semitic languages. We also know that *i/u* and *u* in Eritrean and Ethiopian Semitic languages can correspond to long *i/u* and to long *a* respectively in other Semitic languages.[89] Thus, we can see that the last vowel in *cäcacvc / cacācvc* can correspond to either long or short vowel in other Semitic languages. In fact, we can assume the pattern *cacācv(v̄)c* in Tigre. Moreover, we can assume *cacācv(v̄)c* pattern in earlier forms of North Abyssinian Semitic languages which is very much similar to the (basic) prosodic template of Arabic indicated in McCarthy.[90]

As indicated in Rubio,[91] a process like /cc > nc/ is possible. In North Abyssinian Semitic languages, we can find quadriliteral verbs derived from triliteral type B verbs. In Tigrinya, for instance, we have a quadriliteral verb *bänťäsä* "he cut" derived from a triliteral type B verb *bäťťäsä* "he cut". The *cäccvc / caccv(v̄c)* pattern derived from *cäcacvc / cacācv(v̄)c* in nominal internal plurals correspond to *cäccvc / caccv(v̄c)* derived from *cäcacvc / cacācv(v̄)c* in verbal internal plurals.

## J. Conclusion

The idea of considering stem II and stem III (which correspond to type B and triliteral type C verbs respectively) as originally variants and relating these forms to reduplication of verbs is not new.[92] According to Greenberg,[93] the gemination of the second radical is regarded as partial reduplication.[94] In fact, several scholars tried to derive reduplicated forms and broken plurals from a third form as we can see in Rubio,[95] Benmamoun,[96] McCarthy,[97] McCarthy and Prince,[98] Ryder.[99]

I also assume that they can be derived from a third form (even though different from them). We observe that:

1.  The frequentative stem (which may also be called reduplicative or intensive) and the broken plural form have exactly the same *cv* pattern, and in both of

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[89]  Cf. also Tesfay 2003.
[90]  McCarthy 1982.
[91]  Rubio 2006.
[92]  See Rubio 2006; Fassi-Fehri 2003; Greenberg, among others.
[93]  Greenberg 1991.
[94]  See also Marantz 1982.
[95]  Rubio 2006.
[96]  Benmamoun 2003.
[97]  McCarthy 1993.
[98]  McCarthy / Prince 1990.
[99]  Ryder 1974, p. 26.

them the infix /-ā-/ (which becomes /-a-/ in Tigrinya and Gǝʿǝz) occurs in the same position.

2.  Both the frequentative stem and broken plural form show plurality.
3.  Frequentative / reduplicative / intensive stem, stem II and stem III can indicate similar function.
4.  In Tigre, the function of frequentative / reduplicative / intensive form like *sabābara* and type C like *sābara* may overlap.[100]
5.  In Cushitic (as in the case of *ʾadābil* "I collected several times" vs *ʾadbil* "I collected" in Bedja) and Berber languages, the infixation of *-a-* indicates plurality.
6.  The *t/tǝ/tä/ta-* followed by a form of type C (as in *ta-cācac-a* in Tigre) or a reduplicated form (as in *ta-cacācac-a* in Tigre) have similar or complementary meanings in Tigrinya, Tigre, Gǝʿǝz and Amharic.

Hence, I assume type B (which corresponds to stem II) and triliteral type C (which corresponds to stem III) can be derived from the frequentative / reduplicative / intensive stem with a *cv* pattern *cacācv(v̄)c* (which later becomes *cäcacvc* in Gǝʿǝz and Tigrinya).

It may be possible to argue that the pattern *cacācv(v̄)c* is new and limited to Ethio-Eritrean Semitic languages. Reduplication is quite widespread in Afroasiatic and rather rare in Semitic (aside from Eritrean Semitic, Ethiopian Semitic and Modern Hebrew), while gemination is more productive in Semitic and less productive in Afroasiatic.[101] In the modern Ethiopian and Eritrean Semitic languages like Amharic, Tigre and Tigrinya (specially in type A), the most common stem is the frequentative / reduplicative / intensive stem and exists in the simple and causative forms, reflexive/passive forms and participles. The fact that it does not occur in East Semitic or is not common in North West Semitic does not necessarily mean that it did not occur in Proto-Semitic or Afroasiatic. It is believed that pharyngeals and laryngeals existed in Proto-Semitic but are lost in Akkadian.

Broken plural was believed to be a peculiar feature of South Semitic. But now scholars believe it is an archaic Afro-Asiatic feature. It is clear that more research is needed on this. But the fact that the *cäcacvc / cacācv(v̄)c* pattern (similar to the frequentative / reduplicative / intensive or internal plurals in North Abyssinian Semitic) exists in North Abyssinian Semitic, Bedja (Cushitic) and Berber and also in broken plurals[102] in Arabic may give an indication of the archaism of the frequentative / reduplicative / intensive stem.

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[100]  See also Raz 1983, p. 53.
[101]  Cf. also Satzinger 2002, p. 243; Gardiner 1950 for the comparison of gemination in Semitic and reduplication in Egyptian.
[102]  Which according to McCarthy 1979, 1982 is regarded as the basic form.

Furthermore, the nominal broken plural forms and the verbal plural reduplicative forms can be related to ancient adjective/stative *cacvc* forms or to participles. Verbs and nominals have the pattern *cäcacvc* / *cacācv(v̄)c* to indicate plurality. In order to fit into the *cäcacvc* / *cacācv(v̄)c* pattern, the words like *qätilu* have become *qätatilu* (frequentative / reduplicative / intensive), while the plural of *saʾni* "shoe," *därhu* "hen," *mänbär* "chair" are *ʾasaʾən* "shoes," *därawəh* "hens" and *mänabər* "chairs" (words like *mänbär* are originally particles). As indicated earlier, singular nouns with two or three consonants in the singular can have the *cäcacvc* / *cacācv(v̄)c* pattern in the plural. The nominal and verbal pattern indicating plurality occurs in different Afroasiatic languages and hence can be related to an ancient Afroasiatic form. However, more research must be done on this issue.

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*Tigre abstract*

ሞላድ ጅንስ ከሊማት ውዳይ ወናይ ከርስ መአሸረት
አትባዝሓት ከሊማት ዲብ ሀገጊ ሴም ናይ ቅብለት ሓበሻ

ዲብ ሀገጊ ሴም ናይ ቅብለት ሓበሻ አጅናስ ከሊማት ውዳይ A ወB ዲብ ብዕዳት ሀገጊ ሴም ምስል ፈርዕ I ወፈርዕ II ልትመጣወር። ጅንስ ውዳይ C ወለአርባዕ ሓርፍ ለቡ ከሊማት ውዳይ ህዬ ምስል ፈርዕ III ናይለ ብዕዳት ሀገጊ ሴም ልትመጣወር። ፈርዕ I ወፈርዕ II አስሉም ምን እንርኤ ሓቴ ጅንስ ዲብ እንተ ሐድ መፈናቲት አትጠወረው። ዲብ አክታብት ክም ድጋም: አትባዝሓት ቀበለተ አው አትባዝሓት ከሊማት ውዳይ እንዴ ትበሀለ ልትሽረሕ። ዲብ ሀገጊ ሴም ቅብለት ሓበሻም ጅንስ ውዳይ B ወC ክም ድጋም: አትባዝሓት ቀበለተ አው አትባዝሓት ከሊማት ውዳይ እንዴ ገብአ ከድም። ምናተ: ምስለ ጅንስ ከሊማት ውዳይ ለልትጸበጥ አፍርዐት ድጋም ወቀበለተ ሀለ። አማን ሓቆ ሓዜነ: አጅናስ ውዳይ B ወC እብ ገበይ ፈርዕ ድጋም ምን ጅንስ ውዳይ A ለመጽአው ቶም ለልብል ወግም ሀለ እዮ። ፈርዕ ድጋም ወናይ ከርስ አትባዝሓት አስማይ *cacācvc* (ዲብ ግእዝ ወትግርኛ ህዬ *cäcacvc*) ቱ። እሊ ንዛዝም እሊ እግል ናይ ከርስ አትባዝሓት ከሊማት ውዳይ ወአስማይ እብ ሕበር ለከምኽም ንዛዝም ቱ።

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# The Development of Tigre Literature

Rainer Voigt[*]

*Abstract*

The history of the Tigre literature can be summarized as having gone through the following five stages:

a) The Swedish Evangelical Mission followed by the French Lazarists who, for reasons of evangelizing, produced a written form for Bible translations and devotional tracts, and who were the first to contribute to Tigre literature. – The Gospel of St. Mark was the first book ever to be published in Tigre. Apart from biblical and religious writings a number of books were published that deal with diverse matters such as spelling books, collections of folktales, customs and legends.

b) The most significant contributions to Tigre literature were those made by Enno Littmann, and presented in his four *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia*,[1] published in five volumes. The first two volumes (1910) contain the *Tales, Customs, Names and Dirges of the Tigré Tribes* in Tigre with an English translation; and the remaining three volumes (1913–1915) contain the *Lieder der Tigrē-Stämme* in Tigre with a German translation.

c) With the establishment of the *Colonia Eritrea* in 1890 the Italian colonial authorities to some extent promoted and were more inclined to accept only Tigrinya and Arabic as the languages of the native population. In spite of all this, off and on some Tigre publications did emerge during these decades. However, one cannot characterize this period in any other way but as a time of decline for Tigre literature.

d) A new beginning in the development of Tigre literature came about with the implementation of the EPLF's language policy that considers all Erythrean languages as equal national languages and as languages of instruction used in schools. In line with this policy, school books, pamphlets, and a series of other books have started to see the light of day since 1976.

e) After the independence of Erythrea, the development of Tigre literature gained momentum to include, in addition to some textbooks: newspapers, magazines, short stories, novels, translated literature from other languages, dictionaries,

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[1]  I-IVA/B, Leyden 1910–1915.

and proceedings of national and international conferences. As a result, Tigre is now a fully developed language of literature and education.

f) Particular attention has been paid to the monolingual dictionary by Musā ʾĀron, ʾĀron, from which a sample root with its derivations is compared with its treatment in in the Littmann / Höfner dictionary.

Tigre constitutes the third-largest Ethio-Semitic language after Amharic and Tigrinya. Amongst the modern Semitic languages it is ranked fifth because outside Erythrea (Eritrea) and Ethiopia it is only surpassed in terms of speaker numbers by Modern Hebrew – and, of course, Arabic the most widely used modern Semitic language.

## A. Beginnings

In past centuries the situation was not conducive to the development of a common Tigre literary language, neither within the Christian-Ethiopian sphere of influence to which large tracts of the tigrephone region of Erythrea belonged for most of the time, nor within the Islamic-Arabic sphere of influence which has increased since the 19th century. In their respective spheres which intersect in Erythrea either Old Ethiopic (and later on Amharic and Tigrinya respectively) or Arabic commanded a domineering role. So far no written Tigre documents in Arabic script have come to light although it is not unreasonable to think that some might exist.

The idea of developing a written representation of a language is due to European influence. As with many languages of the region, e.g. Tigrinya, Saho, Bilin, Oromo and many more, it was primarily the Protestant missions who for reasons of evangelizing produced a written form for Bible translations and devotional tracts.

In the case of Tigre it was the Swedish Evangelical Mission, who were active from 1866 on and first in Mokullu (እምኩሉ ʾƎmkullu). A little later the French Lazarists followed (first active in Keren). It was foremost the Swedes with their missionary school in Galab (in Tigrinya Gäläb) who rendered outstanding services to the development of the Tigre written language.

Under the direction of the Swedish missionary C. Winquist it was firstly the Gospel of St. Mark (ወንጌል ፡ (ባህለቱ ፡ ብሽራት ፡ ) ክምከትበዩ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ ማርቆስ ፡ *Wangel* (*bahlatu[2] bəššarāt) kəm-katbayu ḳəddus Mārḳos*) that was published in 1889 in the translation by Täwäldä-Mädhən Gäbrä-Mädhən (1860–1930) and Dawit ʾAmanuʾel (1862–1944). And the whole of the New Testament was published in 1902 (rev. ed. 1931) under the direction of Karl G. Rodén: ሐዲስ ፡ ገለድ ፡ እብ ፡ ሂጋ ፡ ትግሬ ፡ *Ḥadis Galad ʾəb higā Təgre*. It was Rodén who translated the Small Catechism by Martin

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[2]  The form documented in the Tigre dictionaries (Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch* 1962 and Musa ʾAron: *Kəbət-ḳālāt* 2005) is በሀለት *bahalat* 'meaning', but *bahlat* is possible as well.

Luther into Tigre (**ምህሮ፡እምነት፡ክስታን፡** *Məhro ʾəmnat kəstān / Dottrina Cristiana secondo il piccolo Catechismo de Martino Lutero*, Asmara 1920).

Parts of the Old Testaments were translated by Karl G. Rodén (1860–1943) and Gustaf Richard Sundström (1869–1919) and published at Asmara, i.e. the Psalms (**ድርሳን፡ዳውድ፡** *Dərsān Dāwəd / I salmi di Davide*, 1925) and Isaiah (**ክታብ፡እሰያስ፡** *Kətāb ʾƎsayās / Il libro di Isaia in lingua Tigré*, 1925).

Besides the Bible translations, other religious writings were brought out, but not all of them are known. Specially Catholic pamphlets are less well known, but see **ናይ፡ክርስቶስ፡ ምህሮ፡ እብ፡ሐጪር፡ቃል።** *Nāy Krəstos məhro ʾəb ḥačir*[3] *ḳāl – misyon kātolik la-ʾafgarawo* (1915 / [=] 1922). The Swedish Mission was very active:

Wilhelm Norlén (1826–1896) / Fredrik Lundgren (1847–1915): **ድግም፡ ቅዱስ፡ ክታብ፡** *Dəgəm ḳəddus kətāb / Manuale di storia sacra*, which was revised for a second edition by Karl G. Rodén and Giuseppe Hemmed (**ዮሴፍ፡ሐመድ፡** Yosef Ḥəmmad) (Asmara 1925),

Norlén, Wilhelm / Fredrik Lundgren: **አድጋማት፡ቀዱስ፡ክታብ። እግል፡ውላድ፡ ነኣይኣሽ፡** *ʾAdgāmāt Ḳəddus Kətāb ʾəgəl wəlād na'āyəš / Racconti biblici illustrati per le scuole elementari inferiori*, transl. by A. Renlund and Karl Gustaf Rodén, Asmara 1916,

Karl G. Rodén / Richard Sundström: **ደሩስ፡ጽዮን፡ እብ፡ትግሬ፡** *Darus Ṣəyon ʾəb Təgre / Cantici di Sion in Tigré*, 2nd rev. and exp. ed. 1931.

It is a given that these translations would not have been possible without the linguistic ground-work and orthographic care and advice of European scholars and the great linguistic competence of the Tigre informants.

Apart from biblical and religious writings a number of books were published that convey different matters, e.g. spelling books, sometimes containing selections for reading.

Karl Gustaf Rodén: **ፈደል፡ውላድ፡ትግሬ፡ለልትመሃሮቡ፡** *Fidal wəlād Təgre la-lətmaharo-bu*, Mukullo 1889, and from the Catholic side: **ፈደል፡ናይ፡ሂጋ፡ትግሬ፡** *Fidal nāy higā Təgre*, Asmara 1909,

Giovanni da Palermo / Gabrazgi ʾƎmbāya[4] (**ገብረዝጊ፡እምባየ፡**): **ፈደል፡ናይ፡ሂጋ፡ ኢጣልያ፡ እብ፡ሂጋ፡ትግሬ፡ለትበለሳ፡** *Fidal nāy higā ʾIṭālyā ʾəb higā Təgre la-tballasā*, Asmara 1909,

Karl G. Rodén (**ካርል፡ ጉስታብ፡ ሩዴን፡**): **ክታብ፡አግኣዞት፡ወቅርኣን፡ እግል፡ውላድ፡ ነኣይኣሽ፡ እብ፡ትግሬ።** *Kətāb ʾagʾazot wa-ḳər'ān ʾəgəl wəlād na'āyəš ʾəb Təgre / Sillabario e compimento per le scuole elementari inferiori in lingua Tigrè*, Asmara: Società Evangelica Nazionale Svedese, ²1916.

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3    Since the dot under the symbol indicates emphaticness I prefer to introduce my own symbol *ḥ* [*ħ*] which has no such associations although this new symbol is usually reserved for the voiced glottal fricative. I use the symbol *Ħ* for the capital form.

4    The correct Tigre form of the name is **እምባየ** *ʾƎmbāye*, in Tigrinya **እምባየ** *ʾƎmbayä*.

Amongst the Tigre ethnic groups the most research was undertaken with the Mansāʿ. The first ethnographic texts were published by Carlo Conti Rossini (*Tradizioni storiche dei Mensa*, Roma 1901)[5]. In this task he was also helped by K.G. Rodén.

A collection of texts by the Mansāʿ people (ክልኤ፡ መንሳዕ፡ ድግም፡ ወፍትሕ፡ ወዓዶታት፡ *Kəlʾe Mansāʿ – dəgəm wa-fətəḥ wa-ʿādotāt / Le tribù dei Mensa – storia, legge e costumi*: A. *Testo originale in Tigrè*), edited and published by Karl G. Rodén[6] in Asmara in 1913, is of great importance.[7] The first part of the book (ድግም፡ መንሳዕ፡ *Dəgəm Mansāʿ*) was translated by Rodén himself into Italian (*Le Tribù dei Mensa – storia, legge e costumi ecc.*: B. *Traduzione italiana dalla lingua del Tigrè*, Stockholm 1913).[8] And the second part was admirably translated and commented by Maria Höfner (*Das Feteḥ Maḥāri – Sitten und Recht der Mänsaʿ*, Wiesbaden 1951).[9]

Another important work by Rodén which was destined for use in schools is his *Tigre Reader* (ክታብ አግአዞት ወቅርአን፡ *Kətāb ʾagʾazot wa-ḳərʾān*) with the third edition revised by Musā ʾĀron, who was to become a great scholar of Tigre.

Also Gustaf Richard Sundström's and Enno Littmann's *En sång på tigrè-språket* (Uppsala 1904) must be mentioned in this context. Another result of the cooperation between these two scholars was the publication of *The Legend of the Queen of Sheba in the Tradition of Axum* (Leyden, Princeton 1904). Littmann also produced: Canzone tigrē in onore del governatore italiano (*Rivista degli studi orientali*, 1 (1907), pp. 211–215). And Gustaf K. Sundström was also the editor of further ethnographic texts of the Mansāʿ:

Kännedom om läkemedel ock deras användning bland infödingarne i Mänsaʿ (*Le Monde Oriental*, 3 (1909), pp. 152–173),

Sjukdomar ock deras behandling av infödingar i Mänsaʿ (loc. cit., pp. 127–151);

Some Tigrē texts with transliteration and translation (*Le Monde Oriental*, 8 (1914), pp. 1–15).

Even though all texts published by Europeans have so far generally been overlooked by Tigre speakers, I am convinced that the strengthening of Tigre culture will also lead to a greater interest in these older texts.

The schools founded by the Swedish as well as the Catholic missions were the first modern schools in Ethiopia and Erythrea. In these schools it was not only religious knowledge that was imparted but also folklorist and secular information was

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[5]   Also published in *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana*, 14 (1901), pp. 41–99.

[6]   According to the pronunciation his name appears in Fidäl as ካርል ጉስታብ ሩዴን *Kārl Gustāb Ruden*.

[7]   The remark of Shlomo Raz, that the book is "printed in two parts" (Raz: Source materials, 1983, p. 311) does not apply to my copy, which in old binding and continuous pagination comprises xiii, 192 pages.

[8]   Note his Spiegazione delle voci del Tigrè usate nella traduzione, pp. 311–333.

[9]   Published in Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Jg. 1951, 8.

conveyed. Also the children were made acquainted with the Ge'ez-script, which consequently allowed access to Ge'ez, Amharic and Tigrinya literature. Those missions deserve our praise for not introducing the Latin script for the written form of Tigre but for using instead the Ge'ez-script.

During this first phase I also count Enno Littmann's life's work as a contributing factor in the development of a Tigre written language. I am not so much thinking of his linguistic contributions, which at any rate occupy a special place in Tigre linguistics, but I am thinking more of his four *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia* (I-IVA/B, Leyden 1910–1915) published in five volumes. The first two volumes (both published in 1910) contain the *Tales, Customs, Names and Dirges of the Tigré Tribes* in Tigre with an English translation;[10] and the remaining three volumes (III. 1913, IV.A. 1913, IV.B. 1915) contain the *Lieder der Tigrē-Stämme* in Tigre with a German translation. This important collection includes in vol. I. 287 pages and in vol. III. 715 pages of Tigre songs amounting to 14,000 lines on 530 pages of Tigre text (with translation and commentary altogether over 2,300 pages). This must therefore constitute the most important literary collection of the old Tigre culture. I doubt very much whether it would be possible today to dig up such a treasure trove.

This material was collected by Littmann with the help of his assistant and main informant Naffā' wad 'Ħtmān (ነፋዕ፡ ወድ፡ ዕትማን፡) (born in the year when 'Azzāzi was killed, i.e, 1882 – and missing, presumed dead in 1909 during the voyage from Napels to Catania) and the Swedish pastor Richard Sundström (1869–1919). Littmann has set both collaborators a lasting monument in his relevant articles in the volume *Ein Jahrhundert Orientalistik* (Wiesbaden 1955). The importance of Sundström's contributions can hardly be overestimated because quite a number of the texts published by Littmann in the *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia* were originally collected by Sundström.

## B. Stagnation

In the period following those early days Tigre was not able to continue on its path to becoming a literary language. With the establishment of the *Colonia Eritrea* in 1890 the Italian colonial authorities to some extent promoted and were more inclined to accept Tigrinya and Arabic as the languages of the native population. Later the Protestant Swedish missionaries were expelled from the country but were able to return in 1941 and have continued their work. The British colonial authorities promoted Tigrinya which after the union with Ethiopia (1961) was replaced by Amharic, the official language in school and public life.

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[10]  These English translations have been rendered into German in his *Abessinische Klagelieder – Alte Weisen in neuer Gewandung* (Tübingen 1949).

In spite of all this, off and on some Tigre publications did see the light of day
during these decades. However, one cannot characterize this period in any other way
but as a time of decline for Tigre literature.

One must not forget that since Littmann's fundamental linguistic contributions
many grammatical papers on Tigre have been published. All these publications can-
not be mentioned within the scope of this article. In the European research papers
one does however find occasionally authentic Tigre texts, like Wolf Leslau: Tigre
games,[11] Shlomo Raz: Dəgəm Ḥabāb ʿAd Həbtes,[12] A.C. Beaton: Tigri folk tales
(digam)[13] and Maria Höfner: Überlieferungen bei Tigrē-Stämmen, I. ʿAd Šēk.[14]

One can argue about when the ascent of Tigre literature began, on the one hand
with the recognition of Tigre as one of the official languages in which primers and
other educational literature was created, due to the EPLF having introduced ver-
nacular education in the "liberated" areas in Erythrea, see the next paragraph. On the
other hand Tigre's ascent can also be seen as starting with its acceptance of Tigre
amongst the languages used for writing during the Därg period (1974–1991). In
1987, with the reorganisation of the State of Ethiopia, even an Autonomous Region
was established. The promotion of minority languages is a result of the communist
ideology of the Därg which has also been adopted by the successor parties, i.e. the
EPLF (later PFDJ) in Erythrea and the TPLF (resp. EPRDF) in Ethiopia.

The extent of Tigre literature from this time is not yet known, but cf. ናይ
ፖሊቲካ ምህሮ: *Nāy politikā məhro, kāl'āy kətāb* (Addis Abäba: yä-golmassoчč
təmhərt, 1976 [ʿa.-mə. = 1983/84]).


## C. A New Beginning

A new beginning in the development of Tigre literature came about with the recog-
nition of Tigre as a national language by the EPLF in Erythrea. In the "liberated"
regions schools were founded where self-published school-books in Tigre were used.
Sadly we have no bibliography of the publications at this time. Keep also in mind
that it was by no means a matter of course that Tigre was to become the school lan-

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[11]  Wolf Leslau: Tigre games, *Rassegna di studi etiopici*, 17 (1961), pp. 61–68.

[12]  Shlomo Raz: Dəgəm Ḥabāb ʿAd Həbtes, *Israel Oriental Studies*, 12 (1992), pp. 193–233.

[13]  A.C. Beaton: Tigri folk tales (digam), *Sudan Notes & Records*, 18 (1947), pp. 146–150. Tigri is no
printing error for Tigre as Leslau (*Annotated Bibliography* 1965, p. 158) seems to assume, because
this spelling occurs six times in the article. The fables which were collected for the first time in Su-
dan could dialectologically be of greater use if the transcription had been more precise (e.g. "adeq"
for *adəg* 'donkey', "hatɛ" for *ḥatte* 'one'). The folkloristic value is diminished by the fact that the in-
formant, a certain Beni Amer Sheikh, knew Aesop's fables in an Arabic translation.

[14]  Maria Höfner: Überlieferungen bei Tigrē-Stämmen, I. ʿAd Šēk, *Annales d'Éthiopie*, 4 (1961),
pp. 181–203.

guage, and the ELF was against it at the time.[15] The reason was an arabophile attitude, which lead to a confused entanglement of loyalties vis-à-vis one's religious and linguistic community. Thankfully this attitude seems to have been for the most part overcome nowadays.

Apart from school books (like e.g. **ትግሬ ፫ [ሳልሳ]ይ ፈስል** *Təgre – sālsāy fasəl*, 1982) a series of other books and pamphlets were published, like ʿAli ʿAbba [l. ʿAbbe] Maḥammad (**ዐሊ ዐበ መሐመድ**): **ምን ምድርና ተወዝ ይእንብል!** *Mən mədərnā tawaz yə-ʾənbəl!* 'We won't give up our country!' (1987), a bilingual (Tigre-Tigrinya) cartoon: **መርባት ዓጀ እግል አቅስንቱ!** *Marbāt ʿāǧǧe ʾəgəl ʾāḳsən-tu!* 'I will take revenge for my country' (underground publication: n.d. [? late 1980s]).

With Erythrea becoming independent in 1991 and after a referendum in 1993 respectively, this development has continued. From 1995 until 2001 the newspaper *Galad* (**ገለድ**)[16] and other publications have appeared. Also new school-books are being produced.

## D. Tigre – A Genuine Literary Language

What could be considered as the third phase in the development of Tigre literature I see merely as the result and continued policy of promoting Tigre as a school and literary language. Of course, this must be seen in the context of the Erythrean nation-building and linguistic policy which affects not only Tigrinya and Tigre but also a number of smaller languages that are planned and being implemented as school and literary languages.

From among the school books – of which many also contain ethnographic texts – I shall only mention a few of linguistic or general interest:

**ህግያ ትግሬ እግል ሳልሳይ ፈስል፤** *Həgyā Təgre ʾəgəl sālsāy fasəl* 'Tigre language for the third class, Asmara ³1997,

**ህግያ ትግሬ እግል ራብዓይ ፈስል፤** *Həgyā Təgre ʾəgəl rābʿāy fasəl* 'Tigre language for the fourth class, Asmara ³1997,

**ዕሉም እግል** 5[**ሓምሳ**]**ይ ፈስል፤** *ʿIlum ʾəgəl 5 [ḥāmsā]y fasəl* 'Science for the fifth class, Asmara 2008.

Today, at the beginning of the new millennium, as far as Tigre is concerned, a new stage in the normalization of the language has been reached with the increased publication of Tigre books.

The publication of a monolingual Tigre dictionary by Musā ʾĀron (2005) was introduced to the public at the end of 2005 (v. *Ḥaddās ʾErtrā*, 29 taḥsas 2005) in an

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[15]   V. Ghirmai Negash: *History* 1999, p. 58.
[16]   There is also a missionary journal: **ጸሓይ በርሀት፤** *Ṣaḥay barhat*, e.g. 1 (1996), 3 (1997), 7 (1998).

event (in the addaraš Dändän), in which Musa also received an honorary gift from Präzidänt Isayəyas. I shall have more to say about Musā ʾĀron's work below.

A further significant milestone in the development of Tigre literature is the novel *ʾƎmanini* 'Trust (f.) me!' by Maḥammad-ʿAli Ibrāhim (**መሐመድ ዐሊ ኢብራሂም፥**), published in 2007. It is seen as the first non-religious and non-folkloristic novel. We were delighted to be able to welcome Maḥammad-ʿAli at our conference. I should also mention his **ከዋክብ** *Kawākəb* 'Stars' (2006), which is dedicated to the description and preservation of folkloric traditions; and his story books are used in schools: **መነቲት፥ አወላይ ክፋል እግል ሳልሳይ ፈስል፥** *Manattit – ʾawalāy kəffāl ʾəgəl sālsāy fasəl,* **መነቲት፥ ካልአይ ክፋል እግል ራብዓይ ወሓምሳይ ፈስል** *Manattit – kāl'āy kəffāl ʾəgəl rāb'āy wa-ḥāmsāy fasəl,* 'Twins – part II for the 4th and 5th classes' (2000). He is also the author of two tracts: **ስለል በርሀት፥** *Səlal barhat* 'The path of light' (2007) and **ሰሚረ ወዐሊ፥** *Samira wa-ʿAli* 'S. and A.' (2007).

To further the expansion of literary faculties, great importance is given to the language tutoring of young speakers. This is manifested by the endeavours of many writers to produce good texts for pupils and students. The collection of stories by Dassāle Barakat (**ደሳሌ በረኸት፥**): **እት ቆልነ ንስበት፥ ወብዕድ አድጋማት እግል አጀኒት፥** *ʾƎt kolna nəsbat – wa-bə'əd ʾadgāmāt ʾəgəl ʾağannit* 'Let us keep our promise – and other stories for children' (2004) is part of this effort.

Maḥammad-Səʾid ʿUsmān (**መሐመድስዒድ ዑስማን**) with his collection of poems **ትንከር – ክምኩም አሽዓር ትግራይት** *Tənkar – kəmkum ʾašʿār Təgrāyət* 'Flow – selected poems in Tigre' (2007) can be seen as the first modern lyric poet.

Maḥammad-Səʾid ʿUsmān and Maḥammad-ʾƎdris Maḥammad (**መሐመድ-ስዒድ ዑስማን ወመሐመድ-እድሪስ መሐመድ**) are the authors of a collection of stories: **እፈ ʾƎfa** 'Butter churner's lid' (Asmara 2007).

The expressivity of Tigre shows itself in the description of military and political events, as in the translation by Nāyəzgi Waldu (wad Haygat) (**ናይዝጊ ወልዱ፥ (ወድ ሀይገት፥**)) of the novel **ኤርትራውያን ኮማንዶ – ቅያ** 18 **ደቓይቛ፥** *ʾErtrawəyan komando – kəyya 18 [ʿassärtäw šämmontä] däkayək* 'Eritrean Commando – the miracle of 18 minutes' by Sälomon Dərar (**ሰሎሞን ድራር፥**). In Tigre its title is **ኤርትርይን ኮማንዶ – ዓጃይብ** 18 **ደቂቀት፥** *ʾEratrəyan komāndo – ʿağāyəb 18 [ʿasər wa-samān] dakikat.* The original publication by Sälomon Dərar came out in 1996, its translation by Nāyəzgi Waldu in 2002.

Another important book written by ʾAläm-säggäd Täsfay (**አለምስገድ ተስፋይ፥**)[17] in Tigrinya, is the historical work *ʾAy-nəffälalä – ʾErtra 1941–1950* (**አይንፈላላ-ኤርትራ** 1941–1950) 'We will not allow ourselves to be separated – Eritrea 1941–1950' (Asmara s.d. (2001); [v,] xv, 609 pp.). This voluminous historical dissertation was

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[17] According to the Tigre orthography this name is spelled **አለምስገድ ተስፋይ፥** with initial **አ**. This character (of the first order) has to be read nowadays as *ʾä*.

translated by ʾĀdəm Sāləḥ ʾAbu-ḥariš (**ኣድም ሳልሕ ኣቡሐሪሽ፡**), ʿUmar Maḥammad ʿAli ʾAbib (**ዑመር መሐመድ ዐሊ ኣቢብ**) and Maḥammad-ʾƎdris Maḥammad (**መሐመድእድሪስ መሐመድ**) into Tigre: **ኢንትፈናቴ፡ ኤርትርያ** 1941–1950 *ʾI-nətfanāte ʾErətəryā 1941–1950* (Asmara 2007, 575 pp.).

The publishing of the new newspaper *ʾEratrəya Ḥaddās* (**ኣረትርያ ሐዳስ፡**) in 2008 several years after *Galad* (1995–2001) having folded must be seen as being of great importance. This newspaper is now also accessible on the internet, which enables us to read up-to-date cultural and political texts in our Tigre-learners' course which I hold in this Department (Seminar für Semitistik und Arabistik).

Furthermore I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the first home-grown Erythrean Tigre-conferences were recently held, namely the "First Assessment Symposium on Art Works in the Tigre Language" (19.–21.12.2008) (**መሕበር ጎማት ጌማም ፈን ህግያ ትግራይት** *Maḥbar gomāt gemām fan həgyā Təgrāyət*) and the 1st Conference for Standard-Tigre (1 **ይ ዋዕላ ትግራይት ዕግል፡** *1 [ḳadāmā]y wāʿla Təgrāyət ʿəggəl*) held a few days before (v. title page in *ʾEratrəya Ḥaddās*, 2.1.2009).

The importance of Littmann for Tigre studies was emphasized at the *III International Enno Littmann Conference* held in April 2009 in Berlin. His outstanding contribution was also fully acknowledged,[18] in a volume published by Musā ʾĀron und Dässale Bäräkät[19] in 2010: **ሜራስ – ምን ዓዳት ገበይል ትግሬ ለትሐየበት ዝሕረት፡** *Merās – mən ʿādāt gabayəl Təgre la-thayabat zəḥrat* 'Inheritance – treasure collected from the traditions of the Tigre tribes' (Asmara 2010; xxii, 533 pp.). In this work a certain number of stories that Littmann had published in his *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia* were offered in a revised version. By comparing the old and new versions of the stories the modifications in the orthography reveal themselves clearly, as is shown by the story **ድግም እናስ ወኣርዌ ወወድ ሐሺል፡** *Dəgəm ʾənās wa-ʾarwē wa-wad-ḥašil* 'Story of a man and a snake and a fox' (Littmann: *Tales* 1910, p. 5, and Musa ʾĀron / Dassālē Barakat: *Mērās* 2010, p. 48). Consonantal length is marked in the *Tales* by the Arabic *šaddah* sign about the letter (here indicated by underlining), but in the volume *Mērās* length is marked by a postpositioned apostrophe.

| 1910 | 2010 |
| --- | --- |
| **ኣርዌ፡ ዐርጋ፡ እቱ።** | **ኣርዌ ዐርገ እቱ'።** |
| **ኣስክ፡ ረኣሱ፡ ትለዋላ፡ እቱ።** | **ኣስክ ረኣሱ ትለዋለ እቱ'።** |
| **ወኣርዌ፡ ኣባ፡ እሉ።** | **ደኣም ለኣርዌ ኣበ እሉ።** |
| **ደኣም፡ እባ፡ ቀትሎ፡ ኢረክባ።** | **ምናተ እበ' ቀት'ሎ' ኢረክበ።** |

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Of course, it would be much more interesting to analyse the stylistic changes the language has undergone in the past one hundred years. This would be a rewarding task for a Tigre scholar.

