

Abdirachid M. Ismail
Université de Djibouti-
LLACAN- umr 8135 du CNRS
abdirachid_mohamed_ismail@yahoo.fr

“Caroweelo¹ :

When an Abyssinian Queen Dominates the Horn of Africa, Teen Centuries ago...”

“L’Histoire, comme une idiote, mécaniquement se répète” Paul Morand.

“History, as an idiot, mechanically repeats itself”.

Many authors treated this idea according to which the history repeats itself. Whatever the opinion we can have on this subject, it seems evident that the same causes produce the same effects. In this respect, the idea of an antique dominion of the Horn of Africa by Abyssinia seems today more plausible.

This ancient domination is reflected in an outstanding way through the character of *Caroweelo* and the impact that she has left in Somali people memory. In this presentation, we shall not be interested in the current circumstances prevailing in Somalia, but only in the character of *Caroweelo*, by showing the part of myth and the possible part of history.

Caroweelo is, in Somali culture, one of these characters in whom it is difficult to distinguish the part of the myth and the part of the reality. In an oral culture, everything naturally tends to be colored in myth. Nevertheless, today we have a certain number of elements allowing us to place better *Caroweelo* in an historic scheme. These elements are of historic, linguistic and anthropological order.

A- The part of the myth

Let us see first of all how *Caroweelo* is depicted in Somali popular imagery:

Who is *Caroweelo*?

Caroweelo is a woman who appears often under the features of a Queen, or at least as a chief of a troop. The legend tells us that she lived during a very distant time and had two sons that she had emasculated. These two sons guarded, alternately, for her the numerous female

¹ There are some small differences in the pronunciation of this name, according to the individuals. So, we find *Caraweelo*, *Carraweelo*, *Caroweelo*, *Carawillo*, *Araweelo*, *Arraweelo*, *Aroweelo*, etc. I adopt here the transcription used by Nurridin Farah in his book *secrets*, in which the proper names are transcribed according to the Somali alphabet. Some particular phonemes that we meet in this language are: *c* representing the voiceless fricative pharyngeal √, *x* for the voiced fricative pharyngeal □, the digraphe *dh* for the retroflexe stop l.

camels she had. Caroweelo also had a girl who had given her a grandson. When the young lady understood that her mother got ready to emasculate her child, she ran away with him. The husband of Caroweelo, *Biiqi* also went away from her to escape the mutilation. *Caroweelo* terrorized all the region inhabited by the Somali and even men were afraid of falling between her hands.

Biiqi seems to be the heroic resistant who foils, thanks to an intelligence which became proverbial, all the traps of *Caroweelo*. He trained his grandson and gave him his spear to put an end to the career of *Caroweelo*. When the little boy shot down *Caroweelo* with his spear, during a meeting remained memorable, the entire nation could not hold on showing its enjoyment. To make realize to the unbelieving inhabitants that *Caroweelo* passed away, he linked her body to the tail of his horse (or of his camel) and dragged it through all the country. The people who lived in the country stoned to death the corpse in the passage and in every place where a part of the body got loose, appears a mountain or a cairn.

The versions² differ a little according to geographical regions but there is a great homogeneity as for the dominant features of *Caroweelo*: the cruelty, the castrating tendency, the virile behaviour (it is said that she rides), the activism (she is perceived as a fury, *massiibo*, constantly taking up stratagems to destroy her opponents).

Reading of the myth by Somali intellectuals

Here is how three Somali intellectuals perceive and restore Caroweelo myth. Ladan Affi, in an article entitled "Caroweelo, a model for the women Somali"³, tells the history of this woman in the style of a tale : " *Once upon a time, there was a famous Queen named Arraweelo, who ruled most of what is now Somalia. When she was younger, Arraweelo had witnessed many wars and conflicts between Somalis. She had also seen how the council of elders had, on many occasions, made some unwise decisions. She felt that these were due to the fact that some of the men on the council were not intelligent and capable enough to be in a position of leadership. Her recommendation was that these men should be replaced by women who were intelligent and competent to make decisions that would be of benefit to the community. However, Arraweelo's husband disagreed with her and felt that that kind of work belonged to men and that women were better left to do what they did best housework and childcare.*" And by then, says the author, that there was peace and prosperity in the country.

