„Mehr als nur Worte ...“
Afrikanistische Beiträge zum 65. Geburtstag
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herausgegeben von
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Somali - Somal Terminologie

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Notes on Somali Camel Terminology

1 Names of wild and domestic animals, especially when organised in lexical systems according to their colour, sex, age, etc. are one out of the many areas of Franz ROTTLAND's interest. I was lucky enough to listen to him talking about this on more than one occasion, and found a particularly stimulating example in the paper where he related a number of Iraqiw individual cattle names with some Bantu (esp. Sukuma and Rimi), Sandawe, and Southern Nilotic (Datooga) terms used both as individual names and 'as general terms referring to the skins of cattle and goats and indicating their colour(s) and/or the pattern of distribution (size and position of patches etc.)' (ROTTLAND 1994:338). In a concise but clear way, he showed how the direct or indirect source of them was Datooga, that lent this sizeable set of terms because its speakers 'came to the area as fully specialized herders and raisers of cattle' (ROTTLAND 1994:340).

In the Horn of Africa several pastoralist communities developed an economy with a strong specialisation in camel-herding during the last two millennia, when increasing aridity created a comparative advantage for more drought-resistant animals. This resulted in a common set of distinctive terms being adopted and preserved until now by the languages of the main camel-keeping societies in its eastern and southern regions. The five terms shown in Table 1 all occur in at least two different language groups, and have been discussed in BANTI (1993:205ff).

2 Obviously enough, most of these languages have a much larger stock of specialised terms related to this important animal, especially if their speakers keep them in large numbers. For instance, there are few camel-related terms in Dasenech, Turkana and Pokot, as well as in Saho and in the language of most of the western, central and eastern Oromo who are agriculturalists and cattle pastoralists.
Richly specialized camel lexicons are instead reported for camel-herding Oromos such as the Boorana and the Gabitra in north-eastern Kenya and the Karrayyu in eastern Showa, as well as for Afar, Somali, Maay,1 and Rendille. The best known among these is the Somali one, that counts several hundreds of items, partly used exclusively for camels, partly for both cattle and camels. SAID (1982:17) and, especially, ISSE (1984) record samples of these terms, but the bulk of them has still to be published systematically. Strict space limits make it impossible to list all the known Somali camel-related terms here. I hope to do it in the future. Here only some of them will be discussed, in an attempt at explaining them etymologically. Some have already been taken into account in BANTI (1993: 208), but will be given here what I hope will be a somewhat improved treatment, other ones are new etymologies. In order to make it easier to find a specific item in the following pages, the arrangement is alphabetical rather than semantic.

2.1 āvr m. (pl. āvrr) ‘bull-camel; pack-camel’. This word has good parallels in Maay ḏor ‘group of male pack-camels’, southern Oromo ooṛo ‘male camels used as pack animals or for meat’, as well as Dasenech awr-r ‘male camel’. Rendille ḏor means both ‘male camel’ and ‘ox, bull’, while in Saho-Afar this word is used only for cattle: Saho āvr ‘bull used for reproduction’, Afar āvr – abir – agir ‘bull, ox’. The geolinguistic pattern of the meanings of this word suggests that ‘bull’, the meaning preserved in the two lateral areas, is older and was later extended also to camel bulls, possibly through the phrase ‘āvr of camel(s)’ parallel to Rendille ḏor-i likio ‘cock, rooster’ (lit. ‘ordo of chicken’, cf. SCHLEE 1978:144), or Karrayyu Oromo korma gaadā ‘bull-camel’ (lit. ‘korma, i.e., bull – adult male animal, of camel’). More precisely, the original stage appears to be preserved in Saho-Afar, the intermediate one in Rendille, and the most recent one in Somali, Maay, southern Oromo and Dasenech. A special development took place in Boni, where ḏor is ‘male elephant’ (cf. HEINE 1982: 104), probably because it was the most important animal for this community of hunter-gatherers.