Further modern publications are:

A reading book for children: **አድጋማት በዲር እግል ግም ሐዲስ**፡ *ʾAdgāmāt badir ʾəgəl gəm ḥadis* (Asmara 2007), and its translation published as *Tigre Old Stories for New Readers* (Asmara 2007).

Constitution of Eritrea (**ደስቱር ኤርትርያ**፡ *Dastur ʾErətəryā*, Asmara 1997), which was however never implemented. There are also translations of it in other Erythraean languages, e.g. in Tigrinya **ቅዋም ኤርትራ**፡ *Ḳəwam ʾErtra*, n.d. [ca. 1997].

An English textbook by Yämanä Gərma-Ṣəyon (**የማነ ግርማጽዮን**፡), which was translated from Tigrinya into Tigre by Teka Abdelged (**ተኸአ ዓብደልገድ**): **እንግሊዝ እብ ኖስካ መትምሃር**፡ *ʾƎngliz ʾəb noskā matməhār / English Teach Yourself* (Asmara 2000).

An English Grammar book, ed. by Dessale Berekhet (**ደሳሌ በረኸት**): *Let's Learn English /* **እንግሊዝ ንትዐለም** *ʾƎngliz nətʿallam* – English-Tigre / **እንግሊዝ ትግሬ** *ʾƎngliz-Təgre* (2001).

A book of healthscare by Maḥammad-Səʿid ʿUsmān (**መሐመድ-ስዒድ ዑስማን**): **አጥራፍዬ ወኖሼ**፡ *ʾAṭrāfye wa-nošše* 'My World and Me' (Asmara 2003), used as a reading book in schools for class 2.

A cartoon by Mikiʾel ʾAdonāy and Muse ʾAsgädom (**ሚኪኤል አዶናይ / ሙሴ አስገዶም**), which was translated into Tigre by ʾIyob Fəssəha-Ṣəyon (**ኢዮብ ፍስሓጽዮን**): 6ይ **ወራር እብ ካርቱን**፡ *6[sādsā]y warār ʾəb kārtun* 'The 6th offensive in the cartoon' (2007).

A publication by the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare (**ወዛረት ዓመል ወመራዓየት እጅትማዕዮት** *Wazārat ʿamal*[20] *wa-marāʿāyat ʾəǧtəmāʾəyot*[21]) dealing with human rights: **እትፋቕየት እብ ሰበት ሐቅጅና** *ʾƎttəfāḳəyat ʾəb sabbat ḥaḳ ǧənā* 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1996).

Tigre grammar: **ጀህ – መምሬሕ ትገራይት-ዕግል እት ኤማት-አኽባር**፡ *Ǧaḥ: mamreḥ Təgrāyət-ʾəggəl ʾət ʾemāt-ʾakbār* 'Excellence[22] – guide for standard Tigre' (2008).

English-Tigre dictionary by Nasser Anur Kalifa (**ናስር አኑር ከሊፋ**): **ጀህራይ – ክብት-ቃላት እንግሊዚ-ትግሬ** – 7,000 **ከሊማት**፡ *Ǧaḥrāy – kəbət-ḳālāt ʾƎngliz-Təgre – 7,000 kalimāt / Jahray – dictionary English-Tigre – 7,000 words* (2010).

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[20]  For the written form **ዓመል** *ʿāmal* the transcription ʿamal (**ዐመል**) is given.

[21]  *ʾƎǧtəmāʿəyot* is the tigrefied form of Arabic *(ʾi)ǧtimāʿiyat^{un}*.

[22]  Literally Northpole Star.

Some other publications:

ʿAli ʿAbbe (**ዐሊ ዐቤ**): **ለሽርዑን ሽፍ**: *La-šǝrʿun šaf* 'The crazy war' (Asmara 2009).

Maḥammad ʿAbdalla Sǝlemān (**መሐመድ ዐብደለ ስሏማን**): **ሐዮት: ክምኩም ቅሰስ ወአሽዓር**: *Ḥayot – kǝmkum ḳǝsas wa-ʾašʿār* 'Life – collected stories and poems' (2003).

Maḥammad ʿAli ʾIbrāhim (**መሐመድ ዐሊ ኢብራሂም**): **ኖር**: *Nor* 'Light' (2002).

Among the very few texts which were translated into English are three poems by Paulos Netabay (Ṗāwlos Nattābāy), Mussa Mohammed Adem and Mohammed Said Osman (v. Cantalupo / Ghirmai Negash: *Who Needs* 2005, pp. 81–96, 137):

**ጳውሎስ ነታባይ: ንዘከር** *Nǝzzakkar* / Remembering Sahel,

**ሙሳ መሐመድ አደም: ኢልትደከል** *ʾI-lǝtdakkal* / The invincible,

**መሐመድ ስዒድ ኡስማን: ጁከት!** *Ǧukat* / Juket.

There are stage plays too in the Tigre language, which used to be performed in the soldiers' camps during the conflict. After Erythrea achieved independence the National Theatre in Asmara was also used for performances (v. Matzke: *En-gendering* 2003, *Trying* 2000). The plays **መንጌል** *Mangel* 'The sin' / **አስራር ንዳል** *ʾAsrār Nǝdāl* 'Secrets of the struggle' by Maḥammad ʾAssanāy (**መሐመድ አሰናይ**) have not yet been published.

If we add to all this the further communication channels of radio and television[23] we must say that Tigre has in recent years gained a position that was formerly unthinkable. The favourite Erythrean TV series **ቤት ምን ዐርሽ**: *Bet mǝn ʿarǝš* (which can approximately be translated as 'An ideal home') with dozens of episodes should be mentioned here. Another is called **እምቤዕ እት ዕድራ**: *ʾẼmbeʿ ʾǝt ʿǝdrā* 'Tears on its own illness'.

Tigre is now a fully normalized valid literary language which has the status of a quasi-national language of Erythrea – besides Tigrinya.[24]

Apart from that there is also a small output from an exiled press: v. **ክሽቦ ወለት አንሳይት – መምርሕ መደርሲን መጅተመዕ**: *Kǝšbo walat ʾansāyǝt – mamrǝḥ madarrǝsin maǧtama*ʿ 'Circumcision of women – a guide for community teachers' (Norway n.d.).

## E. Musa ʾAron

Musa ʾAron (**ሙሳ አሮን**:), born in 1930, is one of Erythrea's best-known writers who holds a special place in the history of Tigrinya literature (e.g. Ghirmai 1999, pp. 153–159). Not only is he the author of two primers written in 1965, that are often reprinted (²1968, ⁴1971), and published in two volumes (**ጕደና ትምህርቲ**: *Godäna*

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[23]  Friendly personal communication by Sālǝḥ Maḥmud Idris (Asmara).

[24]  With Arabic and English as two official languages, the centres of which lie outside the country, however. The Arabic speaking tribe of the Rashaida, who immigrated into Erythrea in the 19th century, is irrelevant in this context.

*təmhərti* 'The Path of Learning'), but he is also the translator of Daniel Defoe's novel: *Robinson Crusoe* which he translated in 1957 and which has been extremely popular in Erythrea as proven by a number of reprints, the latest in 2003.

Musa ʾAron became famous because of his two novels of which the second can be seen as a continuation of the first: **ወርቅሃ – ልብወለድ፣** *Wårḳəha – ləbb-wålläd* 'W. – Novel' (1958 ʿa.-mə. [= 1965], 2003) and **እምባፍራሽ – ልብ ወለድ፣** *ʾǦmbafraš – ləbb wålläd* 'A. – Novel' (1959 ʿa-.mə. [= 1966]).

His Bible Dictionary also proved very important (**ናይ መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ መዝገበ ቃላት፣** *Nay mäṣḥaf ḳəddus mäzgäbä-ḳalat,* [Toronto] 1996, 537 pp.); it was composed on the basis of the Amharic (*Yä-mäṣḥaf ḳəddus mäzgäbä-ḳalat,* Toronto 1996).

Musā ʾĀron[25] rendered great services to Tigre by publishing three works on the language itself, two of them quite voluminous. In his **መዝገበ ቃላት ስማት ኤርትራውያን ትግርኛን ትግሬን፣** *Mäzgäbä-ḳalat səmat ʾertərawəyan Təgrəñña-n Təgre-n* 'Dictionary of Tigrinya and Tigre Personal Names' (Toronto 1994) he analyses more than 300 closely printed pages the male and female personal names used in Tigrinya and Tigre. He comments on their meanings and if appropriate on their Hebrew or Arabic etymologies. In his shorter work **ጽሕፍቲ ቛንቛ ትግረ፣ ብትግርኛ ጌርካ ቛንቛ ትግረ ምንባብን ምጽሓፍን፣** *Ṣəhəfti ḳʷankʷa Təgrä – bə-Təgrəñña gerka ḳʷankʷa Təgrä mənbab-ən məṣḥaf-ən* 'Written Tigre – how to read and write Tigre consistent with Tigrinya' (2005) he deals with Tigre orthography, a subject still very much under discussion.

Musā ʾĀron's third work on Tigre is the big monolingual Dictionary of Tigre (2005): **ክብት-ቃላት ህግያ ትግሬ፣** *Kəbət-ḳālāt həgyā Təgre* 'Dictionary of the Tigre Language'. It must be compared to the big monolingual dictionary of Tigrinya by Täkkəʾä Täsfay (**ተክአ ተስፋይ፣**): **ዘመናዊ መዝገበ ቃላት ትግርኛ፣** *Zämänawi mäzgäbä-ḳalat bə-Təgrəñña* 'Modern Monolingual Dictionary of Tigrinya' (1999). In this respect Tigre has now drawn level with Tigrinya. This dictionary is, as is rightly said in the preface: **ናይ መአንበቲ ለገአ ዝቡዕን ክብት ቃላት ትግሬ እብ ትግሬ፣** *nāy maʾanbati laga'a zəbbun kəbət-ḳālāt Təgre ʾəb Təgre* 'The First Modern Monolingual Dictionary of Tigre'. But the designation as **ናይ መጀመርታ መዝገበ ቃላት ቛንቛ ትግሬ፣** *nāy maǧam-martā mazgaba-ḳālāt ḳʷānḳʷā Təgre* 'the first monolingual Tigre dictionary' in the Tigre newspaper (of 29 taḥsās 2005) is the result of the usual journalistic shoddiness: the first voluminous Tigre dictionary was published in Mainz in 1962 (with the first fascicles in the 50's, starting in 1956)[26] by Enno Littmann and Maria Höfner, the *Wörterbuch der Tigre-Sprache – Tigrē-Deutsch-Englisch.* The question now arises as to what extent it was used by Musā ʾĀron. Although it is cited in the list of **ለተሐሶʾሰ**

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[25]  This is the Tigre form of the name.

[26]  V. the reviews of 1st (1956), 2nd (1957) und 3rd (1957) fascicles by V. Christian in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes,* 54 (1957), pp. 264–267, 55 (1959), pp. 168–170, and 58 (1962), pp. 214–216.

ክቱባት፡ *la-taḥassasa kətubāt* 'works used' the way it is quoted creates some doubt as to the usage since the title is given wrongly, i.e. in English as "Tigre-German-English Vocabulary" thus underestimating by his choice of words the rank of this work, it has got the wrong place of publication (the vague statement "Germany" is negligent) and Maria Höfner's name was mutilated into Maria "Hoffner". As for Littmann's texts, they seem to have been used only selectively. This is suggested by the fact that only the first two volumes of the five volume *Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia* are cited and no further publications by western scholars. The lack of literature used for compiling can possibly be explained by the dearth of available books, the scholar's advance age (the writer and man of letters died on the 8th of September 2011)[27] and the pressure exerted on him to produce the dictionary quickly.

For a comparison of both dictionaries let us choose randomly the entries of the root *bašla*. Again in the dictionary by Littmann / Höfner consonantal length is marked by a stroke beneath rather than above the letter.

| Littmann / Höfner: *WTS* | Musā ʾĀron: *KQHT* |
|---|---|
| በሸለ *0*₁ kochen (intr.), reif werden, heranwachsen – *to boil (v.i.), to ripen (v.i.), to grow up* SO; St S 107, 16 | በሸለ ቃ.ው፤ (ብበሸለት፡ በሸ'ል፡ ልብሸል፡) |
| *Inf.* ብሸሎ N zu G. | 1. ነብራ ጥሪት እት እሳት እንዶ ትከሬ'ት ትጨዮፌት፡ ትቀመ'ደት፡ |
| ብሻሌ Reife – *ripeness* | ፈልሐት፡ ወለተ. ወክእና' እግል ብልዐት |
| *pass. Inf.* ብሻል Mäns 12, 17f. | ትዳሌት፡፡ |
| *Part. a[ct].* (ባሸለ), f. ባሸለት P III, L. 672, 8 | 2. እክል ወፍሬ እት ለዐጨዮ ለለትሐዜ |
| *Part. p[ass].* ብሹል, f. ብሸል(ት) | ወክድ ክልል ወአዳ'የ ክም በልዐ'የ ገአ፡፡ |
| 1. gekocht – *boiled* P. III, L. 461, 4; | 3. እት ለናይ መከለ'ሲ. ደረጀ'ት በጽሐ፡ |
| ቀይሕ፡ ብሹል scharlachrot – *scarlet colour* | ተመ'፡ (እግል አዳ'ም ዶል ብጽሕነ'ቱ፡ |
| Off 17, 4 | እግል ለገአ ጋር ዶል ነፍዐቱ)፡፡ |
| 2. besonnen – *considerate* Lt | ባሸል፤ |
| አብሸለ *A*₁ kochen (tr.), ein Mahl zubereiten, (das Feld) bestellen – *to boil (v.t.), to prepare a meal, to* | 1. እግል ትትበለ'ዕ ለትዳሌት ነብራ |
| *till a field* P III, L. 6, 10; L. 74, 3; SO; Munz. | (ለትጨዮፌ፡ ለትቀመ'ደ፡ ለፈልልሐ ወለተ. |
| Inf. አብሸሎት FM 119, 7f. | ጅንስ ነብራ)፡፡ |
| *Part. a[ct].* መብሸለ, መብሸላይ, | 2. ህግያሁ፡ መባልሱ፡ ወሐሳቡ ዐሙ'ር |
| f. መብሸላይት Koch, Köchin – *cook (male and* | ለገአ አዳ'ም፤ ባሸል፡፡ |
| | ብሹል፤ አስክ በሸ'ል እት ዐጨዮ ወብቅሉ |
| | ለለትሐዜ ወክድ ለክለእ እክል ዋክ |

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27 V. his obituary (with picture) in the Tigre newspaper *ʾEratrəya ḥaddās* of 14 saptambar 2011 (4th year, no. 37), p. 1, and in the Tigrinya newspaper *Ḥaddas ʾErtra* of 9 Mäskäräm 2011 (21st year, no. 9), p. 1.

*female)* P I, 81, 4; N zu G.

**ትበሸለ** *T₂ pass.* P III, L. 80, 14

**አትባሸለ** *AT₃* kochen (tr.) – *to cook (v.t.)*
P I, 223, 15

**አተብሸለ** *ATA₁ caus. zu A₁* P I, 33, 22

S. **መብሸል** *n. instr.* N zu G.

**በሸላት** das zum Bierbrauen zubereitete Getrei-
de – *corn prepared for brewing beer* FM 120, 14
u. 17 (vgl. P II 228f.)

[G., Tña, Amh. **በሰለ** kochen (intr.)]

ፍሬ።

መብሸላይ፤ ነብራ ለለበሸእል ፡ [28] ነብራ
ለለትዳሌ።

ምኔት አን. መብሸላይት።

ትበሸእለ፤ ክም በሸእል ገአ።

አብሸለ፤ ክም በሸእል ወደ።

ምኔት አን. አብሸለት።

This entry in Musā ʾĀron's Dictionary will be transcribed and translated.

**በሸለ** *bašla* Verb (*bəšlat, baššəl, ləbšal*)

1   *nabrā ṭərit ʾət ʾəsāt ʾəndo təkarret təčefet, təkammadat, falḥat wa-la-ta.*[29] *wa-kə'ənnā ʾəgəl bəl'at tədālet.* 'Fresh food was cooked, roasted or boiled over the fire (lit.: put on the fire) etc. and was prepared in this way for consumption.'

2   *ʾəkəl wa-fəre ʾət la-'əčayu la-latḥaze wakəd kal'a wa-'addām kəm ballə'o ga'a.* 'Grain and fruit on its tree have taken the appropriate (lit.: desired) time and they ripen that one can eat them.'

3   *ʾət la-nāy makallasi darağat baṣḥa, tamma (ʾəgəl ʾaddām dol bəṣḥənnatu, ʾəgəl la-ga'a gār dol naf'atu).* 'It has reached the state of completion, it is completed (i.e. maturity for man, period of usage for a thing).'

**ባሸል** *bāšəl*

1   *ʾəgəl tətballa' la-tədālet nabrā (la-təčefa, la-təkammada, la-falḥa wa-la-ta. ğənəs nabrā).* 'Food that was prepared for eating (a meal that was cooked, roasted or boiled etc.).'

2   *həgyāhu, mabāləsu wa-ḥasābu 'əmmur la-ga'a 'addām, bāšəl.* 'A human being whose language, speech and thoughts are fully developped; mature.'

**ብሹል** *bəšul*

*ʾasək baššəl ʾət 'əčayu wa-bəklu la-latḥaze wakəd la-kallə' ʾəkəl wok fəre.* 'Grain or fruit that remain on its tree or its plant for the appropriate time up to ripeness (lit.: until they ripen).'

**መብሸላይ** *mabšəlāy*

*nabrā la-labaššəl, nabrā la-latdāle.* 'Someone who cooks food; someone who prepares food.'

*mənet ʾan.*[30] **መብሸላይት** *mabšəlāyət* fem.

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[28]   Corrected from **ለለብሸእል** *la-labəššəl.* Without the relative pronoun the corresponding Tigrinya form would be (A₁) **የብስእል** *yäbəssəl.*

[29]   Abbreviation for **ወለተሉ** *wa-la-talle* 'etc. (lit.: and what follows)'.

**ትበሸእለ** *təbaššala*

  *kəm baššəl gaʾa*. 'It was cooked (lit.: it became that it was cooked).'

**አብሸለ** *ʾabšala*

  *kəm baššəl wada*. 'He made that it cooked.'

  *mənet ʾan.* **አብሸለት** *ʾabšalat* fem.

I do not want to compare the two articles systematically, but let me point out that the threefold meanings, that are closely related to each other, of "to cook (intr.); become ripe; grow up or into" are also expressed in the Tigre version. The great advantage of the Littmann / Höfner dictionary lies in the references given which allows the reader to check the lemmata in their original context.

The impression that Littmann / Höfner contain more lexemes is confirmed when comparing the words whose first two consonants are BŠ in both dictionaries.

| Littmann / Höfner | | Musā ʾĀron |
|---|---|---|
| ብሽ | በሺሽ | በሸኣረ |
| ባሻ u. ባሻይ | ቦሸት | ቡ·ሽ |
| ቦሽ (?) | ቤሽትያይ | ባሻረ |
| በሽሐ | ብሽክል ወዳ | ባሻኣይ |
| በሻም | ባሸኮክ | ባሸኮክ |
| ባሸማ | በሸውሸው ቤለ | ብሽክሌታ |
| በሸረ | ባሸዐ | ቦሻይ |
| ባሹC | ቦሻይ | |

When comparing these two dictionaries it is important to remember who the target readers were. Littmann / Höfner's dictionary is primarily directed at linguists and language scholars. But the fact that an English translation was added and the Fidäl alphabet was used shows that they also kept a potential Tigre readership in mind. Be aware that had they used only a transcription for Tigre rather than the Fidäl alphabet their printing costs could have been dramatically reduced.

In contrast to this Musā ʾĀron addresses exclusively Tigre speakers and Erythreans whom he wants to familiarize with the common genre of the reference dictionary, something that has hitherto been unknown for their language. Also, it can be used as a spelling dictionary although it seems that not all questions concerning a unified orthography have been answered. In addition his dictionary wants to increase the expressivity of the Tigre language. For the first time the definitions of certain words are formulated, as with the simple explication of **ትበሸእለ፤ ክም በሸእል ገኣ፡** *təbaššala: kəm baššəl gaʾa* 'to cook (intr.) / be cooked: becoming so that it can cook/be cooked'. Other entries are drafted as if for an encyclopaedic dictionary or an encyclopaedia; see his entries for **ከልብ፡** *kaləb* 'dog', **ካንጋሩ፡** *kāngāru* or **ካታሎግ፡** *kātālog* (with reference

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30   Abbreviation for **ምኔት አንስ** *mənet ʾanəs*.

to Greek *kātálogos*), and the list of geographic names, list of camel names, list of sword names and list of star names in the appendix. All this is of great importance to Tigre speakers and scholars of Tigre, while others will be more interested in the choice of the orthographic representation, the dialectal forms mentioned and the stylistic remarks.

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*Tigre abstract*
ዐቦት ክቱብ ትግራይት

ታሪክ ዐቦት ክቱብ ትግራይት እብለን ለተልየ ሐምስ መራሕል ክም ሐልፈ እንዴ አትሐጨርከ
እጋል ልትሸረሕ ቀድር። ሀ) ናይ ስዊድን ወንጌላይት ሚስዮን ወአሰር ለትሌተ ናይ ፈረንስ ሚስዮን
ላዛሪስት እጋል አስባብ ክድመት ዴን ክስታን እንዴ ልብሎ ዲብ ተርጀመት ክታብ ቅዱስ
ወለመስሉ ጋራት ለልትነያ እቡ ንዛም ክታበት አምበተው። እሎም ለእጋል ዐቦት ክቱብ ትግራይት
ለከድመው ናይ ስልፍ ጀሃት ቆም። ለሰልፍ ለትከተበ ክታብ፡ ወንጌል፡ (ባሀለቱ ብሽራት፡)
ክምክተበዩ፡ ቅዱስ ማርቆስ፡ ለልብል ቱ። ምን ክታብ ቅዱስ ወዕዶ እቡ ለመስል አክተበት ዴን
ክስታን ወኬነም ክም አክተበት ሕሩፍ፡ አድጋግነት፡ ዓዶታት ወለመድ ለመስል ለትፈነታ
አክተበት ከትበው። ለ) ለአግደ እጋል ዓዳት ወለመድ ሽዐ ትግሬ ለሸርሐ ክተብ እብ ኤኖ ሊትማን
ቱ ለትጀምዐ። ኤኖ ሊትማን ምን ሰነት 1910–1915 ዲብ ላይደን ሐምስ አክተበት አጥበዐ። ምን
እሎም ለክልኣት ቀዳምያም (1910) ለመድ፡ አድጋግነት፡ አስማይ፡ ወሄዐ ሽዐብ ትግሬ እብ
ትግራይት ወተርጀመት እንግሊዚ ለሸርሓ ገብስ እት ህለው ለሰለስ ሐረየም ህዬ ሐልየት ገባይል
ትግሬ እብ ትግራይት ወተርጀመት እብ ሂገ ጀርመን ክምክሞ። ሐ) ዲብ ሰነት 1890 ምስል
መትአምባት መስተዐመረት ኤርትር ጥልያን እጋል ሀገጊት ትግርኛ ወዐረቢ ገጽ ለዐል ክቡ
አበለወን ወሀገጊትለ ውላድ ዐድ ክም ህተን ሌጣ ተን ለነስእ ረአይ አትጠወረው። ወለ እት ክእና
ለተመስል ሐለትመ፡ እትለን ዐስሮታት ሰኖታት እለንምን ዶል እት ዶል ለልትሻበዐ አክተበት
ትግራይት ትጠብዐ። ምንታ እለ መርሐለት እለ ክም መርሐለት ሀርጋቴ ክተብ ትግራይት ሌጣት
እጋል ትትወሰፍ ለትቀድር። መ) ሐዳስ እምቡተት ዐቦት ክቱብ ትግራይት ምስል መትአንባት
ስያሰት ሀገጊት ጀብሀት ሽዕብየት እጋል ተሐረር ኤርትር ሐሶሴት። ናይ ጀብሀት ሽዕብየት ስያሰት
ሀገጊት ኩለን ሀገጊ ኤርትር አክል-ሕድ ላተን ሀገጊ ወጠን ወናይ አድረሰት ወመተዐላም ሀገጊ ተን
ትትብል። እብ አሳስ እለ ስያሰት እለ ምን ሰነት 1976 እንዴ አምበተ አክተበት ደረስ፡ መናሺር፡
ወዐዶድ አጅናሰ አክተበት እት ልትጠበዐ አምበተ። ረ) ሐቆ ሕርየት ዐቦት ክቱብ ትግራይት ሒለት
እንዴ ወሰከ፡ ምን አክተበት ደረስ ወኬነ ዲብ ጀራይድ፡ መጀላት፡ አድጋግ ሐጨይር፡
አክተበት ዐባዮ፡ ምን ሀገጊ ብዕድ ለተርጀመ ክተብ፡ ቀዋሚስ (ክብት-ቃላት)፡ እብ ደረጀት ወጠን
ወደረጀት ዓለም እትለ ገብስ መሓብር ጎማት ለትቀደመ ውራቅ ለከምክም አክተበት ተዐደ። ክም
ፍነገሩ ናይ እሊ ወቀይ እሊ ትግራይት ዮም እት ዐቦት ታመት ለበጽሐት ሒገ አምር-ክተብ
ወተዐሊም ጋብአት ህሌት። ሰ) ለእብ ሙሳ አሮን ለትዳለ ክብት-ቃላት ትግራይት-እንብ-ትግራይት
ዲብ እለ ወረቀት እለ ፍንቱይ እህትማም ህፀቡ ህለ። አግቡይ ቀደሞት ናይ ገሌ ምን እሊ ክብት-
ቃላት እሊ ለትነስአ ክም መሰል ለገብስ ከሊማት ምስለ እብ ኤኖ-ሊትማን ወማሪያ ሆፍነር ለትዳለ
ቃሙስ ወአግቡይ ቀደሞቱ እንድ ትቃረነ ቅዱም ህለ።

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# Notes on Tigre-Beǧa Interference

## Andrzej Zaborski (†)[*]

*Abstract*

Northern Tǝgre and Southern Beǧa have been in contact since ancient times so that the
contact and interference of their languages have been quite intensive in the Eritrean
language area or rather subarea in the frame of the larger Northwest African language
macro-area. The problem has been quite underinvestigated so far. On the one hand we
know thanks to D. Morin that there are some varieties of Tǝgre spoken by some bilin-
gual groups within the Beni Amer 'federation' which are 'oscillating' between Tǝgre and
Beǧa, but on the other hand the existing very provisional accounts by Beaton / Paul as
well as by Nakano / Tsuge present the variety of Beni Amer Tǝgre almost void of even
lexical interference with Beǧa which, however, is probably due to the very restricted
scale of the field work and to the particularities of the idiolect of Nakano's only inform-
ant. On the basis of the available publications the following elements of the morphology
can be ascribed to interference: 1. There is a similar use of copular clitics, 2. There is a
retention of the active participle *qātil* with a 'help' of both Beǧa and Arabic, 3. There is
a common singulative suffix *-ay* in Beǧa and Tǝgre. Tǝgrǝñña has been also involved
since it shares some features partially due to contact with Beǧa, i.e. the new independ-
ent personal pronouns, i.e. *nafs* + possessive suffixes in Tǝgrǝñña parallel to *bar* + pos-
sessive suffixes in Beǧa for the 2nd and 3rd persons. Beǧa, Tǝgre and Tǝgrǝñña share the
use of the definite article with nouns with possessives as well as in *status constructus*.
There is also a similar use of *nota genitivi*, i.e. *nay* which in Beǧa occurs suffixed to the
adjective following the possessor.

Beǧa and North Ethiosemitic/Afrosemitic languages have been in contact probably
since the emigration (or re-emigration?) of the Semites to North East Africa. As far
as history (which continues prehistory) is concerned, in connection with Ethiopia,
Beǧa appear, as is well known, in Ezana's inscriptions. The most important of these
inscriptions in question tells us about a treaty between Ezana and southern Beǧa after
an event which was hailed by Ezana's propaganda as a victory, in spite of the fact that
it was rather a truth treaty since Ezana mentions his great expenses granted to the

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[*]    Andrzej Zaborski died on 1 October 2014.

Beǧa and actually an endowment offered to them.[1] This treaty which most probably offered certain privileges to the Beǧa must have favored further Beǧa-Ethiosemitic contact and interference. Thanks to Arab historians and geographers, we know that, at least in the 9th century, or probably earlier, a group of Northern Ethiosemites, whose territory was called Baqulin (the name has survived in the name of a village – it is possible that this was a kind of capital), was dominated by southern Beǧa.[2] These Northern Ethiosemites were at least predecessors, perhaps even ancestors of the part of Təgre dominated as vassals by the Arabized Nabtab 'aristocratic' caste and the Hadarab Beǧa in the frame of the Beni ʿAmer or Min Amer group described in the 19th century, e.g. by Heuglin and Munzinger, in the 20th century e.g. by the Seligmans, by Nadel and Paul, and more recently (but still largely on the basis of the aforementioned sources) by Jordan Gebre-Medhin[3].

How old is the Beni ʿAmer (known also as Min Amir) tribal federation actually? I am unable to answer the question, although there has been a hypothesis about a connection with the decline of the Fung Kingdom, but there is no doubt that the 'feudal' social system of overlords, serfs and slaves originated very early, probably already in the time of Ezana. There are some traces of the influence of Beǧa in the Gəʿəz lexicon, but after many centuries of contact and interference, Southern Beǧa elements in some varieties of Təgre, and Təgre elements in Southern Beǧa must be bigger in number due to the cultural as well as communicational and not only geographical contact. As a matter of fact, there is, as I indicated already in 1999, an Eritrean Language Subarea (within the larger North East African or Ethiopian Language Area or 'Sprachbund') in which not only southern Beǧa and Təgre but also Cushitic Saho, ʿAfar, Bilen, Semitic Təgrəñña as well as Arabic (the latter as a later adstratum) and Nara and Kunama (hypothetically included in the still enigmatic Nilo-Sahara family) participate.

The problem is that all these languages are not very well known, and in many cases, the particular contacting dialects of these languages are either little known or quite unknown. In the case of Beǧa and Təgre, we have only important but not exhaustive data on Southern Beǧa collected mainly by Reinisch, and there is a very short collection of basic vocabulary with some grammar of Təgre as spoken by Beni ʿAmer written by Beaton / Paul (however amateurish) while Nakano / Tsuge (more professional but very superficial) concentrate on lexicon.[4] Other dialects of Beǧa and other dialects of Təgre remain either unknown[5] or there are only general and not

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[1]   See Zaborski 1968 and 1998.
[2]   Zaborski 1984.
[3]   Jordan Gebre-Medhin 1989, pp. 49–55.
[4]   Cf. Ullendorff 1987.
[5]   See Saleh Mahmud 2005.

very detailed descriptions, such as those by Leslau and Raz, of the Mensaʿ dialect, and the unpublished thesis on the dialect of Ḥabāb (or Riqbat) by Elias.[6] Both Beǧa and Təgre dialectology is in an initial stage.

Beaton / Paul, who had a rather good practical knowledge of the region, said that

> the Beni ʿAmer dialect of Təgre had been no less strongly (in comparison to the impact of Təgrəñña upon other dialects of Təgre) influenced by Arabic, and to a lesser extent by To Bedawie. This is especially true of the Beni ʿAmer in the vicinity of Kassala and of the Aflanda 'badana' of the Beni ʿAmer of the Red Sea District, which inhabits the coastal plain east of Agig. The dialect of the latter is unique in two respects. It contains many To Bedawie words, survivals of the Melhitkenab origin of the aristocratic caste, the Egeilab, while its Arabic accretions derive rather from the Hedjaz and the Hadramaut than from Sudan.[7]

Nakano / Tsuge hardly mention Beǧa. It is a bit surprising that the vocabularies provided by Beaton /Paul and Nakano are almost void of Beǧa loanwords. This cannot be explained by the fact that especially Nakano (Beaton / Paul only to a limited extent) tried to collect basic vocabulary which is usually resistant to a considerable degree. Actually, both vocabularies do contain many 'cultural' words and the lack of Beǧa loanwords is significant. Both informants used by Nakano / Tsuge[8] were trilingual, speaking Təgre, Beǧa and a variant of Sudanese Arabic, but out of almost one thousand lemmata only one word is indicated as being of Beǧa origin, viz. *šagāb* 'work,' but this is an Arabic loan in Beǧa, viz. *šagg/šaqq* with the Beǧa ending -*āb*. Apart from this item there may be no more than some five or six uncertain Beǧa loans while, naturally enough, there are many Arabic loanwords.

See also the chapter on Arabic loanwords in Ḥabāb Təgre in Elias' work[9] where no Beǧa lexical influence is reported. Also, the vocabulary collected by Beaton / Paul is almost void of words of Beǧa origin. It means that all these authors have dealt with the varieties of the Təgre language as spoken by some particular Beni ʿAmer groups which had very restricted contact with the Beǧa language. Those members of the Beni ʿAmer 'federation' who speak Təgre speak different varieties of this language. In other words, there is nothing like one Beni ʿAmer dialect of Təgre. That 'aristocracy' does not speak the same variety as the serfs is quite natural. Morin emphasizes that

> in the 90s (when conducting my field-work) the ʿAd Ḥa 'the cow-herders' ... of Keren were known for speaking both Mansa and Beni ʿAmer (dialect) ... depending on the degree of lan-

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[6]  Leslau 1945; Raz 1982; Elias 2005.
[7]  Beaton / Paul 1952, p. 2.
[8]  Nakano / Tsuge 1982, p. 1.
[9]  Elias 2005, p. 274–292.

guage practice, people even inside the same tribe may speak more or less different varieties of Təgre.[10]

That some varieties of Təgre spoken by some groups of the Beni ʿAmer 'federation' have been strongly influenced by Beǧa and *vice versa* has been shown firstly by Morin[11] who provided the first examples of Təgre 'mixed' with Beǧa as well as an analysis which is mainly phonological. He added that "(Beni ʿAmer) sont aujourd'hui majoritairement tigréophones et fortement influencés par la variété valorisée de Ke- ren (mansaʿ), tout en conservant de nombreux traits phonétiques et lexicaux du be- dja"[12] and a bit later

> L'enquête révèle toutefois des divergences intradialectales, qui obligent à préciser à quelle variété on fait reference lorsque l'on mentionne le Beni-amer. Une définition du corpus s'impose, face à la diversité des pratiques, par exemple de certains bilingues comme les Labad ou les Bet Awad du Sāḥil, don't le parler oscille entre le bedja et le Təgre [spacing A.Z.].[13]

Altogether Morin has identified at least three dialects of Təgre as spoken by Beni ʿAmer:[14] 1. ʿAqordat, 2. Saḥel (Tokar) and 3. Sämhar, which "are considered rural and inferior dialects of Təgre." On the other hand Saleh Mahmud says, "Habab is another name of the Sahil dialect. Similarly, Beni ʿAmer is another name of Barka dialect"[15] but the latter opinion is corrected by Morin[16] who indicates that the Beni ʿAmer dialect is spoken also in Sahil and Samhar.