² See the version related by Bader (1999), p.84

³ Affi (1995), [<http://members.tripod.com/~caafi/arawel1.html>]

We perceive here, through this narration, the modernization of the myth of *Caroweelo* and the integration of the sociological relationships between Somali men and women, in the modern history of Somali people.

The second writer is Nuruddin Farah who says through one of his protagonist of the *Secrets* (cf. Waberi⁴) that "*Caroweelo is a Queen whose administration can be situated when the people changed the ancient matriarchal tradition, by accusing the women of betraying the idea of society and being unable to rule in a right way*"

« *Caroweelo est une reine dont le règne peut être situé à l'époque où les hommes changeaient l'ancienne tradition matriarcale, en accusant les femmes de trahir l'idée de société et de manquer à régner de façon juste* ».⁵

Abdourahman Waberi (id.), in the article where he analyzes the perception that Farah Nuruddin has about women, through his works, writes that this *Caroweelo* is not any more seen " as the devourer mother ", "the castrating Queen of the traditional history", the one that " popular songs show selling young men and decimating the male kind". On the contrary, she is perceived as the archetype of a distant matriarchal time of the Somali society, a "matriarchy accepted by all". There is here a sociological and anthropological interpretation which enlightens the story otherwise.

B-Part of the history

Nevertheless some linguistic and some purely historical indications allow us to grasp better this character of *Caroweelo* and take her out from the mist of legend.

Etymology of the name Caroweelo

The name *Caroweelo* can be divided into two morphemes : *caro* which means "earth", "soil", with the meaning of "country"⁶, and *welo* that we can compare with the est-center region of Ethiopia, the region of Welo. In this view, *Caroweelo*, would mean "the country of the Welo". This word is morpho-syntactically formed on the same model as *Caro Ogadeen* or *Caro Dhulbahante* (and so on), which mean respectively the country of the Ogaden and the country of Dhulbahante. The only difference being that in *Caroweelo*, the noun and the genitive has been mixed to give a single unit, functioning as a proper name.

⁴ Waberi (2005), www.africultures.com/anglais/articles_anglais/35wabe.htm.

⁶ Here, the term of country do not refer to a political identity, as it is nowadays, but to the place or region where live a certain population.

This statement urges us to look for the origin of the character in Ethiopia, and more exactly in the region of Welo. By looking closely at the history of this country and the region of Welo in particular, it appears a historic figure which looks like by many aspects to the character of *Caroweelo*.

The Agaw Queen

The Ethiopian columns registered the history of an Agaw Queen who ravaged the realm of Axum in the Xth century, temporarily terminating the Salomonide dynasty. It is the Arabic commentator Ibn Awqal, quoted by F. Anfray (1990), who relates in 978 AD: "*As regards Abyssinia, during several years, it is a woman who was in control of it. It was she who killed the King of Abyssinia*"

« En ce qui concerne l'Abyssinie, durant plusieurs années, c'est une femme qui a été son maître. Ce fut elle qui tua le roi d'Abyssinie » (p. 158).

This author is not the only source who reports the event since there is also a letter written by the King of Abyssinia himself, to the King Georges of Nubia, who informs this latter that he is chased, him and his family, by a Queen of the Banu al-Hamwiya who slaughters everywhere the Christians. The historians, among whom Anfray (1999) and Abraham (2001), consider that this Queen was from Damôt, near Welo region, and that she was Agaw. Anfray writes this: « *Among this Agaw population doubtless arose this Queen that the Abyssinian tradition kept in memory under the name of "Goudit"; the monstrous*».

« De cette population Agaw était sans doute issue cette reine dont la tradition abyssine a conservé le souvenir sous le nom de « Goudit », la monstrueuse » (id., p.159).