According to EHRET (1987:9, 138), since -r may have been “a singularizing suffix in origin”, East Cushitic āvr- can be compared to -r-less forms such as Iraaw and Burunge ḏaw m. ‘bull’, and KIESLING (no date) adds also Arbore (East Cushitic) ḏaw ‘steer’. EHRET (1980:317) also points out that since the South Cushitic word was borrowed into Bantu languages such as Thangay and Chaga as ḏawaand with if < r, e.g. Gikuyu n-jar, it is necessary to posit an old variant ḏaw- that may be preserved also in Dahalo ḏu-m-uru ‘male water-buck’, with a semantic shift to a male wild animal that parallels what occurred to Boni ḏor. Also two Beja forms with initial ḏ- have been added by him here: ḏo-b m. ‘ox, bull’ and ḏe-v ‘cow-calf, heifer’ (ROPER 1928:249, 251: -b in the m. form is a case marker). This is then a very old word, attested in three out of the four major branches of Cushitic. It should be compared to Egyptian jw3 ‘bull’ and jw3 ‘cow’, whose similarity to the two above Beja words and the South Cushitic reconstructed variant *aw- is so striking that direct borrowing, rather than retention of an inherited word, cannot be ruled out. Interestingly, since in several cases Egyptian <j, usually taken to have been a glottal stop /ʔ/, represents an older *r (e.g., Egyptian klm ‘vineyard’ vs. Ugaritic kmr, Hebrew karem < *karm ‘vineyard’, Gezِ ez karm ‘vine, grapevine’, etc.; see LOPRIENO 1995:31), the final -r of *aw- attested in Somali etc. may be of considerable antiquity. On the other hand, since Egyptian j can
also be the result of palatalisation of an older *l, as in Egyptian *jbr 'heart' (vs. Akkadian libbu 'id.', Hebrew lèb 'id.', Ge'ez lëbb 'id.', as well as Beja lèb 'belly, heart', and Omotic forms such as Yemsa nibu 'id.', Mecha nibbo 'id.', even Anfillo yibbo 'id.', etc., cf. LORPIENO 1995:31 and EHRET 1995:398), other authors prefer to posit Egyptian jur3 'bull' ≠ *h3u - a cognate of an Afroasiatic family of words for cattle, e.g., Akkadian lit 'wild bull', Somali lo 'cattle', Iraqw and Burunge hle 'cow', Mubi la 'cattle', Ngizim lò 'cattle', etc. (DIAKONOFF 1981:33). Yet Cushitic and Chadic seem to attest an old *f in this family of words, that does not palatalize to j in Egyptian and makes it unlikely that jur3 'bull' belongs here. DOLGOPOLSKY (1988:629), on the other hand, prefers to connect East Cushitic *aur with the Semitic family of Hebrew arvēh 'lion'. Akkadian aru 'back (of gazelle or mountain goat)', Arabic inwāy ‘inwāy ‘mountain goat', Ge'ez arve 'wild beast'. Amharic un 'id.' Miller or 'id.', Harari in 'id.' The similarity between the southern Ethio-Semitic reflexes of this family and *aur 'bull' = 'camel bull' are striking, yet it has already been pointed out that these Semitic words should rather be connected with Somali dar m. 'male lion' (e.g., LESLAI 1987:40b), as well as Arbore dar m. 'bull' (cf. HAYWARD 1984:336). The similarities are striking, and instances of contamination between southern Ethio-Semitic and East Cushitic are likely.

2.2 Döble m. 'camel(s). A generic term used for indicating camels especially in poetry. It is a compound of dibh 'ashes from a special plant used by men to make their hair white' and of the verbal noun le m. from leh 'have'. It is thus a metaphor that refers to the ash-like colour of camels.

2.3 Goel m. collective 'camel(s). This general term is the only m. noun in -l that has definitives with e rather than k, e.g., goel-a 'the camels', gëel-is-i 'his camels' (vs. cëel-ka, cëel-kis-i from cëel '[Geel] m. 'well'). The vowel is actually [e], i.e., long [+ATR] e, with raising of older -a-as in Somali gëes [e] 'horn' vs. Maay gëas 'id.', Oromo goofa 'id.', Dullay (Gollango) këase 'id.', etc. LAMBERTI (1986:209, 217ff, 422) reconstructs *gæal rather than *gæala, with (inflectional ?) *-i causing umlaut to [+ATR] ee before being deleted. (Actually, he distinguishes [+ATR] umlaut from raising -aa - ee in order to account also for some other instances where he does not posit a final *-i, but Somali gëel 'camel' and gëes 'horn' are the strongest cases, in my opinion.) The older form with -aa- is preserved in some Somali compounds such as haruub-gal 'container for milking camels (lit. milkvessel-camel)', daba-gal-ale 'ground squirrel (lit. tail-camel-having)'. Older -aa- is also preserved in most of the other languages that, as shown in Table 1, have reflexes of this word: Saho gäala 'camel', Afar gäla 'id.', Maay gäal 'id.', Rendille gäl 'id.', Oromo gaala 'id.', Turkana -kool 'id.', Dasenech galti 'camel, she-camel'.