The study of the Beǧa-Təgre interference requires a lot of fieldwork-based re- search. First of all, the varieties of Təgre, which must have been heavily influenced by Beǧa, should definitely be identified and systematically investigated. Obviously, we also need further study of the southern dialects of Beǧa, especially since according to Thompson, "It is reported that they [Beni ʿAmer – A.Z.] speak two dialects of Beǧa, one dialect being that of the aristocracy, the other that of the serf class."[17] Further study of Beǧa as spoken by the bilingual speakers whose main language is Beǧa and second language is Təgre is especially needed, as well as the Beǧa spoken by those whose first language is Təgre and second is Beǧa. Morin emphasizes that "the use of Təgre is now part of the Beni ʿAmer identity with the loss of the Beǧa language (Ḥidarab in the Beni ʿAmer variant of Təgre language) in the young generation in

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[10]  Personal letter from the 5th October 2010.
[11]  Morin 1996 and later publications.
[12]  Morin 1995, p. 20.
[13]  Morin 1996, p. 251.
[14]  Morin 1996, p. 253 and 2003, p. 528.
[15]  Saleh Mahmud 2005, p. 72.
[16]  Personal letter dated 5th October 2010).
[17]  Thompson, 1976, p. 600.

Eritrea"[18] and we can only hope that there will be a linguist who will have a possibility to study the speech of the vanishing generations of speakers of mixed Təgre and Beǧa.

In existing studies there has been a tendency to consider Beǧa as the original language of the Beni ʿAmer.[19] Several authors have repeated an opinion about the origin of the Beni ʿAmer, which is quite questionable. They believe that the Beni ʿAmer are simply of Beǧa origin. I, however, do not agree. Not only was the Beni ʿAmer 'federation' of both Beǧa and Təgre origin (with a later Arab influence) but we have enough information illustrating the fact that within Beni ʿAmer there have been 1. mixed Beǧa-Təgre groups, 2. more or less 'pure' Beǧa, 3. more or less 'pure' Təgre groups. See also Tucker / Bryan where the earlier situation is described in the following way on the basis of earlier publications [spacing is mine]: "Təgre is spoken by some of the Beni ʿAmer and affiliated tribes. Some of the Beni ʿAmer speak Təgre and some Bedawiye, while others are bilingual."[20] Təgre is mentioned also on pages devoted to the Beǧa[21] so that altogether the members of the Beni ʿAmer – Dagga, Ad ʿUqud, Ad al-Bakhit, Ad Elman, 'El Hasa' (the name known already from Ezana's inscription)[22], el-Gureshab, Ad Kukal or Kokuduab, Beit Awat[23] and Ad Sheraf – were described as speaking Beǧa and Təgre. Meanwhile, the Beit Maala (in Eritrea and Sudan – 1000 in the Tokar District) were described as bilingual speaking both Beǧa and Təgre but not as being a member of Beni ʿAmer. The Aflenda/Aflanda/Afilanda who lived in the 'Massawa Division' and in the Tokar district were characterized as "of Bedawiye origin," which is highly probable as their name certainly goes back to Beǧa -enda 'clan, people,' although the people probably only spoke Təgre and no longer spoke Beǧa.[24] It is very difficult to say what the tribal, clan and language affinity of the Beni ʿAmer and 'affiliated tribes' today is. Naturally enough, the article on Beni ʿAmer by Morin included in the prestigious *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*[25] provides only very basic information.

There is a surprising mistake in another *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* article, namely in the lemma "Haḍaṇḍowa Ethnography" by Kerstin Volker-Saad in which we read namely, "The word Ḥədareb in Beǧa (tu-beḍawiye) means 'serfs' and explains their subordinating status within the H. [Haḍaṇḍowa, A.Z.] group."[26] Here, "Zaborski

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[18]  Morin 2003, p. 528.
[19]  E.g. Thomson 1976, pp. 598 and 600.
[20]  Tucker / Bryan 1956, pp. 132f.
[21]  Ibid., pp. 119f.
[22]  See Littmann 1950, pp. 115 and 124.
[23]  Tucker / Bryan 1956, p. 134.
[24]  Ibid., p. 134.
[25]  Morin: Beni ʿAmer, *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I, 2003, pp. 527–529.
[26]  Kerstin Volker-Saad: Haḍaṇḍowa. Ethnography, *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, II, 2005, p. 958.

1983: 49"[27] is quoted as the first source before Nadel[28], Paul[29] and personal communication by Mohammed Sheikhan. In my lemma on Beǧa published in the *Lexikon der Afrikanistik*[30] I do not mention Ḥadarab at all. What is even more important, since the beginning of my studies of Beǧa history in 1962 I have always emphasized that Ḥadarab not only has a good Beǧa etymology[31] and has no connection with Ḥaḍramaut[32] but also that the Ḥadarab were overlords and not serfs (i.e. Təgre *Za-yəfaddi*, viz. 'tribute payers/serfs')[33] already in the 10th century AD, mentioned as such quite explicitly by Ibn Salim al-Uswani and even earlier by al-Yaʿqubi.[34] That recently some Ḥadarab might have been reduced to serfs is another question. Some published – however, not reliable sources[35] – and some oral sources speak about Ḥadarab serfs but the present situation remains obscure.

Here I would like to discuss some morphological interference. There is an important areal typological feature – namely new personal pronouns consisting of a noun and suffixed possessive pronouns – which goes beyond the languages of the Sudanese-Eritrean border and is found, among others, also in South Ethiosemitic Gurage. Werner Vycichl[36] compared Beǧa independent personal pronouns with the new independent pronouns in Təgrəñña, which he mistook for Təgre. He corrected himself in a later publication, however, his idea that Beǧa and Təgrəñña independent pronouns represent the same type is correct and this must be due to contact. The old Semitic independent personal pronouns have been rather well retained in the dialects of Təgre that we know so far, as well as in Dahalik. In Təgre there are also variant constructions of the same type as in Təgrəñña,[37] i.e. consisting of the noun 'person' (etymologically also 'soul')[38], e.g. *nos-e*/*nōs-ye*, literally 'for my own sake > myself' which are used not only for emphasis (e.g. "I myself", "you in person" like in Arabic) but can occur also alone[39]. In the Təgre of the Beni ʿAmer as recorded by Beaton and Paul and Nakano and Tsuge there is:

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[27]  Zaborski 1983, p. 49.

[28]  Nadel 1945, p. 93.

[29]  Paul 1950, p. 245.

[30]  Zaborski: Beǧa, *Lexikon der Afrikanistik*, 1983, p. 49. The date '1998' is a misprint!.

[31]  Actually 'chief's sons', see Reinisch 1895, p. 112 and Zaborski 1965.

[32]  This folk etymology is still taken into consideration by Hofheinz 2007, p. 9.

[33]  See Zaborski 2010, pp. 54–56.

[34]  Zaborski 1965.

[35]  E.g. Olson 1996, pp. 89 and 557.

[36]  Werner Vycichl 1953.

[37]  Leslau 1941, pp. 44f.

[38]  See Raz 1997, p. 488; Tesfay 2005, p. 78 and Morin, personal letter of 5th October 2010 who thinks that it could be better linked with Beǧa *nasā* 'councel'.

[39]  Cf. Leslau 1945, par. 44 a: "Mensaʿ Təgre *nošše* 'I myself'" with prepalatalization.

|            | Beaton / Paul 1954, p. 13 | Nakano / Tsuge 1982, p. 137 |
|------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sing. 1    | *nos-e*                   | *nōsye*                      |
| Sing. 2m   | *nos-ka*                  | *nōska*                      |
| Sing. 2f   | *nos-ki*                  | *nōski*                      |
| Sing. 3m   | *nos-o*                   | *nōso*                       |
| Sing. 3f   | *nos-a*                   | *nōsa*                       |
| Pl. 1      | *nos-na*                  |                              |
| Pl. 2m     | *nos-kum*                 |                              |
| Pl. 2f     | *nos-kin*                 |                              |
| Pl. 3m     | *nos-om*                  |                              |
| Pl. 3f     | *nos-an*                  |                              |

Example Table 1

Wedekind[40] indicate constructions with *nifs* 'soul, self', e.g. *u-nifs-u* 'myself' in Beǧa as one of the methods to express 'self'. How much is due to contact with Arabic and how much to contact with Təgre and Təgrəñña? The noun itself must be a loanword in Beǧa, but the use of both the prefixed definite article and the suffixed possessive pronoun is genuinely Beǧa, which has been the source of the same principle in Təgre and in Təgrəñña (see below).

There is a possibility that in Təgre the Old Semitic independent pronouns have survived largely thanks to the interference with Arabic. In Təgrəñña, in which the influence of Arabic has been weaker and the contact with Beǧa could have been stronger (although weaker than the contact between Beǧa and a part of the dialects of Təgre), the new constructions have won and the Old Semitic pronouns have been limited to secondary functions, viz. vocative and poetic. Beǧa (2nd and 3rd persons like *bar-ū-k* 'thou'. *bar-ū-h* 'he' etc.) and Təgrəñña (*nəssə-ka* 'thou', *nəss-u* 'he' etc.) independent personal pronouns are proof of the Beǧa-Təgrəñña contact and interference in the past.

Both Təgre[41] and Beǧa use suffixed copular clitics[42] which are of different origin but typologically similar, and hence probably at least partially due to contact. Hudson adds, "In Beni Amir the ending *-na* can be added in all plural forms, not just in

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[40] Wedekind et al. 2007, p. 68.
[41] Leslau 1945, p. 193; Beaton / Paul 1954, p. 12.
[42] Wedekind et al. 2007, pp. 39f.; Hudson 1976, pp. 103f., 113; Roper 1928, pp. 18f.; Reinisch 1893: par. 139.

2nd person forms, although it is uncommon in 1st person and 3rd person forms"[43].[44] In Hadendiwa the ending *-u* is replaced by *-i*.[45]

|  | Tǝgre | Beǧa |
|---|---|---|
| Sing. 1 |  | masc. *-i*, *-u*, fem. *-t-i*, *t-u* |
| Sing. 2m |  | *-w-a* |
| Sing. 2f |  | *-t-w-i* |
| Sing. 3m | *t-u* | *-i*, *-u* |
| Sing. 3f | *t-a* | *-t-i*, *t-u* |
| Pl. 1 |  | *-a-na* |
| Pl. 2m |  | *-ā-na* |
| Pl. 2f |  | *-t-ā-na* |
| Pl. 3m | *t-om* | *-a(na)* |
| Pl. 3f | *t-a-n* | *-t-a(na)* |

Example Table 2

For example, Tǝgre *ǝlli nǝwway tabʿat tu* 'this animal is a male', *tǝgrǝ-hu tǝgrǝ Mansaʿ ta* 'his Tǝgre is the Mansaʿ Tǝgre'[46]. What strengthens the hypothesis that these copulas have influenced each other is the fact that both in Tǝgre and in Beǧa they are used in cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences, e.g. Tǝgre *'abi la-tu lǝnsa'* 'the one who is the greatest may take it'[47], Beǧa *wí aanda gwa'eene búun-u* 'What men drink is coffee'[48].

All three languages – Beǧa, Tǝgre and Tǝgrǝñña – use the *nota genetivi* or 'preposition of appurtenance'[49] *na-y*, e.g. Beǧa *wi-oor oo-win naa-i baaba* 'the big boy's father', Tǝgre *aqbǝr na-y lämotäw* 'the graves of the dead';[50] *šaʿab nay Tǝgre* 'the Tǝgre people'[51] *ǝlli malāṭey na-ye ta* 'this knife is mine'; Tǝgrǝñña *kälbi nay ḥawway / nay ḥawway kälbi* 'my brother's dog'[52], *worqi nay gar* 'blood money'[53]. Tǝgre *nay* and

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43 Hudson 1976, p. 131.
44 Reinisch 1893, p. 831.
45 Roper 1928, p. 88.
46 Morin, personal letter of 5th October 2010.
47 Leslau 1945, par. 55d.
48 Hudson 1976, p. 104.
49 Littmann / Höfner 1962, p. 337; Leslau 1945, par. 38, 49; Elias 2005, p. 89.
50 Hudson 1976, pp. 109, 130; Roper 1928, p. 18.
51 Elias 2005, p. 89 and Morin's personal letter of 5th October.
52 Leslau 1941, p. 41.
53 Kogan 1998, p. 433.

Təgrəñña *nay* and *nəway*[54] go back to Gəʿəz *nəwāy* 'thing, object, property, possessions'. It also occurs as a loan in Bilen as *n-uw* 'utensil' and in Saho as *n-uwā*[55] and in ʿAfar[56] as *uwwa* 'utensils, tools; in Parker / Hayward also 'goods, luggage'[57]. It is not clear at all whether there can be a connection with as *nota genetivi* in Egyptian, Berber and Chadic. On the other hand, there must be a connection between Beǧa, Təgre and Təgrəñña due to contact.[58]

Beǧa definite article occurs in some variants of Beni Amir Təgre.[59] More interestingly, in Beǧa "a noun with a possessive suffix is rarely used without the definite article except in the predicative and except with the nouns of close senior relationship"[60], e.g. *wū-ašō-yu kēya?* 'where is my enemy?', *te-kamt-ēk-na irhān* 'I saw your nagas'; *ō-sm-ū-h Ali ēyadna* 'his name is Ali'; *wa-hadaʾā-yi* 'my chief', *i-malk-ōn* 'our king' and the same happens in Təgre, e.g. *lä-ʾamʿit-u ʾafgärä mənnu* 'he took his entrails from him'[61], *hətu la-kətb-ā lakfayo* 'he threw her books away', *la-kaləb-ka* 'your (masc.) dog', and with possessives: *la-ʿəmer nay-na* 'our age'[62]. The same happens in Təgrəñña with remote demonstratives which may function as definite articles, e.g. *ʾətu rəʾs-u* 'his head'[63] *ʾətom waläddom* 'their parents'[64]. Agostinos-Tädla[65] says that also close object demonstratives can have a function of the definite article.[66] What is even more interesting, in Beǧa "occasionally the article is found also with the *nomen regens*, usually for emphasis"[67] e.g. *i-tāk-i ū-kām kēa?* (where also *nomen rectum* is preceded by the definite article). The same happens in Təgre where the article "can be used either with the modified element or with the modifier or with both of them"[68], cf. Təgrəñña, e.g. *ʾətom woläddi ʾətu qwolʿa* 'the child's parents'[69].

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54   Leslau 1941, pp. 40–42.
55   Leslau 1987, p. 410 but cf. Vergari / Vergari 2003, p. 141: *nuwaa* 'furniture, goods'.
56   Morin, personal letter of 5th October 2010.
57   Parker / Hayward 1985, p. 206.
58   Cf. Morin 1996, p. 257.
59   Morin 1996, p. 251.
60   Roper 1928, pp. 30f.; see also Reinisch 1893, par. 169; cf. Wedekind et al., pp. 64–67 but cf. Morin 1995, p. 36.
61   Leslau 1945, par. 38c.
62   Elias 2005, pp. 106f.
63   Kogan 1997, p. 431.
64   Leslau 1941, p. 39.
65   Agostinos-Tädla 1994, p. 66.
66   On this see Leslau 1941, p. 39.
67   Roper 1928, p. 15.
68   Leslau 1945, par. 38d.
69   Kogan 1997, p. 431.

In Ethiosemitic languages, the active participle *qātil > qātəl[70], e.g. ḥāləq 'capital, town, leader,' ākəl 'being sufficient', wādəq 'falling down' survives only in Təgre,[71] and could have survived not only due to the contact with Arabic but also with Beǧa, e.g. Beǧa[72] kātim-i/kātem-āna 'coming' (kitim 'to come'), dābil-i/dābil-āna 'collecting' (dibil 'to collect').

Both Beǧa[73] and Təgre have the singulative suffix -ay, e.g. Beǧa Arab 'hillmen' (plural) and arab-īn-ay '(one) hillman' which shows 'depluralization' of the plural ending -īn; in Təgre,[74] e.g. Beni 'Amrāy 'a (member of) Beni 'Amer', anṣ-ay 'mouse'[75], čeggär-ay '(single) hair'[76], cf. also Təgrəñña, e.g. säb'-ay 'man.' According to Palmer[77] who worked mainly with an informant speaking the dialect of Mensa', the singulatives with -ay are limited to a class of nouns referring to insects, tress, joints of meat and to "nouns which have no unsuffixed singular form but a lexically quotable form with the suffix -ay." It is also used as an additional suffix to make diminutives.[78]

All of this shows that there has been not only lexical and phonological but also grammatical interference between Beǧa, Təgre and Təgrəñña, not to mention other members of the Eritrean Language Area. Tosco's[79] hypothesis that Təgre has been a dominating language in the area requires verification since it is based on very little linguistic data and on some historical allegations by Thomson[80]. A study in the field of the interfering dialects and especially those "oscillating between Beǧa and Təgre" (as Morin says) could be important not only for the study of the particular languages and of the particular language area but also for the theory of language contact.

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[70]  Raz 1983, pp. 28–31.
[71]  Bulakh / Kogan 2010, pp. 286–289.
[72]  Roper 1928, p. 63.
[73]  Roper 1928, p. 12.
[74]  Palmer 1962, pp. 50f.; Leslau 1945, par. 19.
[75]  Leslau 1987, p. 32; probably of Cushitic origin.
[76]  Leslau 1987, p. 550; probably of Cushitic origin.
[77]  Palmer 1962.
[78]  Ibid, pp. 52–60; Littmann 1943; Leslau 1945, par. 18.
[79]  Tosco 2008, p. 118.
[80]  Thomson 1976.

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*Tigre abstract*

መትአታታይ ትግሬ ወቢጃ ለትከስስ ሐብሬ

ናይ ቅብለት ትግራይት ወናይ ግብለት ቢጃ ምን ዘመን ቅዱም እንዴ አምበተየ ገወውር ሰበት ጸንሐየ ደረጀት ሕባራተን እት ንኢሽ-መንጠቀት ሀገጊ ኤርትርያ ምን ገብእ ወእት ከሪጠት ዐባይ-መንጠቀት ሀገጊ ቅብለታይ ምፍጋር ጸሐይ አፍሪቅየ ሰኒ ውቅል ተ። ለምሽክለት አስክ እለ ለከፌ በሐስ ጋብእ እተ ኢሀለ። እብ ዖሮ እንክር እብ ፈድል ሸቅል ዲ. ሞሪን ገሌ ገባይል ሚንዓምር ሰኒ ወእግን ዲብ ቢጃ ቅርብት ላተ ለህጀት ትግራይት ክም ልትሃገው እግል ንአምር ቀደርና። እብ ብዕድ እንክር ህዩ ምን ናይ ቤቶን ወጋቱል ሸቅል እታክምሰልሁመ ምን ሸቅል ናካሃ ወትሱጌ ክምኡ እንፍህሞ ለህጀት ሚንዓምር ወለሐበር ከሊማት ቢጃመ አለቡ ዲበ። ምን አመራ እለ ለበሐስ እት ሕዱድ ምድር ሌጠ ሰበት ገብእ አው ለእግል ናካሃ ሐብሬ ለህይብ ለዐለ ነፈር ምስል ቢጃ ለኢልትጋወር መትሃግያይ ትግራይት ሰበት ገብእ እግል ልግበእ ቀደረ። ምን አስክ እለ ጥቡዕ ለሀለ ክቱብ እሊ ለተሌ መከውነት ከሊማት ሰበቡ ሕባራት ትግራይት ወቢጃ እግል ልግበእ ቀደረ፦ 1. ሕድ ለመስል ቄርነት ውዳይ ልትነፈዐ። 2. እብ ፈድል ሰዳይት ቢጃ ወዐረቢ ሸክል *“ቃትል” ለቡ ፋዕል ነሺጥ እግል ትሓፍዝ እቱ ቀደረት። 3. ዲብ ትግሬ ወቢጃ -አይ ለልብል ናይ ሕበር መአሽራይ ፈርድ ህለ። ትግርኛም ዲብ እሊ ሕባራት ሂገ አትየት ተ፡ ሰበቡ ህዩ እብ ፈድለ ምስል ቢጃ ለህለ እግል ግውርኖት ገሌ ከፈል ናይ እሎም መአሽረት እሎም ሐፍዘቶም ህሌት። እግል መሰለ ዲብ ትግርኛ ለሐዲስ ሐር መወክላይ ስም *ኖስ + ውጨል ምልክ ምስል እት ቢጃ እት 2ይ ወ3ይ ገሮብ ለከድም *ባር + ውጨል ምልክ ልትማወር። ቢጃ፡ ትግሬ ወትግርኛም ምስል አስማይ ወምስል ናይ ምልክ መወክለት አስማይ መአሽራይ እሙር (definite article) ልትነፈዐ። እት ረእስ እሊም ሕድ ለመስል መአሽራይ ምልክ “ናይ” ህለ እግለን፦ እሊ ናይ ምልክ መአሽራይ እሊ ዲብ ቢጃ ዲብ ሜላካይ ለተሌ ስፈት ልትወጨል።

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*Society, Traditions and Institutions /*
*Gesellschaft, Tradition und Institutionen*

# Conflict Resolution and Customary Law
# in Contemporary Eritrea:
# Case Studies of the Saho Community

Abdulkader Saleh Mohammad[*] & Nicole Hirt[**]

*Abstract*

The Eritrean society is composed of nine ethnic groups who are heterogeneous in nature, based on a variety of languages and cultures. Each ethnic group practices different belief systems and various customary laws, which are framed and administered by elderly, religious and wise men of the concerned groups. This paper will elaborate the origins of the Saho speaking groups, their traditional rules and regulations. Although the historical trace of their customary law is not clearly known, most elders and ʿuqqāls[1] of the Saho people claim that it is older than the era of the Islam. This traditional law was preserved orally among the community and was passed on from generation to generation. Only during the period of the British colonial administration, this oral traditional culture was collected, recorded and written down in 1943. The Saho as agro-pastoralists maintained their self-governance system for long periods, and this should be seen as a base of historical development of the customary law, which was respected and applied by all Saho tribes. The traditional conflict and tension mediation system continued to be practiced during the European and Ethiopian colonial administrations, especially on the local level. The paper will also discuss the relevance of this law in the modern State of Eritrea, and how the government tolerates the traditional forms of social organisation and conflict mediation systems. In addition, the paper will demonstrate the functionality of the law by presenting different case studies.

## A. The Eritrean Customary Law:
## Historical and Theoretical Background

Eritrea is a multi-ethnic society divided between Islam and Christianity and inhabited by sedentary farmers and pastoralists, but in spite of the rifts between the different groups, the society has been able to face extreme difficulties like displacement, rapid

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[1]  'Wise men'.

population movements, government resettlement policies, extreme scarcity of material goods without resorting to violence. There is a high level of mutual respect in everyday life, and most importantly, there are traditional institutions like religious elders and mediators[2] people can turn to in order to find a just solution in case of strives and conflicts.

This article is based on the findings of a research project carried out in Eritrea from 2004 to 2006,[3] trying to explore how Eritrean society has kept its internal peace and to some extent harmony in spite of the severe disruptions caused by the war with Ethiopia (1998 to 2000) and the increasingly depressing political environment in the country. We suggest that Eritrean society has the capacity to resolve conflicts using a deeply rooted culture of mediation without resorting to uncontrolled violence and civil war. Throughout long periods of time, Eritrean society existed as an entity with functioning laws and regulations more or less independent of the respective ruling powers, be it the Italian and British colonial administrations or the Ethiopian regimes of Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The Eritrean customary laws have a strong communal undertone and rule both economy and social life, especially in the rural areas. Each of the nine ethnic groups has relied on its own customary law for hundreds of years, and most of them were kept in memory. Some of them are recorded in written form, but were not necessarily published. These documents are sometimes referred to as a "customary code" of the tribe, village or community concerned, in the sense that individual rights are strictly connected to those of the tribe or the village community, and rules were created and maintained by the tribe or the community elders and wise men of the concerned group itself.

However, it is important to note that the Təgrəñña customary law attracted a greater number of European colonial and missionary scholars than the Saho and Afar ones, and this is due to the fact that the church laws overshadowed the customary laws to a larger extent than in other non-Təgrəñña speaking ethnic groups, except for the Mensa and Bilen. In this respect, most of the literature available today in Italian, English and German speak about the Təgrəñña and Christian Mensa and Bilen customary laws.[4]

The Italian legal system did not replace the customary or religious laws, especially as far as those living in the countryside were concerned. The Italian codes were only introduced for European residents of the colony, and public order regulations were

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[2]   Tgrn.: *šəmagəllä*, tgr. *šəmāgalla*.

[3]   The project named "Zones of peace in Eritrea and Tigray under Pressure" was based at the University of Hamburg, Germany. See: Abdulkader / Hirt / Smidt / Tetzlaff (eds.): *Friedensräume in Eritrea und Tigray unter Druck* (2008); Abdulkader / Hirt: Zones of peace under threat in a region of conflict and crisis, *Hotspot Horn of Africa Revisited*, Berlin 2008, pp. 263–279.

[4]   Grande 1998, pp. 110–113; Guadagni 1998, p. 14; Guadagni 2001, pp. 4–8.

imposed on Eritreans in urban areas as well as when issues regarding crime, taxation and land tenure were concerned. The British Military Administration was too short (1941–1952) and too provisional in character to replace the existing customary laws as well as the Italian penal code and civil law systems with its own common law.[5]

These customary laws based on traditional forms of civil society, headed by religious and local elders, stayed very much alive even after independence in 1991 and were accepted by the government as a stabilising factor. The former liberation movement EPLF (Eritrean People's Liberation Front), that is now the ruling party renamed PFDJ (People's Front for Democracy and Justice), was well aware that it had to respect traditional forms of social organisation in order to be accepted by the people, whose convictions rested not so much in the revolutionary programs of the liberation fighters but in their established mode of coexistence.

## B. Empirical Observations of Contemporary Conflict Resolution in Eritrea

Levels of criminality and physical violence are remarkably low compared to other African countries like South Africa or Kenya. Property delicts are rare, as well as physical assaults motivated by criminal intentions. The low rate of deviant behaviour in the country seems to be due to a combination of traditional norms and values as well as those established by the liberation movement. The state makes use of its power of suppression combined with the promotion of traditional values to prevent criminality. In the social realm, the extended family puts considerable pressure on the young generation to behave according to traditional demands, i.e. showing respect to elders and the demands of the communal or family group they belong to. Arranged marriages are still widespread, and financial support of poorer family members is considered a natural duty. There are strong mechanisms of mutual control, and serious misbehaviour is punished by exclusion from the community. On the other hand, this traditional form of social community provides the individual with a feeling of belonging and safety quite different from the Western concept of individual liberalism which often leads to isolation and treats the less successful as outsiders, and leads to anomie.

Our empirical study showed that up to the present, people obviously trust in the traditional institutions to solve conflicts about land, housing, property, or family affairs. Conflict regulation usually is exerted in the form of customary jurisdiction by local elders and mediators (*šǝmagǝllä*). The elders act as representatives of the various customary laws of the ethnic groups, which differ among each other, but generally follow the objective of keeping the community stable and united by solving internal disagreements peacefully. Our study showed that people in both rural and urban

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[5]    Guadagni 1998, pp. 14f.

surroundings respect customary jurisdiction and have more trust in traditional mediation than in the modern court system. In fact, the modern courts show little capacity, and very frequently pending cases are referred to traditional mediators by the judges of the state's judiciary – this practice is most common in cases of civil litigation, but is sometimes also practiced in cases of criminality, especially concerning the compensation of the victim and his or her family, which is one of the major concerns of customary law and more important than the individual penalty of the perpetrator, who is instead punished by social exclusion. Moreover, the government introduced so-called "community courts" in 2004, which are in charge of dealing with cases related to daily life activities, like rent, petty thefts, private contracts and the like. The lay-judges are selected by the government, but are supposed to apply customary law.

The focus of this paper is the customary law of the Saho ethnic group, which was first published in written form in 1943,[6] the time of the British Military Administration, but has been orally passed from generation to generation for centuries. As the Saho are Muslims, the law is partially based on regulations derived from the Šarīʿa law, but contains also many passages that are rooted in traditional, probably more ancient sources of law, regulating everyday social and economic life. The law generally aims at conflict resolution and finding just solutions that can be accepted by the perpetrator who has caused harm to an individual, a group, or the community and by the victims of his actions. The Saho customary law covers cases of civil litigation, such as family and property conflicts as well as verbal assaults, but also criminal cases like injuries inflicted on somebody up to cases of murder. In order to demonstrate the way how customary law is applied and respected up to the present times, four recent case studies shall be presented,[7] related to divorce, inheritance, a land conflict, and non-compliance of a person released from prison on bail. In order to ease the interpretation of the case studies, we will present a short overview of the social organisation of the Saho.

## C. Historical and Social Background of the Saho People

### I. Origin

In spite of the myths and legends of the different Saho tribes concerning their origin, they are unified as one ethnic group by their common language known as Saho, by their religion and cultural traditions. This language belongs to the East Cushitic family. According to Bender,[8] the split of the Afar and Saho from the rest of the East Cushitic group took place about 4.000 years ago or a bit longer. The genetic

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[6]    Abdulkader: *The Customary Law to the Akele Guzay Muslims* (the Saho) (2009).
[7]    The events described in the case studies took place between 2005 and 2008.
[8]    Bender 1971, pp. 174f.

classification and sub-grouping of the East Cushitic languages according to Herbert Lewis[9] indicate that there are at least 24 languages which can be divided into four coordinated branches: Somal, Afar/Saho, Oromo and Sidamo.[10]

The distribution of the Saho speaking groups in Eritrea is the result of repeated movements of the different Cushitic and Semitic groups in the Horn of Africa. The Saho were among the first to feel the effects of the South Arabian migrations, which during a long period crossed through their territory, e.g. through the Burie Peninsula, Irafale, to the highlands of Akkälä Guzay and Säraye.[11] Thus, the regions inhabited by the Saho became intermediate zones of international trade between the people of the Arab world, Persia, India, and the Far East. These variety of people formed commercial nets and the Saho controlled trade points which existed for centuries, like Zula, Foro, Semhar. The Saho as well as the Afar were centrally placed to become participants and players in this great socio-cultural interaction. The Arabs and other foreigners settling in the coastal areas intermingled with and were absorbed by the Saho and the Afar populations.[12]

However, today the majority of the Saho inhabit Eritrean territory and historically occupy the Red Sea coast (Burie Peninsula, Golf of Zula) and the Southern Region of the highlands (Akkälä Guzay and Säraye). There are also a number of Saho groups settling in the Gash-Barka Region today. Other Saho communities are found across the political borders, in Ethiopia, especially in the Tigray region, in Djibouti, and in the Eastern Sudan. The Saho there are known as Seeho, and they have their own *nāẓir* (chief).

Among the Saho living in Eritrea, according to their oral traditions and legends, the Assa-bora Kabota, and Idda are the most ancient Saho tribes in the region. The Saho call these three tribes the guardians of the Saho land, and this attitude is widely shared by all Saho tribes and sub-tribes of today. There are ten semi-autonomous tribes, seven large and three smaller ones.

## II. Social Organisation

The social organisation of the Saho society are closely related to the surrounding ethnic groups which interact with them through seasonal migration. The majority of the Saho are multilingual; beside Saho they speak Təgre, Təgrəñña, Arabic, and Afar, depending on their geographical location and according to their seasonal migrations as agro-pastoral groups. Most of the Saho raise cattle but also practice rain-fed agriculture in Badda, Irafalo, Hadish and Wangabo in the Red Sea regions, and at Hazamo, Ali'gade, Adolei, Soira and Qohaito in the highlands. As most scholars admit,

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[9]   Lewis 1966, pp. 38f.
[10]  See also: Taddesse Tamrat 1977, p. 135; Fleming 1964, p. 93.
[11]  Pollera 1996, p. 26.
[12]  Abdulkader Saleh 2003, pp. 1–4.

no rigid land rights exist among them, while land is collectively owned by the tribes.[13]

They organise themselves and their social life according to a pattern of relations in which family and kinship play significant roles. The tribes occupy a well-defined area where they graze their animals and put up their seasonal camps in order to cultivate and to pasture their animals as part of their mixed subsistence economy.[14] Accordingly, a number of extended families work jointly together to perform these important functions, and they chose a leader from among the family heads. Thus, the simple or extended family is the basic economic unit and it is within such family units that the basic management of resources and social life takes place, e.g. economic cooperation, specially during times of drought and famine, inheritance of land or cattle, marriage arrangements, care of elderly and orphans.[15] The principle of this association of families is primarily the egalitarian agnatic relationship system, and the leaders of the different sub-tribes form the bases of the entire political structure of the Saho society.

## III. Political Structure

The Saho society is egalitarian, and their political system is uncrentralized. That means, the leaders of the sub-tribes are elected, and their constitution is democratic compared with their Təgrəñña and Təgre neighbours, who have a hierarchical system. Thus, the elected leader (*reezanto / reedanto*) should know the history, tradition, and customs of the Saho ethnic group in particular and of their neighbouring ethnic groups in general. The power and authority of the chief, once he is elected, is highly respected, and before independence, his name was proposed to the official political authority for confirmation. Until 1991, the chiefs of the sub-tribes were powerful leaders in their respective areas. Under him were the heads of clans called *nabara*, who represented him in their respective regions.

The power and authority of the leader (*reedanto* or *šum*) depended on the consensus of his kinsmen and not on his hereditary rights.[16] The main responsibility of the leader was to secure the requirements of his group, e.g. the defence of pasture, agricultural land and water resources against other groups. He also cared for the security of the caravan trade routes from the Red Sea coast to the hinterland, which passed through his area. The need for cooperation and solidarity of the groups was highly valued by the leader, and he had to receive strangers as guests and to extend hospitality. At the same time, he was collecting taxes in the name of the concerned local governments, and his most important responsibility was to settle family and clan

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[13]  Nadel 1944, p. 129.
[14]  Abdulkader Saleh 2003, pp. 9f.; Nadel 1944, pp. 128f.
[15]  Abdulkader Saleh 1996, p. 11.
[16]  I.M. Lewis 1969, p. 176; Trimingham 1974, p. 177; Longrigg 1974, p. 26.

disputes inside his group or with other groups. However, these traditional positions were undermined after independence, although the government still relies on their informal good offices in order to get support and to resolve tensions and conflicts in the rural areas.

## D. The Saho Customary Law

The Saho society maintained its self-governance systems for long periods, and this law was highly respected by all the tribes. During the Italian colonial period, the Saho remained autonomous; and the authority did not interfere much in their tradition of mediation and their conciliation system, although the Italian administration had reservations against the structure of the Saho traditional law. It considered it a threat to their authority and domination, as it was difficult for them to bring the scattered decentralised Saho tribes under control. On the other hand, the Saho themselves were suspicious and full of mistrust against the colonial administration and their courts. Especially during the Ethiopian rule (1952–1991), the Saho boycotted the civil courts by not taking tribal or clan cases before them, because of the biased attitude and political agenda of the Ethiopian administrations against the Saho Muslims in general.[17]

It is important to refer to the fact that every clan leader (*reedanto*) was implementing the rules and regulations with the support of the elders and the ʿuqqāls strictly, in order to govern their tribal affairs and activities. This legal system was passed orally from generation to generation, and the elders and wise men of the tribe were responsible of keeping these traditions in their memories as records. Only in 1943, the British Military Administration gathered the Saho leaders in ʿAddi Qäyyǝḥ and asked them to assign a committee of experts in order to collect and to revise the existing oral customary laws and to write them down.

