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SEZIONE DI ORIENTALISTICA



SAPIENZA  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

# QUADERNI DI VICINO ORIENTE

XII-2017



## AFROASIATICA ROMANA

EDITED BY  
ALESSIO AGOSTINI  
AND  
MARIA GIULIA AMADASI GUZZO

ROMA 2017



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DI VICINO ORIENTE

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“PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE 15TH MEETING  
OF AFROASIATIC LINGUISTICS”  
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edited by  
Alessio Agostini and Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo

ROMA 2017

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# QUADERNI DI VICINO ORIENTE

SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	i
M.I. Ababneh - <i>Kinship terms in Safaitic inscriptions</i>	1
S. Anthonioz - <i>Pesah-Paşāḥu: toward a philological and exegetical hypothesis</i>	29
F. Aspesi - <i>Ebraico biblico bāmâ e il sostrato linguistico egeo-cananaico</i>	39
L. Avallone - <i>Neither fuṣḥā nor ‘āmmiyya: how to reach a simplified Arabic language writing for theatre. Linguistic devices in Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm’s theory and practice of the Third Language</i>	47
S. Baldi - R. Leger - <i>Gender in Hausa and Igbo proverbs</i>	55
G. Banti - M. Vergari- <i>Aspects of Saho dialectology</i>	65
A. Boucherit - <i>Spatial deixis and interlocution space in Algerian Arabic tales</i>	83
D. Calabro - <i>Inalienable possession in early Egypto-Semitic genitive constructions</i>	91
M. Campanelli - <i>Conflict in government (Tanāzu‘): the treatment of the coordination reduction inside the Arabic linguistic tradition</i>	107
G. Castagna - <i>Towards a systematisation of the broken plural patterns in the Mehri language of Oman and Yemen</i>	115
A. Faraj - <i>A new Mandaic incantation bowl from Babil</i>	123
Z. Frajzyngier - <i>Subject but no object: asymmetry in grammatical relations of noun phrases</i>	133
G.F. Grassi - <i>Direct object in Old and Imperial Aramaic</i>	147
O. Kapeliuk - <i>What happened to the special features of South Semitic in the modern languages</i>	155
M. Marrazza - <i>Some remarks on the lexematic function of the adjectives ḥlh and šlm</i>	163

## QUADERNI DI VICINO ORIENTE

SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

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S. Olivieri - <i>Standards and variations in the Arabic Ḥilāfāt Literature</i>	175
I. Pepe - <i>La langue des journaux en arabe: une analyse des néologismes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui</i>	183
A. Puglielli - <i>The relation between syntactic structure and text organization: the Somali case</i>	193
A. Roccati - <i>The history of the language of Ancient Egypt revisited</i>	205
H. Satzinger - <i>A lexicon of Egyptian lexical roots (Project)</i>	213
P.C. Schmitz - <i>The phonology and morphology of the Phoenician directive suffix</i>	225
O. Stolbova - <i>Chadic parallels to Semitic roots prime, medial, tertiary waw (on the origin of Chadic labialized velars and postvelars)</i>	233
A. Suzzi Valli - <i>Direct object markers in West-Chadic (Maaka)</i>	241
C. Taine-Cheikh - <i>Les particules d'orientation du berbère. Fonctionnement, sémantisme et origine</i>	247
M.V. Tonietti - <i>Some reflections on Early Semitic in the light of the Ebla Documentation</i>	259

## INTRODUCTION

The 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics was held in Rome on 17-19 September 2014 at the Museum of Classical Art, Sapienza University. These Italian Meetings were conceived in 1978 thanks to a group of distinguished Italian scholars, Fabrizio Angelo Pennacchietti and Frederick Mario Fales, along with Francesco Aspesi, Vermondo Brugnattelli, Felice Israel, Antonio Loprieno and Alessandro Roccati. Initially called the “Giornata Nazionale di Studi Camito-Semitici” (Hamito-Semitic), since 1995 the more neutral Afro-Asiatic has been preferred. Previous meetings have been held in Venice, Milan (Università Statale), Turin, Bergamo, Perugia, Sassari, Milan (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), Naples (Istituto Universitario Orientale), Trieste, Florence, Bergamo, Ragusa, Udine and again Turin. Now, nearly approaching its 40<sup>th</sup> year, and after 14 irregular editions, the Meeting was held in Rome for the first time.

Rome has a long tradition in Afro-Asiatic - mainly Semitic - studies, once called “Oriental Studies”, and it is worth recalling, briefly, their development, from the start of our knowledge of “oriental languages” to the work of our predecessors. The study of Hebrew began in Rome at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when, in 1482, we know of a salary paid for teaching Hebrew to a certain “Guglielmo Raimondo”, who can be identified with the converted Jew from near Agrigento, Wilhelmus Raimundus Monchates /Moncada = Šemuel ben Nissim Abu ’l-Faraġ, alias Flavius Mithridates, about whom so much has been written (even novels).<sup>1</sup> In the same period the Vatican Library began its collection of oriental manuscripts, a collection studied particularly, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by Giorgio Levi Della Vida, specifically with regard to Islamic Arabic manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> The teaching in Rome of Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac continued in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, if not on a regular basis, at the University but also inside ecclesiastical institutions (Jesuit institutions especially).<sup>3</sup> However, it was only in 1903 that in the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy a School of Oriental Studies (“Scuola orientale”) was founded that lasted until 1982 (the organisation has since changed, the School being divided into Departments/Institutes).<sup>4</sup> From its very start, the School of Oriental Studies covered Near Eastern and Far Eastern studies (with the teaching of Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Ethiopic and South Arabic languages, Assyriology, Egyptology, Iranian languages, Chinese and Japanese). There was a shared library<sup>5</sup> and a periodical, the “Rivista di Studi Orientali” which was founded in 1907 and still exists, along with other more or less recent periodical publications.

The period from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1970’s was one which witnessed the flourishing of Roman Oriental School, especially with regard to Semitics (comprising Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. among the more recent studies Perani (ed.) 2008; as a novel, Camilleri 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Levi Della Vida 1935; 1939; 1947; 1965.

<sup>3</sup> Invaluable are the teaching and the library of the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

<sup>4</sup> Gnoli 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Now “Biblioteca di Studi Orientali” which, after a troubled period, has been based since 2016 at Circonvallazione Tiburtina 4.