As for Abraham, he writes : « Finally, the Agaw let by their Queen Yodit burnt down the capital Axum » (2001, p.36), and he tells besides that « The Christian hegemony was also to be challenged by the ferocious Queen Yodit, who reigned around 950. But soon the descendants of the Axumites in present Welo were to revive the crusading zeal which led the christianisation of the Agaw people of this area » (id., p. 37).

The patronymic of the Queen

It seems that there are some uncertainties for the true name of this Queen. Certain authors name her Judith or Yodit, and consider her as belonging to the Falasha ethnic group, others think on the contrary that she belongs to the royal Axumit family. Here is what the historian

Mekouria (1990,) writes: " *about this Queen, texts are contradictory. Some consider her Queen of Falasha, girl of the leader Gédéon. Others assert that she is a granddaughter of King Wodem-Asfere, the others assert that she is a girl of the Axumit King King, Delnaad, known under the name of Mesobe-Work*"

« Au sujet de cette reine, les textes sont contradictoires. Les uns la donnent pour reine des Falasha, fille du chef Gédéon. D'autres affirment qu'elle est une petite-fille du roi Wodem-Asfere, d'autres affirment qu'elle est une petite fille du roi Axumite, Delnaad, connue sous le nom de Mesobe-Work » (p.603).

Some arguments make us tilt for the first thesis which gives to this Queen a Falasha origin, this Agaw ethnic group of Jewish confession. The first one of them being the violence, which became legendary among Abyssinians, and with which this woman destroys all related to the Christendom and to the dynasty which symbolizes it. In fact, according to Mekouria

"The Ethiopian church kept in its memory this Queen that they called Goudite (the monstrous) or Esato (the ardent), without indicating, however, her own name."

« L'église éthiopienne conserve la mémoire de cette reine qu'elle appelle Goudite (la monstrueuse) ou Esato (la brûlante), sans nous indiquer cependant son propre nom » (id., p.603).

So it is difficult to think that this Queen belonged to the royal lineage of Axum, Christian since the IVth century, when we consider the relentlessness and the furious determination with which she tries to eradicate this religion and culture.

The Queen and Somali people

If we give faith to the Monumentum Adulitanum of Adoulis (IIth or IIIth century AD), which describes the campaigns of the Axumit King of that time and the regions on which he claims to exercise his authority, these latter seem to include the regions of Ethiopia inhabited by Somali, but also the north of Somalia (today Somaliland). It is written, among others, on this stele, that this King subjected

"...all the peoples who are neighbour to his country (Axum)...on the other side of the ocean till the territories of Ethiopia and of Sasou"

« tous les peuples qui avoisinent son pays (Axum)...du côté de l'occident jusqu'aux territoires de l'Ethiopie et de Sasou.» (Anfray, 1999, p.136)

And in the VIth century, Cosmas Indicopleustes, in his *Topographie Chrétienne de l'Univers*, indicates that Axum contains Ethiopia, and extends "...up to the country of the incense which

is named Barbarie and which, following the ocean, is not close, but far from Sasou, ultimate part of the country of the Ethiopians”.

« jusqu’au pays de l’encens qui est nommé Barbarie et qui, longeant l’océan, se trouve non pas proche, mais loin de Sasou, ultime contrée des Ethiopiens » (Cf, Anfray, id, p.137).

Ethiopia of the VIth century, such as it is perceived by the columnists of that time, is “*a vast region exceeding widely in the North as in the South and in the West of the limits of the country which today bears this name*”

« une vaste région dépassant largement au nord comme au sud et à l’ouest, les limites du pays qui aujourd’hui porte ce nom » (Anfray, 1999, p. 137).

According to the inscriptions of Adoulis, Sasou is on the west of the “*country of the incense which is named Barbarie and which is situated in the extremities of Ethiopia ...edged by the ocean*”

« à l’ouest...du pays de l’encens qui est nommé Barbarie et qui...est situé aux extrémités de l’Ethiopie...bordé par l’océan » (id.)