The most likely source of *gæala is one of the Semitic names of this animal, already attested in King 'Ezān's inscriptions in the northern Horn as Ge 'ez gamal. Before that, it occurs in Hebrew gamal, Akkadian (Late Assyrian) gamnaltu and possibly also gamlu (in ADD 779-5, cf. CIVIL et al. 1968, Vol. 5:36a), and Epigraphic South Arabian (Sabáic) gml. Arabic gamal is already in the Koran, and probably still retained velar [g] as modern Egyptian gamal. Loss of -m- between vowels has not been observed in any of the East Cushitic languages that preserve reflexes of *gæala, but occurs frequently in Jibbali (one of the Modern South Arabian languages of Dhofar), and occasionally in Harari and some Gurage languages. For instance, the reflex of the above Semitic word for 'camel' is gūl in Jibbali with *sam- developing into a short nasalized high back vowel, while tūn (with f. nouns) and tūn-t (with m. nouns) are its reflexes of 'eight' (cf. respectively Arabic tánīn and tánīnyatu spelt 〈tn n〉, 〈tn nth〉, Sabáic omm ñy 〈omm ny 〉 tūn, Ge 'ez samān 〈smn sn〉 and samānitu-samānitu). When *-m- is lost in Harari it does not leave nasalised vowels, e.g., sūr 'eight' (with a single form for both genders as in all modern Ethio-Semitic languages), whereas in Gurage it may leave either nasalised or oral vowels, e.g., Endegel sūt 'eight' and sāf tatt 'twist around' (vs. Chaha tō matám, with -w- being reduced both to -w- and to 0). If one is not to posit a lost language where Semitic *gamal- became *gaa-, the most likely assumption is that the East Cushitic forms preserve a southern Ethio-
2.4 **Hal f.** (pl. **hato** ')adult she-camel'. This word has good parallels in Maay **hii l** 'id.' and Afar **alà** 'id.'. Its plural is preserved in Rendille **alò** 'she-camels', that lost its initial *h- like Afar, a process that is regular in Rendille (cf. SASSE 1979:40, LAMBERTI 1986:298f), but less so in Afar (cf. SASSE 1979:38ff). Oromo has **halåa** ~ **alåa** 'adult she-camel' in the south (Boorana, etc.), **hashåa** 'id.' in the east, and **dhalåa** 'id.' among the Karrayyu in Shewa. The last term is a derivative of dhal- 'give birth' and also occurs in other varieties of Oromo as 'female'. Hashâa is an adaptation of Somali hashsa 'the she-camel', i.e., the form halå has when it takes the definite article. The southern form halåa ~ alåa alternates initial h- and O like most other Oromo words with initial h-, e.g., barričë ~ arričë 'donkey' < *barričë- (cf. Harso Dullay barričë 'donkey'). Sidamo harrirčëo 'id.', etc.; ororà ~ hooroo 'pack camels' cf. (2.1) above, hurji ~ urji 'star' < *hurk- ~ *urk- (cf. Afar catúk-ta [hûrik-ta] 'star'. Arbore hizzåq 'id.', Gollango Dullay hakkirë 'id.', Somali xiddig [hidding] 'id.', etc.). This southern Oromo Orom haliça ~ alåa is either a recent contamination of Oromo **dhalåa** with Somali **hål** or an older cognate. Interestingly, Saho has goal-atto, the singulative f. of goaša, for 'she-camel', and uses alå as a suppletive pl. of lab 'female goat'. EHRET (1987:126) adds also Mbugu (Ma'as) -alìti [r̥alìti] 'female domestic animal that has calved' (the i- is the Bantu class 5 noun prefix) and aliti [aliti] 'mother-of' (e.g., aliti X 'mother of X'), and reconstructs *hål- 'bearing adult'. If he is right, a word preserved in South Cushitic with its older more general meaning developed two different specialised meanings in East Cushitic: (i) 'female goat' among the Saho for whom goats are important animals in the rugged mountains and escarpments they live in, but (ii) 'female camel' in the languages of the lowlands, where camel-cows became the most important calving mothers.