and Assyriology) and Egyptology. Of course, this period of nearly a century was interrupted by years of war and dictatorship. Before - and after the first decade following the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War - we must remember the important scholarship of Ignazio Guidi, Carlo Conti Rossini (the only teacher of Ethiopic, and South Arabic, followed for some years after the war, by Francesco S. Pericoli Ridolfini), Michelangelo Guidi, Carlo Alfonso Nallino, David Santillana, Umberto Cassuto, Giorgio Levi Della Vida. Levi Della Vida in his collected essays “Aneddoti e svaghi arabi e non arabi”<sup>6</sup> traced in a perfect way (in content and style) the portraits and scientific profiles of his masters and colleagues mentioned here, all knowing the main Semitic languages and other languages at that time known as Chamitic; they were mainly philologists and historians (of literature, laws, religions), only the great Ignazio Guidi having written also an important contribution about Semitic origins from a comparative linguistic point of view.<sup>7</sup> Levi Della Vida’s works have been masterly remembered by Francesco Gabrieli, professor of Arabic since 1938 and by Sabatino Moscati.<sup>8</sup> However, in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we must also recall the great personality of Leone Caetani,<sup>9</sup> who, although a private scholar, nonetheless contributed to the progress of the Arabic field of studies especially with his unfinished enormous work “Annali dell’Islam” (Milano 1907)<sup>10</sup> and who was undoubtedly, if indirectly, the master of Michelangelo Guidi and particularly of Levi Della Vida (at the University pupil and successor of Ignazio Guidi); indirectly, also of Francesco Gabrieli. After 1956, Sabatino Moscati, teaching from the chair which had been that held by Levi Della Vida (“Ebraico e Lingue semitiche comparate”, later “Filologia semitica”),<sup>11</sup> continued and even enlarged in a comparative direction the philological work of his predecessors: he was the organiser of the only Congress on Semitic Languages held in Rome in 1960<sup>12</sup> and the author and editor, with E. Ullendorf, A. Spitaler and W. von Soden, of “An introduction to the comparative grammar of the Semitic languages”<sup>13</sup> still used today. Founder of new journals, such as “Oriens Antiquus” and “Rivista di Studi Fenici” and of Centres of Research (“Centro di studi per la Civiltà fenicia e punica”, now “Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico”), and new chairs (“History of the Ancient Orient”, “Near Eastern Archaeology”, “Phoenician and Punic Archaeology”), he soon turned to the study of archaeology, particularly of the Mediterranean regions. Moscati taught at “La Sapienza” from 1958 until 1982,<sup>14</sup> Semitic Philology being then taught from 1982 until his retirement in 2006 by Giovanni Garbini. We must also remember Assyriology, taught first by Giulio Cesare (Bruto) Teloni, then by Giuseppe Furlani, Giorgio R. Castellino and Giovanni Pettinato to cite only past holders of the chair, and, lastly Egyptology, taught in the past by Giuseppe Botti, then by Fabrizio Sergio Donadoni.

<sup>6</sup> Levi Della Vida 1959.

<sup>7</sup> Guidi 1878-1879 (reprint 2015, with an introduction by M. Liverani).

<sup>8</sup> Gabrieli 1993, 33-38 (the book contains profiles of the main Orientalists of the last century, not only Italian); cf. already Moscati 1968 and Garbini (ed.) 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Gabrieli 1973; cf. also Guidi 1937; Levi Della Vida 1966, 21-72.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also, among other works, Caetani 1911 (reprint 2012) and Caetani 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Barbanera 2012; cf. also AA.VV. 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Levi Della Vida (ed.) 1961.

<sup>13</sup> Moscati (ed.) 1964.

<sup>14</sup> When he taught from the chair of “Ebraico e Lingue semitiche comparate” at Tor Vergata University.



In the present far from easy period, knowledge of the history of our disciplines, which have suffered years of wars and restrictions, might give some confidence in the progress of research.

The Meeting here in Rome also represented an occasion to remember and share such a long and distinguished tradition with a wider audience. Since its beginnings, in fact, the Italian Afro-Asiatic Meeting has progressively enlarged its international vocation, having attracted a growing number of scholars from different parts of the world. During this edition in Rome we were honoured to host nearly 65 speakers. The range of topics was consequently very wide, just as Afro-Asiatic languages are spread over a large area, from the Semitic Near East through North Eastern Africa (Egyptian), the Horn of Africa (Cushitic, Omotic) to North-Western Africa (Berber, Chadic). The chronological span is also very ample, more so as it is thanks to two branches of Afro-Asiatic languages, the Semitic and the Egyptian, that the first written documents in human history have been preserved, allowing us to investigate ancient languages starting from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC - a privilege denied to the vast majority of the other linguistic families. It is also worth mentioning that, in its early days, the Meeting had an even wider scope since it also embraced topics linked to Indo-European languages, an extension that was later dropped. Now firmly concentrating on Afro-Asiatic languages, the Meeting is certainly one of the most important on this subject in Europe, especially if we consider the fact that the only other similar event is the North American Conference on Afro-Asiatic Linguistics.

This edition of the Meeting was organized with some general transversal sessions, gathering papers focusing on common linguistic traits and methodology, but also exploring the latest research results in all of the numerous linguistic branches covered by the conference. In parallel, two specific sessions were organized, namely the “New Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics”, which enjoyed a particularly numerous participation, and the “South Semitic Focus Session”, which provided the opportunity not only to investigate some specific linguistic traits, both ancient and modern, but also to revive the more general topics of classification and subgrouping in an area, around the Red and the Arabian Seas, across the borders dividing the Semitic from the other African linguistic branches. Nor can we forget that the region we investigate unfortunately offers many reasons for concern, among others also because some of the living languages are here in danger (Modern South Arabic and Modern Aramaic in particular), a problem which is further worsened by the serious social and political instability that a large part of the region is now experiencing and which, at present, is both aggravating and sensibly limiting direct scientific investigation in the field.

We are glad that the articles collected in the present Proceedings offer a wide selection of the range of topics covered during the Meeting: Eblaite (Tonietti); Biblical Hebrew (Anthonioz, Aspesi, Marrazza); Phoenician and Punic (Schmitz); Aramaic (Faraj, Grassi); Ancient North Arabian (Ababneh); South Semitic (Castagna, Kapeliuk); Arabic (Avallone, Boucherit, Campanelli, Olivieri, Pepe, Puglielli); Egyptian (Calabro, Roccati, Satzinger); Cushitic (Banti-Vergari); Chadic (Baldi-Leger, Frajzyngier, Stolbova, Suzzi Valli); Berber (Taine Cheikh).

We wish to thank all the colleagues of the Faculty, especially those of the Department of Antiquity Sciences and the Institute of Oriental Studies for their encouragement, particularly Lorenzo Verderame for the organizational support, and all the members of the Scientific Committee for their advice: Maria Giovanna Biga, Alberto Camplani, Alessandro Catastini, Franco D'Agostino, Olivier Durand, Lucia Mori and Loredana Sist. To Lorenzo Nigro goes our deepest gratitude for having welcomed our Proceedings in the series of "Quaderni di Vicino Oriente" under his direction.

We finally wish to dedicate the present Proceedings to the memory of three scholars who made an enormous contribution to the field: Paolo Marrassini (1942-2013), Andrzej Zaborski (1942-2014), both having also occasionally participated in the previous editions of the Meeting, and Giovanni Garbini (1931-2017) who passed away while these Proceedings were in press.

Rome, January 2017

Alessio Agostini  
Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo

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## ASPECTS OF SAHO DIALECTOLOGY\*

Giorgio Banti - Università di Napoli “L’Orientale”

Moreno Vergari - Ethnorêma

*Saho is an East Cushitic language spoken in Eritrea and NE Tigray (Ethiopia). It closely resembles Afar. Surveys by the Eritrean Ministry of Education, and fieldwork by Morin, Banti and Vergari make it now possible to provide details about the complex set of isoglosses that characterise its different varieties.<sup>1</sup>*

Keywords: Saho; Afar; dialectology; East Cushitic; Horn of Africa

### 1. INTRODUCTION: THE SAHO-SPEAKING AREA

Saho (more correctly Saaho)<sup>2</sup> is an East Cushitic (EC) language spoken in Eritrea (south-east of Asmara and Massawa down to the Afar depression), and in northern Ethiopia, mainly in the Irob *wereda* of north-eastern Tigray. The number of Saho speakers in Eritrea is ca. 260,000, according to the CIA World Factbook<sup>3</sup> estimate that in 2010 the Saho amounted to 4% of a population that is now estimated to be of 6,5 million. For Ethiopia the 2007 census set the number of Saho speakers at ca. 33,000.