This fact makes Anfray think that Sasou is “*...very likely a region which corresponds to a region which corresponds roughly today to the territory of Djibouti and the northern portion of Somalia...*”

« très vraisemblablement une région qui correspond aujourd’hui au territoire de Djibouti et à la portion nord de la Somalie, approximativement » (id.)

These inhabitants of Barbarie who, moreover, “*go into the internal lands, trade there and bring most of the spices: incense, cassia fruit, cane and many others...*”

« remontent dans les terres intérieures, y trafiquent et en ramènent la plupart des aromates : encens, casse, canne douce et beaucoup d’autres... » Anfray (id)⁷.

So, we can suppose that once the King of Axum is dethroned, the Queen established her dominion on all the regions formerly under the control of this King. The Arabic historian Ibn Awqal relates, indeed, that this Queen “*dominates freely her own country and the surroundings of the territory of Hadani (King, negus), in the South of Abyssinia. It is a vast part of the country, without definite limits, made difficult of access by deserts and solitudes*»

« domine en toute indépendance son propre pays et les alentours du territoire du Hadani (roi, négus), dans le sud de l’Abyssinie. C’est une vaste contrée, sans limites déterminées, rendue difficile d’accès par les déserts et les solitudes » (Kramers et Wiet , 1964, vol. I, p. 16.).

⁷ See also Munro-Hay, 1991, chap. 11, section 5 « *The Aksumite Inscriptions* ».

Besides, Anfray quotes an other Arabic historian, Al-Masoudi of the Xth century, who makes us understand that in 935 AD "*there is numerous cities such as Zayla in which the Muslims pay levy to the Abyssinians* "

« il y a de nombreuses cités telles que Zayla...dans lesquelles des Musulmans payent tribut aux Abyssins » (id., p.158).

And the fact seems confirmed by Ibn Awqal, quoted always by Anfray, that the port of Zayla "*depended in any way on the nagâshi (negus, King)* ".

« dépendait en quelque manière du nagâshi (négus, roi) » (id.)

Zayla is, in that period, one of the main trade post of the region and the front door of the Moslem traders who are going to established themselves little by little in the Horn of Africa.

In view of these various elements, we can deduct that this Queen was known, not only by the inhabitants of the region between Welo (or Axum) and Zayla, but very probably by the inhabitants of the region of Barbarie (current Berbera) also.

The Agaw Queen, Goudit, "the monstrous" and Buti, the ogress

Next to *Caroweelo*, it exists in the collective imagery of Somali people, and in a way, more marked among Somalis of Ethiopia, another legendary character, a semi-human being called *Buti*, the ogress woman. Linguistically, we can think that the term "*Buti* ", which does not belong to the Somali language lexicon, may have been borrowed from the amharique *goudit*, itself being, we can suppose, a pejorative reformulation of the name Yodit or Judith.

We find the legend of *Buti* from Djibouti to Ogaden (Dire Dawa, Harare, Jigjiga), passing through Zayla and Borama, and maybe going beyond. In the northeast of Somalia, she seems to take an other patronymic, *Dhegdheer*, literally "the long ear"⁸. And every Somali knows the tune *dhegdheer dhimatoo dhulkii nabaddee*, " Dhegdheer has died, the country is in peace ", which marks the end of the "Monstrous" and the release of the popular jubilation which, even told a millennium later⁹, remains lively in the consciousness of the Somali people.

So we think that "Goudit", who terrorized regions under her dominion, by the exercise of a power without limit, got, in Somali people perception, the phantasmagorical features of an ogress. However, a question arises. *Buti* appears under the figure of an ogress who torments the inhabitants and of whom they have difficulty in getting rid of, and not at all as a castrating

⁸ This name, which is very likely a nickname, connotes a person who can hear from a far distant place. This seems to consolidate the elements discussed above and below, in relation with a far distant and terrifying power.