2.5 **Nirig** m. (f. **nirig**, pl. **nirgo** m.) 'camel calf that still suckles milk'. This is one of the most widespread camel-related words in the Horn of Africa, as shown by Maay **nari** 'new-born camel', Rendille **niyax** m. (f. **niyax-e**; pl. **niyax-o** ')young camel', Afar **narg** (Predicate form not f-i-g-i; f. **narg-y**; pl. **narg-o** ')very young camel', eastern Oromo **nyárag**-do (singulative m. **nyárag-icha**; f. **nyárag-itti** ')very young camel', Karrayyu Oromo **nariq-ichão** 'very young female camel', Dasenech **nir-q**-i 'young camel'.

An etymology for this word has been suggested by EHRET (1991:268, 1995:331) who noticed that Arbore **hirqi** 'weak (Adj.)' is likely to be from the same root, but with -i- rather than -a- ~ -i-. Within Arbore, **hir-q-i** is best analysed as lexically related to Arbore **nari-d-o-s** 'make thin, emaciate (Causative of the Middle/Autobenefactive stem)'. Both preserve the initial n- of a root he reconstructs as *har/-hiv-/-hir- to be weak, frail', which has reflexes in Somali jirr-äin 'be in bad health, be ill' and jirr-o 'bad health, illness'. It may occur also in South Cushitic *naraku* 'poverty' reconstructed by KIESSLING (n.d.) on the basis of, e.g., Gorowa narririk 'poor, few', Iraaq narrak 'poverty', etc., and in Omotic (Gonga: Keja niri: 'be tired, be weak', Mocha nira: 'be soft, loose, flexible, have pity').

It should be pointed out, however, that the sound correspondences are only partly regular. On the one hand, the correspondence set posited by EHRET (1991:262) requires initial *n- to be preserved in Oromo and Arbore, while becoming n- in Afar, and g- in the Somali group (later palatalized to j- before i in Rendille, northern Somali and other varieties). Accordingly, Rendille **ny-xas**, Somali **nirig** and Maay **nari** would be expected to have initial j- like Somali jirro 'bad health' (Maay even g-). On the other hand, *q is expected to be preserved in Oromo and Arbore, to become O medically in Dasenech (hir-q- < *hir-q-) and j in Rendille, but in Somali it should have yielded q, in Maay g' [ŋ'], and in Afar either o (~ -i) or k (cf. SASSE 1979:47ff). MOHAMED (1985:105f) and EHRET (1991:268) suggest that Somali **nirig**, as well as Maay **nari**, is a loan 'from an Afar-related language' that left also other traces in northern Somali (cf. MOHAMED 1985:144ff). This may explain initial n- but not the final -g, that is puzz-
ling even in Afar. On the other hand, also the Rendille form must be ‘a borrowing because of its manifestation of [n] instead of expected /f/’ (Ehret 1991:268). As I already pointed out (Banti 1993:214), we are thus left with basically two sets of reconstructed forms, i.e., (i) *harq- ~ *hir gái- in the central and western languages (eastern Oromo, Rendille and Dasenech), vs. (ii) *narq- ~ *nir gái- in the eastern languages (Afar, Somali, Maay). If set (i) preserves the older consonants, set (ii) can be explained as a borrowing from ‘an Afar-related language’ only if one postulates either that *q > g also occurred regularly in that language, or that the development of g was irregular and due, e.g., to tabooistic distortion. Yet *n > n- is not diagnostic of Afar because, according to Ehret (1991:262), it also occurs in highland East Cushitic languages such as Sidamo and Burji. Karrayyu Oromo marq-tehó ‘very young female camel’ is formally intermediate between the two sets, and may be due either to contact with Afar, that adjoins the Karrayyu in eastern Shewa, or be an independent development of this little known dialect of Oromo. Indeed, ny is known to be in dialectal variation with ntnj in Oromo, e.g., Macca naacha ‘crocodile’ vs. Boorana and Eastern naacha ‘id.’, Macca and Eastern keema ‘our’ vs. Gujii and Boorana keema ‘id.’, etc.

2.6 Qaalin m. (pl. qaalimmá f.) ‘young he-camel’. So, e.g., Reinisch (1902:259b ‘ein 3—jähriges männliches camel’), Abrahimi (1964:199a), Andriejewski (1964:32), and Agostini et al. (1985:477a). Some varieties of northern Somali use only the feminine of this word, qaalin f. (pl. qaalimmó m.) that is defined by Yaaasun (1976:333b) as neef heel ah ama la’ oo da’ xar ‘camel or cow of young age’, rather than ‘young she-camel’.