During the armed struggle (1961–1991), the clan leaders as well as the religious and village representatives of the rural areas were highly involved in resolving disputes and tensions between the different segments of the Saho society. These steps were supported by the freedom fighters in the field. After independence, the Eritrean government initiated community courts, introduced officially in 2004 in the urban areas for members of the local community to make pragmatic use of the customary laws, in order to settle or to end smaller conflicts, solve family matters, especially marriage or divorce cases, and decide about questions of inheritance, theft, and other conflicts between the different segments of society. Accordingly, most of the Saho conflicting parties in the urban areas, similar like those in the rural areas, agreed to select their own representatives (*šǝmagǝllä*) from their own clans, and sometimes they require the assistance of sheikhs or ʿuqqāls. If the mediation or settlement of the

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[17]    Abdulkader Saleh 2009, pp. 5–7.

dispute gets stuck, the clan leader will bring the disputants before neutral *šəmagəllä* from outside his clan. That means the involvement of neutral elders and famous knowledgeable persons who are very well known for their ability in conflict mediation.

## E. The Practical Application of the Law

When there are complaints or quarrels between two persons, one of them should bring his grievance to the attention of the elders or ʿ*uqqāl*s (wise men) of the clan. The elders or ʿ*uqqāl*s in their turn should appoint *šəmagəllä* for the investigation of the claim. But before starting the hearing, each of the conflicting parties must bring or name guarantors who are known as "dish," who are asked to accept the responsibilities in case one of them escapes or disappears during the hearing day. Not everyone can be accepted by the *šəmagəllä* as a guarantor (dish). The guarantor should be a person who is respected by his clan members, or he can be a wealthy person or a sheikh. During the hearing, the two conflicting parties have the right to speak in person or to allow other persons to advocate on their behalf according to their wishes. The mediators are helped in order to inspect the case in a proper and accepted way, including the participation of the clan members. In the case of women, under age or sick persons, his or her family or clan assign a person who can advocate and defend their case in a right way, who is experienced in defending similar cases, and who can bring logical arguments relevant to the case of his client in front of the *šəmagəllä*. It is clearly stated in the traditional consensus, that the sub-tribe or tribe cannot escape responsibility for the criminal acts committed by its members. If a blood feud continues between families or clans, the *šəmagəllä* try to settle such cases through marriage between the two conflicting parties.

In case of injuries or beatings, it is a tradition that the family whose member committed the crime should supply the affected person with 1 kg butter, 1 kg honey, 20 kg of cereals, and a goat, until the injured or beaten person has recovered. In addition, they should visit him every second week to inquire about the health condition of the injured person, and they usually bring butter, honey etc. This behaviour is seen as a sign of restoration of peace between the two families. The *šəmagəllä* consider such behaviour in their mediation and reconciliation as a sign of good will.

It is also a well-known tradition among the different Saho clans, that when cattle enters into an agricultural field of others, or smashes a pasture of other clans, the affected family captures one strong ox as assurance of the fulfilment of a compensation agreement. Then the owner of the cattle comes to negotiate with the family, but when the harmed family captures all the cattle, this means a challenge to the whole clan of the cattle-owner, which often leads to tensions and conflicts.

# F. Case Studies

## I. Conflict Mediation in Family Conflicts like Divorce

Ḥalīma[18] got married in 2002 at the age of 28. Her husband Ibrāhīm was related to her from the family of her mother's side. The families of the husband and the wife supported the marriage and contributed to the ceremony and everyone expected it would run smoothly. The husband was 40 years old and had been conscripted to the national service since 1998; he received a payment of 500 Naqfa per month. He was supposed to give 300 Naqfa per month to his wife. But soon after marriage it became clear that Ibrāhīm did not support his wife financially, although she was pregnant. She had to move to the house of her uncle in order to survive. After the child was born, she stayed with her uncle for another six months, as she received neither material nor moral support from her husband. Her daughter became sick due to underweight and had to spend two months at the hospital – the husband did not cover the costs for the medical treatment. When he finally came to bring his wife and daughter to his residential house in ʿAddi Qäyyəḥ, the uncle warned him that he should treat his wife well and not beat her like he had done before, and his mother who lived with him was also informed that she should take care of the child. After three months, he started beating his wife again and she did not get food and clothing for her and her daughter. Finally, the neighbours called the uncle to take her back again, as Ibrāhīm used to come home drunk and aggressive. The extended families of the couple tried to keep the marriage together, but now the wife, who had returned to her uncle for fear of her husband's aggressiveness, was determined to get divorced. As the marriage was held under šarīʿa based regulations, she turned to the šarīʿa court to get the divorce. The court tried to appease her by claiming that her husband was under national service and could therefore not support her, and things would get better in the future. The husband was told to stop drinking and beating her. He did not accept the divorce, but the wife refused to go back to his house. So the court established a committee of five šəmagəllä (traditional mediators), two from each family and one neutral person (maʾkäl šəmagəllä). After six months of unsuccessful negotiations, the case was taken back to the court, which did not come to a decision, following its general strategy to extend pending cases in the hope that people may calm down and the tension will gradually disappear. Finally, it called upon the relatives of the couple to find a solution. Now the ʿuqqāls (traditional leaders) of the clan both belonged to intervened and convinced the husband to accept the divorce, because his wife refused to live with him again. In case of his refusal, he was warned to be excluded from the clan, and his family would not get any support in the future, including for ceremonies like marriages and funerals. After this verdict, he accepted

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[18]    All names mentioned in the case studies were changed in order to safeguard the privacy of the individuals involved.

the divorce after the case had been pending for one year. The husband now claimed the child for himself, but according to the respective *šarīʿa* understanding, a daughter has to stay with her mother until the age of seven. Instead, he was supposed to pay 150 Naqfa per month to support the child, and the court decided that the girl should stay with her mother. He did not pay for the following three years but the uncle continued supporting his niece.

This case study shows that traditional social structures and customary law are still the most decisive patterns of everyday life. Marriages are frequently arranged with the consent and support of the extended family, which, by accepting the arrangement, also accepts a certain responsibility for the well-being of the family. In this case, the wife could always turn to her uncle when she was in trouble, and it was the extended family which guaranteed her survival when the husband failed to support her. The *šarīʿa* court which formally concluded both marriage and divorce is a religious institution – but interestingly, it does not just formally practice jurisdiction as it is laid down in the *šarīʿa*, but refers to traditional mediators in order to find a practical solution acceptable to all who are involved. The *šəmagəllä* as traditional mediators are those who are supposed to find a solution by discussing with the couple and with the extended family as well. The aim is, whenever possible, to save the marriage arrangement by putting pressure on the husband to change his behaviour. In this case, all endeavours towards this aim failed, and as a last resort, the tribal elders, the *ʿuqqāls*, had to step in and use their authority to bring the matter to an end, as the husband's behaviour was about to damage the reputation of the clan and its members. Only now the husband was ready to accept the verdict, as he was immediately threatened by social exclusion, something which could not be achieved both by the *šəmagəllä* and the *šarīʿa* court. In terms of gender equality it can be stated that the wife had to fight a long struggle in order to get her freedom to lead a dignified life, and the first attempt of the traditional instances was to safeguard the family – but the example makes also clear that it is the tradition of the Saho community to punish a man's aberrant behaviour.

## II. Conflict Mediation Related to Inheritance

Yūsif had a rich brother who was married without having children. He died in Saudi Arabia at the age of 65. Before independence, he had supported the Eritrean struggle financially, and after independence he invested money in bakeries and bought land from the government worth US$ 12.000 in Asmara and another piece of land in Massawa. Moreover, he left about 1 million Naqfa on his bank account in Eritrea. He also owned part of a villa in Asmara which belonged to his family from his mother's side. Due to his political and economic activities, he had close friends in the government administration.

When the brother of Yūsif became sick, he was transferred to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. Meanwhile, his wife was persuaded by her own family members

and influential friends interested in taking profit from her property to make her husband sign a donation in which he passed all his property to her, even the family villa. This donation was contrary to the rules of *šarīʿa*, according to which the wife would inherit one third of his belongings because she had no children, while the other two thirds would be shared between his three brothers. As the villa was the property of the entire family, she would only be entitled to the share of her late husband. He, however, was manipulated to donate his complete property to the wife without consulting his brothers and without considering the *šarīʿa*.

Yūsif contested the deed because

1. His brother was not mentally fit when he signed it on pressure of his wife and her influential friends.
2. His donation was not confirmed by a *šarīʿa* court in Saudi-Arabia, but by the Eritrean Consulate in Ǧidda.
3. According to the *šarīʿa* legal understanding he was not supposed to donate his entire property to his wife.

The case was opened at the Asmara Regional Sharia Court (Zoba Maʾkäl) and dragged on for more than two years, as each side engaged in arguments and counter-arguments. The court was under a certain political pressure because the influential officials who formerly had business relations with her husband backed the wife's position. The court could not come to a decision and instead established a committee of four *šǝmagǝllä* (traditional mediators) to find a solution and to distribute the property in a way to which both parties could agree. The committee suggested dividing the property equally between the wife and the brothers, but the wife with the backing of the interest groups refused to accept. The case was re-submitted to the *šarīʿa* court. In the end, the court, giving way to political pressure, decided that the donation document was correct and the wife should obtain the property.

Now Yūsif appealed to the Sharia High Court in Asmara, which after long discussions with the two parties decided that the document was invalid because the man was physically and mentally sick at the time of signing and because it was not confirmed by a *šarīʿa* court in Saudi Arabia. It advised the two parties to turn back to the *šǝmagǝllä* in order to avoid further family conflicts.

Now the wife refused to accept the decision and appealed to the High Court once again, making use of her influential friends. The court established a special committee consisting of high court judges who were supposed to take over the role of the *šǝmagǝllä*, giving special consideration to the wife's position.

The lower *šarīʿa court* (Zoba Maʾkäl) was supposed to implement the decision of the High Court, but meanwhile the wife had got a second judgement made by the special committee assigned by the High Court. The court was stuck between the two decisions, of which the first one was formally correct in a juridical sense, while the second one was taken by the committee which had the backing of the influential

pressure group. After three years, the case is still pending, and the court again advised the adversaries to turn back to the *šəmagəllä* to find an acceptable solution.

This case presents a conflict where powerful interest groups (generally such groups can be political, military or economic elites) are involved and try to manipulate the procedures of the traditional courts and *šəmagəllä*. However, even powerful interest groups are not always successful in pushing through the judgement they desire, as this case study shows.

## III. Conflict Mediation in a Land Conflict between Family Members

According to Saho customary law, the land belongs commonly to all members of a clan, while the single members enjoy usufruct rights, but no person is entitled to sell land, which is regarded as common property.

During the independence struggle, in a village in Zoba Däbub (Southern Region), Sub-Zoba Sänʿafe, most families left their land and migrated to Sudan, while a part of the clan remained there under Ethiopian occupation. When the Därg came to power in 1974, it declared a land reform under the motto "land to the tiller," and land was distributed among new settlers which came to own the land under the new state law. After independence, the Eritrean government in its own land reform of 1994 declared that all land belongs to the state, but every citizen can claim land for lifelong usufruct. This created tensions between families when those of them who had been in exile returned, because there was a contradiction between customary law based on descent.

The kinship group of Saleh was divided between one branch which had remained in the village, while another branch had migrated to urban areas. The latter claimed land in their area of origin in order to construct a house and claim their possession rights due to descent based on traditional law. As there was a shortage of land, those who had remained in the area and cultivated the soil in the name of the kinship group refused to hand over a portion of the land to those who did not live in the village and did not cultivate the land.

However, the clan to which these families belonged established a committee of *šəmagəllä* in order to mediate between the conflicting family members by arguing that the urban branch of the family is a member of the *maḫbär* (solidarity committee) of the clan, and although they were living in the urban areas, they attended the clan ceremonies like marriages and funerals and contributed financially to the clan's welfare.[19] The *šəmagəllä* decided that the urban branch of the family has the right to possess land for house construction purposes to show their presence in the indigenous clan area. The rural branch of the family accepted the decision of the *šəmagəllä* because there is high respect to the elders and the decision was honoured.

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[19]   The *maḫbär* has the function of a "social fund" to support the needy members of the clan.

This case demonstrates the functionality of traditional mediators in an environment where decisions are made without the interference of juridical state institutions. It also shows that in contradiction of the government's land reform, customary law is still respected and applied with the silent approval of the state.

## IV. A Conflict Resulting from Non-Compliance of a Person Who Was Released on Bail

A businessman named Suleiman was arrested because he was involved in illegal hard currency transfer and his case was brought before the "special court".[20] After two months in prison, he was released on bail after having paid a fine of 100.000 Naqfa. The guarantor of the bail who had given his house worth two million Naqfa as a surety was obliged by the court to ensure that Suleiman would not leave the country illegally in case of further investigations. But Suleiman managed several times to get exit visas for business trips and he told the guarantor that his case was finalized.

However, after Suleiman had stayed abroad for almost one year, the special court invited the guarantor of the bail and asked him about the whereabouts of the businessman. The guarantor was not aware that the case was still pending, as Suleiman had left the country with an official exit visa. The court declared that it did not mind how he left the country but told the guarantor that he was obliged to make Suleiman return within two months and appear in front of the court; otherwise his house would be confiscated. The guarantor sent letters to inform the relatives of Suleiman and called him on the phone in Khartoum, Sudan in order to convince him to come back and face the allegations. Suleiman ignored this appeal and pretended to be sick with malaria. After two months had passed, the guarantor appeared in front of the court and asked for permission to go personally to Sudan, but his request was denied. He also asked for an official letter indicating that Suleiman is wanted by the court in order to send it to the Sudanese authorities, but this was also declined. Instead, he was given two months additional time to persuade the businessman to come back. Suleiman continued to refuse and moved from one Sudanese city to another to hide himself from the relatives of the guarantor who tried to put pressure on him and refused to receive the letters which the guarantor's brother wanted to hand over to him after having travelled to Khartoum. When the two months had passed, the special court gave another final two months of extension, after which the house would definitely be auctioned. They advised the guarantor to involve *šəmagəllä* of Suleiman's clan to oblige him to return. Finally, the *šəmagəllä* and his relatives succeeded in

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[20]  The Special or Military Court was introduced in 1995 to deal with corruption cases within the administration, but during the past years, it extended its activities on corrupt private businessmen, criminal acts, draft dodging, and theft. It is headed by military commanders who exercise their position as a judge without professional training. There is no right to appeal and no right to be defended by a lawyer.

convincing Suleiman that it was his responsibility to come back and face his case in order to get his file closed. To avoid the consequences he confronted, namely exclusion from his clan and collective sanctions against him and his relatives in future business activities by his own and the other Saho clans, and to avoid general confrontation and tensions between the clans involved, Suleiman finally returned to Asmara. He appeared in front of the court and the guarantor was released from his responsibility.

This case study makes clear that escaping justice at another person's expense is not tolerated by the traditional network of elders and mediators who will imply their own sanctions which may be more far-reaching than the ones of the law. Another peculiarity shown by this case is that even the special court, which is a creation of the PFDJ political culture and headed by military officers, relies on the traditional mediation system as a last stance in order to enact its authority.

## G. Conclusion

In spite of the rifts between the different groups of Eritrean society, it has been able to face extreme difficulties without resorting to violence, because there are traditional institutions like religious elders and mediators capable of resolving immanent conflicts. Customary laws have been functioning in the country for centuries, and the Italian legal system and its followers did not replace the traditional legal system. Thus, it stayed alive even after independence in 1991 and was accepted by the government as a stabilising factor.

The low rate of deviant behaviour in the country seems to be due to a combination of traditional norms and values as well as to those established by the liberation movements. Even today, people trust in the traditional institutions to solve problems concerning land, housing, property or family affairs, instead of turning to the modern court system. In 2004, the government introduced the so-called "community courts" which are supposed to apply customary law in their jurisdiction.

This paper focused on the customary law of the Saho ethnic group, which was first published in 1943 under the British Military Administration. It is partially based on regulations derived from the *šarīʿa* and contains many passages rooted in more ancient traditional sources of law.

The Saho tribes derive their identity from their common language, which belongs to the East-Cushitic language group, and their common religion and culture. They inhabit Eritrean territory in the coastal areas of the Red Sea, the Southern Region and Gaš-Barka. Their social organisation is based on family and kinship relations, playing a significant role in their agro-pastoralist way of life, and they own land collectively. In their decentralised political system, their leaders are democratically elected from the different sub-tribes. Until 1991, the chiefs of the sub-tribes were power-

ful leaders in their respective areas, and even nowadays, the government relies on their good offices to settle family and clan disputes within their own group or between different clans.

The Saho society maintained its system of self-governance for long periods and their legal system was passed orally from generation to generation. The elders and wise men of the tribe were responsible of keeping these traditions as records in their memories, until the law was printed in 1943. During the armed struggle, the clan leaders remained involved in resolving disputes and tensions between the different segments of the society, and after independence, they continued to play the same role in rural as well as in urban areas.

The law is practically applied when people involved in conflicts bring their grievance to the attention of the elders or wise men (ʿuqqāls) of the clan. The elders appoint šəmagəllä (mediators) to investigate the claim, and they ask the conflicting parties to name a guarantor in case of disappearance of the perpetrator. The aim of the process is to find a solution appeasing the conflicting groups by compensating the victim and his or her family. It is clearly stated in the traditional consensus, that the sub-tribe or tribe cannot escape responsibility for the criminal act committed by its member.

The different case studies reflect the functionality of the Saho customary law in present times, and that even modern courts rely on traditional mediation systems in order to find reasonable solution satisfying both conflicting parties.

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*Tigre abstract*

ባልሕት አከይ-መቅርሕ ወቀዋኒን ሰብ-ዐድ፥
– ፍንቱይ በሐስ ጋራት ሽዐብ ሳሆ

መጅተመዕ ኤርትርያ እብ ህግያ ወዓዳት ለልትፈነተየ ሴዕ ቆምየት ምነን ልትከወን። ክል-ቆምየት ናይ ኖሰ ፍንቱይ ዓዳት ወለመድ ወቀዋኒን ሰብ-ዐድ እሱ ትትመረሕ። ለቀዋኒን እብ ዐባዩ ዐድ፥ ዓቅላያ ወማግረሕት ደያናት ናይለ ምጅተመዕ ፈግር ወልትመረሕ። እለ ወረቀት እለ እሱል ናይለ ሂገ ሳሆ ለለትህነ ገባይለ፥ ናይ ለመድ ቀዋኒኑ ወዓራፍ ትፈስል። ተአሪካይ አሱር ቀዋኒን ሰብ-ዐድ ሳሆ አክል-ሕድ እሙር ምነም ኢገብእ ዐባዩ ወዕጋል ሽዐብ ሳሆ ምን ቀደም መደት ዲን እስላም ለአንበተ ቱ ልብሎ። እለ ቀዋኒን እለ እብ አፍ ሌጠ እንዴ ተሐፈዘ ምን ጂል ዲብ ጂል ለሐልፍ ዐለ። እት መደት መስተዕምራይ ሕክም እንግሊዚ ሌጠ ቱ እንዴ ተአከበ፥ ወትስጀለ ክዲብ ሰነት 1943 ለትጠብዐ። ሽዐብ ሳሆ ክም ዋዮ እብ ሐርስ ወርዕዮ ለለትነባበር ሽዐብ፥ ንዛም አትመቃርሐት ኖሱ መደት ረያም ሐፈዘ እቱ። እለ ክም ተአሪካይ አሳስ ናይለ ኩለን ቀባይለ ሳሆ ለለሐሸማጎ ወለልትመረሐ ቡ ቃኑ ሰብ-ዐድ ሳሆ እንጋል ልትርኬ ቡ። ለናይ ለመድ አግቡይ ዕሬ ወባልሐት አከይ-መቅርሕ ዲብ መደት ሕክም እስትዕማር አሮብዬን ምን ገብአ ወእት መደት አቶብእ እት ደረጀት ደዋይሕ አተላለ። እት ረእስ እሊ፥ እለ ወረቀት እለ አተሐዘቦት ናይ እሊ ቀዋኒን ሰብ-ዐድ ዲብ ናይ ዮም ሐዳስ ደውለት ኤርትርየ፥ ወሕኩመት ኤርትርያ እንጋል ናይ ለመድ አሽካል ማሕበራይ ተርቲብ ምጅተመዕ ወአግቡይ ዕሬ ወባልሐት አከይ-መቅርሕ እብ ከፎ ክም ትክህሉ ትሽርሕ። እምበልሁመ እለ ወረቀት እለ ክም መሰል ለገብእ ለትፈናተ ቀድያ እንዴ አምጸአት እሊ ቀዋኒን እሊ ሽቄ ክም ሀለ ተአመርዬ።

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# Social Construct and System in Tigre Tradition: A Contribution to Eritrean Customary Law

Hatem Elliesie[*]

*Abstract*

Countries on the Horn of Africa such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Sudan are blessed with diverse spheres of peoples and cultures. However, in contrast to the well-known traditions in the highlands of Eritrea and Ethiopia, especially those recorded in the Amarǝñña and Tǝgrǝñña speaking contexts, the varied formations of peoples in the lowlands have not been sufficiently examined. This paper responds to this desideratum by focusing on the social construct and system in "Tǝgre" tradition, a term that refers to both the language and the people who speak it. More precisely, this presentation will examine the *Mansāʿ* (**መንሳዕ**), a *Tǝgre*-speaking Christian and Muslim group of Eritrea. The *Mansāʿ* have been chosen because of their connatural written traditional law, known in the Tǝgre language as **ክልኤ፡ መንሳዕ፡ ድግም፡ ወፍትሕ፡ ወዓዶታት**፡ (*kǝlʾe Mansāʿ: dǝgǝm, wa-fǝtǝḥ, wa-ʿādotāt*), but more commonly referred to as the **ፍትሕ፡ መሓሪ** (*Fǝtǝḥ Maḥāri*). In addition, relevant *Tǝgre*-terms and selected aspects of customary conditions in the society will be discussed.

## A. Introduction

Prior to the arrival of the Italians in the Abyssinian territory, the various communities were, according to Yoḥannǝs Gäbrä-Medḥǝn,

> 'stateless' in the (modern) sense that they did not have a centralized political or administrative organization equivalent to a modern government. However, in most of those communities there was an orderly system and norms that wielded together groups of people sharing common ancestry, culture and language.[1]

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[1] Yohannes Gebremedhin: *The Challenges* (2004), p. 37.

Defined as biologically based but socially constructed pattern of human relationships relating to genealogy and filiations,[2] political and social relations basically revolved around kinship on the territory of pre-colonial Eritrea. By way of comparison, one is able to observe a more extensive publication activity in the academic circle regarding the highland communities as opposed to those of the lowland communities.[3] This might be predicated on the fact that the languages, cultures and social settings in the lowlands have been studied to a lesser degree, compared to those of the highland, e.g. especially the Təgrəñña.[4] This desideratum can be considered as the patchy survey of the originally prevailing social perceptions. The materials collected and published by Enno Littmann, however, still constitute "eine unschätzbare Quelle zu Leben und Kultur der Tigré-Leute" ("an invaluable source of life and culture of the Təgre people").[5] His contributions, not only to the second most widely used language on the territory of Eritrea, the *Təgre* language, remains a milestone for contemporary Eritrean and Ethiopian Studies.[6]

## B. The Social System in a Təgre Tradition

The second largest 'group' of people in Eritrea are also known as **ኻሳ** *ḵāsā* or ألخاصية *al-ḫāṣṣīya*. These terms do not refer to a homogenous group but to sub-tribes and kinship groups.[7] Moreover, the term *Təgre* also refer to their language.[8] By and large, the Təgre-speakers follow the Qādirīya and the Mīrġanīya dervish orders (*ṭarīqa*, pl. *ṭuruq*).[9] Apart from independent migrations of small groups to areas of nowadays

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[2]   Cp. Abbink: Kinship (2007), p. 403.

[3]   Likewise Miran: Constructing and Deconstructing the Tigre Frontier (2010), pp. 35f.

[4]   A distinguished survey, as to the *Təgrəñña* customary law, see: Kemink: *The Tegreñña Customary Law* (1988). See also Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF), Department of Public Administration, Research and Education Section, **ሕግታት እንዳባ** (*Ḥəggətat ʾəndabba*) (1986), p. 34f.

[5]   Bulakh: Die Tigré (2006), p. 73.

[6]   Zitelmann: Enno Littmann (2006), p. 103.

[7]   Trevaskis: *Eritrea* (1960), p. 14; Saleh Mahmud Idris: Tigre Dialects (2005), p. 46; Yohannes Gebremedhin: *The Challenges* (2004), pp. 167ff. See also ʾAddi Gäbrä: **ትምህርቲ ትግርኛ** (2000), pp. 23f; Saleh Mahmud Idris: Outline of the Kinship Terms (2010), p. 125.

[8]   The Kärän (Təgre: Karan) variety, also called **መንሳዕ** Mansāʿ, is considered to be the norm while the other varieties such as the **ቤኒ ዓምር** Beni ʿĀmər in the Gaš-Barka (Aqordat), Saḥəl (Tokar) and Sämhar are considered as rural and less prestigious dialects. However, as to written Təgre, Saləḥ Maḥmud Idris result of the latest research in Eritrea delivered to us that "written Təgre dialects belongs to no group specifically", see Saleh Mahmud Idris: Tigre Dialects (2005), pp. 45–73. See also Musa Aron: **ጽሕፍቲ ቋንቋ ትግረ** (2005); Täwäldä Təkkuʾ: **የኢትዮጵያ አንድነት እና ኢጣሊያ** (1990 ʿa.-mə.), pp. 354–358.

[9]   Id.: *Islam in Ethiopia* (1965), pp. 233ff.; Shack: *The Central Ethiopians* (1974), p. 91.

Sudan, the vast majority inhabit the semi-desert plateau and costal regions of the northern, western, and eastern lowlands of Eritrea.[10] Their customs have hardly been a subject of contemporary research (at least outside of Eritrea). Due to this fact, this paper presents the respective concept of the Mansāʿ (መንሳዕ) Təgre-speaking Christian and Muslim group of Eritrea whose population was estimated in the mid-20th century at 6,500.[11]

## I. General Characteristics

The Mansāʿ were an independent entity until the reign of King Fasilädäs, Səlṭan Säggäd [II] or ʿAläm Säggäd (r. 1632–1667). According to oral tradition, the *Mansāʿ* descend from a common ancestor called **መንሳዓይ** *Mansāʿāy* whose father **ዜድ** *Zed*, reported to be an offspring of the tribe *Qurayš,* emigrated from Arabia to Eritrea.[12] *Mansaʿāy*'s brother *Maryāy* is believed to be the ancestor of Marya. They are divided into two clans, the *Bet ʾƗṣaḥaqan* and the *Bet ʾAbrəhe*.[13]

## II. The Social Organization of መንሳዕ

The *Mansāʿ* ruling class were originally Christians and resisted Islam for a long time.[14] In the middle of the 19th century, however, the majority of the *Mansāʿ* converted from Orthodox Christianity to Islam (approx. between 1820 and 1850), especially due to concerted efforts of the *ʿAd Šek* and *ʿAd Nāʾib* families.[15] The leading reason for the transformation seems to have been the loss of their **ታቦት** (*tabot*), the Ark of the Covenant, which was not only a religious but a tribal symbol. Though ostensibly Islamic in belief, *Mansāʿ* still observe many Christian customs, keep Christian festivals, and invoke the name of Mary in rainmaking ceremonies.[16] The history of melting identities through migration and a continuing reorganization of societal orders finds its reflections in local literature and, foremost, in their written traditional law, known in the Təgre language as **ክልኤ፡ መንሳዕ፡ ድግም፡ ወፍትሕ፡ ወዓዶታት፡**

[10] Shack: *The Central Ethiopians* (1974), p. 67; Miran: Constructing and Deconstructing the Tigre Frontier (2010), p. 35.

[11] Nadel: *The Races and Tribes of Eritrea* (1944), p. 39; Favali / Pateman: *Blood, Land* (2003), p. 28; Volker-Saad: Mänsaʿ (2007), p. 735; Saleh Mahmud Idris: Outline of the Kinship Terms (2010), p. 125.

[12] See Muḥammad Idrīs Ḥamdī. عرف حكايات قانون النسب – مسعتين (2005), p. 16; Zärʾa-Yaʿqob Ɨsṭifanos / Wäldä-Maryam Abraham / Gärima Gäbrä-Mäsqäl: ሕግን ሥርዓትን ናይ መሬት ዓደ (1990), p. 469.

[13] Conti Rossini: *Tradizioni* (1901), pp. 69ff.; Rodén: *Le tribù dei Mensa* (1913), p. 1; Pollera: *Le popolazioni* (1935), p. 169; Omar: *Ethnien und Nationalstaaten am Horn von Afrika* (2001), p. 132.

[14] Werner Munzinger, in a letter dated 1865, refers to the **መንሳዕ** still Christian; quoted by Douin: *Histoire* (1933) p. 287.

[15] Pollera: *Le popolazioni* (1935), p. 176; Trimingham: *Islam* (1965), p. 162.

[16] Shack: *The Central Ethiopians* (1974), p. 91.

(*kəlʾe Mansāʿ: dəgəm, wa-fətəḥ, wa-ʿādotāt*), more commonly referred to as the **ፍትሕ፡መሓሪ** (*Fətəḥ Maḥāri*).[17] It dates back to the first part of the 15th century and took its name from that of its compiler, the legendary tribal hero *Maḥāri*.[18] Many refer to these laws[19] as "(traditional) codes". By way of legal methodology, however, they should not be considered as codes. But rather consolidated a set of rules agreed to previously by elders and/or qualified villagers.[20] Just as similar "contemplations of customs" known on the territory of today's Eritrea, the *Fətəḥ Maḥāri* contains detailed rules relating to the different status of the various classes within a complex society.

## 1. The Mansāʿ (መንሳዕ) Social Concept

The traditional social structure of the *Mansāʿ* can be classified as a 3-layer society:

a)   The ruling class is of *Saho* origin[21], hence their organization has been aristocratic with a ruling caste, the *Šəmāgalle* (ሽማገለ),

b)   a caste characterized as serfs or vassals, the *Təgre* (ትግረ) and

c)   a third class constituted the slaves that could be purchased and sold by the *Šəmāgalle* and even by some *Təgre*.

The *Šəmāgalle,* also described as nobility, ruled over the serf population, the *Təgre*, who did not share the Arabian descent of their masters.[22] This distinction between ruling class and serfs reminds one of the *Beni ʿĀmər* (ቢኒ ዓምር; Arabic: *Banī ʿĀmir /* بني عامر) social division, although the *Mansāʿ*-tribes were never part of the Beni ʿĀmər conglomerate which politically united many peoples of the north and west of present-day Eritrea.[23] Traditionally, every Beni ʿĀmər section (*badāna*)[24] and clan was divided between *Nabtāb*, the ruling class (the only ones considered "sons of ʿĀmir b. Kunnu" proper[25]), and *Təgre* (ትግረ), or serfs.[26] The *Nabtāb*, each of whom created their own autonomous sub-tribe, were loosely allied in the Beni ʿĀmər confederacy under the rule of either a *Dəglāl* (ድግላል) or a *Nāẓir* (ناظر),[27] who functioned as the paramount chief of their respective local community. The *Dəglāl* of the *ʿAd Ḥamad*

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[17]   Mikaʾel Ḥasama Rakka: ዛንታ ኤርትራ (1986), p. 42; 9.

[18]   Pollera: *Le popolazioni* (1935), p. 175; Favali / Pateman: *Blood, Land* (2003), p. 28.

[19]   "ሕጊ" (*ḥəggi*): Bocresion Haile G. Mussie: *The Collusion on Eritrea* (2007), p. 20.

[20]   Favali / Pateman: *Blood, Land* (2003), pp. 17f.

[21]   Killion: *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea* (1998), p. 10.

[22]   Volker-Saad: *Mänsaʿ* (2007), p. 736; Bulakh: *Die Tigré* (2006), p. 76.

[23]   Mikaʾel Ḥasama Rakka: ዛንታ ኤርትራ (1986), p. 125.

[24]   See Nadel: *The Races and Tribes of Eritrea* (1944), pp. 19ff.

[25]   See Trimingham: *Islam in Ethiopia* (1965), p. 156; Shack: *The Central Ethiopians* (1974), p. 71.

[26]   Id.: The Central Ethiopians (1974), p. 79.

[27]   Omar: *Ethnien und Nationalstaaten am Horn von Afrika* (2001), p. 145.

*Baḵīt* lineage (or ድጌ *Dəgge*; Beǧa: *Daka*) of *Aqordat* was recognized as the para-mount chief[28] who collected and paid tribute to the *Funǧ* sulṭān in Sinnār.[29]

Furthermore, this *Šəmāgalle-Tɘgre* concept bears the *Fətḥa Mägarəḥ* social regime of the Bogos grouping to one's mind, where we had an aristocracy "caste" (*Səmgär*), a notion formed according to tradition after *Nabtāb* and their *Tɘgre* equivalent (*Məḵiruḵʷ*).[30] Since many Tɘgre speaking people of the Bogos area adopt-ed the Bilen language and ethnicity,[31] a customary nexus can hardly be denied.[32]

## a. Šəmāgalle

To begin with, one should clarify that *Šəmāgalle* were masters in the sense of author-ity, not of personal ownership.[33] Accordingly, both the *Šəmāgalle* and *Tɘgre* were, in virtue of chapter 48 paragraph 2 of the *Fətəḥ Maḥāri* obliged to pay tribute to the king jointly, however, out of each ones assets:

> እምበል ፡ እሎም ፡ ሽማገለይ ፡ ልግባእ ፡ ማ ፡ ትግረይ ፡
> ጥልበት ፡ ንጉስ ፡ ክል ፡ ዎሮት ፡ ክም ፡ ማሉ ፡ ምስል ፡ ሀዩባ ።
>
> ʾḤmbal ʾɘllom Šəmāgallay lɘgbāʾ mā Tɘgray
> ṭɘlbat nɘgus kɘl worot kɘm mālu mɘsɘl hayubā.
> In addition to [except] the Šəmāgalle and the Tɘgre,
> each one of them, pay tribute to the king from his own assets.

Just as the other societal groupings, like the serfs or vassals, the *Tɘgre* (**ትግሬ**), the *Šəmāgalle* were tried. Chapter 2 paragraph 23 of the *Fətəḥ Maḥāri* states that

> ሽማገለይመ ፡ እት ፡ ዐገብ ፡ ዐቢ ፡ እንዶ ፡ ትጸበጠ ፡ ልትሀመጅ ፤
> ወሽማገለይ ፡ ቀጢን ፡ ልትበሀል ።
>
> Šəmāgallay-ma ʾɘt ʿagab ʿabi ʾɘndo tɘṣabbaṭa lɘthammaǧ
> Šəmāgallay qaṭin lɘ-tabahal.