⁹ Legend collected from old persons, and also from Mr Rirache who published several papers on the culture Somali.

female. Why thus *Caroweelo*, besides the characteristics connoted by the names of *Goudit* and *Buti*, does also appear under this aspect ?

It is very difficult to give faith to the history of a woman who castrates physically all the men who fall into her hands, and who goes as far as emasculating her own sons, because of a so-called hate against the male kind. On the other hand, it is likely to suppose that this "castrating" habit is only metaphorical, as suggested by Rirache¹⁰, and refers to a "mental castration", a domination exercised over those who usually beheld the power, meaning men.

Another argument which seems to us even more convincing is the Agaw origin of the Queen. Indeed, the Agaw name is phonetically closer to *cadhgow*, which means "castrator" in Somali. And Somali people, particularly those living inside the present borders of Ethiopia, are in the habit of calling indistinctly the inhabitants of Welo region (either Oromo or Agaw) *Cadhgow*, adding to the original name of Agaw, the fricative phoneme [c].

It is necessary to note that the Agaw is an old ethnic group belonging to the Cushitic family, and identified in the oldest registers of the Ethiopian history. The Agaw of Welo were Christianized and became Amharophones, completely submerged by the Amharique culture from the XIIth (Abraham, on 2001, p. 37). Those, very few, who kept their culture of origin, populate essentially Agawmeder, on the west of Godjam and the region of the lake Tana. And it is among them that we find the Falasha, this Jewish ethnic group of Ethiopia. We also meet another fraction of Agaw, the Bilin, which forms an island around Keren in Eritrea. So, Somali are only in contact with the Amharized and Christianized Agaw of the region of Welo and with the Oromo of that region, whether it is in Djibouti or in Ethiopia.

As for the important consideration that *Caroweelo* has among the Somali people Somali (she is the object of numerous eulogistic poems), we can compare to that dedicated to the Agaw Queen, because, as write Beckwith and Fisher (1998) "*through her campaign, she terminated a long period of dominion of the Semitic leaders of Axum*", and thus moved "*the secular power (of Axum) southward, from Tigré into Welo.*"

« par sa campagne, elle a mis fin à une longue période de domination des dirigeants sémitiques d'Axum... (et a ainsi déplacé) le pouvoir séculaire (d'Axum) vers le sud, du Tigré au Welo... » (p. 51).

¹⁰ Not published interview, 2005.

Besides, we imagine that this woman, who put so much heat to “*eradicate the Christian faith*”¹¹ (Beckwith and Fisher, id.), who let suppose that she “*was not a heathen opponent, but rather a monotheist conservative, motivated by the desire to restore the Jewish religion into a dominant position in the country*”¹², also began to persecute the rising Moslem religion, around the trade posts such as Zayla and the road of caravans (from Harar to Berbera). The Agaw Queen, *Caroweelo*, then, from an adulated position, becomes *Buti*, spurned by all. This hypothesis is allowed, among others, by the particularly long administration of this woman, which lasted approximately thirty years, according to the geographer Ibn Awqal¹³.

Relations between Agaw and Somali

The relations between Agaw and Somali do not date from *Caroweelo*. Indeed, in his Topography, Cosmas speaks about Sasou evoked above and tells that, in the VIth century, the King of Axum, Kaleb “*sends (to Sasou) his men, through the leader of the Agaw, for the business of the gold. Many other traders join them, so that they are more than five hundred. They bring there oxen, blocks of salt and some iron*”.

«...envoie (à Sasou) ses hommes, par l’intermédiaire du chef des Agaw, pour le commerce de l’or. Beaucoup d’autres marchands se joignent à eux, de sorte qu’ils sont plus de cinq cents. Ils y mènent des bœufs, des blocs de sel et du fer » (Kramers et Wiet, 1964, vol.1, p. 361-362)¹⁴.