Heine (1978:92) compares this word with Rendille xadím ‘young male camel’ and reconstructs *qāalin for his ‘specialized Proto-Sam vocabulary involving camels’ (Heine 1978:67; cf. also Heine 1981:179). Yet Reinisch (1902:259b) already pointed out the similarity of the Arabic root ٦٠٥ to this word, that appears to be a direct loan of Arabic active participle qaalin ‘that is hot, that burns’, with the normal development of Arabic g > Somali q (that regularly corresponds to Rendille x). Indeed, it may be remembered that camels reach sexual maturity when they are about 3-4 years old, i.e., when they are called qaalin m. / qaalin f.

This is not the only Arabic loanword in the camel-related lexicon shared by Somali and Rendille. Another one is Somali rakáah m. ‘camel for riding’, Rendille rakáá ‘id.’ (cf. Heine 1978:94), also attested in southern Oromo rakúm ‘male camel used for riding’ (Tablino 1980:183), as well as in Saho and Afar rakáah ‘adult male camel’, from Arabic rakub ‘mount, riding animal; pack animal’. This word occurs once already in the Koran (36:72), wa-dalalinná-ha la-hum fa-min-há rakúb-hum wa-min-há yaııkulána ‘and we rendered it (an’áman ‘livestock’ in the preceding verse) submissive to them; part of it is their mount, and part of it they eat’.

The development of this word in the Horn is due to the fact that the Afar, the Somali, etc., use only the strongest male camels as pack animals and sometimes for riding, never the females. The wide diffusion of these two loanwords in Somali, Rendille, southern Oromo and Saho-Afar need not be construed as an indication of great antiquity, i.e., that they were borrowed into the proto-languages. Rather, it shows that single items of the camel-related lexicon, just as the five terms in Table 1 above, could be widely adopted by linguistically diverse camel-herding communities.

2.7 Rati m. ‘bull-camel’. This word occurs only in Somali, where it is a synonym of ādur. An older cognate of it may, however, lie behind the otherwise obscure southern Oromo roochóo, irregular sg. form of ooróo – hooróo ‘pack camels’ (a cognate of the above ādur, for the form with initial h- see under hál above), if it is a contamination between ooróo and a possible Oromo *ra-cha corresponding to Somali ra-ti but with the Oromo singulative m. suffix -cha instead of Somali -ti, for which see below. (Notice that a possible reason for dropping old Oromo *ra'cha ‘pack camel’ may have been its quasi-homophony with Oromo raachá ‘frog’.)
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Verb</th>
<th>Derived Verbs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. erre 'load; go with herds from one place to another' (3sg. m. Impl. juvre)</td>
<td>S. erre 'cause to load' (REINISCH 1890-42: Causative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. erre 'load' (3sg. Impl. voure)</td>
<td>A. eserre 'cause to load in order to move' (Causative of Causative)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. eserre 'load in order to move f.o.b.' (Middle/Autobenefactive of Causative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. erre 'load f.o.b., load one's own pack animal' (REINISCH 1890-42: Middle/ Autobenefactive)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. enerre 'be loaded' (Passive; 3sg. m. Impl. vannoure)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Derived Nouns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. erir m. 'loading up (of camels)'</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. irr m. 'back, rear' (unclear vocalism, possibly etymologically independent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. merrd f. 'pack animal'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. meerca f. 'loading, load'</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. amerta f. 'loading'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. vure f. 'song of exertion'  (formally an agent noun of the simple verb, cf. BANTI 1988:51: A. jaquf &quot;put from ooguu hit strike&quot;, A. yukami &quot;irritation of the skin&quot; from oone 'eat', etc. show that forms with the m. prefix y- can be used as f. nouns; unclear motivation of the meaning specialization)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Also this Somali word can be explained if one remembers that the camel pastoralists in the Horn use only the strongest male camels as pack animals, while camel cows are used as milk animals and for calving. During the centuries the etymological connection between Somali ra-ti 'pack-camel' > 'bull-camel' and the old reduplicated forms rār m. 'camel-load', rār- 'to load (camels)' - and possibly saar- 'put something on to', 'load something on to', an old causative form cognate of Saho eser - became obscure, whereas Afar still has merrd 'pack animal' transparently derived from the verb erre 'load', whose derivational scatter is shown in Table 2 above (where S. = Saho and A. = Afar).