Afar (more correctly ‘Afar) is the language that most closely resembles Saho within EC, and is spoken to the E and S of Saho in Eritrea, Djibouti and Ethiopia up to the Gulf of Tadjoura in the SE and Dire Dawa in the S, by ca. 1,400,000 speakers.<sup>4</sup> The Ḥazo (or

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The following abbreviations have been used in this paper: *1sg.* 1st singular, *1pl.* 1st plural, *2sg.* 2nd singular, *2pl.* 2nd plural, *3sg.* 3rd singular, *Af.* Afar, *Ar.* Arabic, *C* centre, central, *Cush.* Cushitic, *EC* East Cushitic, *EthS.* Ethio-Semitic, *f.* feminine, *gen.* genitive, *H* high tone, *HEC* Highland East Cushitic, *id.* idem, same meaning, *Kam.* Kambaata, *L* low tone, *m.* masculine, *N* north, northern, *neg.* negative, *nom.* nominative, *NSo.* Northern Somali, *Or.* Oromo, *S* south, southern, *Sa.* Saho, *SE* south-eastern, *Sem.* Semitic, *sgt.* singulative, *Si.* Sidamo, *SO.* southern Oromo, *Ts.* Ts’amakko, *V* vowel.

<sup>1</sup> The authors prefer to use the term “variety” instead of “dialect” in this paper, because in the Italian tradition it is regarded as a sociolinguistically more neutral term, in the sense that “two varieties” can be either two languages or two dialects of the same language.

<sup>2</sup> Since both Saho and Afar are currently written with different orthographies and scripts, the authors of this paper have chosen to use here the common conventions used in Oriental studies, with the only exception of long vowels, that are represented here as double vowels rather than as vowel + macron: i.e., [a:] as *aa*, rather than as *ā*. H-tones are marked only when it is strictly necessary. In the maps, however, the official Eritrean Latin orthography is used.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html> (accessed on 3 Oct., 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Lewis *et al.* (eds.) 2015, online version.

Hado) live in an area between the core Saho and Afar areas and basically speak a southern variety of Saho, but are treated by the Ethiopian administration as belonging to the Afar. Ethnically they sometimes regard themselves as being part of the Saho and, other times, of the Afar, even if they claim to have a common ancestor with the Ṭaruu'a Saho. On the other hand the other Saho-speaking communities regard themselves as different from the Afar, both in the cultural identity and genealogically: there is no tradition of a common ancestor for all the Saho and Afar clans.

One should also add that the Saho-speaking communities of Ethiopia now recognize Saho as the name of their language, but prefer to be referred to as Irob, which is the name of their major clan. They are mainly settled agriculturalists, while most of the Eritrean Saho had a mixed farming and pastoralist economy. Their herds of cattle grazed in the highlands of central Eritrea and were moved to the coastal lowlands during the rainy season. Fields were cultivated both in these two areas and on the escarpment. During recent decades, the Ethiopian occupation, war and drought caused several thousands of Eritrean Saho to flee to the Sudan or other countries, or to be resettled as farmers in the western lowlands of Eritrea. The loss or dramatic reduction of many herds has caused settled farming to play an increasing role in the economy of many traditional areas of the Eritrean Saho, while only a small portion of them engage in trade, teaching or other services or tertiary activities.

The similarity of Saho and Afar is such that the group has frequently been regarded as a dialect continuum.<sup>5</sup> However, basic lexicon lists of six varieties of Saho compared with Afar induced Ibrahim (1997, 5) to state: "All Saho varieties hang closely together, but Afar obviously is an entirely different language".

In recent decades three different official written varieties have emerged:

- Eritrean written Saho, mainly based of N Saho, in Eritrean Latin orthography;
- Ethiopian written Saho, based upon Irob Saho, in a modified Ethiopian orthography;<sup>6</sup>
- written Afar, broadly koineized, but with two distinct Latin orthographies, i.e., an Eritrean one and a Djibouti-Ethiopian one.

However, writing in Saho and Afar has also been done much earlier. For Afar the oldest known examples are by Kabir Handa (died in 1828)<sup>7</sup> in Ajami, i.e., in an adapted Arabic script. A tradition of writing in Ajami also exists for Saho at least since the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> Saho has also been written and published by Christian missionaries in Latin script; the best known example is by Mahaffy.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, a detailed history of writing in Afar can be found in the Introduction to Morin's Afar dictionary.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Mahaffy 1952, 1-2; Welmers 1952, 145.

<sup>6</sup> For the major features of the Eritrean and Ethiopian Saho orthographies see <http://www.sahoarchive.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Table.pdf> (accessed on 3 Oct., 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Morin 1997, 55ff.

<sup>8</sup> Banti - Vergari 2014, 136.

<sup>9</sup> Mahaffy 1964; Vergari 2007, 645ab; <http://www.sahoarchive.org/religious-texts/> (accessed on 3 Oct., 2015). An overview of the history of writing in Saho can be found in Banti - Vergari 2008, 68ff.

<sup>10</sup> Morin 2012, 44ff.

## 2. STATE OF THE ART

### 2.1. *Previous work on Saho dialectology*

Documentation and studies on the Saho language started to appear in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but major works were published only much later.<sup>11</sup> The first truly dialectological studies on Saho were three papers that described three specific varieties of it: Irob, Ṭaruuʿa and ʿAsawurta, respectively a S, and two N varieties.<sup>12</sup> Further data on Irob Saho - several short texts with grammatical and lexical notes - were published by Plazikowsky and Wagner,<sup>13</sup> one year after the already mentioned paper by Welmers that described a C variety, from Irhaafalo (Iraafalo). More recently, Hayward wrote several papers on specific aspects of Irob grammar and phonology, both by himself and together with Orwin, while Lamberti compared aspects of the word order of Irob Saho and the Afar variety of Assab.<sup>14</sup>

Major contributions both to Saho dialectology and to the comparative description of the different varieties of Saho and Afar are due to Morin, the major living European expert of Afar language, culture, and history. To him we owe the first dialectological studies of this language group that explicitly mention isoglosses, and set up comparative lists of them for the major varieties.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, an important survey of the local variation of Eritrean Saho, mainly targeting lexical differences, has been carried out by the Saho Panel of the Curriculum Division of the Department of General Education in 1996-1997, within the context of a dialect survey of the country launched by the Ministry of Education<sup>16</sup> for achieving two main aims: “(a) to check and if necessary improve the selection of standard dialects, and (b) to provide a representative group of teachers from each language with an in-depth study of the issues involved”.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.2. *The ATMCS project*

The independent Italian scholars Moreno Vergari and his wife Roberta Zago started to co-operate with the Eritrean Ministry of Education in 1999. In a few years a Saho-English-Italian dictionary with a grammatical introduction and a Saho pedagogical grammar were produced.<sup>18</sup>

As already stated in § 1, the way of life of the Saho-speaking communities has been changing dramatically during the last decades, and major portions of their traditional material culture have been partially or completely lost. Documenting what still remains is an important task, and even more its variation in the different Saho areas. Furthermore, a more detailed survey of Saho varieties was needed in order to document further

<sup>11</sup> See Banti - Vergari 2013, 87ff.