If the King of Axum relies on the leader of the Agaw, it is probably because their country is close to this part of the country called Sasou, who according to the deductions of Anfray (id., p. 85), would be between Djibouti and the North of Somalia. So, we can suppose that, in this strong delegation of approximately five hundred persons, there was an important number of Agaw. As at that time some of the Agaw (maybe the main part) were of Jewish confession, it is likely that there were Jews among the trading delegation of the Axumit King and that through these kind of contacts these latter diffuse their faiths among the populations in contact, and particularly among Somali people. Maybe from this time date the numerous Jewish references which strew the habits and customs of the Somali people.¹⁵

¹¹ «déraciner la foi chrétienne»

¹² (n’est pas)...une opposante païenne, mais plutôt une conservatrice monothéiste, motivée par le désir de redonner à la religion juive une position dominante dans le pays » ((Beckwith and Fisher, 1998, p. 51)

¹³ Kramers et Wiet, 1964, vol.1, p.16

¹⁴ Voir également Munro-Hay, 1991.

¹⁵ Cf, Mohamed Abdi Mohamed (1990)

It is what allows, moreover, Bader to envisage a Jewish ancestry to Yibro, and to suppose even that the latter *"come from a community which, within the people Somali, was formerly powerful and respected."*

« descendente d'une communauté qui, au sein du peuple Somali, fut jadis puissante et respectée ». (id., p. 173)

This idea can be consolidated by the fact that Agaw occupied a big part of Ethiopia of the North and that they had their period of glory in the Antiquity, and had given the Zagwe dynasty which governed Ethiopia between 1150-1270 AD.

Bader also evokes another fact, in adequacy with the thesis of a non-Somali origin for this community which would have had a confession different from that of the Somali of that time. He writes that *" among all the clans subjected to the new religion (Islam), the one from which Yibro arises offered apparently the wildest resistance to the teaching of the Koran."*

« parmi tous les clans soumis à la nouvelle religion (l'Islam), celui dont les Yibro sont issus offrit apparemment la résistance la plus farouche à l'enseignement du Coran. »(id., p. 174)

On the other hand, Cosmas (id.) describes in great detail products exchanged in the commercial expeditions raided by the Axumite King, and mentioned above. He specifies that the men of the King lead to Sasou *"oxen, blocks of salt and some iron. Arrived near the country, they stop in a place. Piling up a quantity of brambles, they raise a big fence and are stay inside; they slaughter their oxen, dismember them and expose the meat on the brambles, as well as the blocks of salt and the iron. Then arrive the natives bringing nuggets of gold, big as seeds of lupin, that they call " tagkhara "; they put one or two, or more, on the part of meat which pleases them, on the blocks of salt¹⁶ or the iron, and then retire. The owner of the ox approaches, and if he is satisfied, takes the gold; in his turn, comes the native and brings with him the meat, the blocks of salt or the iron..."*

...« des bœufs, des blocs de sel et du fer. Arrivés à proximité du pays, ils font halte sur place. Entassant une quantité de ronces, ils élèvent une grande clôture et se tiennent à l'intérieur ; ils abattent leurs bœufs, les dépècent et exposent la viande sur les ronces, ainsi que les blocs de sel¹⁷ et le fer. Alors arrivent les indigènes apportant des pépites d'or, grosses comme des graines de lupin, et qu'on appelle « tagkhara » ; ils en mettent une ou deux, ou davantage, sur la part de viande qui leur plaît, sur les blocs de sel ou le fer, et se retirent. Le

¹⁶ It would be interesting to know about the route followed by these Axumite expeditions, in particular about their place of supply in salt. Do they pass by the coast or go directly inside the country? Would they have been able to pass by the lake Assal which is a supply place in salt, since an immemorial time? These questions may give indications about the possible contacts between these expeditions and Afar people...