As for -ti, it is a suffix that is no more productive in present-day Somali, even though it is still well attested as a deverbal and denominal morpheme. The deverbatives gatti f. 'foreigners, persons who came from somewhere' (from gal- 'enter'), tammooti f. 'animal killed when it was going to die because of a wound or disease' and tumaari m. 'deadly wound' > 'wound caused by a pointed weapon' (from the old prefix-conjugated -ammuur- 'die') were reported in BANTI (1988:49). Derivational forms are, e.g., gashaant-ti f. 'unmarried girl' (vs. Riddu giddam 'girl of marriageable age', Rendille giddam 'id.'); the Somali simplex gashaan f. shifted to 'mistress, female lover', and originated gashdan m. 'male lover', moviti f. 'the dead, spirits of the dead', and meyi f. 'id.' (from the Arabic loanwords mōwād m. 'death' and mēyād m. 'corps' respectively).

Another interesting example is Somali ab-ti 'maternal uncle' from ab m. that in Somali means only 'male ancestors', while its East Cushitic cognates all refer to maternal kinsfolk like Somali abdi, e.g., Saho abo 'maternal uncle; male ancestor(s)', Afar abu 'male maternal relative/ancestor', Rendille abiyaa 'maternal uncle', Konso ap-iyaa (Vocative) 'mother's brother; mother's brother's son', Burji ab-iyyaa 'mother's brother; wife of mother's brother', Sidamo abho 'maternal uncle'. BLACK (1974:174) and SASSÉ (1982:22) reconstruct *ab- 'maternal uncle' for East Cushitic, but Mbugu abu 'mother's sibling' (EHRET 1980:281) attests this word even in South Cushitic.9

2.8 Xito [bito] f. 'camel'. A generic term used for indicating camels especially in poetry. It is a back-formation from the name of a bird known as xidixito f. and xidixito f. that has been defined in the following manners in the main dictionaries of Somali:

a. 'der nachtfalke, gattung kleiner eulen, der zigenmelker (Haggenm.)
Schl. T. 85, 22; ein nacht Vogel, roter, langbeiniger regenpfeifer (Burt); bei Lar. bedin beno a whitish-grey bird resembling the lark' (REINISCH 1902:197b);

b. 'ringed plover' (ABRAHAM 1964:120c);

c. 'small bird with a red bill and long thin legs' (YAAŞIN 1976:463a; AGOSTIN 1985:632a).

In popular belief, after the xidixito-bird's sons had been falsely accused of theft and killed, she vowed (cf. CIISE 1985:23):7

Waxaan midir ka maray 'I make a vow never
Hiliib dambe canideddi To eat other meat
Hurda dambe jiiwee To slumber another sleep
Geed dambe koridda To climb another tree
Haad dambe raacidda To mingle with other birds.'

The metaphor refers to the whitish-grey colour, the long legs, and the facts of not eating meat and that camels don't like to mingle with other livestock.

3 Even this small sample of nine words (the eight entries plus rak'jub discussed under qaadin) shows how the Somali camel-related lexicon is made up of rather diverse items. On the one hand, there are words such as déebbe 'camel(s)' and xiiitu 'camel' that can be explained rather transparently through Somali, and are language-internal innovations with no parallels in the languages of other camel-herding communities. On the other hand, there are Semitic loanwords that, interestingly, occur also in several other East Cushitic – and even Eastern Nilotic – languages of the Horn. One of them, gäél 'camel(s)' is the most widely used generic name for this species, and is likely to be quite old. Its development *-ama- > *-aa- has parallels especially in southern Ethiosemitic, and may thus be an indication of the fact that speakers of an older form of southern Ethiosemitic had a special role in introducing camel-herding in the eastern Horn. Alternatively, the weakness of -m in southern Ethiosemitic (and possibly in Jibbali) may be due to a vanished substratum language that could have been the locus for *gäaal- > *gaal-, and even of *harq- > *harrīq- > *harqīs- > nīrīq-. The other two are direct loanwords from Arabic, i.e., qaadin 'young he-camel' and rak'jub 'camel for riding'. Their occurrence also occurs in other languages, i.e., in Rendille and, respectively, in Rendille and Afar shows how even borrowed items, once included in the set of camel-related words, were passed round different languages of camel-herders. (For the further occurrences of reflexes of Arabic rak'ub in other languages of the Horn, yet with quite different meaning developments such as Ge'ez rakub 'female camels', see BANTI 1993:217).