28  Caffarel: La legislazione dell'Eritrea (1913), p. 169; Pollera: *Le popolazioni* (1935), pp. 226–229; Morin: Beni ʿAmɘr (2003), p. 528; Killion: *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea* (1998), p. 165; Favali / Pateman: *Blood, Land* (2003), p. 28.

29  Killion: *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea* (1998), p. 115.

30  Pollera: *Le popolazioni* (1935), p. 160; Trimingham: *Islam in Ethiopia* (1965), p. 166; Favali: Fɘtḥa Mägarəḥ (2005), p. 533; Smidt: Bilin (2003), p. 586.

31  See Munzinger: *Ueber die Sitten* (1859), pp. 42–46; id.: *Dei costumi* (1891), pp. 42–44; Favali / Pateman: *Blood, Land* (2003), p. 29.

32  Cp. Conti Rossini: *Tradizioni* (1901), p. 73, fn. 1.

33  d'Avray: *Lords of the Red Sea* (1996), p. 45.

If a Šəmāgalle is caught in serious [gross] offence,
he can loose his status as Šəmāgalle
and he is called a Šəmāgalle of lower[34] status.

## b. Təgre

In addition, Mansāʿ tradition distinguished between Islamic *Təgre* (**ትግራይ፡ እስሌማይ**) and Christain *Təgre* (**ትግራይ፡ ክስቴነይ**). Chapter 2 (**ፍትሕ፡ ወሐቅ፡ ሽማገለይ፡ ወትግረይ።**, *Fətəḥ wa-ḥaq Šəmāgallay wa-Təgray,* "The Right and Duties of *Šəmāgalle* and *Təgre*") of the *Fətəḥ Maḥāri* states in its paragraph 1 that

> **ምን፡ መምብሁ፡ ክልኤ፡ ገርሀት፡ ለለትጸባሕ፡ ትግረይ፡ እስሌማይ፡**
> **ፋዘጋ-ፋዘጋ፡ አርባዕ፡ ዋንጫ፡ ሔሳስ፡ ሀይቦ፡ ወሐቴ፡ ለለትጸባሕ፡ ክልኤ፡ ሀይብ።**
>
> *Mən mambəhu kəlʾe garhat la-ləṭṣabbāḥ Təgray ʾəslemay*
> *fāzagā-fāzagā ʾarbāʿ wānča ḥesās hayəbo wa-ḥatte la-ləṭṣabbāḥ kəlʾe hayəb.*
> A Muslim Təgre who takes two plots of land[35] from his lord (**መምብሁ** *mambəhu*) gives four *wānča* of butter every Easter and the one who gets one [plot] gives two [*wānča*s of butter].

> **ትግረይ፡ ክስቴነይ፡ ላታ፡ ምን፡ አሐሁ፡ ምን፡ ሐርድ፡ ማ፡ መን፡ ለመይት፡ ክል፡ ዶል፡**
> **ንሳሉ፡ እት፡ መምብሁ፡ ረፍዕ፡ ደኢኮን፡ ገርሀት፡ ቱ፡ ኢለትጸባሕ፡ ከገልጸ፡ ኢሀይብ።**
>
> *Təgray kəstenay lātā mən ḥarrəd mā man la-mayət kəl dol nəssālu ʾət*
> *mambəhu raffəʿ daʾikon garhat tu ʾiləṭṣabbāḥ ka-gəlṣā ʾihayəb.*
> Each time a Christian Tigre slaughters [one] of his cows or when he loses one [of his cows], he has to deliver its tongue to his lord, but he doesn't receive his [the lord's] land and he doesn't give *gelṣa*.[36]

If a serf [*Təgre*] were treated barbarously by his lord [*Šəmāgalle*], he could leave and seek his fortune elsewhere.[37] He may not even express his desire to leave his master after a quarrel ["**ትበአስ**"] but may also act accordingly as stipulated in chapter 2 paragraph 9 of the *Fətəḥ Maḥāri*:

> **ወሀዬ፡ ትግረይ፡ ምስል፡ መምብሁ፡ ምን፡ ልትበአስ፡ ከእብ፡ ጨሊቅ፡ እንደይ፡ ገይስ፡**
> **ዐለዮ፡ ምን፡ ሐዜ፡ ለመምብሁ፡ ሰለስ፡ ወእት፡ በሀለት፡ ሐቴ፡ እት፡ ምንሕት፡ ወሐቴ፡ እት፡**
> **ሽፍር፡ ወሐቴ፡ እት፡ ብዕራይ፡ መጽዐን፡ ነስእ፡ መኑ፡ ከጠልቆ።**
>
> *Wa-haye Təgray məsəl mambəhu mən lə-təbaʾas ka-ʾəb čaliq ʾənday gayəs ʿallayo mən*
> *ḥazze la-mambəhu salas waʾat bahalat ḥatte ʾət mənḥət wa-ḥatte ʾət šəfər wa-ḥatte*
> *ʾət bəʾrāy maṣʿan nassəʾ mannu ka-ṭalləqo.*

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[34]    **ቀጢን** *qaṭin*, literally "thin".
[35]    The literally meaning of **ለለትጸባሕ** *la-ləṭṣabbāḥ* is "lunch".
[36]    **ግልጸ** *gəlṣā* is the "tribute for a plot".
[37]    d'Avray: *Lords of the Red Sea* (1996), p. 45.

> And if a Tigre is in a quarrel with his lord [**መምብሁ**, *mambəhu*] and if he wants to migrate without running away secretly, his lord [**መምብሁ**, *mambəhu*] takes from him three cows, i.e. one for milk and one for pasture for manure and a ox for drought, and let him free.

Furthermore, he might even join a caravan as a servant, and if he did so, his *Šəmāgalle* had neither the right to call upon return nor to demand a punishment, as it was the case with a runaway slave. A *Təgre* who did depart in this fashion exiles himself from his tribal society – a step that no one would take lightly since the consequence could have been enslavement by some other tribe or by a band of raiders.[38]

### c. Slaves

As recorded in chapter 3 **ግብርነት** (*gəbrənnat,* slavery) paragraph 1 of the *Fətəḥ Maḥāri*, the Mansāʿ traditionally differentiate between two "**ጅንስ ፡ ግብርነት**", *ǧəns gəbrənnat* ("types of slavery")[39]*,* "black" and "red" slaves:

> ሰብ ፡ መንሳዕ ፡ አግብር ፡ ጸላይም ፡ ወቀይሒት ፡ ዐለው ፡ እሎም ።
>
> (*Sab Mansāʿ ʾagbər ṣalāyəm wa-qayḥit ʿalaw ʾəlom.*)
>
> The people of Mansāʿ had black and red slaves.

Formally, the main differences between the two types of slavery were the status within the society: While the red slave had the chance to express his wish to be free with the consent of a lord*,* "When the red slave wants to get out of slavery [wish to get free], he asks his lord"[40]. An equivalent right to release oneself was not intended for black slaves, as clearly penned in the wording

> "እብ ፡ ነይ ፡ ለፍገራት ፡ ላት ፡ ገብር ፡ ጸሊም ፡ ሰልፍ ፡ ለሓራ ፡ ኖሱ ፡ ጋር ፡ ኢወዴ ፡ እታ ፡
> ወሓር ፡ ሃዬ ፡ ሓዘያማ ፡ ምን ፡ ገብእ ፡ መምብሁ ፡ እግል ፡ ለፍገሮ ፡ ኢፈቴ ።
> ከፍትሕ ፡ ፍገራቱ ፡ ድሉይ ፡ ኢኮን ።"[41]
>
> *ʾƎb nay la-fəggarāt lāt gabər ṣallim saləf la-ḥarā nosu gār ʾiwadde ʾəttā wa-ḥar haye ḥazayāma mən gabbəʾ mambəhu ʾəgəl lafgərro ʾifatte.*
>
> *Ka-fətəḥ fəggarātu dəluy ʾikon.*
>
> Regarding the process of granting freedom for the black slave, firstly, he himself doesn't care about being free and, even then, if he wishes, his lord doesn't want to free him.
>
> So, a [respective] regulation [in the *Fətəḥ Maḥāri*] is not known.

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[38]   d'Avray: *Lords of the Red Sea* (1996), p. 45.

[39]   Cf. **ፍትሕ ፡ መሓሪ** (*Fətəḥ Maḥāri*), chapter 3 **ግብርነት** (*gəbrənnat*), par. 5.

[40]   Cf. ibid., par. 6.

[41]   **ፍትሕ ፡ መሓሪ** (*Fətəḥ Maḥāri*), chapter 3 **ግብርነት** (*gəbrənnat*), par. 4.

## 2. Individual Ranks and their Role in the መንሳዕ-society

Historically, Mansāʿ communities were guided by a chief, *Käntebāy* (ከንቴባይ). The Təgre title *Kantebāy* is a derivation of the term *käntiba* (ከንቲባ, Gəʿəz pl. *käntäbt;* Təgrəñña pl. *känättəb,* also *käntäbti, käntibatat*). The term ከንቴባይ has been used mainly in two different ways in the Ethiopian and Eritrean history, depending on the region and time. It meant either a city governor, as the representative of the monarch, or, in the north, a quite autonomous regional governor.

In the northern region, specifically in the Təgre context, the title dates back to the early 18th century. Due to a power struggle and conflict with increasing frequency with Ḥamasen, the then head of the Ḥabab, a Christian Mansāʿ was nominated by the emperor Iyasu, the ሥዩመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዘኢትዮጵያ (*Śəyyumä-əgziabəḥer nəguśä-nägäśt zä-Ityopya*).[42] The newly honored *Kantebāy* was given the outward and visible signs of his rank: a robe, a gold bracelet and a *nägarit.* The latter ceremonial drum was used in Ethiopia to call to arms all those entitled to, and thus bound to, use them when summoned by the *Nəguśä-Nägäśt* or his representatives.[43] The *nägarit* came to be the sign of authority; its possession an essential element in a claim to the *Kantebāy*-ship.[44] In the *Mansāʿ* context in specific, the *nägarit* could also be used to accompany important announcements such as the declaration of a slave becoming a free man.[45] According to Wolbert Smidt, this form of legitimation maintained even after the Ḥabab had lost their ties to the Ethiopian center due to their Islamization and the colonization of Eritrea.[46]

The change of faith resulted in a new *šarīʿa*-influenced interpretation of matters of the *Personalstatut* in general and the Christian-shaped rules of marriage – quite typical for such a socio-religious transition on the Horn of Africa – in specific. By giving wider room to plural marriage,[47] the number of legitimate sons in any given generation was greatly increased. This led to a situation in which new challenges to the Mansāʿ society arose: succession and inheritance among the *Šəmāgalle,* and, most significantly, in the descent of the *Kantebāy*-ship became complex. More parties expanded and the most powerful of which were armed, and seized the *nägarit,* and, with it, the power. These trials of strength and discord grew naturally with the growth of new branches of sub-tribes. Thus, the title was also likely to move from one branch of the family to another as a strong adult with a forceful following over-

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[42] Cp. d'Avray: *Lords of the Red Sea* (1996), p. 45; Smidt: Kantiba (2007), p. 338.

[43] Pollera: *Le popolazioni* (1935), p. 195.

[44] d'Avray: *Lords of the Red Sea* (1996), pp. 46, 50.

[45] Höfner: *Das Feteḥ Maḥārī: Sitte und Recht der Mänsaʿ* (1952), p. 658; Rodén: *Le tribù dei Mensa* (1913), p. 101.

[46] Smidt: Käntiba (2007), p. 338.

[47] Cf. EPLF Research Branch: Eritrean Traditions (13 January 1996), p. 7.

rode the rights of a nephew or cousin. It seems, however, that a strong cultural sentiment towards usurpation remained – the eldest son of a *Kantebāy* ought himself to be the next *Kantebāy*.[48]

Reflecting the social structure and system in Təgre tradition, it is indispensable to pose the question of communal leadership of which the specific *Šəmāgalle*-concept and the *Kantebāy*-ship have been raised. What remains to be clarified is the term *Šum* (ሹም). Just as the terms *Šəmāgalle* and *Kantebāy*, *Šum* has different meanings to different groups in different times. Everyone who relies on or believes to find explanations in secondary literature hits upon a quite diffuse and unsatisfactory picture when it comes to a classification in the Təgre context. And while the primary research sources are rich in information, getting to it and its analysis is a labored undertaking. Enno Littmann's vast collection of Təgre texts constitutes therefore even more a welcomed and adjuvant source. As mentioned, the *Dəglāl* of the *Beni ʿĀmər* can be considered an equivalent to a *Kantebāy* in Mansāʿ tradition, where a *Šum* – nowadays also called *ʿUmda* (عمدة) in the Sudan – is in charge of certain sub-tribes. According to chapter 28 paragraph 1 of the *Fətəḥ Maḥari*

> ሽመት ፡ ለሐዜ ፡ እናስ ፡ አግዳ ፡ ምን ፡ ንጉስ ፡ ሐዝየ ።
> *Šəmat la-ḥazze ʾənās ʾagədda mən nəgus ḥazzəya.*
> The man who wants to have the lordship (ሽመት)
> seeks it mostly from the king.

Having said that it should be noted that it was still difficult to determine *Kantebāy* nor *Šum* in *Maryāy-Təgre* customs. Alessandro Bausi's studies, however, carried out at the Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", based on documents collected by him during his fieldwork in Eritrea, should be mentioned in this context. He raised the question regarding the Təgre word መኪት (maket), which means, according to Enno Littmann and Maria Höfner, "*Höriger / Vassal*".[49] Alessandro Bausi identified the Təgrəñña word – based on Carlo Conti Rossini's research – with a similar word, *maqet*,[50] with "the same meaning".[51] So far, it remains unclear how this group fits within the Təgre paradigm. It should, however, be noted that, at least in the Ḥabab area, the Təgre word መኪት refers to a council of *Šum*s.[52]

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[48]   See d'Avray: *Lords of the Red Sea* (1996), p. 97.
[49]   Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (1962), p. 133.
[50]   See Conti Rossini: 'Aethiopica' (1923), pp. 365–382; 373–374 (§ 6).
[51]   Bausi: Documents (2001), p. 154.
[52]   I would like to thank Saleh Mahmud Idris for this note during his stay in Berlin, Germany in April 2009.

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*Tigre abstract*

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# Rabʿat:
# The Tigre Traditional Youth Organization

## Mohammed-Ali Ibrahim[*]

*Abstract*

The *Rabʿat* is a very popular and widespread traditional organization throughout the Təgre communities. It is a community system which stands for social works, entertainment, and jousts in the communities. The *Rabʿat* is common in the Bəlin and Hədārab ethnic groups also but it is more organized and more regular practice in the Təgre ethnic group. This paper examines the *Rabʿat*'s role and practices in the Təgre ethnic group only. Although the *Rabʿat* is still alive in many adults' memories its use has deteriorated over time. Its practices have become limited to some occasions and in very limited areas due to the expansion of governmental services and the integration of different communities. When *Rabʿat*'s were operating we knew who was clever and dynamic in our community but now we know nothing about each others potential. "We just become equal like the donkeys teeth," said Idris ʿAli Dəraʿ one of the former *Rabʿat* leaders. He is still assigned as a community leader but according to him, his current role doesn't satisfy him as much as his previous work with the *Rabʿat*. He also said he had inherited most of his knowledge on public administration from his previous time of leading the *Rabʿat*.

The *Rabʿat* can be a real example of the traditional community's democratic skills on managing their affairs. It really shows how people love jousts and democracy not only for themselves but for the coming generations too. It is also a mechanism by which people can transfer their values, attitudes and beliefs to others. Currently such rich communities' experiences and the traditional democracy are dying out. It only remains in adult memories and is practiced during minor occasions. At the same time the young people are losing rich democratic and local practices. If these practices decline at this rate, they will disappear in few generations. This is why the writer decided following a long period of data collection, to write this document especially, though the *Rabʿat* was working as an administrative system and value transmitter as it has never existed in written form before. People were transmitting its practices and rules from generation to generation orally.

The data was collected through participatory research approaches, focus group discussions, interviews and free chatting. All this information is collected from people orally so it was not possible for the writer to undertake a literature review or background

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references on the organization. Due to this the data collection has taken more than seven months in different areas. It was difficult for the researcher to go to all the different corners of the nation where the Tǝgre people live. The researcher therefore selected national service bases as a major target and areas of common immigration such as Gāš Barka (the national food basket area and comfortable places for livestock) as a second preferable target area. The third major target was in the refugee resettlement areas in Gāš Barka. The last option was going to different geographical locations. The research was followed by a final workshop for all Tǝgre tribal representatives in Kärän. At that workshop people came from different places, discussed the collected information and offered additional information. The workshop objectives were to collect new information, to harmonize the collected information according to clan practices and to evaluate the public responses to the gathered information. The workshop was enjoyable and it had a fruitful outcome.

Objectives: 1. To document the oral practices. 2. To expose the traditional culture to wider communities. 3. To create good bases for further research. 4. To explore links between the traditional and the modern organizations. The content of this paper is organized based on the *Rabʿat*'s activities. It includes meaning, structure, the election system, principles, jousts and laws of the organization. It also refers to the relationships and roles of the different age groups within the community. The researcher strongly recommends the revival, modification and implementation of these practices in a modern system especially for the given communities. Introduction of this system in schools could help comparisons to modern democracy and encourage further research on community potentials.

## A. Introduction

A *Rabʿat* is a common traditional youth organization throughout the Tǝgre ethnic group. This traditional organization was based on small tribes and clans who live together. In the beginning rules and regulations of this organization were dictated by tribal rules and general regulations which they call *Nǝggārat*. Each tribe of the Tǝgre ethnic group used to have one *Nǝggārat* which had general rules and regulation for leading and coordinating the whole tribe. The youth organization was a branch of the *Nǝggārat* and was used in order to have common regulations for all youth who belong to one tribe.

Due to a community's mobility and resettlement based on natural resource, different tribes came to settle together. The youth normally played and worked together if they were in one place, so as a matter of practical convenience they set their rules based on settlements rather than tribes. Generally the youth organization and rules were the same but there were some minor differences based on the nature of their work and kinds of play.

The organization of this paper is based on the organization of the *Rabʿat*. It covers even the minor differences within the organization and the ethnic group. Informa-

tion was first collected from grassroots organizations in different geographical locations. All the information was summarized under common topics and a summary of all groups was compared and organized in order. After all these processes, all the common regulations and systems were put together and the differences were indicated in each topic.

This organization was popular in the absence of governmental presence and educational services in the Tǝgre areas. People were using it as a means of socialization and as a means of developing regulations, teamwork and networking systems between themselves and their new generations. Now with the presence of governmental services and the interference of different circumstances such as the integration of different communities, the traditional organization is deteriorating over time. There is no official recognition and encouragement practice, of traditional organizations. As a result it is dyeing off.

## B. What is *Rabʿat*?

The word *Rabʿat* originated from *Rabaʿ*. In the Tǝgre language *Rabaʿ* means the right age for physical and mental fitness. Most of the time people use *Rabaʿ* for camels. A camel who has reached the right age for carrying a maximum load and growing a maximum number of teeth is called *Rabaʿ*. It is also applicable for other animals and men. So *Rabʿat* means the right age group who has physical and mental fitness to work, lead, judge, play, and fight on behalf of their communities and themselves.

The *Rabʿat* incorporates both sexes of the given age group and is active in all kinds of social, economic and political activities of the community. They participate at jousts/legal delimitations as well. Similarly if there is any kind of violence the village's *Rabʿat* takes a lead either on fighting or on conflict resolution.

There are two different kinds of *Rabʿat*, namely *Rabʿat Nǝggārat* and *Rabʿat Dǝllālat*. *Rabʿat Nǝggārat* is the original and large *Rabʿat* which is more permanent in villages. *Rabʿat Nǝggārat* means the age group who can act together as one sound or who can come together by one calling of the drum. They do all the ruling and working activities. *Rabʿat Nǝggārat* contains all the boys and girls who are in the right age group and in the same area. The number of *Rabʿat Nǝggārat* varies depending on the number of the age groups in the village or villages.

In contrast *Rabʿat Dǝllālat* is occasional and small and is a subset of the *Rabʿat Nǝggārat*. So it stands to serve the new house and the new family only.
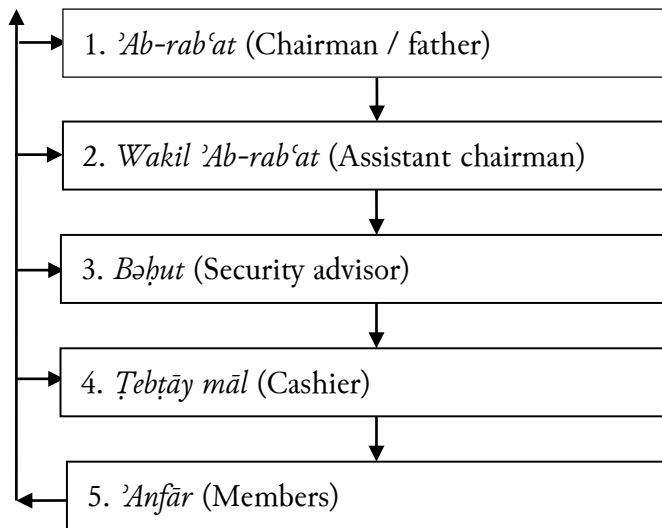
The *Rabʿat Dǝllālat* members make their own rules and regulations for leading the organization and to make the bride and bridegroom's time more pleasant. Its members might be members of *Rabʿat Nǝggārat* with some additional members. It is created for weddings and honeymoons only and has a limited mandate. The *Rabʿat*

*Dəllālat* facilitates wedding ceremonies and works hard to make the time for the bride and the bridegroom memorable one for a month after the wedding ceremony.

The *Rabʿat Dəllālat* is formed by friends of the bride and the bridegroom. First they make all the pre-preparation for the wedding then they work hard on the wedding ceremony itself and lastly they help the bride and bridegroom have a pleasant time on their honeymoon. *Rabʿat Dəllālat* generally works only for around 40 days but they can start again with another wedding. So it is a sort of continuous process with every wedding and different members.

## I. Organizational Structure of *Rabʿat*

The *Rabʿat* has five separate positions each with a specific job description, responsibility and accountability. Most *Rabʿat Nəggārat* has this structure but in some cases if the number of people in the organization is limited or if they formulate an organization for a definite period of time they might have only three or four positions.

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| 1. *ʾAb-rabʿat* (Chairman / father) |
| 2. *Wakil ʾAb-rabʿat* (Assistant chairman) |
| 3. *Bəḥut* (Security advisor) |
| 4. *Ṭebṭāy māl* (Cashier) |
| 5. *ʾAnfār* (Members) |

## 1. *ʾAb-rabʿat* (Father of the Organization)

The chairman is responsible for all internal and external affairs of an organization. He can legally act and make decisions on behalf of the organization. The chairman prepares organizational duties, provides information, instructions, and gives orders to all members. Similarly the chairman/chairwoman is responsible for proposing new organizational rules and making sure they are implemented. The chairman is responsible for maintaining jousts and judging organizational members' cases by coordinating the members. The chairman leads and calls organizational meetings.

The *Rabʿat*'s chairman is accountable to all the members. If a chairman/chairwoman wants to take any action, he/she has to inform the members and get agreement from them. In urgent conditions he has the responsibility to take action and report back on the situation to the members.

If he takes action on daily/normal issues without consultation of members, he could be punished based on the rules. If the chairman of the *Rabʿat* misses an appointment with a member for no reason, the *Rabʿat* members take the responsibility to act on behalf of the chair. They take any property without his permission and run their programs. If he comes back while they are running their activities, first they punish him before any talk or action. After the punishment members can hear the chairs reasons for not coming to the appointment.

## 2. *Wakil ʾAb-rabʿat* (Assistant Chairman)

The assistant chairman is responsible for checking organizational activities and acting on behalf of the chairman in his absence and is responsible for following and running all internal and external affairs. He assists the chairman in different activities. The assistant acts on minor internal affairs. Members of the organization can make their requests to the assistant if they need minor things for registration and other domestic activities. The assistant registers all matters and gives answers to most things but in case of serious issues the chairman is made aware and calls a meeting to inform all members.

## 3. *Bəḥut* (Security Adviser)

The security adviser follows internal and external failures/mistakes of the organization. He is responsible for following the members, leaders and other community activities related to the organization. In the absence of the assistant, the security adviser can work as a second person to a chairman. If both the assistant and the chairman are not available the security advisor takes responsibility for the whole organization.

The security advisor transfers information from members to organizational leaders and from leaders to members. He assesses all the organization's weaknesses and works hard to correct organizational failures. He is accountable for any negative aspects of the organization. If there is any weak side in the *Rabʿat* he has to point it out and inform all the *Rabʿat* members.

If he fails to do so the *Rabʿat* members are responsible for questioning him and even punishing him for his negligence. Similarly the security advisor sorts out all kinds of information and channels information to the right people. Generally he is given secret information from sources.

### 4. *Ṭebṭāy māl* (Cashier)

The cashier is in charge of the money and the accounts. He is responsible for recording, storing, reporting and making the money balance.

He is not allowed to spend money without permission of either the leaders or all members except in a case of an emergency. The cashier reports to organizational leaders and members.

All members have to know the amount of money they have, the amount of expenditure and reasons why it has been spent. So they always inform members when there is any new income and expenditure. Most of the time they spend money when all the members agree to it.

If they spend money before they get permission from the organizational members they have to call a meeting and explain the reason. Based on their regulations members should discuss and come to a unanimous decision on how, when and how much to spend and what to keep. In case of an emergency any member is allowed to spend any amount and to keep an accurate report for the members and the leaders.

### 5. *ʾAnfār* (Members)

The supreme power of the organization is in the members. All decisions are made by the majority number of members. Leaders are coordinators and organizers only. They create the space for members to make decisions whether it is on jousts, works or expenses.

If the chairman and other leaders make a decision without involving members in normal conditions they are accountable for it. However they are allowed to take any measure in case of an emergency. Emergence by the *Rabʿat* measurement is any duties which need fast response and action.

Members act in all organizational duties, decisions and economic contributions. They are active implementers of the organizational plans too. E.g., if the cashier gets money from any sources he has to report to the chairman, similarly the chairman reports to all the members. After that the members can decide on how, where and when to spend that money. Even if the chair has different ideas he has to discuss his ideas with the members otherwise he is not allowed to make his own decision.

Most of the organizational duties are coordinated by the chairman. The other three leaders support the chairman in carrying out organizational activities. So if the number of their organization is limited they don't need to have the whole structure of leaders. In some small organizations they only elect a chairman and a cashier and conduct the rest of the activities with the members.

The *Rabʿat* is not just a bureaucratic organization. It is not restricted to rules and leaders activities only. All *Rabʿat* rules, regulations, values, obligations, responsibilities, material and financial properties are open to every individual member. Since

organizational regulations and properties are open to every individual and any member has full rights, obligations and responsibilities to perform an organizational role in the absence of the leaders.

Every member is obligated to take action in case of emergency. After that he/she is responsible to report his/her actions to the chairman and the chairman explains the actions to all members of the organization. On the other hand if someone who is working on behalf of the organization encounter some loses or challenges on his/her action the whole organization is responsible for it. The organization can punish an individual but they take full responsibility of the action taken by their member.

In the case of the absence of all leaders members can discuss what action to take. However, when there is only one member alone and there is a case of emergency which should be solved by his organization he has to take action to solve it either by cash or by materials.

For example if a group of guests come to a village and spend a night there, a member of the *Rabʿat* is responsible for providing the guests with enough food, water and other supplies. He can slaughter sheep or goats to feed them. He can also order villagers to bring food, water and offer other supplies. When the chairman of *Rabʿat* returns he gives a full report of all his actions and the expenditure he made. At the same time the chairman gives a full report to his members. After that they pay back all expenses to the person involved and in addition they have to thank him. If they want contributions from the families they discuss with the tribal elders and get back their money from them.

Once boys create a *Rabʿat* in one village, girls have to create a *Rabʿat* following the same structure and same age group. All regulations, responsibilities and structure of the girls *Rabʿat* is similar to the boys *Rabʿat*. The only difference being the practicality of the job. The function of the boys *Rabʿat* is different from the function of the girls *Rabʿat*. Most of the time girls are active in domestic activities and boys do duties outside the houses. However, the two groups coordinate their activities and they have strong work relations.

The chairwoman is called *ʾǝm Rabʿat* or *Kamanda* which means the mother of the organization. The rest have similar names as the boy's leaders. Both boys and girls organizations are considered as one organization. They coordinate all their activities. They act as one body with any external organizations and community members, though in their internal affairs they have specified systems/channels of transferring their information, order and communications. All girls communicate with their leaders. If they want to ask something from boys *Rabʿat* they have to go through the chairwoman of their *Rabʿat*. The chairwoman communicates directly with the chairman of the boys *Rabʿat*. When boys and girls have common decisions, they come together to make the decision. They discuss and vote equally on issues. The final decision is made based on the highest number without consideration of any gender

differences. But the chairman takes responsibility of facilitating a meeting of both organizations.

Both boys and girls organizations take similar responsibility and they work on behalf of each other. If the boy's organization gets any duties related to the girl's organization they don't decline it, or say 'this is not our duty'. They take that responsibility and transfer it to the girl's *Rab'at* through their chairwoman. The chairman transfers any information to the chairwoman. Then she organizes her group and performs the duties. Similarly, the chairwoman reports her organizational performance to the chairman.

The girls' *Rab'at* work and accept things on behalf of the boys' *Rab'at*. They follow similar processes as explained above. When it comes to organizational activities evaluation, they come together and evaluate both negative and positive aspects. Leaders work together to know each others organizational activities and failures. Practically they are one organization with different job descriptions. When they come to specific issues of girls, the girls *Rab'at* chairwoman takes over the floor to respond and clarify the conditions. After that all the girl's leaders and other members can comment before boys.

Generally both boys and girls *Rab'at*s act together in most cases. They are responsible for common duties in their respective village. Their major identity is cooperation, integration, unity and solidarity. Sometimes the local community calls them (*Wəlād Nəggārat*) which means a group who can act together as one sound. Or they can respond together in one sound.

## II. Relationship of the *Rab'at* with Other Age Groups

As explained above a *Rab'at* is only one age group of both sexes. This age group lives and works with the other age groups in harmony. The relationship of the *Rab'at* with other age groups might clearly indicate its role on the community as a whole. It could also clarify the following questions:

– How do *Rab'at* come to power?
– Who is going to replace them?
– How do they inherit organizational culture?
– Why do they follow the same process in all generations?
– What is the role of the old people on supporting and recognizing *Rab'at*?

To get more clarification let us have a look at the following traditional age classification. The *Rab'at* is not limited to one generation or age group only. It is a community cultural practice that transfers from generation to generation through common regulations. All community members pass through the same practices, so they appreciate and support its sustainability. At the same time the younger generation is eager to join it because they appreciate it based on their family's memories.

The *Rabʿat* gives a chance for older people to teach new generations and it gives an opportunity to the youth to practice leadership and the responsibilities of taking care of community values and culture. It is a process of learning administrative skills based on community values and criteria.

There are four different age categories in the community. Two age groups are older than *Rabʿat* and two age groups are younger than it. *Rabʿat* allows youth to take full responsibility and play a leading role in their community. *Rabʿat* is the most active and dominant age group, which plays a great role in community affairs.

The youngest age group is called *Damaddəm* in the Local language. *Damaddəm* are children who can't take social responsibility and work for the community but they are supposed to learn from others. They are below age 11. *Damaddəm* are allowed to observe and practice *Rabʿat*'s activities but they are not requested to sit with *Rabʿat* in all activities. They are free from any responsibility.

*Rabʿat* follows and advises them based on the community values. If they come to dancing *Rabʿat* allows them to observe and practice without any obligation. *Rabʿat* gives them advice but they can't punish them.

The second age group is called *Šəkəl* in the local language and is the next age group before the *Rabʿat*. They are around ages 12–18 for boys and 11–15 for girls. They follow *Rabʿat*'s footsteps and work closely with *Rabʿat*. *Šəkəl* is requested to play an active role in all kinds of *Rabʿat*s activities. They come to play with *Rabʿat* as a group.

*Rabʿat* gives them their own turn at dancing. When *Rabʿat* sits for judgment *Šəkəl* comes and follows the process with them but *Šəkəl* are not obliged to be treated as members. If any member of the *Šəkəl* committed a crime the *Rabʿat* sit and discuss the issue just like *Rabʿat*'s members, finally they let him/her free with advice only.

*Šəkəl* prepare themselves for the next age role or *Rabʿat* as they replace the existing *Rabʿat*, so they are requested to practice all *Rabʿat*'s activities. Similarly the existing *Rabʿat* is responsible for training them in the right way. For any failure by the *Rabʿat* people blame the former *Rabʿat* who handed over the power to it.

Based on the community rules *Šəkəl* is not accountable to *Rabʿat* rules. They only learn the whole process through practical participation. In some areas *Rabʿat* gives minor punishment to *Šəkəl* members. They call such punishments *Zanab*. *Zanab* is the lowest punishment of *Rabʿat*. For example if the *Rabʿat* member is requested to bring a goat based on the mistakes he committed, they ask the *Šəkəl* members to bring one kilo of sugar on the same crime. If *Šəkəl* members see failures in *Rabʿat* members, they have the right to accuse and to sit as witnesses.

In some villages if the *Šəkəl* become mature enough and the previous *Rabʿat* is not ready to hand over their power *Šəkəl* have a right to formulate their own *Rabʿat*. In such situations a village could have a young and old *Rabʿat*.

Rules and regulation of both *Rabʿat* are the same. The young *Rabʿat* members have no right to formulate their own rules. Only one *Rabʿat* rules in one village so the old *Rabʿat* is dominant in the village. This is very rare since most of the time the old *Rabʿat* gives its power to *Šəkəl* when the right age and maturity is reached.

The third age category is called *Gədama*. *Gədama* are members of a former *Rabʿat* that handed over its power to the new *Rabʿat*. *Gədama* are around age 30–40 for men and 20–35 for women. They are busy with their family duties. *Gedama* are allowed to come to *Rabʿat*'s work, play, judgment and other duties and can accuse *Rabʿat* in case of any failures. At the same time *Rabʿat* treat them equally as members, if they make any mistake they are punished since they know all the rules.

On the other hand *Rabʿat* members take a lead on any work. *Gədama* give consultation but are not working with *Rabʿat* members. When *Gədama* come to dancing time *Rabʿat* give them their turn as a group. Even if only one *Gədama* member comes the *Rabʿat* give him/her a turn in the name of *Gədama*. Anybody can dance with him on his time. If *Rabʿat* doesn't give a turn to *Gədama*, the older groups accuse the whole *Rabʿat*.

When *Rabʿat* encounters something beyond its capacity, it transfers it to *Gədama*. Similarly if *Rabʿat* has an internal conflict and they cannot manage to resolve it, they take the case to *Gədama* first. *Gədama* take any intervention after *Rabʿat*'s trial. *Gədama* supervise, guide, instruct, advise and shape the *Rabʿat*. *Rabʿat*s act on behalf of the whole village. *Gədama* works to make the villages social and economic activities perfect by shaping *Rabʿat* properly.