<sup>12</sup> Reinisch 1878a; 1878b; Conti Rossini 1913. Notice however that Reinisch (1878a, 417) states that his description regards how the Ṭaruuʿa speak only “zum grössten Theil”, and not exclusively.

<sup>13</sup> Plazikowsky - Wagner 1953.

<sup>14</sup> Hayward 1979; 1983; 1997; Hayward - Orwin 1991; Lamberti 1990.

<sup>15</sup> Morin 1994; 1995; 2006; 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Tekruray *et al.* 1997; Ibrahim Mohammed 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Tekruray *et al.* 1997, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Banti - Vergari 2003 (revised edition Banti - Vergari 2005); Vergari - Vergari 2003; Vergari 2005.

phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical details and charting them as isoglosses.

In 2007 the non-profit association Ethnorêma, the Oriental University of Naples, and the Ca' Foscari University of Venice launched the ATMCS project together with the Eritrean Ministry of Education. It aims at documenting the traditional material culture of the Saho, its local variation, the terminology it is associated with, and the differences in phonology, grammar and the lexicon among Saho speakers. In particular, the ATMCS has been collecting data on seven cycles of traditional activities in 18 documentary locations,<sup>19</sup> also gathering a wealth of dialectological data during the interviews on material culture with the informants. In addition to this, a dedicated questionnaire has been developed and administered, with 130 questions on lexical items from the basic and cultural lexicon, their phonology and morphology, morphophonemic and tonal features of verb inflection, different sets of pronouns and interrogatives, numerals, and several aspects of syntax. During the interviews, ca. 90 hrs. of audio files, and ca. 15 hrs. of video files were recorded, together with ca. 3300 pictures. Hundreds of new words have been elicited for the special lexicons of the seven cycles of activities, together with detailed explanations about their related objects and actions.

Finally, the first results of the ATMCS project have been published on a special issue of *Ethnorêma*, and in other papers.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. SOME MAJOR ISOGLOSSES

#### 3.1. *Saho-Afar* vs. *EC*

As a group Saho-Afar displays a clear bundle of isoglosses that characterise it vs. the other EC and, more broadly, Cush. groups of languages.

Phonologically, it frequently preserves \**ç* and \**h*, as in Sa. *liḥ*, Af. *laḥa* 'six' (vs. NSo. *liḥ*, Or. *ḡaha* with palatalized \**l*-, Kam. *leho*), and Sa. Af. 'ado 'white' (vs. NSo. 'ad, Or. *adii*), even though some instances of different developments have been pointed out.<sup>21</sup>

Pitch is used morphologically, e.g., in the opposition between m. H-L vs. f. L-H on the two final syllables of many nouns: Sa. Af. *báda* 'son' vs. *baḏá* 'daughter' (phonetically with [-r-] in Sa. and many Af. varieties). This has a clear parallel in NSo. *ínan* 'son' vs. *inán* 'daughter'.

Most m. nouns ending in short *-a* have a H-toned nom. and gen. in *-í*, e.g., Sa. Af. *baḏí* 'son (nom.); son's'. Instead, f. nouns in short *-á* have nom. in *-á*, but gen. Sa. *-át*, Af. *-áC ~ -áh*,<sup>22</sup> e.g., Sa. *baḏá* 'daughter (absolute, and nom.)', gen. *baḏát*.

<sup>19</sup> Further details on this project can be found in Banti - Vergari 2013, for 14 locations in Eritrea. In 2013 and 2014 the ATMCS team has carried out interviews in 4 further locations in N Ethiopia. The dialect questionnaire has been administered in 4 locations in Eritrea and 2 in Tigray, with a total of 10 informants. See also the video about the ATMCS mission at <http://www.ethnorema.it/projects/progetto-saho> (accessed on 3 Oct., 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Banti 2009; Banti - Axmadsacad 2009; Banti - Vergari 2008; 2010; 2013; 2014; Dore 2009a; 2009b; 2015; Dore - Vergari *in press*; Pacini 2009; Vergari 2008; Vergari - Vergari 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Black 1974, 201ff.; Sasse 1979, 38.

<sup>22</sup> See Hayward 1992; Simeone-Senelle 2000.



There is a high number of prefix conjugated verbs: in Sa. more than 40% of all verbs. In Af. the percentage is not much different. Although the conjugational pattern is inherited, only a portion of such verbs are from inherited roots; a considerable number is borrowed from Semitic, mostly from EthS. or Ar.<sup>23</sup> For instance, Sa. Af. *edhe* ‘I said’ (vs. *adhē* ‘I say’) is cognate of NSo. *idi* ‘id.’ and SOr. *yede* ‘id.’,<sup>24</sup> and is probably inherited.

Both Sa. and Af. lack a distinctive negative present tense in suffix-conjugated verbs, e.g., S Sa. and Af. *fakta* ‘she opens it’ vs. neg. *má-fakta*. Instead, both NSo. and Or. have a separate form in *-ó*, respectively *-u*: NSo. (*w-ay*) *furtaa* ‘she opens it’ vs. neg. *má furtó*, and Or. *furta* ‘she unties it, she opens it’ vs. neg. *hin-fúrtu*.

The distinctive endings of the qualitative conjugation are well preserved in the 1sg., 2sg., 1pl. and 2pl.: Sa. Af. *-iyo*, *-ito*, *-ino*, Sa. *-itin*, Af. *-iton*, and have 3pl. Sa. Af. *-on*.<sup>25</sup> In Sa. Af. the same endings also occur in the negative past tense in *-inna* of both prefix- and suffix-conjugated verbs, e.g., Af. *má-fakinniyo* ‘I didn’t open it’, *má-fakinnito* ‘thou didst not open it’. Both NSo. and Or. have invariable negative past tenses in *-n* and *-ne*, respectively, with no qualitative endings.<sup>26</sup>

The same prefixed marker *má-* is used with negative declarative and imperative verbal forms, such as Af. *má-fakin* sg., *má-fakina* pl. ‘don’t open it’. This differs from NSo., that uses two different negative prefixes (*má* vs. *ha*), and from Oromo, that uses the negative prefix *hin-* with both.

Both Sa. and Af. have a typologically consistent SOV basic syntactic order, with relative clauses and gen. phrases that precede their head noun. This is again different from NSo. and Or., that have head first noun phrases, but generally verb-final main and subordinate clauses.

Finally, also the basic cardinal numerals of Sa. Af. are partially different from the other Cush. groups: (a.) Sa. *koon*, Af. *koona* ‘5’ preserve *k-* like Bayso, Elmolo and Konso, but display a distinctive vowel *-oo-*; (b.) Sa. *malhin*, Af. *malhina* ‘7’ and Sa. *bahar*, Af. *bahra* ‘8’ lack any parallel within the numerals of the other Cush. groups.