Also dubēer m. 'decipated pack-camel' may be a loanword, but from a different source. BLAŽEK (1994:17) has suggested a link between it and Elamite zībar 'camel' through "cultural diffusion", because camel-breeding spread to the Horn of Africa from southern Arabia, where it was probably introduced from Iran and the Indus Valley (cf. BANTI 1993:186). The sound change *z > d is regular in Somali, and BLAŽEK's case would be strengthened if other possible Elamitic loanwords were identified in Somali. Alternatively, dubēer may be explained language-internal as a derogatory term developed out of Somali dābēer, a variant (cf. YAASIN 1976: 82b) of dāmēe r̥ dāmēer m. 'ass, donkey'.

Rāti 'bull-camel' is still a different case. It occurs only in Somali, unless its Oromo counterpart *rchā is posited as one of the sources of southern Oromo rōochōo 'pack camel'. Comparison with Saho-Afar shows rāti to be an old verbal noun meaning 'pack animal' that underwent semantic specialization to 'bull-camel'. Finally, ăww 'bull-camel, pack-camel', hāl 'adult she-camel', and nīrīq 'camel calf that still sucks milk' are words belonging to the set of specialized camel-related terms that occur across several East Cushitic language groups in the Horn. As far as the available etymological tools can tell, the former two are Cushitic words that meant 'bull' and, respectively, 'bearing adult, female that has already given birth to her young' before developing their specially camel-related meanings. Nīrīq, instead, may be a derivative of an old root meaning 'be weak, frail', that also has reflexes meaning 'be in bad health' in Somali, be 'poor, few' in the West Rift (South Cushitic) languages and 'be tired, be weak, be soft' in the Gonga (Omotic) languages. (A similar constellation of meanings occurs in the unrelated family of Ge'ez lāphažā lāphaža 'become weak; become slack; be soft; be loose; languish', cf. LESLAI 1987:312b.) The phonetic shape of this Somali word, however, shows it to be a loanword from an unknown language, contrary to MOHAMED'S (1985:105) and EHRSET's (1991:268) suggestion.

Notes

1. Here, as usually in the literature, Somali indicates the group of varieties called Northern Somali ("Nordsomali") by LAMBERTI (1986:301), i.e. the Macca-aarrīt varieties spoken
in northern and eastern Somalia up to Galalkayo in the Mudug, in eastern and southern Ethiopia, in Kenya and in the former Oltregabera (Jubaland) between the Juba River and the Kenyan border. The camel-related lexicon in the coastal Massa-tiru varieties referred to as Benaadir by, among others, MORENO (1955:15) and LAMBERTI (1988:341) does not seem to differ significantly (cf. MOHAMED 1985:262). Many, on the other hand, is the correct spelling for the group of varieties spoken in the interriverine area, and called May or A-May by LAMBERTI (1985:401). Other names used in the literature for this last group have been Jabarti (still used by HEINE 1978b, Digi (e.g., in MORENO 1955), and Central Somali (in SAED 1982).

An old plural *awra/-awrii, similar to the Afar plural *awrī from *awri and to Oromo *awrii, may be preserved in the Somali tribal name *burro-mai, lit. "carrothaving", its variant form *burro-mad, lit. "without sexual organs" is probably a derogatory folk-ethnological reinterpretation of the opaque *awrii- "male camels" as *awrii- "sexual organs". Another variant of this tribal name, *burro-ma, has been replaced by *awrii, synchronically acceptable as a dialectal form of *awrii- "male camels".

The Mbugu data have been improved with the kind help of Maarten MOLS (letter of 26th August 1998). It should be pointed out that EMBET adds *awrii- "male donkey" and reconstructs also "adult animal" as oldest meaning of this word. But it is not likely to belong here, because it has good parallels in Bili *adok: "cry, bellow, moo" and adok- "young 1-3 years old calf" (REINISCH 1887:26), herber (KIFLEMARIAM & PAULOS 1992:200), Saho *adok: "cry, moo, bellow, bleat" (REINISCH 1890:25), Afar *halli: "bray of donkey", as well as Beja *heli: - *halli: - *halai: "cry, bark, bruleen" (REINISCH 1895:117, 1896:28-29). This group of Beja, Saho and Afa-Afar words may be connected with the group of Ge'ez *dalel: "to utter cries of joy", Amharic *dlela: "to rejoice", and Arabic *dalil: - *daila: "to shout with joy" (LESLAI 1987:219b), as well as with the group of Ge'ez *hale: "male equine at rut", Tigre *halai: - *halla: "donkey that brays when at rut", Tigrigna *hala: - *halla: "donky (animal)", and Amharic *dlela- to be in heat (animal)" and *dalel- "of distillate life" (LESLAI 1985:96) lists the group of Ge'ez *dalel in his "Also in" class, i.e., among the words about whose identification as being cognates in Ethiopian Semitic and in Cushitic or borrowings in either direction he has doubts. It is but one of the many cases where it is very difficult to disentangle the thread of the history of a family of words across the many language families in the Horn.