The oldest age group is called *Garadwāt* in the local language. *Garadwāt*'s intervention is very limited in the *Rabʿat*. Since they are old they don't participate in dancing and work with the *Rabʿat*. They are respected and all age groups serve them. If *Rabʿat* members are not present *Gədama* take responsibility of any communal duties on behalf of the village.

In resolving conflicts first it is the responsibility of the *Rabʿat* to address any issue. The *Rabʿat* then transfers difficult conflicts to *Gədama* and *Gədama* transfer it to *Garadwāt* if it is difficult for them. When *Rabʿat* and *Gədama* fail to understand a rule they consult *Garadwāt*. So *Garadwāt* are considered the best and the most respected teachers of the community values, rules and regulations. They are given high consideration on conflict resolution and consultation. In contrast the *Garadwāt* has a very limited role in work and dancing.

Contribution of each of these five age groups makes up the community socio-economic systems. But the leading responsibility is always given to the middle age group, which is the *Rabʿat*. Though the *Rabʿat* has full power/mandate for running social works, leading community ceremonies, dancing and other duties, the most respected age group are *Garadwāt*. Similarly *Gədama* has full power of shaping and advising *Rabʿat*.

There is coordination and harmony among the age categories. Each age group respects the other age groups and together they participate and discuss at every community occasion. The younger age group respects the older groups on work. For Example *Damaddəm* do minor works for *Šəkəl* and *Rabʿat*. *Šəkəl* do most of the work for *Rabʿat*. *Rabʿat* works for *Gədama* and *Garadwāt*. If *Gədama* and *Garadwāt* are left alone *Gədama* do the work.

Generally *Damaddəm* are requested to watch and learn, *Šəkəl* are requested to learn and help *Rabʿat*, *Rabʿat* are supposed to take the whole responsibility, of work, play, judgment and defenses. *Gədama* are responsible for shaping and guiding *Rabʿat* and *Garadwāt* take an advisory role.

## III. Leader Election in *Rabʿat*

When the existing *Rabʿat* is ready to hand over its power, they inform *Šəkəl* to prepare a ceremony. *Šəkəl* slaughter goats and prepare traditional dancing in coordination with *Rabʿat*. The old *Rabʿat* invites representatives of different age groups on the occasion. After spending a joyful time of eating and dancing, all participants sit in a circle for the actual election. The old *Rabʿat*'s chairman chairs the meeting. The chairman informs participants that the old *Rabʿat* is handing over the power to the new generation which is categorized as *Šəkəl*. Participants congratulate the new age group and give their comments on the former *Rabʿat* activities. The old generations give information to the new *Rabʿat* members from their past experiences as well. In this accession all participants tell much about the importance and the role of *Rabʿat*. They tell stories of their *Rabʿat* time.

After sharing experiences and expressing their expectations of the *Rabʿat*, participants hold a leaders election. First the old *Rabʿat* chair takes a lead and says 'Now we are here for a leader's election'. The new *Rabʿat* is responsible of electing its leaders. But we suggest Mr. X who had been tested with us for a year or more. 'Actually they give him time to practice with them'. This time the new *Rabʿat* members respect the old *Rabʿat* opinion. The other age groups also rely on them because it is their responsibility to hand over their power to the right man. If they know a bad habit on that elected boy/girl they can say 'Yes you are right but Mr. X has done such and such but because of such reason he/she can't lead *Rabʿat*'. Although such things are very rare they can disqualify that person from the election. Normally the old *Rabʿat* members consult other people and look at the person critically before they teach him/her to be the next leader. At the same time other age groups work with them closely. They can get information easily in their village.

Due to these reasons most of the time participants accept the first elected person as a chair of a new *Rabʿat* and they all congratulate him/her. When they finish the chairman/chairwoman election they ask the new *Rabʿat* members to elect the other leaders. At this stage all participants become observers only.

The new *Rabʿat* group selects a person and explains the reason why he/she prefers him/her. At the end they count the number of supporters. The one who has the most number of supporters become an assistant.

Once the assistant is elected they go to *Bəḫut* (security advisor). Security advisor is also determined by the highest number of people who vote for him. When they complete the election the chairperson is responsible for assigning a cashier. The other age groups can also give comments if they have a different opinion but they don't act as *Rabʿat* members.

Any one who is elected by the *Rabʿat* to become a leader has no right to refuse/reject. He must accept it and serve them in his/her position. If someone refuses to be a leader they consider it as cheating the community, and give him strong punishment.

If the chairman/chairwoman of the *Rabʿat* doesn't work properly they can replace him at anytime. However the replacement and resignation go through legal and clear process. First the *Rabʿat* members give him/her information about all his/her failures. If he/she doesn't show any progress or improvement they give a strong warning with possible punishment. Afterwards they report the case to the former *Rabʿat* members (*Gədama*). *Gədama* try to resolve the conflict. If *Gədama* feel that the case is beyond their capacity and they need more assessment they report the case to *Garadwāt*. At last when the *Rabʿat* members feel such a leader cannot serve the organization properly, they call representatives of all age groups of the village. They explain all the failures and previous measures which were taken to reshape that leader. After that *Rabʿat* gives their final decision to remove the leader and elect another one. Participants give their comments however they don't try to change the *Rabʿat*'s decision because they assume that the *Rabʿat* knows its leader more than anyone else.

When they remove their former leader they elect another leader in the presence of all participants and under close supervision of *Gədama* (the former *Rabʿat* members). In such elections all other participants are observers except the *Rabʿat* members. If there are any problems *Gədama* intervene to give them direction. The same thing can happen to the other *Rabʿat* leaders if they don't perform well.

The second type of leaders election is run by the actual *Rabʿat* members only. The *Rabʿat* coming to power takes full responsibility to run its own leaders election. In such an election method all other age groups participate as observers in the election and they make comments on the election but they don't guide the *Rabʿat* on the process. The *Gədama* become close supervisors for taking any intervention when necessary.

When the new *Rabʿat* leaders are elected the former *Rabʿat* leaders are obliged to work with them for some time until they master all the rules, regulations and values of the organization. Since they don't have written rules and a working system they have to study all the regulations and rules by practice and memory. Thus they need

to discuss with the former members for a long time. Similarly when they manage to run their duties by themselves they consult the former leaders whenever there is a need. The former *Rabʿat* is responsible of guiding and updating the new *Rabʿat*.

## IV. Criteria for *Rabʿat*'s Chairman/Chairwoman

The chairman is considered to be a good model for his group and other age groups. He/she is committed to supporting others. The chairperson teaches and leads people to keep them on the right track. At the same time the chairperson has to be clean from stealing, lying, discrimination between people, laziness etc. Someone is elected as a chairperson when all community members and his age group are satisfied about his/her characteristics. Similarly the other leaders are evaluated by the same criteria. The idea is to show that the *Rabʿat* is a good model for the community and the leader has to be a good model for the *Rabʿat* and others too.

If a *Rabʿat*'s chairwoman marries her position is automatically given up from the date of wedding. First her assistant has the right to lead the organization as the chair then an election is held to legally replace the chairwoman.

## V. *Rabʿat*'s Duties

The *Rabʿat* is active in all kinds of community duties. They are more responsible for specific communal activities in a given village. The *Rabʿat* plays a leading role in entertainment (playing), ceremonies, domestic activities, fighting on behalf of their village, hosting guests etc.

The *Rabʿat* has an organized system and specified job description based on their community culture. All men's activities and women's activities are specified based on the culture. So the *Rabʿat* has a similar job description based on the culture as well. They give all kinds of work which relates to women to the female *Rabʿat* members and they give all male activities to the male members of the *Rabʿat*. This kind of classification and order of assignment is made by the leaders but if they are not there everybody can do his/her work. If there is any failure in work they hold an evaluation in the presence of both *Rabʿat* members.

Anybody who needs support or work from *Rabʿat* has to come through the chairman of the *Rabʿat*. If the person in need of work is a female she can tell the chairwoman of the *Rabʿat*. Then the chairwoman of *Rabʿat* can transfer the message to the male *Rabʿat* through their chair. Similarly if the chairman of *Rabʿat* gets a demand which should be performed by the female members he can transfer the message to the female members through their leaders. So both male and female members have an effective way to transfer the information and to evaluate their members work activities together.

Sometimes they might work on similar activities like a wedding and other community activities. In such cases the male members perform the male activities and the

female members the female activities and they compliment each other by transferring information and demands to each other.

## VI. What Are the Main *Rabʿat*'s Duties?

Playing/dancing ceremonies: If there is any common occasion for play in a village the *Rabʿat* is responsible for all organization, administration, invitation, selection of the right place and participants and preparations of logistics and other needed materials. Female members take part in all female affairs and male members take part in all male affairs. In case of any difficulties/problems the *Rabʿat* is responsible for judgment and conflict resolution too. If there are expenses for the instruments like drums and other traditional music instruments such as *Rabbābat* the *Rabʿat* members meet to discuss the expenses and how to buy them.

Every group has its turn at dancing and they go by the order of the leaders but the leaders also have a reference to follow. In any playing occasion the first playing time is for the *Rabʿat*. The second turn is for guests who come from different places. The third turn is for *Gədama*. After that it is the turn of the *Šəkəl*. Last it is the turn of the *Damaddəm* if they are present. Once all the groups have danced they can divide the *Rabʿat* members in two different groups and they consider the other age group participation based on their number too. Each part knows its turn and they participate based on the chairman information.

If someone can not fit with the playing team and he/she misleads them out of his identity, the leader has to take him out from the playing team but he/she can learn from outside. The leader informs such person in a gentle and considered manner. If he says '*Ḥarāmi barra*' that means the cheater is out, the one who is not on the right track has to go out. If that person did not notice that information they can take him out by force but he has to be charged for his/her misbehavior during the event. If someone is cheating the team and leading them in a wrong direction they take him out and he/she is punished for bad behavior.

## VII. *Rabʿat*'s Duties in Community Activities

When there is any kind of community occasions like wedding, baptizing, funeral and other activities, the *Rabʿat* takes the responsibility for the communal work. The *Rabʿat* is responsible for fetching water, collecting wood, receiving and respecting guests, preparing coffee, arranging food distribution and guiding all communal activities.

Most of the time the *Gədama* and *Garadwāt* become guests of honor and the *Rabʿat* organizes all the services for the participants. The *Šəkəl* also works with the *Rabʿat* but they don't take responsibility. If the work is beyond both age groups capacity the *Gədama* work with them too. In some cases even the *Gerdwat* can support but most of the time that only happens if there are very few *Rabʿat* members at the

occasion. If a *Rabʿat* member fails to help in the community activities their friend has to advise him/her and if he/she doesn't respond and act based on their advice they accuse him in front of all members. Members evaluate the case and they can punish him based on their rules.

Traditionally people work together at ceremonies such as weddings, baptisms and funerals. For example for wedding arrangements all management and work is run by the *Rabʿat* members. The family has to pay some of the expenses only as even the expenses are shared by all community members including the *Rabʿat* members. During the wedding ceremony the *Rabʿat* members collect all bride and bridegroom's goods, they arrange and carry all the goods to the new family house, they arrange all building material for building a new house and they work on the building. Similarly they carry the bride from her father's house to her husband's house if the houses are less than two hours walk. If the distance is more than three hours first they carry the bride but later on put her on a camel's or horse's back.

They specify some friends who take care of all aspects of the bridegroom and a similar group of girls for the bride. These friends work on behalf of the bride and the bridegroom and have to sit and wait for them only. Both the bride and the bridegroom are respected and they don't do any work for the time of the wedding and honeymoon. The *Rabʿat* organizes all the entertainment for the wedding and they work on providing food, coffee, water and other services for the other participants.

If anything happens to one of their members they take full responsibility of giving him material, financial or moral support, but when that person is back he has to refund it. If he can't manage to pay it back and if they know that he has nothing to refund they share the expenses between all members to cover the full expenses.

If a group of external people come to their village, *Rabʿat* members take the responsibility for hosting them. They give them services like food, water, tea/coffee etc. If the newcomers need support they give them support too. They can even kill goats and sheep to feed them if they don't have ready food. However when the visitors go out of the village the *Rabʿat* members ask the village people to share and refund all the expenses because they act on behalf of the whole village.

Any *Rabʿat* member has to take care of his/her village livestock if he/she finds them in danger or lost. Any member who finds lost livestock has to take them back to the owner or he has to save them from being lost.

If there is any destitute man or women in the village the *Rabʿat* is responsible to take care of him/her. For example if there is an old woman who has no husband and children the *Rabʿat* is responsible for building her house and giving her support. If the support requested is money they share the amount between them. If it is work needed they come together to work for her. They can do her work in one or two days.

The *Rabʻat* is also responsible of carrying out communal activities. For instance if a *Šek* (religious leader) of the village wants to have more rooms for teaching children he can ask *Rabʻat* to do the building for him. They come together and collect wood for building and at the same time they do the building. In such cases they do all the building from local materials and they perform the work by themselves. The only thing they need is food and coffee when they are working. They can arrange for the food by asking the families or they can even share the expenses and make their own food. Most of the time when they are working for the village benefit the older groups arrange food for them.

Every *Rabʻat* member is accountable and responsible for helping any woman if she is a member of their community. For example if a member finds a woman who is looking to find her lost livestock he must either go and search with her or send her home and take full responsibility for looking for the lost livestock. If any *Rabʻat* member left a woman without helping all members sit together and charge him with breaking the rules.

The *Rabʻat* members make job descriptions and sharing of responsibility every time. For example if there are three wedding ceremonies in their village, first they sit together and specify who goes where or to which wedding. After that those who are going to one wedding create job descriptions between them. Some work on fetching water and other work on hosting newcomers and arranging everything for them. Another group work on looking for and arranging food. Others look at making coffee and tea, still other group takes responsibility for taking care of the bride and bridegroom. Similarly they identify people who can arrange dancing and playing matters. The girls *Rabʻat* members have similar job descriptions. They evaluate their work based on those descriptions. Most of the time they conduct evaluations at the end of every task but if the work runs smoothly they don't do evaluation for the sake of evaluation.

The *Rabʻat* members also work with other villages beyond their own village and organizational area. If they get invitations from other *Rabʻat*s or other villages they go and support them. In such situations they don't take responsibility for organizing things. They just come and do the work they are asked to do. On the other hand if other group members come to their village and run their activities inside their village they can play both role of working and organizing works as if they are responsible for it.

*Rabʻat* members have a supportive system in order to make their families activities easier and faster. For example if they want to dig a well in the village all members call each other and they work together until they get enough water for livestock and people. If the village needs several wells in different places they make an arrangement and run the activities one by one. The same thing happens when building houses, hosting weddings, harvesting etc. But in such cases even the other age group mem-

bers can work with them. However they take a leading role and most of the time they are the majority of the participants.

In the teamwork process if they are working for an individual the individual has to cover all the expenses of food, tea/coffee, water and so on. If they are working for the whole community like digging a well the *Rabʿat* has to cover the expenses of eating and drinking. Most of the time one of them covers all the expenses for the day and they refund him either from the organizations money or by dividing the costs between themselves.

*Rabʿat* members have regular meetings mostly once a week or once every two weeks time. The chairman/father of the *Rabʿat* chairs the meeting if he is present if not the assistant takes his place. The *Rabʿat*'s meeting has three major targets most of the time. First it is a good occasion for them to play, relax and enjoy together. Second they discuss different issues and evaluate their activities. And the lastly they evaluate individual members and discuss their failures or if they have broken any rules.

They start their meeting by dancing and enjoying themselves. If they have food they eat, play and chat together. When they finish their dancing time the chairman calls for a meeting. The meeting always takes place in a circle. Each participant has to come in on the right of the circle and puts his stick inside the circle before he sits down. When all participants sit in a proper circle and all sticks are inside the circle, the chairman starts by giving an introduction to the meeting. Most of the time the chairman gives his agenda and puts forward anything new which they need to discuss. At the same time they evaluate the work they did, the money they have and other issues. If there is anything new which needs a decision it is discussed. Similarly if leaders take any action without participation of the members they explain their actions and the reasons behind them.

When they finish all their discussion, the assistant chairman comes inside the circle with the sticks. He picks up one of the sticks and holds it up in front of all participants. Then he asks 'who is the owner of this stick?' The owner of that stick has to hold up his hand and say 'it is mine'. The assistant gives them some time until all members can recognize it. After a short while, he asks them again by saying, 'Did you all see the owner of this stick properly?' Then they say 'yes'. After their positive respond he asks them again by saying, 'Do you have any questions for this stick? Do you need it or not?' If they respond saying 'We don't have anything to ask. Please forward it to its gentle owner'. Then he gives the stick to its owner. If they say 'we need it please let it stay there'. Then he puts it alone in the circle. The assistant continues with all the sticks one by one in this way. At the end all sticks with questions are left inside the circle and all sticks without questions go back to the owners.

Next the assistant chairman goes back to the remaining sticks. He picks one stick and holds it up in front of all participants. Then he asks, 'ladies and gentlemen why

did you separate this stick of Mr. X from its friends? What do you need from it now?' The one who has a question for the owner raises his/her hand and says, 'Well this stick is out of order or has broken *Rabʿat*'s laws, so I want it to account for the *Rabʿat* laws properly. That is why I separated it from its friends or age groups otherwise I know it is respected by others'. Then he goes to further details by telling the story of the stick owner's failure.

The chairman presents the issue to all members. He says okay now Mr. Y is accusing Mr. X and you have followed the issue what is your opinion about this. The first turn is for those who know the case practically and for those who were working directly with Mr. X. They discuss the issue and make their conclusions based on the majority. If any member makes a mistake they evaluate the failure and punish him/her based on their rules. If the mistake is not that big then they can ask the member to learn from it. They repeat this process for all the remaining sticks.

If someone is free from any mistakes and his stick left with the others, he has the right to accuse the person who has asked to place the stick with criminal sticks. Then the failure could be turned around so that man who blackmailed him/her could face the *Rabʿat* members. Once they are out of a meeting no one is allowed to speak about what they did in the meeting. The meeting issues are left in the meeting place and time only. They have to forgive each other at the end of the meeting. They take things in the meeting as a good work to shape their future only.

## VIII. Principles and Values of *Rabʿat* / *ʾƗsul Rabʿat*

The principles and values show things which could be done by *Rabʿat* members and things which could not be practiced by them. It also provides criteria for showing members and other age groups that the *Rabʿat* is a model and it stands for the community. It is a general guideline that leads all members in the right direction. They use these principles as a general guide for making judgments. Of course the principles are many and it is difficult to put down all of them but I prefer to put the main and the most common ones.

Stealing and lying is forbidden by all *Rabʿat* members. Any member either male or female is not allowed to cheat people and to steal other's property. If any member did one of these things all *Rabʿat* members sit together to discuss the case and hand out strong punishment to the person because they assume that person has broken the rules and did bad things in the name of his organization. If they are sure that a person has stolen property from others or cheated others, they put him on a permanent black list. He/she can't be elected as a *Rabʿat* leader. They can't give him responsibility to judge or work on behalf of the organization.

Any *Rabʿat*'s member is not allowed to fight with a member of his/her organization. If someone did a bad thing to him/her, he/she has to inform the *Rabʿat*'s chairman. The chairperson deals with the issue and guides that person not to behave

like that with his members. If the *Rabʿat* members fight with each other then people say that is not a mature *Rabʿat* so it could be really bad for them and the *Rabʿat* may not be accepted by the community. If any *Rabʿat* member fights with others or if he/she gets into trouble, his organization takes responsibility for the situation. The *Rabʿat* pays any money that is needed from its members, if he is in court then they try their best to defend him.

If the *Rabʿat* member committed a crime and they are sure that he is a criminal, first they try their best to help him. But later on they punish him/her based on their own regulations. So the *Rabʿat* members don't want to fight and commit a crime because if they do then their organization will suffer because of them. Second they can ask them for their crime if they are criminals. In addition to this it is not good for the organization or an individual to be considered to be a criminal in the community. So *Rabʿat* members are very careful not to fight. Generally *Rabʿat* members are not allowed to do anything which is not accepted by their community.

Any case which is started by the *Rabʿat* and which *Rabʿat* works on, nobody is allowed to interfere with unless the *Rabʿat* takes the case to older age groups like *Gədama* or *Garadwāt*. Similarly if the *Rabʿat* judge the case nobody is allowed to take it and look at the case again. Likewise the *Rabʿat* is not allowed to interfere in any case which is started by tribal elders, *Šek* or any other age group. So traditionally the community respects each other and they respect the *Rabʿat* too.

If the *Rabʿat* is invited to participate with other age groups in any local case they can give their comments as a group but they are not allowed to take responsibility from other age groups. At the same time other age groups or religious leaders can participate with *Rabʿat* members if they are invited to participate and give comments on a case.

When there is disagreement between a *Rabʿat* member and his wife, the *Rabʿat* is responsible for taking the case seriously and solving the problem as far as possible. No one is allowed to solve such a case before them and no one is allowed to take the case from the *Rabʿat* unless they give permission to do so.

Similarly the *Rabʿat* is not allowed to take any case which has been started by a *Šek* or tribal elder unless they give them permission to act on their behalf. When any organization or individual starts to deal with one issue, the *Rabʿat* has to follow the result from the outside. They are not allowed even to give comments unless they are asked or invited to give comments. They respect all traditional ways of judgment.

Any invitation from other age groups or other villages should come to the *Rabʿat* through the chairperson. When the chairperson gets an invitation he/she has to inform the rest of his/her organizational members. All members discuss the issue and they decide either to participate or not. After that the chairperson can go themselves or assign someone else to go on behalf of the organization. Those members can act on behalf of the whole organization. They take any position and give any comments

on behalf of their organization. If any *Rabʿat* member goes to such a meeting without an official invitation he/she is not allowed to give comments on behalf of *Rabʿat*. He/she can make personal comments only.

If any boy *Rabʿat* member sees a mistake made by a girl he has to inform the chair/father of his *Rabʿat*. The chair/father passes the information to the girl's *Rabʿat* mother/chairwoman. The chairwoman/mother is responsible for dealing with the issue and settling the conflict or the case. On the other side when both *Rabʿat* members sit together for common meeting the boys can ask about the girls case and they can get a full report on the problems. Girls follow the same procedure if they see mistakes made by the boys.

If a case is beyond the *Rabʿat*'s capacity and they believe that they can't settle the issue, the *Rabʿat* takes the case to *Gǝdama*. The *Rabʿat* and *Gǝdama* sit together and try their best to solve the issue as much as they can. If both of them can't solve the case and they believe that they can't solve the issue they take it to the *Garadwāt*. The three age groups sit together and the *Garadwāt* make the final decision to solve the issue.

Most of the time they solve their problems either with the first age group or in the last age group, but if all of them fail to solve the situation they must take it to the higher court or to the king of the tribe or to the government.

For example, there is one case of Malabso's *Rabʿat* which could be an example for the process. Some village members asked the *Rabʿat* to stop dancing every night. They justified it by saying dancing is not allowed according to religion. We have to spend our time either in praying or in learning. Why do all young people dance?

The *Rabʿat* members refused to accept the request and they justified it by saying 'why are you saying that in our time only. All age groups have passed with the same process as we are doing now. Why are you bringing this justification now, religion is not new in our village. But people were doing this tradition with their religion'. They then took the case to the *Gǝdama* who made the same judgment. They say you have learned dancing from the villagers. They taught you first and they don't want to let you play now. So you have to follow the village rules.

The *Rabʿat* said the villagers had transferred the tradition to them but they didn't take the responsibility for keeping this tradition and transferring it to other generations with us. We want to maintain the culture and to transfer it to new generations who are learning from us. They took the case to *Garadwāt* but the *Garadwāt* also supported the *Gǝdama* and the other groups and the *Rabʿat* stood alone in their view. The *Rabʿat* members were not satisfied by their decision and they asked the *Garadwāt* either to reconsider their decision or to send them to higher body. The *Garadwāt* allowed them to go to the tribal king / *Šum*.

The tribal king gave a similar judgment. He said 'you have to follow your father's instructions. Go with their guidelines and directions. I can't allow something which

is different from community needs. Your community teaches you this practice and you are applying it after them. If they don't want you to do this practice you have to respect their instruction and see their reasons'. They were not satisfied by the king's judgment so they went to the government. The Italians were ruling Eritrea at that time and there was no practical Italian presence in their village. So they went to Asmara to get a government judgment. Some members of the *Gədama* and *Garadwāt* went with them because they want to defend their justifications. When all of them came to the Italian governor, the *Rabʿat* chairman explained the whole situation and he ask the governor to give them his final decision.

The Italian governor stressed sustainability of the culture. He said if you continue playing you will maintain your culture for generations. If not you are going to lose your precious culture you have to continue playing as usual. He ask the *Gədama* and *Garadwāt* to allow them to continue and encourage the youth to continue their dancing. The *Rabʿat* had finally succeeded after a long time and they continued their dancing. The dancing culture is still alive and every age group/generation is following the same practice.

If any *Šəkəl* member makes a mistake, the *Rabʿat* is responsible to sit and discuss the issue between their members and the *Šəkəl*. The *Rabʿat* judge the case exactly as they would their own member's case but at the end they let him free. Most of the time *Šəkəl* members are treated as *Rabʿat* members in work but they don't treat them equally when judging them.

If the same thing happens with *Gədama* members they treat him the same as their members. *Gədama* are liable to the rules because they know all the regulations. But if a *Gədama* member's mistake is not serious they have to respect them. Normally they respect all the age groups who are above their age and guests who come from other places.

*Rabʿat* members are not allowed to sit with a woman alone when her husband is not around. But if there is more than one woman in a house they are allowed to sit and talk with them. Similarly many boys are also allowed to go and sit with women.

If girls are playing on one side and boys on the other side none of the boys are allowed to mix with the girls and vice versa. There are some common traditional games which allow boys and girls to play together. But in some traditional games when the girls sing songs boys have to dance and when boys sing girls have to dance. In such cases if anyone comes to the opposite side, the members and leaders are allowed to punish him/her.

No *Rabʿat* member is allowed to start rumors about his/her organization or members. If he/she has a bad feeling about the organization they are allowed to express the feeling in front of all members. Similarly if the feeling is about one of the members anyone can talk openly in front of that person and other organization members.

After that the organization can talk about the issue and they have to work together to resolve the conflict if there is any.

No *Rab'at* member is allowed to give money or other property to an individual during playing time. If he/she is very exited by an individual song, poem or anything he/she has to give things to the whole group but not to an individual. Most of them give perfume to the whole group when they like individual songs. The perfume can cover the whole stage and that means the whole group is getting something because of an individual's performance. Similarly a person can slaughter a goat or a sheep for the whole group.

When the *Rab'at* members are sitting together for their private issues nonmembers are not allowed to join them without their permission. Most of the time when they are sitting together and discussing issues other age groups or guests don't join them. If any member of another age group wants either to join them he/she has to ask for permission. Anyone who joins the group without permission will be accused and punished based on the rules.

If any *Rab'at* member falls in love with one girl he is not allowed to ask her directly for marriage. If he feels that he could marry her he has to tell his parents and his parents have to deal with her parents. If there are some problems with the families a *Rab'at* member has to tell his friends. The friends try their best to convince her family and her. They work on the situation and report back to the person.

Any decision made by a female *Rab'at* can't be changed by male *Rab'at*. Similarly girls *Rab'at* is not allowed to change boy's decision, most of the time they make judgments together. When they come to play together they take some time to settle their conflicts and other issues related to their organization. When boys and girls are together the father/chairman of the boys *Rab'at* is responsible to lead the meeting. If there is something related to girls then the mother/chairwoman of the girls *Rab'at* play her role as responsible person. In the absence of the boys the mother/chairwoman is responsible of leading/facilitating the girls *Rab'at* meetings.

If any *Rab'at* member is not at home the *Rab'at* is responsible for ploughing his farm land and taking care of the livestock in case of any difficulties. They cover all the expenses or they work to do the job. When the *Rab'at* member returns home they ask him for refund if they know that he can't afford the money then they have to share the expenses between all of them.

The *Rab'at* is responsible for inviting the *Gədama* in the case of big decisions and for proper planning of the organization. *Gədama* have to come and follow all *Rab'at* activities, plans and regulations. After that they can make comments, give advice and suggest new programs and effective working systems.

*Gədama* clarify previous experiences, rules and systems of the *Rab'at*. They explain the differences between the time of their organization and this organization of

the youth. Indirectly they are advisers and they build on the rules. They transfer the rules and working systems to the new generations.

Any organizational money or money which is collected as punishment kept properly in the name of the organization. The money is moved by the order of *Rabʿat* members only.

If *Rabʿat* members punish someone by money and then they know that they take the measure in a wrong direction, they bring back the money to the owner. But they don't say that the organization was mistaken. They just say we are taking back your money. *Rabʿat* forgives you because of the good people who were judging you.

The *Rabʿat* drum is not allowed to be taken to any of the member's homes without permission. Such permission has to be given either by the chairman or by a meeting of the members. It is not easy even for the father/chairman of the *Rabʿat* to give permission. But if the chairman allows another *Rabʿat* to play with his *Rabʿat*'s drum he has to go with them and chair the playing process. In such case he has to apply his *Rabʿat*'s rules and regulations on the playing night.

The *Rabʿat* which gives the drum applies its rules on that playing night or day. Similarly if people are punished by money at the playing time the *Rabʿat* which has given the drum has the right to take the money.

If members of one *Rabʿat* come to other *Rabʿat* area they have to ask the native *Rabʿat* to give them a drum and to allow them to play in their area. In that case either the chair or another member can give them the drum and allow them to play. However, they issue the rules and give them directions. The *Rabʿat* which rules the area and owns the drum has the right to rule the visiting *Rabʿat*. Even if the chairman of the new *Rabʿat* is present and the chairman of the native *Rabʿat* is away any member of the native *Rabʿat* can lead the playing. Similarly all rules of the native *Rabʿat* apply even if there is only one person of the native *Rabʿat*.

If anything happens during this playing time, the native *Rabʿat* member is responsible for resolving conflicts and making any judgments. If a punishment is made the money goes to the native *Rabʿat*. Most of the time the *Rabʿat* punishes small issues by fining the members money and they add that money to their capital. The *Rabʿat* normally does not rush into punishing guests.

When two *Rabʿat* members play together, the responsibility goes to the village *Rabʿat*. The *Rabʿat* members who have stayed in the place have full responsibility to lead, facilitate and rule the playing. But they are obligated to respect their guests too. Those who come from outside are considered as guests and they are eligible for hospitality and respect from the other group.

*Rabʿat*'s are not allowed to play in another *Rabʿat*'s village without permission. If a *Rabʿat* comes to play in another *Rabʿat*'s area they can take them to court. If they continue playing in that area then a fight may occur. Such kind of fighting can

spread to the whole village. Since all *Rabʿat* members are aware of the rules playing in other *Rabʿat*'s place without permission is seen as an insult.

If a stranger comes to the *Rabʿat*'s watering hole they give him/her water first before any action. If the newcomer has livestock the *Rabʿat* members are responsible for providing the livestock with water as they would provide their own livestock. But later on they ask the newcomer about his/her circumstances: Why is he there? Where is he going? What they can do for him? If they have very limited resources of water and pasture they inform the newcomer about the problem after he/she gets enough water for himself and his livestock. If the newcomer is on their land illegally they tell him to leave their area after getting the water. If the guest is moving on they show him/her the best way and give him the information he needs. If a newcomer meets *Rabʿat* members at their river/water hole and they didn't support him then the newcomer has the right to accuse the *Rabʿat* of not compiling with their rules.

*Rabʿat* members don't allow any females to take water from a watering hole. If a girl/woman comes to fetch water or to get water for livestock, a *Rabʿat* member has to take responsibility and operate the water pulling system. If a *Rabʿat* member leaves a girl/woman to get water from a well he has to be punished for breaking *Rabʿat* rules.

A *Rabʿat* member is not allowed to avoid community work or social duties in the village. If a *Rabʿat* member doesn't participate in communal work or other social obligations without permission or a reason, first the *Rabʿat* members have to talk about the situation and then give out a punishment. After that members of the other age groups can also talk to him through the *Rabʿat* leaders. If such action is continuous community members can try to prevent that person from being in community corporations.

If the *Rabʿat*'s chairman's wife delivers a child in his absence the *Rabʿat* is responsible for all things based on traditional practices. After completing all things in order then they can ask the chairman to refund them when he is back home. In such a situation any *Rabʿat* member who is in the village is responsible for taking action and telling the rest of the *Rabʿat* members to do so. If any *Rabʿat* member fails to take such responsibility, then the *Rabʿat* has to punish him.

Both male and female *Rabʿat*s have similar customs, rules and regulations. The differences come with job descriptions and weight of punishments only. Duties are different based on the community's cultural practices. If a boy is ordered to bring a goat as punishment then a girl can be ordered to bring a kilo of sugar or a packet of cigarettes for the same mistake. If the punishment is work, a girl can be told to cook and a boy to dig a well or to fix a house.

If anyone of *Gədama* or *Garadwāt* comes to the *Rabʿat* during their playing time they have to give him a chance to play, even if only one of them comes. The same

thing happens when there are guests. If a guest comes to the playing time they have to give him a turn. If guests and other age groups participate in the organization of entertainment and the *Rabʿat* didn't give them a chance to dance they can take the whole *Rabʿat* to court and the whole *Rabʿat* can be punished by the other age groups.

In the traditional dancing all groups have a limited time to dance together. They take turns with other groups. If any group exceed the allowed time, the chairman has to say '*warnob*', which means a beat style. When they hear that word they have to leave the floor immediately. If they don't leave the floor the chairman repeats the word three times. After the third time the group can be given a serious punishment as spending a long time dancing and not responding to the chairman is a serious mistake.

If there are any grievances or any differences between *Rabʿat* members, they are supposed to settle the issue between them. If the problem is between members and the chair, they can punish the chair or if the situation is serious they can remove him/her from power. They can inform all age groups in the village about the reason and the action they have taken. When the chairman disagrees with the members' decision he can take the case to the next age groups. The *Gədama* can take the case to *Garadwāt* in case of disagreement, but most of the time the *Gədama* settle the case.

If *Rabʿat* members divide in two or more groups the other age group takes the case seriously. They consider such conditions as a shameful act which should never happen in the village so it has to be settled quickly. The *Rabʿat* knows how serious such a case is as it is based on the community rules and values. If the case becomes too serious all the community members have to meet together and discuss the issue. But since all the *Rabʿat* members are aware about the impact a grievance has on their status and their community values they make sure such cases do not go outside the village. It is really rare to find a case that does.

All *Rabʿat* leaders are obliged to treat all members equally. Anyone who shows discrimination or special treatment to an individual has to be punished without any preconditions. If the case is serious and clear to every member they have the right to displace the person from any *Rabʿat* leadership position as anyone who shows discrimination based on origin or sex cannot be a popular *Rabʿat* leader.

A *Rabʿat* member is not allowed to rape a female. If a member commits a rape, he will be strongly punished by having to slaughter a cow, or will be dismissed from the organization. Since rape is a shameful act any member who has committed rape is not allowed to be elected as a leader and it would leave him with a really bad name throughout the village.