### 3.2. Saho vs. Afar

As stated above, Sa. has been regarded as forming a dialect continuum with Af. Indeed there are several features that crisscross the Sa.-Af.-speaking area with diverse patterns; nevertheless, it is possible to identify a bundle of isoglosses that neatly separate Sa. from Af.

Phonologically Sa. L-toned final *-e* and *-o* are raised to *-i* and *-u* in Af.:

<sup>23</sup> See Hayward - Orwin 1991.

<sup>24</sup> NSo. retains prefix-conjugated forms, e.g., *idaahdaa* ‘I say’, *tiidaahdaa* ‘thou sayest’. Or. shifted this verb to the suffix conjugation, e.g., *yeda* ‘I say’, *yetta* ‘thou sayest’. Both forms lost the *\*-h-* that Sa. Af. strengthened to *-h-*. The SOr. form derives from the old 3sg. m. *\*y-edhe*, cognate of Sa. *yedhe* ‘he said’, and shifted *y-* to *ǵ-* in most C and N Or. varieties.

<sup>25</sup> See Hayward 1978; Vergari 2008. Banti 2004, 14ff., regards the EC qualitative conjugation as an inherited cognate of the Egyptian *sḏm.f* type, that consequently is not an Old Egyptian innovation, but a shared central Afroasiatic isogloss.

<sup>26</sup> Banti 2004, 9ff., also adds here the Burji affirmative past in *-anni*, and argues that these Cush. qualitative-conjugated past forms in *-n-* are inherited cognates of the Old Egyptian *sḏm.n.f*, rather than EC grammaticalizations of compound forms with a qualitative-conjugated auxiliary *\*n*.

Sa. <i>‘are</i> <i>ifo</i> <i>yamáato</i>	Af. <i>‘ari</i> <i>ifu</i> <i>yamáatu</i>	   ‘house’ ‘light’ ‘(that) he comes’
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Grammatically Sa. and Af. differ, e.g., in how ordinals from ‘2<sup>nd</sup>’ to ‘10<sup>th</sup>’ are formed: prefixation of *ma-* + internal morphology in Sa. vs. compounding with *háytu* (from *hay* ‘to place, to put’) in Af., as in:

Sa. <i>ma-lamma</i> ← <i>lamma</i> <i>ma-ddaḥa</i> ← <i>adoḥ</i> <i>ma-kawwana</i> ← <i>koon</i>	Af. <i>namma-háytu</i> <i>sidoḥ-háytu</i> <i>konoḥ-háytu</i>	   ‘2 <sup>nd</sup> ’ ‘3 <sup>rd</sup> ’ ‘5 <sup>th</sup> ’
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Some cardinal numbers display irregular phonological correspondences or different vocalisation patterns:

Sa. <i>lamma</i> <i>adooḥa</i>	Af. <i>namma</i> <i>sidooḥa</i> ~ <i>sidiḥa</i>	  ‘2’ ‘3’
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Some further grammatical isoglosses separating Sa. from Af. are discussed in Morin (1994; 2015).

Among the differences in the basic lexicon the following three can be pointed out:

Sa. <i>beete, bette</i> <i>ḥiyaw-to</i> (< EthS. ‘living one’) <i>kare</i>	Af. <i>yokme, tokme</i> <i>num</i> <i>kuta</i>	   ‘he/she ate’ ‘man, person’ ‘dog’
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Notice that Sa. *numa* ‘woman’ preserves the same inherited root as Af. *num*, a cognate of NSo. *nin* ‘man’ and Or. *nama* ‘man, person’. Interestingly Oromoid has an isogloss that separates Or. *saree* ‘dog’ (with *s-* < \**k-*) from Konso *kuta* ‘id.’ just like Sa.-Af.

Moreover, the already mentioned survey by the Eritrean Saho Panel observed percentages of shared basic lexicon of 98-84% among 6 varieties of N, C, and S Saho, that dropped to 52-47% when compared with N Afar of Ghela’elo (Eritrea).

### 3.3. Isogloss pattering within Saho

Morin remarked several times<sup>27</sup> that N Sa. varieties have several consonants that SE varieties and Af. lack:

<sup>27</sup> Morin 1994; 1995; 2015.

Ejective stops:	<i>t', k'</i>
Plain affricates:	<i>č, ģ</i>
Ejective affricate:	<i>č'</i>
Voiced alveolar fricative:	<i>z</i>
Voiceless palatal fricative:	<i>š</i>
Ejective fricatives:	<i>s', x'</i> (allophone of /k'/)

Central Sa. generally also displays most of these consonants in its northern area. Even SE Sa. sometimes displays *z*, *s'*, and *k' ~ x'* especially in Tigrinya loanwords, otherwise *z > d*, and ejectives become plain stops and fricatives as in Af. At times S Sa. even preserves *š* in inherited words. The instances of retention of such sounds don't appear to be systematic, but seem to follow a polymorphic word-by-word pattern and/or individual variation. In addition to this, *ģ* mostly occurs in Arabic loanwords, such as Sa. *ģawaab* 'letter' and *ģihle* 'ignorance'.

This N-S divide whereby S Sa. is more similar to Af. than to N Sa. can also be observed for several other features. For instance, Map 2 shows the forms two bound postpositions have when they are cliticised to nouns, e.g., N Sa. *'are-dde oroben* 'they entered the house'. When they occur as free words before verbs they are disyllabic: Sa. *edde* 'in, among', *elle* 'with', and Af. *edde, elle*, e.g., N Sa. *edde oroben* 'they entered it'. S Sa. and Af. lost the final syllable, e.g., S Sa. *'are-d oroben*; Af. further devoiced *-d* to *-t*. Notice that the map shows that the long bound forms are not only used in the northernmost Sa. area, but also in the adjoining portions of the C one. A similar distribution occurs, e.g., with:

- i.) the singulative suffixes: *-tto* and *-tta* in the N vs. *-yto* and *-yta* in the S, with m. L-toned *-yto > -ytu* in Af., as in N Sa. *gaalátto*, S Sa. *gaaláyto*, Af. *gaaláytu*;<sup>28</sup> and
- ii.) the negative particle *mi-* in the N vs. *ma-* in the S and in Af. when it is not followed by a V or *y-*, as in N Sa. *mí-tane* vs. S Sa. *má-tane*, Af. *má-tan* 'there is not';<sup>29</sup>
- iii.) some further grammatical isoglosses that oppose N Sa. to S Sa. are discussed in Morin (1994; 2015).

There are also some lexical isoglosses that display a N-S divide, with S Sa. having a more marked similarity with Af. Map 3 'horn' is an example of this. N and C Sa. have *gašša*, S Sa. *gayša* with a transitional area where both forms occur, while Af. and a few S Sa. areas (Buyya and the Irob) have *gaysa*. This is an inherited word,<sup>30</sup> and comparison with NSo. *gees* 'id.', Or. *gaafa* 'id.' (with *\*s > f*), Ts. *gaasse*, etc. shows that Af. *-s-* is the original sound. Even though the occurrence of *-y-* still has to be explained convincingly, it appears that *\*gaysa* is preserved in Af. and palatalises to *gayša* in S Saho, while N and C Sa. further assimilate the *-yš-* cluster to *-šš-*. Notice that here the border between N and S forms runs much more to the south than in Map 2, and that there is no clear-cut isogloss between Sa. and Af.