1 CERULLI (1951:480) suggested a connection with Amharic *dalel "to be loose, be slack" and Kembant *dal: "be loose" that requires a rather ad hoc correspondence between Gonga n. - Amharic *dlel- Kembant *dal. Instead, LESLAI (1979:378ab) showed Amharic and Gurage *dalel "be loose, be slack" to be a Semitic word connected with Ge'ez *dalel "become weak; be soft, languish", that was borrowed into Kembant.

2 Rendille *mirax, pl. *mira-i-0 "young camel" is thus from *miri: pl. *miri-0. Here LAMBERTI (1986:246) mistakenly assumes *k-, that would have given the same alternation as Rendille *dib, pl. *dib-0 "tooth", cf. Somali ilig pl. *ilig-0 "id.", Baiso *il-0 "id.", Oromo *ik: "id.", etc. with *k-

3 Dahalo has *idiyo glossed "mother's sister" in EMBET et al. (1989:21), but "grandmother" in TOSCO (1991:127), and MADDISON et al. (1993:45). Formally it may belong here as well (cf. EMBET 1980:281), even though something more about the Dahalo kinship system should be known in order to understand fully the semantic shift to "grandmother". CHAIK AHMED (1995:174f) points out that the family of Somali abti is but one of several possible traces of a stronger role formally played by maternal ancestry in these communities.

4 The scansion pattern of these five lines is | 2-2- 2 2 | 2 | Only the actual words of the verse are alliterative in d (runnie repeated four times) and partially in b (siika, horda and inu in lines 2, 3, and 5 respectively).

5 This word has parallels in Boni (Kili) *dabeer f. "ass, donkey" and Baiso *dimir f. (pl. *dimiri) "ass, donkey", but seems to lack other cognates. HEINE (1982:103a) records *dabeer f. as the form this word has in the Kiji dialect of Boni, with *a- rounded to *o- because of the following labial consonant. Accordingly, Somali *dabeer "descript pack-camel" could just be a phonetic variant of the word for "ass, donkey" that became independent through lexical split, rather than a morphological derivation (through vowel change from a to i).

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Change of Feature Prominence as a Motivation to Sound Change: The Case of Setswana Consonant System

1 Introduction

Setswana, just like the other languages of the Sotho-Tswana group, has been described as a language which has made far-reaching changes of the hypothesized Proto-Bantu consonant system (Janson 1991/92,CREASES 1996, BATIBO et al. 1997). It is argued in this paper that this dramatic development was primarily motivated by the incidence of changes in feature prominence which gave rise to the reorganization of the phonological system in terms of segment type, relationship and sequence (BATIBO & ROTTLAND 1994). This reorganization has been in progression from the time of the Proto-Bantu origins through the period of the Bantu migration and settlement.

According to Guthrie (1967-71) and Meeussen (1967), the Proto-Bantu consonant system was fairly simple, made up of an inventory of no more than 21 consonants. These consonants constituted a system which involved only five series, namely the voiceless stops /p t k/, the voiced stops /b d g/, the prenasalized voiceless stops /mp nt ng/, the prenasalized voiced stops /mb nd ng/, the nasals /m n n/ and a palatal semivowel /j/. According to this reconstruction, the Proto-Bantu consonant system involved three major feature distinctions, namely [± voiced], [± nasal] and [± place]. The semivowel /j/ was the only consonant that could be said to involve a [±continuant] distinction. There were, however, a number of phonetic tendencies in the language, which evolved from Proto-Bantu. These tendencies gave rise to new directions of sound changes and therefore the creation of new distinctive features, which became responsible in the development of the many hundreds of sound systems in existence...