Any member who is punished by the *Rabʿat* has to thank the *Rabʿat* members prior to any action. After that if he has money he must bring good things for all organization members. He can bring perfume, fats or batter to be used by all the

members. He states 'I become a respected person because of your support'. If the punished member went out without saying 'thank you' then they have to punish him again for not respecting the rule of law and other members.

A *Rabʿat* member is not allowed to take food and water before guests or his friends. Generally when there is an event the *Rabʿat* members must eat after all guests, old people and even the younger group and are responsible for ensuring everyone has food and water. After everyone has taken their food *Rabʿat* members can take food but nobody should start to take food before the chairman. First the chairman takes his food and then his assistant follows him after that the other members and they all eat together.

The chair has to check whether all age groups have been given their food before they start to eat, when he makes sure that all age groups including guests have been given food, he comes back to *Rabʿat* and says 'now all people have eaten so let us eat. Start'. He insists that others start eating before him but no one can start before him. They say 'okay' and wait until he starts. They ask him to start if he is late too. When the chair and his assistant start to eat, all *Rabʿat* members can start to eat with them. If any member starts to eat before the chair he has to be punished. For instance if someone is cooking food and his hand is burned during the cooking time, he/she has to rub it on the ground. He/she should not put it on his/her mouth. He is not allowed to take any food during cooking, if anybody says he took food or he ate before the people, he can be punished.

In order to strengthen this rule no community member even a child is allowed to milk livestock and start to drink the milk. After milking it has to be given to someone else, later on he can drink it. The same rule applies to water when you take water you have to give it first to other friends and you could drink it after them. Normally the older one should start to drink and younger follow after him.

Anyone who wants to speak to a crowd of people has to ask permission first. If he gets permission he can talk if not he has to stop talking. If anyone takes a long time talking about unnecessary issues the audience has to say '*Zanab*' which means 'stop talking' in a very polite way. Once he/she hears the word *Zanab* he/she stops talking. If the member continues after hearing that word that means the person has broken the rules and he is accountable for the consequences. They use the word *Zanab* for controlling long or unnecessary speaking. On the other hand they say *Zanab* for simple punishment or for young people who want to learn also.

## IX. Jousts/Judgment in *Rabʿat/Ḥəkum Warāzit*

One of the biggest responsibilities of the *Rabʿat* is judicial and carrying out judgments. The *Rabʿat* acts on all major and minor issues of their age group as well as their village. Judgments are carried out by the whole group in a democratic way. The leaders are not responsible for judgment. They coordinate and play an individual role

on decision-making. Normally all the *Rabʿat* members come together and sit in a circle to make a judgment. The chairman and vice-chairman are responsible for leading the discussion only. They introduce the issue into the circle and every member of the circle throws his/her ideas to the group and says this is my suggestion but I go with majority. The decision of the majority is the final decision. There are no gender differences on judgment and other *Rabʿat* activities. Every boy and girl is equal. If the vote is fifty-fifty then the chairman counts as two people and those who get the chairman's support win the decision.

The community calls the *Rabʿat* judgment the justice of youth. *Rabʿat* rules are divided in to two major branches. These are *Ḥəkəm ʾəb nəbur* originated rules and *Ḥəkəm ʾəb fəṭur* created rules. Originated rules are all rules and regulations which have been passed down from their father and grandfathers. Sometimes it is called the rules of the grandfathers. These are the most common and well-known rules for all *Rabʿat* members. Though there are no written documents on *Rabʿat* rules, the older generation is responsible for passing the rules to the new generation. In addition to the formal transferring from one generation to the next generation, communities also tell the rules openly as stories. People also want to see their rules in practices so the young people get more familiar with applying the older generation's rules. Based on the practices the probability of passing the rules on to younger generations is very high.

Created rules are new rules, which are formulated by any new *Rabʿat* members but they are formulated under restricted conditions. They can formulate rules when they face the following conditions:

- If the *Rabʿat* faces a unique issue which has no previous description.
- In case of getting new instruments or conditions which were not known before.
- When no *Rabʿat* members remember the generated rules.
- If originated rules are distorted in translation.
- When the new *Rabʿat* members want to put more emphasis on something they might formulate new rules in order to ensure their implementation.

Under these conditions any *Rabʿat* member is allowed to develop and practice their own rules. All *Rabʿat* members come together to set up a new rule and to agree on it. They inform the other community members about their new rule once it is agreed. All *Rabʿat* rules should be clear and transparent for everybody.

New and old rules need to be harmonious and should not be in opposition to each other. If the new rules are different from the old ones, those who set the rules could be punished. When the new *Rabʿat* members practice a new rule opposing the old rules, people say the originated rules have been ignored and grandfathers have not been respected.

The rules of *Rabʿat* are divided into the following four main groups based on their weight and significance.

## X. Cold State (*Sərʿat Bərdət*)/Cold Rules

Cold rules relate with socialization. They are very simple rules which happen in every day life. Most of the time *Rabʿat* members use these rules to practice things properly and to make sure that everyone is familiar and respectful to the rules. For example, in traditional dancing everyone knows his turn. If someone takes someone else's turn he/she is given a light punishment such as 5 Nakfa, one kilo of coffee, a pair of soap etc. If someone disturbs the dancing then they judge he/she mistake with cold rules. The judgment of cold rules happens very quickly as *Rabʿat* members don't need to call meeting. They can do it at any time. For example, the chairman can stop the dancing, work and tell people about the mistake and then can decide on the punishment.

Sometimes rules are clearly stated. For example, if any person damages a drum or puts down a drum during dancing, they ask him to pay one Nakfa, if the drum has one side/face only. They ask him to pay two Nakfa if the drum has two faces. In some cases they ask boys to pay 5 Nakfa and girls to cook a meal or give a soap.

## XI. Open Rule (*Sərʿat Ṭəlləqət*)/Open State

This is a slightly more serious one than the cold rules and used for simple mistakes. The judgment is open. *Rabʿat* members sit and judge the case. Later on they can forgive the person and let him escape punishment or they ask the person to pay a fine and then they help him/her on paying the punishment.

In open rules all *Rabʿat* members come together and discuss a case. They give a punishment based on the seriousness of the issue. When a person accepts his/her mistake they reconsider the issue again either to let the person free or to help him. In such cases they ask boys to slaughter a goat for the members and girls to cook food for the members. When a boy brings the goat they divide its prices among all the *Rabʿat* members. They do the same with the food. If they punish them with money or other kinds the same method is used.

## XII. *Sərʿat ʾItətnaqqaf* (Fixed Rules System)

Fixed rules sometimes call it sisters' support less judgment. In this rule once they judge a person there is no chance of changing the decision. They punish him/her straight away and no one is allowed to help that person. The person is required to fulfill the whole punishment by himself. This rule is applied in serious cases. If all *Rabʿat* members are convinced of the person's mistake and they want to give him bigger punishment, they apply these rules. Rigid judgment could either be material

or physical punishment. The *Rabʿat* members are free to choose the best method based on the persons skill and the seriousness of the mistake.

## XIII. *Faram* (Death Sentence)

This is the highest punishment by *Rabʿat*'s rules. It is not commonly practiced by the *Rabʿat* and only happens when someone commits a big crime that is a shameful act not only for the individual but for others, or if an individual does not follow the *Rabʿat*'s rules. If *Rabʿat* members sentence an individual to death, they tell the whole community about the individual's sentence plus the crime which he/she committed. The *Rabʿat* members need to convince the villagers about the seriousness of the crime and the justification for their decision.

The *Rabʿat* has three ways to pass a death sentence on a person based on the seriousness of the crime. These are:

### 1. Denial (*Səqqat*)

Excommunicationary (neglecting) someone from the community: In this case *Rabʿat* members come together and make their decision to sentence the person to death. After that they tell the community members that this person has neglected from the *Rabʿat* community from this day onward.

In this case they tell the person that he/she is sentenced to death based on their rules and his crime. That means he/she is not allowed to join the *Rabʿat* members on any social, economic and other activities. He/she is not allowed to join in weddings, dancing and other ceremonies. At the same time no *Rabʿat* member is allowed to work with the person sentenced to death. No one can go to his wedding, work with him and join other social activities. In short the person is neglected from all community and communal activities. This is the simplest way of dealing with death people.

### 2. Burial

Burying is the second type of death sentence. In this case if the *Rabʿat* members feel the crime is more serious than denial and they prefer to bury a person. In this case first the *Rabʿat* members come together and complete the judgment with the criminal. They tell the criminal that he/she is sentenced to death based on the crime he/she committed. Next they tell members of the community including all the age groups. After that they bring a wood on the same height of the person. The same preparations as for a dead person are carried out using the wood. Then they dig a hole and bury the wood just like a dead person. They call 'this is the monitories of Mr. X the one who has committed a crime'. From that day onward no one will help this person in any situation. Neither will they ever go to his activities nor is he allowed to come to the *Rabʿat* members. So this man is left alone by the community.

### 3. Uncompleted Burial (*Qabər ʾəb rağəm*)

This is the last and the most difficult system of sentencing people to death. It is the highest punishment that *Rab'at* can give. They punish a person who has committed a very serious and shameful crime. If they don't want to forget the crime of this person, they put his monitory in a common way and write his name on it. Then they write a short sentence saying 'This is the monitory of Mr. X who has committed such and such crimes. He has been sentenced to death by the *Rab'at* members however his monitory is not completed. Anyone who passes by should throw a stone at the monitory in order to complete the uncompleted monitory'. As a group when they throw stones at the monitory they remember the crimes. It is also designed for the younger generation so they will be told the story when they see the uncompleted monitories.

In all cases they don't commit any physical damage to people. They only sentence them to death and conduct symbolically the burying ceremony with community members. They deny those people from any community activities and it is very difficult for people to spend their lives in the community.

Anybody who is sentenced to death by *Rab'at* members is not accepted to other communities' members. He/she is not allowed to join other *Rab'at* members even if he/she travels to distance places.

Some *Rab'at* members force a man who is sentenced to death to wear women's clothes until they finish his burial ceremony. When they complete the ceremony they let him wear his own clothes and he is not allowed to join them after that time.

People sentenced to death are not allowed even to ask for their rights. If somebody committed a crime against them they have no right to take him/her to the *Rab'at* or traditional judge. They cannot even be called as a witness if they know something.

Someone who is sentenced to death is called *Ṭaleqe*, outcast. He/she is free from any community obligation and no community member is allowed to engage in the dead person's activities. Some times if a 'dead' person comes to traditional dancing all the community members leave the dancing and no one is allowed to observe him if he is dancing.

*Rab'at* members don't forgive anyone who is sentenced to death. Once they believe his crime and decide to kill him they don't leave him. There are only three possibilities which could force the *Rab'at* members to reverse their judgment and liberate the death person. These three are very rare but if any of them happen they let 'dead' person free. The three possibilities are as follows:

1.  If the oldest person of the village carries shoes and requests the *Rab'at* to free that person. The man carrying shoes says 'I am tired and I will not put down this load until you give relief to the dead person'. Then the *Rab'at* reconsid-

ers their judgment and sets the person free. However the story goes around the whole village and all the community members know the situation.

2. If a woman throws her jewelry to the floor in front of the *Rabʿat* members and she refuses to take her jewelry unless they set the person free. Then the *Rabʿat* has to let this person for the honor of the woman.

3. The third possibility is by a bridegroom or a bride. If either a bride or bridegroom stand and beg the *Rabʿat* to let free the person who has been sentenced to death. The bride or bridegroom doesn't sit down until the *Rabʿat* set the person free. In this case the *Rabʿat* is obligated to let the person free due to the bridegroom's honor.

*Faram* / killing is very hard for a human being as it is very difficult for people to be isolated from their community. It happens very rarely and it is only in a few cases, when somebody fails to understand the community's advice and is unable to follow the *Rabʿat*'s rules. During our time collecting data, we only found five *Rabʿat* members who were sentenced to death. These five people were from different regions. Members of the given area knew the case of the man who is sentenced to death. That in itself shows how rear it is to find people who are sentenced to death by *Rabʿat*. The cases and geographical location of those men are as follows:

One was from ʾAsmaṭ's *Rabʿat*. This man told a story to a group of people who were working together out of their village. He told the group that he was having sex before marriage with a woman and that woman was married to another person. Unfortunately her husband was in the group. The husband didn't say anything at that time but he divorced his wife when he returned home. The story spread through the village so nobody would marry the woman. This case came to *Rabʿat* for judgment. *Rabʿat* said the man has committed three serious crimes:

1. First he has violated the rule of *Rabʿat* and had sex with someone who was not his wife.

2. Second he has exposed a private secret to a community/group.

3. Third he caused the divorce of the woman and nobody in the village would now marry her. She lost all chance to get a husband.

All of these were shameful acts for *Rabʿat*. This may not be the most serious act for an individual but it is an insult to the *Rabʿat* and the whole village. It was against the culture, religion, rules and values of the *Rabʿat*. Based on these facts the man was sentenced to death. They brought wood and conducted a real burial ceremony for him. After that the man was expelled from all *Rabʿat*s and community activities. He was isolated from his age group.

The second example is from Habaro. Two *Rabʿat* members stole goat's liver during a wedding ceremony. Then *Rabʿat* members saw the case as serious. They said the men had broken the *Rabʿat*'s law. Second they had done a silly thing. Stealing is

an insult for the whole *Rabʿat* because any *Rabʿat* member is not allowed to steal anything under any circumstance. The *Rabʿat* punished each one by asking him to slaughter two goats for the wedding. The first man brought two goats and apologized to the *Rabʿat* members. The *Rabʿat* slaughtered the two goats and let him free after giving him additional advice. The second man refused to bring goats and left the village. He joined another *Rabʿat* in another village and he made another mistake with the second *Rabʿat*. They in turn punished him for his mistakes. He again refused to pay the *Rabʿat* and moved once more. Then *Rabʿat* referred to his past action and sentenced him to death. They expelled him from the *Rabʿat* without carrying out a burial ceremony.

This man went to another place and asked to join another *Rabʿat*. They said 'we will tell you later but until we give you an answer stay with us as a guest'. They were researching his background while he was staying with them as a guest which is a common procedure for any *Rabʿat*. Only after they have checked his/her background, they accept him/her as a member. In the meantime the *Rabʿat* members collect money from their members. The *Rabʿat* members refused to accept him. When he asked why the *Rabʿat* members replied, 'we are not here to work with dead people. Once you are dead you are dead. We can't accept you and no other *Rabʿat* could accept you'. The man was disappointed by the response and left the Habaro area. He went to Tesenay but in the end he didn't join any *Rabʿat*.

The third one is from *Rabʿat* Haycota areas. That man has committed three shameful crimes which were considered insulting acts by the *Rabʿat*. Then the *Rabʿat* members sentenced him to death. After his sentence to death he has committed other crimes to the local community. The local community came to ask the *Rabʿat* for charging that person. The *Rabʿat* has already killed that person and they don't have any right to charge death people. They told the community that this person is already dead. Then the community has to ask them again, because the man could make another crime. This was a big challenge for *Rabʿat* because based on their rules once a person is dead nobody is allowed to talk to him. No one is also allowed to raise his case. Ideally death could not come again to this world. However it is also difficult for them to let this man do crimes to the community. So they have discussed on this case and came to a consensus saying 'we should not make a judgment for that person. We should only force him to move to distant areas which could be beyond our control'. Finally they forced the person to leave their village and to go to another region which is out of their control. These are some examples of *Rabʿat*s duties and judgments.

## List of Təgre Words and Their Meaning:

*ʾAb rabʿat* አብ ረብዐት: The father of *Rabʿat*/chair man of the organization.

*ʾAnfār* አንፋር: Members.

*Biḥut* ቢሑት: Security advisor.

*Damaddəm* ደመድም: The youngest age group who have no social and political responsibility in their community. These are children who are below age 11.

*Dəllālat* ድላላት: A new house that is built for a new bride and bridegroom only. No one in the society is allowed to have a similar house unless he/she is newly married. It is a white house which is build with woven matches and wood.

*ʾ Ḛm rabʿat* እም ረብዐት: The mother of *Rabʿat*/chair woman of the organization.

*ʾ Ḛsul Rabʿat* እሱል ረብዐት: *Rabʿat*'s values.

*Faram* ፈረም: Sentence to death.

*Garadwāt* ገረድዋት: The older age group based on the Təgre community classification. They are considered a resourceful people for advice and all age group give them a respect.

*Gədama* ግደመ: The fourth age group who has recently handed over the *Rabʿat*s power to a new generation/younger age group and started to do their own business and give advices and monitoring to the new *Rabʿat*.

*Ḥarāmi barra* ሐራሚ በረ: The thief is outside.

*Ḥəkəm ʾəb fəṭur* ሕክም እብ ፍጡር: Newly created laws.

*Ḥəkəm ʾəb nəbur* ሕክም እብ ንቡር: Laws which are inherited from old generations.

*Ḥəkəm Warāzit* ሕክም ወራዚት: Youth rule.

*Ḥərtorini* ሕርቶሪኒ: Tells me.

*Ḥəkum Warāzit* ሕኩም ወራዚት: Judgment in Rabʿat.

*Kamandā* ከመንዳ: The chair woman of the organization.

*Nəggārat* ንጋረት: A special drum which has a strong and unique sound. It is used as a calling system for war or other special occasions for the whole tribe. All people have to come to that area once they hear its sound.

*Qabər ʾəb raǧəm* ቀብር እብ ረጅም: Uncompleted burial in which people throw stones at the monitory every time they pass by.

*Rabʿat* ረብዐት: The third age group who has reached its maximum skill to work, judge, fight and represent its community.

*Səqqat* ስቀት: Isolation from once own community.

*Sərʿat Bərdət* ስርዐት ብርድት: Cold low system.

*Sərʿat ʾəsrət* ስርዐት እስርት: Restricted law system.

*Sərʿat ʾitətnaqqaf* ስርዐት ኢትትነቀፍ: Fixed rules system.

*Sərʿat Ṭəlləqət* ስርዐት ጥልቅት: Free law system.

*Šek* ሼክ: Muslim cleric.

*Šəkəl* ሽክል: The second youngest age group who support the *Rabʿat* and take some active role on social community works however they are not accountable for communal activities.

*Šum* ሹም: Traditional chief/king of a village.

*Ṭaleqe* ጠሌቀ: Outcast.

*Ṭebṭāy māl* ጤብጣይ ማል: Cashier.

*Warāzit* ወራዚት: Young adults who are well organized and fulfill all youth requirements.

*Warnob* ወርኖብ: A beat style.

*Wərzuy* ዉርዙይ: A boy who can fulfill the *Rabʽat*s regulations and values properly. A boyfriend who do all support to his girlfriend is also called *Wurzui*.

*Wərzit* ዉርዚት: A girl who can fulfill the *Rabʽat*s regulations and values properly. A girlfriend who do all support to her boyfriend is also called *Wurzit*.

*Zanab* ዘነብ: Tail, i.e. long-drawn-out.

*Tigre abstract*

### ረብዐት

ከሊመት "ረብዐት" ምን ብዙሕ ናይ "ረበዕ" በዐለት "ረብዓት" ለመጽእት ከሊመት ተ። ረበዐ ለለትበሀለ እት ለትወቀለት ደረጀት ዐቦት ገሮብ ወዐቅል ለልትሪከብ አዳም አው ሔዋን ቱ። ዲብ ምጅተመዕ ትግረ እብ ዓመት ሸባባት ዲብ እግል ልቀቀው እት ለቀድሮ ለሔሰት ደረጀት ዐቦት ገሮብ ወዐቅል ክምሰለ ሀለው ልትሐሰቦ። እብሊ ሰበብ እሊቱ ለዲብ ምጅተመዕ ትግረ እብ ብዝሕ ወእት ምጅተመዓት ብሌን ወሕዳረብ-መ። ሕዱድ መትመዳዶ ለቡ ናይ ለመድ መሕበር ሸባባት "ረብዐት" ለትበሀለ። ረብዐት እት ለትከወነት እቱ ገቢለ ለገብእ ክም ህዳይ ወሞት ለመስለ መሕበራይ ወራታት። አትፋግፋት (ትልህየ)፡ ዕቁበት መንገሮ ዐድ። ወባልሓት ፍንጐር ወአኪይ-መቅሩሕ እቱ እብ ነሻጥ ክም ሜርሐይት ትሻርክ። ክልኤ ጅንስ ረብዐት ህለዩ። ህተን ህዩ፡ ረብዐት ንጋረት ወረብዐት ድላለት ተን። ረብዐት ንጋረት ለዐቤት ወዳይመት ረብዐት ዐድ ተ። ረብዐት ድላለት ህዩ እት ሐንቴ ረብዐት ንጋረት ለትትከምከም ናይ ዶለ ረብዐት ተ። እት ወቅት ህዳይ እግለ መርዓውቶታት ትክድም ወእግለ ድላለት እግል ተአግምል ለትትከወን ረብዐት ተ። አንፉር ረብዐት ድላለት እግል እለ ናይ ዶለ ረብዐቶም ለመርሓ እቡ ናይ ኖሶም እሱል ለአፈግሮ። ኩሎ ወቀዮም ዲብ አገመሎት ወለወቆት መርዓዊ ወመርዓት ቱ። መደት ሕጽዎት ክም ተመት ህዬ ወቀዮም ተምም።

ከግድም እሊ ክቱብ እሊ፡ ረብዐት ሚ በዐለት ክምስለት፡ እብ ከፎ ክም ትትነዘም፡ አግቡይ መሻሪከት አንፉር ረብዐት፡ እሱል ሕርያን ወሂበት ክርን፡ ዲቡ ሕክም ወዕሪ ለለትነፍዖ እቡ አግቡይ ወመባድእ እቱ ለሁድግ። እት ረእስ እሊ ለክቱብ ዶር ወመቅሬሕ ለትፈናተው አግማም ሐቴ ረብዐት ሸሬሐ። አስክ እለ ረብዐት ለክሰስ ለገአ ልግብእ ክቱብ ሰበት ኢጸንሐ። ኬትባይ እሊ ክቱብ መራጅዕ ብዕድ እግል ልወስክ ኢቀድረ። ወእብሊ ኖሱ ምን ገቢለ ትግረ ላቱ ኬትባይ እሊ ክቱብ እሊ፡ ጋመት ለዐዐት አካን እግል ለአትምም እንዴ ሰተተ ትበገሰ። እሊ ክቱብ እሊ እግል ለአትዳለ ዲብ ለትፈናተ መናጥቅ ኤርትርየ ምስል አንፉር ብዝሓም መቃበለት ወህድግ ወደ።

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# The Tigre and their Traditional Beliefs and Superstitions:
## A Socio-linguistic Survey

Saleh Mahmud Idris[*]

*Abstract*

The purpose of this article is to give the reader general information on the Təgre people and their traditions. The article discusses mainly the people, the language, and the culture of the Təgre people. To facilitate the reader's understanding, this introduction defines those terms and concepts that may otherwise be unclear or confusing. Following the introduction, the first section of the main part gives a brief description of the tribal grouping and the social organization of the Təgre-speaking people. This section also explains the main features of economy, lifestyle, and religious history of the Təgre people. Language is the main unifying factor of the Təgre people; thus the second section discusses the origin, the history, the users, and the current status of the language. The author of this article believes that one can gain understanding of the community through an examination of the community's traditions and customs, because culture tells how a people thinks, behaves, and reacts. From this perspective the third section gives detailed information on the main components of Təgre traditions and customs such as traditional beliefs and superstitions, marriage, family and upbringing, property ownership, inheritance, food and diet as well as housing construction. The conclusion summarizes the place of the Təgre speaking people in the process of ongoing nation building in Eritrea.

## A. Definition of Terms and Concepts

The term **ትግሬ** (*Təgre*) refers both to the language and the people who speak it. There is some confusion because of various other usages of the term. Until the 1940s, this word has also been used as a derogatory term to indicate the lower status of a person within the feudal social structure of the Təgre communities. After the emancipation from serfdom, locally known as **ትግሬ ሽማገሉ** (*Təgre-Šəmāgalle*) social stratum, in 1948, the term has gained more acceptance among Təgre speakers. Yet, some tribes of the Təgre society do not like to be called Təgre. This, however, does not mean that they consider themselves different from those who accept the term

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Təgre as their name as well as the name of their language. The confusion exists only terminologically. Some tribes, who associate the term Təgre only with its socio-economic meaning, use the term ሃሰ (*Hāsa*) instead of Təgre to refer to themselves or to their language. Some others see the term *Hāsa* as a derogatory expression, too, used by the Sudanese when referring to the Təgre people and language. Regardless of the terms they use to identify themselves, all speakers of this language see themselves as one entity with common language, culture, religion, land, and history. There is no sufficient information on when and how the term Təgre was used to mean "the commoner" or socio-economically lower class of people. The origin of this word is a subject that requires further research.

The second usage of the term Təgre which tends to create confusion results from the Amharic practice of using the term Təgre to refer to all speakers of ትግርኛ (*Təgrəñña*). Similar confusion occurs when the term Təgre is used to refer to the province of ትግራይ *Təgrāy*), the northernmost province of Ethiopia[1].

The term Təgre in this work refers only to the people who speak the language called Təgre, and to their language. When the term is used to refer to the other connotations it is written in italics and starts with a small letter.

The terms "tribe" and "clan" are used interchangeably, in this article, to mean exactly the same thing, i.e. a social group made up of people of the same race, beliefs, customs, language, and usually living under the leadership of one chief. On the other hand the term "tribal confederacy" is used to refer to a union of tribes who are living in a particular area once were under the leadership of one feudal aristocratic family.

## B. The People

The Təgre people number about one third of the total Eritrean population.[2] They live mainly in the Eritrean administrative zones of Northern Red Sea, ዐንሰበ (ʿAnsaba), and ጋሽ-በርከ (Gāš-Barka). Some Təgre tribes live in the Eastern Sudan. Four factors characterize Təgres: common language, culture, religion and common genealogy, but these factors are not of equal influence. Language is the main factor through which the Təgre people identify themselves as a community, while common genealogy is the least important.

The Təgre people have neighborhood contacts with all eight Eritrean nationalities. To the south, they are bordered by the Təgrəñña and Bəlin, to the southwest the Kunama and Nara, to the northwest the Bidhaawyeet (Beǧa), to the east by the Rašāyda, and to southeast by the Sāho and Afar. The relations of the Təgre people with these surrounding peoples involve movements, intermixture, and assimilation.

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1    Similar also Shack: The Central Ethiopians: Amhara, Tigriña and Related Peoples (1974), p. 67.
2    Ministry of Education: *Eritrea*: *Basic Education Statistics* (1995/1996).

Many of today's Təgre tribes have Təgrəñña, Sāho, ʿAfar, Bidhaawyeet, Nara, Kunama, and/or Arab origin. Many years ago these tribes, for several reasons, moved into the Təgre land and intermixed with the Təgre people through marriage, through adopting the Təgre language and assimilation into the Təgre culture. Those who were Christians accepted Islam, the religion of almost all the Təgre tribes. Some of these newcomers became rulers or spiritual leaders of the Təgre people either by acceptance or by force. The ቤት አስገዴ (Bet-ʾAsgade) of ሐባብ (Ḥabāb) and the ነታብ (Nattāb) of ቢንዓምር (Bin-ʿĀmər) are examples of political leaders and the ʿAd-Šek are examples of spiritual leaders. Although we do not know to what extent, there was also conversion and assimilation of Təgre people into other linguistic communities.

## I. A Short History of Tribal Groupings and Social Changes

Most of the Təgre tribes were grouped into unions of tribes which could be called tribal confederacies. These include: ቢንዓምር (Bin-ʿĀmər), ሐባብ (Ḥabāb), ማርየ (Mārya), መንሰዕ (Mansaʿ), ዐድ-ተክሌስ (ʿAd-Takles). Tribes who lived in the same geographical area formed tribal confederacies to protect themselves from invasions by other strong tribes. One tribe can have its members living in different geographic locations and thus its members can belong to the confederacy in that location. The confederacy is a political, a military, and a territorial unit. Land is owned by the confederacy. People belonging to the same confederacy follow the same legal system. The offices of chief of these confederacies are always hereditary. In all confederacies the chief enjoys greatpower. The chief's title varies from one confederacy to another, though they have the same power. For example, the chief of the Mansaʿ and Ḥabāb is known by the title ከንቲባይ (Kantebāy), the chief of the Mārya by the title ሹም (Šum), and the chief of the Bin-ʿĀmər by the title ድግለል (Dəglal).

In the past, the duties and responsibilities of each of the two socio-economic groups i.e. (ትግሬ Təgre and ሸማገሌ Šəmāgalle) towards each other have varied considerably from one confederacy to another. In general, however, their relationship was similar to that of tribute payer and protector. The Təgres used to pay some amount of money, gifts, livestock and/or services to their Šəmāgalles (their lords), and in return they would receive protection. For example, when a Təgre person faces poverty and is unable to feed his family, his Šəmāgalle has the obligation to help him. In areas where land is owned only by the Šəmāgalles, the Šəmāgalle is obliged to let his Təgre rent a plot of land. In addition, the Šəmāgalle protects his Təgre from being harmed by other lords and sponsors him in cases where there is a need for a sponsor.[3] This type of social system was followed until the late 1940s.

There was a strong solidarity among the Təgres of all tribal confederacies. Similar alliances were also found amongst the feudal aristocrats of the different tribal confed-

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[3]    Rodén: *Le tribù dei Ménsa* (1913), pp. 96–99.

eracies. This was clearly proved in 1943 when a Təgre man called **ሑመድ ሽንጡብ**
(Ḥumad Šənṭub) refused to pay land tax to his **ሽማገሌ** *Šəmāgalle* and killed the lord.[4]
According to Alämsäggäd Täsfay, the British administration sent Ḥumed Šənṭub to
prison for 3 years in addition to a payment of blood-compensation. The *Kantebāy* of
Ḥabāb asked the tribe of Ḥumad Šənṭub to pay 100 camels or its equivalent in cash,
claiming that it was the traditions of Bet-ʾAsgade that the blood-compensation of a
*Šəmāgalle* person was twice that of a Təgre person. Ḥumad Šənṭub's tribe refused to
pay 100 camels and offered 50 camels as a compensation arguing that all human be-
ings are equal and should be treated equally. The **ከንቴባይ** (*Kantebāy*) of Mansaʿ, the
**ሹም** (*Šum*) of Mārya, the **ድግለል** (*Dəglal)* of Bin-ʿĀmər, and the **ናይብ** (*Nāyəb*) of
Samhar in **ሕርጊጎ** (*Ḥərgigo*) supported the proposal of *Kantebāy*. On the other hand,
all Təgres of all the tribal confederacies supported Ḥumed Šənṭub's tribe. This inci-
dent escalated the *Təgre-Šəmāgalle* conflict and lead to the uprising of all Təgres
against the oppressive rule of the *Šəmāgalle* and the emancipation of all Təgres and
total abolition of the system.

In 1961 the Eritrean armed struggle for independence started in the western low-
lands of Eritrea, the homeland of the Təgre people. **ሳሕል** (*Sāḥəl*), another homeland
of the Təgre people, was the base of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF)
for 20 years. These historical situations made the Təgre land a battlefield for three
decades. The Təgre people together with the other surrounding people became the
target of enemy attacks. Many towns and villages were burnt and completely de-
stroyed. A very large number of people fled to the Sudan. All types of economic ac-
tivities declined. Although the war has heavily damaged the human and material
resources of the people, it brought about significant political, social, and cultural
changes within the Təgre society. Since the Təgres were at the center of the political
activities of the revolution, their political awareness grew and they developed a strong
national feeling. Many traditional customs, beliefs, practices, and systems of social
organization have been eradicated and replaced by new revolutionary ones. In some of
the liberated areas schools were established and started to teach both children and
adults in their mother tongue. Gradually, the traditional way of life began to change.
The new generation developed the tendency to abandon traditional rural in favor of
urban life. These changes led to the rapid emergence of semi-urban centers in Təgre
areas after independence. Those who had fled to the Sudan were also subject to social
changes. First, they were forced to leave their rural life and live in refugee camps or
Sudanese towns and cities. They were exposed to different experiences, cultures, and
ways of life, and worked in different economic sectors. Some got the chance to edu-
cate their children. It can be said that the second generation and particularly those
who were living in the cities have successfully assimilated into the Sudanese society.

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[4]    Alämsäggäd Täsfay: *ʾAynəffälalä* (2001), p. 73.

After independence, many of these refugees came back home carrying these new social and cultural experiences. This together with the changes that had taken place in the liberated areas changed the social picture of the Təgre society that had been predominantly rural before the beginning of the struggle for independence.

## II. Way of Life

Many of the Təgre people live in transhumance and/or as pastoralists. After the end of the harvest season in the highlands, they go to the lowlands of ሰምሀር (*Samhar*), ሳሕል (*Sāḥəl*), and northern በርከ (*Barka*). This direction of migration is called ሰብክ (*səbək*). In *səbək* it is mostly the herds and their male shepherds who move; sometimes, however, the entire population does. During the summer they move back again into the highlands of Ḥabāb, Mansaʿ, Mārya and other cool places. This direction of migration is known as ስግም (*səgəm*). This way of life created the opportunity for different tribes of Təgre to live together and intermix and can be considered as one of the major factors which led to the development of collective identity among the Təgre people.

It should be pointed out that although most Təgres are farmers and transhumants, a considerable number of the Təgre population also live in urban areas. Karan, Bāṣeʿ (Massawa), Gənda, ʾAqərdat, Təsəney/Səney, Naqfa and ʾAfʿabat are some of the urban centers in which Təgre speaking communities are found in large numbers. Təgres who live in these towns work in different sectors of the economy, as business owners, merchants, civil servants, teachers, crafts, skilled and unskilled workers, and other forms of public employees.

### 1. Main Features of Economy

### a. Livestock

The Təgre nomads and pastoralists have large flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle and camels, and a few horses and donkeys. In addition to the usual use of camels as providers of milk and meat and means of transport, Təgre pastoralists use camels for ploughing land. On the other hand, in addition to common use, oxen are used as means of transport. Among the Təgres, livestock is considered a symbol of wealth and rarely exploited for its economic value. It is seldom slaughtered or sold, nor effectively used for dairy products. There are no recent livestock statistics available. In 1934 the Təgres were very rich in livestock. For instance; the ሐባብ (*Ḥabāb*) who numbered about 25,000 at that time, owned 16,567 cows, 291,686 sheep and goats,

and 6,365 camels.[5] The other Təgre tribes also had similar or higher number of live-stock.

## b. Agriculture

Agricultural activities of the Təgre people include both stock-rearing and cultivation. In the highlands farmers produce wheat, barley, pumpkins, potatoes, flax, and beans. In the eastern and western lowlands and the central lowlands sorghum, millet, maize, sesame, onions, beans, watermelons, cotton, and bananas are cultivated. Other vege-tables and fruits such as tomatoes, oranges, and lemons are also produced. The ma-jority of the agricultural activities of the Təgre pastoralists and farmers are not mar-ket oriented. Farmers sell or exchange some of their products to satisfy their daily needs, but, in many cases, these do not go beyond local consumption. In recent years, however, the number of market oriented agricultural activities showed signifi-cant expansion and growth.