<sup>28</sup> Notice that the *-tta ~ -yta* variant of this suffix is a cognate of E Or. *-eyya ~ C Or. -eessa*, that has developed into a m. derivational suffix.

<sup>29</sup> However, *ma-kin* 'is not' and *ma-le* 'has not' have *ma-* also in N Sa.

<sup>30</sup> See Sasse 1979, 33 and 44; Bender 2009, 30.

A much more complex picture is shown on Map 4 ‘head’. Part of N and C Sa. have *amo*, that also occurs in SE Sa. and in Af. This word is shared by part of HEC, e.g., Si. *umo* ‘id.’,<sup>31</sup> and is thus old. But there is a strip that runs through the centre of the Sa.-speaking area vertically from N to S that uses *hangal* as its most common word for ‘head’. Interestingly in Af. it means ‘skull’ (Morin 2012, 506b) or ‘brain’ (Parker - Hayward 1985, 126a). The Af. alternative word for ‘head’, *moyya*, could be connected with *amo*. On the other hand, the two isolated Sa. synonyms, i.e., *laana* in the N and *regħa* in the S seem to have arisen from metaphors: *laana* also occurs in Irhaafalo as ‘egg’,<sup>32</sup> a metathesis of Af. *naala* ‘eggs’, also in Djibouti NSo. *naalo* ‘eggs’, while Irob *regħa* seems to be connected to *\*daqh-* ‘stone’, attested in NSo. *daqah*, Or. *daqaa* ~ *dakaa* ‘id.’ (also Ts. *gaah-ko* ‘id.’ with sgt. *-ko* probably belongs here, but the loss of the first consonant has to be explained).<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Irob frequently has Sa. Af. *\*q-* > *r-*. But Sa. and Af. also have *daa* ‘stone’ from the same inherited word, with an elsewhere unattested loss of *\*-gh-*,<sup>34</sup> and the occurrence of the same old word with *-gh-* in Irob but without it in the rest of Sa. Af. requires an explanation.

Map 5 ‘heart’ shows a different pattern: most of Sa. has *af’aado*, while Af. has *kalbi* ~ *galbi*.<sup>35</sup> But some N Sa. varieties use *wazana*, an inherited word reconstructed as *\*wazn-* ‘heart’, attested in Agaw (Khamtanga *əzän*, Bilen *wädän*), NSo. *wadne*, Si. *wadana*, Or. *onnee* ‘id.’, etc.<sup>36</sup> The same word occurs in Irob S. as *wadana* ‘feelings’ with *\*z* > *d*, while conversely *af’ado* with short *-a-* occurs in N Af. as ‘place of the feelings’, ‘energy’, ‘sincerity’, but in S. Af. as ‘stomach’.<sup>37</sup> Notice that Af. also uses *lubbi*, another Sem. loanword, for ‘heart’, as well as other words especially in metaphoric uses such as ‘feelings’, etc.

Finally, Map 6 ‘hare’ shows a general opposition between Sa. *azgalab*, that becomes *adgalab* in some S varieties, and Af. *bakkeela*. The latter word also occurs around Buyya and among the Irob, i.e., the same areas that go with Af. in Map 3. Af. also has *galaala* as a synonym of *bakkeela*, a word shared with NSo. *bakeyle*, Rendille *bakkeyla* ‘id.’

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

It has been seen above that there are some clear-cut grammatical and lexical isoglosses that separate Sa. from Af. The present state of research has also identified some phonological features that separate them, but no major historical phonological development distinguishing Sa. from Af. like Sa. and Af. are distinguished from other Cushitic groups of languages. On the other hand, there are several instances of the whole of S Sa. or parts of it sharing features with adjoining varieties of Af.

A major division also occurs within Sa., separating the N from the S, but the isoglosses that describe it have quite different distributions and don’t form a clear-cut boundary. However, ‘head’ displays a quite different picture, with the innovative *hangal* dividing a N-

<sup>31</sup> See Bender 2009, 27 and 169a.

<sup>32</sup> Welmers 1952, 151.

<sup>33</sup> See Sasse 1979, 18, and Bender 2009, 44.

<sup>34</sup> Discussed in Black 1974, 184.

<sup>35</sup> Either from EthS. that has *k* ‘, or from Ar. where *q* is realised in several dialects as velar or uvular *g*.

<sup>36</sup> See Sasse 1979, 20; Appleyard 2006, 82; Bender 2009, 28.

<sup>37</sup> See Morin 2012, 82a-b; Parker - Hayward 1985, 33b.

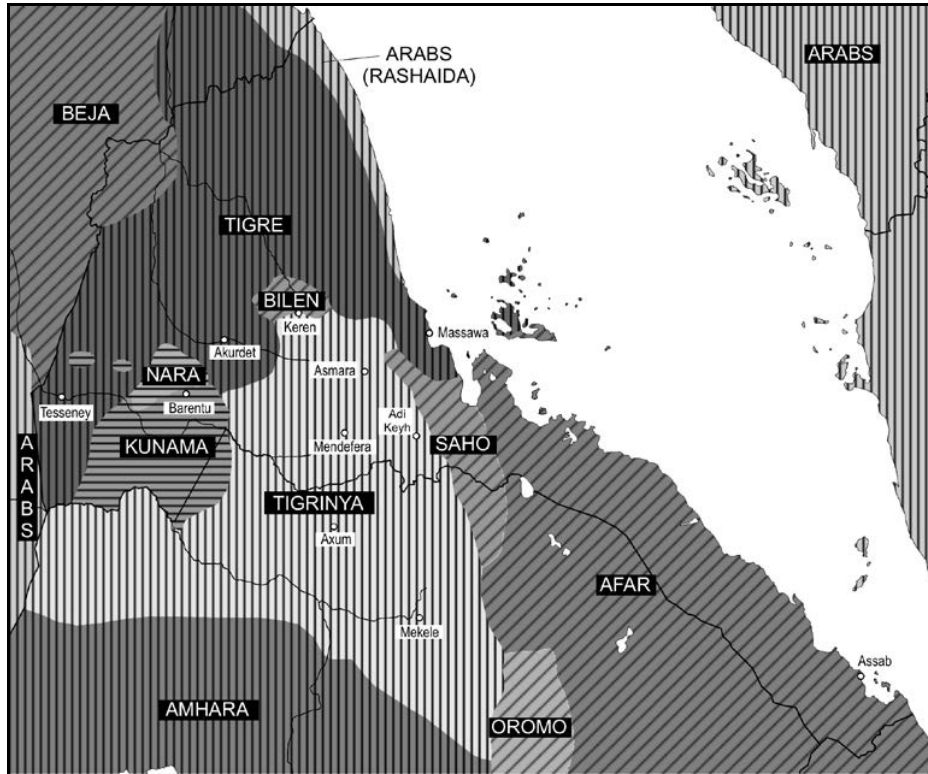
western Sa. area from a S-eastern one and Af., that all preserve the inherited word *amo*. At the same time, local phenomena can be either innovations such as *laana* ‘head’ in the N West, or retentions like *wazana* and *wadana*.