¹⁷ Il serait intéressant de s'interroger sur l'itinéraire suivi par ces expéditions Axumites, et notamment sur leur lieu d'approvisionnement en sel. Passent-elles par les côtes ou par l'intérieur du pays ? Auraient-elles pu passer par le lac Assal ? Cela nous amènerait alors à nous poser d'autres questions sur les contacts éventuels entre ces expéditions et le peuple afar.

propriétaire du bœuf approche, et s'il est satisfait, prend l'or ; à son tour vient l'indigène qui emporte la viande, les blocs de sel ou le fer.... »

Now, Bader speaks also about the three "...outcast groups who dedicate themselves to activities considered injurious by the others Somali".

«...groupes castés qui se consacrent à des activités jugées déshonorantes par les autres Somali...» (id., p. 19).

These professions are in connection with two of the products mentioned by Cosmas, the *meat* and the *iron*, in other words the currying and the forge profession. They are practised, says Bader, in a more or less exclusive way by these outcast groups, that are the Yibro and two other groups affiliated to them.

To conclude on this question of contact between Agaw and Somali, which would have given birth to the Yibro, we cannot refrain from quoting the story reported by Bader, who holds it from an Oromo of Hararge region. This informant tells to this scholar, after an inquiry about the Yibro origin, that these latter would be "...originated from a couple, *Caroole and Wiilo* who, come by boat from a distant country, would have accosted, several hundreds years ago, on Somali coast, around Zeyla".

« issus d'un couple, *Caroole et Wiilo*¹⁸ qui, venu en bateau d'un pays lointain, aurait accosté il y a plusieurs centaines d'années sur les côtes Somali, dans les environ de Zeyla. » (id., p. 92)

The fact is rather striking to be noticed. Indeed, we can imagine that *Caroole* and *Wiilo* are in fact the one and only character, *Carowiillo*, whose name was divided in two proper nouns in the course of time. This hypothesis would enlighten differently the evolution and the perception of this tribe, within the Somali community.

Jabbuti or the end of Caroweelo

The toponym of Djibouti has been given various etymological meanings. In Oromo, it would mean the "place of the snakes", in afar, it seems that it is "derived from the word *gabod*, meaning tray, which is a reference to the geomorphology of the site" (Daoud A.Alwan & Yohanis Mibrathu, 2000, p.39). According to these scholars and others, in Somali, the term means "where the ogress was defeated" (Daoud A.Alwan & Yohanis Mibrathu, id. P.38). In fact, the substantive *Jab* in Somali means "defeat". The verb *jabbi* verb means "to break", but also "to undo an opponent, to overcome an enemy". So *jab buti* takes the common sense of the "defeat", "bankruptcy" of *Buti*. But, set apart this firm oral tradition, which immortalizes the defeat of *Buti* on the territory of Djibouti, according to some people, and the evoked

¹⁸ Stressed by myself.

linguistic resemblance, we do not find for the moment other elements which can confirm this event of the defeat of *Caroweelo* in Djibouti. A deepening of the Afar oral tradition, which also evokes an ogress of the name of *Yanagooni*, as well as the other people of the Horn of Africa oral tradition, could bring new light of on the subject.

As we have seen, *Caroweelo* is some sort of epitome of the different characters evoked here, i.e, the *Agaw Queen*, *Buti* and *Dhegdheer*. This paper has not the pretension to ascertain the historical features given to *Caroweelo*. Its only aim is that this character is so famous and so vivid in Somali collective memory that it is doubtful that she belongs only to legend. A repressive power is often depicted by its victims with some kind of monstrous features¹⁹. And with the story of *Caroweelo*, we have very likely this kind of phantasmagorical and metaphorical representation of an authoritative power beheld by a female.

In any case, we hope that this work will initiate other reflections or researches which contribute to bring out this outstanding character from the mist of legend. And maybe one day, *Caroweelo*, from castrating *misandre*²⁰, will become simply an "iron lady" beforehand, went on battle for saving a civilization in danger...a little bit too late.

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¹⁹ It seems that Napoleon is represented as a kind of monster by the Spanish and the mothers frightens the children with him, to make them eat their meal.

²⁰ *Man-hater female*

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