## c. Trade

Trade is the other economic sector through which a considerable number of the Təgre people lead their life. They export livestock and produce honey, palm tree leaves and their produce, and fish to the neighboring countries. In return they im-port clothes, sugar, coffee, rice, cereal, etc. Similar products are also traded on the internal market. In addition salt is traded in the highlands of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

## d. Other Economic Activities

The other economic activities include: fishing, crafts, services, governmental work, mining, construction and other public work.

## III. Religion

The Təgre people is predominantly Muslim. In the locality of **መንስዕ** (*Mansaʿ*), however, there are some Christians. According to Pollera,[6] in 1931 out of the 6,499 inhabitants of Mansaʿ 1,424 were Christians. This means there were 1,424 Christians out of a total Təgre population of 153,517; that is, the Christians were only 0.9 % of the Təgre population at that time.

Looking at the history shows that there has been a considerable flexibility of reli-gious affiliation among the Təgres. Some started as Christians and converted to Islam with the coming of different Muslim rulers – Turks, Egyptians, Sudanese, etc. to the

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[5]  Pollera: *Le popolazioni indigene dell'Eritrea* (1935), Təgrəñña translation by Abba Yəsḥaq Gäbräʾiyäsus, p. 208.
[6]  Ibid. (Təgrəñña version), p. 182.

Təgre land during different historical times. At the same time, some who were Muslims converted to Catholizism and Protestantism by the influence of missionaries. In recent years, however, no major religious conversions occurred and the Təgres seem to have been very strict Muslims, including those who converted two or three centuries ago. Today, the social life of the Təgres is governed by Islamic rules and tradition.

## C. The Language

Təgre is one of the Semitic languages of Eritrea. It is closer to Arabic than any other Eritrean language. This could be because of its dominant Semitic character and its contact with Arabic as a neighbor, and through the Islamic religion. Təgre is also said to be the closest language to Gəʿəz. For example Palmer said, "[I]n some respect it is the most Semitic language of the Semitic Languages of Ethiopia, and at the first sight at least appears to be closer to the classical Gəʿəz than is any other."[7] Moreover, the language is also called ሃሰ (*Hāsa*) and is known by that name at least in ሳሕል (*Sāḫəl*), በርካ (*Barka*) and in the Sudan. In Grimes, the name of this language is given as Təgre (*khasa*, *xasa*).[8] It is spoken in the Northern Red Sea, ዐንሰበ (*ʿAnsaba*), and Gaš-Barka administrative regions of Eritrea and in the Eastern Sudan. About one third of the Eritrean population speak Təgre as their mother tongue, and, in addition, a very large section of the Eritrean population uses it as their second language. For instance Grimes mentions that 70 % of Bəlin Muslims, who are 70 % of the Bəlin population as a whole, seem to be bilingual in Bəlin and Təgre.[9] He also says that the Beǧa of Ethiopia are bilingual, and that Nara and Kunama speakers use Təgre for intercommunication.

Təgre started to be written in the second half of the 19th century, especially by Protestant and Catholic missionaries. The missionaries chose Gəʿəz (the script used for Amharic and Təgrəñña orthographies) to write Təgre. Some religious texts and books on a few other subjects were written at that time in the መንሰዕ (*Mansaʿ*) dialect of Təgre. Their use, however, was confined to one specific locality, namely that of the Christians in the Mansaʿ area. The main writing experience of the Təgre language is, however, that one fostered by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), beginning in 1976. The EPLF also decided to use Gəʿəz script. The reasons for adopting the Gəʿəz script for Təgre orthography are:

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[7]    Palmer: *The Morphology of the Təgre Noun* (1962), p. ix.
[8]    Grimes: *Ethnologue* (1988), p. 224.
[9]    Ibid., pp. 218, 222.

1. The Gəˁəz script represents all Təgre sounds very simply and accurately.
2. Historically and linguistically Təgre is believed to be the language most closely affiliated to Gəˁəz. Thus adopting the Gəˁəz script preserves the historical and linguistic relationship and the cultural heritage.
3. The use of the Gəˁəz script was helpful to escape the unnecessary extra burden of transliteration or developing a new orthography for the language, since this script had already been applied to Təgre in the 19th century.

As far as orthography is concerned, the Gəˁəz script is ideal for the Təgre language. However, it resulted in two negative consequences. These are:

1  The Muslim majority of Təgre society associates the Gəˁəz script with colonization and Christianity, because Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, is written in the Gəˁəz script. As a result, there were reservations against the use of the Gəˁəz script among Təgre speakers.
2  The Gəˁəz script does not match the educational background of the society; i.e. most of those who can read and write are literate in Arabic, while schools use the Gəˁəz script. This creates a communication gap between schools, parents, and educated members of the society.

These two factors have affected the development of Təgre written literature, but nevertheless many schools have been established with Təgre as the medium of instruction. In addition to school textbooks, many works of poetry, short stories, drama and a few novels have been written. However, very few of these works have been published. On the other hand basic education textbooks for adults, books on health, and books on civics and politics have been translated into Təgre and put to use. In the early 1970s the Ethiopian radio station in Asmara started broadcasting in the Təgre language. In 1979 the EPLF started radio broadcasts in Təgre. Similarly, since 2001, the Eritrean Television has been airing programs in Təgre. ኤርትርየ ሓደስ (*Erətrəya Ḥaddas*) – the State's official newsletter – started weekly in Təgre since 2005. There were also some private organizations who used to issue biweekly or monthly newspapers and magazines. All these factors created a conducive atmosphere for the language to have a standardized form.

Regarding linguistic research, few works has been done on Təgre so far. Many of the publications have been written by foreigners, and their circulation was limited to academic circles far from the reach of the majority of the Tigre people. And only few dictionaries of Təgre exist, i.e. the recent Musa Aron[10], Littmann / Höfner[11] and a few other lists of words and vocabularies. The same is also true of grammar. There

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[10]  Musa Aron: ክብት ቃላት ህግየ ትግሬ, *Kəbət qālāt həgya Təgre* (2005).
[11]  Littmann / Höfner: *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache* (1962).

are few valuable publications, all of them written by foreign scholars. These are Leslau[12], Palmer[13], Raz[14], and three voluminous articles of Enno Littmann[15].

Taking into consideration the vast area which the Tǝgre language covers, it is only natural to expect a number of dialects within the language. According to the perceptions of the speakers of the Tǝgre language there are at least seven distinguishable dialects, which mainly differ phonologically and to a lesser extent lexically. No major grammatical differences seem to exist among these dialects. In spite of the large number of dialects, the level of intelligibility among speakers of the different dialects is quite high.

In 1997 the author of this article conducted a dialectological survey for the Ministry of Education. The survey included the analysis of 300 basic words, measurement of intelligibility levels based on results of recorded text testing (RTT), primer story modification, and a survey on speaker's perception. An attempt was also made to draw isoglossal lines to mark the boundaries of the Tǝgre dialects. Findings from all these instruments show that dialectal variations are minimal and do not hinder communication. The following table shows the close lexical relations between five Tǝgre dialects.

| Sāhǝl | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 96% | Mansaʿ | | | | |
| 97% | 97% | Mārya Qayaḥ | | | |
| 96% | 94% | 94% | Barka (Bin ʿAmǝr) | | |
| 86% | 88% | 87% | 86% | Samhar | |
| 83% | 81% | 81% | | 75% | Bin ʿAmǝr by Nakano |

Table 1: Saleh Mahmud Idris: Tigre dialects (2005), p. 55

The intelligibility level between the two most different dialects was found to be 89 %. It is as high as 95 % amongst the other dialects. On the basis of the outcome of this survey, the Tǝgre dialects may be grouped into three bigger dialectal areas:

1. The dialects of ባርካ (*Bārka*) and ሳሕል (*Sāhǝl*) together with ማርያ ጸላም (*Mārya Ṣallām*) can be regarded as one dialect which is both lexically and phonologically related, and the absence of /ṣ/ and /z/ as their distinctive dia-

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[12]  Leslau: *Short Grammar of Tigré* (1945).

[13]  Palmer: *The Morphology of the Tǝgre Noun* (1962).

[14]  Raz: *Tǝgre Grammar and Texts* (1982).

[15]  Enno Littmann: Das Verbum der Tigresprache, *ZA*, 13 (1898), pp. 133–178; id.: Das Verbum der Tigresprache, *ZA*, 14 (1899), pp. 1–102; id.: Die Diminutivbildung im Tigre, *AION*, 2 (1943), pp. 89–103; id.: Die Pronomina im Tigre: Ein Beitrag zur äthiopischen Dialektkunde, *ZA*, 12 (1897), pp. 188–230, 291–317.

lectal marker. This dialect group could be termed Ḥabāb-Beni-ʿĀmər, but the existence of the Mārya Ṣallām, which cannot be classified as neither Ḥabāb nor Beni-ʿĀmər, in the group disqualifies the term for this purpose. Therefore it may be referred to by the neutral term "the North-Western dialect of Təgre".

2. The dialects of Mansaʿ, **ማርያ ቀየሕ** (*Mārya Qayaḥ*) and **ቤት-ጁክ** (*Bet-ǧuk*) could also be considered as one dialect with a higher number of commonly shared features in lexicon and phonology, as well as in speaker's perceptions and attitudes. This dialect could be called the dialect of **ሰንሒት** (*Sanḥit*) after the name of the former administrative province in which it is spoken.

3. And finally, there is the **ሰምህር** (*Samhar*) dialect, which is lexically distinctive from the rest.


## D. Traditions and Customs

This section, based on findings of research conducted by the Research Branch of the EPLF's Department of Politicization and Culture in 1980s, describes the main components of the traditions and customs of the Təgre people. The findings appeared in serialized articles in *Eritrea Profile* in the late 1990s. Therefore, the main source of this section is the Ministry of Information (*Eritrea Profile*). *Eritrea Profile* is a bi-weekly newsletter issued by the Government of Eritrea, Ministry of Information.

The author of this article also used his experience as a member of the community and communicated with several well-informed members of the community.

## I. Traditional Beliefs and Superstitions

All societies have their traditional beliefs and superstitions. The degree of attachment to such traditions, however, depends on the degree to which the society is exposed to education and technology. The less the society has been exposed to modern education and technology the higher its attachment to traditional beliefs and superstitions is. At present, Eritrean society in general and the Təgre society in particular are less attached to traditional beliefs and superstition. Thanks to Islam, Christianity and the cultural change that took place during the armed struggle, primitive beliefs and superstitions have no strong roots among the Təgre speech communities. The following is a quote from Ministry of Information:

> During the 30-year armed struggle superstitions and pernicious beliefs were more or less wiped out from the face of Eritrea. The EPLF, through political education and various courses on health and sanitation, changed the mentality of the people for the better.[16]

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[16] *Eritrea Profile* (1998), No. 33.

Traditional beliefs and superstitions, however, are not always backward and harmful practices. In many cases it is used to shape the desired morality in the children and other members of the society as a means of upbringing. There are also many examples of traditional beliefs and 'superstitions' that are grounded on scientific facts.

## 1. Witchcraft

Witchcraft is practiced both by old men and women. It is said that witches get their skills by following dreams and supernormal encounters. In some other areas, however, people believe, that witches learn their skills either from their parents or the devil. In both cases they use beads, incense, etc. to assist them in doing their supernatural practices. It is also said that some witches consult stars and read mysterious books. Some of the problems for which witches are consulted are the whereabouts of family members or stolen gods, foretelling the future and predicting calamities, bringing broken families back together, choosing the right mate, etc. Some witches are also traditional healers.

Sometimes the distinction between witches, traditional healers and religious leaders is not a straight forward classification. Some witches not only foretell fortunes and calamities but also prescribe medicine. Furthermore other witches lead religious practices and people look at them as religious leaders. They claim that they do their practices through the power of God, and usually they inherit their skills and social status from their ancestors.

Those witches who work without religious cover are hated by religious leaders, while they have some ground among the common people. Nevertheless, sometimes all types of witches are the cause of conflict, terror and health problems. This is because they make wrong guesses which result in lack of confidence among neighbors and family members or prescribe traditional medicines that result in health deterioration and death. Some witches also use their influence unjustly to satisfy their needs. For example if a witch asks for the hand of someone's daughter and her parents refused him, then he might threaten to make them poor, crazy, ill, etc. if his demands were not met.

Witchcraft is a profit-making business. All witches make some money by charging their clients. Furthermore, some witches receive gifts from wealthy people and satisfied clients or people who are terrified from their anger.

## 2. Forbidden Activities

In the Təgre society there were some forbidden activities, because it was believed that any one who violated the rule and carried out such activities faced punishment by occult powers. The following are some such activities along with the reprisal.

| Forbidden Activity | Reprisal |
|---|---|
| Moving goods at night | Loss of livestock |
| Lending fire to a neighbor | Living in darkness |
| Chewing gum at night | Chewing the flesh of one's dead parents |
| Transhumance conducted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays | Loss of livestock |
| A woman taking a bath on wednesdays if her husband is away and she had only one child or one brother | Loss of the child or the brother |
| Opening an umbrella inside a house | Death of the head of the household |
| Selling milk | Death of the livestock |
| Sitting on a millstone | Death of one's mother |

Table 2: Ministry of Information: *Eritrea Profile* (1998), No. 42.

## 3. Euphemisms and Taboos

The Təgre speaking society avoids the use of some words for the sake of politeness and respect or because of fear. For example women are not expected to mention the name of their husband, father-in-law, grandfather-in-law, and mother-in-law. They use other words instead. For instance, instead of ʿAli they use **ገብሽ** (*Gabša*), instead of **ሓምድ** (*Ḥāmǝd*) they use **ዐንጃ** (*ʿAnǧa*) etc. When a woman wants to address her husband she addresses him as the "father of their (first son/daughter)". A difficulty, however, appears when the name of their first child is the same as the name of one of the woman's parents-in-law. This type of euphemism was very common in the rural areas for about 20 years. It was strict to the extent that a woman could not use a word even if only some parts of its morphemes contained the name of her husband or her husband's parents. One such example comes from a small town called **ዐሊ-ገድር** (*ʿAli-Gǝdǝr*). Women whose husband's name or the name of their father-in-law is ʿAli still call this town **ገብሽ-ገድር** (*Gabša-Gǝdǝr*). The helicopter which in some Təgre localities is known as **ዐሊ-ኮብተር** (*ʿAlikobtar*), has to be called **ገብሽ-ኮብተር** (*Gabša-kobtar*) by any woman whose husband happens to be called ʿAli.

Other examples of euphemisms include avoiding words that stand for sexual organs and activities, avoiding the names of fierce wild animals at night, the mentioning of unpleasant experiences such as death, diseases, and other sad events. For example instead of "he died", the word **ትረሐመ** (*traḥama*) will be used, which means "he has got the mercy of God", instead of "he was bitten by a snake", **ሀዳ** (*hada*) which means "he has got married" is used, and instead of a "snake", **ሐብል-ምድር** (*ḥabǝl-mǝdǝr*) means the "rope of the land" is used – to mention only some examples of euphemism.

## 4. Forbidden Foods and Drinks

All foods and drinks that are listed in the Islamic injunction are strictly forbidden among the predominantly Muslim society of Təgre. According to research conducted by the EPLF's Department of Politicization and Culture, flesh of some forbidden animals could be consumed as a medicine only. Along with the foods and drinks forbidden in Islam there are some which are traditionally forbidden or considered as taboo among members of the Təgre community. The injunction over such foods and drinks, however, is not a strict one and varies greatly from one locality to another.

Almost every "tribe" of the Təgre people has some body parts of animals that are forbidden for them to eat, due to one or more of the following reasons: 1) the grand ancestor of the tribe cursed such parts and banned their consumption, 2) people believe that the consumption of such parts may result in reprisals by supernatural powers and 3) behavioral problems that are related to the functions of those organs. For example, in some localities of the Bin-ʿĀmər the consumption of heart, lungs and tongue is forbidden, because the people believe that the consumption of these would result in skin diseases, poverty, or the loss of one's vital body parts or one's senses. It was taboo for women to eat testicles of animals "(in order not to have excessive sexual desires) and tongues (in order not to become talkative)".[17] Furthermore some tribes do not eat tongue, because their grand ancestor thought that tongue is the cause of conflicts among human beings and thus, he banned its consumption for his descendants.

## 5. Omina and Premonitions

The Təgre society still believes in omina and premonitions. It is believed that a person can feel future dangerous events or fortunes through some extraordinary feelings and/or through some strange encounters. The following are some examples of such beliefs.

| Signs of Good Luck | Signs of Bad Luck |
|---|---|
| A donkey braying on your right | A donkey braying on your left |
| The ዒስ (ʿisa) bird singing on your right | The ዒስ (ʿisa) bird singing in front of you |
| Encountering with an eagle in the morning | Meeting a braying donkey in your journey |
| Listening to the song of swallows in the morning | A fox crossing you path |
|  | Meeting a mean person in the street |
|  | A black dog or a hyena crossing your path |

Table 3: Ministry of Information: *Eritrea Profile* (1999), No. 43

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[17]    Ministry of Information: *Eritrea Profile* (1998), No. 41.

Some unusual body feelings, and actions such as itching, stumbling and sneezing are interpreted as symptoms of calamities or fortunes. For example, an itch in one's feet means that the person will go for a long travel. Itch in one's palm means that the person will get money. Itch in nose is interpreted as expecting a guest or good news. Similarly, if someone stumbles, this means someone else mentioned that person's name in his absence. If someone sneezes in bed, this means one of the family members will die. In order for this not to happen the person who sneezes has to call the names of all family members. In another belief if someone sneezes while another person making a point means the person who was making the point is right.

## II. Housing Construction

Most of the houses of the Təgre people are constructed in the traditional way using local raw materials such as soil, branches of wood, grass, stones, ropes, and mats. Only few types of houses are built by skilled masons. Most of them are built either by the family members or by village cooperation. The types of houses vary from one locality to another depending on the way of life that the people lead, and the climate in which they live. For example nomads in the lowlands built light, movable and well ventilated houses, while the farmers in the highlands built well covered and permanent houses. The pastoralists and town dwellers in the lowlands live in relatively permanent and ventilated houses. The common types of houses of the Təgre people are ሕማር *ḥəmmār*, አብሎ *ʾablo*, ንሕስ *nəḥəs*, ረሴት *raset*, ተከል *takəl*, መዕደኒ *maʿdani*, ሰንደቀት *sandaqat*, ምርበዐት *mərəbbaʿat*.

### 1. *Ḥəmmār* and *ʾablo*

*Ḥəmmār* and *ʾablo* are the types of houses used by nomads and also by pastoralists in some areas. *Ḥəmmār* and *ʾablo* are semicircular temporary shelters. They are made of long branches, mats or quilts, ropes, and pikes. Both *ḥəmmār* and *ʾablo* are constructed by women. Much of the construction and decoration material is also made by women. Men are expected only to prepare few building materials such as the long branches, and to buy some raw materials for the women to process and finish them. Sometimes, however, men might buy the entire building materials in a finished form. The life span of a *ḥəmmār* or *ʾablo* is not more than one or two years.

### 2. *Nəḥəs*

*Nəḥəs* is a type of house used by farmers in the highlands. It consists of stone-made rectangular walls, wooden ceilings, and sand-covered roofs. *Nəḥəs* is built through village cooperation. It is the men who participate in the construction of *nəḥəs*. Women prepare food and drinks. *Nəḥəs* lasts for several decades provided that it is repaired from time to time. From an environmental point of view, however, this type of

housing should not be encouraged, because each single room causes the destruction of hundreds of trees.

### 3. *Takəl* and *Raset*

These are types of huts. They consist of a circular wall made of wood/stone and cone-shape upper part. They are made of wood, ropes, stone, and grass. Both *takəl* and *raset* are either built by family members or village cooperation. Building *takəl* and *raset* is the share of the men. The life span of these types of huts is between 5 and 10 years.

### 4. *Maʿdani, Sandaqat* and *Mərəbbaʿat*

These are all similar in shape and size. There are differences in the ways they are built and in the materials used to construct them. *Maʿdani* is constructed with branches of wood, grass, and ropes. *Sandaqat*, on the other hand, is made of wooden walls and corrugated iron roofs. Again *mərəbbaʿat* is a little different from *sandaqat*. Instead of wooden walls it has stone walls. Both *mərəbbaʿat* and *sandaqat* are constructed by skilled masons, while *maʿdani* is constructed by village cooperation. As to the life span of these buildings, the *maʿdani* lasts 5 to 10 years, while *sandaqat* and *mərəbba-ʿat* last longer, provided that they are constantly repaired.

## III. Marriage, Family and Upbringing

Taking into consideration the fairly wide geographical extension, and other cultural factors it is not surprising to see slight differences in the way marriages are arranged, children are brought up, and family issues are administered among the different Təgre tribes. Thus, the following traditions might not be exactly the same in each and every tribe.

### 1. Family

As already mentioned above, the Təgre society is a patriarchal society. Men occupy a prominent position and play a pivotal role. They are the most important person in their immediate families. The man is the provider of the genealogy of his family. A child is considered a member of a certain clan only if his father is from that clan. Only the existence of a male guarantees the continuation and extension of one's family.

The Təgre family structure is that of an extended family. It consists of parents, children and other close relations such as grandparents and cousins. The family sub-units live close to each other geographically. Final decisions on family issues are taken by the oldest person of the family – usually the grandfather. Property, particularly land, is owned by the extended family. The sub-units have only the right to use the

property. Sometimes, however, the head of the extended family might divide the property to his sons and let them enjoy an autonomous life. In each case the oldest person in every sub-unit of the extended family is the head of his/her family. He/she enjoys some power within the limits of the small family.

## 2. Marriage

The first principle of the Təgre marriage institution is to protect against a possible breakdown of the final union. Thus, marriage happens after a long period of consultation, familiarization, and cooperation. Consultations and deliberations take place among parents and members of the extended family even before the betrothal period. It is only after such serious considerations that betrothal takes place. Then, family ties start through the exchange of gifts, and extended cooperation. If things do not go smoothly during this period, a marriage can be canceled.

In all the Təgre traditional communities, the parents and the heads of the extended families have the final word in betrothal and marriage arrangements. The boy and the girl know nothing about the contract; and even if they would, their word would have no effect on the final decision. Moreover, they can be engaged even before they are born to create continuation of friendship between families, to strengthen economic ties, or to settle blood feuds. The Ministry of Information based on research conducted by the Research Branch of the EPLF Department of Politicization, Education and Culture in 1980s states:

> If two families are well-off and want to keep the wealth w[h]ere it belongs, they make pledges of a marriage alliance referring to the two unborn children still lying in their respective mother's wombs.

> If two families have a blood feud between them, one way to settle the quarrel is through a marriage alliance.[18]

In urban and semi-urban areas, due to education, gender freedom, and influences of other cultures the state of affairs mentioned above is gradually changing. In such areas boys are free to choose their future wives or at least they are consulted and their word is respected. Girls, however, are not as free as the boys to choose their husbands, but at least they are consulted and might refuse the husband proposed by their parents.

Matrimonial union is preferred to occur between two close blood relations. The reasons behind the preference of close blood relationships are: the desire to keep wealth within the clan circuit, to ensure the continuity and the purity of their genealogy, and to guarantee the continuity of unity and cooperation. Nevertheless, matrimonial union between unrelated families is common. In fact intermarriage between

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[18]   *Eritrea Profile* (1999), No. 46.

Təgre and other ethnic groups is also possible. For example it is possible between Təgre and Bəlin, Təgre and Ḥədārab, Təgre and Sāho, Təgre and Afar, Təgre and Nāra, Təgre Christian and Tigrəñña Christian, and also Təgre Muslim and Tigrəñña Muslim. The relations, however, are not always bidirectional. In some cases, the Təgres married a girl from another ethnic group, but they do not give their daughters to the same ethnic group. Intermarriage between followers of two religions, though not common, is not impossible. Again the state of affairs is not symmetrical: A Muslim boy marrying a Christian girl is somehow accepted, while a Muslim girl marrying a Christian boy is not, because taking a wife is considered a gain, while giving a girl away is considered a loss.

Should matrimonial unions take place between unrelated families for reasons other than the ones quoted above, factors such as wealth, purity of genealogy, beauty, level of education, and other socio-economic status are given serious consideration. The more distant the blood relationship between the families are, the more consideration is given to such factors, and likewise, the more the families are related, the less importance is assigned to these factors.

Exchange of gifts and payments start from the betrothal time, and they are started by the family of the boy. In fact it is the family of the boy who will make most of the payments. These include several heads of livestock, clothes for all close relatives of the bride, a certain amount of money for the mother of the bride, clothes and shoes for the bride, gold and other adornments, and many other presents. Some of these payments are legislated in the Shariʿa law and/or the local codes. Accordingly it is a must to pay them. Some others, however, are paid either as a sign of good will of the boy's family or because of other interests. For instance, some families give presents in order to make the girl's family pay a good dowry. Some parents bribe old women who would otherwise use their skills to insult and humiliate them in songs during the marriage ceremonies. In addition, the family of the girl may order a certain amount of money to be paid by the boy's family. In the past these were paid in the form of livestock. At present, however, this is mainly paid either in gold or cash.

With regard to marriage expenses, the girl's family is responsible for three things. These are furniture and other household goods, adornment and decoration, and dowry. The mother of the girl starts preparing furniture and other household goods much earlier than the betrothal period. In the rural areas in which አብሎ ʾablo and ሕምር ḥəmmār type of houses are common, the mother is not only expected to prepare the furniture and household goods but also the building materials such as mats and ropes. She also has the responsibility to prepare and/or buy decoration materials. Her main financial source is the money paid by the boy's family. In the traditional rural areas, to be the mother of a girl is a rather stressful role, and some people say mothers do not want to have daughters to escape this burden. In the urban areas, the mother's burden is less stressful. Preparation of the house itself is the role of the

boy's family. The furniture and most of the household goods can simply be pur-chased ready-made using the money paid by the boy's family. The mother is only responsible for the preparation of some household goods, items for gifts, and decora-tive items.

In the Təgre society dowry is given by the girl's family to the bride. Unlike in other cultures it is her personal property. For example in the case of divorce, she takes the property or money she brought as dowry. In the past it was given in the form of livestock. At the present time although, there are some localities in which dowry is still given in the form of livestock in many other localities it is paid in cash, gold, furniture or a combination of all of them.

## 3. Upbringing and Education

In all Təgre communities children are the most valued and appreciated members of the family. Children have priority in every consideration. They have priority in food, clothes, health care, recreation, etc. Punishment that might hurt the physical or psychological make-up of the children is almost forbidden. Children's ideas are well respected. Parents listen to their children and give appropriate answers to their ques-tions. Children are also free to listen to their parents' discussion and give their opin-ion.

Generally, children are punishable when parents believe that their children have developed the ability to differentiate between right and wrong. Most of the time, however, it is from the age of ten to fifteen that parents punish their children. It is believed that punishment before the age of ten years might have psychological conse-quences. For example when they might develop into cowards, lose self confidence and pride when they grow up. Children above fifteen, on the other hand, are consid-ered adults. At this age they are expected to know all their responsibilities. Punish-ment at this age would be considered as humiliation by those teenagers. Therefore, parents are very careful and think twice before they decide to punish a teenager. Usu-ally it is the father who punishes the male children. Mothers take care of the female children. In the absence of the father, the big brother or the uncle takes the respon-sibility of upbringing.

The process of educating children starts informally as early as the play time (one year and above). Boys are encouraged to play games which are energetic, competitive, and aggressive by nature, because in their future adult life boys are expected to be strong and brave. Their games include many imitations of their fathers' daily activi-ties such as plowing, looking after animals, fighting, matrimonial ceremonies, and constructing houses. Girls on the other hand are expected to play less strenuous but skillful games, because girls are expected to be wise, beautiful, careful, and polite. In short they should play their mothers' role.

During the first few years of their life, even though the children may play the roles which are typical of their gender, they are otherwise gender blind. Children from both sexes play together, and their parents are not worried. As the children grow up, however, parents become more and more conscious. Girls have to help their mothers at home while boys observe and try to do whatever their fathers do. The Ministry of Information based on researches conducted by the Research Branch of the EPLF Department of Politicization, Education and Culture in 1980s states:

> And when they reach age of 15, boys are taught how to plough the earth. At the age of 8, girls are trained in the art of baking, grinding and other house hold chores. In addition boys aged 5–7 are sent to religious schools to recite the Koran. But when they reach adulthood, they are free to choose any profession they like.[19]

After the introduction of formal education in the rural areas, however, things have changed. Boys and girls learn in the same school and work together.

## IV. Property Ownership

Among the Təgre communities property can be owned by individual members of a family, families, tribes, or a union of tribes, depending on the type of property. Live-stock, houses, and other consumable things are usually owned by individual members of the family. The head of the family cannot sell or exchange the property without prior permission of the family member who owns the property. Farmland in most areas of the Təgre communities is owned by families. The ownership of the land passes from father to son through inheritance or by the will of the father. Farm land can be sold or exchanged at any time by the immediate owner. The village or the tribe has no right to prohibit the owner from doing so. In some localities, however, farm land is owned by aristocrat landlords. The other people have only the right to use the land. They cannot sell or change the land. Furthermore, in some areas they pay rent for the land or share the products with the landlord.

Grazing land is owned by tribes or unions of tribes. No individual has the right to sell or exchange this type of land. There are clear borders between the different tribes or unions of tribes. In most cases these borders were settled after many years of war and fighting. Usually the borders exist either at the places where the other side was defeated or at places in which peace agreement was signed. In the past these borders were meaningful. It was not easy to settle in the territory of the other side without prior permission of its owner. At the present time, however, land is the property of the government.

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[19]   *Eritrea Profile* (1996), No. 4.

## V. Inheritance

Among the predominantly Muslim Tǝgre communities sharing out of inheritance is mainly carried out according to *Šarī'ah* regulations, the Islamic legal system. According to this law, land, houses, livestock, money, and adornments are the most commonly inherited properties. Thus, in the following are some examples of inheritance implemented according to traditional customs and local codes: In the past slaves, titles, and ranks were inherited. On the other hand, despite the legislated right of women to inherit from all types of properties according to the understanding of *Šarī'ah*, in most Tǝgre localities land is still inherited by male inheritors only. Among the **መንሰዕ** *Mansa'* clan, who use a local code called **ፍትሕ መሓሪ** *Fǝtǝḥ Maḥāri* women have no right to inherit any type of property. Furthermore, during the sharing of inheritance the first born male is given special privileges, because he is the one who should take care of the family after the death of his father. The last born male also "gets extra privileges such as fertile plot of land, farming tools and a calf, of his own choice."[20] The logic behind this privilege is that the last born son helps his mother to overcome the loneliness after the death of her husband.

## VI. Food and Diet

Most of the Tǝgre people are farmers and/or cattle herders. Generally speaking the majority of the Tǝgres live from what they produce and some of those who live in urban areas can buy imported types of food. The common types of cereal produced in the highlands are wheat and barley. The lowlanders on the other hand produce *durrah*, sorghum, millet, maize, etc. In the typical Tǝgre rural areas most of the utensils used in the preparation of food are home-made. The materials used to make these utensils include: clay, wood, iron, leaves of palm trees, skin, and stone. Usually villagers eat only two meals a day. Since farmers leave for the field early in the morning, usually they do not eat breakfast. On the other hand, since shepherds usually go very far with their herds it is difficult for them to come back home for lunch in the middle of the day. Hence, they are satisfied with only breakfast and dinner. In some localities, however, shepherds have a milk snack in the middle of the day.

In the past cereals were ground by women and mainly eaten as porridge. The flour is also prepared in other forms of food such as **ሕበዘት** *ḥǝbbazat* (unleavened bread), **ሉሕሉሕ** (*luḥluḥ*; very thin pancake), **ተንዱር** (*tandur*; home-made bread). Porridge is usually eaten accompanied by milk and milk products, while the remaining types of food can also be eaten with soups made of vegetables, meat, and fish. In addition cereals are eaten roasted or boiled.

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20  Ministry of Information: *Eritrea Profile* (1997) No. 29.

Domestic animals are considered a symbol of wealth and they are rarely slaughtered for meat. Therefore, among the Təgres meat is consumed only occasionally and usually served either roasted or boiled. In most localities holidays, visiting guests, and social occasions such as marriage, betrothals, circumcisions, baptisms are the main occasions for slaughtering animals for food. Fish is not a very common diet among the Təgre, but nevertheless the Təgre who live in Massawa and the surrounding coastal villages consume much fish in their diet. Milk and dairy products are the main ingredients of the nomads' diet. Milk is drunk either fresh or as yogurt. Tea and coffee are consumed extensively. In almost all Təgre localities tea and coffee are spiced. Fruits such as oranges, bananas, mandarins, and watermelons are also consumed occasionally. In addition the Təgre consume a wide range of seasonal wild fruits and vegetables such as prickly pears, coconut etc. Therefore Təgre meals can have, milk, cereals, vegetables, meat, fish, and fruit as ingredients.

The Arabic cuisine is common among those who live in urban areas. In addition Western dishes are also consumed by the rich. Rural people consume neither Arabic dishes nor Western dishes, but nevertheless rice and macaroni appear occasionally in their meals.

Among the Təgre communities meals are eaten on a mat instead of at a table. Husband and wife never sit together for a meal. The husband eats together with his older male children, while his wife eats in a different place with her daughters and the little children. Due to the influences of other cultures and the understanding of the Islamic religion in urban areas this habit is declining. A meal starts by saying ብስምላህ (*bəsməllāh*; by the name of God) and ends by thanking God.

## E. Conclusion

Four main factors make the Təgre people an important constituent in the process of the Eritrean national fabric. The first of these is their demographic importance. The Təgre people number about one third of the total Eritrean population. This makes them the second largest group after Təgrəñña. The Təgre language is the third most important language in Eritrea after Arabic and Təgrəñña. In addition, it is spoken by many other Eritreans either as their second language or the language of intercommunication. The second important factor is the area that the Təgre people occupy and its geographical location. With the area that they occupy the Təgre people rank first. In addition they have close contacts with all eight Eritrean linguistic groups. This helped the Təgre people to intermix with all Eritrean ethnic groups and become the core of their intermixture. The third factor is the influence of the Təgre culture. Through cultural contacts and through the Təgre language many elements of the Təgre culture have been adopted by the surrounding peoples. This could have influenced the surrounding peoples and have created a sense of intimacy with the Təgre

speech communities. Last, but not the least, comes the history. The past history of the Tǝgre communities shows that the Tǝgre communities absorbed several elements of other Eritrean speech communities. During the 30 years of armed struggle for independence, the Tǝgre people were at the center of the political activities of the revolution. They were among the first few who started and strengthened the struggle. They have being strongly influenced by the struggle and its achievements. These make the Tǝgre people a corner stone of the nation building.

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*Tigre abstract*

ሸዐብ ትግሬ ወናይ ለመድ ዓዶታቱ፡
ግንሓት ወሓሰሶት ጋራት መሕበራይ-ዕልም-ሂገ

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# Index

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# ዓዳት ወሰቃፈት

ዑመር ኣቢብ

## ፍንጌ መጥሓን ወወለተ!

ኣደም ቢል.



**3ይ ኣይንጋይ ወዕለ**
**ኤኖ ሊትማን**
**ምን ዮም 1ይ - 4ይ ኤብሪል 2009**

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