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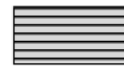
Map 1 - Approximate distribution of ethnic groups and languages in Eritrea and bordering regions (adapted and modified from: European Asylum Support Office (2015) *Eritrea Country Focus*, p. 13. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union).



Semitic languages

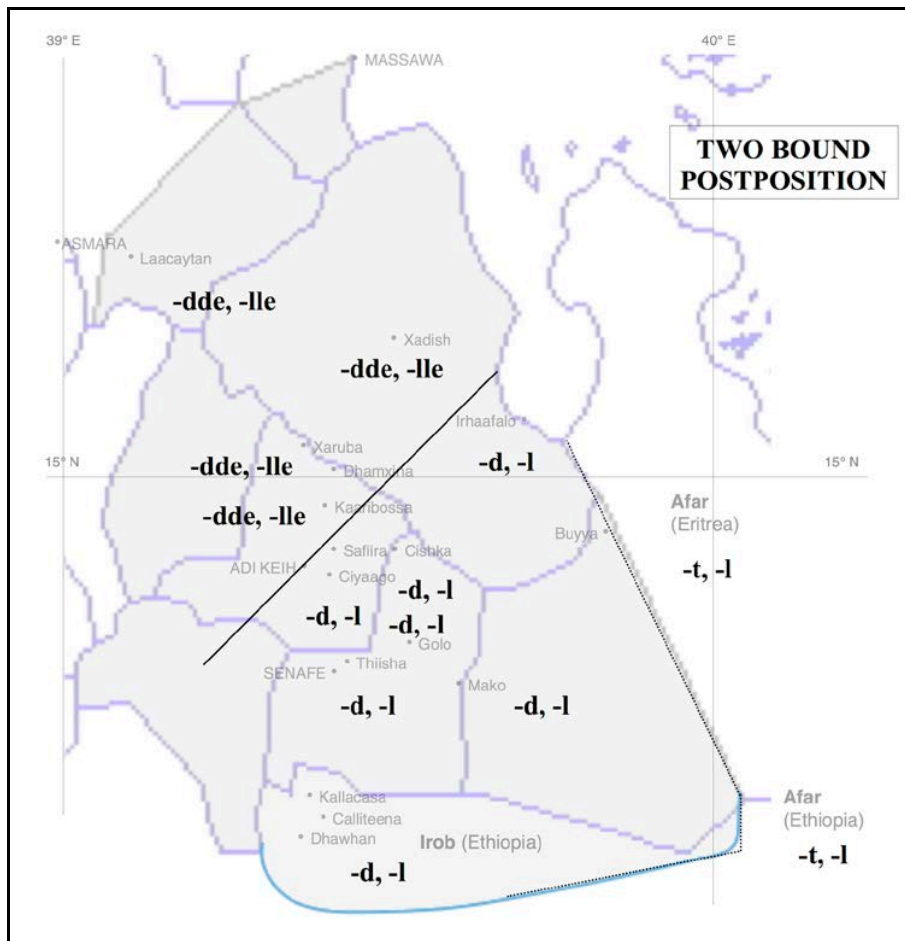


Cushitic languages

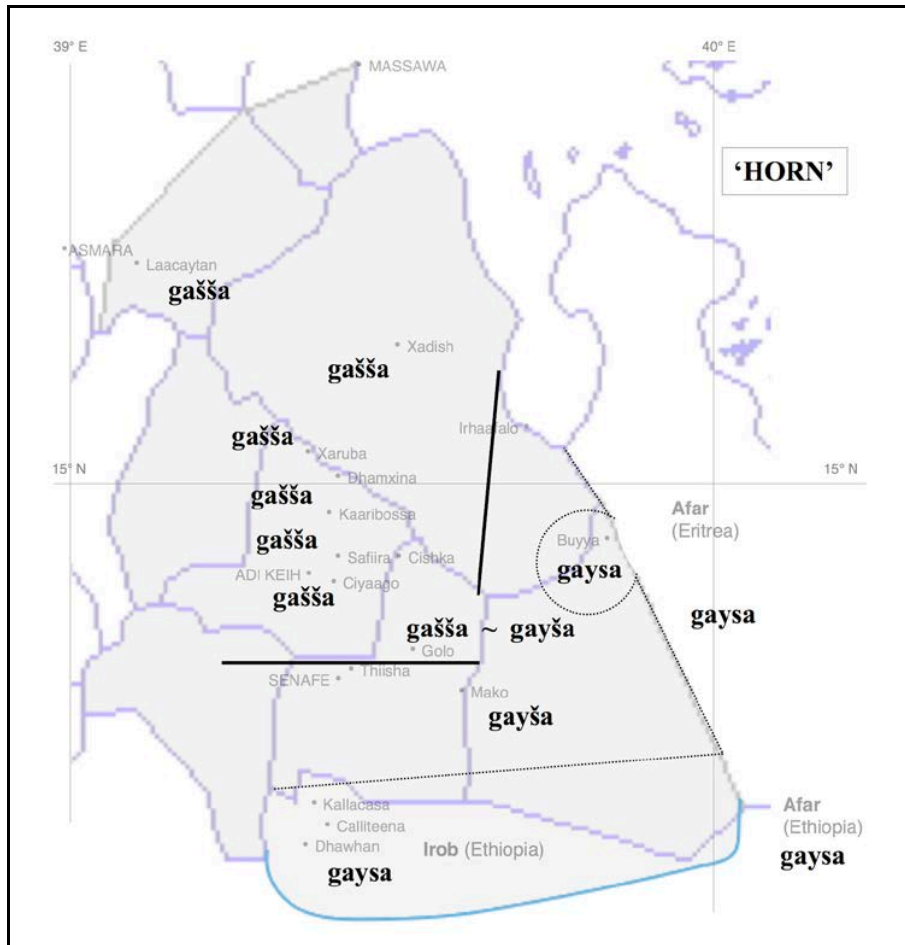


Nilo-Saharan languages

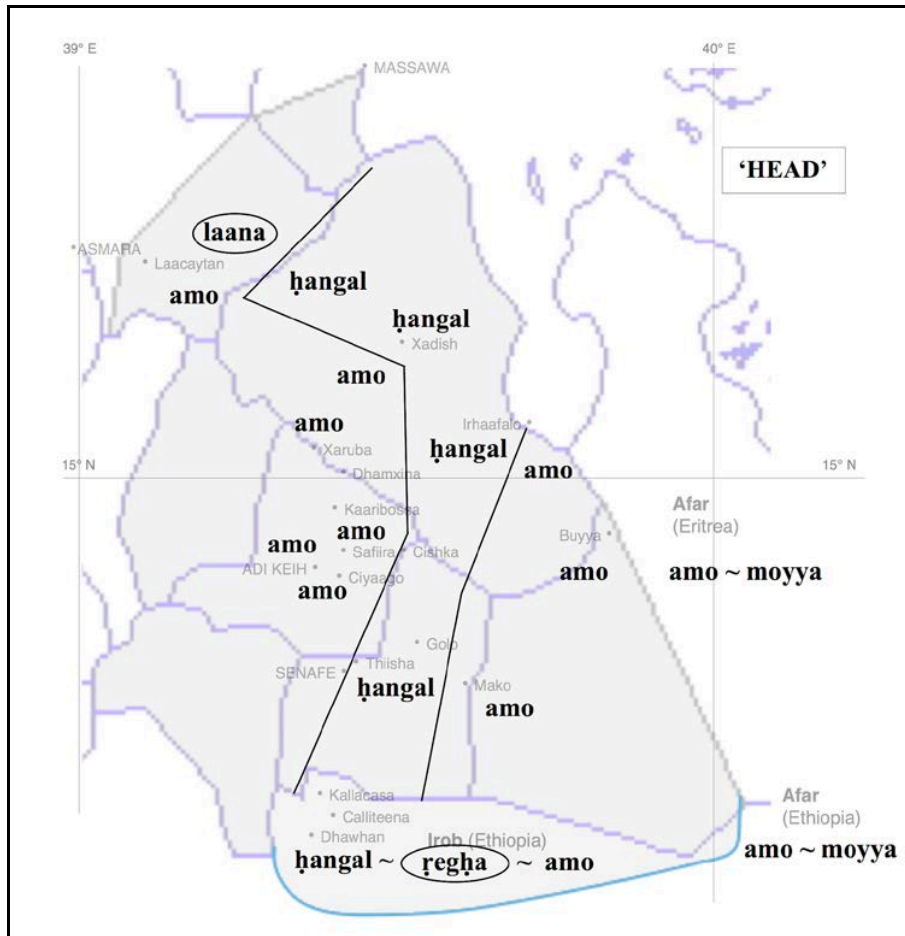




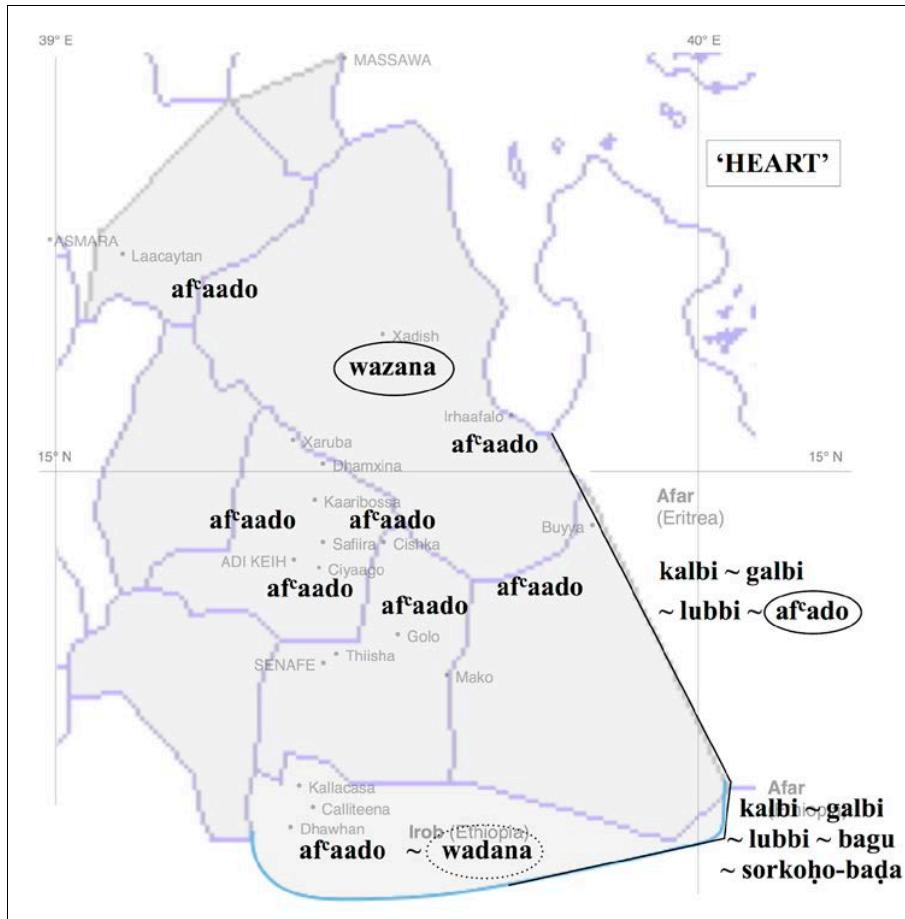
Map 2



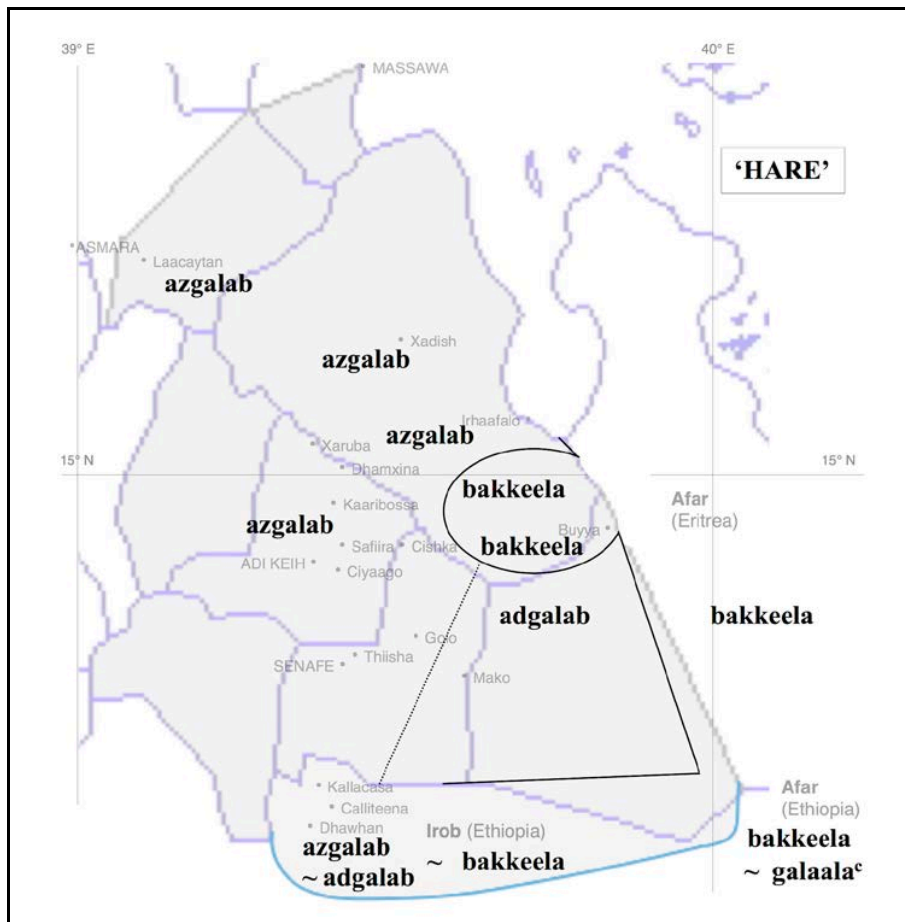
Map 3



Map 4



Map 5



Map 6